

3 Principles to Enact if Your Marriage Is on the Rocks

It looks like your marriage is about over. Love, intimacy, communication, connection—those are all long gone. What do you do when your marriage is on the rocks?

Recently I've heard from:

- A church friend whose husband just moved out after 18 years of marriage
- A husband who feels no love for his wife and sees no hope of getting it back
- A wife whose husband told her she has only 10 percent of his interest before he calls it quits
- A husband who feels he has no emotional energy left to try to fight for his marriage
- A wife who is ready to leave her marriage and is only staying because of finances
- A wife whose husband refuses to talk and has told her he is ready for a divorce

You may feel very alone right now. But you're in lots of company if it seems as though your marriage is hopeless.

If you're in that situation, you may be reacting in one of two ways. You may be feeling frantic, desperately trying to hold on to your spouse. You may be going through their belongings or phone or social media looking for evidence they are seeing someone else. Or you're trying to force a hard conversation, manipulating them into staying with you or nagging them with your snide remarks, criticism and suggestions.

Or you may be doing the opposite. If your marriage is hopeless, why try any longer? You've checked out too and are only going through the motions. Children, finances or convenience are keeping you from leaving yourself, but there's

absolutely no relationship with your spouse. You've been hurt too much, betrayed once too often, neglected too long—and you have nothing left.

If only you knew what to do next!

What to Do

I come from the position that God can restore anything and anyone. He can restore your marriage regardless of how hopeless or dead or volatile it is right now.

Will your marriage be restored? I don't know. But that's not because of any failure on God's part. Both you and your spouse are free moral beings. Your choices have consequences. And your spouse's choices also have consequences. There's the possibility your spouse will choose to leave regardless of what you say or do—or what God says.

But as far as lies with you, you are not powerless. What you do and say next will have an impact on the outcome. Here are three things that are within your power to do that may save your marriage.

1. Begin with you. Put yourself in your spouse's shoes. What would it be like to be married to you? This is not an exercise in shame and blame! It is an exercise in focusing on the only thing you have control over—and that's the part you have to play.

Are there things you do or say that would push you away, frustrate you, humiliate you or hurt you if your spouse did or said them to you? Do less of those. Are there things that would make you want to be closer to your spouse if they did them? Do more of those. Make your heart and home a safe place.

2. Don't try to change your spouse. You can't do that anyway, so don't waste your energy! Set your spouse free. I don't mean walk out or disengage emotionally. I mean take your grubby

hands off their soul! Someone has said that if you love something, set it free. If it comes back to you, it is really yours. If it doesn't, it was never yours to begin with.

Think of yourself as trying to win your spouse's heart all over again. Do that! But that's a very different thing than trying desperately to hold on to them.

3. Fight FOR your marriage spiritually. Pray—like you've never prayed before. Pray for yourself, your spouse and your marriage. It's not over until God says it's over. Remember—prayer does not guarantee your marriage will be saved, but it's truly hopeless otherwise. Your only hope is to bring God's intervention into play—in your own heart, for your spouse and in your marriage.

The enemy of your marriage is not your spouse! But there is an enemy who is out to destroy the marriage you and God want for you. I've prepared some extra help on how you can "Fight for Your Marriage" and do it successfully! It includes prayer, but that's just the beginning. I hope you take advantage of this extra resource. And it's free!

Question: Does your marriage seem hopeless? What is something you can do in your situation? {eo}

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