

How To Attain a Godly Marriage - Part 3

Utilizing Your Passion to Love and Serve Others

Are you passionately living out God's plan for your life? God created you for a specific purpose – have you discovered that purpose? Have you gotten side-tracked by other obligations?

Let's take a brief look at the "Inspired Living" portion of the R.A.D.I.C.A.L. biblical principles for overcoming problems and finding the abundant life God offers – especially through the marriage relationship.

As previously stated, we attain a godly marriage when each spouse aligns his or her entire lifestyle with how God wants us to live. And this includes finding our specific God-given vision for our life – which will include our passion being utilized in a project whereby we love and serve others.

This project may or may not include our spouse as part of the vision, but we certainly are asked by God to put the desires of others (our spouse) above our own. So what would this look like if a husband and wife have God-given visions that seem unrelated?

First, recognize that we're not in competition with our spouse – both of us are part of God's body and, as such, both have equally important tasks to fulfill.

Second, God asks us to keep our priorities straight – to keep our relationship with Him our top priority, and then the relationship with our spouse, then our children, then ministry. By keeping these relationships at a deep, intimate level, we retain the inward flow of love and encouragement that we need to keep fighting the good fight to fulfill God's individual vision for our life. Without these relationships, we soon run dry and get off track, trying to put the cart before the horse.

Third, part of dying to our selfishness requires us to be willing to lay aside our own desires at any moment in order to help our spouse achieve his/her goal(s). As Joyce Meyer states, "to live is to give." When we give of ourselves, we gain more than we give away. So let's let go of the attitude of "me first" and help our spouse become the best person God wants them to become.

Why is it important to understand that God has a specific vision for our life? Because until we do, we will never obtain self-discipline; we will never experience God's love to its fullest; we will never be motivated to move out of our comfort zone and stretch into spiritual maturity; and we will never really *live*!

Remember, our main goal is to become like Christ – in His beliefs, attitudes, actions, loving others, showing compassion, etc. Jesus Christ also had a vision for His life and He stayed focused on fulfilling it. He knew what it was and did whatever was necessary not to get sidetracked. How many of us would be able to turn down people's desire to make us a king or queen or ruler over them? Jesus was able to do this because He knew it wasn't part of God's plan for His life at that point in time.

There will be times in our life when we will have attractive opportunities laid before us that are outside the realm of what God has asked us to do. And unless we know our specific calling from God, we will get sidetracked and eventually those opportunities will turn into entrapments and keep us from fulfilling God's individual vision for our life.

Now I come back to the question asked earlier – do you know what God is calling you to do? What is His BIG vision for your life? Here are some further questions to consider in light of your vision and your marriage relationship:

- Is your vision similar to your spouse's vision?
- Do you feel like there is competition between you and your spouse?
- Have the two of you discussed your visions with each other and the specific steps or goals you foresee to accomplish the visions?
- Have you determined how you can help each other achieve your visions?
- Are you willing at any moment to lay aside your plans in an effort to help your spouse achieve his or her plans?
- Are you modeling Christ-likeness to your spouse? In what specific ways?

These are just a few questions to help you begin to ease any gap that may have been created by having different visions, or feeling like you're in competition with your spouse, or just to help you understand each other's goals better.

Now when you review these questions or discuss them with your spouse, don't forget that God created men and women to communicate differently! Men often use the fewest words to communicate the "bottom line," while women like to discuss all the intricate details along with the emotional involvement. And sometimes because of this, we need friends of the same sex who can communicate on the same wave to enable us to fully talk out our vision.

If you need further help on how to identify your God-given vision, you can read the chapter on Discover Your God-Given Purpose In Life in my book, *Out of Recovery & Into Living Your Dreams!* There is also an exercise in there to help you clarify your passion in life.

Once you've identified your vision (and your spouse's vision), re-read Part 2 of this series of articles on How to Attain a Godly Marriage. You will learn there are more attitudes and disciplines that need to be looked at and implemented in light of your desire to attain God's vision for your life.

Next week we'll look at what's cluttering up our hearts to the extent that God's Word is not fruitful in our marriage; how to continuously produce abundant fruit; and how love binds everything together in our life.