

Investing in your Marriage

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In order to understand why marriage is an investment and why you should invest in your marriage, we must first examine the terms. To invest means to put into, to give power (dictionary.com). The term can be likened to sowing a seed or devoting a substantial amount of time, energy, and love into a person that God has created for you to share your life with on earth. When you invest in something, you are committing yourself to seeing it grow and thrive. You are looking to get something bigger and greater than when you first started. People invest in businesses, businesses invest in communities, and parents invest in their children.

A lot of factors go into having a healthy marriage. These factors (time, energy, love, commitment, respect, etc.) contribute to the amount of return you will receive on your investment. That return is joy, love, security, happiness, prosperity, and more. You may also receive tangible returns such as increased income

In this article, I will discuss two aspects of the marriage investment that are crucial for your investment to thrive, how you can invest more into your marriage and what to do if your spouse is not investing in your marriage. While there are other aspects that can be discussed, I have found that these two are the most important in overcoming investment obstacles.

Investing More

Banks often use propaganda to tell their customers about the many benefits of putting more money into their accounts or opening more rewarding accounts. They spend a lot of money to showcase how important it is to save and why their bank is better than the rest. They hire research teams or put together committees within their corporation to find out what the consumer needs and then tailor their products to match the needs. They then train their front line staff on key phrases to use to interest you in adding more products to your account. They use fancy paper, catch phrases, mascots, commercials and more to show you how great their product is and why you really need it.

How does this relate? In your courtship or engagement period, you spent countless hours planning “perfect” dates, shopping for the right outfit, rearranging schedules, talking until 2:00 a.m., learning your spouse’s family member’s names, and more in order to show that you are interested and committed to the relationship. Congratulations, you just made an investment. Any time you spend time considering what the other person wants or how they feel about something as it relates to your relationship, you’ve invested time and energy. Investing is not always for you. Sometimes it is for the other person. Banks go through so much trouble because they are looking out for your best interest. Their job is to help you be a better you. When you invest into your marriage, you are helping your partner be a better person. Will you reap some of these investments? Absolutely.

But what else can I do to invest more? First of all, put down the phone or computer (after reading this article) and actually spend time with your spouse. The more time you spend avoiding your spouse or substituting things for quality time, the more your investment will depreciate. The time you spend

investing in other things, is the time your spouse spends getting invested in by someone or something else. Secondly, be sincere in your investments. Do not, please do not, pacify your spouse. This means don't just say the things that you think sound well or that they want to hear. A sure fire way to start an argument is to not be honest with yourself and your spouse about things. No one likes a 'yes man' all the time. You can be sincere by listening to what your spouse is saying. Take the time out to understand their heart and validate their feelings. The Lord says we are to "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." (Proverbs 3:5, NKJV). It does not matter whether or not you understand why your spouse feels the way they do, just acknowledge it and be sincere and honest in communicating that with them.

Lastly, but not least, you can invest more into your marriage by investing more into your spiritual growth and the spiritual growth of your relationship. A marriage that stays spiritually stagnate will be at a greater risk for failing than one that is constantly working to elevate itself. That means couples prayer time, Bible study, individual prayer time, tithing, encouraging one another, and more. You set a foundation at the start of your marriage, now it is time to build upon it. Each act of kindness, each prayer, each moment of affection all factor into your marriage and strengthen your investment.

What happens when there is only one investor?

You pray and praise even harder. Honestly, it is frustrating when a team member is not pulling their weight. It makes everyone else work harder to carry the load. If they did not want to work, they shouldn't have made the commitment. Right? Partly. It may not always be the case that you or your partner don't want to put in the work. By working with other couples, I've learned that there are other factors that go into why someone is not investing as much as their partner.

The more noticeable reason is that they don't know how to invest. Look at the way you were raised and the amount of exposure you had to healthy marriages. Now look at your spouse's examples. We cannot do what we have not seen or been taught. How do I fix this? First of all, you fix nothing. God is in control and can fix anything. Your task is to continue to model investments to your spouse, talk to them about how you feel, pray individually and collectively, and talk to a 3rd impartial party (not your mother or girlfriend) for sound advice (i.e. me). Another reason could be that they don't see a problem or are too content with how your marriage is evolving. Or, they have invested somewhere else and feel they no longer want to invest in your marriage. Ouch!

Whatever the case, it is imperative that you remain strong spiritually and put on the whole armor of God. This is a battle that the carnal minded fall victim to and the weak get tossed like raging seas. You cannot change your spouse, but you can pray to God for guidance and help in dealing with your situation. Investing less on your part, will only hurt your situation. Investing more will get you fired up (and not in the good way). Investing in love and remaining consistent in your investments can help you to sleep at night and make it through the day.

Continue to talk to your spouse. If they don't listen, continue to pray (which you should already be doing). If it is working, continue praying. The inevitable may happen (divorce), but we don't want to work towards a divorce when we can work towards rebuilding the marital foundation. Investments are tricky. Sometimes the market crashes and you take a loss. Other times it remains stagnate and there is no change. Most of the time it rises and there is an increase on your return. This is when you store up

invest more into your marriage and reap the harvest. In all seasons and for all reasons continue to pray and praise God.

Additional Readings:

- 1 Peter 5:6-8
- Hebrews 13:1-8
- Ecclesiastes 11:1-6

For more information on investing in your marriage and protecting your marriage, read *Surviving the First Five: Insightful Encouragement for the Newly Married* (available at most major retailers).

Stay tuned for additional points of interest of these topics in latter blog posts and/or featured articles.