

How
GOD
Can and Will
Restore Your
Marriage

*A Book for Women
From Someone Who's Been There!*

Erin Thiele

Eighth Revised Edition

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How GOD Can and Will Restore Your Marriage
From Someone Who's Been There!
By Erin Thiele



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by Erin Thiele

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Chapter 1

My Beloved

*I thank God . . . as I constantly remember you
in my prayers night and day,
longing to see you,
even as I recall your tears,
so that I may be filled with joy.
—2 Timothy 1:3–4*

Dear Beloved Sister in Christ,

It is not by chance that you are holding this book in your hands; it is by Divine Providence. God has heard your cry for help, as He did mine, and He has come to rescue you. The pages that follow will guide you as He guided me when others said it was completely hopeless.

What He asked me to do was not easy, nor will it be easy for you. But if you want a miracle in your life, it can happen. If you want a testimony to share with others on the faithfulness of God, it will happen. If you really want God to restore a marriage that is hopeless, read on. God can and will restore your marriage as He did mine.

The Bible says that “the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His” (2 Chron. 16:9). He has been looking for you to help you. Are you ready?

You will need zealous obedience. You must “enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matt. 7:13–14). It is your choice whether to follow His narrow way now or to turn back.

This is the time to choose. “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days . . .” (Deut. 30:19–20).

If you are still reading and have not thrown this book away, then you have chosen to go on. Tears are in my eyes as I think of the glorious resurrection of your marriage and family that awaits you. I pray blessings upon each and every one of you. I rejoice that some day we will meet, either on this side or the other side of heaven, where there are no more tears.

Dear sweet sister in Christ Jesus, God can and will restore your marriage: you have His Word on it. “And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and do not doubt, you shall not only do what was done . . . but even if you say to this mountain, “Be taken up and cast into the sea,” it shall happen”’ (Matt. 21:21).

Since you are reading this book, I assume that you are in a crisis in your life because of your marriage. Has your husband left you? Have you left or asked your husband to leave? Perhaps you have gotten this book before either of you has taken this drastic step of leaving. Even if divorce has been spoken of during an argument, divorce papers have been filed, or a divorce has gone through, you must believe that “all things **[can]** work together for good to those who *love God* and are called according to **His purpose**” (see Rom. 8:28).

As you go through the personal trials in your troubled marriage, if you really want things to work out for good, you must first love God and really want **His** purpose for your life.

Right now His purpose is for you to draw closer to Him, to let Him transform you more closely into His image. And take courage, for God has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5). God has not left your side: “Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for **Thou art with me**” (Ps. 23:4 KJV).

I’m sure that the “valley of the shadow of death” describes how you feel about your situation, but God *has* allowed this for **your good**.

Only afterward will you shine forth as gold. “In this you greatly rejoice, even though for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold (which is perishable) even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory and honor” (1 Pet. 1:6–7).

The most important thing for you to do right now is “Be still and know that I am God . . .” (Ps. 46:10). Then follow God’s way. Make sure that everything that you do or say follows the Scriptures; be sure that it follows the Bible consistently.

God has no desire for your marriage to be over. Remember that Jesus Himself said, “a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. Consequently, they are no longer two but one flesh. What God has joined together let no man separate” (Matt. 19:5–6). Also, “‘I hate divorce,’ says the Lord God of Israel. ‘So take heed to your spirit . . .’” (Mal. 2:16).

Satan is the one who wants your marriage destroyed, not the Lord, not God. Remember that “the thief [the devil] comes to steal, to kill and destroy; I came that [you] might have life, and might have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Don’t believe the devil’s lies but “take **every** thought captive” (2 Cor. 10:5).

Don’t allow him to steal your husband. Don’t allow him to destroy your family, your life, and your children and to steal your future. Believe me and believe others who can tell you from experience that divorce will destroy children and steal your children’s future as well as your own.

Follow God’s way instead. Take Him as your husband as you await restoration: “For your husband is your Maker . . .” (Isa. 54:5). “‘For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, but My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, and My covenant of peace will not be shaken,’ says the Lord who has compassion on you” (Isa. 54:10).

Pour over the Bible letting Him “wash you with the water of the Word” (Eph. 5:26). Pray and believe what Scripture says, not what you see, since “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things **not seen**” (Heb. 11:1). “And without faith it is impossible to please God . . .” (Heb. 11:6).

No one but God knows exactly what you are going through or the answers you need right now. If you pray (simply talk to God) and listen to Him (read His Word, the Bible), **He can lead you** to the victory that He has for you. Be very careful when choosing to follow what others may say, including those of the world, friends in the church, pastors or any counselor who tells you something he has heard or read that is **not** in the Word of God. If you are praying and reading God's Word, God will speak to you first in your heart or during your Bible reading then someone will **confirm** the direction in which **He** is guiding you, which will be consistent with His Word!

Too many people, Christian or not, tell you things that sound good and feel good in the flesh. But if it doesn't follow Scripture, **it is wrong!** You will be on sinking sand. "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked" (Ps. 1:1). When it is of God, it usually sounds crazy (like believing for your marriage when others say "get out"!) and it always needs the help of the Holy Spirit to carry it out.

Don't act impulsively or be quick to move. God usually says, "Wait!" Many times during the wait, He changes the situation. God said that He is the "Wonderful and Mighty Counselor" (Isa. 9:6). Don't you want the best? Wouldn't you want a Counselor who knows the future? One who can actually turn the heart of your husband? There is only One who can show you the right direction. Trust Him and Him alone! There are actually **more** broken marriages in the church than there are in the world, so don't follow any Christian, Christian counselor or pastor who gives the world's advice instead of God's.

Sadly, Christian marriage counselors destroy too many Christian marriages. They get you and your husband to talk about the past and to say things that should never be said. Cruel statements are lies of the devil or fleshly feelings. Then, after the counselor listens to what he has prompted you to say, he will tell you that your situation is hopeless!

If someone (including your spouse) has told you that your situation is hopeless, start to praise the Lord. Hopeless situations are exactly where the Lord chooses to show His power! "With people this is impossible but *with God*, **all** things are possible!" (Matt. 19:26).

Work with God. And don't believe that without your husband's help or cooperation your marriage can't be saved or improved. Our ministry was founded by and for those who are the only partner seeking marriage restoration! All that is needed is your heart and the Lord's strength. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth that He may support those whose heart is completely His . . ." (2 Chron. 16:9).

I have had the privilege of being "counseled" by the Best Counselor and I want to share some of what He has told me through His Word. No two situations are exactly alike; nevertheless, His Word applies to all. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Cor. 1:3-4).

Search His Word after you have prayed. "Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find . . ." (Matt. 7:7 KJV). "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:5-8).

You must have faith! And where do you get faith? From Him! Ask Him for faith, since "all good things come from above" (James 1:17).

God's Word, His Principles

Beloved, whether you know the Bible well or even if you have never read it before, the Bible *alone* must be your guide to restore your marriage. This book that you are now reading consists of all the verses that the Lord used to guide me through the fires of trial to my restoration.

The Lord showed me that I had violated many of the principles of marriage, and He also showed me other sins that I was unaware of or had never dealt with (by repenting of them). All of these sins and violations led to the destruction of my marriage.

It is the same with **all** who find their marriages in shambles or completely destroyed, including you. You will soon find, if you are not aware of it yet, that it is **not** just your husband who violated God's principles. You will find, as I did, that you have done much to contribute to the destruction of your marriage. This understanding will be the turning point as you accept and look at your sins, not your husband's.

The wisdom that I learned, from reading and rereading the verses of Scripture that the Lord led me to, helped me to understand what the Bible really was and what I needed it to be in my life—my guide. The Bible is filled with the spiritual laws of His creation. When God created the world, He not only made it with physical laws, like the law of gravity, but He created it with spiritual laws as well.

Just as violating the physical law of gravity will result in the consequences of us stumbling or an object falling, in the same way, violating the principles in Scripture regarding marriage will result in your marriage falling.

Another amazing discovery is that the ways of the world are **always** opposite to the ways of God and His Word. The way you have been dealing with your husband's leaving you, his adultery, his drinking or drugs, or the divorce papers he served you more than likely is the same way that anyone in the world would have dealt with them. What you will find, as I did, is that this is the exact **opposite** of the way that God intended trials to be dealt with in order to bring victory. “. . . This is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5:4).

When I began to follow God's way, which was the opposite of the way everyone else was doing it, I started to see my marriage turn around. The ways of the world **always** result in destruction, but the ways of God **always** bring about healing and restoration. “For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Gal. 6:8).

I have put together a quick reference in this chapter to help you to **immediately** get your marriage out of crisis. These principles, if followed to the letter with a sincere and humble heart, will result in an immediate or future restoration of your marriage—it is **guaranteed**, not by me, but by God in His Word.

The more a woman follows these principles, the more restoration she will see as a direct result of her obedience. Those who stay in crisis, or who never see their marriages restored, are those who refuse to believe and obey the spiritual laws of God or erroneously believe that they are above the laws of God. One of the “Be Encouraged” videos is devoted entirely to testimonies of mistakes that kept women from restoration.

If you are one of those who believe strongly that you are not “under the law” and are therefore free to violate God's laws, “may it never be!”

“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? **May it never be!**” (Rom. 6:15).

“Do we then nullify the Law through faith? **May it never be!** On the contrary, we establish the Law” (Rom. 3:31).

“**May it never be!** How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” (Rom. 6:2).

Those who understood the law of gravity learned to rise above it, which resulted in man being able to fly. The Christian who studies the Word of God will rise above the world and astonish the unbeliever who will then seek God. However, a person who believes that he is above the law of gravity, and violates that law by jumping out of a plane without a parachute, will fall to his death. This is why so many Christians live lives full of destruction.

Believe and Obey

If you are like many women who want to restore their marriages, not only must you believe that God can restore your marriage, but you also must obey His Word. When you read this book, it might help you to remember that the book you are reading was written by someone who was desperate—desperate to follow God’s Word **no matter what!!** How about you? Are you willing to follow God’s Word, no matter what it costs? No matter how much it hurts? The question you must ask yourself is “How important is saving my marriage?”

Receive anything. If you don’t obey God with zealous obedience, you should expect nothing from Him because you are double-minded. “For that man ought not to expect that he will **receive anything** from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (James 1:7–8). “I hate those who are double-minded, but I love Your law” (Ps. 119:113).

Faith by my works. If you say you have the faith to trust God for your marriage, **act** on it. “**What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? . . . But someone may well say, ‘You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works’**” (James 2:14, 18). There are so many testimonies of those who chose to “believe” instead of obeying. Every one of them is still “believing” for their marriage, but not **one** is restored!

Tear it out, and throw it from you. Again, how important is your desire to have a restored marriage? Are you desperate enough to do **whatever it takes** to save it? If you don’t believe God calls us to that kind of obedience, look at what Jesus said in Matt. 5:29–30: “If your right eye makes you stumble, **tear it out, and throw it from you;** for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.”

Through the entire fifth chapter of Matthew, Jesus calls us to a higher obedience than what had been written in the Old Testament. Read it to motivate yourself to obey to the point of looking like a fanatic. If what you are doing right now does not seem crazy to others, you need to become more radical in your commitment to your marriage, because that’s what it takes!

We all must be like Peter in our obedience. Each time he was asked to do something, like allowing Jesus to wash his feet, he went overboard! He even went overboard when Jesus asked him to get out of the boat. He was the only one who followed Jesus with such a zealous commitment. Even so, Jesus rebuked Peter for his little faith (Matt. 14:31). Are you lukewarm? “So **because you are lukewarm,** and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth” (Rev. 3:16).

Trust and believe that God is able and wants to restore and rebuild you, your marriage, and your family. God does not have any other person out there for you, nor does he think you've picked the wrong person. "For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning her husband. So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an **adulteress**; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man" (Rom. 7:2–3).

If you are thinking about remarriage, you should know this—your second marriage has **less than** a 20% chance of survival! You would have an 8 out of 10 chance of going through another painful divorce! Then it's on to numbers three and four. Stop now at whatever number you are on. There is a better way!

Instead, "Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the Lord" (Ps. 27:14; see also Isa. 35:4). "O give us help against the adversary, for deliverance by man is in vain. Through God we shall do valiantly, and it is He who will tread down our adversaries" (Ps. 60:11; see also Ps. 108:12, and please read chapter 11, "For I Hate Divorce," for more knowledge).

Don't run to others about your situation. First talk to God; search His Word for your answer. ". . . Seek and you will find" (Matt. 7:7, Luke 11:9). "He is the Mighty Counselor" (Isa. 9:6). "Do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly" (Ps. 1:1). Don't tell others about your situation: "May a slanderer not be established in the earth" (Ps. 140:11).

Also, "The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain" (Prov. 31:11). "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matt. 12:37). "A slanderer separates intimate friends" (Prov. 16:28; see also Prov. 17:9.) (See chapter 7, "Kindness on Her Tongue," for more knowledge. Such knowledge is not optional but essential: "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge" [Hos. 4:6].)

Ask God for a *female* prayer partner who will believe God with you for your marriage. If you want your marriage **restored, stay away from singles groups!!** You do **not** belong there if it is your desire to have God restore your marriage! Stay away from "support groups" that are too often nothing more than "pity parties." If you want a restored marriage, don't attend a divorce recovery group that will encourage you to move on. You have to choose now whether you want hope or closure with your marriage.

Instead of joining a group, we strongly suggest that you pray and ask the Lord for just **one** other woman who will help you. All I had was one other person and the Lord. All you need is one other person and the Lord! You can find an Encouragement Partner who understands what you are going through on our website.

Stop all arguing with your husband! This one principle will be a deciding factor as to whether your marriage will be restored. There are so many Scriptures on this topic, pages and pages I could type out for you. Here are just a few: "**Agree with your adversary quickly!**" (Matt. 5:25 KJV). "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Prov. 15:1). "The beginning of strife is like letting out of water, so abandon the quarrel before it breaks out" (Prov. 17:14). "Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise . . ." (Prov. 17:28).

"She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue" (Prov. 31:26). "Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, but any **fool** will quarrel" (Prov. 20:3). And, "He who separates himself seeks his own desire, he quarrels against all sound wisdom" (Prov. 18:1). Have you been a contentious woman? (See chapter 6, "A Contentious Woman," and chapter 8, "Won Without a Word," for more knowledge.)

Remove the hate or hurt; then try to look lovingly into your husband's eyes. “They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces will never be ashamed” (Ps. 34:5). “Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” (Matt. 23:12, Luke 14:11, Luke 18:14). Peter asked how many times he should forgive his brother who had sinned against him. “Seven times?” he suggested. But Jesus replied, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to *seventy times seven*” (Matt. 18:22). That’s 490

times! Have you decided *not to forgive* your husband for what he has done to you or to your children? The lack of forgiveness is very dangerous to you and the future of your marriage. (For more knowledge, read the section entitled “Forgiveness” in chapter 9, “A Gentle and Quiet Spirit.”)

You must begin to see your husband as God sees him. Pray for your husband. You need to first forgive him and any who are involved with him—friends, family, co-workers, and even the other woman. (Again, see the section entitled “Forgiveness” in chapter 9, “A Gentle and Quiet Spirit,” to learn more about the dangers of *not* forgiving.) Then you will be ready to pray for the man God wants your husband to be. Stop looking at the bad things he is doing. Replace that with asking God to show you the good that he is doing and especially the good he has done in the past. (See the section entitled “Respectful” in chapter 7, “Kindness on Her Tongue,” for more knowledge.)

Thank God for these things and take the time to thank your husband when he calls or comes by. If your husband has left you, don’t call him! **But if you** have left your husband or ordered him out of the house, **you must call him** and ask for his forgiveness. This point is critical! The longer you wait, the greater the possibility of adultery, if it hasn’t occurred already. (Please read the testimonies on our website, which provide evidence of how these very principles worked in the lives of women who followed them.)

Once you have repented, **do not** keep repenting. This can be counterproductive. Also, whether or not your husband accepts your apology is not the issue. You are doing it out of humility and obedience to God and nothing more.

Speak kindly and lovingly to your husband when you have an opportunity to talk with him. “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones” (Prov. 16:24). “A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones” (Prov. 17:22, Prov. 18:14). **You don’t have to be joyful about your marriage problems; just be joyful that God has them all under His control.** “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11).

Don’t listen to gossip or anyone who tries to give you bad reports about your husband. Love “bears all things, *believes all things*, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails” (1 Cor. 13:7–8). Maybe your husband says he’s not involved with anyone else, yet you *know* he is. Nevertheless, you must believe him instead. You’re not being stupid or naive; you are expressing unconditional or God’s love.

Sometimes it is your family or closest friends who try to persuade you to pursue divorce or to tell your husband off for the things he has done or is doing. You must separate yourself from those who attempt to lead you astray from God by feeding your flesh and emotions. “Leave the presence of a fool or you will not discern words of knowledge” (Prov. 14:7). “He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, therefore do not associate with a gossip” (Prov. 20:19). If you slander your husband, others will slander your husband too! “Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy . . .” (Ps. 101:5).

Because you will receive much advice that is contrary to the will and the Word of God, don’t share your situation with anyone! Ultimately it will arouse self-pity or anger in you! These emotions are of the flesh and

will war against your spirit. God says in Galatians 5:17, “For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.” Listening, discussing, or seeking counsel for your situation will also bring in confusion, since most Christians do **not** really **know** the Word of God. Even pastors may advise you contrary to God’s Word! Unless they have “walked on the same water,” they may disregard or minimize God’s principles when you desperately need the entire **uncompromised** Word of God to save your marriage!

Do not try to find out what your husband is up to. That means following him or any kind of snooping. If you do suspect there is someone else, or you know that there is someone else he is involved with, then do what God says: “Let your eyes look directly in front of you. Watch the path of your feet, and all your ways will be established” (Prov. 4:25). “Do not be afraid of sudden fear nor the onslaught of the wicked when it comes; for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught” (Prov. 3:25–26). Again, remember that love “**believes** all things” (1 Cor. 13:7).

Do not confront your husband or the others involved! That is a net that Satan has left. I, like so many other women, fell into this trap. Watch out! You may satisfy your flesh, but the consequences will destroy you and any feelings your husband may have for you. Don’t talk to the OW over the phone or in person or send her a letter telling her that you forgive her. This is not God. It’s the devil playing on your self-righteousness.

So often, women erroneously think that they should confront their husbands because “they shouldn’t get away with it.” **All** who have confronted their husbands, out of ignorance as I did or out of ignoring this book or my personal warning, have written to tell me how much they regret it! They **all** have shared that it resulted in *many* horrible consequences! Please don’t be like Eve who went ahead and did what she knew she shouldn’t!

Once the sin is out in the open, it will be flaunted in front of your face, and you will **lose the advantage** that God has given you as “the wife of his youth” (Prov. 5:18). Remember, love “**believes** all things . . .” (1 Cor. 13:7).

You must remember at all times that this is a **spiritual** war. As in all wars, it is foolish and dangerous to let the enemy know what you know. No battle in the Bible was ever won by revealing inside information from the Lord! Nor does it tell us to reveal enemy movements. Instead, the Bible warns us to fight this as a spiritual war! First Timothy 1:18 says to “fight the good fight.” “We do not war according to the flesh” (2 Cor. 10:3). We are told instead to “be of sober spirit [which literally means *wake up*], be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

Your husband (and others) is working with the devil, as his slave, to destroy your marriage, future, and children. “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as **slaves** for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of **sin resulting in death**, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16). To win this war, **you** must be a slave of righteousness—don’t confront him about his sin or what you know!!

Do not try to find out where your husband is if he hasn’t given you his whereabouts! This is God’s protection **for you!** Be quiet; be still. Go into your prayer closet and begin to fight the battle through prayer, on your knees before the Lord. God can change your husband’s heart, but you will harden it if you openly reveal mistrust, suspicion, and jealousy. “The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes” (Prov. 21:1). The other woman will then appear to be the one wronged, not you! Every man protects and defends the adulteress when his wife verbally (or physically) attacks the other woman. Be quiet! Listen to the “Be Encouraged” videos to avoid making this fatal mistake.

Don't act hastily in any decision. At this time you are not thinking clearly and are most certainly acting on emotion rather than wisdom. "And he who makes haste with his feet errs" (Prov. 19:2). "The prudent man considers his steps" (Prov. 14:15). "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Prov. 16:25, Prov. 14:12). "Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Prov. 29:20).

"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" (Prov. 16:33). "A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil" (Prov. 14:16). Don't hurry to make changes like setting up a "visitation schedule."

Don't be quick to run to get a divorce. God says, "I hate divorce" (Mal. 2:16). Don't move out or leave your home: "She [a harlot] is boisterous and rebellious; her feet do not remain at home" (Prov. 7:11). Don't follow her ways!

Have you gone to your husband with your needs, your fears, or your problems—only to have him let you down or reject you? Memorize these Scriptures: "My **God** shall supply all my needs according to His riches in glory" (Phil. 4:19). "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, yes, wait **on the Lord**" (Ps. 27:13).

"When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7). "Strength and dignity are her clothing and she smiles at the future" (Prov. 31:25). Instead of pleading, take this opportunity to thank your husband and praise him for how he has taken care of you in the past. This is God's way; it's called **contentment**.

Part of your problem may be your career outside the home. Since God said to wait for things, but we move ahead and charge things, you may have "needed to go to work." Now your house **sits empty** while you work, your children are in day care, and your husband has his own apartment. Satan is a thief!

Soon you will lose the house that you worked so hard for. Allow God to save your house, your family, and your marriage. (For more knowledge, see the section entitled "Servant of All" in "The Ways of Her Household," found in *A Wise Woman*.)

Never seek your husband's help and support in your present trials. There is no better way to drive your husband away from you than to tell him all that is wrong at home! The reason he left you was to "flee" trouble. He will **never** return to a home that is in chaos or come to your rescue—never! A man who leaves or gets involved with another woman is concentrating on finding happiness. If you find help through your "love relationship" with the Lord as you should, when trouble hits (and it will hit!) then your husband will come running back home!

Did you ever encourage your husband to leave? We at Restore Ministries have seen too many wives who have asked their husbands to leave or who have been first to mention the word "divorce" in a time of anger. When you plant bad seeds, don't be surprised if he ends up in adultery. Words have more power than you know. "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36).

If there have been problems like alcohol, drugs, or abuse, don't add adultery to them! Maybe you wanted him to leave because of alcohol, drugs, or abuse. Maybe one of you just felt that you didn't love each other anymore. (Please read the section entitled "Comfort Those" in chapter 8, "Won Without a Word," for more help.) Men who are out of their homes are considered "single" even though they are **not!** Separation is the first step toward divorce, and divorce is a life-changing mistake.

Too many older women, ignorant of the destruction of separation, advise young women to tell their husbands to leave or not to allow them to return home. Older women, as stated in Titus 2, should **teach what is good** and encourage younger women to “love their husbands, to love their children . . . being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.”

The separation that is spoken of in 1 Corinthians 7:5 is to be done with mutual agreement **and** for the purpose of fasting and prayer. This is confirmed in 1 Corinthians 7:13: “And a woman who has [a believing or] an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, **let her not send her husband away.**”

By making a decision to separate or divorce, you will have chosen to destroy not only your life and your husband’s life, but also your children’s lives and future. Your (future) grandchildren, your parents, and all your friends will also feel the devastating effects of this selfish, ignorant, and foolish decision.

By suggesting that your husband leave, you have taken that first step toward divorce. Isn’t it time to turn around before things go any further? The world and Satan have convinced you that this separation or divorce will make things better, but **it is a lie!** If that were true, 8 out of 10 people wouldn’t get divorced in that second or subsequent marriage. Once again, the Bible is clear: “a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her **not send her husband away**” (1 Cor. 7:13).

If your husband has left you, you must stop pursuing, pushing him, or even standing in his way. He will only try harder to get away from you or to run to evil. “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the **way** of sinners . . .” (Ps. 1:1 NIV). The only roadblock should be a “hedge of thorns” (see Hosea 2:6). You should read the book of Hosea in your Bible. We have a prayer written for you to memorize based on the hedge of thorns. (You will find it in chapter 17, “Stand in the Gap.”) Pray it daily *for* your husband.

We have heard of ministries who encourage “standers” to continue to pursue the spouse who has left with phone calls, cards, letters, and statements about their “marriage covenant.” ***This is not scriptural*** and has caused many to become “standers for life”! The Bible says, “. . . if the unbelieving one leaves, **let him leave;** the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has **called us to peace**” (1 Cor. 7:15). If you won’t let go, friction will continue. “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or **stand in the way of sinners . . .**” (Ps. 1:1 NIV). You must let your husband know that he is free to leave (based on 1 Cor. 7:15). This will cause him to stop running, pursuing divorce, or jumping into another marriage!

But I am already divorced. It’s never too late even if a divorce has taken place. Many “remarry” their former spouses **after** they have divorced. “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21). God specifically asked His prophet Hosea to remarry his wife Gomer even after she was blatantly unfaithful to him: “. . . For she is not my wife, and I am not her husband . . .” (Hos. 2:2). “Then she will say, ‘I will go back to my first husband, for it was better for me then than now’” (Hos. 2:7). “Then the Lord said to me [Hosea], ‘Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress’” (Hos. 3:1). God used the story of Hosea and Gomer to show His commitment to His own bride (the church) and His strong stand on marriage.

Don’t allow your children to see your pain or anger toward your husband. Do *all* that you can to shield your children from what is going on. Sharing with them about your marital troubles will only cause them to have bad feelings toward you and/or their father. (Please listen to “Be Encouraged” to see how to do this scripturally.) Don’t place the blame on your husband. “A wise woman **builds** her house but the foolish **tears it down** with her own hands” (Prov. 14:1). The Lord “turns [the heart] wherever **He** wishes” (Prov. 21:1). Be careful where you turn your children’s hearts. “He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and

the hearts of the children to their fathers, *so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse*" (Mal. 4:6), for "the glory of sons is their fathers" (Prov. 17:6).

The Lord has allowed these trials in your life, and your children's lives, for a time, in order to draw you all closer to Him, accomplish His work in all of you, and then draw you back together again for His glory! When your husband is not around to blame, you can then look to God! When you are closer to Him, He can change you more into His image! "They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed" (Ps. 34:5).

Don't allow your children to speak badly about their father. You must demand respect for their father (whether they are 5, 15, or 25!). "Honor your father and your mother" (Exod. 20:12, Deut. 5:16, Mark 7:10). Again remember, "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse" (Mal. 4:6). (If you have spoken badly about their father, first ask God for forgiveness; next ask your husband's forgiveness; and lastly ask your children's forgiveness.) "He who conceals his transgression will not prosper" (Prov. 28:13). Then begin to build him up in the children's (and your) eyes. (See the section entitled "Respectful" in chapter 7, "Kindness on Her Tongue," for more knowledge.)

Remember, you will have trouble enforcing respect for *their* father if **you** exhibit disrespect for **your** husband.

Don't allow your children to become unruly. "A child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother" (Prov. 29:15). Instead of allowing them to vent their anger, use this time to teach them to forgive and pray for their father. When the anger is gone, the pain will be felt; then teach them to rely on God for comfort. This Scripture helped my (then) five-year-old when he memorized it: "For He has said 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Heb. 13:5). Your children are confused right now, so give them clear directions. (For more knowledge, see "Your Mother's Teachings," in *A Wise Woman*.) Again, you will have trouble enforcing this if **you** exhibit a lack of control.

Be careful not to choose the "easiest" road. It may *seem* like the easiest road, but in the end it is the road to even more sadness, trials, difficulties, and heartache than you are now experiencing. We, who have gone through difficult marriages, separation, and/or divorce, want to warn you against any ideas, books, or other people who will sway you to go the way of the world, which **always** ends in disaster! If the world endorses it, as Christians, we know it is the wide road to destruction.

Narrow is the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it! "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matt. 7:13–14). You must look for that narrow way in all your decisions, in the way you speak to others, and in the way you handle the trials that **will** come your way now and in the future.

Please be careful what you read. The books whose foundation is in philosophy or those written by psychologists or marriage counselors can fill your mind with ideas that are **not** scriptural. These destructive ideas that are contrary to God's principles will cause your restoration to go backward, not forward. We have learned the hard way that books that cover such topics as "tough love," "spicing up your marriage," and "co-dependency" have hurt our marriage tremendously. We have seen the damage that these ideas have done to our marriage and to the marriages of the men and women who have told us that they looked to them in their desperation. Instead, renew your mind with God's Word. If you meditate on His Word, God promises in Psalm 1 that you will prosper in **everything** that you do!!

Look to God and to those of “like mind” to encourage you to believe God for your marriage. Please go to the Counselor (God’s Word), which is free, and save your money and your marriage. God wants you to Himself! Stay away from the “professionals.” Every professional has his or her ways and beliefs. There are thousands of Christian and secular marriage counselors and books about marriage problems. If they knew all the answers, why is there an epidemic of divorce especially in the church?!

Where do you begin? What should you do? Begin to move your demolished house onto the rock. “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And 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 upon the rock” (Matt. 7:24–25). “The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands” (Prov. 14:1). “By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches” (Prov. 24:3–4).

Praise God in all things. “Let us continually offer up a **sacrifice** of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15). “Rejoice in the Lord **always**; again I will say, rejoice!” (Phil. 4:4).

Learn to really pray. “I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and **stand in the gap** before Me for the land, that I would not destroy it; but I found no one” (Ezek. 22:30). Standing in the gap does **not** mean standing in your husband’s way!

Take every thought captive. “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

Begin to renew your mind to be like Christ’s and to look down at your situation like God does, from above. Get *A Wise Woman* and work through it with a friend. Get a “Bible Promise Book” from your local Christian bookstore (very inexpensive) and put it in your bathroom. Many women use this as their prayer closet when they have children or a husband in the home. It is a place of refuge and you can pour over His promises to you.

Get 3x5 cards and write down different Bible verses that you can use to renew your mind, to fight in the Spirit (the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God), or to run to when you experience an attack of fear, doubt, or lies. Keep these with you and read them over and over again. Stop talking so much about your problems; listen to God and read His Word. Psalm 1 gives you a promise: “His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he *meditates day and night*. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in *whatever he does*, he **prosperes**.” Practically speaking, if you read and reread this book to the point of wearing it out or take the time to make 3x5 cards with the Scriptures you need, you can’t help but meditate on His Word. Almost every woman I have met who has a restored marriage did one or both of these things.

No marriage is too far gone! “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). Again remember that it is not true that you *and* your husband, together, must seek help to change the marriage. We have seen the good “fruits” of the women who have asked God to change their husbands’ hearts and to work on them, and God was faithful. (See “fruits” in Matt. 7:16, 20.) “And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (Matt. 7:3, Luke 6:41). We pray the same for you: that you will see clearly how to really help your husband by being a godly woman with a gentle and quiet spirit who smiles at the future.

How long? Many women have asked me “how long” their husband will be gone or “how long” their trial will continue. It may help you if you think about it as a journey. How long it takes often depends on you. As the Lord shows you an area that He is working on, work *with Him*. Do not become sidetracked with everyday life. Satan will bring in “the cares of the world” in order to choke the Word out of you. He also will bring situations, emergencies, and other crises that will divert your attention away from your destination—your restored family!

