

6 Weakest Excuses Christians Use to End Their Marriages

Ben and Marie (not their real names) have been together for 12 years, and they have three children. Their marriage was never perfect, and their arguments never stopped—mainly because they never had enough money to pay their bills. In the end, Marie decided to end the marriage simply because, she claimed, God “told her” to divorce. A few months later, God “told her” to move in with another man.

The church today is full of stories like this. While there are certainly justifiable and biblical reasons for ending a marriage (see my column from May 28), way too many believers are taking the easy road to divorce and paving the way for others with their bad examples. This has become a special problem in some charismatic circles, because we believe in hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit. Today, it’s convenient to blame the Holy Spirit for our bad choices by saying “God told me to do it.”

Here are the six most common bad excuses I’ve heard recently from people who chose the easy road to divorce instead of the narrower path to healing:

1. “We never should have married in the first place.” Couples who are in love can make foolish decisions, for sure. Some hurriedly elope without any pre-marital counseling, while others aren’t financially ready—so marriage becomes a nightmare of stress and unpaid bills. Once you choose to marry, you must assume the responsibility of adulthood. Grow up and accept the consequences of your choices. If you shirk your responsibility now by bailing out, you will end up running from maturity the rest of your life.

2. “Our families don’t get along.” I recently learned that a

young man who had been married for two years—and gotten his wife pregnant—decided to leave the marriage because his parents never liked his choice for a wife. That’s ridiculous. A marriage is not between families—it’s a unique relationship between a man and a woman. Genesis 2:24 says a man should “leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife.” Married couples who allow parents to control their marriages are headed for disaster.

3. “We’ve grown apart.” This is a classic line, but the accurate translation is: “I’m copping out.” It is also an indication that your connection with your spouse is based more on fluffy romantic feelings than a solid covenant commitment. Satan loves to divide—and he will use suspicion, mistrust, anger, bitterness and abusive words to create a toxic environment in your home. Don’t give the devil this opportunity (see Eph. 4:27) by listening to his lies. Jesus can reconnect what you’ve allowed to drift apart.

4. “We argue too much.” That’s a lame excuse. Many married couples in the Bible had frequent disagreements—including Abraham and Sarah, the father and mother of our faith. Arguing is actually healthier than burying your emotions—as long as you know how to resolve a conflict and let go of anger quickly. If you and your spouse argue constantly, it could be a sign that you don’t manage stress well or that one or both of you need some new communication skills. Finding a new spouse will not fix your problem if the problem is you!

5. “Counseling didn’t help.” I’m a big believer in marriage counseling, and estranged couples should always pursue counseling before calling it quits. But if your marriage has been in trouble for years, three one-hour sessions with a pastor will not fix your problems overnight. Counselors are not magicians. Be patient. If your marriage is in shambles, it will take some time to repair it. It may take months just to clear away the debris before you can rebuild.

6. “God told me to marry someone else.” This is the most laughably absurd excuse I’ve ever heard, but even preachers have used it. One California minister divorced his wife and married another woman within a week because “God said to.” It’s sad that God gets blamed for such foolishness. If you ever think God is telling you to do something that clearly contradicts the Bible, you are under the influence of a deceiving spirit. Please humble yourself and get help immediately.

If you are having marriage problems, and you think divorce is your only option, stop everything and take a deep breath. Go slow. Before you race to open the escape hatch, or seek to justify your exit, ask God to give you His counsel—and seek help from friends.

While there certainly can be situations where divorce is inevitable, don’t assume this is your only option. The Father’s love and mercy may surprise you.

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