

Hope for Troubled Christian Marriages

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5 Tips for Stability and Sanity

Being a Christian does not insulate your marriage from times of trouble. Like every other person walking around and breathing, Christian relationships can be ransacked with the pain of infidelity, the cold distance resulting from bitterness, and the loneliness of conflict. Here are

5 things you can do to bring a sense of stability and sanity to a troubled Christian marriage:

1. Recognize there is a problem

As a counselor, I am always amazed at the energy that is spent in denying the existence of a troubled relationship.

Spouses ? male and female ? will go to great lengths to avoid dealing with a problem. Problems will be denied, overlooked, or even ignored in hopes that they will somehow resolve themselves. Sadly, it does not happen, and couples find their relationship in dire circumstances.

Couple Tip: Admit there is a problem. You do not necessarily have to agree on the cause of the problem.

Simply agreeing a problem exists can cause a change in attitude.

2. "Quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger."

James 1:19 reminds us to "Post this at all the intersections, dear friends: Lead with your ears, follow up with your tongue, and let anger straggle along in the rear." (The Message). Quick tempers and a lack of listening to one another is a sure fire way to get into an argument. James emphasizes the significance of listening over talking.

Couple Tip: Consider whether you are truly listening to your spouse's need or are you interrupting so that you do not

have to take any blame?

3. Do not make a major life changing decisions regarding divorce

When I counsel couples I am always interested in whether one spouse has already spoken to a divorce attorney. This often tells me the depth of their emotional pain. Hasty decisions can have permanent consequences. Divorce can always take place. Reconciliation after divorce requires more work.

Couple Tip: If you feel like talking to a divorce attorney then consider talking to a trusted friend about your motives. Are you making your decision based on emotion? If you do talk to an attorney, do not make any final decision for 60 ? 90 days. Emotions can be very volatile even for 30 days.

4. Support, support, support

Assuming you both desire to save your marriage, I encourage you to find some likeminded fellow Christians that can walk with you during this time. Many churches have marriage mentor programs, or a pastor to will meet with you. Some of the best advice we received was even from older couples that my husband and I sought out to talk with.

Couple Tip: Dare to ask for help. It is much easier to

isolate than to reach out. No one can help you if you do not ask for it.

5. Pray blessings for your spouse

Too often when we are in the midst of crisis, our prayers remain self focused. If I shift my focus from wanting justification for my behavior to blessings for my spouse then my attitude will become more peaceful. Therefore, I am more amiable and approachable.

Couple Tip: Write down 15 things you are grateful for your spouse for, and share the list with them either verbally or in a card or email.

Being a Christian does not guarantee your relationships will be wrinkle free. However, God does promise to walk with us through these times, and provide respite when we need it. (Psalm 23) and provide hope for troubled marriages.

Are you looking for help with your Christian marriage? I invite to visit <http://www.greatchristianmarriages.com/> for more resources that can help save your marriage, even if you are the only person that is seeking help.

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