

I Don't Think I Love My Spouse Anymore. What Now?

1 Corinthians 13:4-5: (NASB) *⁴Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, ⁵does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered.*



“...And they lived happily ever after.” While this fairy tale ending makes us feel all warm and fuzzy, it does not help us to prepare for reality. The fact is, marriage is hard. Think about why. Two people make a promise to one another before God to be completely faithful to each other for the rest of their lives. Theoretically, we think this is not unreasonable because when we marry, the bonds of love are powerful. Then life happens. Stress, jobs, children, changes, finances, likes, dislikes, opinions, moods; all the human things that life is made of show themselves. We wake up one day and that bond of love that once looked impervious has faded into the shadows of everyday experience. This does not happen to all of us, but it does happen to too many of us.

In the first marriage proclamation we see the intention of God for His human family.

God's design is a relationship of commitment:

Genesis 2:18-22: (NASB) *¹⁸Then the LORD God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him. ¹⁹Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.*

- **Verse 20** - The noticeable absence of the woman revealed the emptiness man had without her. Loneliness is a deep ache.

²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. ²²The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man and brought her to the man.

- **Verses 21-22** - God's creation of woman from man gives a sense of equality and companionship.
- **Verse 22** - God presents Eve to Adam to be named as his own companion and helper.

Helper: “One who helps” but certainly not one who has to be in a lesser position. God is our help:

Psalm 33:20: (KJV) *Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our **help <5828>** and our shield.*

Continuing with Genesis:

²³The man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Our spouse should be significant to the contributions of our life.



- Verse 23 - **AT LAST**, *bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh etc.* Adam's deep companionship desire was at last fulfilled.
- Verse 24 - **THEREFORE**, a man leaves his home and **CLINGS** to his wife. This implies a **LIFELONG DEVOTION**.

²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

- Verse 25 - *They become one flesh* - inseparable and united in every way.

What do we do when we see trouble?

We will be telling a true story throughout the podcast about a Christian woman who contacted me (Rick) through Christian Questions. We communicated for many months about her challenges in her marriage. Her husband is not a devout Christian as she is, and they have had many issues. We asked her to write her story for us to share. Her efforts to make her marriage work in spite of incredible odds are inspiring. We asked our CQ volunteer, Julie, to read and record the story for our audio clips.

Things changed, *Challenging Marriage, MIX*

- *When I was getting married, he made me feel loved, safe and special. He appreciated me for being independent with a strong faith and that I was close to my family. I was so thrilled with being able to have a husband and family of my own. I put him first above all. Very soon after our wedding, things started to change. He began to criticize me, my family, my friends, and others around us. The criticism of me was little by little at first but built slowly to more and more. My cooking, the way I look, the way I cleaned, parked the car, cleaned the car, or if I didn't put the laundry away fast enough by the time he came home - these were all less than acceptable to him. I was a stay-at-home mom and often spent the day frantically trying to have everything in place by the time he got home, but to no avail. Either something wasn't clean enough, dinner wasn't good enough, or I asked a question I should have KNOWN the answer to.*



Often situations like this are not noticed beforehand and we end up in difficult circumstances. She is working against serious odds to keep her commitment.



* Marriage

was unequivocally designed to be at **THE core of humanity's foundation**. When troubles arise with this foundation, always remember its meaning and value.

The fundamentals of marriage are not just obvious but appealing. We just need to keep them firmly in place.



Sometimes life changes us. Is it possible to love your spouse even if you no longer love your spouse?

This is an incredibly relevant question that is almost never asked. The answer is a resounding YES! For Christians, this answer could potentially save many troubled marriages. It unlocks secrets to life, support and communication that most people never have the wherewithal to understand or apply.

There are two basic kinds of love that scripturally apply to marriage. We will see it is possible to have one kind without having the other.



The first kind of love: A strong marriage is built upon mutual respect.

This includes an ever-growing ability to take that which we tolerate and transform it into that which we embrace.

Love: Strong's #5362; *philandros*; affectionate as a wife

Love: Strong's #5388; *philoteknos* fond of one's children

The affection between spouses, parents to children, and children to parents.

This level is the most basic and instinctive:

Titus 2:4-5: (NKJV) ⁴that they admonish the young women to **love <5362>** their husbands, to **love <5388>** their children, ⁵to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Admonish the young women to love to have a connected, affectionate love for their spouse and also for their children. The family should work together.

