

Four Foundations for Peace in Marriage

God created marriage to be a paradise, and the most important ingredient in a paradise is peace. Peace makes marriage pleasurable. But how do you find peace? Here are four foundations of lasting peace in marriage.

The first is prior agreement. Marriage is the longest journey in a person's life. If one spouse goes one way and another goes the other way, it creates conflict.

When I used to do a lot of premarital counseling, I would lead couples through what I called a "Marriage Expectation Inventory." I asked how many kids they wanted to have, whether or not they would both work, who would manage the money, where they would spend the holidays, and what church they would attend.

These were big questions. At least once, I watched a couple break up in my office because they had never talked about these questions. They avoided them because it might lead to an argument. Whether you're engaged or have been married for decades, you need to talk about and agree upon the big issues.

The second foundation is having God's purpose for your marriage. Your life has a big story, but people often get trapped in the little story. They go to work, make money, shop for groceries, eat dinner, take the kids to soccer, and then life is half over. Those are all pieces of the little story.

The big story is that there's a King and a kingdom and a call from God on our lives. Why did God put you two together? Discovering how God wants to use you and your spouse within His kingdom gives you purpose and binds you as a couple. It's like putting your hand in a glove. You fit together perfectly.

Partnership is the third foundation. Marriage is about sharing. It's an equal partnership. A husband and wife should be equal stockholders. Marriages that fail are often destroyed by one spouse who dominates the other. In your marriage, does one feel fearful or disrespected? Does one spouse never give the other spouse the chance to speak for themselves? Does one spouse bully the other? If so, that's a dominant marriage, an out of balance marriage.

Marriage is about sharing. That kind of partnership brings peace.

The final foundation is prayer. *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:6-7).

Anxiety is a choice. If you're an anxious person, it's because you have chosen to be anxious. You have embraced stress. Those two things—*anxiety and stress*—can kill a marriage. Instead of worrying, give those fears to God. He will fill you with peace. If you don't pray, you're going to worry.

Write down what they're worried about and use that as their prayer list. God will take those worries from you and give you peace.

God didn't create marriage to be painful. He created it to be a peaceful paradise. A marriage characterized by agreement, purpose, partnership, and prayer will have this peace in abundance.