Too often our journey seems to have “stalled.” Just take the next step of obedience. Our “Be Encouraged” videos or audiotapes can help. When you become weary with the “wait,” do not lose heart. This is the time

our Lord is using to stretch our faith and focus our attention on His workings in our lives. All that is required is our obedience, which will release spiritual power to work on our behalf. It is not necessary that God gives us a detailed explanation of what He is doing. We know that He will work out His purposes through whatever happens even when we have made a mistake. We must believe that He is working with people and situations and arranging circumstances for His good for us.

There Is MORE Help!

When women continued to come to us weary and needing hope, we were led to create a fellowship on our website to give more help, support, compassion, and guidance to those seeking to restore their marriages and all the relationships in their lives.

We would like to invite you to join our fellowship. We have received so many awesome praise reports about this area of our ministry, and it is growing by word of mouth. What is even more exciting is that we have seen more relationships restored on a regular basis than we ever thought possible!

We also want to help you find an ePartner, which is an encouragement, prayer, and accountability partner. Women are paired with other women who are going through the same or a similar situation and have a heart to restore every area of their lives. If you would like to join, visit our website at:

RestoreMinistries.net

or

RMIEW.com

Many women in your situation rave about the change in them and their situation after reading *A Wise Woman*, which appears to be foundational to your restoration.

To give more hope when everyone keeps telling you that your situation is hopeless, we have our testimony book, *By the Word of Their Testimony*. This book is filled with testimonies of hopeless marriages that God miraculously restored. If your parents, friends, pastor, or coworkers think you are crazy because you believe God can restore your marriage, give them a *By the Word of Their Testimony* book and watch them begin to *encourage* you rather than *discourage* you!

We also have a book, *Questions and Answers*, that has proven to be extremely helpful in answering many of the questions you may have concerning marriage restoration. This book contains over 300 questions, which are answered through Scripture. In this book you will find the answers to most, if not all, of the questions you may have in terms of the practical walking out of the principles that you are now learning about.

Our most popular resource is a video series that goes into more detail and gives you more help in answering your many questions—the “Be Encouraged” video series. These will answer most, if not all, of the questions you may now have in terms of practically walking out the principles that you have just read or will read.

We look forward to the opportunity to help you through our website and to pray for you as you post prayer requests. Until then, let me pray for you now . . .

“Dear Lord, please guide this special sister during the trouble in her marriage. And her ears shall hear a word behind her saying, this is the way, walk here, when she turns to her right and when she turns to her left (see Isa. 30:21).

“Please reassure her when she sees a thousand fall on her right side and ten thousand at her left; help her to know that if she follows You, it will not happen to her (see Ps. 91:7). Hide her under your protective wings.

“Help her to find the narrow path that will lead her to life, the abundant life you have for her and for her family. Lord, I pray for a testimony that you can use for Your glory when this troubled or broken marriage is healed and restored! We will give You all the honor and the glory. Amen.”

Chapter 2

The Potter and the Clay

. . . *We are the clay,
and Thou our potter;
and we all are the work of Thy hand.*
—Isaiah 64:8 KJV

When we are going through a marriage crisis, it is so easy to focus on what our husbands are doing to us. However, as long as you do this, you will struggle and never come to victory. In chapter 8, “Won Without a Word,” we will learn that our husbands are not the enemy.

Let us learn, in this chapter, that God many times is not changing our husbands (their attitude or behavior) because God is using the things our husbands are doing as the Potter’s wheel while His hands are molding us more into His image. However, if we complain because we would rather He use something or someone else—not our husbands and not our marriages—as His wheel, we will find ourselves wandering in the desert land for years!

Quarrel with his Maker? “Woe to the one who **quarrels with his Maker**’—an earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you doing?’ or the thing you are making say, ‘He has no hands?’” (Isa. 45:9). Let God be God. Instead of complaining about “how” or “whom” He uses to irritate us into finally seeking God to change us, praise Him for His faithfulness! He is determined to bring you forth as a beautiful vessel ready for **His** use.

But you don’t understand. Many women tell me as I try to comfort them or encourage them that I “just don’t understand!” In many ways I *do* understand, yet they are right that no one except Jesus really understands. “. . . Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, that what is made would say to its maker, . . . ‘**He has no understanding**?’” (Isa. 29:16). Talk to Him about your situation and allow Him to give you peace. He knows what’s best for you, so work with Him.

You are in His hand. “Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you **in My hand . . .**” (Jer. 18:6). Isn’t it comforting to know that you are in God’s hand? Though your husband may tell you that he doesn’t care, or treat you as if he doesn’t, your Lord does. Who else do you need? The truth is that your husband does care.

God’s Prescription

God has a prescription for healing a nation or a family. He says if “My people who are called by My name **humble** themselves and **pray** and **seek My face** and **turn from their wicked ways**, then I will *hear* from heaven, will *forgive* their sin, and will *heal* their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

God told us that if we would **humble** ourselves, if we pray, if we seek His face (not His hand) *and* turn from our wicked ways, then *He will hear*—hear, forgive, and heal us. Instead, we “walk in the counsel of the wicked” (Ps. 1:1) and “trust in mankind” (Jer. 17:5), so now we suffer the consequences—superficial healing!

“The brokenness of His people is healed superficially” (Jer. 8:11). “And they have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ but there is no peace” (Jer. 6:14).

Instead, we are to die to self. “And He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live **for themselves**, but **for Him** who died and rose again on *their behalf*” (2 Cor. 5:15).

Only the Humble

Humble yourself. Self-willed, haughty people understand the Word without the Spirit, but to know the mind of God we need **humility!**

Humility will be tested. “. . . He might **humble** you, **testing** you, to know *what was in your heart*, whether you would *keep His commandments* or not” (Deut. 8:2).

Humility will save you. “When you are **cast down**, you will *speak with confidence* and the **humble** person He will **save**” (Job 22:29).

Humility will strengthen your heart. “O Lord, You have **heard** the *desire* of the **humble**; You will **strengthen their heart**, You will *incline Your ear . . .*” (Ps. 10:17).

Only the humble will be exalted. “He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has **exalted** those who were **humble**” (Luke 1:52).

Only the humble will be given the grace that they need. “But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, ‘GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT *GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.*’ Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you” (James 4:6, 10).

Humility is rooted in the spirit. “To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and **humble in spirit . . .**” (1 Pet. 3:8). Your false humility will be manifested in a self-righteous attitude.

Spiritual arrogance. Over half of those who come to our ministry for help to restore their marriages exhibit spiritual arrogance or self-righteousness. This is what I refer to as a Pharisee spirit. Ladies, this is so dangerous. It *will* prevent God from moving your marriage toward restoration, and it is what is really driving your husband away.

God showed me, in His Word, that Jesus was only harsh, critical, and opposed to one set of individuals—the Pharisees! And I was one of them! I am sorry to say that there are far too many Christian women who pretend to be spiritual on the outside but are filthy on the inside. There are so many women who look at their husband’s sins yet neglect to look at the log in their own eye. Ladies, this was me! I saw my husband and *his* sin of adultery. However, no one could see my contentiousness, my deceitfulness, or my spiritual arrogance.

Others saw me (and I saw myself) as the “poor victim” who had been abandoned and cheated on. But **I**, in my self-righteousness, was willing to forgive. **I was** the one desperately trying to hold our broken family together. **I was** the one waiting, with open arms, to forgive my husband, “the sinner,” when he came to his senses, by repenting and coming back home from the far country! Scribe, Pharisee, “white-washed tomb”!!

If you can identify with this sinful and prideful mind-set, if this is you, I would beg you to get on your face before God, and ask Him to cleanse you of this attitude that will not only inhibit restoration but also put you in opposition to a sincere and intimate relationship with God.

Pray! Begin by praying Psalm 51:2–4: “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, and blameless when Thou dost judge.” There is much more on praying in the last two chapters of this book.

Seek My face. “If . . . My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and **seek My face** . . .” (2 Chron. 7:14). “Seek the Lord and His strength; *seek His face continually*” (1 Chron. 16:11). “. . . *seek My face*; in their affliction they will **earnestly** seek Me” (Hos. 5:15).

They were radiant. “They **looked to Him** and were **radiant**, and their faces shall never be ashamed” (Ps. 34:5). Seek His face! So many seek His hand (what He can **do** for *me*). Those who seek the face of God will inherit all things!

Turn from your wicked ways. “If . . . My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and **turn from their wicked ways** . . .” (2 Chron. 7:13). Scriptures are not only for the head; they are for the heart and the will. To get the real impact of Scripture, we must surrender our lives and our wills to the leading of the Spirit. We must be willing to be made over. We must yield to Him.

To obey is better than sacrifice. “Behold, to **obey is better than sacrifice**, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry” (1 Sam. 15:22). Do you know the right thing to do, yet you do not do it? Obey it! “Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).

Walk in the Spirit

Walk in the Spirit. Being filled with the Holy Spirit will enable you to walk in the Spirit, not in sin or fleshly desires. Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit right now! “And I will put **My Spirit** within you and *cause* you to **walk in My statutes**, and you will be careful to **observe My ordinances**” (Ezek. 36:27). “But I say, *walk by the Spirit*, and you will not carry out the **desire of the flesh**” (Gal. 5:16). (For more information on being “filled with the Holy Spirit,” watch or listen to the “Be Encouraged” series. Once you are “filled,” you will have power that you never had before to make it through to restoration victory!)

Pray. “If . . . My people who are called by My name humble themselves and **pray** . . .” (2 Chron. 7:13–16). At a RMI Home Fellowship, all the women whose husbands were with other women (OW) prayed for their “wombs to be closed.” All but one was closed. God used this child as the tool to mend this family.

We can always trust God to bring about everything for our good because “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**” (Rom. 8:28).

What “Condition” Is Needed to Be Heard?

Conform your desires to His will. Jesus' promise is based on this condition: "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7). When your heart rests in Jesus alone and *your will* is centered in **His will**, you are truly making Him Lord. To know His will is to know His Word. It is His will that your marriage be healed. He hates divorce, and we are to be reconciled; however, He has conditions.

The condition for every blessing. Each promise given by God has a condition for that blessing. Many will claim a portion of the Scripture, yet omit the conditions or overlook them.

Condition: "Believe on the Lord Jesus . . ."

Promise: ". . . and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Condition: "Delight yourself in the Lord . . ."

Promise: ". . . and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps. 37:4).

Condition: "Train up a child in the way he should go . . ."

Promise: ". . . even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

Condition: First, "to those who love God . . ."

And secondly, ". . . to those who are called according to His purpose."

Promise: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good . . ." (Rom. 8:28.)

Your Tears Are Precious to Him

To whom do we cry? Men seem to hate our tears. Is it because they don't know what to do when a woman cries, or because the female has used tears to manipulate him so much so that he stands afar? The fact that God is a jealous God and those tears belong to Him could be the reason for our husbands' indifference, at times, to our tears. "Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; **you will cry**, and He will say, '**Here I am**'" (Isa. 58:9). "*Do not cease to cry to the Lord* our God for us" (1 Sam. 7:8).

This victory may take longer to be manifested in the flesh: We hope for the things that are **unseen**. It will need our faith in God. Cry to Him **alone**, not to your husband! Only God has the power to change your situation!

My tears. "I am **weary with my sighing; every night** I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my **tears**" (Ps. 6:6). "My **tears** have been *my food day and night*, while they say to me all day long" (Ps. 42:3). "Put my **tears** in Thy *bottle*; are they not *in Thy book*?" (Ps. 56:8). "Those who sow in **tears** shall reap with joyful shouting" (Ps. 126:5). "'Yet even now,' declares the Lord, 'Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, **weeping**, and **mourning** . . .'" (Joel 2:12). To find a greater walk and intimacy with the Lord, visit our website first thing in the morning for our Daily Devotional for fellowship members, written especially for those in marital crisis.

Tears, crying out, wailing. You must find and write down Scriptures that will help you understand the heartfelt sincerity needed when we cry out to God (especially for our husbands' salvation or for a broken or troubled marriage). As you read through them, mark those that move your heart and memorize them during your prayer time, on your knees and before the Lord. We are told to pray and to cry out to God.

Personal commitment: to allow God to change me. “Based on what I have learned from God’s Word, I commit to allowing God to change me through whatever means or through whomever He chooses. I will focus my attention on changing myself rather than my husband or others around me.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Chapter 3

Have Faith

*And Jesus answered them,
“Have faith in God.”
—Mark 11:22*

Do You Have Faith or Fear?

Fear will be one of the greatest attacks that you will need to overcome. Romans 12:21 tells us “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Fear will steal your faith and make you totally vulnerable to the enemy. When you listen to all that others tell you about what your husband is doing or not doing, instead of keeping your eyes on the Lord and His Word, you will fail to focus on Him and you will begin to sink!

Have faith in God’s ability and His desire to restore your marriage. Again, read the testimonies of restored marriages, and **believe** that yours will be added to theirs!

An example of faith: Peter. Read the account of Peter in Matthew 14 starting in verse 22. Jesus asked Peter to walk on water. If He is asking you to walk on water, are you going to get out of the boat? Watch when Peter cries out to Jesus—it is always followed by the word **immediately**. Immediately, Jesus spoke to them and told them to take courage. When Peter began to sink and he cried out to the Lord, “immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him”! (Matt. 14:31).

Fear. A question we must ask ourselves is “why did Peter sink?” “But seeing the wind, he became afraid” (Matt. 14:30). If you look at your situation and at the battle that is raging before you, you will sink! Peter took his eyes off of the Lord and the result was fear! It says “he became afraid.” If you take your eyes off of the Lord, you will become fearful.

Instead, look to **Jesus** and *rise* above your storm. When you are in an airplane in the midst of a storm, it is very bumpy when you are climbing above the clouds. Once the plane is above those black clouds, the flight is smooth, the sun is shining, and you can almost see and feel God there! Amazingly, from that vantage point, the clouds below are white and soft!

Your testimony. Another very important point is to see what happened to the others who were in the boat. (Did you forget that there were others who didn’t get out of the boat?) It says, “And those who were in the boat worshiped Him saying, ‘You are certainly God’s Son!’” (Matt. 14:33). Are you willing to allow God to use you to show His goodness, His loving kindness, His protection, and to draw others to Him? There is a great reward! This is evangelism. Others will come to you when they are having trouble because they have seen your peace despite your circumstances.

Overcome

The wind stopped. “And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped” (Matt. 14:32). Your battle will not go on forever. This test was needed to make Peter strong enough to be the “Rock” of which Jesus had spoken (Matt. 16:18). Satan (and others working for him) will tell you that you will stay in the trial unless you get away or give in and give up.

God never intended us to remain “in the valley of the shadow of death.” In Psalm 23, it says that we go “**through** the valley of the shadow of death.” Satan wants us to think that God wants us to **live there!** He wants to paint a “hopeless” picture! God is our hope, and hope is the faith in His Word that has been sown in our hearts.

Faith

Abraham. A second example is when Abraham was 90 years old and still without the child God had promised him. It says, “He hoped against hope” (Rom. 4:18). Isn’t that good? Even when all hope was gone, he continued to believe God and take Him at His Word. We **must** do the same.

Act on the faith that you have. “And He said to them, ‘Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have **faith as a mustard seed**, you shall say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it shall move; and **nothing** shall be impossible to you’” (Matt. 17:20).

If you lack faith. If you lack faith, you should ask God. There is a battle, even for our faith. “Fight the good **fight of faith . . .**” (1 Tim. 6:12). And “I have fought the **good fight**, I have finished the course, I have kept the **faith . . .**” (2 Tim. 4:7) “And He [Jesus] could do **no miracle** there except that He laid His hands upon a few sick people and healed them. And He wondered at their **unbelief**” (Mark 6:5). When the Lord lays His hands on you and your marriage, will He marvel at *your* unbelief?

Imitators of faith. We would do well to imitate those in Scripture who exhibited faith (You can find the “Hall of Faith” in Hebrews, chapter 11). We need to act on God’s promises: “but **imitators** of those who through **faith and patience inherit the promises**” (Heb. 6:12). There are many women who have followed the principles found in this book who have had victory over troubled or even broken marriages. Their testimonies will encourage you in your faith. Believe as the song says, “What He’s done for others, He’ll do for you!” Read all the incredible testimonies of marriages that God restored on our website at EncouragingWomen.org.

Doubt Destroys

Double-minded or doubting. You must not be double-minded. Your mind must not waver or doubt God. “But let him **ask in faith without any doubting**, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, **unstable in all his ways**” (James 1:6–8). “I **hate** those who are **double-minded**, but I love Thy law” (Ps. 119:13).

If you have trouble with double-mindedness, you need to read and meditate on God’s Word, which is the only truth! You *must* also separate yourself from *anyone* who continues to tell you something contrary to your desire to restore your marriage. You must also always speak the **truth** to everyone about your faith in God’s ability and His desire to restore your marriage.

Faith without works. “But someone may well say, ‘You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will **show you my faith by my works**’” (James 2:18). Show others that you have faith by your actions. If you believe that your husband will return home, act like it. Leave his side of the closet empty, his side of the bed empty, his drawers empty—and make *sure* you wear your wedding ring! “But are you willing to recognize, you *foolish fellow*, that **faith without works is useless?**” (James 2:20). If you believe that what you are praying for is going to happen, start treating that person as if they were changed!

Don't get ahead of God. Don't move. Don't buy a house thinking it's for you and your husband when he comes home. Instead, wait on this side of the Jordan—don't enter the Promised Land without your husband! God is a God of **waiting**. Urgency is usually from the enemy.

Firm in your faith. Remind yourself of those who overcame and thus received the abundant life God promised. “But resist him, **firm in your faith**, knowing that the **same experiences** of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world” (1 Pet. 5:9). Read and reread the testimonies on our website and in our book *By the Word of Their Testimony*. Keep the testimonies of others in the front of your mind. Share these testimonies with your family and friends who doubt that your marriage can be saved or that God is unable or unwilling to change your husband. (He changed you didn't He?)

How to Increase Your Faith

The Word. How can we gain faith or increase our faith? “So **faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ**” (Rom. 10:17). Read His Word and the testimonies of others. Surround yourself with faithful **women** who will believe with you. Those who have stood for God will teach you and hold you up. Many times we find that when you feel like you are almost out of faith, you should give away what little you have left. Call someone you sense needs encouraging and give her the rest of your faith. You will hang up the phone rejoicing because God will fill you **full** of faith. Read 1 Kings 17:12–15 to remember the widow who gave her last cake to Elijah and the miracle *she* received!

So many come to us for help and fail to reap a restored marriage because they feel they are unable to sow into anyone else's life as they are struggling to save their own marriage. This is unbiblical and contrary to God's principles. Get yourself an Encouragement Partner and help her restore her marriage. You can also start an Encouragement Course in your home or church if you have leadership abilities. God used me (and others) powerfully as we ministered to others in our pain and lack—and God blessed our efforts with restored marriages!

Obedience. Don't forget that obedience to God is paramount to victory. Don't forget what Jesus said: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS’” (Matt. 7:21, 23). If you **practice** or keep doing what you now know is contrary to the biblical principles found in this book, your marriage will **not** be restored!

In God's will. If your heart convicts you that you are not in God's will and that you are not following His principles in this book, then of course you will have no confidence and no faith to receive your request from the Lord. Ask God to “break” you so your will becomes His will.

You MUST Wait

Wait for His timing. God seems to work on *one* thing at a time. We must work *with* Him in His timing. This does not mean we need to **wait to pray**; it only means we need to wait for God to change the situation at the proper time. Thank God that He doesn't dump (through conviction) all my sins on top of me all at once! Just use the time while you wait to pray. Many times the battle will continue to rage on your behalf. There may be many battles that must be fought (and won) in the war against your marriage. Just remember, “When the battle is the Lord's, the victory is ours!”

We have the comfort of knowing that He hears us immediately, but the response may seem slow. In the book of Daniel, an angel spoke to him and gave us these insights: “. . . From the **first day** that you **set your heart** on understanding this and on **humbling yourself** before God, *your words were heard*, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of Persia was withstanding me for **twenty-one days**” (Dan. 10:12–13). It may take some time to win the battles, so do not become weary. “But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of **doing good**” (2 Thess. 3:13).

Personal commitment: to allow God to change me. “Based on what I have learned from God’s Word, I commit to seeking God and His Word to increase my faith in His ability to restore my marriage. I will fight fear by keeping my eyes on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of my faith.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Chapter 4

Various Trials

*“Consider it all joy, my brethren,
when you encounter various trials,
knowing that the testing of your faith
produces endurance.”*
—James 1:2–3

What is **God’s** purpose for our trials and tribulations? There are too many Christians who have no idea why God allows our sufferings. Without this understanding, is it any wonder that Christians today are so easily defeated? We will see that there are many *benefits* that come from our trials and tests, especially the building of our faith and the endurance needed to finish the course set before us.

The most important thing we need to realize during our trials, tribulations, tests, and temptations is that **God is in control!** It is **His** hand that allows these trials to touch us or not touch us. When He does allow it, He sends His grace that enables us to endure it.

Permission for adversity. The most comforting thing to know is that Satan cannot touch us without God’s permission. “Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your power, only **do not put forth your hand on him**’” (Job. 1:12). Satan not only needs permission, but he is also given specific instructions on how he can touch us. “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat . . .” (Luke 22:31).

Temptations. The temptations that we experience, Scripture tells us, are common to man, yet God does provide a way of escape. “No temptation has overtaken you but that which is **common to man**; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the **temptation** will provide **the way of escape** also, *that you may be able to endure it*” (1 Cor. 10:13). He is not going to take you out of the fire until you are willing to walk in it, walk through it, and endure it!

Temptations are brought on by our own lusts. Lust is simply what *we* want. Also, God cannot tempt us to do evil. Instead, it is our lusts that tempt us to do what we know we shouldn’t! “Let no one say when he is being tempted, ‘I am being **tempted by God**’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and **enticed by his own lust**” (James 1:13–14). Women are caught up in condemning their husbands’ lusts (adultery, drugs, alcohol, or pornography), yet they fail to see their own lusts for food, buying, or even their marriages! Lust is lust—a desire for what *we* want!

We are in His hand. “For I have taken all this to my heart and explain it that righteous men, wise men and their deeds are **in the hand of God**” (Eccl. 9:1). We make the mistake of foolishly trying to get things from others, especially from our husbands, when *all* that we receive will be from the Lord!

“Many seek the ruler’s favor, but **justice for man comes from the Lord**” (Prov. 29:26).

“The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but **victory belongs to the Lord**” (Prov. 21: 31).

“The lot is cast into the lap, but its **every decision is from the Lord**” (Prov. 16:33).

“The king’s **heart** is like channels of water **in the hand of the Lord**; He turns it wherever He wishes” (Prov. 21:1).

Repentance and salvation. “I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the **will of God**, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the **will of God** produces a **repentance without regret**, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death” (2 Cor. 7:9–10). God allows us to be sorrowful to bring us to repentance. When we try to make our husbands (or others) sorry for what they have done, it will not bring true and genuine repentance, but instead will **harden** their hearts toward us (and God)!

We need grace. “And He has said to me, ‘My **grace** is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, I am **well content** with **weaknesses**, with **insults**, with **distresses**, with **persecutions**, with **difficulties**, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor. 12:9–10). You will *never* see restoration until you exhibit contentment in your trials.

Amazing Grace

How do we get the grace we need to make it through our trials? We gain grace through humility.

“God hates the proud but **gives grace** to the **humble**” (James 4:6).

“For everyone who exalts himself will be **humbled**, but he who **humbles** himself will be exalted” (Luke 18:14).

“Blessed are the **humble** for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5).

“A man’s pride will bring him low, but a **humble spirit** will obtain honor” (Prov. 29:23).

Boasting about our weaknesses, confessing our faults, and being humble will enable the Holy Spirit to dwell in us. Then we will learn contentment no matter what our circumstances. Once we are content, God can give us what we’ve been seeking—our husbands back!

Learning contentment. We see that we must *learn* contentment by the difficult circumstances that God has allowed. “Not that I speak from want, for I have **learned** to be **content** in whatever circumstances I am . . . In every circumstance I have **learned the secret** of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need” (Phil. 4:11–12).

Learning obedience. Even Jesus learned obedience from His suffering. “Although He was a Son, He *learned obedience* from *the things* which He **suffered**” (Heb. 5:8).

He will perfect us. “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who **began a good work in you** will **perfect** it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6). Once He has begun a good work in you (your husband or loved ones), **He** will complete it. Please don’t try to play “junior holy spirit” with your husband!

We are to be a comfort to others. We are not merely to accept God’s comfort—we are commanded to give that comfort to others, no matter what their affliction! “The God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to **comfort** those who are in **any affliction** with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2 Cor. 1:3–4).

Our Father’s discipline. Many times our suffering is discipline for disobeying God’s Law. “My son, do not regard lightly the **discipline** of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprovved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He **disciplines**, and He scourges *every son* whom He receives. It is for **discipline** that you **endure**; God deals with you as with sons . . . He **disciplines** us for our good, so that we *may share His holiness*” (Heb. 12:5–10). When a trial comes into your day, ask yourself, “Is this God disciplining me, or is He testing me to see how I am going to react?”

Discipline is a blessing. We must follow the examples of the prophets in the Bible to help others to endure their adversity. “As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we count those **blessed** who **endured**. You have heard of the **endurance** of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful” (James 5:10).

To receive a blessing. When evil is done to us or insults are cast our way, we must endure them, without returning them, to receive our blessing. We need to remember that insults and evils are brought into our lives to give us an **opportunity** to receive a blessing. First Peter 3:9 says, “Not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a **blessing** instead, for you were called for the very purpose that you may inherit a **blessing.**” “But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are **blessed**. And do not fear their intimidations and do not be troubled” (1 Pet. 3:14). If you continue to respond with an insult or another evil, don’t expect to be blessed.

Discipline may be sorrowful. Discipline is never joyful when you are in the midst of it. Yet, those who have been trained by His discipline know the rewards of righteousness—peace and a restored marriage. “All **discipline** for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been **trained** by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11).

It begins with Christians. Why must suffering first begin with Christians? It begins with Christians first because sinful, disobedient Christians will never draw others to the Lord. Again, it is the “will of God” that we are put through sufferings. We need to *allow* ourselves to suffer (usually at the hands of another, even our own husbands) by entrusting ourselves to God. “For it is time for judgment to **begin** with the household of God; and if it **begins** with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? Therefore, those also who **suffer** according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right” (1Pet. 4:17, 19).

The power of our faith. It is our faith that opens the door to miracles. You need to believe that He is able to restore your marriage, and not doubt, in your heart. “And Jesus answered saying to them, ‘Have **faith** in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, be taken up and cast into the sea, and **does not doubt it in his heart**, but **believes** that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray, they shall be granted unto you’” (Mark 11:22–24).

God in His Word has told us that we will suffer. “For indeed when we were with you, we kept *telling you in advance* that we were going to *suffer affliction*; and so it came to pass, as you know. For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your **faith**, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain” (1 Thess. 3:4–5). What has happened in your marriage is *not* a sign that

it is over. It is what God used to get your attention and is now using to change you. Don't give up! Don't let Satan steal the miracle that God has for you when you have endured and prevailed!

With God. “With men this is impossible, but with God **all things are possible**” (Matt. 19:26). “Looking upon them, Jesus said, ‘With men it is impossible, but not with God; for **all things are possible with God**’” (Mark 10:27). Nothing (**not a thing**) is impossible with God. Work **with God**. Don't have *your* plan and expect God to bless it. He is not going to work *with* you; instead, *you* must work **with God**.

What you speak. “. . . Let us **hold fast our confession**” (Heb. 4:14). “But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, **always being ready** to make a defense to everyone *who asks you* to give an account of the **hope that is in you**, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet. 3:15). “If it be so, our God whom we serve is **able to deliver** us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But **even if He does not** . . .” (Dan. 3:17–18). We need to speak what God says in His Word, without wavering, with hope on our lips. Wait until you are asked to give an account. You **will** be asked if you are filled with the joy of the Lord in the midst of your adversity! When asked about your hope regarding your marriage, be sure that you answer the other person with reverence, respect, and gentleness. Never use Scripture to argue with anyone!

Note: If it is your husband who asks, remember, he will be won “without a word”!

Gird your mind and stay fixed. “Therefore, **gird your minds** for action, keep **sober** in spirit, **fix your hope** completely on the **grace** to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:13). (Sober means clear thinking.) Be clear in your mind about what you really believe to avoid the consequences of double-mindedness.

Be joyful. We are to be joyful in our trials because we know they are producing endurance that will enable us to finish the course set before us. “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter **various trials**, knowing that the **testing of your faith** produces **endurance**. And let **endurance** have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask **in faith without any doubting**, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind” (James 1:2–6).

Be prepared—your faith *will* be tested! Fears and doubts come into everyone's mind; just don't entertain them! Instead, think only good things. If you doubt, you will have trouble believing and the trials will become harder. Remember, we will have a “variety” of trials, some major and others mere irritations. We need to thank Him for *all* of our trials. This is our sacrifice of praise.

Rejoice! “**Rejoice** in the Lord always; again I will say **rejoice!** **Let your gentle spirit be known to all men.** The Lord is near! Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with **thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute [report], if there is any excellence or **anything worthy of praise**, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, **practice these things**; and the God of peace will be with you” (Phil. 4:4–9).

Clearly, most battles are won or lost in the mind. Follow the Lord's advice for peace during your trials to gain victory over them—**praise** the Lord in the midst of them! Rejoice for what you *know* He is doing. Then think on this, speak of this, and listen only to this. Many times close friends call to tell you what your husband is up

to. These usually are not “good reports” and most of the time they are not lovely, pure, or right—so don’t listen!

Faith is *not* seen. So often, women write to me because they are looking for signs of improvement in their marriage or in their husband’s attitude toward them. You must remember that Scripture is very clear—faith is **unseen!**

When others ask you about your situation, answer them with, “Praise the Lord—God is working!”

“Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For our **momentary, light affliction** is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are **not seen**; for the things which are seen are **temporal**, but the things which are **not seen are eternal**” (2 Cor. 4:16–18).

Faith is the conviction of things *not* seen. When you are experiencing what Paul calls “light affliction,” it may still be breaking your heart and may be *very* painful. Remind yourself of the most important truth: these afflictions are meant to be only **momentary!** These same afflictions are not only temporary but they are producing something wonderful for you—they are getting you ready for a new and wonderful marriage. Remember, the suffering is temporary but the benefits will last an eternity! “Now **faith** is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things *not* seen” (Heb. 11:1).

Walk by faith—not by sight. Most people start believing when they begin to “see something happening,” but this is not faith! “For we walk by faith, **not by sight**” (2 Cor. 5:7).

Looking at our circumstances. When Peter looked at *his* circumstances, he sank—and you will too. “And He said ‘Come!’ And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But **seeing the wind**, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, ‘Lord save me!’ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, ‘You of little faith, why did you doubt?’” (Matt. 14:29–31).