The need to keep standards before us is plainly obvious. This text is not saying that these things were being omitted; it is saying these things need to be central! Family love is fulfilling.



Jonathan, I have known you for a long time. I was your best man in your wedding. I have watched your relationship throughout the years, and I see this kind of love between you and your wife. You take care of each other.



This ***I've got your back*** affection between spouses builds **deep bonds of trust and loyalty.**

If it wanes, we usually begin to question every part of our marriage.



Protection of one another is important. Disappointments and issues happen in marriage. Do not publicize them. Protect each other's mistakes or trust will be lost. This protectiveness gets lost in marriages where they feel they do not love their spouse anymore. Protectiveness becomes defensiveness.

Let's return to the narration of the story of the Christian woman who shared her story so we can learn from her experiences and how she is trying to overcome difficulty.



A wake-up call, *Challenging Marriage*, MIX

- *Six years after our son was born, I became physically sick with an autoimmune disease that seemingly came out of nowhere and put me in the hospital. That was a real wake up call for me. I was putting every ounce of my being into trying to make my husband happy, but nothing worked. I wasn't putting God first. By God's grace, I received this "nudge" to realize I needed to get my priorities straight. My husband didn't change, but now I was aware that I needed to continually seek God and righteousness above all. I was always praying and attending church and doing what I thought was my best to serve God, especially by trying to please my husband, but I let his opinion or judgment of me become more valuable than God.*

"I let his opinion or judgment of me become more valuable than God." The marriage covenant is one we make before God. God should always come first in our lives. All of our earthly relationships are better when we put God first.

Her illness helped her to come to this realization and propelled her in the right direction. Often when we need to change, we hit bottom, so we are forced to look up, look out and move forward.

Most men lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them. — Henry David Thoreau



When I am working on developing a Christian Questions podcast, I sit at a little desk in my living room. Trish sits on the loveseat a few feet away from me. Occasionally we will chat about the topic. I explained I was searching in my mind for a theme to run through this entire podcast and she said, this sounds like that quote about men living lives in quiet desperation. That was it!

We are talking about the quiet desperation so many of us are bearing. We may not talk about it to anyone because it can be embarrassing or threatening, or we may feel like we will be judged. It is quiet desperation, but it does not have to be.

When we find ourselves now questioning everything, we need to truly focus on what we still have to work with. While this may seem like grasping at straws in the midst of hopelessness, let us remember that Jesus taught us the love that follows here:

The second kind of love: A strong marriage is built upon putting your spouse first.

Loving them enough to not be concerned with what you get in return is a foundation of true marital connection and growth.





Love: Strong's #25 *agapao*; [or compare Old Testament #5689]; to love (in a social or moral sense)

Love: Strong's #26 *agape*; from 25; love, i.e. affection or benevolence

Jesus loved us with selfless love. He loved the Pharisees and received nothing in return. This is the same type of love described in the next verses.

1 Peter 4:8: (NASB) *Above all, keep fervent in your **love <26>** for one another, because **love <26>** covers a multitude of sins.*

Matthew 5:43-44: (NASB) ⁴³*You have heard that it was said, you shall **love <25>** your neighbor and hate your enemy. ⁴⁴But I say to you, **love <25>** your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*

Is it possible to love your spouse even if you no longer love your spouse? If we feel we no longer love our spouse and do not have that bond anymore, we can love them with benevolence and by giving without worrying about receiving. If we can love our enemies as Jesus taught, we can certainly love our spouse with this same type of love, even if we do not feel IN LOVE with them.

Ephesians 5:25: (NASB) *Husbands, **love <25>** your wives, just as Christ also **loved <25>** the church and gave himself up for her.*

We should love our spouse the way Christ loved us. He gave to us without receiving. We can do the same if we want to be faithful to our marriage covenant.

The original marriage proclamation implies this selfless kind of love:

Genesis 2:24: (NASB) *For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined (cling or adhere) to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.*

The Scripture does NOT say a man shall leave his father and his mother and be head-over-heels in love with his wife. It may start out that way but if this feeling wanes for one reason or another, it does not change the covenant. For those of us who are Christians and take the covenant of marriage seriously and are having trouble, focus on the selfless love Jesus taught us.



