

Miracle Helps for Marriage

The ONE great secret of marriage is “Love”. God makes it very clear as he commands us to love our wives/spouses as Christ Loves the church. What most of us don’t quite get is that we can’t keep this commandment without his help. “Love is not Natural...It is supernatural.” Our ability to love depends on allowing/imploring Christ to help us, to change our hearts. As we teach ourselves to EXPECT our help from God FIRST and not our spouses we have opened the door to great blessing. Corrie Ten Boom a great



Evangelist and survivor of Hitler’s Concentration Camp (more difficult than most marriages) used to begin her message by dumping a bag of “Her Troubles” on a table on the stage and then one by one she would prayerfully give them to God. This week when tempted to “Give it to your spouse try giving IT to God instead.” After many years of traveling Corrie realized that at the end of each talk she gathered up her troubles and took them with her. At that point she decided that taking her troubles (marriage and otherwise) to God was not enough. She needed to leave them with him and when tempted to take things into her own hands she must instead take it back to God. The same God that helped Corrie find Peace in the Concentration camp can help with even the most difficult marriage.

For most of us one of the most difficult things to give to God is personal criticism. Modern research actually pinpoints criticism as the number one predictor that a marriage will not last. When told about ourselves most of us turn to Retaliation. A good prayer at that moment is; “God I know my spouse is far too critical but what about me. If I am picking on my mate please help me recognize it and REPLACE it with Blessings and Encouragement.” Focusing on our own shortcoming rather than our spouses has saved many a *marriage and certainly endears the soul to God*. When we can’t ERASE a bad habit or shortcoming we can and should ask God to help us REPLACE IT. A good scripture to keep on display somewhere in the home might be “Put off your old self... and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God. In short God’s way is not to erase bad habits but to replace them with himself.”

Miracle help number two: No one can bless and curse at the same time. Once we have asked God to help with a problem the best second step is BE PREPARED. Our recommendation is to prayerfully make a list of compliments. THEN, when you want to criticize your significant other trot out a compliment. If you can’t think of enough compliments try adding a blessing or two. Two of my favorite Bible Blessings well worth keeping on hand are: 2 Corinthians 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you. And Numbers 6:24-26 THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU, THE

LORD MAKE HIS FACE TO SHINE UPON YOU AND BE GRACIOUS UNTO YOU THE LORD TURN HIS FACE TOWARD YOU AND GIVE YOU PEACE. Or ... if you just can't come up with either a compliment or a blessing simply kiss your spouse on the cheek and say "May the hinges of our love never grow rusty." AND now is the time to put down this article and make a list of good things about your spouse. The harder it is the more important it is. Save the list in a safe place then memorize your favorites, some kind words to fill your mind when you want to frown and fume.

Miracle help number three is put yourself in your spouse's position. Look past their behavior and focus on their need. Pray that God helps you understand what changes them from Dr. Jekyll into Mr. Hyde. The more we understand the past experiences and feelings of our significant other the easier it will be to forgive and pray for them. God made love a command because it is not always easy. Knowing why a spouse behaves the way they do makes it easier to love them thru it.

Miracle help #5 : giving your home a Bible make over. A good Bible Verse for the kitchen wall is "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins." John 15:12, For the living room try: "Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them." Ephesians 4:2, For the bathroom: if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; Colossians 3:13 Our choice for the bedroom is a flip over Bible Calendar with a verse a day for an entire year. Starting and ending each day with a Bible Verse is probably one of the best marriage helps of all. The author invites everyone to visit www.bibleparent.com for free SON catchers...Bible verses for windows reminding the entire family that God's light enters the home through his word.

Miracle help five is Problem Solving Skills: For many years one of my neighbors was Dr. Carl Menninger founder of the Menninger Foundation. Some years back while working on a coloring book to help children with anger I met Dr. Carl at a bus stop. I asked him what he had learned about anger. He did not miss a breath but said "Two things...first that anger is a secondary emotion. No one can manage anger without looking for what is underneath usually hurt, fear, loss or frustration. Second is that even very young children learn quickly that even though anger never makes a problem go away it does make people go away so children grow up getting rid of relationships instead of trying to solve problems. A Christian counselor can often be a great help.

Miracle help number six is fellowship. My mother and grandmother both belonged to a group of ladies living along half day creek. They called the group The Union Club and they met the first Wednesday of the month for over 100 years. Sometimes they had a speaker, sometimes just food, fellowship and prayer. For those of us who do not live in such a neighborhood MAKE ONE. Take a copy of Titus two to the pastor of your church and ask his help in forming either a men's or a women's group. The scripture in Titus two is very clear...specifically that the older women of the church, women who have learned how to make marriage work counsel and pray for the younger women. God gives the same command to men: *For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Ecclesiastes 4:10.* Turning to friends in the church is an important part of God's help.

Following is a short summary of our Miracle marriage savers.

1. **Love is not natural it is supernatural.** BEFORE taking a problem to your spouse take it to God. Your partner is only human.

2. **Avoid/REPLACE criticism and BE PREPARED.** The BEST, perhaps only, way to get rid of a bad habit is to replace it. Our favorite NEW habit is to catch your spouse doing something right instead of wrong. The harder it is the more important it is.
3. **Put yourself in your spouse's position.** If you don't learn to UNDERSTAND your significant other how **could** you hope to know how to pray for or love him or her?
4. **Give your home a Bible Makeover,** a verse in every room and a flip over Bible Calendar near the Bed.
5. **Learn problem solving skills.** Anger doesn't make problems go away. It just makes people leave you alone. If anger is a recurring problem in your relationship ask your pastor (corps officer) to suggest a Christian counselor.
6. **Get connected** to the older married folks in your church/citadel. Talk with them. Pray with them. *Lift one another up.*

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