For our testing. Probably the most important lesson in our stand for our families and our marriages is being able to pass our test—the test of our faith in His Word and not being swayed by emotion or false statements made by others. “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the **testing of your faith** produces endurance. And let **endurance** have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:2). When you are perfected and your refining is complete, *then* you will see your husband home!

Tested by fire. “In this you greatly rejoice, even though for a little while, if necessary you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though **tested by fire**, may be found to *result in praise and glory and honor* at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:6–7).

So many have failed their test and have continued to walk in the desert as the people of Israel did because they lacked faith. They murmured and complained, which led to rebellion. The proof of your faith, which is a heart full of faith and contentment in your *present* circumstances, is more precious than gold.

Keep the faith. Do not turn to another plan when things get tough; do not compromise what you started out to do. Satan is known for bringing new (and wrong) solutions to our trials. Discerning and deciding to stay on

the right path is the test we must continue to pass. “I have fought the good fight, I have *finished the course*, I have **kept the faith**; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness . . .” (2 Tim. 4:7–8).

A cord of three. If you have been walking with the Lord for some time and have become weary, ask God to send you one other woman who will help you **not bend** from your commitment. “Two are better than one for they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. ***A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart***” (Eccl. 4:9–12). Here are some three-cord examples found in the Scriptures:

Moses, Aaron, and Hur: “But Moses’ hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set” (Ex. 17:12). Also see **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego** in the book of Daniel, chapter 3. You, just *one* friend, and the Lord are a *powerful* threefold cord!!

A Quick Reference to Trials and Tribulations

God is the One in control, not man and *not* the devil!

1. Justice is from the Lord (Prov. 29:26).
2. An answer is from the Lord (Prov. 16:1).
3. The heart is turned by the Lord (Prov. 21:1).
4. Their deeds are in God’s hand (Eccl. 9:1).
5. Thou (God) has done it (Ps. 44:9–15).
6. He (God) raised the storm (Ps. 107:1–32).
7. He (God) removed lover and friend (Ps. 88:8, 18).

What do our trials do *for* us?

1. The power of Christ will dwell in us (2 Cor. 12:9–10).
2. We will learn to be content (Phil. 4:9).
3. We will receive a reward (2 Tim. 4:7, 19).
4. We lack nothing (James 1:2–4).
5. He will enable us to comfort others (2 Cor. 3:1–4).
6. He will perfect what He started in us (Phil. 1:6–13).
7. We will have our loved one back (Phlm. 1:15).
8. We will receive mercy (Heb. 4:15).
9. We will learn obedience (Heb. 5:7–8).
10. They will produce endurance (James 1:2–4).
11. We will receive the crown of life (James 1:12).
12. We will prove our faith (1 Pet. 1:6–7).
13. We will follow in His steps (1 Pet. 2:21).
14. We will share in His sufferings (1 Pet. 3:13).
15. We will be perfected, confirmed, strengthened, and established (1 Pet. 5:10).

Ask God for guidance through every trial. “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and **lean not** unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:5–6 KJV).

Let us call on **Him** for strength and draw close to **Him** in our time of need. Let us allow **Him** to discipline us, try us, and test us. Let us rejoice always in *all things*, not just in the good but also in the troubles that come our way. Let us keep our hope close to our lips and stay steadfast in our minds. Let us always remember that it is **His will** that we face these hard times and that they are for our good!

“Let us rejoice that He considers us worthy to suffer for His name!” (Acts 5:41).

“She smiles at the future” (Prov. 31:25).

“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**” (Rom. 8:28).

Personal commitment: to consider it all joy when I encounter various trials. “Based on what I have learned from God’s Word, I commit to allowing the **testing of my faith** to help produce my **endurance**. And I will let **endurance** have its perfect result, that I may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____

For more encouragement and to understand God’s benefits and blessings for the trials He has allowed in your life, get the audio or videotape “Esther.” It will help you tap into your trials, which will ultimately set you in a place of royalty and influence “for such a time as this.

Chapter 5

Your First Love

*But I have this against you,
that you have left your first love.
—Revelation 2:4*

Have you left your first love? Who is your first love? Was your husband your first love? Is your baby or your children first in your life, above your husband and the Lord? Has your career been first? Who is really **first** in your life? “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” (Matt. 10:37). The Scripture in Revelation says: “But I have this against you, that you have left your **first love**” (Rev. 2:4).

What is our Lord saying to us? He is saying that any time we put someone or something ahead of our love for or our relationship with Him, then we are not worthy of His Love.

Seek first. You are to put Him first in your priorities, first in your day and first in your heart. “But **seek first** His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

Dirty rags. Ask yourself these questions: Do the things I put first have eternal value? Will what I do today help to increase His kingdom? Am I seeking after His righteousness or trying to muster up my own righteousness? Remember, our righteousness is like **dirty rags!** (See Isa. 64:6.)

What happens when you put someone ahead of the Lord? What does He do to draw you back to Him? If you have put your husband ahead of the Lord, then it was the Lord who has taken your husband from you. “*You* have [God has] removed my acquaintances far from me; *You* have [God has] made me an object of loathing to them. You have [God has] removed lover and friend far from me; my acquaintances are in darkness” (Ps. 88:8, 18). Don’t make marriage restoration first in your life; you **must** make **the Lord** first in your life!

Does this mean that we are not to care about what our husbands want and need? Are we to have the attitude that “We serve the Lord, not you”? God teaches us a perfect balance in His Word. “Wives, be subject unto your own husbands, **as unto the Lord**” (Eph. 5:22). “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, **as is fitting to the Lord**” (Col. 3:18). When we are subject to our husbands, we’re doing it **for the Lord!** Even, and especially, if we feel that our husbands don’t deserve the honor we show them, we can rest *knowing* we submit graciously to our husbands for the Lord who deserves our submission to Him and to His Word!

Word of God may not be blasphemed. The Lord even gives us a warning that not obeying or not honoring our husbands will dishonor, even blaspheme, the Lord and His Word: “. . . being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored” (Titus 2:5). In the KJV, it reads, “. . . being subject to their own husbands, that the **Word of God may not be blasphemed.**”

Pleasing to the Lord. We are to seek to please the Lord, rather than trying to please our husbands. Then the Lord will cause us to have favor with our husbands. “When a man’s ways are **pleasing to the Lord**, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Prov. 16:7). “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a

woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised” (Prov. 31:30). “Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps. 37:4).

Obedience Rather than Sacrifice

To obey is better than sacrifice. “Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice**, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you . . .” (1 Sam.15:22–23). “To do righteousness and justice is desired by the Lord rather than sacrifice” (Prov. 21:3).

Your outward appearance. Even if your outward appearance deceives others into thinking you’re submissive, God knows your heart! “Do not look at his appearance . . . because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the **outward appearance**, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7). My husband and everyone else thought I was an extremely submissive wife. I was even deceived. God knew that my being abandoned was what I needed. (For more encouragement in this area, listen or watch the “Esther” video available through our ministry office.)

There is a story of a little boy whose father continued to ask him to “sit down.” Finally, the little boy did sit down and the father smiled. The boy quickly exclaimed, “I may be sitting down on the outside, but on the inside—I’m standing up!” Many times we are standing up on the inside. Many times after you do the right thing and go along with your husband’s plan, you exclaim, “But I don’t agree!” or your attitude tells him that you don’t. *Have you done this? Has this been your type of “mock” submission to your husband?*

Also you will reap what you have sown. If you were a rebel with your parents before you were married, you are probably still a rebel with your husband. To top it off, you married a rebel. Now your husband has become a greater rebel since you married, just like you have. He now rebels against all sound wisdom and has even taken the rebellion as far as to rebel against his commitment to be faithful to you!

Nothing is impossible. “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife” (1 Cor. 7:14). Yes, it is true. Obey now and watch as the Lord sanctifies your husband. Does this seem strange? Does it seem impossible, because he is so bad? It’s because you are one flesh: “Consequently they are no longer two but one flesh” (Matt. 19:6). “Neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman” (1 Cor. 11:11).

Can only half a body go one way and the other half go the other? Even if you go separate ways for a while, God will eventually bring you back together. It can happen because “**nothing is impossible** with God” (Luke 1:37).

He who walks blameless. Once you obey, God will turn your husband’s heart. “He turns it (the heart) wherever He wishes” (Prov. 21:1). Remember, only “**he who walks blameless** will be delivered” (Prov. 28:18). If you say you don’t want to obey your husband, then he won’t obey the One who is over him either! “Christ is the head of *every* man, and the man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:3). Don’t give the excuse that your husband is not a Christian therefore you don’t have to obey him. There is *no* Scripture that tells a woman that she does not have to be subject or submissive to a non-believer!

Don’t excuse your present rebellion by saying that your husband is not around, so how can you obey someone who is not there? You obey what you *know* you should do and what you should have done when he was still there! If you can’t remember, then ask the Lord to bring to mind *all* those things your husband asked you to do

when you weren't listening or obeying. Then do them. It is not a matter of your husband seeing those changes, but God seeing that you've changed.

Suffering unjustly. And what if my husband is mean or even cruel? "Be submissive . . . with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when **suffering unjustly**. For what credit is there if, when you sin [disobey] and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right, and suffer for it you **patiently** endure it, this finds favor with God" (1 Pet. 2:18–20). The Word goes on to say that we women have an example in the Lord and His life. He asks us to follow in His footsteps as we'll see below.

Ladies, Lose the Rebellious Spirit!

I'm not young, and I wonder how I could have lived so long by my own understanding. I thought wrongly, and did not know it. I was not a bad person, but I was rebellious in spirit, and tried to be the master of the house. Unfortunately, I succeeded.

My husband came for a visit last evening. Now that I really listen to what he has to say, he (the silent one) is talking nonstop! It has taken much preparation, study, and time alone listening to my Lord, to Whom I eagerly returned.

Ladies, what we read in RMI may initially seem foreign. If we have a rebellious spirit, we need to deal with that first. I now take my issues to God so I am much easier to be with. After that happened, my husband has offered me solutions I never thought of, and help he once withheld.

I know God is smiling! —Karen, NC, Separated

“If You Love Me—Obey”

After you put God first in your life, and begin to obey those in authority over you, you must then cast down the false doctrine that says “you are saved by grace, so it's really *okay* to sin, because we are no longer under the Law.” Let's search the Scriptures:

Do your deeds deny Him? “They profess to know God, but *by their deeds they deny Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed” (Titus 1:16).

Do you do what His Word says? “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46). “What shall we say then? **Are we to continue in sin** so that grace may increase? **May it never be!** How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” (Rom. 6:1–2). “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? **May it never be!**” (Rom. 6:15).

Faith without works is dead. “What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also **faith without works is dead**” (James 2:14, 26). Good works are the “fruits” of our salvation. These are the questions we must ask ourselves: Do my deeds deny that I follow the Lord? Does grace give me a license to sin? Am I, as a believer, to produce good works?

I never knew you. Many believe that you can live any way you wish and then enter into heaven once you die. Is this true? “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘**I never knew you;** depart from me, you who practice lawlessness’” (Matt. 7:22–23). The answer is then “no!”

Confess your sins. If this is the mind that you had, prior to learning these Scriptures, do as Scripture says: “Therefore, **confess your sins** to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed . . .” (James 5:16).

Obedience to His Word

Seek wisdom! “*Wisdom* shouts in the street, she lifts her voice in the square. At the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings: ‘How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing and fools hate knowledge? **Turn to my reproof,** behold, **I will pour out my spirit on you;** I will make my words known to you” (Prov. 1:20–23).

“Because I called and you refused; I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; and you neglected all my counsel and did not want my reproof; **I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes,** when your dread comes like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you” (Prov. 1:24–27).

“Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but they will not find me, **because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord.** They would not accept my counsel, they spurned all my reproof. So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way and be satiated with their own devices. For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them. **But he who listens to me shall live securely and will be at ease from the dread of evil**” (Prov. 1:28–33). Seek wisdom!

Obedience comes from the heart. “. . . You became obedient from the **heart** to that form of teaching to which you were committed” (Rom. 6:17). Again, “for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Sam.16:7).

Obedience needs testing. “Do not be surprised at the fiery trial which comes upon you for your **testing**” (1 Pet. 4:12). Obedience *purifies* your soul. “Since you have in obedience to the truth **purified your souls . . .**” (1 Pet. 1:22).

Obedience gives testimony of who your Father is. “Obey My voice and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way in which I command you, that it may be well with you. Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward” (Jer. 7:23–24).

Your disobedience actually praises the wicked. “Those who forsake the law *praise the wicked,* but those who keep the law strive with them” (Prov. 28:4). The prayers of the disobedient go unheard. “He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination” (Prov. 28:9).

Our Example of Obedience Is Jesus

He was obedient *even unto death*. “He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8). “Although He was a Son, He *learned obedience* from the things which He suffered” (Heb. 5:8).

He was obedient and submissive to His authority. “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet **not as I will**, but as You will. My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, **Your will be done**” (Matt. 26:39, 42).

Our submission to our authority. “Wives be submissive to your own husbands, as to the Lord . . . But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their own husbands in **everything**” (Eph. 5:22–24). “For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are *established by God*” (Rom. 13:1).

The secret to success. “All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness and truth to those *who keep His covenant and His testimonies*. For Your name’s sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should choose. His soul will abide in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land. The **secret of the Lord is for those who fear Him**” (Ps. 25:10–15).

Turn aside to myths. Instead of searching for the truth, many want others to agree with their wrong ideas or decisions: “But wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and . . . will **turn aside to myths**” (2 Tim. 4:3–4).

Obedience to His Word. “Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they will not come near to you” (Ps. 32:9). If you don’t obey, He will discipline you. “The Lord has **disciplined me** severely, but He has not given me over to death. I shall not die but live, and tell of the works of the Lord” (Ps. 118:18, 17).

God is faithful to His Word. “If his sons forsake My law, and do not walk in My judgments, if they violate My statutes, and do not keep My commandments, then I will visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes” (Ps. 89:30–34). If you continue in rebellion to God’s Word or your husband’s authority, God will continue to punish you.

Read and pray Psalm 51 aloud: “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners will be converted to Thee. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou will not despise.”

May God be with you as you strive to be more like Christ!

Personal commitment: to put the Lord first in my life. “Based on what I have learned in Scripture, I commit to do everything as unto the Lord. I will show the Lord my commitment to Him and my obedience to His Word by submitting to those who are in authority over me, especially my husband.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Chapter 6

Contentious Woman

*A constant dripping
on a day of steady rain
and a contentious woman are alike;
he who would restrain her
restrains the wind
and grasps oil with his right hand.
—Proverbs 27:15–16*

Ask Yourself, “Am I a Contentious Woman?”

Maybe that question is difficult to answer because you’re not exactly sure what a contentious woman is. If we check the Strong’s Concordance, the word *contention* means a contest, a quarrel, strife, quarrelsome spirit, argumentative.

Were your conversations with your husband usually a contest to see who would win or get their way? Did you win many times? Let me share with you that I was a contentious wife and I won often, or maybe most of the time—but actually I lost! I lost my husband and the family life we had!

Do you ever quarrel with your husband? “The beginning of strife is like letting out of water, so *abandon the quarrel* before it breaks out” (Prov. 17:14). Yet, the world and so-called “experts” in marriage tell us that a good fight is actually good for the marriage. Don’t you believe it! Arguing *will* destroy your marriage! If you continue to argue with your husband, you will lose your opportunity to restore your marriage!

Is there strife in your home? “Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it than a house full of feasting and *strife*” (Prov. 17:1). Are you the gentle and quiet woman that 1 Peter 3:4 speaks of who is precious in the sight of God? Are your children loud and unruly? Your husband will not come around to see you or the children if he feels strife in your home. Even if you change, but your children remain obnoxious or unruly, your husband will seek peace and solace in the arms and home of another.

Do you have a quarrelsome spirit? “But refuse foolish and ignorant **speculations**, knowing they produce quarrels. And the Lord’s bond-servant must not be **quarrelsome** but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged” (2 Tim. 2:23). Are you a “know-it-all”? Do you have a contrary comment to the things your husband says? God tells us to “agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him, lest at any time thine adversary *deliver thee to the judge*” (Matt. 5:25 KJV). **Watch out for divorce court!**

Are you argumentative? “Urge bond slaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not **argumentative**” (Titus 2:9). Are you Jesus’ bond slave? Has He bought you with a price? Then you owe it to **Him** to be well-pleasing. Now that we’ve seen what it means to be contentious, God’s Word mentions five times how awful a contentious wife is. Let’s take a look.

A Contentious Wife

Contentious woman. Have you ever had a dripping faucet that drove you crazy? “And the **contentions** of a **wife** are a **constant dripping**” (Prov. 19:13). Sometimes it takes someone calling attention to that drip (maybe a friend or your father-in-law) for your husband to notice the dripping, but once he has, that’s all he’ll be able to hear! Have you ever wondered why men move out of their homes and often in with a harlot? Proverbs 21:9 tells us that it’s because “it is better to *live* in a **corner of a roof**, than in a house shared with a **contentious woman.**”

Contentious and vexing woman. Again, a man would rather live without water and in the desert heat than live with a wife who challenges him and his authority. “It is better to live in a *desert land* than with a **contentious and vexing** [annoying or angry] **woman**” (Prov. 21:19). God is so adamant about this verse—He repeats it! Are you listening? “It is better to *live* in a *corner of a roof* than in a house shared with a **contentious woman**” (Prov. 21:9).

Constant dripping. God compares a constant dripping to a contentious woman eventually causing a person to move out. Why doesn’t the man just fix the roof? Because God says that it is impossible! “**A constant dripping** on a day of steady rain and a **contentious woman** are alike; he who would *restrain her* restrains the *wind*, and *grasps oil with his right hand*” (Prov. 27:15–16).

Being Subject

A lot of your contentiousness may be rooted in the fact that you believe that marriage is a partnership. This is what I believed and later found out was *not* true! Instead, God has put the family, along with the rest of His creation, in levels of authority. Our husbands are our authority. This is important for you to understand. “But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:3). “But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in **everything**” (Eph. 5:24).

What is submission or being subject? It is obeying without a word, even if your husband is being disobedient to God’s Word. It is not insulting in return for his insults or threatening him. First Peter 3:9 says, “not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead . . .” “But giving a blessing instead” means responding to an insult with a compliment and a good attitude “as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior” (1 Pet. 3:2).

Is submission applicable today? “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever” (Heb. 13:8). In Matthew 5:18 Jesus says, “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law until all is accomplished.”

Christ is the head of every man. How can we be sure that God is over Jesus, and my husband (saved or not) is over me? “But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of *every* man, and the man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:3).

Respectful behavior. Now that we are sure that God is speaking to all wives, what does He command? “In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, so that if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and **respectful behavior**” (1 Pet. 3:1–2).

Being Subject. “Wives, **be subject** to your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For 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. But as the church

is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything” (Eph 5:22–24). This Scripture explains that our relationship with our husbands is to be the same as Christ’s relationship with the church. Isn’t it sad that so many churches don’t submit to Christ and His teachings, just as so many women don’t submit to their husbands? Is there any correlation?

Holy women. Where is our hope in submission? “For in former times the **holy women** also, *who hoped in God*, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands” (1 Pet. 3:5). Our hope and trust is in God, not in our husbands. Therefore, we do not need to fear if they are doing the wrong thing! “Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear” (1 Pet. 3:6).

Protector. When we women protect ourselves because we feel we can “fight our own battles,” why would we need husbands? Was it you who told the salesperson off or got rid of that guy at the door, probably with more gusto than your husband would have? Did your husband forget how to stand up for you since you usually took over? Who really wore the pants in the family? Who was really stronger?

Did you tell your husband to mind his own business when he said to take it easy or to slow down? What did your husband do when you continued to rebel? First, he backed down because he didn’t want another fight; then he moved out of the “constant dripping” house; then he found another woman to give his affections to!

If you have remained contentious, then when he has come around or called or emailed, he has had a reminder of why he left you. This is the reason why so many women do not see their husbands.

You must be a “totally transformed into the image of God” woman the first time God brings your husband around in answer to your prayers. If your husband likes what he sees and hears, he will be back for a second look. This is what leads to restoration! If God turns his heart, but his will overrides it because of your lack of change, then you cannot blame God.

The Root of Our Contentiousness:

Self-Esteem!

How did so many women become contentious? We women are contentious because we who are Christians imitate the world and the world’s thinking. The books we read, the counselors we seek, the classes we attend do not reflect God’s Word, which is *pure* and *uncompromising*. Most Christian women are full of psychology.

Poison dipped in chocolate is still poison! My sisters in Christ, psychology is more dangerous when it is dipped in Christianity because we eat it right up! We have been brainwashed into thinking that “self-love” and “self-esteem” are good things, but they are *nothing* more than *pride*! That was the sin that resulted in Lucifer becoming Satan!!

The contentious, prideful woman, the woman who “knows it all,” is the woman who argues and wants her own way—because she “thinks” she is right. And when she is wrong, her self-esteem needs to be protected. There is never a humble word or an “I’m sorry I was **wrong**”! The contentious woman has been conditioned to think that to make an apology would be too humiliating.

Our pride results in self-righteousness, which is why so many women reveal their husbands’ sins, because they can’t see their own sinfulness!

How to Rid Yourself of Contentiousness and Self-Righteousness

If we confess. As we can plainly see, living with a contentious, self-righteous woman is nothing less than a nightmare, not just for our husbands, but also for our children. Let us pray as we ask God's forgiveness. Let us seek His grace to help us become gentle and quiet women who are precious in His sight, as well as in our husbands'. "**If we confess** our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Too many misunderstand this verse and instead confess their husband's sins. The verse says that we are to confess *our* sins.

Confess. When your husband comes home or comes to visit, ask him for forgiveness for your contentiousness and self-righteousness. If you no longer have contact with your husband, pray for an opportunity to tell him over the phone or in person. (Please, don't call him!) "Therefore, **confess your** sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (James 5:16). Again, this verse says that we are to confess *our* sins—not our husband's sins—so that *we* can be healed.

When confessing, don't go on and on with your "little speech." Just tell him briefly that God has convicted you of being loud and argumentative, which is because you are prideful and self-righteous. Tell him, with the *Lord's* help, that you are praying to change the way that you have been. Give him a kiss and leave the room, or say good-bye and hang up! Then, confess to your children and explain to them how God is going to help you to change through humility. So often they see or hear only about their father's sin; it is important that they see that the separation or divorce was far from one-sided.

First be reconciled. If you don't feel "led" to go and get things right, never go back into church. "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go; **first be reconciled** to your brother, and then come and present your offering" (Matt. 5:23–24).

Grace to the humble. Also, be sure you are humble; don't be too proud to come right out and say that you are a contentious woman. "God is opposed to the proud, but gives **grace to the humble**. Therefore humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that **He** may exalt you at the proper time" (1 Pet. 5:5–6). Keep confessing every time you are contentious to anyone. Once you are tired of the sinful woman, and you really cry out to God to change you, you will cease to be one.

Here is God's prescription. "And when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore it was named Marah" (Exod. 15:23). Moses threw a tree into the water, a representation of the cross of Calvary. You must also throw the cross into the sea of your bitterness. Christ died to free you from all sin, including your contentious arguing and prideful, self-absorbed behavior.

Jesus should be our example, always, in all things, in the way He walked on this earth. "Have this attitude [humility] in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but *emptied Himself* . . . He *humbled* Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:5–9).

Personal commitment: to make others more important than myself, by putting away my contentious and prideful ways. "Based on what I have learned from God's Word, I commit to renew my mind and to be a doer of the Word by being humble and by putting away my contentious ways."

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Chapter 7

Kindness on Her Tongue

*She opens her mouth with wisdom
and the law of kindness is on her tongue.
—Proverbs 31:26*

Everyone watches how a woman speaks to her husband, to her children, and to others. When a woman speaks respectfully and kindly to her husband and children she shows the main characteristic of a “godly woman.” However, those who are impatient and disrespectful reveal themselves as weak and immature Christians.

Kind and gentle speech is one of the most important ingredients for a good marriage and well-behaved children. Kindness is the main characteristic of a “godly woman.”

We have been deceived by “counselors” and so-called “marriage experts” who tell us that it is a **lack of communication** that causes marriages to be destroyed. While searching the Scriptures, I found that God has a *lot* to say about how much we say, what we say, and how we say it! Follow me as together we discover the **truth**:

It’s not a “lack” of communication!

We are to watch how much we say!

Many words. Not only is it not a *lack* of communication that causes problems in marriage, but when there is a lot of talking and discussing, transgression (a violation of God’s Word) cannot and will not be avoided! “When there are *many words, transgression is unavoidable . . .*” (Prov. 10:19).

Keeps silent. Others tell us to speak our minds and to share what we think, but God says that “**a man of understanding keeps silent**” (Prov. 11:12). “The one who *guards* his mouth *preserves his life*; the one who *opens wide his lips comes to ruin*” (Prov. 13:3).

Closes his lips. Actually, God says that we practice wisdom and appear wise when we say **nothing**. “Even a fool, when he *keeps silent*, is *considered wise*. When he **closes his lips**, he is *considered prudent*” (Prov. 17:28). “But let your statement be, ‘**Yes, yes**’ or ‘**No, no**’; *anything beyond these is of evil*” (Matt. 5:37).

Without a word. God speaks directly to women to remain silent. “In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won **without a word** by the *behavior of their wives*, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior” (1 Pet. 3:1–2). “The *women* are to **keep silent** in the *churches . . .*” (1 Cor. 14:34).

Gentle and quiet spirit. God finds the quiet woman precious to Him. Is this you? “. . . with the imperishable quality of a **gentle and quiet spirit**, which is *precious* in the sight of God” (1 Pet. 3:4). “Guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding **worldly** and **empty chatter** and the opposing arguments of what is *falsely* called ‘*knowledge*’—which some have professed and thus *gone astray from the faith*” (1 Tim. 6:20–21).

God Tells Us to Be Careful What We Say

Guards his mouth. How many times have you gotten into trouble through the words you have spoken? “The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom, but the **pervverted tongue** will be *cut out*” (Prov. 10:31). “There is one who **speaks rashly** like the *thrusts of a sword*, but the **tongue** of the *wise brings healing*” (Prov. 12:18). “He who **guards his mouth** and **his tongue** guards his soul *from trouble*” (Prov. 21:23).

What proceeds out of the mouth. This statement is clear. What you say is *very* important! “For by **your words** you will be **justified**, and by **your words** you will be *condemned*” (Matt. 12:37). “Is is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but **what proceeds out of the mouth**, this *defiles the man*” (Matt. 15:11). “. . . *put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech . . .*” (Col. 3:8).

Attention to the Word. This Scripture describes two types of wives. Which one are you? “An **excellent wife** is the **crown** of her husband, but **she who shames** him is like **rottenness** in his bones” (Prov. 12:4). “He who gives **attention to the word** will *find good*” (Prov. 16:20).

Do away with childish things. Have you matured? Are you still a child who says things that hurt others? One of the biggest lies we learned as children was “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Many of us have never recovered from some of the words that were spoken to us as children. “When I was a child, I used to **speak like a child**, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I *did away with childish things*” (1 Cor. 13:11).

Isn't it time for us to **grow up**? Stop saying things that hurt your husband, your children, and your relationships with others!

Righteous lips. Who doesn't appreciate a kind word from someone? “**Righteous lips** are the *delight of kings*, and he who **speaks right** is *loved*” (Prov. 16:13). “*Speaking* to one another in *psalms* and *hymns* and *spiritual songs*, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord . . .” (Eph. 5:19).

Abandon the quarrel. “The beginning of *strife* is like letting out water, so **abandon the quarrel** before it breaks out” (Prov. 17:14). “A *fool's lips* bring **strife**, and his mouth calls for blows” (Prov. 18:6). Again, *arguing* or *strife* is **not good** for marriage (or any relationship), though others may tell you differently!

Constant friction. Is there constant friction in your home? “Deeds of the flesh are evident . . . **strife**, jealousy, **outbursts of anger**, **disputes**, **dissensions**, envying . . .” (Gal. 5:19–21). “If anyone advocates a different doctrine and **does not agree with sound words**, those of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, and with the **doctrine conforming to godliness**, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and **disputes** about words, out of which arise envy, **strife**, **abusive language**, evil suspicions, and **constant friction** between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth . . .” (1 Tim. 6:3–5).

Agree quickly! If you have problems with arguing, memorize these two verses. **These verses totally changed my life!** “**Agree** with thine adversary **quickly**, while thou art in the way with him” (Matt. 5:25 KJV). “Keeping away from **strife** is an *honor* for a man, but any *fool* will **quarrel**” (Prov. 20:3).

Two of you agree. You must try to find the area of *agreement* instead of the point of *disagreement* with **everything** your husband says. If you can't find anything to agree about, **keep quiet** and smile! “Again I say to you, that if **two of you agree** on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father Who is in heaven” (Matt. 18:19).

Crushes the spirit. Proverbs also tells us that what we say can **crush** our husband's spirit! "A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but *perversion* [defined as being obstinate or determined not to agree with another person's wishes or accept their suggestions] in it **crushes the spirit**" (Prov. 15:4).

Guard my mouth as with a muzzle. Here is a sobering thought: "Even before there is a word on my **tongue**, behold, O Lord, *You know it all*" (Ps. 139:4). "I said, 'I will guard my ways, that I may *not sin* with my **tongue**; I will **guard my mouth as with a muzzle . . .**'" (Ps. 39:1). Muzzle your tongue. Fasting is the **only** way to be truly delivered from a big mouth! *Believe me—you're too weak to speak! It's what worked for me! Just do it—fast!*

Slander

Her husband safely trusts in her. Another area in which we must watch the way we speak, which can result in losing our husbands' trust, is in speaking about him to others. "The heart of her **husband safely trusts in her** and he will have no lack of gain" (Prov. 31:11). We should **never** share our husband's weaknesses or tell others something he told us in confidence. Remember, "A slanderer **separates intimate friends**" (Prov. 16:28). *So many women share with me (and with everyone else they know or meet) about their husband's sin of adultery, alcohol, drugs, or pornography. I refuse to listen and cut them right off.* Let me ask you, "How many people have you told?"

Confess our sins. During counseling or when we are talking to others in order to get help for our marriage, we all make the fatal mistake of confessing our husband's faults and sins, thus failing to get the cleansing and healing *we* need for *our* marriage to be restored. The verse clearly says, "If **we** confess **our** sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us **our** sins and to cleanse **us** from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Again in James 5:16 it clearly says, "Therefore, confess **your** sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that **you** may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

I will destroy! "Whoever secretly **slanders** his neighbor, him **I [God] will destroy**" (Ps. 101:5). So many women think that they are constantly battling the "enemy" when in fact it is God who is against them. If you have told others about your husband, you have slandered him. God promises that He will bring destruction into your life. You can rebuke the devil all you want, but Scripture is clear: You must repent and ask the Lord to remove this sin from your life and then make restitution by going back to everyone you have told. Confess your own sinfulness to them and share all the good things your husband has done (and is doing) for you.