Having ***benevolent love*** not only keeps the door open, it solidifies your efforts to continue contributing to a relationship that seems to have lost its attractiveness.

It is important to be faithful to what we promised.

What we are being told is to stay the course when we are deeply challenged. That is what Jesus did!



Practically speaking, what do we do when we find out there is another, darker side to our spouse?

For many of us, this is a really shocking and often frightening revelation. The first thing to say here is this - IF YOU ARE IN AN ABUSIVE SITUATION please have the courage to remove yourself and any children and GET HELP! People who abuse need help, and the only way they will get it is by being confronted with the reality of their actions.

Physical abuse can be life-threatening. But what about mental abuse? If it is so poisonous, are we justified in leaving that situation? The short answer is, yes. However, let us not take that as an excuse to take an easy road out. We must go through a lot before it gets to the point where it is breaking us. We will return to this thought later.



**GET
HELP!**

We received another story from a different Christian woman. She was married before she gave her life to the Lord in consecration. She had a horrific, physically abusive experience and was in the mindset that she was supposed to stay married. When someone abuses another person, there is something broken. If you love that person and you want to honor your marriage covenant, you will want to get them help. Help can come from intervention, the law or counseling. Children who are raised in those types of relationships often become abusers. Protect yourself and your children when necessary.

The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. — Henry David Thoreau

When we do not feel loved it is easy to resign and fall into the thought pattern of:

- “it is over”
- “biggest mistake of my life”
- “what did I do to deserve this”
- “I have had enough”
- “this isn’t working”

Resignation brings retreat! Retreat brings a shut-down heart which makes effort a thing of the past.

If we are Christians and we are in a broken marriage relationship, we need to fight for the covenant. By fighting for that, we fight for that relationship with our spouse which could possibly be helped.

A lack of family love is cited twice as a sign of the depth of sin and as a sign of the End Times:

Romans 1:28,31: (NASB) ²⁸And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, ³¹without





understanding (stubborn), *untrustworthy* (covenant-breaker) <802>, *unloving* <794>, *unmerciful* (lacking love of family).

We do not want to break that sacred covenant. As followers of Jesus, we owe that covenant to God. Jesus was specific in telling us the reason for divorce is fornication.

Unloving: Strong's #794 *astorgos*; hard-hearted towards kindred; without natural affection

Untrustworthy: Strong's #802 *asynthetos*; covenant-breaker

2 Timothy 3:1-3: (NASB) ¹*But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.* ²*For men will be...* ³**unloving <794>**, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal...

Look around carefully and see the many ways our generations have subtly fulfilled these prophetic statements. How often do we divorce for “IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES”?

Am I letting my spouse slip out of family love because I am too busy or stressed? Sometimes we are then the cause of our own problems.



In our next two podcasts we will be discussing how to avoid burnout. Burnout has a lot to do with marriage and marriage failure.

March 9, 2020, How Do I Avoid Burnout? (Part I)

March 16, 2020, How Do I Avoid Burnout? (Part II)

Let's continue with our story. When this woman got married, she had not fully given her life to Christ. She has grown into being a sincerely dedicated Christian who is determined to do what she can to uphold the covenant.

Strategies, Challenging Marriage, MIX

I was always anxious when he was about to come home or when he was in a bad mood. I didn't feel like I was walking on eggshells; I felt I was walking in a minefield. But I realized I couldn't control how someone else acted or what they said, but I could control how it affected me. Here are some strategies I use in my marriage:

