

Cultivating Connections

Marriage Conference 2021

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Objectives

1. Define what it means to flourish and discuss five Biblical concepts related to it.
2. Share the P.E.R.M.A. model of flourishing and describe the components.
3. Provide examples of flourishing in individual and couple contexts.

Some Working Definitions of Flourishing

What Flourishing is:

- To thrive.
- To be alive and growing.
- To be in a state of healthy activity and productivity.

What Flourishing is not:

- To flounder.
- To be dead, stagnant or dormant.
- To lack engagement or productivity.

Adapted from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/flourish>

Don't Confuse Flourishing With:

- Being perfect.
- Being "super-spiritual."
- Having everything together.
- The absence of problems or struggles.
- Having harmony in every relationship.
- Never feeling stressed.

Five Biblical Concepts Related to Flourishing

1. **Joy** – hopeful settled-ness that your welfare is secure beyond your present circumstances.
2. **Fruitfulness** – indicating life, abundance, growth or multiplication.
3. **Gratitude** - awareness of blessings and feelings/expressing thankfulness.
4. **Shalom** (Hebrew) – peace; completeness; welfare; health.
5. **Reconciliation** – restored relationships (2 Cor. 5:18)

PERMA Model of Flourishing

- Positive Emotions
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Achievement

Adapted from Seligman (2012), *Flourish*.

Three Areas of Engaging PERMA

- 1. Stewarding**
 - Being responsible for yourself.
- 2. Facilitating**
 - Bringing out the best in your spouse.
- 3. Joining**
 - Being intentional about flourishing together.

Positive Emotions

- Positive emotions – pursuing positive emotions through gratitude, forgiveness, hope, optimism.
- Examples:
 - 1. Stewarding** – positive self-talk, gratitude journaling.
 - 2. Facilitation** – know what sparks positive emotions in your spouse.
 - 3. Joining** – laugh together, express gratitude for each other, express hope and confidence to each other.

Engagement

- Engagement – Being in the present moment and enjoying activities for their own sake.
- Examples:
 - 1. Stewarding** – practice being present when involved in your hobby, music, art, nature, etc.
 - 2. Facilitation** – help your spouse find time and resources for their “thing” (refreshing).
 - 3. Joining** – practice being “all there” with your spouse by eliminating distractions and blocking out time.

Relationships

- Relationships – having connected relationships in which you both give and receive belonging, support, etc.
- Examples:
 - 1. Stewarding** – take inventory of your relationships and identify one(s) to tend.
 - 2. Facilitation** – think about your spouse’s relational style and needs right now (what needs increase or decrease).
 - 3. Joining** - Most types of wellbeing are amplified through relationships. Note the difference between feeling gratitude for your spouse and expressing gratitude to your spouse!

Meaning

- Meaning – belonging to and serving something bigger than ourselves.
- While often spiritual in nature, this can be done in other ways.
- Examples:
 - 1. Stewarding** – take the next step in your walk with Christ and His Word.
 - 2. Facilitation** – find a way to support your spouse in something they are involved in, support, or care about.
 - 3. Joining** – consider how the two of you serve together and find meaning in your walk with Christ, church, and ministry.

Achievement

- Achievement – being able to gain mastery, produce, or participate in activities and purposes.
- Examples:
 1. **Stewarding** – consider one task, project, or goal you have put aside that would feel good to complete and do it.
 2. **Facilitation** – ask your spouse about their gifts and talents or desires to grow – help them take a step.
 3. **Joining** – consider ways you are a team and how God uses your similarities and differences; remind each other your ultimate worth is in being and not in doing.

Take Home Activity

Discuss the parts of the P.E.R.M.A. model of flourishing and some of the ways the Bible speaks about flourishing.

Then, answer the following questions:

1. **Stewarding:** Identify specific ways you include each aspect of the model in your life. Identify 1 or 2 items for growth.
2. **Facilitating:** Identify specific ways you support your spouse in being able to include each aspect of the model in their lives. Identify 1 or 2 items for growth.
3. **Joining:** Identify specific ways you include each aspect of the model in your couple relationship. Identify 1 or 2 items for growth.