A slanderer reveals secrets. One of the most common snares that women fall into is gossiping over the telephone, under the guise of sharing "prayer concerns" or "prayer requests." Stop hanging around with women who gossip. Do as God commands: ". . . do **not associate** with a **gossip**" (Prov. 20:19).

Slander be put away from you. Others may not realize that you're a gossip, but God knows your heart. Don't fool yourself; you don't need to get into details to share prayer concerns—you're a fool! "And whoever spreads **slander** is a **fool**" (Prov. 10:18). All of us must put sharing prayer requests, which is nothing more than slander, away from us. "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and **slander be put away from you**, along with all malice" (Eph. 4:31).

You may find as you get rid of this type of "sharing" that you have nothing to say to your friends. *It also resulted in my acquiring new friends!* If you resist the temptation to slide back into your old ways, God will be faithful to teach you to edify instead of shaming your husband. "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who **shames him** is like *rottenness in his bones*" (Prov. 12:4). Let's instead begin ". . .

speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19).

Sweetness of speech. If you have shamed your husband by what you have said to him or about him or by your attitude, God is so faithful to offer the cure: “A **joyful heart** is good *medicine*, but a broken spirit dries up bones” (Prov. 17:22). “**Pleasant words** are a *honeycomb, sweet to the soul* and **healing to the bones**” (Prov. 16:24). “**Sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness**” (Prov. 16:21).

God sees! Watching how much you say, winning your husband without a word, and getting out of your husband’s way is what God’s Word tells us to do. God is also adamant about the “attitude” behind our actions, since this shows our heart. “. . . For God *sees* not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart ” (1 Sam. 16:7). The attitude of a godly woman is one of respect for her husband, which stems from a pure heart.

Respectful

We are told that respect is something we should *demand* from others. We are told that we should have respect for *ourselves*. To learn the true meaning of respect, let us look for a deeper understanding. Our husbands are to be won “by the behavior of their wives, as they observe [our] chaste and **respectful** behavior” (1 Pet. 3:1). The word **respect** is defined in the dictionary as “a special esteem or consideration in which one holds **another** person”! It is **not** what we demand for ourselves!

According to the thesaurus, **respect(ful)** means to have admiration, to be **considerate, to esteem, to honor, to reverence, to admire, to appreciate, to notice, to prize, to treasure, to uphold, to value**. Antonyms (the opposite) are **scorn, blame, and censure**. We will study the words in bold (or italics) in more depth.

Consideration: thoughtfulness toward others. Hebrews tells us that we need to *encourage* our husbands and others. By our actions, we can stimulate them to love us and to also seek to do good. “And let us be **considerate** of how to *stimulate one another to love and good deeds*” (Heb. 10:24). Therefore, when we are inconsiderate, we motivate our husbands or children to despise us and do wrong!

The deeds of the flesh. We use our husbands’ sins to excuse our lack of respect for them. Here is a list of sins as stated in Galatians. As you read them, please take a moment to underline those sins that are usually committed by men, the ones that we in the church call “**real**” sin.

“Now the **deeds of the flesh** are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities (hostility), strife (contentions), jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions (differing opinion), factions (actions that cause friction), envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you . . . that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19–21).

Now go back and circle the sins we tend to ignore in the church, those that are usually committed by women. To excuse your disrespect, based on your husband’s sin(s), is obviously based on *ignorance* or excusing your own sinfulness before a Holy God! We are clearly full of sin, which God says is “evident”!

Looking to yourself. Many feel that it is their responsibility to punish or chastise others who sin, especially their own husbands. Scripture tells us differently and shows us the consequences of these prideful actions. Let us not forget the log in our own eye. Remember that all sins are the same to God.

Again, don't let Satan fool you into thinking that *your husband's* sin is worse than yours. "Brethren, even if a man is caught in *any trespass*, you who are spiritual, **restore** such a one *in a spirit of gentleness* (or *consideration* in KJV); each one **looking to yourself**, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (Gal. 6:1–3).

Esteem: high regard *for others*. Psychologists, sadly even Christian psychologists, have taken God's command "to esteem others better than ourselves" and twisted it to teach us to build up ourselves, rather than others. Read this entire passage to allow the truth to set you free from esteem and pride, which are destroying you and your marriage:

"Let *nothing* be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each **esteem others better than themselves**. Do not look out for your own interests, but for the interests of others. Have the attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:3–7).

Appreciate those who have charge over you. Your husband has charge over you. Did you make his job easier or harder? "We request of you, brethren, that you **appreciate** those who diligently labor among you and have charge over you . . . and that you **esteem** them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another" (1 Thess. 5:13).

Honor: regard highly. We are to regard our husbands as worthy of honor, honor we should *already* be showing them. "Let all who are under the yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all **honor** so that the name of God and our doctrine may not be spoken against" (1 Tim. 6:1).

God may not be dishonored. Remember that by showing honor to your husband, whether or not his actions warrant or deserve honor, you bring glory to God!—and not only when your husband is around, but at all times when you speak of him and in your thoughts of him. The consequence of not showing this type of respect is dishonor to God and His Word. We say we are Christians but our "deeds deny" it! (See Titus 1:16.) Instead we are ". . . to be . . . kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of **God may not be dishonored**" (Titus 2:5). "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, **as to the Lord**" (Eph. 5:22).

In toil. "Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it, cursed is the ground because of you; **in toil** you shall eat of it all the days of your life'" (Gen. 3:17). After the fall of man, the man and the woman were each given a punishment; the woman would have pain in childbirth and the man would have to toil on the ground or work. So why is the man's punishment now shared by both the man and the woman? Why did we buy into this lie? It is because of pride.

A woman full of pride doesn't want to be told what to do or how she should spend money. If she makes her own money, she can make her own decisions about how her money is to be spent! We can easily slip out from under our husbands' authority and ultimately their protection as well.

In addition, when wives have a different career than that of the home and children, it divides the couple's interests and makes us independent of each other. God warns us when He says that a house that is divided will not stand! Has your job or career destroyed your marriage? (See "The Ways of Her Household" in *A Wise Woman*.)

Grant her honor. All women long to have our husbands treat us as in the following verse: “You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and **grant her honor** as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Pet. 3:7). By striving to be quiet and gentle and honoring our husbands, especially when they may be living dishonorably, in a chaste and respectful manner, we can receive the blessing of having our husbands honor us by choosing to return home!

Here are some scriptural guidelines on how to receive the honor:

By being gracious. “A *gracious woman* receives **honor**” (Prov. 11:16). Respond graciously to *whatever* is said to you *always* with all people! Never press or overreact! Remember, you are a child of the King—act like royalty! Those in royalty never show ill emotions or fly off in a rage. Think of Princess Di who was experiencing all kinds of horrible marital pain, yet you never saw her pitch a fit or make a scene.

By having humility. “And before **honor** comes humility” (Prov. 15:33).

By being humble. “But humility goes before **honor**” (Prov. 18:12).

Reverence: a feeling of *great respect*, love, awe, and esteem; to fear. Many women do not respect or show reverence to their husbands. How can we as Christian women ignore the Scriptures? “And let the wife see to it that she **respect** her husband.” In the King James Version it says, “And the wife see that she **reverence** her husband” (Eph. 5:33).

Appreciate: to give favorable recognition; to cherish, enjoy, value, understand; to treasure (especially in the marriage vow), to take loving care of, to keep alive (in emotion). We spoke about doing things from the heart. If your husband is not one of your treasures, your heart is not with him. “For where your **treasure** is, there your *heart* will be also” (Matt. 6:21).

Sometimes when we lose something or temporarily misplace it, we realize how important it is to us. Did it take losing your husband for you to realize what you had? *I know it did with me!*

How can you help heal your husband spiritually and emotionally? Speak sweetly and gently to your husband whenever the Lord gives you an opportunity to speak to him. “A **soothing tongue** is a tree of life, but perversion in it crushes the spirit” (Prov. 15:4).

This blessing can be yours. “All the days of the afflicted are bad, but a **cheerful heart** has a *continual feast*” (Prov. 15:15). If your heart is cheerful, you will draw your husband back home, since he left to find happiness. When he leaves where he is now, will he find joy back in his own home with you and your children?

Here is a caution. Watch what you say about your husband. **Shame** is an emotional cancer. “An excellent wife is a crown to her husband, but she who **shames** him is as *rotteness in his bones*” (Prov. 12:4). Rotteness is defined as decay by caries, decay as by *worm eating*. “In the end she (the harlot) is *bitter as wormwood*, sharp as a two-edged sword” (Prov. 5:4).

A good word. *Never* talk to your husband about your troubles, fears, or anxiety over his sins (adultery, abuse, alcohol, or drugs), about your finances, or about the impending divorce, since “**Anxiety in the heart** of a man weighs it down, but a *good word* makes it glad” (Prov. 12:25). Whenever your husband happens to speak to you, he *must* leave feeling uplifted, not confronted or downtrodden.

Brings healing. Your tongue can have two opposing effects; which will you choose? “There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the *tongue of the wise brings healing*” (Prov. 12:18).

A joyful heart. Have a joyful or a merry heart. “A **joyful heart** is *good medicine*, but a *broken spirit* dries up the bones” (Prov. 17:22).

Cheerful face. Let your face show the joy that is in your heart. “A **joyful heart** makes a **cheerful face**, but when the heart is sad, the *spirit is broken*” (Prov. 15:13). [Joyful is from the NASB; merry is from the KJV.] Let’s learn more about being joyful and merry. Merry: glad, **joyful, rejoicing**. Joyful: (to be) a good woman, pleasant, precious, sweet, **grateful, agreeable**.

Rejoice always. In our circumstances it seems impossible to be happy. How can we possibly be merry or joyful? “**Rejoice in the Lord always**, again I say **rejoice**” (Phil. 4:4). And when are we to rejoice? “**Rejoice always**” (1 Thess. 5:16). It’s in Him that we rejoice. This is the **most** powerful weapon of our spiritual warfare—*praising* the Lord when adversity comes against us!!

Are you able to do anything without murmuring and complaining? Do you complain, whine, or murmur continually about your situation to others or to your husband? If you do, you are not grateful! “Do *all things* without **murmuring** and **complaining**” (Phil. 2:14).

Have you learned the secret? We may think that in our circumstances we have reason to whine. Instead, we must learn to be content. “. . . for I have *learned* to be **content** in **whatever circumstances** I am. I know how to get along with humble means . . . and in any and **every circumstance** I have **learned the secret** of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need” (Phil. 4:11–12).

Antonyms of Respect are Scorn, Blame, and/or Censure

Did you scorn your husband? Did you blame him for past failures? Did you censure where he went or what he said? Now is the time to **renew** your mind. Read and reread this chapter until you’ve worn out the pages and have broken the binding. Make 3x5 cards for every Scripture verse that brought conviction in your spirit. Keep them with you in your purse and read them throughout the day. “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

In conclusion. Let us all first strive to appear wise by keeping silent. Next let us make sure that when we do open our mouths it is with wisdom, kindness, respect, and edification. Let our words be sweet and gentle. Let us be a *crown* to our husbands in the way we handle this adversity in our lives, which will be *precious* in the sight of God!

Personal commitment: to open my mouth with wisdom and kindness. “Based on what I have learned from God’s Word, I commit to remain quiet, wait before I answer, and be sweet in my every word. I also commit to demonstrate a respectful attitude toward my husband because of the example it sets for others and the honor it gives to God and His Word.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Chapter 8

Won Without a Word

*In the same way [as Jesus], you wives,
be submissive to your own husbands,
so that if any of them are
disobedient to the word,
they may be won without a word . . .
—1 Peter 3:1*

In this chapter, we will learn from God’s Word that since our husbands are over us, our words are not only useless, but may be dangerous. Many of us are now reaping “bad fruits” of unknowingly trying to persuade or warn our husbands instead of taking our concerns to God. We will learn that everything you’d like to say to your husband, you must first talk to God about.

When our husbands are doing something against God’s Word, we are told in Scripture to win our husbands “without a word,” with a respectful attitude toward them and their God-given authority over us.

Won Without a Word

When I am concerned about something, should I discuss it with my husband? No.

Ask God to speak to your husband. We must not discuss our fears, concerns, or even our desires with our husbands. Instead, we must first go to the top; we must go to our Heavenly Father and appeal to Him. Ask God to have the Lord speak to your husband (since the Lord is directly over *all* men) about what is on your heart.

This is the proper order of authority: “But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of **every** man, and the man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:3). Instead of seeking your husband’s help or guidance, you must seek the face of God. Then search the Scriptures for one of God’s principles concerning the dilemma you face. This will confirm what the Lord has spoken to you in your heart. Mark that verse and then hold onto it, *knowing* that the Lord is in control.

Get Out of His Way!

Get out of his way. “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, **nor stand in the way of sinners** . . . But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night” (Psalm 1:1 NIV). Get out of your husband’s way; you are not his authority! The second line tells us what we are **to do**: meditate on His Word and leave your husband to God. God must be the One to change your husband; your husband can’t even change himself.

Stand in the way. “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor **stand in the way** of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!” (Ps. 1:1). When dealing with a husband who is “disobedient to the Word,” there must be stages of “letting go” **without a word**. A woman whose husband is in the home but

is not coming home on time or at all must “let go” of trying to police him through curfews, “20 questions,” or the “silent treatment.”

If a wife finds out that her husband is involved with another woman, she must “let go” by not following him or confronting him and use this time as a “wake-up call” or she will push him into leaving or divorcing her. If at this stage he leaves, and she continues to stand in his way rather than “letting go,” he will most likely push the divorce through, hoping that this will stop his wife’s pursuits. However, if she still pursues, you will see the man marry the other woman.

If she still holds on, rather than “letting go,” you will most likely see her former husband in a *very* strong second marriage. I have personally known women whose husbands had remarried, yet who were still signing their husband’s name to Christmas cards and thank you notes! In addition, with this distorted view of their situation, they have no qualms about continuing to be sexually intimate. Rarely do you see a divorce occur when a husband is convinced that he can basically have two wives.

Very often a wife who won’t let go will see her former husband and his new wife resort to having a child of their own, hoping this will discourage the ex-wife and make her let go. Some women write to me in a rage and anger against God because He did not close the OW’s womb. Yet they neglect to acknowledge that they failed to follow the biblical principles of letting go and obtaining a gentle and quiet spirit. Occasionally, when a husband does divorce the OW or second wife, he doesn’t go back to his first wife, but instead searches for someone new to make him happy! (For encouragement, please read the testimony at the end of chapter 12, “Seeking God,” about a woman who humbly let her husband go, did *not* get angry at God, and found herself with a restored marriage after her husband remarried!)

Get off his back and pray! You can help to heal your home by your prayers. “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and **pray** for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective **prayer** of a righteous man can accomplish much” (James 5:16). If you do speak, it is *very* important that you choose your words carefully!

Turn, through prayer alone, your husband’s direction to God. You must understand also that you are not responsible for what your husband does; he is accountable to God for his actions. “But each one is **tempted** when he is carried away and enticed by his *own lust*” (James 1:14). Close your mouth; then get out of your husband’s way.

Wives love to treat their husbands as if they were one of their children. This type of mothering attitude will drive off *any* man and drain the manliness out of him. Then, when a woman comes along who looks to him as the man, he leaves his wife for the other woman.

Have the proper attitude. “Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For **there is no authority except from God**, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves” (Rom. 13:1).

Your husband is your God-ordained authority. Your rebellion to his authority has allowed your present situation. Obey and submit *now* and watch God turn your husband’s heart back home as you honor God’s Word.

Overcome all evil with good. Your reaction to the evil *when* it occurs tells God, others who are watching, and your husband what is *really* in your heart. “Do not be *overcome with evil* but **overcome evil with good**”

(Rom. 12:21). It **will** occur, but you can be prepared “. . . knowing that the **testing of your faith** produces *endurance*” (James 1:3).

Take this opportunity to speak a blessing of kindness to your husband: “. . . not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but *giving a blessing instead*; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing” (1 Pet. 3:9). If you agree with the insult or hurtful statement and return a kind statement or blessing, this will turn your situation around in an *instant!*

However, most women spend their energy defending themselves or discussing the issue. As they attempt to get their spouse to take *his* responsibility for what happened, they fail to see their situation improve. “He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he does not open his mouth” (Acts 8:32).

These are the women who email me wanting to know what is stopping their restoration. When I hear their derogatory and condescending attitude, I know why! Can you humbly accept what I am saying? If you can’t, do you wonder why your husband has chosen to leave you? “The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands” (Prov. 14:1).

(For encouragement, please read the testimony at the end of chapter 12, “Seeking God,” about a woman who humbly let her husband go, did **not** get angry at God, and found herself with a restored marriage after her husband remarried!)

Concentrate on loving the unlovable! When you love and respect your husband, even when he is unlovable, unkind, and in sin, you are showing him unconditional love. “For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same?” (Matt. 5:46). Give God your hurts. He will help you love your husband if you just *ask* Him.

The ministry of reconciliation. As children of God we are to be ambassadors of God’s love, and that will draw others to the Lord. “Therefore we are **ambassadors for Christ** . . . (Christ) gave us the **ministry of reconciliation** . . . *not counting their trespasses against them*, and he has committed the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18–20).

Have you been counting? Do you rehearse your husband’s sins and shortcomings in your mind as you reveal his trespasses to others? Remember, God’s mercies are new every morning—are yours?

Our first mission field. Your attitude may be, “Why should I minister to my husband the sinner?” Because the Lord gives us **our husbands** and our children as our first “mission field” before we can truly be effective with others.

We, of course, want to rush ahead of God before we are really ready and minister to those in the church, in the neighborhood, and at work—while we neglect our ministry **at home!** If you haven’t won your husband or children to the Lord, how can you win the lost?

So many women act like victims having to live with an unbeliever. Yet, they are the very ones keeping their husbands or children from the Lord. A Pharisee who attends services and then acts arrogant and spiritual keeps the lost from wanting a relationship with the Lord! Is this you?

God wants us to learn contentment *before* He’ll change our husbands. If you are still whining and bemoaning your situation, be prepared to stay in it! We can see in Paul’s life: “Not that I speak from want; for I have **learned to be content** in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means,

and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have **learned the secret** of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need” (Phil. 4:11–12).

Paul goes on to say (the verse you hear so often), “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). You will stay in difficulty until you have *learned* contentment in it—period!

Comfort Those

When women come to us, they want to know: “How can I deal with and overcome the destruction that has plagued our lives for *years*? How can I possibly make it through this pain and this mess?” The answer is by seeking wisdom and truth. Proverbs 23:23 says, “Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding.” My heart’s desire is to share the truth with you in order to set you free: “. . . and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

Let me assure you that *all* the principles in this book will help to restore your marriage whether your husband is abusive or has a drinking, drug, or pornography problem. Most of the women who come to our ministry are dealing with adultery and one or more of the sins of drinking, drugs, pornography, and/or abuse. Even though most of the testimonies do not reflect these sins because these women do not want to shame their husbands (even my own testimony), these other situations did exist, but they were overcome by following the principles in this book and especially those in *A Wise Woman*. A woman who is respectful in her attitude and in her words to her husband, along with a spirit of submission, will turn any abusive situation—God guarantees it!

Dealing with Your Husband’s Sins

If your husband is in any sin, how should you, as his wife, deal with it? Not as the world does!! The world’s ways will bring about destruction, but God’s principles will bring victory. Here is God’s prescription, straight from His Word:

Without a Word. As we learned earlier, the Bible is clear that we are to reverently keep quiet and not try to talk to our husbands when they are disobedient to God’s Word. (See 1 Pet. 3:1–2). Do not make the mistake of talking to your husband about his sin; talk to God only. Also, I would urge you not to talk to others about it either. Two things happen when you do. First, it puts us at odds with the Lord. “Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I [God] will destroy . . .” (Ps. 101:5).

Secondly, when you uncover your husband’s sins and weaknesses to others, it makes it almost impossible for him to come back and repent. When everyone in the church, and all of your family and friends know that he has been living in adultery (or some other sin), you have made it almost impossible for him to come back. We are not to confess someone else’s sins. Confessing your own sins is very different from revealing someone else’s. It also brings about its own curse. “. . . Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and **told** his two brothers outside . . . So he said, Cursed be Canaan” (Gen. 9:22–25).

This verse confirms the principle that we read earlier in Psalm 101:5. We are told not to slander anyone! Nevertheless, I am keenly aware that it is very difficult to keep all that you are going through a secret. That is why we are told in Matthew 6:6 to “. . . go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.” When you have no one to talk to, you *have to* pour your heart out to God! He is the only One who can really change your husband and your situation anyway! When we tell everyone who asks or will listen, when we talk on the phone for hours

about it, or even pour it all out to our pastor or counselor, we will fail to use that urgency in our prayer closet! I encourage women to do what works. I know personally that this works, and any other solution does not.

Fast. The greatest way to free a husband who is in bondage to sin is to fast and pray for him. “Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, **and break every yoke?**” (Isa. 58:6). There is more on fasting in chapter 16, “Keys of Heaven,” that you need to read.

Overcome evil with good! The other way is to overcome the evil by doing good! “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21). The Bible does not lie. Though the “experts” of today tell you that you “enable” the person who drinks, takes drugs, etc. by being kind and loving, Scripture tells us the opposite. Which will you choose to believe and obey? Love is one of the most powerful weapons we have, and it is guaranteed to work. The Lord tells us that it is how we are to deal with our enemies or those who hurt us. Loving your husband right now, right in the midst of his sin, is truly overcoming evil with good!

Proverbs 10:12 promises that “**love** covers **all** transgressions.”

First Peter 4:8 confirms this principle when it tells us, “Above all, keep **fervent in your love** for one another, because **love covers a multitude of sins.**”

First Corinthians 13:8 gives us a bold promise: “Love **never** fails.”

First Thessalonians 5:15 admonishes us saying, “See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good **for one another** and for all men.”

Romans 12:14 expounds upon this principle when it teaches that we are to “bless those who **persecute** you; **bless and curse not.** Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. **Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.** Respect what is right in the sight of all men.”

Jesus said these words in Matthew 5:44–46: “But I say to you, **love your enemies**, and pray for those who persecute you . . . For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers [or sinners] do the same?”

Testimony: She Told Her Husband to Get Out!

A woman came to Restore Ministries who was angry, resentful, and bitter! She had searched everywhere for help—support groups, counselors, and many books—in order to solve the problems she was having with her husband, who she said was an “alcoholic” and drug “addict.”

She had had enough! She had thrown her husband out of the house—as she had done a couple of times before. She had been following everyone’s advice; unfortunately, nothing seemed to change her situation, and inevitably things got much worse. What she learned from our ministry was different from anything else she had read or heard before. Finally, she said, she heard the truth.

She said she finally learned that the reasons for her problems were altogether different than what she had been told repeatedly. She told us that she had been so totally indoctrinated in psychology and unbiblical ideas that she could no longer discern the truth. When she read the principles, the Word of God became a sword, cutting through to her very marrow!

She learned about the danger of ruling over her husband, as when she had told him to leave the house. She learned the right way to win a disobedient husband: without a word. She learned how to deal with a man who was bound to the sin of alcohol by fasting and praying for him. She learned that a forced separation encourages adultery and would *always* exaggerate her trials.

Within one week, she looked up every Bible verse listed in this book and marked them in her Bible. To her astonishment, she could find *no* scriptural basis for the actions she had taken with her husband.

She even called her church and begged them to show her that what she had been doing was really correct. She said she needed to discredit those Scriptures she had read in this book. They could give her no scriptural support. They just encouraged her to keep her husband out of the home and not allow him to return.

In all her confusion, pain, and anger, this woman really was searching for the truth. She finally asked her husband to return home. She then gave him respect as the head of the household and spiritual leader for the first time in their marriage. The rebuilding of their home was neither easy nor quick, yet it was *always* stable. Her husband later confessed that he had been planning to commit adultery after she had forced him to leave. Her husband has been home for over nine years, drug and alcohol free! He is even a deacon at a large church.

Testimony: Husband Delivered from Alcohol

A woman contacted our ministry. She had hit the bottom with her husband's drinking. She had tried applying every method that she read for wives of alcoholics. Yet, she found that every recovery was only temporary. Their marriage was falling apart.

They had become estranged. She felt that if he really loved her he would stop drinking. However, her husband was convinced that she no longer loved him because of the way she was treating him. He said her ill treatment only made him drink more because he felt things were hopeless. She told us that she did love her husband, but all the books said to withdraw from him because they were co-dependent and she had become his "enabler." She told us that she had "tried everything" and was ready to give up. We encouraged her to "seek God." She said that she had tried that. She said that she had gone to her pastor who confronted her husband, but that only made things worse—he left the church.

When she finally reached the end of herself, she cried out to the Lord. The next morning she met a woman who had a restored marriage and who agreed to pray for her. Just two weeks later, when she thought her husband was at work, she got a phone call from him. He was at Teen Challenge seeking help. This woman's husband came out, three months later, a totally new man on fire for the Lord. He became the spiritual leader of their family and active in their new church. *You can try everything, but when you do, I promise, you only make matters worse. Try God alone!! Go after God; trust Him and He will change your situation in an instant.*

Do Not Provoke Them

Scripture warns us, ". . . do not harass them nor provoke them" (Deut. 2:19). When you provoke someone who is under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or the seductions of an adulterous woman, you put yourself in grave danger. Proverbs 18:6 tells us, "A fool's lips bring strife, and his mouth calls for blows."

If physical violence has become a part of your marriage, you need to heed this Bible verse and make sure that it is not occurring because of your disrespectful attitude and words toward your husband along with your spirit of rebellion. God warns women not to even speak to a husband who is being disobedient to the Word and to make sure we are silent with a respectful attitude (see 1 Pet. 3:1–2). God also tells us in Ephesians 5:33 that “the wife *should see to it* that she **respect** her husband.”

So often, after you verbally attack your husband’s character, one of you takes a swing. Often it is the woman who hits first because she is so hurt by something her husband has said in response. Unfortunately, after the first punch, physical violence becomes the norm. Once violence is brought into a home or a marriage, it becomes a major part of the destruction.

Those in our ministry who have overcome violence in their marriage are convinced that if it is destroyed at the root of the problem, which they all agree begins with a disrespectful attitude, cutting and demeaning words, along with rebellion (refusing to submit as the Bible commands that women are to do), that it is wiped out for good. This testimony confirms this truth.

Testimony: In Her Own Words

I read this testimony in *Crowned with Silver* magazine. I am reprinting it for you, with permission from CWS and the writer of the article.

The following story is, I hope, an encouragement to others who may be in the situation in which I found myself. God has many ways of reaching people and my story is one, which may cause the hardened of heart to call me “Raca,” or “fool,” but the Lord reached my husband through some very difficult circumstances. I ask, dear sisters, that you don’t place my name at the end of the article, for I am concerned that my husband would not receive the honor that is due him in the eyes of my children if they read this.

My husband and I grew up in a community church and married as high school sweethearts. I was always a stay-at-home mother, and my husband was an automobile mechanic. We were from very different types of families. He grew up with four brothers and two sisters; I came from a family with just two girls. His family members were always loudly arguing, debating, and throwing a punch here and there when they were making a point. My family was very quiet. When my sister and I argued, we did it silently and maliciously. We wouldn’t use words to get back at one another; we would do something to get even.

At the beginning of our marriage we were baby Christians, but I had a thirsting for more of God. My husband was content right where he had been for 23 years. He had made a confession of faith, and knew he was heaven bound. That was good enough for him. I, on the other hand, knew there had to be more. I knew that God was enough to sustain me throughout the rest of my life and I wanted to live a life different from the world around me.

We struggled financially. With the birth of our first daughter we were barely making it in our one-room apartment. My husband was like a tightrope. I’d try to keep the baby quiet in order to make life more peaceful and less irritating to him. Our relationship was better during the weekdays because he wasn’t home that much. But we fought on the weekends. And then I would start my old tactics that I’d used growing up on my sister.

I wouldn’t fight back, or yell, or scream. I would simply . . . get even. When we were arguing, I wouldn’t make dinner, or I wouldn’t do the laundry for a week and he would have to wear dirty clothing. I’d do something that I knew would get under his skin. But it wouldn’t be something that he could actually point his finger at me for. I could get away with it because it wasn’t blatant. Life went on like this for some years. We had the two girls back then, and then that tightrope that my husband and I were walking on snapped.

One Saturday, we were arguing about how we should spend the extra \$20 out of the paycheck. My husband wanted to go to the ball game; I wanted him to take us out to dinner. He yelled that he worked for the money and he deserved a little time out for fun, and he turned to leave. So I gave him a little . . . shove with my elbow. (I think all the built-up pressures from all the arguing and strife that was constant in our life somehow brought back his interaction with his brothers.) He immediately lifted his arm and socked me back in my arm as hard as he could. Never had I seen so much fury directed at someone—me!

The pain of it. I think that it wasn't the physical pain so much as the emotional and spiritual pain. See, I had been trying to grow in the Lord in all areas but my marriage. It was a torture to read the Scriptures that talk about how the Lord is the bridegroom and we are the bride, and somehow our marriage was supposed to be an example of our relationship with Christ. That was horrifying!

If my marriage and the relationship I had with my husband was in any way related to my relationship with Christ I was in big trouble! I think that once the restraint was gone, the taboo of hitting your spouse having been broken, my husband felt hopeless. More and more fighting would break out like this. I would try to hide it from the children, but sometimes there was no way to do this. I think this hurt me more than anything else.

Proverbs tells us that children's fathers are their glory. If fathers were supposed to be their glory, then my children must have felt betrayed and distrustful of all things, even God. As they were being taught the Scriptures, they were going to come to distrust even them if something didn't happen to heal this broken marriage.

And yes, even though my husband and I were married and not divorced, we had a broken marriage. I never told any of my friends at church what I was going through. I did tell one of my closest friends that my "cousin" had been going through certain things in order to get some advice, or to talk through the issues. But all the advice this friend gave me was that I should leave the monster. She said that there were names for this type of treatment and that only a fool would stay with such a man.

But there was one problem. It was a vow I had made to God a few years back that I would stay with this man through sickness and in health, through the good and the bad, until death do us part. . . . And even though I felt that there was absolutely no love left in my being for the man I was married to, I still loved God. I loved God with every fiber of my being. I loved Him so much that I would not break my marriage vows, which I had said before Him those seven years ago.

Staying with my husband was a commitment I had made to the Lord the day that we were married before Him. I turned to our heavenly Father. So many times in the past I had turned to secular advice in reading materials. I'd listen to my friends bad-mouth their husbands, and so on. I knew that the only way I was going to get any help at all was by seeking the Lord and finding Him and His help.

The Lord revealed Truth to me in some very simple ways. I needed to stop blaming my husband as the world tells us to do, and look at the things I was doing wrong in my marriage. Putting aside the hatred, anger, and resentment I felt for my spouse, I decided to replace those emotions with forgiveness, understanding, and love. I repented of getting even in so many ways in order to make my husband miserable. And the Lord started changing me!

There is so much more to tell, but let me only say that God is in the changing business. If we yield our whole lives to Him, He is there to guide us through our darkest hours! I've now been married for 21 years to the same man. Well, he isn't the same man, as he gave his whole life to God as I did about 11 years ago. Just as

he had felt the resentment and hate oozing from every pore of my being, so did he start feeling love and forgiveness flowing toward him.