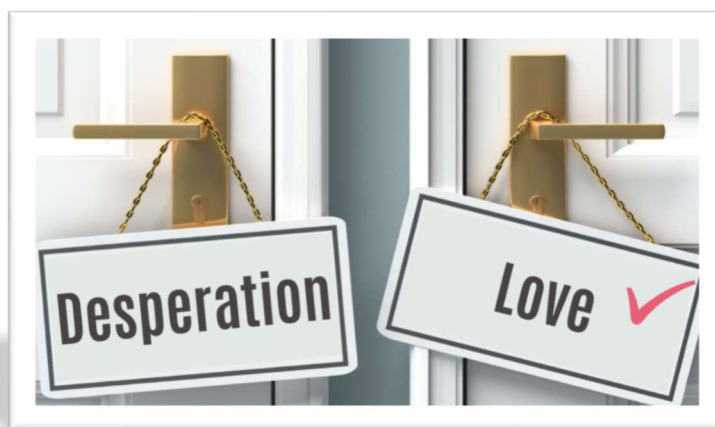
- *As I do things for our family, whether cleaning the house or cooking meals, or whatever, I try not to resent that what I do is only not appreciated, but often criticized, I think of Colossians 3:23-24: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ.*
- *I spend time studying the Bible, listening to sermons from my church, listening to Christian Questions. I've gone to a marriage counselor. With God's leading, I got bits of help everywhere I looked.*
- *Instead of thinking, "What does God want from me," I think "What does God want for me?" Learning humility is a Christlike characteristic, and that is our goal. We want to rid ourselves of pride. I try to reframe my thinking from: "I have to take out the garbage," instead I think, "I get to take care of my family."*



- *I breathe deeply when I am in an uncomfortable situation.*
- *I learned practical ways of speaking to someone who is screaming at you, including not reacting too quickly and speaking slowly and calmly, repeating back to him what he said to give him a chance to reconsider.*
- *My therapist told me to actually make the motion of slamming and locking a door or closing and locking a window to give myself a visual and real feeling of blocking his negativity from me; not letting it in.*

She sought help and looked for it in various ways because she had decided she would be contributory to mending her marriage as best as she could.

Decide that desperation is not your destiny! Act in “agape love.”



Colossians 3:23-24: (NASB) ²³Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

We respect and honor our spouse because we serve and honor God.

What does God want for me? I get to take care of my family. She was giving practical responses. That is a paradigm shift in thinking. Take the difficult circumstance and make it a blessing. That takes courage.

When we resign, we let anger or resentment fester. Is this what God wants for me?

Ephesians 4:25-27: (NASB) ²⁵Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry, and yet do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not give the devil an opportunity.

Instead of fighting our environment, work with and through it.

Decide that desperation is not your destiny! Act in agape “love.” ✓

When we resign, we hold grudges and complain. Is this what God wants for me?

Proverbs 19:11, 13: (NASB) ¹¹A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression. ¹³A foolish son is destruction to his father, and the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.

God does not want us to be desperate. He wants us to stand for the things that are righteous.



Decide that desperation is not your destiny! Act in agape “love.” ✓

Instead of having a narrow view, we should step back and see the view of the bigger world around us.



Desperation and resignation are convenient tools of the adversary. They work well because they are natural emotions and reactions.

***Love* instead and honor God!**

This is where things get serious. This is where we have the opportunity to decide how important Jesus is to us.

**What should we do if we feel too tired to fight?
How do we keep our thoughts and actions righteous?**

We have all been down this road of overwhelming odds and insurmountable potential losses. One of the most important courses of action to take is finding our deepest core motivations. In a challenged marriage, when the circumstances show brokenness, our resolve should be to TAKE SMALL STEPS.

Never look back unless you are planning to go that way.

— *Henry David Thoreau*

Rehearsing the past takes us out of the present and robs us of our future.

We will introduce four small steps in this segment.

First: Decide on your direction. Find the deepest “why” of your life and manage your brokenness through it.

The deepest “why” in my life is in this Scripture:

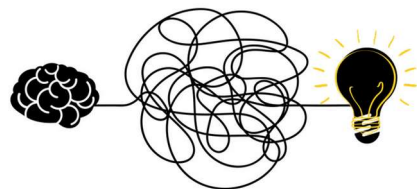
Matthew 6:33: (NASB) *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*



Every time I get myself into a bind, I try to think of this Scripture. If I put God and His righteousness and His ways before everything else, all the difficulties seem to find a pathway.

We should find our deepest “why” and attack our issues through that.

Chaos creates clarity. It is in the turmoil of our broken experiences that our true needs and direction appear, if we look for them.



This became clear to me when someone close to me was going through some difficult experiences with one of her children. It occurred to me that because of the chaos of the child’s actions and reactions, a clarity emerged and showed the mom what to do. In the middle of what looks like the worst, we can find the plan of attack. Chaos can create clarity, if we allow it.



