

Healthy Marriage Tips from A to Z
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Dream Together

Part One

From Good to Great - Matt's Thoughts

From day one of our marriage Laura and I have had a good marriage. Most importantly, Jesus is our Lord and Savior. Thus, we have similar values which has meant very little conflict in important areas of life. We try to live by the Golden Rule of treating each other as we would want to be treated. Better yet, we are friends, not just roommates. We had a good marriage.

But, in our opinion, a good marriage is not enough. We want to have a great marriage. Not for ourselves, but for God's Kingdom. We believe great marriages honor the Lord. We see Him using couples to accomplish His purposes and we want in on that. Yes, He can and does use anyone in any kind of relationship, but a great marriage is what we are pursuing.

About a year ago I got into an evaluation phase. I put in writing the priorities that were in my head and heart. Then I took a serious look at how I was spending my time. What was on the paper did not fully match up with my real life. The next day I asked Laura to do the same activity. After we reflected on our lives and considered what changes we needed to make, we were then on the launching pad for a great marriage. We would not be satisfied with cruise control in our marriage. We were ready to lift off. We began to dream together by asking, "How can God best use us as a couple for His glory and purposes?+

Good is Good, but Great is Better . Laura's Thoughts

Matt and I are both a little bit "visionary" in the way we think - always coming up with ideas and trying to be creative. Who am I kidding when I say "little bit"? Matt is *very* visionary, a quality I admire and appreciate (most of the time). :)

Because we've always been a couple who "looks into the future" and talks together about our goals and dreams, it's been interesting to recognize how recently we've watched our marriage go from good to great. Having a good marriage has been very, very good. Thank you God for a good marriage!

So how did God make it *great*?

I believe it has a lot to do with the evaluating we've done recently. When you are already connected as a couple, already working hard together toward common goals, already on the same page in the important areas of life . and *then* you ask yourselves, "How can God best use us as a couple for His glory and purposes?+ something pretty amazing begins to happen.

Assignment: Brainstorm and discuss how God can use you and your spouse's abilities, passions, and experience to serve together.

Part Two

God's Marriage Math - Matt's Thoughts

Dreaming together is part of a healthy marriage for at least three reasons. First, dreaming together implies that you anticipate a hopeful future. That alone infuses your relationship. The power of positive thinking is extraordinary and energizing?. It is exciting to think about what can be accomplished together. It doesn't end with just a dream though. Act on it. Make goals and have a plan to fulfill the goals. As you make progress, celebrate with each other and keep the momentum rolling.

Second, dreaming together demonstrates how two become one in marriage. The concept of two becoming one, as stated in Genesis 2:24 and quoted by Jesus and the Apostle Paul, incorporates more than a physical union. You are uniting numerous facets including your ambitions. Instead of two people going in different directions only pursuing their own goals, a merging occurs. Your combined abilities, experience, and passions create an incredible God blessed synergy. The two of you, empowered by God, produce more than the sum of your work individually. God's math equations look like this:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Two become One } 1 + 1 = 1 \\ \text{Synergy } 1 + 1 > 2 \end{array}$$

Third, dreaming and praying together about those dreams unleashes God's promise in Ephesians 3:20-21 which reads, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." In our dreaming phase we are imagining great works being accomplished for the Lord. Then the Lord takes it and multiplies it beyond what we can even imagine. We bring a sack lunch to Jesus - like the boy who brought some bread and fish (John 6:1-15) - and He multiplies it into a feast for all...with leftovers. So dream big!

Sack Lunch - Laura's Thoughts

Because food is "my thing", I love what Matt said about bringing a sack lunch to Jesus and watching him multiply it. As a couple, we can and should dream big. We can fill our lunch bag with some pretty exciting foods, including juicy fresh fruit and rich desserts - but Jesus is the one that actually makes our offerings *become* something wonderful. That's what he does with our dreams.

Or *sometimes*, He might exchange our sack lunch offering with a different one - one that we'd never thought of and one that is much better for us as a couple and as a family. This can sometimes be painful, but as we see God's great plans for us unfold and recognize that these

plans were born out of our kingdom focused dreams, we see that God's plans for us are truly more than we could ever ask or imagine.

Start dreaming. God is huge!

How have you dreamed together and then saw how God made it more than you could imagine?

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