



Living Well

The Character of Marriage



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For more detailed information about the ministry - www.livingwelloc.org
Photos and writings about the ministry - www.livingwelloc.blogspot.com
Encouragement/culture on marriage - www.livingwellinmarriage.blogspot.com
Marriage events in the state, resources for marriage - www.marriagenetworkok.net
Making Marriage Memorable blog - www.marriagenetworkok.nblogspot.com

Courage to Face My Spouse

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, "I will try again tomorrow."

Mary Anne Radmacher

Courage may be one of the most important character qualities that we can build into our marriage. *What happens when a husband and wife don't show courage in addressing relationship difficulties or conflicts?*

Often in marriage, the husband doesn't bring up issues to the wife, because he doesn't want to hurt her or make her angry. And the wife doesn't bring up issues to the husband because she is afraid of his anger or disapproval. So, **the problems are pushed below the surface until they blow up.**

Some people hate confrontation so much, they will do

anything to avoid it. We have to think about **the difference between a peacemaker and a peacekeeper.** Some people just want to keep the peace – don't ruffle feathers, don't get anyone upset.

Again, that scene is a blow-up waiting to happen; **instead we can be peacemakers, dealing with the issue for the purpose of resolving the conflict to make a more harmonious relationship.**

Some marriages aren't harmed as much by what is said as by **what is left unsaid.** Withholding the truth from one another can kill a marriage. These truths can range from failing to express one's love (in words, in deeds, in conscientious responses), to not standing up for oneself, to failing to speak up when something's wrong in the marriage but you don't want to rock the boat.

When I am able to raise difficult issues rather than pushing them to the recesses of the relationship, **the encounter may be unpleasant but can be worth the cost.**

As I find the courage to speak up about my feelings and concerns, knowing that it will be hard for the other to hear, **the marriage grows stronger. Showing courage in those moments inevitably increased intimacy, respect, and love.**

I need to pay attention to what I resist saying. They are the very ones that need to be addressed.

Courage includes expressing the depths of our feelings in a positive way also. I express verbally that I am proud of him or that she looks nice, or I respect his talents or abilities. And even our love for each other.

Approaching hard topics

What is the best way to approach the hard topics?

1. Ephesians 4:15 says to **"speak the truth in love."**

We must include the warmth of love with the hard part of truth. When I assure my spouse of my love and care for him/her as a person, it is easier to hear the hard parts. If I speak with kindness and compassion, my spouse can listen to my heart.

2. **Truly listen** to what the other is saying in response to the issue. When I listen to her without criticizing or attacking, she will be more open to share her thoughts and feelings.

3. **Take responsibility for my part – not blaming the conflict on my spouse.**

4. **Seek understanding rather than assuming you know the motives behind what he said or did.**

When I have **the courage** to talk about those feelings in my heart that have never been expressed, to be vulnerable about how I truly feel and what I think, risking an adverse response – I give our marriage a chance to move to a **higher plane, a more intimate level, and to a deeper, stronger bond of love.**

To be able to do that I have to trust **God, believing that He will take care of me.**

On the reverse side:

To Face Myself

Godly Courage

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Courage to Face Myself

The hardest part of courage in marriage may be **the courage to face myself and my contribution to the problems.** That means quit blaming the problem on my spouse, my past, or my job.

Regardless of whom I am married to and how that person acts, **I can respond in a godly way.** I don't have to attack back when I feel attacked.

Regardless of my past, **I can see the power of God's Spirit transform me,** so that I don't have to repeat the unhealthy patterns and habits of my parents.

Regardless of whom I work for or what they do, **I can do my job with integrity**

and wholeheartedly, not neglecting my family.

When there is conflict in any area of my life, I can ask God to show me what the issues of my heart are in the situation.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24

Courage faces the fact that I may be angry at my spouse because of the hurt from my parents. I have unrealistic expectations of myself and my spouse because I never felt that I measured up.

Courage asks my spouse what she sees in my life that

is hurtful to our relationship. When she answers, I don't blame others, get defensive, or attack.

Courage owns emotional mood swings, irritability, anger, or erratic behavior. Courage seeks forgiveness and God's help to change in that area.

When I ask God to show me what my part is, God doesn't beat me down with condemnation. In fact, he says in Romans 8:1, *there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

But **God is faithful** to stick with me and help me work through those difficult times.

An unlikely source of wisdom, Alex Karras (pro football player and actor): It takes more courage to reveal insecurities than to hide them, more strength to relate to people than to dominate them, more 'manhood' to abide by thought-out principles rather than blind reflex. Toughness is in the soul and spirit, not in muscles and an immature mind.

He will give me the courage if I move towards Him rather than trying to figure it out on my own or moving away from Him. He says that we can conquer the hard parts of life.

In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Romans 8:37

The more I press into the Lord, the more He gives me strength. Then the more courage I have.

Have courage for the great sorrows of life and patience for the small ones; and when you have laboriously accomplished your daily task, go to sleep in peace. God is awake. Victor Hugo

Godly Courage

Biblical courage is not the result of self-reliance or self-confidence, but **the result of surrender and sovereignty - our surrender to God's sovereignty, and our trust in God's strength, not our own strength.**

God tells his people, 11 times in the Old Testament, "Be strong and courageous."

Deuteronomy 31:6 *Be strong and courageous. ... he will never leave you nor forsake you.*"

Joshua 1:9 *Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*"

In the New Testament, Jesus encourages those who encounter him with the admonishment, "Take courage!"

Matthew 14:27 *But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

Mark 6:50 *because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

God says to each of us, *Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.* 1 Corinthians 16:13