

I was slow in starting my letter, "I'm thankful you don't come home drunk..." But as I wrote it became a little easier and soon I had a 2 or 3 page letter to give to him. That letter, by the grace of God, saved our marriage, for by the time I reached the end, I realized how blessed I was to have the husband that I had. I realized that true love is not a feeling, but rather a decision "for better or for worse".

**Never give up, even if you don't feel love, learn to love** Mark 10:27b... *With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.* Remember "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13

\*\*Although the Bible does not give permission for divorce and remarriage, except for adultery, we do not believe that God calls women or men who are in a truly abusive relationship to stay in that environment.

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*Through the years I never decided what that thing was, but each time he did something that irritated me, I thought maybe this is that thing."* 1 Cor. 13:4-8 states "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth..." In fact, if you implement this plan to overlook an irritation you may even learn to enjoy some of those things your spouse does that irritate you.

King Solomon wrote, Pro 21:19 "*It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.*"

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One day, one of my friends asked me, "How is it that you and your husband can live together when you both are so hard-headed?" I answered, "Because we both follow the same instruction book, the Bible." When there is a difference of opinion in our household, both of us are willing to submit to a "Thus saith the Lord." **This is the first and foremost principle of a happy marriage-Christ and His word must be the center, and as each of us draw nearer to Christ we will automatically draw closer to each other.** "*Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it..." Psalm 127:1*

#### **Try looking at things from the other's perspective.**

I read this statement several years ago, and it made a deep impression on me.

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Sometimes I have written and highlighted this in a document my husband was typing up when he was having a hard day. Be creative. It may sound simple, but you may be surprised how much it cheers the day and how often it will come back to you.

#### **Learn to be a good listener**

James 1:19 says, "*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*" Sometimes your spouse may just need someone to listen. The story is told of a woman who was having extreme stress caused by problems in her marriage. In order to fix this problem, the doctor gave her some special pills to take with water and hold in her mouth whenever she got angry at her husband.

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But day after day, I decided to enjoy helping him by picking up his socks and putting them in the hamper. A little over 15 years later, when my husband and I were unavoidable separated on and off for 5 months, I realized I actually missed picking up those dirty socks.

#### **When times get hard, write a letter to your spouse telling them what you appreciate about them.**

Every marriage will be tested, and because many people deem love to be a feeling, when that feeling disappears, they want out. Instead of a feeling, "*True love is a high and holy principle, altogether different in character from that love which is awakened by impulse, and which suddenly dies when severely tested.*" (Christian Education 230.1) Yet the question remains "how do you decide to love"?

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The word confess in this scripture literally means "to acknowledge". When we have been in the wrong, we have the responsibility to try to make things right.

### **MENDING BROKEN MARRIAGES**

**Even some marriages where a spouse has been unfaithful can be saved by the grace of God, but the offending spouse must be willing to acknowledge they were in the wrong and accept that life may be different for a while.**

For example, allowing the offended spouse to ask, "*Have you been faithful to me today?*" as they feel it is needed can reestablish broken trust. Also praying for your spouse can never be underestimated.

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cereal and then allow for one "dessert cereal" a meal.

#### **Continue the early attentions**

Proverbs 26:20a says, "*Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out...*" It has been said, "*It is the little attentions, the numerous small incidents and simple courtesies of life, that make up the sum of life's happiness; and it is the neglect of kindly, encouraging, affectionate words and the little courtesies of life which helps compose the sum of life's wretchedness.*" {Mind, Character and Personality Vol. 2 576.2} Think about all the special things you did when you were dating. Little kindnesses go a long way, and it's hard to be angry at the person rubbing your back or the one who just presented you with a hand-picked bouquet of wildflowers.

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#### **Don't allow anything to come between you and your spouse**

*Matt. 19:5, 6 says,*

*"And [Jesus] said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."*

Many marriages have broken up because something or someone came between a man and his wife and children. According to the Telegraph and top10stop.com the top causes of broken marriages include affairs, interference of in-laws, money problems, and addiction.

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The Bible says, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6:38

## SHMILY

A fun way to implement this tip is to play the SHMILY game. SHMILY is short for **See How Much I Love You**. This is an excellent way to show your spouse how much you love them. Hide this phrase in places for them to find. For example, write it on the toilet paper a few squares down or put it on a post-it note in folded clothes, spell it with berries on the breakfast plate.

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No one, except God, should be more important than your spouse and children. Nothing - not sports, nor money, nor work, nor computer, nor pets-- should be more important than your spouse.

There are only two things that can dissolve a marriage biblically.\*\* The most obvious is death -- "till death do us part". 1 Cor. 7:39 states, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." The Bible also allows for divorce in the case of adultery. Jesus states in Matt.19:9, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

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and Prov. 21:9 "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." He clarifies what he means by saying, "A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike." Prov .27:15

Wives, I've learned there is a fine line to walk between reminding and nagging. If you would draw your husbands with love, be careful to stay on the side of reminding and not to cross over into nagging zone. Remember you were created to be his help meet. "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Gen. 2:18 Through our marriage years, my husband's dirty socks always seemed to end up right next to the hamper instead of inside, and for a while this irritated me.

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But even in the case of adultery the marriage may sometimes be saved. Decide today, to prioritize your marriage and fight for it to succeed.

### **Admit when you have been wrong, forgive past offenses and pray for your spouse**

Ephesians 4:32 says "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." We are to forgive others, not because they deserve it, but because Christ forgives us. James 5:16 adds, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

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**"If pride and selfishness were laid aside, five minutes would remove most difficulties."** {EW 120.1}

It would be well to think when there is a prolonged argument- "Am I being selfish?" Philippians 2:3,4 states, *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.* This principle allows for compromise where Biblical principles are not at stake. For example, when we got married, my husband loved sweet cereal, while I grew up eating healthier not-so-sweet cereals for breakfast. As children came into the picture, this became a bigger issue until we settled on a compromise. We would eat healthier

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She diligently took her pills and water each time she and her husband got in an argument, and they worked amazingly well until she ran out. When she went back for more, the doctor informed her that she could just use the water, the pills were just placebos. It had helped her marriage just to learn to listen (as she was forced to do when her mouth was full of water).

Perhaps this is why the Bible says, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." (Proverbs 15:1) Another important tip is not to go to bed angry because instead of fixing the problem this allows anger to fester and get worse. Ephesians 4:26 says, *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

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Here's an idea that worked for me. The first winter after we moved to the country was particularly hard. Though a few kind folks gave us some firewood, we didn't have near enough for winter since we had just barely "dried in" our house before the snow. The children were still small, and day after day I trudged out to cut enough wood with a hand saw to keep the house at 50°F. I began to resent the fact that my husband got to go work in a nice warm thrift store all day while I shoveled 3/10 of a mile driveway, cooked, did laundry by hand, homeschooled and tried to stay warm all day. One day, I finally decided I had about had it, but I decided to write my husband a letter stating why I was thankful for him. After all, the Bible tells us "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1Thess. 5:18)

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I heard recently of a woman whose husband left for five years, but she refused to give up praying for him. God finally broke through his spiritualism, and the husband was converted and returned home. God healed their marriage and they again have a happy home with their children, thanks to the power of prayer.

### **Learn to be content**

Philippians 4:11b *...I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.* A few years ago, I read a story about a man and a woman that had an exceptionally happy marriage. Several younger women asked the secret to the success of their marriage. She said, "When we got married I decided that I would pick one thing to overlook that he did that irritated me."

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