



Marriages that Pray Together

Ephesians 5:21-22, 25, 33; James 3:13-17

About *Opportunity: Today's Decisions Tomorrow's Realities*

Time moves faster and faster the older we become. In fact, life is far too short to make foolish decisions. One bad decision can take years to overcome. If you're not sure how to get where you want to go, ask someone who's been there. If you heed the advice, chances are ... you'll be glad you did! Learn how to make the most of every opportunity in this four-part series – *Opportunity: Today's Decisions Tomorrow's Realities*.

Bottom Line

Couples who pray together are far more likely to stay together.

Introduction

Today, I want to talk to couples or anyone who hopes to be a part of a couple.

This will create some discomfort and awkwardness. I'm not talking about sex. This is way more awkward than that.

Today, I want to encourage couples to create a practice that will do more than any other one activity to anchor your relationship spiritually.

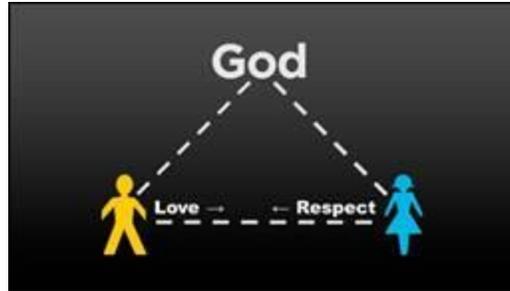
First, a little context...

Struggle

Mutual submission is the *most powerful relational dynamic*.

Paul introduces his teaching on marriage with this idea:

Ephesians 5:21-22, 25, 33, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church... Each one of you must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”



The picture is two people submitting to each other, who are both submitted to God. This is the model Christian marriage. It requires different roles and responsibilities but acknowledges men and women are of equal value in the sight of God.

Christian marriage is two people saying yes to God and serving one another.

Here's the challenge...

Submission to God and each other requires something that does not come naturally: humility.

Truth

James 3:13-17, "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom."

Wisdom is demonstrated through humility, which leads to wisdom.



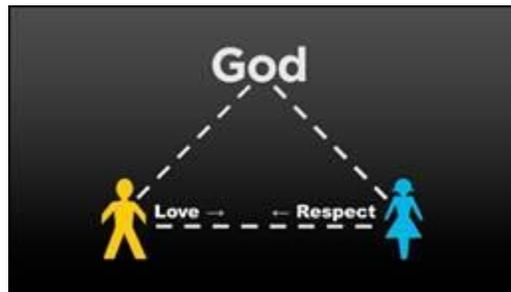
James 3:13-17, "But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such 'wisdom' does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition [opposite of humility], there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, **submissive**, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere."



Relationally, humility looks like this:

1. When I discover I'm wrong, I'll admit it.
2. When you say I'm wrong, I'll honestly consider it.
3. When God says I'm wrong, I'll immediately embrace it.

This brings us back to our triangle chart.



What does this mean in the real world? How do I do this? Here is the best place to start.

Pray together, out loud, on a regular basis.

Family Life survey: Fewer than 8% of Christians prayed together. Fewer than 1% of those who do pray together get divorced.

Philip C. McGraw, Ph. D. in *Relationship Rescue*, says, “The divorce rate in America is at a minimum one out of two marriages (1:2). But the reported divorce rate among couples that pray together is about one in ten thousand (1:10,000). Pretty impressive, even if you reduce it a thousand-fold (p. 342).”

Humility brings wisdom, and prayer is the ultimate expression of humility.

Conclusion

People always ask, “Does prayer work?” This kind of praying always works because it is an expression of mutual submission to God.

In a great relationship, both people are submitted to each other and submitted together to their heavenly Father. Praying together is an expression of that submission.

Commit to begin. Pray together, out loud, on a regular basis (and not just for the food).

Next Steps

- Memorize Ephesians 5:33
- Pray together, out loud, on a regular basis. (Not just for the food.)
- Join us next weekend for *Opportunity*, Part Four: *Investment Opportunity*.

Next Week - Opportunity: Investment Opportunity

The longer you live, the more you'll have to give. Invest your time in those coming along behind. The value of your life is determined by how much of it you give away. Our culture says life's value is found in what we achieve or what we accumulate. But those things eventually fade away. We each have a treasure chest full of life experiences that will die with us unless we become intentional about distributing our wealth. The value of your life is found when we share those experiences.