

No Matter What Storms Hit Your Marriage, Here's How You Can Stand Strong

Do you feel as though your marriage has been hit by a storm? Right now, during the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine, many people are feeling like that. We're all having to deal with new and unexpected things that challenge us in ways we've never experienced.

Even without the looming threat of the coronavirus, that scenario is exactly what drove authors and speakers Gene and Carol Kent, along with Dave and Cindy Lambert, to write their new book, *Staying Power*. Longtime friends, the two couples spent some time discussing "things that have hit us from outside our marriage," Carol tells host Marti Pieper on the *Hope for Your Marriage* series on the *Charisma News* podcast.


And the Kents know about those forces. More than 20 years ago, their only child, Jason, then a recent graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, made a terrible choice and ended up in prison serving a life sentence for first-degree murder.

"There are lots of books about the wrong choices we make in marriage, like adultery or pornography. Those are things we bring upon ourselves," Carol explains. "But we wanted to write a book for couples who are pretty happy, who might have an autistic child, in our case, a child who has a prison sentence. ... And Dave and Cindy were raising a grandchild because their son was drug-addicted. [*Staying Power*] deals with those things—it might be a financial crisis or caring for aging parents, but they're things that come from outside our marriage, and then the enemy comes in and tries to ruin our relationship. And we want to help marriages grow strong."

Gene adds, "When we were in the very beginning of our journey

with our son, I started reading the Bible over again ... and I came to Genesis 28. And that's just a great little passage where it talks about Jacob, who's having the dream where he sees the ladder going into heaven. And he realizes that there's a spiritual battle going on, on earth. ... There's one little verse, verse 16 of Genesis 28, that says, 'surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.'

"And I think that's got to be true for all of us as we look at COVID-19 and try to figure out, 'OK, God, we don't know what's happening. But You still are in this place,'" Gene says. "'You are walking along this journey beside all of us. And we just ask You to empower us as believers to be a light to the people who don't have any light, who are pretty fearful right now.'"

 To hear more of Gene and Carol Kent's story and how you can strengthen your marriage even when life sends its worst, [click here](#) for the complete interview.

Feeling Rejected? Therapist Says You're Not Alone, Offers Hope

In this season of pandemic and quarantine, people are struggling in various ways. Nichole LeMonds is accustomed to seeing people with problems. In fact, as a therapist, professional counselor and founder of Breakthrough Endeavors, she works with people to help them find breakthrough and live out the lives God intends for them to have.

Speaking with host Michael McIntyre on the *Next Level Podcast*

on the Charisma Podcast Network, Nichole says rejection is one of the greatest issues her clients face. “Rejection is a huge [issue] ... getting over that rejection and figuring out what that rejection did to their self-worth. It kind of challenges who they are and who they believe they’re made to be.”

What she does in her therapy, she says, is basically “getting in there and doing that work and building them up again.” Sometimes, she says, they don’t even recognize they’re struggling with feelings of rejection. “They have this belief in their head that formed at some point in life ... like a trigger situation. And so they start living their life on that belief. And then usually in counseling, that belief gets challenged, or they get to meet that belief face to face, and then they really get to identify and break down that belief.”

To learn more about Nichole’s work and healthy ways to cope with the common struggles many of us face today, listen to this podcast.

In These Trying Times, This Kind of Faith Will Help You Overcome

Hebrews 11:1 tells us that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” But what does that faith look like in trying times like those we’re experiencing today?

“We have to, as the people of God, develop a faith in God that will anchor our souls through difficult times. ... We’re living

in a time of coronavirus, and this season of difficulty is really running rampant through the country. It's costing lives; it's sending people to the hospital," says Dr. Sharon Mancha on *The Power of Intimacy With Christ* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network.

But there is hope. "The saints are blessed of God, and He has given us the ability if we rest in Him to be overcomers in a time like this, because [to have] faith in trying times is to have a faith that sustains you in difficult seasons," Mancha says. "It's a faith that will anchor you when all of your emotions and all of the fears that the media and the circumstances tried to ignite inside of your heart cause [you] to be restless and fearful and question your situation."

