Are You Satisfied with the Way Things Are?

In every area of our lives we can become complacent or lazy and be satisfied with the way things are or believe the lie that "this is as good as it gets." You may have worked hard to get to where you are right now and like the ways things are in your life. There's certainly nothing wrong with pausing to enjoy your accomplishments and the fruits of your labors, but even this can become stagnant and boring over time. Or you may slip back into a place where it's less enjoyable again. Others may have done all they could to move into something better but get stuck somewhere along the way and give up hope that anything will ever be any better. Our heavenly Father never wants us to be forever satisfied with the way things are, but He wants us to use our faith and press on to the **Way Things Ought To Be.**

Sue and I have experienced this in our own marriage. About 7 years into our marriage, I began focusing more on my job and was content with the marriage where it was. However, the passion and love had cooled and the level of conflict and arguing were increasing. On top of that we had the demands of raising two young children. I had become so discouraged and dissatisfied that I thought of divorce and getting out of the marriage all together. Thank God Sue never stopped praying and kept believing for our relationship to get better. Through a Marriage Encounter weekend and some good marriage resources our marriage began to turn around and get better and better. Sue has never been satisfied with where our relationship is right now and has always gently pressed me to do more to improve it. The improvements have always been stretching for me and sometimes uncomfortable, but the results are well worth the effort! We have never been more in love with each other and enjoying every part of our marriage than we are right now! Yet we know that there are still more and greater things to come! I'm so glad that we have never given up working on our relationship.

I want to encourage all of you who are reading this article to never be completely satisfied with the way things are in your marriage, but to continue to press on to where Father wants them to be for you! Marriage is not meant to be an endurance test that you suffer through until the bitter end. Nor is it meant to be where two people live separate lives under the same roof as married singles with little or no interaction with each other. Father said that the man was to leave his mother and father and cling to his wife until they become one flesh. The adventure, excitement, fun, work, and fulfillment are in the process of becoming one, not just physically, but in every way! There is danger when your relationship becomes too common and familiar. You run the risk of losing it all or devaluing the beauty, pleasures, delights, and treasure of the covenant marriage that Father wants you to have. For some more specific ways to help become one in your marriage, check out the marriage encouragement I wrote last year on "Becoming One" on our website
https://abbasarmsintl.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/becoming_one.pdf

Like anything good in this life, I have found out that reaching the "way things ought to be" in your marriage takes lots of work, sacrifices, time, energy, money, and commitment. It takes developing new relational skills and learning new ways to communicate with each other. You must create a safe place to share your heart with each other and keep the lines open for effective communication. There also may be some "bumps" in the road with your relationship or changes and events in your life that may try to hinder your

progress in making thing better, but don't get discouraged or give up. Father is always there to help and put you back on the right track again, if necessary.

Equally important to all the other areas mentioned above is to keep the romance and passion alive in your marriage. This is usually one of the first areas to start to slip when the relationship is not going well. Romance falls largely under the man's responsibility. Being romantic was easy when Sue and I were dating and I was trying to win Sue's heart to marry me. I wrote dozens of letters, made many phone calls, planned lots of fun things to do and spent many hours at her house talking and sharing our dreams. But once we got married, it seemed a lot harder to keep up the romance with so many other things requiring my attention. I finally had to start changing my priorities and start becoming more creative doing things that were not always comfortable to do. But each little baby step I made, won lots of points with Sue and a couple bigger planned outings once in a while have been big hits in the romance category! Men, there are lots of good references about being romantic that will give you a variety of romantic ideas for you to work with.

On the other hand, keeping the passion alive is something both of you need to work on together. Keeping yourself looking good, being sexy, playful, and spontaneous, and using your imagination and creativity will go a long way keeping your love life fun and exciting. Again there are many good books available to help you get started and allow the Holy Spirit to help keep it going! Making love is a way we affirm our covenant with each other. Praying before you make love and inviting Father may sound a little different, but the results may surprise you. After all, Eden literally means "pleasures and delights!"

Don't be satisfied with the way things are,
but press in to Where Things Ought to Be in your marriage!

Dialogue Questions

1. Are there areas in our marriage where we have settled for **where things are** rather than where **they ought to be**? How does that make me feel? In those areas, list 2 possible ways we might change that part of our marriage or relationship.

2. List several ideas or areas in our marriage to change that would help keep our marriage alive with more romance and passion. For each area describe what you would like to do and how we might do it together. Discuss your ideas with each other and pick a couple to start working on.

Fun Night Ideas

1. Leave little love notes (encouragements, appreciation, thanks, expressions of your love and commitment) around the house where your spouse will find them like drawers, shelves, cabinet, pantry, underwear, under pillows, work bench, garage, car, etc.

2. Light some candles, put on some of your favorite romantic music, and slow dance holding each other close. Spin her around and kiss her. Make your wife the center of your attention!

3. Write a love letter, mail a card, or send an email to your spouse expressing your love and affection like you did when you were dating!