

Dr. Ebony S. Taylor

Riding Shotgun: Four Anchors for a Thriving Marriage

(A Free Download by Dr. Ebony S. Taylor)

Marriage isn't just a contract-it's a covenant designed to thrive under God's protection.

In this guide, you'll discover four timeless anchors: truths that strengthen your bond, guard your love, and remind you that you are never fighting alone.

To help you remember the anchors I have created the acronym P.U.R.E Enjoy discovering tools to keep your love "PURE!"

Stand strong. Stay anchored. Love boldly.

– Dr. Ebony S. Taylor



Anchor One—Piercing Prayer

Matthew 6:6 “But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” -ESV

In order to anchor your marriage you have got to take prayer seriously. Prayer becomes piercing when it becomes sacred.

The verse above is positioned within The Sermon on the Mount. This verse is a positive instruction that follows the negative warning in 6:5: “And when you pray, you must not be like hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others,” ESV.

The verse starts with a contrast “But when you,” this is in opposition to the hypocrites who do not regard prayer as sacred but make a spectacle of it.

Palestinian homes typically had small inner store rooms. It was often windowless, used for valuables and provisions. The original language of Matthew 6:6, talks about going into the innermost part of the home—the store room or secret/hidden place. Not only does the scripture say you are to go to the innermost room to pray, but once you get there you need to shut the door! This emphasizes complete privacy. In this text, Jesus is getting at “heart,” religion. Head and heart must walk as one. You cannot have a performative prayer-life and expect a transformative marriage. If your marriage is going to divinely thrive it must be anchored in by a piercing prayer life.

The reward for a marriage anchored in prayer is the promise of the omniscient God, your Father who sees (you) in secret will reward you openly. We have the use of familial language in this text. There is family communication happening in the secret place. It is sacred intimacy between a Father and child. There is nothing more piercing than when a spouse goes into the hidden place to commune with the Father about their mate. You are taking the one whom you love, to the One who loves you both better than you could ever love one another. God promises to reward those who anchor themselves with a sincere prayer life.



Anchor Two -Unity

Matthew 19:6, “They are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”-NIV

Unity isn't just a goal, it is your spiritual weapon against the warfare of division.

Remember Anchor 1-Piercing Prayer. You should add this to your prayer journal and pray it consistently; Father bind our hearts in Your love. Remind us everyday that we are stronger together. Protect Your covenant between us. Silence every voice that seeks to divide us, amen.

God is the active agent in a marriage union....or He should be. It is God's design that you and your spouse have a shared purpose, direction, and burden. So many couples live separate lives, go in separate directions, and are burdened by separate things. These couples often find themselves frustrated and discontent in their marriage. That is because they are not actively seeking to be one flesh. The “b” part of the verse says “let no one separate.” This is a command of ongoing action to not separate. That's right, you must work at not separating. You must move towards unity because if you do not unity will move away from you. Nothing scares hell more than a husband and wife going in the same direction.

You always want to seek “becoming,” one. Even when you achieve the crown, and know your marriage is anchored in unity, always remember Satan is coming after it. That is why you can be secure in your union but never lazy. Always be active in embracing the “one flesh,” unity. Prioritize unity in decision making, financial practices, emotional intimacy, worship and prayer.

Here is a bonus leg to the Unity Anchor: Accountability. There is a whole chapter on accountability in my book *Riding Shotgun Four Weapons to Annihilate Divorce*.



Anchor 3–Rest

Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”-NIV.

When a couple learns the art of “Come to me,” they will learn how to rest in and with one another.

There are so many marriages suffering from “rest deprivation.” This is different from sleep deprivation in that sleep has to do with physical rest. Rest deprivation is relational, spiritual, and emotional.

A couple cannot truly rest in one another if they have not learned to rest in Christ both individually and collectively. When Jesus says, “Come to me...and I will give you rest,” He did not preface it with “Get your wants met, solve all the problems, complete the checklist, get yourself together and then come to me.” Rather He is inviting you to come with all the undone and ugly. There are so many marriages that suffer because both partners are trying to fix themselves or each other rather than coming to Christ and resting in Him first. Efforts to fix without resting puts you on a crash course to rest deprivation. Instead of being crash course dummies God offers you rest and His yoke. Notice it is not freedom from responsibility but He offers you rest with a different kind of burden, one that is easy and light. It means learning how to navigate life’s burdens Jesus’ way. We are to learn His heart, His method, and that is true rest.

When a couple learns the art of “Come to me,” they will learn how to rest in and with one another. Resting in Christ means we learn to work from rest and not for rest. This not only is an anchor for marriage, but it also applies to every area of our life. Praying, and seeking unity in our marriage from a place of rest instead of a place of drought, weariness, frustration, or anger is revolutionary. In order to do it we must accept the invitation to “come.”

Anchor 4–Exhortation

Hebrews 3:13 “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.” -NIV

The best gift to give your spouse in every season is to push them toward growth in Christ.

In its origin the verb translated “exhort” in Hebrews 3:13 means “to earnestly support or encourage a response or action.” It comes from the Greek noun *paraklésis*, which refers to the calling of someone alongside to help or encourage (<https://biblehub.com/searchstrongs.php?q=Exhort>).

Paul is teaching about mutual encouragement in the faith. Walking alongside each other daily, and seeking to admonish one another to maturity in Christ. You may think walking alongside and exhorting one another only applies to your local church body, or an accountability group. However, that couldn’t be further from the truth. What Paul is teaching does not only apply to those groups. It applies in your home as well. You and your spouse are children of the one Father. Your family is the church. You should do your best pacing together and exhorting at home. Many couples can miss this truth, especially if they are deprived of the other anchors. It is so important to be your spouse’s walking buddy as well as their biggest cheerleader. No matter who we are, we all need encouragement. God designed us to need it because He created us to need each other. The enemy of God relishes in unions where there is no mutual uplifting and spurning towards Christ. Every time you utter “righteous” life over your mate you push them toward heaven compelling them to resemble their Father. Whether they respond in the moment or not, heaven sees, hears you and responds to your righteous action. Over time those gold nuggets of godly incitement will produce a heavenly force to be reckoned with.

We must remember that God ordered the world into function and purpose by speaking. We must learn to speak righteously over our mates to help them to function in their God-ordained purpose. For some couples exhortation may be a foreign language, but thanks to God it is a language all of us can learn. You can start with something as simple as verbal exhortation... “I love the way you _____.”

Use the anchor of exhortation to cast your mate at the feet of Jesus.