She adds, "Do the things that are necessary, obey the laws of man, self-quarantine, do the things that are necessary and believe God to keep you. Don't live a fearful life; live a faithful life, a life that's rooted and grounded and established in the truth."

And Mancha offers godly encouragement about the source of this kind of faith. "That ambition that you have toward God for a particular thing, that ambition that you have that's rooted and grounded is made and established in biblical texts," she says. "Faith has its very root in the Bible. Faith is not supposed to be isolated and up and down and flimsy. But faith is supposed to be at its very core built on the foundation of the Word of God. Because our confidence, our faith, is defined as confidence in God. Faith in God is confidence that God is who He says He is, and that God will do what He says He will do."

To hear more teaching and encouragement on how to have faith in trying times, listen to the entire podcast [here](#).

Prophet: 'I Have Come to Decree and Declare so That We Will Begin to Stop Corona in Its Tracks'

In this season, many are in need of a healing touch for breakthrough, says Dr. Hakeem Collins on the *Prophetic Breakthrough With Dr Hakeem Collins* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. In the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, "death has hit," he says.

"I come to decree and declare and speak the Word of God so that we will begin to stop corona[virus] in its tracks. Not only corona, but any disease, any sickness, because I like what the Scripture says in Psalm 81:10 [TPT] ... 'Open your mouth with a mighty decree; I will fulfill it now, you'll see! The words that you speak, so shall it be.' There is a mighty decree that has been released out of the mouth of the church in this season. And I believe that we're going to see God fulfill the words that we speak according to His will," Collins says.

"God only responds to His word; He exalts His word above His name. And so even angels are sent on assignment because the Bible says they hearken unto the voice of the Lord. And so they respond to the decrees of God's people that are aligned to the Word of God, which is His will for your life or humanity.

"This is a season that we have to align ourselves in prayer, and that God is doing something great, and so I want to pray; I feel led to pray. So if you are sick, or you're not feeling

well, if you know anyone who needs prayer, who just can't muster up enough strength to pray ... I want to pray the blessings of God over them. I want to decree the word of healing. I want to decree healing Scriptures over them. I want to speak it, and I'm telling you, your body is about to come into divine alignment. There is supernatural healing that has just been released."

To hear Collins' prayer of healing over coronavirus and other illnesses, [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast.

How God Used a 'Hopeless Case' to Win Thousands of Teens to Christ

Dr. Ralph "Yankee" Arnold is a longtime pastor, evangelist and youth expert. For many years, he led a Colorado ministry called The Christian Ranch that brought thousands of teens to Christ. But Arnold started out just as lost as the thousands of people God has used him to reach through the years.

God used his teenage crush to lead him to Christ, Arnold says. He saw a girl and "went after her," he tells host Greg Stier on the *Gospelize With Greg Stier* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. He asked the girl's parents, "Can I marry her?" and received a firm no. "Why?" he asked.

"Because you don't have a job, don't have any money, don't have a place to live," the girl's parents told him. "And her mother said, 'You're a bum,'" Arnold says.

“And everything they said was the truth. I was one hopeless case,” Arnold says. And as that lost, hopeless case, he ran away and married the girl. “Her daddy came looking for me with a gun. He was going to park my soul in eternity, but instead, he had mercy upon me. And one night, he explained to me the gospel. I trusted Christ as my Savior.”

That background, Arnold says, helped him relate to the many teens touched by his ministry through the years—including Stier, who says Arnold led many of his family members to Christ.

“Why do you think they listened to my testimony and where I came from? Well, that gave everybody hope. ... ‘If God can use Yank, He can use anybody,’” Arnold says.

For more of Arnold’s testimony of how God has used him to reach thousands of teens with the gospel, [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast.

Pastor, Marriage Counselor: ‘We Never Outgrow or Expert Our Way Out of Utter Dependence on God’

Disney World touts itself as “the most magical place on earth,” but the multifaceted theme park proved just the opposite for newlyweds Rob and Gina Flood. Five days into their honeymoon, the couple had what Rob now calls “the worst fight we’ve ever had” in their now nearly 25-year marriage.

