

Oakland Hills Counseling

Couple Devo

Clarifying Your Expectations During The COVID-19 Crisis

Directions

Find a comfortable place to be by yourself with the Lord and start with reading the scripture verses out loud. Then answer the questions in Part 1 as you reflect on how you can apply the principles and values expressed in the verses. When you have finished, move on to Part 2 and answer the questions related to your expectations during this challenging time due to the COVID-19 "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order. Next, come together and share your answers from Part 1 and Part 2. Then answer the questions together in Part 3 while one person writes down your answers. Finally, wrap-up in prayer together. Remember: the point of this exercise is to be guided by biblical principles and wisdom to help you both proactively think through your expectations, discuss them, and mutually work together to meet each other's needs. Our prayer for you is that you will take advantage of this extended period of time to strengthen your relationship!

Part I – Scripture Focus

“Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus . . .”

Philippians 2:1-5 (NASB)

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life”.

Proverbs 13:12 (NIV)





Part I – Questions & Answers

1 In your own words, what does it mean to “regard one another as more important than yourselves”?

2 What would your marriage look like during this “staycation” if you truly regard your spouse’s / partner’s needs as more important than your own?

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard others as more important than yourselves.”

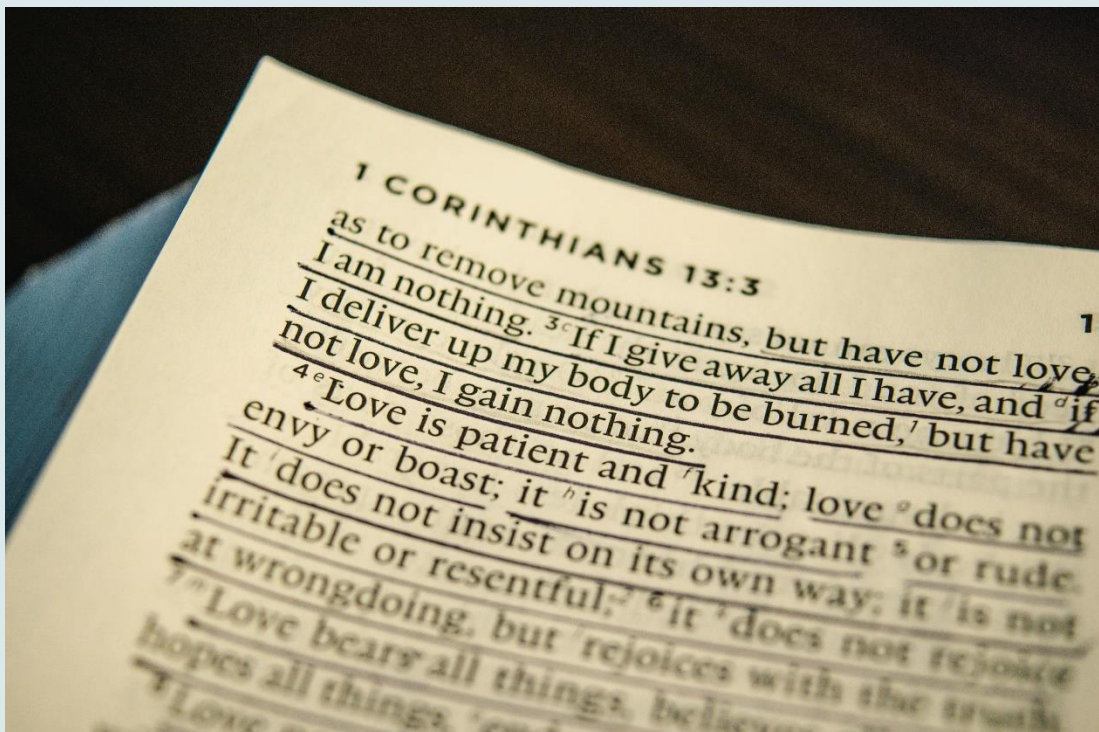
3 Make a list of ways that you could show your spouse/partner that they are important and valued by you.

4 What would help you not only look out for your “own personal interests, but also the interests” of your spouse/partner?

5 What do you need from God to have or develop this other-centered and Christlike attitude?

Part 2 – Personal Reflection

As you think through and identify your most important expectations during this COVID-19 "staycation," keep in mind your answers from the passages of scripture above. To be sure, we all have legitimate needs, even God-given needs, of our spouses. As we just read, it "makes the heart sick" when our desires or longings are not fulfilled. But the truth is, we all struggle with being self-centered in the acquisition of those needs; it's just part of the human condition. In our natural state we don't "regard others as more important than ourselves," and it affects every relationship; especially our marriages and families. So, in reality, we all desperately need help from God to embody this other-centered attitude. Maybe we need it now more than ever during this global crisis!





Part 2 – Questions & Answers

1 What are your top three (realistic) needs/expectations that would make this extra time you have together end up being a blessing in disguise?

2 What can your spouse/partner do to help you have a great “staycation” experience together?

3 What do *you* need to do that will help make these expectations a reality in your relationship?

4 What roadblocks and/or challenges do you anticipate encountering during this extended time together (careful here not to be negative on this one)?

“Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also the interests of others also.”

Part 3 – Couple Discussion

Finally, come together and share your answers from Part 1 and Part 2. Then, answer the questions together in Part 3 while one person writes down your answers. Remember: the point of this exercise is to be guided by biblical principles and wisdom to help you both proactively think through your expectations, discuss them, and mutually work together to meet each other's needs. Our prayer for you is that you will take advantage of this extended period of time to strengthen your relationship!





Part 3 – Questions & Answers

1

Share your answers from Part 1 & Part 2, and write down any insights.

2

What are your action steps now that you have shared your needs/expectations?

3

What do you both anticipate will be *your* biggest challenges with meeting each other's needs?

4

What do you need to be successful in meeting each other's needs? How can you help each other?

5

How would coming together before God in prayer and scripture reading help you both? What was it like doing this devo together?

**“Hope deferred
makes the heart
sick, but a longing
fulfilled is a tree
of life.”**

Wrap up – Praying Together

Lastly, spend some time before the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for your relationship and for this opportunity to grow in your vertical relationship with Him and in your relationship with each other. Ask Him for the wisdom, power and lovingkindness to follow through with the needs and expectations you have both identified and shared together.

May The Father richly bless you and your relationship, and “crown your life with lovingkindness and compassion” (Psalms 103:4b).



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