Now we don't argue as we used to do, for both of us love each other so much that we want what the other person wants. We no longer put ourselves before the other's needs! God is wonderful! See, the Lord changed me first, and then He changed my husband! But it was the Lord who did the changing!

Testimony: Hide Me Under the Shadow of Your Wings

Elaine* had suffered so much abuse. From the time she was pregnant with her first child, her husband had repeatedly, in a rage, abused her. She had tried everything: shelters, friends' homes, going back home to her parents, even law enforcement officers, but nothing was permanent.

After her husband's violent explosions, he would become repentant, remorseful, and even kind to her. He would seek to try and "make it up to her." He would plead with her to "please forgive" him. Being a Christian, she would. All too soon, he would again become violent.

After three children and no hope in sight, she thought of taking her own life. How could she leave her children with this violent man? She couldn't. She would have to take their little lives as well. But murder! She had thought several times about killing her husband, especially in the midst of his attacks. How could she, a Christian, think like this?

One night she went to a prayer meeting at her church. There was no altar call, but Elaine walked slowly to the front of the church during the last song and left her burdens there. For the first time that she could remember, she gave the entire situation to the Lord.

She heaved tears of pain at the foot of the cross. She gave it all to Him. She surrendered, "Lord if you want me to stay with this man, I will. I will never try to run away again or to seek help. I accept this life you have given me. My children are yours. Do whatever you will with all of us."

Elaine went home relieved that things were finally settled in her heart. The next day, while her children were at school and she and the baby were grocery shopping, God ***moved in her life***. Her husband left his job, came home, and packed his things. Elaine's husband disappeared that day. That was 21 years ago.

Elaine is still legally married to a man she has not seen or heard from in over two decades. Her children are all grown and her youngest daughter has just married. She and all her children have a close relationship with the Lord. Elaine still lives hidden under the shadow of His wings (Ps. 17:8).

"And they **overcame** him because of the ***blood of the Lamb*** and because of the **word of their testimony**, and they did not love their life even to death" (Rev. 12:11).

*Not her real name.

For many more powerful testimonies, visit our website at RMIEW.com or get a copy of the book *By the Word of Their Testimony*.

Personal commitment: to pray to our Father rather than to quickly speak to our husbands. "Based on what I have learned from God's Word, I commit to allowing God to move my husband through His Holy Spirit. I will instead 'bathe all my desires and concerns in prayer' by seeking His face. I acknowledge that the only way to win my husband to righteousness, especially in my present circumstances, is 'without a word,'

and with my respectful and humble spirit. I will bless and pray for those who persecute me and overcome evil with good. I will trust the Lord and His protection rather than the arm of the flesh.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Chapter 9

Gentle and Quiet Spirit

*But let it be the
hidden person of the heart,
with the imperishable quality of a
gentle and quiet spirit,
which is precious in the sight of God.
—1 Peter 3:4*

Boisterous women are common today. Boisterous is defined as “offensively loud and insistent.” It is not only accepted but encouraged through our media.

Sadly, this behavior has also permeated the church and Christians today. Is it any wonder that the divorce rate in the church is now higher than the national average?

A woman with a “gentle and quiet spirit” is called a doormat. She is told that her husband won’t respect her if she doesn’t stand up for herself.

Husbands even tell their own wives to fight back or defend themselves, and at the same time they follow through with the divorce and stay with the other woman. God says that a gentle and quiet spirit is precious to Him, and therefore it is the only way toward healing and restoration.

However, when a husband strays from the truth and falls into sin, you hear Christians, even pastors, advise the wife to use “tough love,” even though it is unbiblical and will destroy marriages. In addition, it results in a “hardened heart” which inevitably results in a wife who is unwilling or unable to forgive her husband. Only a heart of flesh, a tender heart, is able to truly forgive.

In this chapter we will seek the truth regarding tough love and the healing that comes through forgiveness.

Tough Love?

Love is patient. God gives us a description of love. See if you can find the word “tough” or any word even remotely similar. “**Love is patient**, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is **not provoked**, **does not take into account a wrong suffered**, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails . . .” (1 Cor. 13:4–8).

This verse proves that there is no place for “tough love” in a marriage, on either side. The love that Jesus lived and calls us to is “tough” to live, but never “tough” in response to another whom we love.

This I command you. Another very popular statement in the church today is “love is a choice.” Read with me the following verse to see if God says we can “choose” to love. Or does God **command** that we do so, as followers of Christ? “**This I command you, that you love one another**” (John 15:17). We do have a choice: to obey His **command** or not. This is not exactly what Christian psychologists are telling us, is it?

Love your enemies. Our friends encourage us to “protect ourselves” or to “not love those who are difficult to love.” Are we to love them or not? “But I say to you who hear, **love your enemies**, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Luke 6:27–28).

In this passage God is even clearer. He even admonishes those who love only the lovable: “But I say to you, **love your enemies**, and pray for those who persecute you . . . for **if you love those who love you**, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same?” (Matt. 5:44–46).

Leave room for the wrath of God. In the book that talks to us about being “tough” with our spouse, we are told to confront and to cause a crisis. In other words, we are to take matters into our own hands. What does God instruct us to do?

“. . . Rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer . . . bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not . . . Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but **leave room for the wrath of God**, for it is written, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,’ says the Lord” (Rom. 12:12, 14, 17–19).

He uttered no threats. You may ask yourself “Why do I have to endure such suffering, and not even have the satisfaction of vengeance?” Read God’s explanation for your suffering:

“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps . . . and while being reviled, **He did not revile in return**; while suffering, **He uttered no threats**, but kept entrusting Himself to Him (God) who judges righteously” (1 Pet. 2:21–23).

Overcome evil with good. “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink, for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but **overcome evil with good**” (Rom. 12:20–21).

Blessed are the meek. If you don’t take matters into your own hands and take a “tough” stand, others (even Christians), will tell you that you are a doormat. However, let me remind you whom Jesus said are *blessed*: “**Blessed** are the *meek*, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5). Jesus chose to lay down His life and allowed His enemies to seize Him. Are we to follow in His steps or not?

The righteousness of God. People may even remind you of an instance where Jesus turned over the tables in the temple. They will use this example to tell you that you have the “right” to be angry with others. God says He is a jealous God. Can we then also be jealous? “But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; for **the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God**” (James 1:19–20).

That you may not do the things that you please. When we have an impulse to do or say something to another that is anything but meek, we are walking in the flesh and not in the Spirit. “But I say, walk in the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16).

“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so **that you may not do the things that you please**. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:17, 22–23). “And just as you want people to treat you, **treat them in the same way**” (Luke 6:31).

The kindness of God. It is deception to think that confronting and being unkind and firm will turn the other person around. If that worked, why would God use kindness to draw us to repentance? Sinners do not go

forward to accept the Lord because they think that they are going to be criticized or chastised, do they? “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that **the kindness of God** leads you to repentance?” (Rom. 2:4).

No one will see the Lord. Another extremely important reason for your gentle and quiet spirit in dealing with your husband (or others) is that we are to let others see Christ in us. “*Pursue peace* with **all** men, and the sanctification without which **no one will see the Lord**” (Heb. 12:14).

Don’t think that you can act kindly with your husband, but act horribly with your children, parents, or coworkers. God is watching and He is the one who will turn your husband’s heart. Nothing is hidden from Him. Let us not forget that He is looking at our hearts; therefore, even if you try to control your anger, He is looking deeper! You must “die to self.”

The ministry of reconciliation. We are to be ambassadors for Christ in reconciliation. “Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us **the ministry of reconciliation**, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19).

“Therefore, we are **ambassadors** for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we **beg you** on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20).

Lest you too be tempted. The following Scripture is a warning to us when we are not gentle to others when they have sinned against us. “Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, **lest you too be tempted**. Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:1–2).

Lest the Lord see it and be displeased. Many women have been so happy to see their husbands “get what they deserve” when God punishes them with financial difficulties or other trials. Then they see their husbands’ situation turn around for the better. Why does this happen? “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; lest the **Lord see it and be displeased**, and He turn away His anger from him” (Prov. 24:17).

Doers of the Word. It’s important that we learn the truth and agree with what we see in Scripture, but we must not stop there. “But prove yourselves **doers of the word**, and not merely hearers who delude themselves . . . Not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does” (James 1:22, 25). “Therefore, to him who **knows the right thing to do**, and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).

The error of unprincipled men. God has warned us that we should not listen to or follow men who tell us something contrary to Scripture. “Be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him . . . in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of Scripture, to their own destruction. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being **carried away by the error of unprincipled men**, you fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .” (2 Pet. 3:14–18).

“Tough love” is wrong and totally contradicts the teachings and example of Jesus. Let us instead **learn** from Him who describes Himself as “gentle and humble in heart.” “Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me,

for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light” (Matt. 11:29).

Forgiveness

Only a woman with a heart that is gentle and quiet can forgive her husband. However, many women have been deceived and do not forgive their husbands because they don’t fully understand the grave consequences of their lack of forgiveness. Let’s search the Scriptures to see what God says about forgiving others. Here are some questions we should ask:

Q. Why should I forgive my husband or the others involved?

Christ also has forgiven you. We forgive because God forgave us. “And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in **Christ also has forgiven you**” (Eph. 4:32).

The precious blood of the covenant. Jesus shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins—even your husband’s sin! “All things are cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb. 9:22). “For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many **for forgiveness of sins**” (Matt. 26:28).

Reaffirm your love for him. To relieve the offender’s sorrow. “. . . You should rather forgive and **comfort him**, lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. Wherefore **I urge you to reaffirm your love for him**” (2 Cor. 2:7–8).

Let no advantage be taken of us by Satan. Satan can use a lack of forgiveness against you to take the advantage. “For if indeed what I have forgiven . . . I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, in order that **no advantage be taken of us by Satan**; for we are not ignorant of his schemes” (2 Cor. 2:10–11).

Our Father will not forgive your transgressions. God said that He won’t forgive us if we don’t forgive others. “For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive men, then **your Father will not forgive your transgressions**” (Matt. 6:14–15). “So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you do not forgive his brother *from your heart*” (Matt. 18:35).

Q. But shouldn’t the offender be sorry if I’m to forgive?

Father, forgive them. Those who crucified Jesus did not ask Him for forgiveness, nor were they sorry for what they were doing or what they had done. If we are Christians, we are followers of Christ; therefore we are to follow His example. “**Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing**” (Luke 23:34).

When Stephen was being stoned he cried out just before he died, “**Lord, do not hold this sin against them!**” (Acts 7:60). Could *we* do any less?!

Q. But how often does God expect me to forgive?

Seventy times seven. Many women exclaim, “But *my* husband has done this to me before, throughout our entire marriage!” When Peter asked how often he was to forgive, Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to **seventy times seven**” (Matt. 18:22). That’s 490 times for the same offense!

Remember no more. Does forgiveness really mean that I forget that sin, even in an argument, even in divorce? “For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will **remember no more**” (Jer. 31:34). “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:12). “Not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing” (1 Pet. 3:9).

Be prepared; Satan will try to bring up old transgressions in your mind even after you have forgiven. When he does you must forgive again. Many women, whose husbands have been unfaithful to them even after their husbands have returned home, have experienced “flashbacks,” almost like “spiritual” war trauma. They say they must continually, sometimes daily, forgive.

Q. How can I possibly forgive as God has asked me to do in His Word?

God alone. Only God can help you to do it. You must *humble* yourself and ask Him to give you the grace. “*Who can forgive sins but God alone?*” (Mark 2:7).

Ask. “. . . You do not have because you do not ask” (James 4:2). Ask God to forgive your husband through you as you yield to Him.

God gives grace to the humble. How do I get the grace I need? “God is opposed to the proud but **gives grace to the humble**. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you at the proper time” (1 Pet. 5:5–6).

Humbled their heart. How can I gain humility? “Because they had rebelled against the words of God and spurned the counsel of the Most High. Therefore He **humbled their heart with labor**; they stumbled and there was none to help. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble; He saved them out of their distresses” (Ps. 107:11–13).

“I **humbled my soul with fasting**; and my *prayer* kept returning to my bosom” (Ps. 35:13). Sometimes it could be through illness that He quiets and humbles you. Don’t fight it—it is God working!

First be reconciled to your brother. When do I need to forgive those who have hurt me? Shouldn’t I feel convicted of it first? “If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; **first be reconciled to your brother**, and then come and present your offering” (Matt. 5:23–24). If you have not forgiven another, especially your husband, you need to ask forgiveness.

Bitterness. Not forgiving someone causes bitterness. The definition of bitterness is “poison!” “Let all **bitterness** and wrath and anger . . . be put away from you” (Eph 4:31). Not forgiving another is eating at you, not the other person! “The heart knows its own bitterness” (Prov. 14:10). “For He knows the secrets of the heart” (Ps. 44:21).

A brother offended. Be sure that you follow scriptural guidelines. I have heard many who have said that things were actually worse when they did ask forgiveness or that it did no good. I can speak from experience. At times, when I have asked for another’s forgiveness, I have stated it the wrong way and further offended the other person. “**A brother offended** is harder to be won than a strong city” (Prov. 18:19).

Men pleasers. Be mindful that you may fool your husband but God knows your motives and your heart. “. . . But the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Sam.16:7). “. . . In the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eye service, as **men pleasers**, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (Eph 6:5–6).

Every idle word. Prepare *every word you say!* Every word you say must be carefully chosen. “A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind” (Prov. 18:2). “**Every idle word** that men shall speak they *shall give an account* thereof in the day of judgment” (Matt. 12:36).

Try writing down what you are going to say. Then read out loud what you wrote, putting yourself in the other person’s shoes and hearing it from his point of view. Did it sound accusing? Ask God to put the right words in your mouth and speak through you.

Many words. “When there are **many words**, transgression is unavoidable” (Prov. 10:19). Only say what *you* did; don’t set the stage with something like, *When you did this, and such and such, well then I . . .*

He uttered no threats. If the other person starts to lash out at you, do not open your mouth except to agree. “And while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering **He uttered no threats . . .**” (1 Pet. 2:23).

Every idle word. The “prodigal son” prepared his words after his decision to return home: “I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘**Father I have sinned** against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men’” (Luke 15:18–19).

Make sure your words are sweet and kind **every time** you have an opportunity to see your husband! Remember that “sweetness of speech adds persuasiveness” (Prov. 16:21). “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, **sweet to the soul and healing** to the bones” (Prov. 16:24).

Q. How can I be sure I have truly forgiven?

You will know and have the confidence that you have truly forgiven when your sin and weaknesses loom before your eyes so large that you are unable to see your husband’s sins and weaknesses. You will be blind to his past, present, and future failings.

When women write or talk about **anything** that their husband is doing wrong, I know that they are far from restoration. So many who have been seeking restoration see no progress because they have failed to take the full responsibility for the sins committed in the marriage that caused the separation, divorce, or adultery.

They, in error, want to “share” their part in it, which is to their own destruction. Jesus took the full and complete responsibility and bore **all** of our sins. We, too, must take all and bear all. Then, as believers, we can seek the Lord and lay the sins of the marriage at the foot of the cross, knowing the debt has been paid.

Also, if you still are irritated by what your husband says, does, or does not do, or worse, you become angry then you have not forgiven—anger is a deadly heart condition, which shows up in a trial.

Personal commitment: to desire and strive to be gentle and quiet. “Based on what I have learned in Scripture, I commit to do everything I have learned by being quick to hear and slow to speak, and to forgive those who have offended me and to do what I can to reconcile with those I have offended.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Chapter 10

He Turns the Heart

*The king's heart is like channels of water
in the hand of the Lord;
He turns it wherever He wishes.
—Proverbs 21:1*

Has everyone told you that your husband has his own will; therefore, he may “choose” not to return to you?

When trying to restore your marriage, you will be bombarded (as everyone else is who is trying to restore their marriage) by the onslaught of those who will tell you that it is your husband's choice and his “free will” to choose to leave you or to be with another woman. Praise the Lord, this is not the truth!!

When I searched for the answers to this dilemma of the will of man versus **God's** will, I found that the Bible continually referred to “God's will” without mentioning man's will.

Let me show you what He showed me:

It's *not* man's will but God's will!!

“He does **His will** . . .” (Dan. 4:31).

“He bestows it on whomever **He** wishes . . .” (Dan. 4:25).

“**God** is able to deliver . . .” (Dan 3:17).

Consider Nebuchadnezzar. After his pride caused him to crawl like an animal, he said of God, “He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’” (Dan. 4:35). Is this not the same God who still does according to His will? Is your husband greater than King Nebuchadnezzar?

Consider also Jonah. Jonah was unwilling to do what God wanted him to do, but God *made* him willing. “And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights” (Jonah 1:17). God is *more than able* to make your husband willing!!

Lastly, consider Paul. “Now Saul, [was] still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord . . . Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him . . . and Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing . . . ‘The Lord Jesus . . . has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized” (Acts 9:1–18).

God is *more than able* to change your husband in an **instant!!** *I have seen it done countless times, with my own husband and with many other husbands!* If you say “But you don't know my husband,” I would say—you don't know God!! He changed you, didn't He?

Turning the Heart

You will hear pastors and other Christians say that it is your husband's will to leave you, divorce you, or be with another woman. We just learned in Scripture that it is not man's will but God's will.

It may be your husband's will to leave you, divorce you, or be with someone else. Nevertheless, **God can change his heart!**

We don't need to worry about his will. Instead, we need to pray for our husbands' heart to be turned. "The king's **heart** is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; **He turns** it wherever He wishes" (Prov. 21:1).

Pray that God will give him a new heart and replace his heart of stone with a heart of flesh! "Moreover, I will give you a **new heart** and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a **heart of flesh**" (Ezek. 36:26).

The first step in turning your husband's heart is to find God's promises, His truths, and then meet the conditions of those promises. *These are the verses that I memorized and used to turn my husband's heart back to me.*

"When man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7).

"Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps. 37:4).

"Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him and He will do it" (Ps. 37:5).

"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

Remember, you need to put God first in your life; He never wants to be second place to anything or anyone. Once He is first, you will begin to be transformed into His image. That is when you will begin to see your husband's heart turn back to you.

If you struggle with this principle of man's will versus God's will, you will need to renew your mind with the verses in this chapter to overcome the doubts of the "man's will theology" and replace it with God's focus, which is the **heart!**

Let's look at the Scriptures that I found that tell us how God changed the hearts of men and even kings:

"He put this in the king's heart . . ." (Ezra 7:27–28).

"He hardened the hearts of the Egyptians . . ." (Exod. 14:17).

"The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart . . ." (Exod. 10:27).

"The Lord turns the heart wherever He wishes . . ." (Prov. 21:1).

In the book of Proverbs we learn wisdom. Proverbs 1:2–7 lists the benefits of knowledge:

To know wisdom.

To receive instruction.

To receive instruction in wise behavior.

Also instruction in righteousness, justice, and equity.

Prudence to the naive.

To the youth, knowledge.

Read Proverbs every day for wisdom! (Go to the “Daily Devotional” section of our website for the verses to read every day—just another one of our member benefits to help you restore your marriage.)

Husbands Who Are Unwilling

Not all husbands return home even after God turns their hearts. Many husbands, unfortunately, go against their hearts because their wives are the same women they chose to leave. Once again, God is *more than able* to turn your husband’s heart back to you. If you are still contentious, kindness is not on your tongue, you do not exhibit a gentle and quiet spirit, then once his heart turns toward you, the *old* you will cause him to harden his heart and make a mental decision rather than a heart decision!

Make sure you read and reread this book over and over again! Make sure you live in the Word. Make sure you spend hours daily with your face to the ground, seeking His face. You must be a new woman for your husband to want to follow his heart and come home! Remember, the reason your husband has left or has gotten caught by an adulteress is that your home was not built on the rock. It was divided; it was torn down by your words and your attitude—in other words, your contentiousness or arrogance.

Let’s look at Proverbs and some New Testament Scriptures:

Her own hands. “The wise woman builds her house but the foolish tears (or “plucks” in the KJV) it down with **her own hands**” (Prov. 15:25).

House of the proud. “The Lord will tear down the **house of the proud**” (Prov. 15:25).

House divided against itself. “Any kingdom or house divided against itself is laid waste: and any city or **house divided against itself** shall not stand . . .” (Matt. 12:25).

Yet it did not fall. “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and **yet it did not fall**, for it had been founded upon the rock” (Matt. 7:24–25).

Built together. “. . . Christ Jesus being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being **built together** into a dwelling of God in the Spirit . . .” (Eph. 2:21).

Let no man separate. “And He answered and said, ‘Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and

shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'? Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, **let no man separate**" (Matt. 19:4–6).

God has promised to heal, restore, and create praise on your lips! "Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry and struck him; I hid My face and was angry, and he went on turning away, in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and to his mourners, creating the praise of the lips. Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near,' says the Lord, 'and I will heal him'" (Isa. 57:17–19).

"For perhaps he was for this reason parted *from you* for a while, that you should have him back forever, no longer as a slave [of sin], but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord" (Phlm. 1:15–16).

Seek the Lord to break and allow the Lord to change and transform you so that when (not if) God turns your husband's heart, he will see a **new** you! (See *A Wise Woman* for help.)

*Nothing is impossible for God!
The Lord turns the heart wherever He wishes!*

Personal commitment: to ask God to turn my husband's heart and not to fear the will of man. "Based on what I have learned in Scripture, I commit to trusting the Lord to turn my husband's heart. I dispel the lie that my husband has a free will and the lie that therefore God will not intervene on my behalf nor answer my prayers. Instead, I believe that my 'husband's will' will follow after God turns his heart back home."

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Chapter 11

For I Hate Divorce

*“For I hate divorce,”
says the Lord, the God of Israel.
—Malachi 2:16*

Why are so many marriages ending in divorce? We have all heard the statistics . . . 50% of **first** marriages end in divorce and 80% of **second** marriages end in divorce. That means that only 20% of second marriages survive! The real shame is that just as many marriages end in divorce *in* the church!! Christians now accept divorce as an option! Why the onslaught of failed marriages?

“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, **for it had been founded upon the rock**” (Matt. 7:25). Was your house built on the Rock? “And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and **great was its fall**” (Matt. 7:27).

The Rock we need to build on is the Word of God! How many of us really knew the principles that you have read in this book thus far concerning marriage? Hosea 4:6 tells us that “we are perishing for a lack of knowledge.” This was certainly true for me, and I am sure it is true for you too!

So when our marriage fails, we seek to be released from the marriage only to repeat the mistakes in a second or subsequent marriage. God hates divorce, but when we are in the midst of trouble that’s what we believe will bring us relief. We even try to convince ourselves (and others) that divorce is what God wants for us since He wouldn’t want us to suffer. (Go back to chapter 4, “Various Trials,” if you still believe that this is true.)

The Deception

When we entertain a wrong thought or idea, God tells us: “Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his **own lust**. (The definition of lust is a “longing” for what is forbidden, like longing for a divorce when God says, “I hate divorce.”) Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren” (James 1:14–16). It’s sad that so many say that there is nothing wrong with divorce, especially in certain circumstances, even when the destruction it leaves behind is plain to see.

We must obey God rather than man. Everyone has his or her own opinion concerning marriage and divorce (what he or she “thinks” God tells us pertaining to marriage in His Word). “We must **obey God** rather than man” (Acts 5:29).

He is our only hope for salvation. Don’t follow what another person says. Instead, follow God; obey Him, for *He* is our only hope for salvation. Don’t complicate His Word by trying to find “what you *think* He means.” **He means exactly what He says!**

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Please stand by God’s teachings regardless of what is popular or how many people in your church have divorced and/or remarried. “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16).

Please understand that if marriages are to be saved, we must stand on truth! Those second marriages that “seem” happy are in fact living in defeat, not a testimony of God’s faithfulness. They continue to cause many others to suffer or live at less than God’s best, especially the children who suffer the most! They cause many to stumble who are experiencing difficulty in their marriages. It is very tempting to want to find a second husband when many profess that they found happiness in their second marriage after they finally got rid of their first husband!

With gentleness correcting those who are in opposition. Please do not debate the issue of divorce. Each person is only responsible to speak, teach, and live the truth. The Holy Spirit will do the convicting, and the Lord will turn the heart. “But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels” (2 Tim. 2:23).

“And the Lord’s bond servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with **gentleness correcting** those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will” (2 Tim. 2:24–26).

The tree is known by its fruit. We can see the “fruits” of many of those in church leadership—those who have allowed the widespread abuse of “exceptions” for divorce. We have seen that it began with the loophole of “unfaithfulness or adultery” and has led to divorce for practically any reason! It parallels what has happened with the abortion issue . . . rape, incest, and the health of the mother now account for less than 1% of all abortions performed! “You will know them by their **fruits**” (Matt. 7:16). “Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit” (Matt. 12:33). We can clearly see the bad fruit that has been produced by compromising God’s Word—broken marriages and broken vows.

The Questions

Why must we fully understand and follow God’s Law concerning marriage?

Families are being destroyed, and without the family, the foundation on which our country stands will be removed, and great will be our fall! We, as Christians, will be to blame. We cannot point the finger at others because God promises us as believers that if “My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will *heal* their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

Yet, Christian marriages are perishing at the same rate of destruction as those in the world. Why? “My people perish for a lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6). Christians have been deceived and are following the world’s ways rather than God’s ways.

How can we know that we are being deceived about marriage and divorce?

Turning aside to myths. Many of those who sit in the church pews don’t want to hear the truth. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will

accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths” (2 Tim. 4:3–4).

We now seek worldly solutions for troubled or wounded marriages rather than seeking the Lord and His Word. “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a *peculiar* people” (1 Pet. 2:9). We are not a “peculiar people” if we just follow the beaten path that leads to the divorce court!

You may not do the things you please. His Word is always consistent; God’s Word is opposed to the world’s philosophies and sometimes are difficult to understand and follow. “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Cor. 2:14). “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh . . . so you may not do the things that you please” (Gal. 5:17).

Bad fruit. Again, we can easily see “the fruits” of all the Christian marriages that have been destroyed because they believed the lies. “You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit” (Matt. 7:15–17).

Scriptural Facts to Stand On

Let’s search more Scriptures to see how God views marriage.

Marriage is for life. We say the vows *until death do we part*. “Consequently they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Matt. 19:6). “AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh” (Mark 10:8).

God says that He hates divorce! Yet, some women are actually convinced that God led them to get a divorce! Some have said that God has “released me.” **He says**, “For I hate divorce says the Lord” (Mal. 2:16). He never changes: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

You are not the exception: “I most certainly understand that God is not One to show partiality” (Acts 10:34).

Remarriage is not an “option”—the Bible says it’s “adultery”! “. . . **But I say** [Jesus Himself says] to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman **commits adultery**” (Matt. 5:32).

“And I say to you, whoever **divorces his wife**, except for immorality (fornication, KJV), and marries another woman **commits adultery**” (Matt. 19:9).

Commits adultery. “And **He** [Jesus again] said to them, ‘Whoever **divorces his wife** and marries another woman **commits adultery** against her . . .’” (Mark 10:11). “Everyone who **divorces his wife** and marries another **commits adultery**; and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband **commits adultery**” (Luke 16:18).

If her husband dies. “So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, **she shall be called an adulteress**; but **if her husband dies**, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man” (Rom. 7:3).

Lacking sense. “The one who commits adultery with a woman is **lacking sense**; he who would destroy himself does it” (Prov. 6:32). “If there is a man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, one who commits adultery with his friend’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death” (Lev. 20:10).

What about the “exception” clause?

Again, very few divorces in the church are for the reason of adultery, even if that were the correct “exception.” When I was counseled by pastors who told me that I had grounds for divorce because my husband was in adultery, I sought to find out the truth. What I found was that in many Bible translations the words “adultery,” “fornication,” and “moral impurities” were used **interchangeably** as though they were the same words—but I found they are **not** the same words! The word “adultery” (Strong’s Concordance in the Greek or original language is 3429 *Moichao*) means an act of intimacy **after** marriage. The word “fornication” (Strong’s 4202) means an act of intimacy **before** marriage. Therefore these are two separate sins and should not be confused.

So when the Bible says in Matthew 19:9, “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, **except** for *immorality*, and marries another woman commits adultery,” this exception meant that a man could divorce his wife if, **before** they were married, she was found to have been immoral or committed fornication—as was the case with Joseph when the Bible said he contemplated divorcing Mary secretly (Matt. 1:19). It is **not** saying that if you find that your husband has committed adultery, which is intimacy *after* marriage, that you can divorce your husband.

With this information, we could rewrite the verse in Matthew with the correct translation to say: “. . . **But I** [Jesus] **say** that everyone who divorces his wife makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman **commits adultery.**” Only when a **woman** was found *on or before* her wedding day not to be a virgin—only then could the husband divorce his wife. Again, Moses only allowed men to divorce: “Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; **but from the beginning it has not been this way**” (Matt. 19:8).

In other words, **no**, you cannot divorce your husband for **any** reason.

Be careful when you say, “God told you!” “Behold, I am against those who use their tongues and declare ‘The Lord declares.’ Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams, declares the Lord, and related them and led my people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting” (Jer. 23:31–32). “For I **hate** divorce, says the Lord.” (Mal. 2:16). God never tells us to go against His Word! He never changes! Never!!

You also must be very careful what you say about divorce or remarriage since it could lead another person to stumble and divorce or remarry: “Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! . . . It is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt. 18:7, 6).

Many have been deceived. If you believe that God wants the divorce, you have been deceived. “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14).

Flesh reaps corruption. “For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Gal. 6:8). Check to see how “driven” you

are before you go step out in faith. Fleshly desires feel good to the flesh; if you have an “urgency” behind it, you need no grace to carry it out. “For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please” (Gal. 5:17).

God and only God! What knowledge has been gained from seeing so many broken and troubled marriages? God and only God can save and keep a marriage together by your obedience to His Word!! You have to know His Word before you can begin to obey it. “My people perish for a lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6). That’s why you *must* read this over and over and over again! That’s why you must meditate on His Word. That’s why you must feed on His Word not just every day, but all day long!

If You Love Me

In closing, “If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of truth” (1 Tim. 6:3–5).

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (John 14:15). If you say you believe God, **then obey Him**. “Why do you call me Lord and not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46). If you have decided to ask Jesus for your salvation but are not following His teachings, then He is not your Lord and Master. If He *is* your Lord, then be sure that you act like it. Obey Him!

Let us make a personal commitment to

REMAIN MARRIED

and encourage all we meet or talk with to do the same.

Personal commitment: to remain married and encourage others to do the same. “Based on what I have learned from God’s Word, I recommit myself to my marriage. I will humble myself when necessary and take all steps as a ‘peacemaker’ in my marriage. I will not cover my transgressions nor cause another to stumble. I will devote my lips to spreading God’s truth on marriage in a gentle and quiet manner.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____

We have put together “Restoration Fellowship” to help women find the help and support they need. Find an Encouragement Partner to meet with over the Internet, or face-to-face. We pair women up with other women who are in similar situations. If you are separated, divorced, or if your husband has remarried or is still living in the home, you will find comfort, support, and understanding with your Encouragement Partner.

