

Detroit Lions' Chaplain: How Holy Spirit's Intervention Saved My Marriage

Dave and Ann Wilson's 10-year marriage had come to a crisis point. But only one of them knew about it.

Dave, now chaplain of the Detroit Lions and host with his wife, Ann, of *Family Life Today*, had planned a romantic anniversary dinner complete with "romance and talking and roses," he says. On the way home, he stopped in the Detroit-area parking lot where they were about to launch Kensington Church, now a multi-campus congregation. That's when, he tells host Marti Pieper on the *Hope for Your Marriage* series on Charisma News, he received an unwelcome surprise.

Ann refused to kiss him. He couldn't believe it.

"And so I finally asked her, 'Is anything wrong?'" Dave says. "And she says, 'Yeah. ... I've lost my feelings for you.'"

"I was dumbfounded, because if you had asked me before that night, 'What's your marriage on a scale of 1 to 10?' I would've said it was a 10, at least a 9.8. And I guarantee my wife would agree," he explains. "And then here we are sitting there, and she's saying it's not a 10 at all."

Ann shares her perspective about that crucial moment. "I'm amazed that he thinks it can be a 10, because I'm thinking we're 1, maybe 2.5. But here's what I thought, *Well, of course, he's so clueless and not in touch with our marriage. Of course he thinks we're great, because he's not even thinking about us.*"

Ann had struggled for years with Dave's busy schedule and lack of attention to their relationship. "I started out angry," she

says. But by this time, “my anger had turned to bitterness. My bitterness turned to resentment. And now [I was] at a place where I didn’t even care [Dave was] gone. I fully expected him to argue back because that’s what we did.”

But something changed that night, and it began with the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit. As Ann waited for Dave’s words of defense, he started to reach for his day planner in the backseat of the car. “I was reaching back to grab it and prove to her that she was wrong,” he says. “‘I have been home! I can show you what nights I’ve been home, blah, blah, blah.’

“And as I’m reaching back, I feel the Holy Spirit ... the Spirit nudges me pretty strongly and says, ‘Don’t you touch your planner. Just shut up and listen.’ I really heard two words: ‘Shut up.’ And so I pulled my hand back.”

But the Holy Spirit had more to say. “One word: Repent, repent, repent, repent, repent ... I knew with one word, what God was saying in the word ‘repent.’ It was, ‘You’ve lost your first love.’ You’re running around doing all this ministry, speaking at all these places, leading all these places, and you’re far from Me. ... If you want your marriage to work, it starts with Me. You’re not going to fix this horizontally. You’re only going to fix this vertically.”

To hear how God used that moment of brokenness to set the Wilsons’ marriage on a healing journey described in their new book, *Vertical Marriage*, listen to this podcast! {eoa}