

AWAKEN
CHURCH COMMUNITY

MARRIAGE AND MINISTRY

Caring for Your Home While Serving the Kingdom

God did not call us to choose between marriage and ministry, but to honor Him in both.

A healthy ministry requires a healthy marriage.



“For if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?”

1 Timothy 3:5 (ESV)

INTRODUCTION

Things are not always what they appear to be.

A ministry may look successful on the outside while the marriage is weakening on the inside.

One of the greatest dangers in pastoral ministry is this:

Helping many families while our own family is weakening.

Is my marriage stronger today than it was five years ago?

I. THREE TRUTHS ABOUT MARRIAGE & MINISTRY

1. Your Marriage Is a Window into the Gospel

Our marriage is a visible representation of the gospel.

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” — Ephesians 5:25

A healthy marriage:

- Preaches the gospel without words
- Gives credibility to ministry
- Makes disciples at home

Your marriage preaches a sermon every day.

- Does my marriage reflect the character of Christ?
- Does my wife feel loved or merely accompanied?
- Am I pastoring my home or only the church?

2. Your Marriage Is a Part of Your Ministry

Our marriage is not a distraction from ministry. It is the first field of ministry.

“For if someone does not know how to manage his own household...” — 1 Timothy 3:5

God does not separate:

- Public spiritual leadership
- Spiritual leadership at home

A pastor’s most important ministry begins at home.

- Do I treat my marriage as a spiritual priority?
- Am I spiritually leading my home?
- Does my wife feel that ministry is our calling or only mine?

3. Your Ministry Will Never Be Stronger Than Your Marriage

If you are not sure about the state of your marriage: **Ask your wife.**

Many pastors' wives experience:

- Lack of attention
- Unrealistic expectations
- Lack of privacy

It is possible to have a strong ministry and a weak marriage — but not for long.

- Is there a disconnect between my ministry and my marriage?
- Does my wife enjoy ministry or merely tolerate it?
- Am I sacrificing my family on the altar of ministry?

II. THREE LESSONS ABOUT UNHEALTHY PASTORAL MARRIAGES

1. Neglect Becomes Damage Quickly

Marriages rarely fail suddenly. They fail slowly. Small neglects become large problems.

“Pay careful attention to yourselves...” — Acts 20:28 (ESV)

A marriage is not destroyed in a day — it is neglected over years.

- What things have I stopped doing with my wife?
- When was the last time we spent meaningful time together?
- Are we growing together or just surviving together?

2. Neglecting Marriage Destroys Ministry Opportunities

A weakened marriage:

- drains emotional energy
- reduces credibility
- limits spiritual influence

You can rebuild a sermon in a week. It may take years to rebuild a marriage.

- Am I investing more energy in the church than in my wife?
- What would happen to my ministry if my marriage collapsed?

3. God Will First Ask About Our Marriage

Before asking about our ministry, God will ask about our home.

Before being a pastor of the church, I am a pastor of my home.

- If God evaluated my marriage today, what would He say?
- Am I being faithful in private?

III. FIVE PRACTICES OF PASTORS WHO PROTECT THEIR MARRIAGE

Practice 1 - Find Your Identity in Jesus, Not in Ministry

One of the subtle dangers of ministry is finding identity in what we do for God instead of in God Himself.

If ministry defines you, ministry can also destroy you.

Paul David Tripp:

“You will either get your identity vertically from who you are in Christ or horizontally from situations, experiences, and relationships.”

- Who am I if I leave ministry tomorrow?
- Does my joy come from Christ or from ministry?
- Is my wife competing with ministry for my heart?

Practice 2 - Connect Spiritually With Your Wife Daily

Many pastors disciple their churches. But not their families.

“But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” — Joshua 24:15 (ESV)

Daily spiritual connection may include:

- Praying together
- Reading a short passage
- Giving thanks to God

Your wife does not need another sermon. She needs a husband who walks with God.

- When was the last time we prayed together?
- Am I the spiritual leader of my home?
- Does my wife feel that we walk with God together?

Practice 3 - Pay Attention to Warning Signs

Marriages do not enter crisis without warning.

Common Warning Signs:

- Lack of meaningful communication
- Lack of time together
- A culture of blame
- Fantasies about another life

Your wife does not need another sermon. Marital crisis begins long before it becomes visible.

- Which of these warning signs exists in my marriage?
- What conversation am I avoiding?
- What problem am I ignoring?

Practice 4 - Schedule What Matters Most

Many pastors live under the tyranny of the urgent.
Crises will always seem more important than marriage.

Your calendar reveals what you truly love.

- Does my calendar include time with my wife?
- When is our next date?
- Is my wife scheduled or merely accommodated?