Chapter 12

Seeking God

*I love those who love Me;
and those who diligently seek Me will find Me.
—Proverbs 8:17*

When a woman is seeking to restore her marriage, there are always **many** questions that come up in the course of her restoration. Let me say that throughout the two years of my restoration and during the many years that I have been ministering, I have found that **no one** but God knows the answers you need—no one including me, anyone in our fellowship, a counselor, your pastor, nor anyone else. God **alone** has your answers.

This book, our other resources, and this chapter will not give you all the answers because God wants and yearns for you to *seek Him!* As you read the different questions and the scriptural answers, you will see that there are so many variables in each situation. Things become extremely complicated the more sin we have allowed in our lives and the more we have strayed from God’s perfect plan for His children.

Getting back on track to achieve His perfect plan is **impossible** for you, but it is **not** impossible for God!

Throughout this chapter, many questions will arise in your mind; when they do, simply **ask God** to show you the answer. God will lead you and reveal the answer you need for **every** question you ask. Here is your promise:

“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him **ask of God**, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5).

Ask of God

What if my husband is unfaithful and commits adultery, then am I allowed to divorce him?

No. As we just learned in chapter 11, “For I Hate Divorce,” God’s Word says that a *husband* could divorce for the reason of **fornication** only (which is intercourse prior to marriage) if the *woman* was defiled, no matter what your Bible translation may seem to say. **The one exception refers to the time of betrothal only.** Fornication and adultery are not the same sin. If they were, these sins would not be stated *twice* in the same Scripture verse: “. . . neither **fornicators**, idolaters, nor **adulterers** . . .” (1 Cor. 6:9).

Divorce her secretly. Divorce for the cause of fornication was allowed during the betrothal time, as in the case of Mary and Joseph. The terms “fiancé” and “engagement” were not used during this period of history. The term “husband” was used because Joseph had already committed to being Mary’s husband. “And Joseph, her husband . . . desired to **divorce her secretly**” (Matt. 1:19). This was prior to their marriage because divorce was allowed for the case of fornication only.

Betrothed. The previous verse explains that the “divorce” was to take place **before** the marriage! “. . . when His mother Mary had been **betrothed** to Joseph, **before** they came together she was found to be with child . .

.” (Matt. 1:18). The latest a divorce could take place was immediately after the wedding night, if the **woman** (not the man) was found not to be a virgin.

There are far too many churches and pastors who say that divorce is right in *some* situations, but God’s Word clearly says, “Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:19). Therefore, we, as teachers of the Word, will not annul any of God’s commandments—in other words, we will not say that the verses about divorce are not valid.

How can you be sure that what **this** book says is right and what so many of the churches are saying is wrong? The Scriptures warn us to “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’” (Matt. 7:15–23). Aren’t many of the marriages in your church crumbling and the families dissolving? These are the bad fruits.

I have found in talking to pastors about this issue of divorce and remarriage that many of them personally feel “deep down” a conviction about marriage but don’t want to “offend” anyone, especially all those “church members” who are in their second and third marriages. Sadly, one who did finally take a stand in his church was met with a church division from those who were in second and subsequent marriages. They did not appreciate their pastor taking this firm stand on divorce and remarriage! However, when faced with making a decision, we must remember, “Friendship with the world is hostility toward God. Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4).

A strong stand is **not** for the purpose of condemning those who are divorced or remarried, but instead, to prevent others from making the same mistake. In the same way, I would not want to make a woman uncomfortable because she had an abortion, yet I would not fail to share the consequences and God’s will for others who could make the same mistake.

Ears tickled. If a pastor or church takes a stand against divorce and remarriage, they are labeled legalistic or judgmental. Those who want to “do their own thing” will go to another church to hear what they want to hear (to have their ears tickled).

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their **ears tickled**, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away from the truth, and will turn aside to myths” (2 Tim. 4:3–4).

Since I’m already divorced or single again, couldn’t I remarry or at least date and then ask God to forgive me?

First of all, **you are not really single.** Only someone who has *never* been married (or a widow or widower) is single, as you will discover if you read the Scriptures honestly without trying to make them say what you want them to say. “So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, **she shall be called an adulteress**; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man” (Rom. 7:3).

Secondly, you will reap what you have sown. “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will reap also” (Gal. 6:7). You are willfully entering into sin. “Therefore to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).

A terrifying thing. You'll set yourself up for God's vengeance. "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. How much more **severe a punishment** do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God. Vengeance is mine, I will repay. The Lord will judge His people. *It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God*" (Heb. 10:26–31).

God will not be mocked; you can never benefit from ignoring God's Word nor by trading obedience for a "better marriage" (or relationship) with someone new; you will reap what you have sown. Yes, God can forgive you, but that will not erase the consequences that will be worse than what you feel you are living through right now.

During many years of ministry, the Lord has continually shown me information about those who have rejected our beliefs and the truth of God's Word. Some of the most horrible, abominable, and heart-wrenching testimonies I have heard came from women who "knew the truth" and yet ignored it to do "**as they pleased.**"

Can anyone then ever remarry?

"A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, **she is free to be married** to whom she wishes, only in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39). For those women who are widowed, it is important to know that when the real "Mr. Right" comes along, he will also be widowed or will never have been married. Remember, Satan usually brings his best first, but the Lord makes you wait and then brings His best! "Wait for the Lord, and keep His way" (Ps. 37:34).

But what if I am already in a second (or third) marriage?

Begin by asking God for forgiveness, whether you were married before you were saved or not. You can't be effective in your Christian walk if you can't admit past sins. "He who covers his transgressions shall not prosper" (Prov. 28:13). "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is **faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins** and to cleanse us from **all unrighteousness**" (1 John 1:8–9).

Time to repent. "And I gave *her time to repent*; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds" (Rev. 2:2). "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (James 5:16).

Next, seek God to see whether it is His desire to restore your marriage. It is very **important** that no matter which marriage you are seeking to restore (first, second, or subsequent) that you **seek God**. We have seen that **hearing from God** in your heart (that He truly wants to restore your marriage) will help you to "finish the course" and to "endure to the end," not to mention starting you off in the right direction.

If you cannot discern God's will for which marriage or which husband to restore (as is the case with many women), then God is telling you that, for right now, He wants you all to Himself. He wants you to feel His perfect love, which you can never earn—but you don't have to because He gives it freely, even when you feel unworthy. He wants to heal you of all your past wounds. He wants you to be so full of **Him** that you don't **need** any earthly husband. This is where all women need to be. When we are needy, we are vulnerable to hurt and often drive a husband away. Let God be your Husband and see what real love is! (See Isa. 54:4–6.)

Can my adultery of being in a second (or subsequent) marriage be forgiven?

Yes. In John 8:11 Jesus asked the woman caught in adultery if anyone had condemned her, “And she said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more.’”

Some have read into the verse that to “go and sin no more” means that if she was in an adulterous marriage that she would need to divorce her husband in order to be made clean. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Ignoring or minimizing the power of Christ’s shed blood. When a person believes that God will **not** forgive a second or subsequent marriage but sees it only as ongoing adultery, that person is saying that Jesus’ blood is unable to cover the sin of adultery caused by divorce and remarriage.

This verse in 1 Corinthians 6:9 shows us the truth: “Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor **adulterers** . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such **were some of you**; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.” Hallelujah! God can and does forgive adultery—any and all adultery! “And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more’” (John 8:11). Impossible, you say?

When Jesus spoke of it being “easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” that is certainly **impossible** to do, His disciples questioned Him: “Then who can be saved?” “And looking upon them Jesus said to them, ‘With men this is **impossible**, but with God **all** things are possible’” (Matt. 19:24–26).

But I was told that since my husband was married before (or I was married before) that I am in “continual” adultery.

If we must go beyond His shed blood and His forgiveness by “needing” to “make it right” by no longer being in a second marriage (which, by the way, would constitute a divorce that God says He hates), then a person who stole something would need to “make it right” by returning what he had stolen. That would be fine if the person still had what he took, and if he no longer had the goods or money he certainly could **work** to pay it back. However, if someone murdered and needed to “make it right,” how could he? The person he murdered is dead. Therefore the “solution” of “making it right” does not work since it is not applicable to **all** sins.

In addition, it adds “works” to the equation of forgiveness when Titus 3:5 clearly states that it is “**not** by **works** of righteousness which **we** have done, but according to **His mercy** He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

There are marriage ministries who believe that only those in first marriages are blessed and sanctioned by God (since they themselves were in first marriages). However, they neglect the power of His saving blood that covers **all** sin. The truth is found in God’s loving-kindness; He is a God of hope for **all** who will come to Him, no matter how messed up their lives may be.

In addition, God has confirmed His will through the **many** restored marriages of those who were in second or subsequent marriages. God is not a respecter of persons: He does forgive, and His blood does cover all sins without our having to add works to the equation.

We are no longer under the law, but we live by grace. “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all” (James 2:10). “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love

with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) . . . For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the **gift** of God . . .” (Eph. 2:4–5, 8).

A gift is not something you can or should **earn**; it is **freely and lovingly given!** Trying to live under the law was a curse, but “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law” (Gal. 3:13). Hallelujah!

Most who want to believe that an adulterous marriage is the “unpardonable sin” are the same individuals who are looking at the speck in someone else’s eye but have failed to notice the plank in their own eye. If you are judging someone in this fashion, just remember it will be how God will judge you. “For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you” (Matt. 7:2).

Then is remarriage okay if it’s under the right circumstances?

When anyone sees God’s forgiveness displayed to those who were forgiven of adultery in a second or subsequent marriage, it is very tempting to seek to remarry rather than seeking restoration, especially when it is so very painful.

If you continue to seek what **you** desire rather than God’s will for your life, you will **never** experience the abundant life that He has waiting for you.

Should I restore this marriage or go back to my first husband?

His will. After you confess your sin of getting ahead of God by remarrying or marrying someone who was already married, you must lay **your will** aside and **ask** your heavenly Father for **His will** concerning your present marriage. Does the Lord want you to continue to seek restoration for this marriage that is falling apart? Many women have faced this difficult task, but God is **always** faithful and will guide you if you seek Him. Pray for God’s direction. “The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

An adulterous foundation. Is your present marriage the result of an adulterous relationship? Were you or was your husband married to someone else? Is that former spouse presently unmarried? If you answered “yes” to all three of these questions, it is possible that the Lord may want to restore your previous marriage.

Again, it is in **seeking the Lord** for **His will** that will bring you the peace that passes all understanding. Surrendering yourself totally to Him, repenting of your sins and being forgiven, being willing to forgive, and then putting your **trust** in the God who has a wonderful future, a hope, and an abundant life waiting for those whose hearts are completely His—this is what He is asking you to do.

Don’t allow the enemy to put you under condemnation. You will know it is the enemy if you feel “hopelessness” in your spirit. God doesn’t condemn, but instead, convicts us and “gently” equips us to fulfill His desire with the help of His Holy Spirit and by His wonderful grace.

What if my husband has remarried?

When women who were divorced began experiencing their husbands’ marrying the OW, I “thought” I knew the answer based on the plan I had when my husband told me that he was going to marry the OW. God reminded me in Isaiah 55:8–9: “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,’

declares the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’”

I had made up my mind (back when my husband was gone) that if he married the other woman, then I believed that God was telling me to devote myself to Him, to my children, and to ministering to younger women—that I was no longer to seek restoration. The first part was true: I was to devote myself the Lord, to my children, and to ministering to women, but the second part to “no longer seek restoration” would have caused me to fall short of His perfect plan.

God is **good** all the time! It is His desire to give **hope** to everyone who seeks Him!! God has faithfully revealed **His** plan for the women whose husbands have remarried through two testimonies of restored marriages that He brought to me when I had been pleading with Him to help me to minister more effectively to this group of women in our fellowship. In the first testimony, God gave a woman (whose husband had remarried) the faith to believe and endure to the end, and she received her husband and family back!

This woman continued to pray and believe **even after** her husband remarried the OW but soon felt that she may have been crazy to continue to believe since **no one** agreed with her (which is exactly the way I felt about halfway through my restoration). At her lowest point, she **cried out** to God, who brought her to Ezra 9 and 10. It was there that she found the **hope** to continue to believe and endure the final trial when the Lord **led her** to give her former husband her home and two daughters. Only two weeks later, her husband “broke.” He gave His life to the Lord, divorced his wife, and remarried this believing wife. In addition, he became a minister of God’s Word even though he had been a professional criminal!

At first I was skeptical, but as I began to study the Scriptures in Ezra (that God gave the woman whose husband had remarried), I gained the faith and the scriptural truths to believe that if God restored her marriage, this was available to every woman whose husband had remarried! Here is what I found:

Ezra 10:10–11 says, “Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, ‘You have been unfaithful and have married **foreign** wives adding to the **guilt** of Israel. Now, therefore, make confession to the Lord God of your fathers, and do His will; and **separate** yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives.’”

Then in Ezra 10:14 we read “Let our leaders represent the whole assembly and let all those in our cities who have married **foreign** wives come at appointed times, together with the elders and judges of each city, until **the fierce anger of our God on account of this matter** is turned away from us.”

I searched Ezra and looked up the term “foreign” or “strange” wives, which the men were to “put away” or “separate” from in the original translation of Greek. What I saw was that the words “foreign” and “strange” in the King James Version translated to “adulterous.” When I looked up the words “separate” and “put away” from the KJV, they translated to “asunder.” This means that God is saying that if a man is married in an **adulterous** marriage, and God leads him to, that God tells him to put **asunder** (or **separate**) from that marriage. “That means that if a man is married in an **adulterous** marriage, *by God’s leading* he may in fact be told to put **asunder** (or **separate** from) that marriage.” Chapter 10 of Ezra concludes with this verse: “All these had married foreign wives, and some of them had wives by whom they had children” (Ezra 10:44). If this verse concerns you, remember that when Sarah told Abraham to send Hagar and Abraham’s son away, **God** told him to listen to her! “But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her . . .’” (Gen. 21:12).

God was the one who cared for Hagar and her son Ishmael after Abraham sent her away. “So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her

shoulder, and gave her the boy, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba” (Gen. 21:14). Later, when they were about to perish, God said to Hagar, “Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him” (Gen. 21:18).

After I got the first testimony and studied the verses of Ezra and Genesis with the testimony of Abraham, I again diligently sought God in prayer to make sure that what I believed was correct. A week or two later, God faithfully confirmed His leading when a man submitted to us the testimony of his marriage that was restored after he had been remarried and was led to divorce or “put away” his wife from an adulterous marriage. He came to a place of brokenness when he found himself in prison due to the OW he had married. (You can read both of these testimonies in *By the Word of Their Testimony*.)

Once again, this shows us that no matter what your situation—married, separated, divorced, husband remarried, first, second, or third marriage—you **must** seek the Lord about restoration and allow Him to lead you! If your husband has remarried, you have **hope!** Based on divorce statistics alone, there is only a 15% chance that his marriage will survive. When you add your prayers and faith to that equation, you can easily “hope against hope” and believe! (See Rom. 4:18.)

While you continue to seek the face of God and follow His principles for restoration, God will be busy allowing your husband’s marriage to end in divorce.

Grace, Grace, and More Grace

In closing the second chapter dealing with divorce and the issues of remarriage, it may seem that this chapter contradicts the previous chapter “I Hate Divorce”—but this is not the case any more than the Old Testament contradicts the New Testament. The Old Testament is the Law that God’s people were unable to keep; then, in the New Testament, Jesus enters, His shed blood covers **all** sin, and grace abounds!

Why teach this way and not stay with “the letter of the Law”? “[It is He] who has qualified us [making us to be fit and worthy and sufficient] as ministers and dispensers of a **new covenant** [of salvation through Christ], not [ministers] of the letter (of legally written code) but of the Spirit; for the code [of the Law] kills, but the [Holy] Spirit makes alive” (2 Cor. 3:6 AMP).

This chapter reminds us of God’s abundant grace! He is a God of second, third, and many chances! Jesus told us to forgive seventy times seven—how much more is God willing to forgive us and all who sin and come short of the glory of God?

The secret to understanding these chapters is in *seeking* Him. I do not have all the answers, nor does *anyone* else, except God! Even Jesus, when the Sadducees asked which husband got the wife who had been passed down through seven brothers (as was their custom when a man died leaving a widow and no children), He did not give them a direct answer but instead corrected them in regard to their understanding of the Scriptures **and** the power of God! (See Matt. 22:23–33.)

That means that it is up to you to *seek* God for your restoration for **any** and **all** questions that you have and the power of God! Don’t let anyone rob you of an intimate relationship with the Lord or of hearing directly from Him. God has allowed this trial in your life to draw you closer to Him so that you can experience **joy** in the midst of this trial and every future trial you will experience in your life!

Let us make a commitment to

SEEK THE LORD

PERSONALLY

and encourage all others to do the same!

Personal commitment: to seek the Lord as to whether I am to restore my present (or previous) marriage now or in the future. “Based on what I have learned from God’s Word, I commit to ask God whether or not I am to restore this marriage. I will lay aside my will, wanting only *His* will, since He is my Lord. I promise to **wait** for Him to lead me, and in the meantime I will seek a greater intimacy with Him. In addition, I will never judge anyone who is in a second or subsequent marriage but instead acknowledge that the blood of Jesus is able to cover the sin of all adultery.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Testimony: Restored After Husband Remarried

A woman from California wrote to me about restoring her marriage. Things were progressing very nicely and both she and I were hopeful that her marriage would soon be restored. However, one day she heard through a friend that her husband had married the other woman. Despondent, she wrote to me, “What now?”

I shared with her much of what you have just read in this chapter on remarriage. She wrote back and thanked me. She said that once she became content with God’s will for her life and gave up her will in exchange for His, she was at peace.

Within the year, she wrote back that her former husband recently contacted her. He said that he realized that he had made the biggest mistake of his life! He had already separated from the new wife and was filing for divorce. He wanted to know if she would consider dating him again or if she would only consider it after he was legally divorced. He told her that it was his intent to marry her again if she would have him!

I have shared the principle of **completely** letting go of a husband who has remarried with a strong and bold statement to several other women. All of them rejected this counsel, except this **one** woman who now has a restored marriage! When your husband has taken the step of remarrying the OW, you must do more to let go and let God do a work.

Once left alone, her former husband was able to feel the full impact of his wrong decision to marry the other woman. He had not seen or heard from his former wife during this time but had to track her down to find her (they had no children). I say this to those who are afraid to let go for fear that God is unable to bring a person back.

When a husband is still in the home, a marriage is more easily restored than one in which they are separated. A separated married couple is more easily restored than one who has gone through a divorce. The same is true for a marriage that has not only gone through divorce but where the husband has remarried. It takes more faith, prayer, intimacy with the Lord, more letting go, and greater tests.

With God nothing is impossible, but apart from Him we can do nothing.

*Prayerfully consider becoming a member of our Restoration Fellowship to help you see **your** marriage through to restoration. You can find out about the many benefits of becoming a member on our website:*

www.RMIEW.com

Chapter 13

Wonderful Counselor

*And His name will be called
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Eternal Father,
Prince of Peace.
—Isaiah 9:6*

My husband is filing for divorce; what should I do?

How do I find someone to defend me?

How can I protect myself and especially my children?

People who know about your situation may have been advising you to get a good Christian lawyer to protect you, your assets, and your children. It could be a Christian friend, a counselor, or even your pastor. When my husband was divorcing me, I got this same advice from other well-meaning Christians—but **praise God** that is what helped me find the “Mighty Counselor”! This is what I found in my Bible when I was searching for what God had to say on this subject of litigation.

I found in His Word that He had promised to protect and defend me! So I chose Him and did what His Word told me to do. He was not only faithful, but also mightier than any attorney or court could be because I put my trust in Him **alone!**

I have shared these principles with countless others. Each of them found that following these principles turned their situation around and brought peace where there once was war.

Who has known the mind of the Lord? “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For **who has known the mind of the Lord**, or who became His counselor?” (Rom. 11:33–34). Speak to the Lord. Then **sit quietly** and **hear** from Him.

Woe to the rebellious. Egypt represents the world. “**‘Woe to the rebellious children,’** declares the Lord, ‘who execute a plan, but not Mine, and make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, in order to add sin to sin; who proceed down to Egypt, without consulting Me, to take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh, and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!’” (Isa. 30:1–2).

Have you sought protection in the court system? Do you trust your attorney **more** than you do your Lord? “. . . Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength.” It makes your heart turn “away from the LORD” (Jer. 17:5).

It shall not approach you. “And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also” (Matt. 5:38–48). Usually we are worried that our husbands won’t take care of us and that they’ll take too

much of what we (or our children) deserve. If you act like he's your enemy and fight, he'll fight back. Hasn't he in the past?

Many share "horror stories" about those who have divorced to scare you into getting a good lawyer. Just remember, "A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand, but **it shall not approach you**" (Ps. 91:7). Instead, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). Release your attorney and trust God **alone** to deliver and protect you.

Dare go before the unrighteous versus saints? "Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?" (1 Cor. 6:1). This is a very firm Scripture. Would we dare God? If you merely show up in court, you are standing "before the unrighteous."

In most states you do not violate the law if you don't show up in court if you are served with divorce papers. You merely lose by default. Some make you sign a waiver that you will not appear, and in some (as in the state of Florida at the time of this writing) you neither have to sign the papers nor show up.

Check it out and don't just take one person's word for it if they tell you that you "have to" do anything. I took this verse literally when I was served my divorce papers. I didn't sign the papers nor did I show up for the hearing—and God delivered me! Had I gone to an attorney or shown up in court, I would not have seen the mighty deliverance of the hand of God!

We shall judge angels. "Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? Do you not know that **we shall judge angels**? How much more, matters of this life?" (1 Cor. 6:2–3). God is mocking us, showing us how petty and insignificant the matters of this world are in comparison to our life with Him.

Matters of this life. "If then you have law courts **dealing with matters of this life**, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church?" (1 Cor. 6:4). The courts today do not follow biblical teachings as they did when this country was founded. As a result, we have rulings and burdens placed upon believers that neither God nor our founding fathers had in mind. If you choose the courts to help you, you will choose *their* judgment over God's protection and provisions.

Before unbelievers. "I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goes to law with brother, and that **before unbelievers**?" (1 Cor. 6:5). When the church began to ignore the biblical teachings, they also began to ignore the church's correction.

I have **never** heard of a man who turned from his sin of adultery after being confronted by the church. Some temporarily changed, but in **all** cases they returned to the other woman! So don't ask your pastor to talk to your husband. Allow **God** to turn and soften your husband's heart.

Rather be wronged or defrauded. "Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be **wronged**? Why not rather be **defrauded**? On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud, and that your brethren" (1 Cor. 6:7–8). God says it is better that you are wronged and defrauded (cheated or tricked).

Most women that I speak to who are in the process of divorcing are so caught up in what they'll get, how much money for support, and how many possessions. If you don't allow yourself to be wronged, your husband will end up angry and bitter. If you don't allow yourself to be backed up to the Red Sea, you will never see

God's power of deliverance! Remember that the "cares and riches of the world will choke the Word!" (Matt. 13:22).

We are told that Demas left Paul because the cares of the world choked the Word from him. The following verse tells us how. "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the **worry** of the world and the deceitfulness of **riches** choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful" (Matt. 13:22). Scripture says specifically that it was because of "worry" and because of "riches." Don't worry about or get caught up with money or possessions.

Trust that "our God will supply all our needs," even when your papers say that he doesn't have to pay enough child support or it doesn't "look" like there will be enough money for you and your children. Many have fallen from their faith because the Word was choked out.

My divorce papers stated that I wouldn't get nearly enough to support my four small children and myself. God softened my husband's heart because I trusted the Lord. I didn't even need to ask for more or tell him my plight. God placed in my husband's heart the desire to pay all of our bills until he came home!

A defeat for you. "Actually, then it is already **a defeat for you**, that you should have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?" (1 Cor. 6:7). This is your answer: if you go into court with your spouse, it is already a defeat for you. You may get the money or the possessions, but you will lose your husband!

No one will see the Lord. "Pursue peace with all men, and sanctification without which **no one will see the Lord**" (Heb. 12:14–15). If you wish to act as Christ acted (Jesus was totally innocent) remember that He "opened not His mouth in defense" (1 Pet. 2:23). God can begin to work in your husband's life because you are planting seeds of life and no longer giving Satan fuel for destruction. (See 1 Pet. 3:1.)

We want our husbands to see Jesus' ways in us. We quench the work of the Holy Spirit when we do the things we "want to" instead of what we "ought to." Do it **God's way!**

Put away. "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be **put away** with all malice" (Eph. 4:31). If you have a lawyer, slander and wrath *will* take place. This is what divorce is all about. You must put it away from you. It doesn't matter if you have a "Christian" attorney or not—all "**deliverance by man is in vain!**" (Ps. 108:13).

Deliverance by man is in vain. "O, give us help against the adversary, for **deliverance by man is in vain**" (Ps. 108:12–13). I have heard countless accounts of all the ways that people try to deliver themselves, only to find that even though the judge gives a judgment of a certain amount of money or protection, the courts can't make your husband pay or protect you from his vengeance or physical harm!

There has been much media attention given to those who don't pay child support. You have heard stories about men who come after their wives for physical revenge—and law enforcement can't help them! Allow God to turn your husband's heart (Prov. 21:1).

Your husband doesn't need stricter penalties, but a heart for you and your children. You have His promise: "When a man's ways [*your ways*] are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7).

Take refuge in the Lord. "It is better to **take refuge in the Lord** than to trust in man" (Ps. 118:8). A lawyer is no substitute for the Lord. Can a Christian have *both* a lawyer and God's protection, or are they actually in

opposition to one another? “Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and **whose trust is the Lord**” (Jer. 17:5–8).

We have found in the area of divorce that you can either be blessed or cursed by trusting God or what you and an attorney can do. You must ultimately decide. I decided that I really would certainly lose if I tried to fight. I might win more money, but thankfully, God led me to want my husband and our marriage restored! So I chose to put **all** my trust in the Lord and He delivered me because of my faith in trusting Him **alone!**

Cease striving. “**Cease striving** and know that I am God” (Ps. 46: 8–10). Put it in His hands. Stop wringing your hands about it; stop discussing it with everyone. Be still! If your husband has already begun divorce proceedings, and you have already humbled yourself and turned from your wicked ways, then follow these steps:

Called us to peace. Tell your husband that you do not want the divorce, but that you will not stand in his way (Ps. 1:1) and that you will **not** contest the divorce either. Tell him that you don’t “blame him” for wanting to divorce you. Tell him that you will still love him (if the “hate wall” is down), no matter what he chooses to do. “Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave . . . but God has **called us to peace**” (2 Cor. 7:15).

Sweetness of speech. Again, be sure to tell your husband that you will not contest or fight him in the divorce and that you won’t get a lawyer for yourself. If you have a lawyer, tell your husband that you will dismiss him or her. Tell your husband that you trust him and know from his past that he will be fair, and that he will do what he believes is right for you and your children. The only way to win the war that is raging against your marriage is with kindness and **refusing** to fight! “**Sweetness of speech** adds persuasiveness” (Prov. 6:24).

I hate divorce. Tell your husband that you have made so many mistakes in the past that you don’t want to make any more. You hope that he will allow you **not** to sign the divorce papers. I told my husband that since ours was a state of “no—fault,” the divorce would go through even if I did not sign the papers. Seek the Lord for how He wants to deliver you and the words that He wants you to speak to your husband. Remember, the Lord said, “**I hate divorce.**” Of course if he persists in your signing, agree to sign and then pray diligently that the Lord will stop him from pursuing you to sign. If you are not the same disagreeable woman that you were, and your husband sees a humble and meek wife, then he will not continue to press. Don’t offer suggestions to try and please your husband; this is displeasing to the Lord. Seek the Lord! (See “Wives, Be Subject,” under the heading “Sarah’s Obedience: Submission unto Sin?” in *A Wise Woman*.)

Nothing is impossible. However, if you have participated in divorce proceedings, all is not lost. Ask the Lord’s forgiveness and then your husband’s forgiveness also. Demonstrate your desire to have the family together by dropping any and all legal action or protection. God will begin to heal right now: “**With God nothing is impossible**” (Matt. 19:26).

Again, if you have retained a lawyer, dismiss him or her immediately if you want the Best to defend you. Then pray, “Lord, there is no one besides Thee to help us in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O Lord our God, for we trust in Thee, and in Thy name have come against this, O Lord. Thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee” (2 Chron. 14:11 KJV).

Harder to be won. If you have already been through a divorce, bitterness, resentment, and extreme anger are probably what your husband feels toward you now. Pray that God will forgive your transgressions and blot out the bad memories he has (Ps. 9:5) and replace them with good thoughts. Pray harder and be sweeter (again, sweetness of speech adds persuasiveness) at every opportunity that you may have with your husband to win

him back. Remember, “A brother offended is **harder to be won** than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle” (Prov. 18:19). (See chapter 8, “Won Without a Word.”)

Then I could bear it. God does understand what you are going through. Read some of Psalm 55; He’s speaking directly to you. Beginning in verse 6, “Oh that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. Behold, I would wander far away, I would lodge in the wilderness. I would hasten to my place of refuge, from the stormy wind and tempest.” Verses 12–14: “For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, **then I could bear it**; nor is it one who hates me who exalted himself against me, then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, my companion and my familiar friend, we who had sweet fellowship together . . .”

Steal, and kill, and destroy. If you have “flown away,” go back home. Satan is in his glory because he has again managed to divide and conquer! Take back the ground that he stole from you; he is a thief! “The thief comes only to **steal, and kill, and destroy**; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Give God the victory and the testimony by turning this around for **His** glory! Instead of throwing away “your cross” (your troubled marriage), pick it up again and follow Him!

Take up his cross daily. “And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross daily**, and follow Me’” (Luke 9:23). Be sure that your cross isn’t heavier than He has designed for you; take off all your lack of forgiveness and bitterness. It’s a heavy weight to carry and, eventually, you won’t be able to continue to carry it. You may not even be able to lift it up now, to begin to follow Him.

Take off any “works of the flesh.” The flesh will wear you out and break you down. Let go and let God restore. Use this time to fall in love with the Lord! If your cross feels too heavy to bear, there are burdens on your cross that **you** have put there. He does not lie and He has promised that He wouldn’t give us more than we could bear!

There is no one besides Thee. Now let us together pray as Asa prayed in 2 Chronicles 14:11: “Lord, **there is no one besides Thee** to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O Lord our God, for we trust in Thee, and in Thy name have come against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee.”

Below are a few short testimonies (or Fruit of the Word) from those who have chosen to follow the ways of the world or the ways of God:

Testimony: A woman came into class for the first time only a week before she was to take the “evidence” of her husband’s infidelity to her attorney. The attorney said that if she could show this to the judge, he could get her more money. The lesson that night was “Wonderful Counselor.” Without saying a word in class, she went home and threw the shoe box full of “evidence” into the trash. Since then, her husband has continued to pay her bills though he married another. She is still praying and trusting God.

