

Praying with your Spouse

A prayer guide - forgiveness

INTRODUCTION

In November we hosted the Sacred Marriage Conference and many of us made this commitment at the end of the conference:

"From this day forward, we're committed to fighting for our marriage. We promise to seek God for the wisdom, strength, and tenacity needed to create and sustain a sacred marriage with one and another. Whatever it takes, we're all in. We will remember that marriage wasn't created to make us happy, it was created to make us holy."

With this commitment, hundreds of us pinpointed one barrier that is keeping us from having a Christ centered marriage; these barriers have been prayed over ever since.

During the Revival Series we want to provide ways you, as couples, can be praying over these barriers, too.

We are providing couples with prayer prompts for each of the top nine barriers that were identified. We have offered ideas for how the issue may be impacting your home or a friend's home; a Scripture that speaks about this topic, a suggested action item and a prayer. Please use this time to pray, as husband and wife, over your marriage and the marriages of all those around us. Let us start a revival in our homes...a revival in our marriages...a revival in our families.

Each topic includes:

- Topic introduction.
- A passage that speaks about this topic.
- A practice or idea that may benefit your marriage.
- A prayer regarding the topic.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is one of the most countercultural actions we can show others... especially our spouse. Why is it so difficult to forgive? Why, at times, does it seem like our spouse forgave you, but the feelings of guilt and shame still linger. Forgiveness can seem dismissive to the rest of the world...how could you not want to get revenge? Why not get back at them? They deserve it! The task for us as Christian spouses is to love our spouse like Jesus loves us, regardless of the wrong they did, or we feel like they did. (Forgiveness does not mean we stay in unsafe situations. If your spouse is abusive, seek help immediately.)

Matthew 18:21-22 says, "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." This passage tells us that Jesus wants his followers to forgive 7 times 70 times. This comment is less of a mathematical formula and more a reference to the number seven, which symbolizes completeness and wholeness. Christ wants us to forgive all and to leave nothing swept under the rug. Forgive until your spouse feels deeply loved by God through your love and forgiveness for them.

My wife and I like to practice a weekly check in called "clearing the table" we set aside time for conversation once a week to talk through our week, how we experienced love from one another, what do we need to confess, and what do we need to forgive each other for? We want to clear the table each week so that we aren't dwelling on the past or ways we may have unintentionally hurt one another. How can you and your spouse clear the table with one another to let nothing stand in the way of experiencing Gods love through each other?

Lord, you gave us the gift of marriage as a covenant to one of your beloved sons or daughters. Lead us towards a posture of forgiveness, listening well, and mercy towards one another. May our family, children if present, co-workers, and friends see how we forgive one another so that it points them to your unfailing love. We thank you for your ultimate example of forgiveness on the cross. In Christ we pray, amen.