Practice 5 - Have a Weekly Check-In With Your Wife

A strong marriage requires intentionality.

A weekly conversation may include:

- How are you spiritually?
- How are you emotionally?
- What do you need from me?
- How can I pray for you?

Small conversations prevent big crises.

- Do we have intentional conversations?
- Does my wife feel heard?
- When was our last meaningful conversation?

CONCLUSION

Marriage and ministry are a privilege. They do not have to be enemies.
They can strengthen each other.

But if we prioritize ministry over marriage:

- We lose joy
- We lose health
- And potentially we lose ministry.

A pastor with a healthy marriage has a sustainable ministry.

CONVERSATIONS THAT STRENGTHEN MARRIAGE

A GUIDE FOR A MARRIAGE DATE

MARRIAGE COUNSELING - PASTOR FERNANDO SERRANO



PURPOSE

These questions are designed to help strengthen **healthy, transparent, and grace-filled communication** between husband and wife.

This is not a test or an evaluation.

It is an opportunity to **know each other better, reconnect emotionally, and grow together.**

Sometimes one meaningful conversation strengthens a marriage more than many quick solutions

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COUPLES

1. Listen Without Judging

When your spouse is speaking:

- Do not interrupt
- Do not correct
- Do not defend yourself immediately
- Do not explain your intentions right away

Listening is an act of love.

The goal is not to win an argument.

The goal is to **understand each other's heart.**

2. Speak With Love and Respect

Speak honestly, but with grace.

- Be transparent
- Be kind
- Choose your words carefully

The goal is to **build up, not tear down.**

Before responding, ask yourself:

Will what I am about to say strengthen our marriage or weaken it?

3. Give Grace to Each Other

No one responds perfectly.

We are all growing.

Give each other room for mistakes and growth.

This conversation is not about perfection.

It is about connection.

4. Take Your Time

You do not need to answer every question in one date.

You may choose 5–10 questions per date.

The goal is depth, not speed.

CONVERSATIONS TO STRENGTHEN OUR MARRIAGE

1. Getting to Know You Better

1. What are your favorite meals? Rank them from your most favorite.
2. What are your favorite restaurants right now?
3. What are your favorite desserts?
4. What activities help you relax and enjoy life the most?
5. What small things brighten your day?
6. What kinds of gifts make you feel most loved?
7. What activities do you most enjoy doing with me?
8. What new things would you like us to try together this year?
9. What helps you experience true rest?
10. Ideally, how much time would you like us to spend together each day?

2. Your Inner World

11. What makes you feel happy and fulfilled as a person?
12. What makes you feel fulfilled as a spouse?
13. What makes you feel valued by me?
14. When do you most need reassurance of my love?
15. How do you most like me to express love to you?
16. What things have made you feel sad recently?
17. What concerns do you have that I may not have noticed?
18. What fears do you currently have?
19. What do you long for most in this season of life?
20. What helps you feel peace?

3. Our Spiritual Life

21. Which book of the Bible has impacted you recently? Why?
22. What do you feel God is doing in your life right now?
23. How can I help you grow spiritually?
24. How can we seek God together more consistently?
25. What does it mean to you for us to walk with God as a couple?

4. Our Daily Life

26. In which household responsibilities do you need more help from me?
27. Which tasks do you enjoy doing?
28. Which tasks drain you the most?
29. What practical things could I do to make your life easier?
30. What things around the house need attention or repair that matter to you?
31. What daily habits help you feel stable and grounded?
32. What practical things help you feel cared for?

5. Our Emotional Connect

33. What things do I do that make you feel especially loved?
34. What things do I do that are difficult for you?
35. What areas of my character would you like me to grow in?
36. What important conversations have we avoided?
37. What desires do you have that we haven't talked about yet?
38. What do you enjoy most when we spend time together?
39. When do you feel most connected to me?
40. How can I support you better emotionally?

6. Our Intimacy

41. What helps you feel closer to me?
42. What helps you feel emotionally safe with me?
43. What can I do to make our physical relationship more meaningful?
44. When do you feel most loved through physical affection?
45. How can I show more tenderness and affection?

7. Our Future Together

46. What dreams do you have for the next few years?
47. In what areas would you like more support from me?
48. What makes you feel protected and secure?
49. What personal habits of mine would you like me to change?
50. What makes you feel deeply important to me?

Helpful Phrases for Healthy Conversations

During the conversation, these phrases can help:

- "Thank you for telling me."
- "I want to understand you better."
- "That matters to me."
- "I'm listening."
- "I want to grow in this."
- "I'm sorry."
- "I love you."

FINAL REMINDER

One good conversation does not solve everything.
But it **opens the heart**.

And when the heart is open:
Love grows.