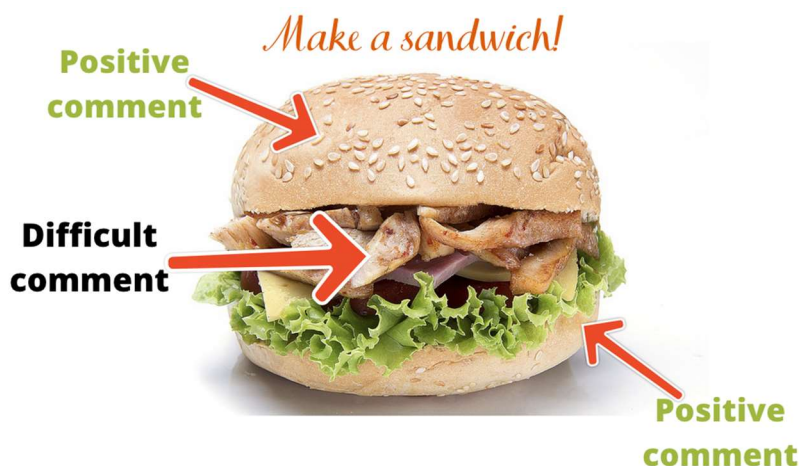
Make a sandwich, *Challenging Marriage, MIX* (Continuing with more strategies.)

- *I make more of an effort to help others, be kind and do more in service to the Lord. It helps me to count my blessings rather than think about the negative.*
- *Counseling with Rick showed me ways I could handle my situation in a God-honoring way. I try to cherish my husband. This one is still a work in progress for me. I am thankful for my husband, but I am especially thankful for all of the experiences that I have had, because ultimately, they brought me closer to God, closer to my brethren, and closer to my family. If I had not gone through these experiences, I may still be “lukewarm” about my commitment to God.*
- *Listening to CQ Episode 947 Why Are We SO STRESSED?! gave me different tips for dealing with stress.*
- *Listening to CQ Episode 1092: How Do You Deal With Toxic People in Your Life? Wow, before that I had always just absorbed all of the negative comments—I could physically feel them sinking into me. I learned to calmly state my opinion or stand up for myself or another person being criticized. One great tip was to make a “sandwich” when stating my opinion, saying something positive or understanding about the other person before and after stating my view.*



I am not a counselor. I do not have a license. But I do a lot of listening and try to give back scripturally-based tools. I have been able to watch this individual work and grow through her difficult experience.

The idea of making a sandwich - dealing with the hard part by putting something good before and after it helps the message to be heard.



This may not fix her marriage, but it can fix her attitude towards her covenant and her spouse.

Second: Realize the great challenge of stopping what starts out as a little thing but can grow into something horrendous:

Matthew 5:27-30: (KJV) ²⁷Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: ²⁸But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Jesus is saying: Do not even put yourself in the position where you can even **THINK ABOUT** considering an action such as adultery. Stop it at its origin.



Once something evil takes root in our heart, it can only produce a poisonous plant:

²⁹And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out...³⁰And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee... (This is figurative, not literal.)

Do not do or look upon things that are not God-honoring. If we allow ourselves to go down that road, it is rationalizing and resigning which leads to trouble.

How determined am I to hate to the point of **SEVERING** that which is an evil temptation in my life?



Clarity gives birth to courage. Once the fog of a broken marriage's chaos is lifted, courage is activated. We now know what the battle is about and why we need to fight it. Lifting the fog is not solving the problem. It is allowing us to see so we can gain courage to take action to solve it.

A recipe to cope with your spouse is for **YOU** to handle **YOU** in a godly manner.

Third: Accept that we really do have a choice and make it. We cannot serve our families (and therefore God) and serve the world as well:

Luke 16:10,13: (NASB) *¹⁰He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. ¹³No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.*

We cannot serve God and self.

Courage is proven in action. To positively contribute to a marriage that is broken takes courageous effort. Small steps towards honoring our covenant and spouse are actually heroic actions! *Just do it!* Be honorable and respectful. Build one another up, even if they are not building us up. Sometimes that can change the marriage relationship



Fourth: LIVE YOUR FAITH, even in the context of brokenness:

Matthew 7:24-25: (NASB) *²⁴Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.*



Being present makes your family better:

1 Corinthians 7:14: (NASB) *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.*

Just being there and letting them see the love of Christ in us is a blessing to them before God. We can have a cleansing effect on those around us.

