

Coaching: Marriage Matters



Week 10

The Establishment Stage of Marriage

There are for the purpose of these discussions four stages of marriage—the Establishment Phase (years 1-7), the Growth Stage (years 8-20), the Transition Stage (years 21-35), and the Mature Stage (years 36 and beyond). During these first seven years, the relationship transitions from wooing to doing. These are the years when the beautiful wrapping of the courtship is removed to discover what is inside the gift of marriage.

Statistically, 20% of people within the first five years of marriage will not like what they find and will divorce. This happens when newly married couples discover that traction is different from attraction. Many couples within this first stage of their marriage discover that working together presents much more of a challenge than merely being together. Dissatisfied with reality, they wish they could travel back in time to the ease of what things were like when they were dating. However, it's important to note that dating only presents the challenge of coordination. It is marriage that presents the challenge (and rewards) of consolidation.

A well constructed marriage needs a solid, secure foundation that consists of shared guidelines for the relationship. Some of those guidelines are rooted in the commitment to listen, to learn, to adapt, to encourage, to serve, and to forgive. When a marriage is built upon a solid and safe foundation, there is a framework for couples to practice being supportive, cooperative, consistent, dependable, trustworthy, even-tempered, attentive, and courteous.

Just as no person is born knowing how to speak in full sentences—no person is born knowing how to be married. Marriage is a skill that is learned and practiced over time. More so, marriage is not the fulfillment of a storybook illusion. Nor, is it about reproducing what your parents had (or didn't have).

If a couple can make it through the establishment phase of their marriage, learn how to process their own “stuff,” and move intentionally and compassionately through life with their spouse; each partner will not only be made more whole as a person, but the marriage will be made stronger through the process.

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Some Things to Do This Week

Day 2: Reflect on the message and scripture reading; journal if you like

Day 3: Pray for or meditate on what you think you need

Day 4: Discuss the message and scripture with your spouse

Day 5: Plan how you can best respond to the message

Day 6: Rest; don't think about the message or the scripture; listen in the stillness

Day 7: Recommit yourself to your marriage

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