“And from there, it went downhill,” Rob, author of *With These Words: Five Communication Tools for Marriage and for Life* (New Growth Press) tells host Marti Pieper on the *Hope for Your Marriage* series on the *Charisma News* podcast. “We drifted into isolation. We weren’t talking to one another for days on end. And we eventually ended up in marriage counseling, but that didn’t help. The counselor, I think, had his eye on the wrong problem. ... And so it wasn’t until 15 months after we were married that we started to put our lives and our marriage back together.”

But despite his long marriage, six children and years of experience with both *Family Life* and as a church pastor/counselor, Rob still doesn’t consider himself a marriage expert.

“There are skills we’ve learned that we are much better at now than we were 25 years ago. There’s no doubt about that,” he says. “And I think in the area of communication, our marriage is stronger at this point compared to 25 years ago. But as soon as we feel like we’ve got this thing mastered, the Lord has our 11-year-old turn 12 or our 16-year-old turn 17, or we have to move to a different location. And now the challenges are all different. And you realize that we never outgrow or expert our way out of utter dependence on the Spirit of God.

“And once I embraced that, and once my wife Gina embraced that, that we are dependent upon God for wisdom and careful communication, it stopped us from feeling like we should have this thing figured out by now. We’re just looking today to obey the move of the Spirit and the will of God. And tomorrow, we’ll be just as dependent on Him as we are today.”

For more tips from Rob Flood on healthy marital communication, listen to the entire podcast [here](#).

Facing His Cancer Surgery, Robert and Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth Say, 'You Can Trust God to Write Your Story'

"I trust the Lord." "I'm trusting in God." "You should trust in Him." Phrases like these cross the lips of Christians almost automatically—or at least they did before the coronavirus crisis. This unexpected season, however, has caused many of us to think more seriously about the one in whom we place our hope and trust.

Robert and Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth, authors of the new book *You Can Trust God to Write Your Story*, understand how unexpected circumstances can challenge our faith. In fact, the subtitle of their book, *Embracing the Mysteries of Providence*, reveals their approach. The couple unpacked the word "providence" and many other truths on a recent episode of the *Hope for Your Marriage* series on the *Charisma News* podcast.

"We are all either having come to something, in the middle of something or about to step into something," says Robert, who has worked in the publishing industry for more than 40 years. "And so 'embracing the mysteries of providence' sums it up pretty well."

"Providence" refers to "a God who sees everything before it ever happens, and who not only sees what's going to happen in our lives, but orders every particle of this earth, every happening in this universe and in our lives before we ever come to it, who not only sees what's going to happen, but He goes before us," adds Nancy, host of the *Revive Our Hearts* and

Seeking Him podcasts and radio shows. “And He makes provision for what we’re going to need when we get there. And so it’s a God who cares for us, who knows everything, who is good, who is faithful.

“And so when we land in a chapter of our story that catches us off-guard, we’re saying, ‘Oh, that’s not the script I would have written for my life. I don’t want that chapter.’ [But] we know that we’re not going through it alone, that God has been there before us. ... We are safe, because God is a God of providence, which doesn’t mean that we can see it all or understand it all.”

Not only did God bring Robert and Nancy together in an amazing way after the tragic death of Robert’s first wife, Bobbie, but at the time of this recording, the two were holding fast to His promises as Robert faced a March 31 surgery for melanoma.

“So this is real life for us,” says Robert. “This is the front lines of trusting God to write our story. I’m incredibly grateful to have a wife who understands, who stands with me, who encourages me, who reminds me of truth. And that’s really what we rest on: God’s Word. And His providence, His kindness, is true.”

To hear more of the Wolgemuths’ encouragement and to learn how you can trust God to write your story no matter what, listen to the podcast [here](#).

Real Talk Kim: How You Can

Move From Brokenness to Beautiful

Life is fickle. It doesn't matter how well you started or whether you were voted most likely to succeed. Life can shift in a moment, causing feelings of inadequacy and fear. Even so, you are not your mistakes or what has happened to you. You are bigger than your circumstances.

