

Fireproof

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly... But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:1-6, 8

In any partnership there needs to be shared goals. Caleb wanted to buy a boat. Catherine wanted to help her parents. Caleb expected Catherine to take care of their home. Catherine wanted to feel loved and appreciated. Both of them had reasonable expectations, but neither of them was listening to the other. Caleb started the healing process when he was willing to set his dreams aside to help his wife.

What are your expectations? What are your partner's expectations? Do you need to make adjustments?

Caleb and Catherine were both courteous to other people but impatient and unkind to each other. Caleb wondered why she didn't give him the respect that other people did. Catherine wondered why he didn't give her the affection she craved. Catherine's friends advised her to leave him saying that a real man's got to be a hero to his wife before anybody else.

When you watch their arguments, who do you think is right? Is being right going to help their marriage?

Caleb knew how to respond to accidents and emergencies, but didn't know how to respond to the emergency in his home. He was willing to be a hero saving the lives of others but wasn't a partner to his wife. Men and women have different ways of communicating. Although Caleb and Catherine both tried to prove they were right by shouting louder, it didn't work because they weren't listening to each other.

Are you a good listener? God gave us two ears and one mouth. We need to use them all wisely.

Romans 5:3-4 says that "suffering produces perseverance, perseverance produces character, and character produces hope." Caleb's suffering did exactly what the Bible verses say. He went from suffering, to perseverance, which gave him character, and then hope. Although Caleb didn't know whether or not Catherine would ever love him again, he was willing to invest in his marriage because it was the right thing to do. When Caleb started studying his wife, he realized that he didn't want to lose her.

When Catherine asked Caleb why he worked so hard to save their marriage, he replied, "You never leave your partner - especially in a fire." Our partners can be family members, the people we work with, our friends ... Each of us needs to protect our partners. Who are your partners? How can you protect them? Do you do your part in building up your relationships? Do you do your part at work? Have you thought about who has to work harder or pick up the pieces when you don't do your part?

Ephesians 4:1-3 tells us to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." God wants us to be eager to live in peace. It is easy to get into the habit of arguing and complaining, but that isn't God's way for us. When Caleb and Catherine learned to care about each other and appreciate each other, their communication improved immediately.

Dear Lord, help us to seek peace in our relationships and in our work. When we need to communicate something that our partner doesn't want to hear, help us to do it with kindness and gentleness. Take away our frustration and anger and fill us with love for each other. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.