

This Spirit-Led Advice May Help Save Your Marriage

During premarital counseling, my husband and I learned many valuable lessons, but the one lesson that carried over to this day, six years later, is one particular piece of advice our pastor gave us.

About seven years ago, my then-fiance and I started premarital counseling with our pastor. We were required to attend biweekly sessions for eight weeks before our pastor would agree to marry us. He wanted to ensure we had the tools to communicate, and he also wanted to assist us in learning new ways to approach topics such as finances, stress, raising children and so forth.

“Counseling” is a word that makes certain folks uneasy, because the idea of opening up to someone can be a bit intimidating, but I love when people realize how productive, healthy and soothing counseling sessions are for couples and individuals.

In fact, I can’t say enough good things about it!

Well, during our last session, our pastor looked at us with a serious expression and said, “There will come a time when you don’t want to talk through your problems. You may feel resentful, angry or hurt, and if those emotions fester, you will find more reasons to not communicate. In knowing this, I want you to promise yourself something—that if and when those circumstances arise, one of you will commit to putting your pride to the side to lead your partner down the path of healthy communication.”

We looked at our pastor and quickly agreed to his request, and then he stopped us.

"I think you are both assuming that this might be easy, that putting your feelings aside will be a walk in the park, but during moments of anger and frustration, putting aside your emotions is anything but simple. Please, keep this advice in the back of your mind. It will come in handy someday."

After our session, my fiancé and I went about our day, yet I couldn't help but think about our pastor's advice. I wondered if I would be the one to initiate a conversation or an apology in the midst of an argument or if he would be the one to take the first step.

Well, three months after the day we promised each other forever, my husband and I got into an argument. I can't remember exactly what happened, but I remember feeling frustrated over a disagreement that went south.

I looked at my husband with disdain, quietly vowing to myself to give my partner the silent treatment until he realized I was right. In that moment, I needed him to know I was right and he was wrong.

That evening, we didn't speak. We ate dinner in silence. Then we went to bed without saying a word to one another, either.

The next morning, I woke up and no longer felt angry. At that point, I was sad. My partner and I ignored each other for an entire day, something we've never done. So, I started to pray. I asked God to remove the fleshly feelings from my heart, and as I prayed, our pastor's advice flashed in my mind.

I knew what I had to do yet I was reluctant to speak to my husband.

I don't want to be the one to initiate a conversation, I thought to myself.

I also did not want to let another day go by and not speak to the man I love most in this world.

So, I walked into our living room, took a deep breath and said, "I understand we're both angry, and we both feel misunderstood. Let's try to talk this out."

Admittedly, I was seething inside, but I didn't want to wait around to see if my partner would initiate a conversation. I cared more about our healing than proving myself right or being a victor. After all, there is no winner when two people are led by their ego.

At first, my husband was a bit cold to my request. So I reminded him about what our pastor had said during our counseling session. Then I noticed a shift in his attitude, as if he suddenly remembered our pastor's advice and gentle warning that this day might come.

That day, we talked through our problem, and after we exchanged apologies, we put our issue in the past and carried on with life.

To this day, we follow our pastor's advice, and one of us initiates a conversation during a time when the last thing we want to do is communicate in a healthy way. {eoa}

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