A favorite Scripture that I quote often is Romans 8:28: "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Because we all experience ups and downs, one of my favorite sayings is "Life just happens." It can seem that we spend more time being down than being up. All of us have felt like quitting in the face of challenges so tough that we can't figure a way out. If you're like me, you look back and wonder how you allowed your circumstances to determine your path for so long.

You might feel that you have lost a lot more than you have gained. Nobody means for it to go that way. You had goals. You had a vision board. Yet where you are right now was absolutely not part of your plan. You might even have sat in church on Sunday and wondered whether being there was a waste of time. Maybe you're thinking that God has forgotten you or turned down the volume on your prayers.

I can assure you that He hasn't! The Scriptures state clearly that God knows your name and address. (See Ps. 139). He has very clear ideas about your life, and He says so: "For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).

You might think God's promise is for everyone but you. Don't

you know the enemy tells you that to dispel your faith? It's easy to look through the eyes of self-pity and tell yourself that no one cares. But you have no earthly idea how many people have put you on the top of their prayer lists. You have no clue who focused on you and your needs as they sought God today.

Let me use my life as an example of what I'm saying. God was thinking of me throughout my years of rebellion, when I wanted to forget I was raised as a preacher's kid. I wondered why I couldn't be like my friends whose parents hung out on Sunday and didn't worry about all those Christians who, in my opinion, weren't special anyway. I could hardly wait to grow up, leave home and do my own thing. I wanted to show the world how independent and strong I could be. Then I could go to church on Sunday if I felt like it, or I could go to the beach instead. I didn't see what difference it made because I'd never understood what involving God in my everyday life would do.

Against my wishes, my mom would always sit my brother and me down at bedtime and pray with us. My dad was usually out leading home-group meetings, as my parents were church planters and starting a new church. I didn't understand the importance of my mom being at home with us and establishing a godly family life while my dad worked outside the home for the kingdom of God. I look back now and realize how much I resented our family's not looking like every other family on our street. Of course, I get it now. If my family had been just any family, my parents would not have known how to fight in the Spirit for my very life as I rebelled against all that we had.

I had no idea that I was setting myself up for rejection, loneliness and even trauma by rejecting the source of the peace that encompassed our home. Today I am so thankful for the strength that kept my parents fighting for my future even when I had decided to do life my own way. I did not realize

that I would initiate a landslide of events that, apart from the grace of God, could have taken me out.

Please understand that you are never in your life situation alone. Even when you feel abandoned and betrayed, God is with you. He *never* leaves nor forsakes you. That is probably the most important thought I can leave with you! Of course, everyone's challenges are different. As you're reading this, you might be thinking that I don't understand your situation.

You are right. I cannot know all that you are going through. You might think I have no clue about the mess you are facing at home, the grief you catch at work or the people at church who do nothing but judge every move you make. But I can tell you that even your toughest situations will make you better if you let them.

In my daily interactions with people, I ask the Lord to help me remain transparent. I share my life struggles so they can be examples to those who are looking for answers. I want them to see that I first find my answers on my knees. It's not about giving glory to a man or a woman. It's about knowing the one who has a plan and who works that plan for you.

Let me assure you right now that you will move from brokenness to beautiful if you choose to *stand*. God has given you a promise to help you: "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Jesus in you is greater than any trial or tribulation that tries to devour you. It is up to you to believe it. {eoa}

✘ *Adapted from Shut Hell Up by Real Talk Kim (Kimberly Jones-Pothier), copyright 2020, published by Charisma House. This book will show you how to step away from feelings of inadequacy and embrace who you are as a child of God, so that you can realize God's plan is bigger than your past or anything you are currently facing, and make choices with*

confidence and not doubt. To order your copy, click on this link.

Prayer Power for the Week of April 5, 2020

As we enter Holy Week, remember our Lord's sacrifice for our sin and prepare to celebrate His Resurrection. Remember His victory is your victory over the forces of darkness that cause fear, anxiety, dread, lack, and all kinds of bondage and disease. Continue to pray for worldwide revival. Continue to pray that God would give our leaders supernatural wisdom and knowledge to make needed decisions. Thank Him for His faithfulness. Ask Him how you can be a blessing and share the love of Christ in this season. Read 2 Chronicles 7:14, 2 Corinthians 12:9, 1 John 4:4.