Testimony: A young woman believed God when she read in her Bible, “He is our Provider.” When she read the divorce papers, which stated that she was barely going to get enough to pay the small rent payment for herself and her children, she made up her mind to continue to trust God. Then she acted on her faith. She told her husband that she trusted him and that she was sure that he would help take care of them as he had done so faithfully in the past. He did continue to pay **all** their bills and even gave her spending money from time to time out of his girlfriend’s savings! The other woman and the attorney tried to falsify the divorce papers, but they were not able to succeed because God had turned her husband’s heart. The divorce did go through, but shortly thereafter, they were remarried.

Testimony: A woman, whose husband had filed for divorce, tearfully contacted us. She said that she also had a friend who had filed. She said that she was so sympathetic that she failed to share with her friend about her own troubled marriage and that she was trusting God to help her.

A few weeks later she heard a shocking report on the news: her friend's husband was so distraught about the divorce that he planned to kill his wife before he would let her leave. Yet the net, which he had hidden, caught his own foot; he died in the fire that also destroyed their entire house.

Testimony: An older woman came to Restore Ministries after her divorce was final (though a friend had begged her for months to come!). She shared with others the devastating effects of fighting it out in court. She did receive "all that she deserved": the house, a new car, and alimony. Yet she now has a former husband who will have nothing to do with her. He has thousands of dollars worth of bitterness that the court made him pay to her and to her divorce lawyer.

Testimony: A woman came to a prayer group (not Restore Ministries) asking that they pray for her upcoming divorce. They prayed that God would have the judge provide well for her and her children. God answered that prayer and the court awarded her an ample amount of money in the divorce. Only a few months later she was asking for prayer again since her husband had not paid her a dime! Again they prayed for the court to be firm with her husband. The judgment again was in her favor.

Only weeks later she asked that the prayer group pray that the police would "find him" and bring him back for "justice"! He had fled to another state to avoid paying. At this point the police threw him into jail. That prayer group failed to really trust God for her protection, for Him to turn her husband's heart and have him "want" to provide for his family. "And *my God* shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). Only God's way will bring "victory."

Don't follow the world's way; trust only in Him. I promise you that He will never let you down. Only as you compromise or look to the flesh for strength and protection will things go awry. Still, it may take going through the fire of endurance (*with Him*) to reach the victory He has waiting for you. Will you pick up your cross and follow Him?

How much faith do you have? Do you have enough to take the step to allow the Lord to fight for you without a lawyer? My beloved sister in Christ, release your attorney, and take the hand of Jesus.

Personal commitment: to trust God alone. "Based on what I have learned in Scripture, I commit to trusting the Lord to fight for me in this battle. I will release my attorney (if I have one) and I will not show up in court (unless I will be in contempt)."

Date: _____ Signed: _____

For more help if there is a divorce that has been filed, or a possibility that one could be filed, I would **urge** you to get our **Facing Divorce** book **and** our Q&A video or DVD, **Facing Divorce**, available through our ministry office.

Chapter 14

First to Throw a Stone

*He who is without sin among you,
let him be the first to
throw a stone.
—John 8:7*

Adultery: Grounds for Divorce or Grounds for Forgiveness

Can adultery be forgiven?

Yes. Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery: “Did no one condemn you? . . . Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more” (John 8:10–11). Actually, not only is **adultery not** grounds for divorce, it is **grounds for forgiveness**, as Christ showed in John 8:10 above.

We also have an example of a spouse forgiving adultery in Hosea 3:1. “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress.’” Then in 1 Corinthians 6:9–11, when God refers to adulterers and fornicators, He says: “And such **were** some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.” We are washed in His blood of forgiveness.

Yet, too many pastors say that adultery is grounds for divorce. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you that everyone who *looks* on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:27–28). If it were true that adultery is grounds for divorce, most married women could divorce their husbands since most men have lusted over pictures of women on television or in magazines!

If you have committed adultery, you must confess your sin to your husband if he is unaware of your unfaithfulness. “He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion” (Prov. 28:13).

Should my husband’s adultery be forgiven?

What did Jesus do? Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, “Did no one condemn you? . . . Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on, sin no more” (John 8:10–11). Have you condemned your husband?

But he is a “repeat offender”!

What did Jesus say when Peter asked how many times he should forgive his brother who sinned against him. “Seven times?” he suggested. But Jesus replied, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy

times seven.” That’s 490 times! (See Matt. 18:22.) Too often when women have husbands who are repeat offenders (like mine was), a pastor or counselor convinces the woman that her husband will **never** change; however, that is simply **not** scriptural.

If this were true, more than 9 out of 10 of our restored marriages would simply not be restored today. **Most** of our restored marriages are marriages that had a spouse who was a “repeat offender”—in other words, a repetitive adulterer, not a “one night stand” situation. Most, if not all, were given ample time to repent, but refused—but God heard the cry of the wife who stood in the gap for her husband and God did a work in her husband’s life and **broke** the sin of adultery out of his life. (For more information, read chapter 17, which trains you to pray Scriptures or “stand in the gap” for your husband, and chapter 16, which teaches many principles regarding prayer, especially the power of “prayer and fasting.”)

Are you without sin, that you should cast the first stone at your husband? Jesus also said to the people who wanted this adulterous woman punished, “He who is without sin among you, cast the first stone” (John 8:7). Are you without sin, that you should cast the first stone at your husband? The truth is, “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8).

But I never did anything that sinful! Let me show you that God groups your sins along with your husband’s. This is how God sees sin: “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: (his?) immorality, impurity, sensuality . . . drunkenness, carousing, (now yours?) strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, envying” (Gal. 5:19–20).

And if I don’t forgive him? What are the grave consequences of not forgiving? “But if you do not forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will not forgive your transgression” (Matt. 6:15).

When God refers to adulterers and fornicators, He says, “And such *were* some of you; but you were washed, but you were **sanctified**, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9–11). “For the unbelieving husband is **sanctified** through his wife” (1 Cor. 7:14). Since you and your husband are one flesh, we at Restore Ministries suggest that you draw closer to God, allowing Him to transform you more into His image. Something amazing will begin happening to your husband since you are one flesh—He will become sanctified! However, as long as you stay in sin, you will both remain unsanctified.

But adultery has happened before! Let us once more remember what Jesus said to us when asked how often we are to forgive someone. “If he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying ‘I repent,’ forgive him seven times seventy” (Luke 17:1–4). (See chapter 9, “A Gentle and Quiet Spirit,” on the subject of “Tough Love.”) Also, see below for why it continues.

But he hasn’t repented! As Jesus hung on the cross for *your* sins, He cried out, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). (Again, see chapter 9, “A Gentle and Quiet Spirit,” on “Forgiveness.”)

“Don’t be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.” God specifically asked His prophet Hosea to remarry his wife, Gomer, even after she was blatantly unfaithful to him. Hosea 2:2 says, “For she is not my wife, and I am not her husband . . .” Then in verse 7, “Then she will say, ‘I will go back to my first husband, for it was better for me then than now.’” Later in verse 3:1 it says, “Then the Lord said to me (Hosea), ‘Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress.’” God used the story of Hosea and Gomer to show His commitment to His own bride, the church (see the book of Hosea). In Luke 15, it says the older son said to his father “. . . this son of yours came, who devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the

fatted calf for him.” Then the father said to his older son, “But we had to be merry and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.” What will your husband find when he calls or comes by? The fatted calf, your robe, and a ring—or will he be met with judgment?

Can I ever trust him again? God said to trust **Him**; you will then be blessed with a faithful husband. “Cursed is the man who trusts mankind and makes flesh his strength . . . Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord” (Jer. 17:5–7). People always ask me how I can trust my husband. I answer by saying, “I don’t—I trust the Lord!” It is the Lord who made my husband faithful to me, and He will keep him faithful. Glory to God!

How can I help my husband? Help him by praying! “Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mark 14:38). Every woman who **allowed God** to turn her husband’s heart testifies that God removed the wandering eyes and unfaithfulness. (These are women whose husbands have been home for years!)

God may bring other tests into our lives to be sure, but not adultery. When God heals and brings deliverance, He says, “It is finished.” It is a complete healing and deliverance from adultery. Remember, if you sow in the flesh, you will reap in the flesh. Ladies, if you coerce or entice your husband to return home, you will reap consequences. Learn to wait. When it is the blessing of the Lord, He will add no sorrow to it! (See Prov. 10:22.)

What does His Word say we are to do (or not do) if our husband is in adultery?

The adulteress flatters; we are instead to edify. Proverbs 29:5 says, “A man who flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his steps.” “Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification” (Eph. 4:29). The difference between flattering and edifying is the heart. When someone flatters, the heart or motivation is to “get something.” The motivation of one who edifies or builds up is to *give* something—expecting nothing in return. Two women can be saying the same thing, yet the difference is in their hearts. What kind of heart do you have? Do you whine and complain to others about what your husband hasn’t done in return for your kindness and forgiveness? Whether he hears your whining is not important. God hears it and is looking at your heart.

God may bring on His wrath; don’t you do it! “Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For on account of these things the wrath of God will come” (Col. 3:5–6). “For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay,’ and again, ‘The Lord will judge His people.’ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:30–31). If you haven’t forgiven your husband, you may be joyful when the “wrath from God” begins. However, God warns us: “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; or the Lord will see it and be displeased, and turn His anger away from him” (Prov. 24:17–18).

Don’t be deceived—you don’t need to look into what your husband is doing. “For nothing is hidden that shall not become evident, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light” (Luke 8:17). They have been hidden from you by God to protect you. Those who thwart God’s protection by spying or investigating are **tragic**; please don’t make the same mistake! “For it is disgraceful **even to speak** of the things which are done by them in secret” (Eph. 5:12). Ladies, stop talking about your husband’s sinful life. It does not glorify God. Only the adversary is delighted that you are so willing to speak for him!

What Can We Learn from Scripture About the Adulterer and the Adulteress?

It is flattery that pulls a man into adultery. “For the **lips** of an adulteress drip honey and *smoother than oil* is her **speech**; but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps lay hold of Sheol. She does not ponder the path of life; *her ways are unstable, she does not know it*” (Prov. 5:3–6). While you were busy tearing him down, the OW was building him up. While you were disagreeing, she was agreeing. Has it changed?

She uses her flattery to pull him into adultery and into spiritual death. “With her many persuasions *she entices him*; with her flattering lips *she seduces him*. **Suddenly** he follows her as an ox goes to slaughter. So he does not know it will cost him his life” (Prov. 7:21–23). Many times it is quite suddenly that he follows her. Many women whose husbands have fallen into the pit of adultery have reported that they warned their husbands, yet they never heeded their wives’ warnings. (See chapter 8, “Won Without a Word,” for why husbands ignore their wives’ warnings.)

Once again it is her flattery that pulls a man into adultery. “That they may keep you from an adulteress, from the foreigner who **flatters** with her **words**” (Prov. 7:5). When was the last time you praised your husband for anything? Encouraged him? Got excited about what he said? Is it any wonder he was starving for what the adulteress was serving—flattery?

Again, it is her flattery that eventually pulls him down to suffering financially. “To keep you from the evil woman, from the **smooth tongue** of the adulteress. Do not desire her beauty in your heart, do not let her catch you with her eyelids. For on account of a harlot one is **reduced to a loaf of bread**, and an adulteress hunts for the precious life. Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? The one who commits adultery with a woman *is lacking sense*; he who would destroy himself does it. Wounds and disgrace he will find, and his reproach will not be blotted out” (Prov. 6:24–33). So many women are surprised by their husbands’ actions or what they say while in adultery. The Bible is clear: at this point he *is lacking sense* and is *destroying himself*.

Again, God says that he will suffer financially. “He who keeps company with harlots **wastes his wealth**” (Prov. 29:3). There have been women who have come to me to tell me that, because her husband is so successful corporately, this will never happen to him. God’s Word applies to all. Every woman who came to debate this principle later told me of her husband’s financial collapse, and how the adulteress wasted his wealth!

The adulteress is basically out to get the man. She is out (of the home) to do it! “A woman comes to meet him, dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart, she is boisterous and rebellious; her feet do not remain at home” (Prov. 7:5). Is this a description of you too? Are you boisterous? Are you rebellious? Do you spend more time away from home than in it? “For the harlot is a deep pit, and an adulterous woman is a narrow well. She lurks as a *robber*, and *increases the faithless among man*” (Prov. 23:28). (Please read “The Ways of Her Household” in *A Wise Woman* for more knowledge.)

The adulteress is deceived into thinking that she has done nothing wrong. “This is the way of an adulterous woman: she eats and wipes her mouth, and says, ‘**I have done nothing wrong**’” (Prov. 30:20). Many women who come seeking help for their marriages respond in the same way by stating “**I have done nothing wrong.**” Have you taken the full responsibility for your marriage collapsing? Until you look directly

at what you have done long and hard enough that you can no longer see your husband's sin, your marriage will not be restored.

The adulteress is an enemy of God! “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself **an enemy of God**” (James 4:4).

God will give her time to repent and then cause great tribulation! “And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will *cast her upon a bed of sickness*, and those who commit adultery with her into **great tribulation**, unless they repent of her deeds” (Rev. 2:22). We see this so often in our ministry. All the men who stayed in adultery eventually fell into “great tribulation.” This is why it is vital that when your husband is seeking relief he “knows” that there is peace in his own home. He must **know** that the contentious woman is gone! If God hasn't brought him around, then you are not ready. God is more than able to create a situation in your husband's life to cause him to contact you. It's not God's problem or your husband's problem; it's your problem. Once there is a significant change, God will be faithful to bring him around. Until that time, He is hiding you with the desire to change and mold you from the inside out.

We have also seen at least four cases when the other woman, who would not repent after a time, was stricken with a significant illness (i.e., lupus, cancer).

“And I will *kill her children with pestilence*; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds” (Rev. 2:23). In addition, we know of two cases when a child died. One woman lost a child in a miscarriage to what the doctors said was a “parasite.” We in Restore Ministries just heard of another case when the other woman (a professed Christian), in her boldness, continued to pursue another woman's husband after many warnings. Her oldest son died of a brain tumor!

This is a spiritual battle. It must be fought and won in the Spirit. Please reread chapter 8, “Won Without a Word,” to understand more about spiritual warfare. We also have examples of prayers in chapter 17 that work mightily against adultery. Always ignore and resist the temptation to fight in the flesh, either viciously or enticingly. Books, talk shows, and well-meaning friends may try to sway you to either administer the “tough love” approach, which, we experienced first hand, leads to even more hurt and a complete disaster in your restoration, or to be more romantic or seductive to win him back. Neither of these is the cause nor the solution to this sin. **It is a spiritual battle.** It must be fought and **won in the Spirit**. Love, as described in 1 Corinthians 13 is always the right response!

Once your husband shows you that he feels he is able to trust you (because he knows that you are not going to try to make him come back to you, but that you have let him go) then it is time to allure him as it describes in the book of Hosea. *If you want a good teaching on this topic, the Q&A video “Alluring and Unconditional Love” has helped many who are now restored.*

Seducing is very different from alluring. Kind and loving words are alluring. Forgiveness is alluring. Someone who is at peace is alluring. Don't fail to allure your husband through kindness, with loving words, which speak loud and clear that you truly have forgiven him. “Therefore, behold, I will **allure** her, bring her into the wilderness, and speak kindly to her” (Hos. 2:14). *Again, for a deeper understanding of the principle of alluring, you would do well to view the video “Alluring and Unconditional Love.”*

Be **excited** when your husband calls or comes by. It's not pursuing to be excited. Let him know by excitement, enthusiasm, and the tone of your voice that he is special and very loved by you. However, if you have never

let him go, it will drive him away. You must *first* be sure he *knows* that you have truly let him go, then begin to allure him with your kind words.

By agreement. Many ask what they should do if their unfaithful husbands approach them for physical intimacy. “But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, *except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer*, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (1 Cor. 7:2–5).

If you are still legally married, yet you refuse to be intimate, resist his advances, order him out of your bed, or initiate sleeping apart (for whatever reason), you are working and playing into the hands of the devil. A woman who is an unbeliever would certainly order her husband out of her bed or out of her house. “And if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them” (Luke 6:32).

When a sinner or anyone who was “unclean” came to Jesus, He always responded kindly and even touched them. He says that anyone who comes to Him, He will in no way cast out! (See John 6:37.) No matter how often a sinner comes to the Lord, He always accepts him back even though He knows that he will soon reject Him again. Are you an imitator of Christ?

However, the above verse clearly covers those who are still legally married. If a divorce has taken place, give no appearance of evil. This is the time that you must abstain from intimacy when your former husband requests it.

Personal commitment: to forgive. “Based on what I have learned in Scripture, I commit to trusting the Lord and refusing to fight in the flesh. I will continue daily to forgive my husband and all who have been involved. I will stay gentle and quiet as I walk in a spirit of forgiveness.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Chapter 15

Opening the Windows of Heaven

*“Test Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts,
“if I will not open for you the windows of heaven,
and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.”
Malachi 3:10*

This is a pretty powerful statement from God. Nowhere else in Scripture does God tell us to test Him, except in this verse. What is it that God says will cause Him to open the windows of heaven, pouring out His blessing on us until it overflows?

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows” (Mal. 3:10).

Did you see it? It’s tithing. Tithing will cause God to open the windows of heaven and shower His blessings over your life!

Many Christians shy away from learning as much as they can about this important principle, but please don’t miss this! God wants us to be faithful and obedient in **all** things, and when we neglect or choose to be disobedient in one area of our lives, it spills over into other areas as well.

What exactly is tithing? It is giving back to God ten percent of the first of your increase.

Our society as a whole is ignorant of this principle. Many churches fail their people by neglecting to teach the importance of tithing. Why is it so serious? God is angry when we fail to give back to Him what is rightfully His. “The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it” (Ps. 24:1). Tithing is an act of worship.

There are too many Christians who either live in poverty or are in as much debt as the unbeliever. God wants to make every believer “the head and not the tail.” He wants you to be “above” and “not be underneath” debt or anything else that will rule or control your life (Deut. 28:13). We are told, “Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another . . .” (Rom. 13:8). “The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes the lender’s slave” (Prov. 22:7).

Most Christians are blessed with so much, especially if we look at other nations and the level of poverty at which most people of the world live. We spend our earnings on pleasures while our churches, missionaries, and ministries struggle to make ends meet. Why? Because we try to hold onto what is not rightfully ours to keep.

We take but give little. “Now this I say, he who **sows sparingly** shall also **reap sparingly**; and he who **sows bountifully** shall also **reap bountifully**. Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:6).

We ask and wonder why we don't receive. "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may **spend it on your pleasures**" (James 4:3).

God wanted to **bless** His people, but He did not because they were unwilling to give into His storehouse. He tells them in Haggai 1:6–7, "'You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes. Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Consider your ways!'"

"'You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, **I blow it away**. Why?' declares the Lord of hosts, 'Because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house'" (Hag. 1:9).

Understanding Tithing

It is ironic that so many Christians erroneously believe that they are not able to "afford" to tithe and bless God through offerings. The truth is that they are simply caught in a vicious cycle that only obedience and faith can cure. They can't afford to give because they rob God to pay men, thereby robbing themselves of being blessed!

As a matter of fact, it is when we are in deep poverty that God asks us to give. The Christians in Macedonia understood and applied this principle of giving: "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity" (2 Cor. 8:2). Sounds a bit like many of us, doesn't it?

Why 10%?

The word tithe in the Hebrew is "**ma'asrah**," which translates to "a tenth." So whenever God speaks to us in His Word and says to "tithe," He is saying to give Him a tenth.

Why should I give my tithe *first*, before paying my bills?

This is the principle of "first fruits" of our labor. Deuteronomy 18:4 tells us, "You shall give him the **first fruits** of your grain, your new wine, and your oil, and the first shearing of your sheep." Then, in Exodus 34:24 and 26, God says, "For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders . . . You shall bring the **very first** of the **first fruits** of your soil into the house of the Lord your God . . ."

This also is confirmed in the New Testament when Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:33, "But seek **first** His kingdom and His righteousness; and **all** these things shall be added to you."

Where should I tithe?

Malachi 3:10 tells us, "'Bring the whole tithe into the **storehouse**, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,' says the Lord of hosts, 'if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.'"

Your **storehouse** is where you are spiritually fed. Many Christians make the mistake of giving where they are **not** spiritually fed or would rather give where they see there is a need—but this is foolishness. It is like going to a restaurant, ordering a meal, but when the check comes telling the cashier that you would rather give to the restaurant down the street that is not doing too well!

If you are attending a church where you are being spiritually fed, then you should be tithing at least a tenth of your income to your home church. That means that if you attend church elsewhere and feel led to sow financially into our ministry (or any other ministry or missions), then this would be an offering “above and beyond” your tithe. We don’t want you to steal from your church to sow into our ministry “for this would be unprofitable for you” (Heb. 13:17).

However, many of our fellowship members who are **not** attending a church (for a variety of reasons) *and* are being fed through our ministry tithe by sowing into restoring marriages, since this is where they are being spiritually fed.

Again, as I have encouraged you throughout this book, seek **God**. This goes for everything, including your finances. Then be obedient and faithful to **Him!**

Don’t make the mistake of diligently following all the principles on restoring your marriage yet fail to tithe, lest you find your marriage not restored because you are stealing from God.

Remember, Malachi 3:8–10 tells us, “**Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed Thee?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you!**”

But since I am not under the law and I live by grace, 10% is no longer required, is it?

God’s grace warrants giving more, not less. When we have experienced His forgiveness, His mercy, His compassion, and His sacrifice of His shed blood whereby we become partakers of His glory, it will increase our willingness to give more, certainly not less.

“ . . . Freely you received, **freely give**” (Matt. 10:8).

“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him **freely give** us all things?” (Rom. 8:32).

However, “. . . he who **sows bountifully** shall also **reap bountifully**. Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:6).

If we are double-minded and don’t really trust that God will provide for us, “let this man expect that he will receive nothing from the Lord.” When we hold onto what we have to try to take care of ourselves, we will never see God’s awesome power on our behalf.

God’s desire is to pour His power and His blessings into our lives. When we tithe, we are being obedient. When, out of utter gratitude and worship, we freely give offerings beyond what is commanded, we are truly opening the door for God to pour out His blessings and do His pleasure in our lives.

We know He “is able to do exceedingly and abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph. 3:20 KJV).

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33 KJV). Do we take God at His Word or not?

Principles of Stewardship

As we have seen, tithing is an important principle in the Bible. God expects us to tithe back to Him a portion of what He has so generously given to us. Indeed, all that He has given us is still His—we are stewards that He has entrusted to care for the earth and all that is in it. How we handle what He has entrusted to us—our money, our talents, our time—demonstrates our obedience to His Word, our trust in His promise to provide, and most importantly, our faith in Him.

The way you view and handle your finances is basic to your Christian growth, and understanding God's principles of stewardship will enable you to mature in your spiritual walk and inherit the blessings God has for your life.

As you have read thus far in this book, God deals with many areas in our lives that indirectly affect our marriage. It is not enough to concentrate on marriage principles exclusively, but again God is using this trial in your marriage to transform you more into His image as He draws you out of the world's destruction and shows you the pathway to life.

The riches of God are not in order for us to “get rich” in the way the world seeks riches, but instead His blessings are part of our heritage. God wants to prosper us (Jer. 29:11) as long as He knows that we will use our inheritance wisely, without allowing prosperity to bring us to ruin. Giving a car to a child who is too young will most certainly end in tragedy. It is not until a parent sees maturity is he willing to turn over the keys of the car.

God wants us to have a mature attitude toward money for it has the power to affect our ability to make wise decisions: “Two things I asked of You, do not refuse me before I die: keep deception and lies far from me, give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is my portion, that I not be full and deny You and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or that I not be in want and steal, and profane the name of my God” (Prov. 30:7–9).

It is clear that it is God's desire to bless His children. Here are more verses that show God's heart toward you as one of His:

“It is the *blessing of the Lord* that **makes rich**, and He adds no sorrow to it” (Prov. 10:22).

“The *reward of humility* and the *fear of the Lord* are riches, honor and life” (Prov. 22:4).

“And by *knowledge* the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant **riches**” (Prov. 24:4).

“A *faithful man* will **abound with blessings**, but he who *makes haste to be rich* will not go unpunished” (Prov. 28:20).

These verses maintain that there are conditions to financial blessings (spiritual maturity) and that this is truly a heart issue (an absence of greed).

All of us want God's blessings upon our life, but did you know that how you handle your financial blessings has a great deal to do with how you grow in the Lord and to what degree God is able to work in your life?

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stand by and be devoted to the one and despise and be against the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions, or whatever is trusted in)” (Matt. 6:24 AMP).

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?” (Luke 16:10–11).

To grow in our ability to be used of God, which is spiritual wealth, and gain the *greater* things (having the power and presence of God in our lives) depends in part on how we handle our finances.

To prove this further, there are roughly 500 references in the Bible to faith and 500 to prayer, but there are over 2,000 verses that refer to our finances! In addition to the spiritual laws that were set in place when God created the universe (see chapter 1), God has also established financial laws, which He has shared with us in His Word. We benefit from following the laws or suffer the consequences if we don't. It doesn't matter if we are ignorant of them or have chosen to reject them; these laws, like gravity, exist and cannot be debated.

Principle #1: We reap what we sow.

One of the most important principles of stewardship is sowing and reaping. To reap a harvest, we must sow seed first. There are many Scriptures that give us insight into the subject of sowing and reaping. Here are just a few:

“Now this I say, he who **sows sparingly** shall also **reap sparingly**; and he who **sows bountifully** shall also **reap bountifully**” (2 Cor 9:6).

“Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting” (Ps. 126:5).

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man **sows**, this he will also **reap**” (Gal. 6:7).

“For the one who **sows to his own flesh** shall from the flesh **reap corruption**, but the one who **sows to the Spirit** shall from the Spirit **reap eternal life**” (Gal. 6:8).

“And let us not lose heart in **doing good**, for in due time we **shall reap** if we do **not grow weary**” (Gal. 6:9).

When we sow with the understanding of this principle and with faith in the Lord and His Word, we should **expect** to reap a harvest in and where we have sown! This is really exciting!

No farmer would take the time or the money to sow seed if he did **not** expect to **reap** a harvest. In addition, if he wanted to **reap** a harvest of corn, he would **sow** corn. If he wanted to **reap** wheat, he would **sow** wheat.

Therefore, if you want to reap kindness, sow kindness. If you want to reap forgiveness, forgive! If you want to reap restoration in your marriage, then **sow** into **restoration** by ministering and/or financially—then **anticipate** a harvest, since God's principles and His promises are true and He is faithful!!

We can also believe God's promise that sowing into His work means we are investing in our eternal future. “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves **treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:19–21). More importantly, what we do with money here on earth is a true indicator of where our hearts are.

“Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed **for sowing** and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God” (2 Cor. 9:10–11).

In other words, when God gives us a bountiful harvest, it is not so we can keep it selfishly for ourselves but so we can sow even more into the kingdom of heaven.

The very wealthy Christians of today are the channels that keep ministries going, send missionaries to foreign lands, and keep our churches flourishing so that they can reach the lost for the Lord. They do not use their finances for their own pleasures but have found that in sowing into the things of God they have true joy and contentment.

However, we must also remember that poverty and prosperity are relative terms. What we call the “poverty level” in the United States would seem like affluence to those in many other countries.

As Christians, we must find contentment in any and every situation. The apostle Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:12: “I know how to get along with **humble means**, and I also know how to live in **prosperity**; in any and every circumstance I have learned the **secret** of being filled and going hungry, both of having **abundance** and suffering **need**.”

Indeed, there are times when God calls His saints to suffering, martyrdom, or poverty (like the poor widow who gave two coins—all she owned) in order to glorify Himself. When He calls us to poverty or suffering, He gives us the grace to bear it with joy and thanksgiving (and without grumbling or complaining).

While we can’t understand all of God’s reasons for allowing poverty, we can trust that His ways are higher than our ways. “Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their **extreme poverty** welled up in **rich generosity**. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability” (2 Cor. 2:8). Sometimes those who suffer the greatest need become the most generous! For someone with a love of money, a loss of riches may be one of the ways God breaks us, draws us to Himself, and teaches us to rely solely on Him.

However, in our country, poverty and debt do not usually draw the interest or attention of your family, friends, and neighbors. If we have been blessed with much, we must witness to others not by self-righteously preaching to them or condemning their lifestyle but by allowing them to “read” **God** in our lives! “You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men” (2 Cor. 3:2). We must exhibit the fruits of our Father. We must be at peace in the midst of troubles, bless our enemies, freely forgive, and walk in whatever prosperity the Lord allows. Our generosity should glorify Him and may be the very kindness that God uses to draw others to Himself!

“. . . And let them say continually, ‘The **Lord** be magnified, **who delights in the prosperity of His servant**’” (Ps. 35:27).

Principle #2: God owns everything.

Psalms 24:1 (NIV) says simply, “The earth is the Lord’s, and **everything in it . . .**” Everything we have belongs to God.

“Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for **everything** in heaven and earth is **Yours**” (1 Chron. 29:11).

“The silver is **Mine** and the gold is **Mine,**’ declares the Lord Almighty” (Hag. 2:8).

All we have, whether much or little, is on loan to us—we are stewards. Again, it is how we handle what has been entrusted to us (as explained in the Luke 16 parable) that will determine whether He blesses us with more or if He takes away what we already have.

Principle #3: God provides everything.

“Otherwise, you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’ But you shall remember the Lord your God, **for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth,** that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. It shall come about if you ever forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish” (Deut. 8:17–19).

“But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generously as this? For **all things** come from **You,** and from **Your** hand *we have given* You. For we are sojourners before You, and tenants, as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope. O Lord our God, **all this abundance** that we have provided to build **You** a house for Your holy name, **it is from Your hand,** and **all is Yours**” (1 Chron. 29:14–16).

“And **my God** will supply all your needs according to **His riches** in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).

Whether you earned it in your job or it was given to you, who was the Source of everything that you have? God.

Principle #4: God wants the first portion of what He gives you.

Many Christians give to their church and other charitable organizations but are not blessed because they don’t understand this very important principle. God is clear throughout the entire Bible that He wants to be **first** in every area of your life.

If you pay your bills before returning the first back to Him, God is not first in your life and you will have missed the blessing. We learned in chapter 5, “First Love,” that God removes from us what we have put ahead of Him.

“Honor the Lord from your wealth, and from the **first** of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine” (Prov. 3:9). The principle is clear; we **must give to God first.**

Often when Christians begin to consider tithing, they cannot see how they can possibly tithe since they are barely making ends meet. This is because they are also ignorant to what has been happening in their finances. Haggai 1:9 says that God “blows away” what you bring home, and He also allows the **devourer** to come and take what was rightfully His.

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. **Then I will rebuke the devourer** for you, so that it may **not destroy** the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes,’ says the Lord of hosts” (Mal. 3:10–11).

Every month non-tithing Christians are met with “unexpected” expenses, things like repairs or other needs they did not foresee. It is only because they are ignorant of this principle. For if God is **first** in your life—first in your heart, first in your day, and first in your finances—then (and only then) God will “open for you the windows of heaven, pour out for you a blessing until it overflows,” and faithfully “rebuke the devourer for you.”

