

5 Ways to Contend for Your Marriage

- 1. Remember the purpose.** Marriage was created for God's glory and our good. In the perfect garden before sin entered the world, God said it isn't good for man to be alone. God provides through marriage--joy, comfort, help, and sanctification. Moreover, marriage tells the beautiful love story between Christ and His Church to the World. Take a step back from the everyday, and be in awe. Track God's faithfulness to you in your marriage. Sometimes, we are too close to see the beauty of what God is doing and has done.
- 2. Cultivate spiritual intimacy.** Tell your spouse what you are hearing from God, share what you are reading in Scripture, and be willing to confess your sin. Initiate everyday spiritual conversations as you take a walk, get ready for bed, or at the dinner table. Welcome and be available for these conversations.
- 3. Invigorate physical intimacy.** Pay attention to the non-verbal conversation happening in your home. Strive to worship God through intimacy with your spouse. Sex is not only a physical act, it is an act of worship. God created sex as a good gift to be enjoyed in marriage for His glory.
- 4. Foster honor.** Hebrews 13:4 says, "Let marriage be held in honor among all.." What cues about marriage have you adopted from our culture? How you honor or dishonor your spouse and the institution of marriage will affect your marriage.
- 5. Pursue selflessness.** In Ephesians 5, we are given a model for a selfless marriage that reflects Jesus and His Church. Wives are called to deferential honor, and husbands to sacrificial love. As husbands and wives pursue being the chief sacrificer in their homes, cycles are broken and Jesus and His sacrificial love is put on display.

KEY: Give your spouse permission to change old patterns in these areas without shaming or bitterness.

KEY: Remember the good news that you have been accepted by Jesus, which enables you to not be paralyzed by shame when you mess up. Remember the good news that you have been accepted by Jesus, which empowers you to extend grace when your spouse messes up.