Revivalist: How You Can Pray Victoriously Through the COVID-19 Crisis

Multiple faith leaders have reminded us that, as believers, the current crisis should not surprise us. Yet many still ask why this plague has occurred.

"All we have to do is read Matthew 24, and we find out that Jesus told us there would be plagues, there would be pestilences," revivalist, prayer leader and author Kathy Bichsel says on *The Kathy Bichsel Podcast* on the Charisma

Podcast Network. “But He told us that there would be trials and there would be tribulations in the world, but to be of good cheer, because He has overcome.” She shares a biblical prayer of hope and encouragement.

“As a rule of life, when I awaken in the morning, I have this prayer ... based out of Isaiah Chapter 50. And I believe it was ... referring to how the Son of God lived when He was here on the earth,” Bichsel explains. “He said that the Lord would give us the tongue of the learned, that morning by morning, He awakens me to give me the tongue of the learned so that I might speak a word in season to Him that is weary.

“And the other morning, I awakened with this beckoning of the Lord to look at Him. And I woke up, and I heard, ‘Look to Me, look to Me’—but not in the sense of looking to Him for help as much as looking at Him to look at Him. ‘I see your failings; I see where you fail, where you miss it where you fall, but I want you to look at Me.’

“And it just sent me down this venue of study that just brought to light some things that I think are so important for this season, especially because we right now have such a focus on praying through this season we find ourselves in as a nation. ... Truly, in times of chaos and insecurity, it is knowing that we can come into the presence of an eternal God [who] is really an anchor of hope for us in any challenging time, not to mention the onslaught of a pandemic.”

To learn more about how you can pray through this season of COVID-19, [click here](#).

This Life-Giving Power Will Impact You Long Past the Pandemic

Have you heard the African proverb that says, “If you think you’re too small to make a difference, you haven’t spent a night with a mosquito”?

Or perhaps you recall the story of Mary Mallon, nicknamed Typhoid Mary. She was documented as the individual who caused the New York typhoid fever epidemic in 1906.

Then there’s the story of a little boy and a beach full of starfish:

One day, an old man walked along a beach littered with thousands of starfish washed ashore by the high tide. As he walked he came upon a young boy throwing the starfish back into the ocean, one by one.

Puzzled, the man looked at the boy and asked what he was doing. Without looking up, the boy simply replied, “I’m saving these starfish, sir.”

The old man chuckled. “Son, there are thousands of starfish and only one of you. What difference can you make?”

The boy picked up a starfish, gently tossed it into the water and turning to the man, said, “I made a difference to that one!”

What do all three of these have in common? The answer is *the power of one.*

Today, we’re experiencing another illustration of *the power of one.* One person can either spread or slow the spread of

COVID-19 in their community. We're hearing it again and again. People confident of their own health are willing to risk being infected rather than be inconvenienced. Those who take this position forget the power of one. They may be healthy, but who might they infect whose health is not as strong? You and I can each be the one who slows or stops the spread of this virus by maintaining physical distancing.

But the *power of one* is best exemplified in this final example, perhaps the most important illustration of all:

The Bible tells us, "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, so death has spread to all men, because all have sinned. ... How much more has the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many" (Rom. 5:12, 15b).

The power of one brought sin. And the power of one brings the gift of grace, freedom from sin and reconciliation with our heavenly Father.

As you and I practice the power of one in our present environment, remember the power of one God provided for you and me in Jesus Christ. Remember the power of one that has eternal ramifications for us. And then communicate this eternal power of one to those who are frightened. They're afraid of a virus, and they're afraid of an uncertain future.

Share the power of one, just as someone else shared Him with you. {eoa}

Ava Pennington is a writer, speaker and Bible teacher. She writes for nationally circulated magazines and is published in 32 anthologies, including 25 "Chicken Soup for the Soul" books. She also authored Daily Reflections on the Names of God: A Devotional, endorsed by Kay Arthur. Learn more at .

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