Those who humble themselves by giving God their tithe and offerings will delight themselves in **abundant** prosperity! “But the **humble** will inherit the land, and will delight themselves in **abundant prosperity**” (Ps. 37:11). His Word tells us, “Adversity pursues sinners, but the **righteous** will be **rewarded** with prosperity” (Prov. 13:21).

Principle #5: What you do with the first portion determines what God does with the rest.

When God asked Abraham for His son, he did not withhold him; as a result, God tells him, “for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me . . . because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will **greatly bless you . . .**” (Gen. 22:12, 17).

God told the army who took Jericho that they were not to take the spoil of the first city, and God would then give them the rest. God always wants to first to test our hearts. “The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests hearts” (Prov. 17:3). However, one of the soldiers, Akin, could not resist and took some of the spoil. When they were to take the next city, Ai, in a battle that was much smaller and should have easily been won, they were defeated. (See Joshua 6.)

This principle is not just in your finances, or in your restoration, but in every area of your life. When we fail to give to God first, we are robbing God of what He has asked for. He wants no other gods before Him: not our money, our spouses, our marriages, or our careers. What you do with the first of everything will determine what God will do with the rest—bless it or curse it.

Are you in a financial crisis?

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

Have you sought the Lord about your finances? In Philippians 4:19, the Bible clearly teaches that the Lord is the One who will supply **all** our needs. However, if we go to others with our needs rather than seeking the Lord—if we fail to “seek Him **first**”—then “all these things” will *not* be “added unto” us.

Are you following the principles for financial security in the Lord? The Scriptures teach us that we are to tithe in order to be “filled with plenty” and “overflow” (Prov. 3:9–10). We are also encouraged to “sow” if we want to reap (Gal. 6:7 and 2 Cor. 9:6). Have you been sowing and faithfully tithing? Take the time to read these passages of Scripture again and again, then pray for how the Lord wants to change the way that you are trusting Him while fulfilling His command to all believers, beginning by giving a portion back to Him.

If you are tithing faithfully and still in a financial crisis, make sure that you are following all of God’s statutes. There are many references in Scripture to actions that lead to poverty, including not asking (James 4:2), asking with wrong motive (James 4:3), adultery (Prov. 6:26), heavy drinking or gluttonous behavior (Prov. 21:17, Prov. 23:21), laziness (Prov. 10:4, Prov. 14:23, Prov. 28:18–20), not accepting rebuke or correction

(Prov. 13:18), making hasty decisions (Prov. 21:5), oppressing the poor (Prov. 22:16), and, of course, withholding from God what is rightfully His.

While we are giving back to God in tithes and offerings, we also need to be sure we are giving our husbands the honor they deserve. “The heart of her husband **safely trusts in her; so he will have no lack of gain**” (Prov. 31:11). If your husband has had a difficult time providing, are you sure he can trust you? Has he told you to get rid of your credit cards, but you kept them? Are you responsible with the purchases you make, and do you look well to the ways of your household? Have you shamed him to others? Be sure you are pure in heart and faithful to your husband in every way.

When I was in financial ruin as a single mother of four young children, I learned the principle of tithing. Even though I lived close to poverty level, I began tithing for the first time in my life. Not only did I sow by tithing ten percent of the meager amount of the money I received, but I also sowed into the lives of women who were experiencing tragedy in their lives (telling them about God’s ability to restore their marriages).

My giving to the Lord set the standard in our home when my husband was gone. God honored this by leading my husband to tithe soon after he came home without my telling him! If you are struggling with giving that much, it may help you to know that God owns everything we have, and it is only because of Him that we have been given the “power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant” with us. (Deut. 8:18). Therefore you need to make sure that you give to Him **first** to confirm that He is **first** in your life!

Will you serve God or mammon (money)?

Too many shy away from teaching on giving because of the abuses and because they don’t want to be considered “money seekers,” but it doesn’t eliminate the truth in the message. Search for the truth yourself. Test Him to see if He is faithful to His promise. Give to God first, tithe to your storehouse (where you are spiritually fed), and see if your life changes and you are blessed in all areas of your life.

God is the one who provides for our ministry and for our family. We sow into the lives of those who are brokenhearted and water with ongoing support through our fellowship, but it is God who brings the increase. We look to no one to supply our needs but God alone.

Failing to properly teach such an important principle would be to neglect to feed the sheep and shepherd those who are coming to us for help, support, and direction.

Jesus said to feed His sheep, and God said in Hosea that His people perished for a lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6). Many who come to us are new Christians or have been attending a church where this principle, and other principles of restoration, is not taught. Our job is to make disciples of the Lord, to give them the tools they need to transform their lives.

For those of you who have never given God His tithe, may God prove to you that you can do more with 90% of your income than the 100% that you used to control. It will take a step of faith, but just like when you chose to restore your marriage rather than moving on, your life will never be the same.

For those of you who do give (but God is not first), may you rearrange your priorities in every area of your life to show God that He has first place.

God is a God who longs to be gracious to us; He longs to bless us!

“. . . And let them say continually, “the Lord be magnified, **who delights in the prosperity of His servant**” (Ps. 35:27).

Let me close with this wonderful **promise**: “Those who **sow** in tears shall **reap** with joyful shouting” (Ps. 126:5). **Hallelujah!!**

Personal commitment: to give. “Based on what I have learned in Scripture, I commit to trusting and blessing the Lord with my finances. I will seek the Lord regarding how and where to tithe. I will sow into restoring marriages through sharing the good news about restoration with those whom God brings into my life and through my financial giving as God leads and faithfully provides for me.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Chapter 16

The Keys of Heaven

*I will give you the keys
of the kingdom of heaven . . .
—Matthew 16:19*

Jesus gave us the keys of heaven to “bind up” the evil and “loose” the good. “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of **heaven**; and whatever you shall **bind** on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be **loosed** in heaven” (Matt. 16:19).

Remove the evil. Find a verse concerning what you want to remove. When someone is “bound” in sin, you must first bind that “strong man” or sin, which has a hold of the person you are praying for. Search for the verse that you can pray. Here is the principle: “But *no one* can enter the strong man’s house . . . unless he **first binds the strong man . . .**” (Mark 3:27). Bind and break the cords of sin that is controlling the person being held captive. “His own iniquities will capture the wicked, and he will be held with the cords of his sin” (Prov. 5:22).

Replace the evil with good. This is very important! “When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, ‘*I will return to my house from which I came.*’ And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes **worse than the first**” (Luke 11:24–26).

If you fail to replace. If you fail to replace what you have removed, it will become worse than before you prayed. You must always replace something evil with something good. This is one reason so many who go on diets actually get fatter. Experts say that they stop eating all the bad, or try not to eat at all. However, they never replace what has been taken away with something good, like prayer, going for a walk, exercising, or eating something else that is good for them. Another example might be when someone has a very oily face. She scrubs it with soap and maybe puts alcohol on it to dry up the oil. Then after a few hours it’s greasier than ever! Dermatologists will tell you that you must replace the oil you have removed with a small dab of lotion.

Replace the lies with the truth. The truth is only found in His Word. Unless what you hear, read, or what someone tells you matches up with the principles in God’s Word, **it is a lie!**

Replace the “arm of the flesh” with the “Lord.” Replace trusting in “the arm of the flesh” (yourself, a friend, whomever) with trusting in the Lord. “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might” (Eph. 6:10).

Replace running away with running to Him! “God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of trouble” (Ps. 46:1). Run to the book of Psalms! *Read Psalms (and Proverbs) every day. Read the Psalm that corresponds to the day of the month plus every 30th Psalm to the end of the book, then read the chapter of Proverbs that corresponds with the date (e.g., on the 5th of the month you would read Psalms 5, 35, 65, 95, 125 and Proverbs chapter 5.) An easy way to remember is to write where to turn at the end of each Psalm (e.g., at the end of the 6th Psalm you would write “36,” at the end of 36 you would write “66.” When you get to Psalm 126 you would write “Prov. 6.”) Since Psalm 119 is so long it can be reserved for the 31st of the month.*

As a member of our Restoration Fellowship, you can also go to our Daily Devotional on our website to be reminded of the Psalms and Proverbs for the day. Go to RMIEW.com to join!

Replace crying out to another with crying out to Him! He promises to hear you and to lift you up immediately! You **must** cry out! Don't think to yourself, "Well, God hasn't helped me in the past!" If He didn't help, it's simply because you didn't ask. "**Ask and it shall be given** you; seek and you shall find" (Matt. 7:7).

Preparing for War

Put on your armor daily as described in Ephesians 6:10–18.

The schemes of the devil. "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (Eph. 6:10–11). Remember who the real enemy is: Satan, not your husband.

The full armor of God. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day" (Eph. 6:12–13). You must resist the **fear** that causes you to run away or give up; stand firm, and having done everything, continue to stand firm. Psalm 37 is good to pray if you are plagued with fear.

Stand firm. "Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth . . ." (Eph. 6:14). People talk about "stepping out in faith." It may be best to stop moving and just stand firm! It may be the difference between trusting and tempting God. Sometimes we feel like we are taking a "step of faith," but we are actually throwing ourselves off a cliff, as Satan told Jesus to do.

Many times we should not be taking a "step" of faith but rather "stand" still in our faith. Our convictions should enable us to "stand" and believe for what is right. If we move by taking a "step" of faith, we could be falling off a cliff. If God brings adversity into our lives, our **stand** will be the testimony. Yet, as you will see later in this lesson, sometimes we are asked to step out and walk on water, as Peter was asked to do. Discernment is needed here. One rule that may help is the amount of urgency. Usually our "flesh" brings about urgency; God usually says to wait.

His righteousness. ". . . and having put on the breastplate of righteousness . . ." (Eph. 6:14). God is talking about His righteousness, not yours. He tells us in His Word that our righteousness is nothing but "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6).

Walk in peace. "And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace . . ." (Eph. 6:15). You can claim the promise in Matthew 5: "Blessed are the peacemakers!" Be peaceful with **everyone** at **all** times!

The shield of faith. "In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to *extinguish all the flaming missiles* of the evil one" (Eph. 6:16). You must have faith—not in yourself, someone, or something else like a judge or a shelter, but faith in God alone! Circumstance has nothing to do with faith. Believe His Word alone for the truth about your situation.

Helmet of salvation. "And take the helmet of salvation" (Eph. 6:17). You must be saved; you must be one of His children to really win a difficult spiritual battle. It's as easy as talking to God right now. Just tell Him in

your own words that you need Him now. Ask Him to make Himself real to you. Give Him your life, a life that is messed up, and ask the Lord to make it new.

Tell Him that you will do whatever He asks, since He is now your Lord. Ask Him to “save you” from your sins and from the eternity that is waiting for all those who do not accept His gift of eternal life. Thank Him for His death on the cross, the death that He died for you. You can now believe that you will no longer live alone; God will always be with you, and you will spend eternity in Heaven.

Sword of the Spirit. “Take . . . the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17). This is exactly what we have been teaching: use His Word for a battle that will be won. When the battle is the Lord’s, the victory is ours! Write down on 3x5 cards the Scriptures you need to help in your battle. Keep them with you at all times in your purse. When you feel an attack coming on, like fear, read the verses that pertain to fear. (See Romans 8:15 and Psalm 23 for wonderful verses to attack fear.) Cry out to God. Stand firm in faith. “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10).

Pray at all times. “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit” (Eph. 6:18). Pray from deep in your Spirit. Have designated times of prayer three times a day (as Daniel did). That was one of the reasons he was thrown into the lions’ den. Don’t worry, but remember that even if you are in essence thrown into the lions’ den, God will shut all the lions’ mouths!

Be on the alert. “And with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints” (Eph. 6:18). Pray for another person you know each time fear overwhelms you. “Most gladly therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong” (Phil. 12:9–10). After you have prayed for someone, call them and tell them.

Pray for those who persecute you. God also asked that we pray for someone else: our enemies, every one of them. Pray for them and ask God to show you what He wants you to do to bless them. It wasn’t until after Job prayed for his so-called friends that God restored what Job had lost. “And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the Lord increased all that Job had twofold” (Job 42:10). “But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.” Jesus goes on to tell you why: “. . . in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:44–45).

Know God’s Word

His Word will not come back void. You must know and learn God’s Word. You need to set out to find the blessed promises of God. These principles are from His Word, and when we speak His Word to Him by prayer it will not come back void.

That is His promise to you! “So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; *it shall not return to Me void* (empty), without **accomplishing** what I desire and without **succeeding** in the matter for which I sent it” (Isa. 55:11). His desire is that you may overcome the evils in this world. You must do what God Himself guarantees. Accept no imitations or counterfeits.

Search for His principles throughout your Bible. Seek understanding. God says if you seek you will find. God’s Word gives wisdom. Looking deeper into the meaning gives you a better understanding. “And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; **seek**, and **you shall find**; knock, and it shall be opened to you” (Luke 11:9). And once you know what to do, then you can apply it to your life. “By **wisdom** a house is *built*, and by

understanding it is *established*; and by **knowledge** the *rooms are filled* with all *precious and pleasant riches*” (Prov. 24:3–4).

Read His Word with delight. Mark the verses in your Bible. “**Delight** yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps. 37:4). Take the time to mark verses for quick reference in times of distress (or when leading another to the truth). In Luke 4:4–10, how did Jesus answer when Satan was trying to tempt Him? “And Jesus answered him, ‘It is written . . . It is written . . . for it is written . . .’” *Use a colored pencil of a specific color for different promises.*

Memorize. Meditate day and night. Memorize the promises you find so that the blessed assurance of them may sink into your soul. You must learn and know God’s promises if you ever want to depend on Him alone. “But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he **meditates day and night**. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers” (Ps. 1:2).

No matter how bad things seem, God is in control. Our comfort is in knowing that God is in control—we are not and Satan certainly is not. “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has **demanded permission** to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when *once you have turned again*, strengthen your brothers” (Luke 22:31–32).

Sifting. Jesus knew the outcome, yet Peter still had to go through the “sifting” to be ready for God’s calling on his life. Will you be ready when He calls you? “And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be **perfect and complete, lacking in nothing**” (James 1:4).

Spiritual Warfare

Take your thoughts captive. Your battle will be won or lost in your mind. “We are **destroying speculations** and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are **taking every thought captive** to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete” (2 Cor. 10:5–6). Don’t play into the enemies’ hands. Don’t entertain evil thoughts. Take them captive!

The Power of Three

Two or three gathered together. Find two other **women** who will pray with you. “So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek [the enemy] prevailed. But Moses’ hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set” (Exod. 17:11–12).

Find **two** other **women** to hold you up so you won’t become too weary. Pray and ask God to help you find two others who are like-minded. You can find an Encouragement Partner on our website.

The power of three. “And if **one** can *overpower him* who is alone, **two** can *resist him*. A cord of **three** strands is not quickly *torn apart*” (Eccl. 4:12).

To lift the other up. “**Two** are *better* than **one** because they have a *good return for their labor*. For if either of them *falls*, the *one will lift up his companion*. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up” (Eccl. 4:9–10).

He is there with you. “For where **two or three** have *gathered* together in My name, there I am in their midst” (Matt. 18:20). “Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he responded and said to his high officials, ‘Was it not **three men** we cast bound into the midst of the fire?’ They answered and said to the king, ‘Certainly, O king.’ He answered and said, ‘Look! I see **four men** loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the **fourth** is like a *son of the gods!*’” (Dan. 3:24). You are never alone!

Agreement. “Again I say to you, that if **two** of you *agree* on earth about **anything** that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 18:19). When you are wrestling with peace about something, call someone who believes with you and pray in agreement.

Standing in the gap. “And I searched for a man among them who should build up the wall and **stand in the gap** before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I *found no one*” (Ezek. 22:30).

Pray for one another. “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and *pray for one another*, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (James 5:16). Also, confession to a like-minded woman is the best way to obtain a pure heart.

Make your confession. Ezra knew what to do when praying: “Now while Ezra was praying and **making confession**, weeping and prostrating himself before the house of God . . .” (Ezra 10:1). Keep confessing the truth.

When do you give up praying? Never! We have a wonderful example of the fact that God does not always mean “no” when we don’t have answered prayer.

Your faith is great. The Canaanite woman continued to beg Jesus for her daughter’s healing. The result: “. . . Then Jesus answered and said to her, ‘O woman, **your faith is great**; be it done for you as you wish.’ And her daughter was healed at once” (Matt. 15:2). When we pray for something that is clearly in God’s will and it seems to have gone unheard, or we think He has said “no,” God may simply mean for us to keep on asking, waiting, pleading, fasting, believing, weeping, and laying ourselves prostrate before Him!

The battle for his soul. Are you unequally yoked? The real battle in your home is the battle for your husband’s soul! Are you unequally yoked? Remember that you have the promise that “. . . you will be saved, you and all your household” (Acts 11:14). Remember, **a husband is sanctified through his wife**. “For the unbelieving husband is *sanctified through his wife* . . . For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband?” (1 Cor. 7:14–17).

To find a prayer partner as a part of our member benefits, go to our website, RMIEW.com.

Prayer and Fasting

Prayer and fasting. Jesus told His apostles, “But this kind does not go out *except* by **prayer and fasting**” (Matt. 17:21). If you have been praying fervently and have checked to see if your ways are pure, then fasting may be called for. There are different lengths of fasts:

Three-day fast. Esther fasted “for favor” from her husband the king. She fasted three days “for favor.” “Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and **fast** for me; do not eat or drink for *three days*, night or day. I and my maidens also will **fast** in the same way” (Esther 4:16). This fast (or the seven-day fast) has another benefit for those who are contentious or who can never stop talking: you will become too weak to argue!!

Day fast. The day fast begins in the evening after your evening meal. You drink only water until the 24-hour period is complete, then you eat the next day’s evening meal. You fast and pray during this time for your petition. This fast can be done a couple of times a week.

Seven-day fast. There is a fast that is seven days (seven days seems to represent completion). “Now it came about when I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned **for days**; and **I was fasting and praying** before the God of heaven” (Neh. 1:4). Usually it will be during great sorrow that you are “called” to fast for seven days.

My knees are weak from fasting. When you are hungry or weak, use this time for prayer and reading His Word. “**My knees are weak from fasting**; and my flesh has grown lean, without fatness” (Ps. 109:24).

In order to be seen. Keep as quiet about your fast as possible. During the fast, you are to be silent, never complaining or drawing attention to yourself. “And whenever you **fast**, do not put on a **gloomy face** as the *hypocrites* do, for they neglect their appearance **in order to be seen** fasting by men. Truly I say to you, they have their *reward in full*. But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face so *that you may not be seen fasting by men*, but by your Father who is in secret; and *your Father who sees in secret will repay you*” (Matt. 6:16–18).

Many write me because they say they can’t fast. If it is for medical reasons or pregnancy, then fast “any good thing.” If, however, you think you can’t fast because you are working—you are selling yourself and God short!

When the battle has been won, stand and see. Once you know that you have prayed, as we have been reading throughout Scripture, then do as it says: “You need not **fight** in this **battle**; station yourselves, *stand and see* the salvation of the Lord on your behalf” (2 Chron. 20:17).

No one should boast. God says we are a stubborn people. When a battle is won or when the war is over, let us only boast in Him. Let us remain humble. “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the **gift of God**; not as a result of works, that *no one should boast*” (Eph. 2:8–9).

“Do not say in your heart . . . ‘Because of **my righteousness** the Lord has brought me in to possess this land,’ but because of the wickedness . . . that the Lord is dispossessing them before you. It is not for your righteousness or for the **uprightness of your heart** that you are going to possess their land, but *because of the wickedness* of these . . . for you are a **stubborn people** . . . You have been rebellious against the Lord” (Deut. 9:4–7).

We all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Let us remember this when the battle is won. Our righteousness is nothing but filthy rags. Glory in Him!

Intensity of your trials is a sign that you are close to victory. Your trials may intensify when you are close to gaining the victory. “For this reason, **rejoice**, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, *knowing* that he has only a **short time**” (Rev. 12:12).

You must battle in the proper way. Do what God says; it *will* work! Don't try to defend yourself; it creates war and hard hearts. "To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning *evil for evil*, or *insult for insult*, but **giving a blessing instead**; for you were called for the very purpose that you might **inherit a blessing**" (1 Pet. 3:8). Make sure you go the extra mile and bless your husband. Ask God how He wants you to bless him.

This is a spiritual battle. "Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will *at once* put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels" (Matt. 26:52). Our heavenly Father will call on the angels to battle for your behalf in the "heavenlies" where the "real battle" is waging. "For our struggle is **not against flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of wickedness **in the heavenly places**" (Eph. 6:12).

Your husband is not the enemy. "Do you not know when you present yourselves to someone as slaves of obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16). A person in sin is really just a slave of the devil.

We may think the one who sins is awful, but so are we, if we continue to react with vengeance. (Remember, that belongs to Him alone!) "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the **weapons of our warfare** are not of the flesh, but **divinely powerful** for the *destruction of fortresses*" (2 Cor. 10:4). Let's get at the root cause rather than just the symptom.

Be committed. Be committed regardless of the consequences and leave the results to God. "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up" (Dan. 3:17).

These boys believed that God would deliver them, but regardless of the consequences, they were resolved to obey the Lord anyway. Even if they should die in the furnace, they would do what they knew God wanted them to do and they left the results with God. The boys didn't die, but the cords that bound them were removed through their walking in the fire. Do you have cords (of sin or worry) that are binding you? God will deliver. **It's His battle! Call on the God of hosts; He is the warrior.**

Personal commitment: to use the "keys" God has given me. "Based on what I have learned in Scripture, I commit to using the 'keys' that God has given me to fight the spiritual battle that rages before me. I refuse to fight in the flesh, but will instead use prayer and fasting that are 'divinely powerful' for the destruction of fortresses that are against my marriage, husband, family, and me."

Date: _____ Signed: _____

To read more about prayer and fasting to accomplish a "breakthrough" in your situation, go to "Pray for Others" on our website, RMIEW.com.

Chapter 17

Stand in the Gap

*And I searched for a man among them
who should build up the wall and
stand in the gap before Me
for the land, that I should not destroy it;
but I found no one.
—Ezekiel 22:30*

There is **nothing** more **powerful** than praying God's Word and promises back to Him. While I was waiting for God to restore my marriage, I began hiding God's Word in my heart by making 3x5 cards and reading them several times everyday. Soon my prayers became mostly His Word. This way of praying is powerful. Use the prayers in this chapter to teach you how to pray the verses that you now "treasure" in your heart!

"Dear heavenly Father, I enter into my prayer closet and, now that I have shut the door, I pray to You, my Father, in secret. As You see me here in secret, You will reward me openly. It is written that all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

"O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee; my soul longs for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. Lord, there is no one besides Thee to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O Lord our God, for we trust in Thee, and in Thy name have come against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art my God; let not man prevail against Thee."

"Your eyes, Lord, move to and fro throughout the whole earth that you may strongly support those whose hearts are completely Yours. Search my heart."

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ—You have readiness to revenge all disobedience when Your obedience is fulfilled."

"O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous. I shall not be afraid of evil tidings; my heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. My heart is established; I shall not be afraid, until I see my desire come upon the enemy."

"Let my husband's fountain be blessed and let him rejoice with the wife of his youth. Let me, dear Lord, be as the loving hind and pleasant doe; let me have the hidden imperishable quality in my heart of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in your sight. For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord and He watches all his paths."

"Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. I ask You, heavenly Father, to rebuke and to bind Satan in the name and through the blood of my Lord Jesus Christ. Hedge up his way with thorns, and build a wall against him so that he cannot find his paths. Then you will say to me, dear Lord, 'Go again, love a man who is loved by his wife.' Therefore I

will speak kindly to him. A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall be one flesh.”

“Abraham hoped against hope, believed in hope, and being not weak in faith, staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. He was fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able to perform.”

“For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope, for what man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage and He will strengthen thine heart, yes, wait on the Lord. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.”

“For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what He hath prepared for him who waiteth for Him. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Amen.”

Prayer for Those in Adultery

“I ask you, Father, to rebuke and bind Satan in the name and through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. I ask you to build a *hedge of thorns* around my husband so that anyone who is interested in him will lose interest and leave. I base my prayer on the command of Your Word, which says, ‘What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.’ I thank you, Father, for hearing and answering my prayer. Amen.”

“Therefore I will hedge up his way with thorns, and I will build a wall against him so that he cannot find his paths. And he will pursue his lovers, but will not overtake them; and he will seek them, but will not find them. Then he will say, ‘I will go back to my wife. For it was better for me then than now!’ Therefore I will allure him, bring him into the wilderness, and speak kindly to him. For I will remove the names of Baals from his mouth. Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go again, love a (man) yet an adulterer.’” *From Hosea 6.*

“Drink water from your own cistern, and fresh water from your own well. Should your springs be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be yours alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountains be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times. For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress, and embrace the bosom of a foreigner? Can man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Or can a man walk on hot coals, and his feet not be scorched? So is one who goes in to his neighbor’s wife. Whoever touches her will not go unpunished. For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He watches all his paths.” *From Proverbs 5.*

“Keep your way far from her, and do not go near to the door of her house, lest you give your vigor to others, lest strangers be filled with your strength, and your hard-earned goods go to the house of an alien, and you groan at your latter end. For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread, and an adulteress hunts for the precious life. He who keeps company with harlots wastes his wealth.” *From Proverbs 5.*

“Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, for the heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes. Do not stray into her paths. For many are the victims she has cast down, and numerous are all her slain. Her house is the way to Sheol, descending to the chambers of death. The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; he who is cursed of the Lord will fall into it. For a harlot is a deep pit, and an adulterous woman is a narrow well.” *From Proverbs 7.*

“The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; he who would destroy himself does it. Surely she lurks as a robber, and increases the faithless among men. Like a bird that wanders from her nest, so is a man who wanders from his home.” *From Proverbs 6, 27.*

“This is the way of an adulterous woman: she eats and wipes her mouth and says, ‘I have done no wrong.’ For the lips of an adulteress drip honey and smoother than oil is her speech, but in the end she is bitter as wormwood and sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; she does not ponder the path of life. Her ways are unstable; she does not know it.” *From Proverbs 5.*

“You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.” *From James 4.*

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.” *From 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.*

“For I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.” *From 2 Corinthians 10.*

“God gave us a ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God Himself was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” *From 2 Corinthians 5.*

“For God has said, Behold, I will cast her down upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. Therefore, confess your sins one to another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effectual prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. For he who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion. *From Revelations 2.*

“There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need repentance. Yes, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. For Jesus said, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone. I do not condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more.’” *From Luke 15.*

“Neither do I condemn you.” *From John 8.*

Prayer to Restore

“Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my cry. Do not be silent at my tears. Put my tears in a bottle—are they not in Thy book? Since I am afflicted and needy, let the Lord be mindful of me. Thou art my help and my deliverer. Do not delay, O my God.” *From Psalms 56 and 40.*

“My close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, then I could bear it; nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, my companion and my familiar friend, we who had sweet fellowship together.” *From Psalms 41 and 55.*

“Let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous. In the net in which they hid, their own foot has been caught. Hold them guilty, O God; by their own devices, let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions, thrust them out, for they are rebellious against Thee. Let those be appalled because of their shame. All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly dismayed. They shall turn back; they shall suddenly be ashamed. Let me not be put to shame, O Lord, for I call upon Thee. Let the wicked be put to shame; let them be silent. In thee, O Lord, I have taken refuge. In Thy righteousness deliver me.” *From Psalms 7, 9, and 31.*

“Though they intend evil against Thee, and devise a plot, they will not succeed. When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before Thee. Thou hast blotted out their name forever and ever. The very memory of them has perished. Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more. And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there. But the humble will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.” *From Psalm 21.*

“Thou dost surround the righteous with a shield. In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for Thou alone dost make me dwell in safety. Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon Me in the day of trouble. I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.” *From Psalm 4.*

“Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the Lord. Be their shepherd also and carry them forever. I would have despaired if I had not believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage. Yes, wait for the Lord.” *From Psalm 27.*

“‘For your husband is your Maker, whose name is the Lord of hosts; for the Lord has called you, like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even a wife of one’s youth when she is rejected,’ says your God” *From Isaiah 54:5–6.*

May God Grant You Victory!

Personal commitment: to battle in the Spirit for my husband and my marriage. “Based on what I have learned from God’s Word, I commit to battling in the Spirit rather than continuing to battle in the flesh. I recognize that when I battle in the flesh I am losing the spiritual battle. Therefore, I commit to spending my energy, time, and thought life in the spiritual battle for my marriage and family.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____

For encouragement and to build your faith, you will find pages of testimonies posted on our website or you can order our book of restored marriages, *By the Word of Their Testimony*, through our ministry bookstore.

If your marriage has been restored through this book or through our ministry, please write to us so that we can post it on our website and publish it in our book of testimonies. Let’s give **Him** the praise He so rightly deserves, and let’s tell the world what God has done in our lives to encourage others. “They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the *word of their testimony* . . .” (Rev. 12:11).

About the Author



Erin Thiele has been blessed to be the mother of four boys, Dallas, Axel, Easton, and Cooper, and three girls, Tyler, Tara, and Macy. Her journey to become the Wise Woman for her daughter began when Tyler was just two-years-old. In 1989, Erin's husband left and eventually divorced her. RMI was founded when Erin searched every denomination in her area but was unable to find the help or hope that she needed.

This book and the workbook *A Wise Woman* were originally one large book she wrote as the Lord led her to prepare her home for her husband's return. Later, this restoration portion of her book was taken out of *A Wise Woman* to help the many women the Lord sent to Erin who were in crisis.

Erin has written many other books with her distinctive style of using the Scriptures to minister to the brokenhearted and the spiritual captives. "He sent **His Word** and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions" (Ps. 107:20).

We have many resources for women to help you no matter what crisis you're in. To find all of her books, please visit: www.encouragingbookstore.com, or in printed form through www.Amazon.com.

If God is moving in your life and marriage, come to our website and become a member: **RestoreMinistries.net** or **RMIEW.com**.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
Because the **Lord** has anointed me
To bring **good news** to the afflicted;
He has sent me to **bind up** the brokenhearted,
To proclaim **liberty** to captives,
And **freedom** to prisoners;
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord,
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To **comfort** all who **mourn**,
To grant those who mourn in Zion,
Giving them a **garland** instead of ashes,
The oil of **gladness** instead of mourning,
The **mantle of praise** instead of a spirit of fainting.
So they will be **called** oaks of righteousness,
The **planting** of the Lord,
that HE MAY BE GLORIFIED.
Then they will **rebuild** the ancient ruins,
They will **raise up** the former devastations,
And they will **repair** the ruined cities,
The **desolations** of many generations.
—Isaiah 61:1–4

Restore Ministries International

POB 830

Ozark, MO 65721

USA

Ministry Websites:

RestoreMinistries.net

RMIEW.com

AjudaMatrimonial.com (Portuguese)

Aidemaritale.com (French)

AyudaMatrimonial.com (Spanish)