Action finds victory. The stronger our actions towards righteously contributing to a broken marriage, the closer we come to victory. What we will find is that victory is in the effort, not the result.



Chaos is a key to
God-honoring contribution.
Let it teach you!

We can look at the chaos and ask, what can I learn and how can I honor God by applying what I learn from this chaos?

In the midst of the chaotic events that break things apart, it is odd to think that therein lies a path to growth.

Christians are supposed to be accepting.
What is the difference between acceptance and resignation?

It is far too easy to fall into the trap of rationalizing what God would have us to do. When faced with the brokenness of one's marriage, rationalizing a course of action or rationalizing complete inaction often comes because we feel like we do not have a choice. To follow this feeling is a big mistake!

We want to pursue acceptance - not resignation:

Romans 8:28: (NASB) *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

This does not mean we just sit back and God is going to work it all out for us. He will give us testing experiences for us to prove our Christlikeness.



Resignation: To live with resignation is to cease your efforts. Like the elephant who is tied to a small stake in the ground, resignation feigns to know the boundaries and to obediently embrace them. In reality, all you are doing is giving up hope and growth.

Marriage is a covenant of God. We need to work hard.



Acceptance: To live with acceptance is to truly embrace the limitations before you and to focus on having them become tools or devices of growth. Acceptance is not concerned with things being in perfect order to move forward; rather it is concerned with the persistence needed to move forward.



Honor God, Challenging Marriage, MIX

- This is not how I ever imagined my marriage would be, but I wholeheartedly believe and accept that God's thoughts and ways are higher and much better than mine. I can see His hand working in my life, and for that I am beyond grateful that He would even consider me, care for me, trust me to do work in His name...and bless me, which He has beyond measure. I have stopped resisting so much when change or difficulty comes my way. I have a moment when I think wait, what's happening? Then, I think, how is God wanting me to grow through this? What can I do here to honor God?*

We are thankful she had the vulnerability to share her experience.

I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies; for the hardest victory is over self. — Aristotle

In our battle to overcome resignation, we know men and women are wired differently. In general, women are more intuitive and more readily able to understand love.

As a result, we are shown different roles in Scripture:

Ephesians 5:21-24: (NASB) ²¹and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ (under Christ). ²²Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, he himself being the Savior of the body. ²⁴But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

Wives ought to be to (subject to) their husbands in everything - this sounds like a recipe for unfair treatment, rebellion and even lawsuits! Let's finish the context.

Husbands are clearly taught to love their wives as a Christian responsibility:

Ephesians 5:25-31: (NASB) ²⁵Husbands, **love <25>** your wives, just as Christ also **loved <25>** the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶so that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

There is no better example for men than to look at Jesus' sacrifice - his giving without receiving. This is the standard by which we must love our wives.

²⁸So husbands ought also to **love <25>** their own wives as their own bodies. He who **loves <25>** his own wife **loves <25>** himself; ²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and **cherishes <2282>** it, just as Christ also does the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body. ³¹For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

Cherishes: Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon #2282 *thalpo*; 1. properly, to warm, keep warm
2. to cherish with tender love, to foster with tender care



Selfless love cherishes, saying, “I love you,” and, “Let me help you.”
The key to truly valuing our spouse is in the concept of cherishing:

Observations from the previous guidance on valuing one another:



- Women - LOVE and be subject (notice only one for women!)
- Men - LOVE and give yourself up for her
- Men - LOVE and care for her as your own body
- Men - Your love for her becomes your way of self-preservation
- Men - Cherish her
- Men - Leave all other ties for her sake

If we can do all of these things, many of the challenges in our marriages will begin to right themselves. Why? Because we would be acting in a way that is God-honoring, spouse-honoring and covenant-honoring.

We have the power to make our marriages better, even if it is not great at the moment.

Instead of resigning to our “fate,” what if we accepted the circumstances as God-permitted and applied the fruit of the spirit to it?

Galatians 5:22-23: (NASB) ²²*But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

Check out our CQ Kids Video: What is the fruit of the spirit?

Look at these things in relation to our marriage covenant.



Accepting your marriage is not perfect,
and what you thought
would be blissful may end up difficult
is a primary step in overcoming the trial.
Faithfulness to the covenant and agape love
towards your spouse speak volumes!

We have a choice to run towards the issue and work, pray and put out the effort. Be the example; be Christlike at every turn. Lift ourselves higher. We want to be more understanding in order to take a bad situation and make it better. It is not about changing our spouse. It is about changing ourselves, honoring God, honoring our spouse and our covenant. We have a greater chance of success if we follow this pattern instead of resigning.



*So, I don't think I love my spouse anymore. What now?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on March 9, 2020
Ep. 1116: How Do I Avoid Burnout? (Part I)

Bonus Material

Marriage - the roots are deep, the covenant is solid, love is sweet, life is hard, and God is good. — Unknown

More on being present to make your family better:

1 Corinthians 7:10-14: (NASB) ¹⁰But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband ¹¹(but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife. ¹²But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. ¹³And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. ¹⁴For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

The greatest love can only be successful with the greatest commitment!

- Commitment lives when feelings die
- Commitment fights when temptation attacks
- Commitment dreams when reality seems too hard
- Commitment persists when you've about given up
- Commitment believes even when you doubt
- Commitment grows when life goes on autopilot
- Commitment focuses when you can't see
- Commitment fulfills when you question yourself
- Commitment strengthens when you have nothing left
- Commitment rebuilds when dreams have been shattered
- Commitment inspires when your will is too weak
- Commitment directs when the future is unsure
- Commitment understands when listening is too hard
- Commitment works though all else may fail



Here are a few words about forgiveness:

Our ability to forgive one another on any level really depends on how we see one another:

Philippians 2:2-8: (NASB) ²*make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.* ³*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;* ⁴*do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

How we see one another really depends on how we see ourselves and Christ in ourselves:

⁵*Have this attitude in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus,* ⁶*who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,* ⁷*but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.* ⁸*Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*



Holding onto an unforgiving attitude WILL affect us physically and emotionally, as our thinking and life will be continually influenced by its clear and powerful influence. Because we are affected physically and emotionally, we WILL be affected spiritually. This directly detracts from our ability to follow Christ.

Philippians 1:21: (NASB) *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

Remember, to forgive is to make someone's sin against us lose its relevance in our life. The event still happened, the results of the event are still intact, but the relevance of the act AGAINST us has been diminished.

The maturing process to forgiveness - it takes time and effort, but our example is inspiring!

Psalms 103:13-14: (NASB) ¹³*Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.* ¹⁴*For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust.*

- God truly does know our weaknesses and frailty. The result of His knowledge of us is a fatherly embrace for any who seek it.
- We who are in a position to forgive must **practice** that family-based approach to those who have wronged us as we accept that we are all faulty.
- We who are in a position to be forgiven must **embrace** the forgiveness.

The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts was a New York Times bestseller and we think it is worth mentioning. Dr. Gary Chapman has been a marriage counselor for more than 30 years. In his book, he described five different ways that people express (and receive!) love emotionally. Each person has their own love language and therefore what makes one person feel loved emotionally is not always the thing that makes another person feel loved emotionally. Not understanding that your spouse's love language is different from yours can create many problems. And more positively, if you and your spouse understand each other's primary love language, you will be more able to express and receive love to and from your spouse that each can understand and appreciate. The five languages are as follows:



Words of Affirmation - One way to express love emotionally is to use words that build up. King Solomon even said, "The tongue has the power of life and death." If this is your spouse's love language, then they will feel loved if you frequently give compliments, say "thank you" or any other positive, encouraging things.

Acts of Service - This means to do things that you know your spouse would like you to do. You seek to please your spouse by serving them, to express your love for them by doing things for them.

Receiving Gifts - Those whose primary love language is receiving gifts, feel loved when they receive any sort of gift and alternatively like to give gifts to people that they love. It doesn't necessarily have to be something expensive, but often something thoughtful will do the trick.

Quality Time - Another way to express and receive love is to spend uninterrupted time together, pay attention to your spouse, focus on things that are important to them, do things together, etc. Give them your undivided attention.

Physical Touch - This can come in many forms, including holding hands, kissing, embracing and sexual intercourse. For those whose primary love language is physical touch, they will feel unloved without it.

