

Here's Some H.O.P.E. for Traditional Marriage

As marriage pastors, our ministry is based on the Third Cord being God's Holy Spirit from the Scripture, "A three-fold cord is not easily broken."

Steve and Emily (pseudonym) were a young couple with two beautiful children. They were both working in professions they enjoyed. To everyone around them, they seemed to be a happily married Christian couple.

Emily had the divorce papers in hand ready to file when Steve contacted us. He was desperate and willing to do anything to save their marriage. This was a good place to be because he was willing to do whatever it took to make the marriage work.

We wish marriages never reached this point but we realize that they do. Steve was a devoted hunter; his love for hunting seemed to overshadow his love for Emily and the kids. They needed help.

The "help" comes in the form of "":

H-Hearing the Holy Spirit's voice. The Holy Spirit plays an active role in hearing from God. He is also known as the Spirit of Reconciliation; ready to bring restoration to broken relationships. His role is vital in binding husband and wife together as one. The Greek word parakletos, translated as "helper" literally means "one who is called beside." The Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to never leave us or forsake us.

O-Openness and honesty. We encouraged Steve and Emily to activate the power of the Holy Spirit by acknowledging Him and giving Him permission to change them, leaving the old, unprofitable things behind. The Holy Spirit revealed to both

Steve and Emily how they had damaged their relationship. Both began to develop intimacy with the Holy Spirit. He revealed ways for them to better relate to each other rebuilding intimacy. As they focused on each other and investing time together, revival came to Emily and Steve's marriage.

P-Praying aloud together. This is how it worked for Jamie and I as we began praying together and hearing the Spirit's "still, small voice". We would feel extreme peace about a right decision. We would feel conviction about wrong thought patterns. Ideas would suddenly come of things we could do to encourage unity. The Holy Spirit also speaks to us through scripture. He reminds us of the things we need to know (John 14:26). Our faith was increased as we shared with one another what we were learning. We experienced exciting and powerful encounters, a three-way interaction between husband, wife and God's Holy Spirit.

E-Expecting God to move. The key is allowing Him to instruct us and expecting Him to move. The Holy Spirit should be invited into every aspect of marriage as the Helper; into our finances, communication, workplace, parenting, etc. He is described as Wonderful Counselor that leads us into all truth. He will give us godly wisdom if we will only ask. Often, it is difficult for us to make changes ourselves. We need divine power to change and the Holy Spirit is that agent of change. Like He did for Steve and Emily, the Holy Spirit took the most dire situation and restored hope.

There is hope. Even though Emily was ready to divorce Steve, at the time we first met them, their marriage was reconciled by the power of the Holy Spirit. It didn't happen overnight. It was a process of taking time to listen to that still small voice. It takes time to turn things around and to learn to trust again.

Seeing those baby steps in our spouse is a great source of hope. Even though there may be setbacks, there is grace for

one another through the effort being made. God uses the Holy Spirit to reveal wisdom and understanding to us. All we need to do is ask Him. He wants relationship with us.

The marriage relationship should be an ever increasing, revelatory experience in knowing our spouse and God. Life will be better and stronger through the power of the Holy Spirit. He is the Third Cord that binds and strengthens marriage.

Steve and Emily have been together for many years since we first met. We keep up with them and their precious young family. Emily now enjoys going with Steve on hunting trips. They now truly are the happily married Christian couple.

*Authors and speakers **Alan and Jamie Wood** have been married for 31 years and are marriage pastors at the Inverness Vineyard Church in Birmingham, Alabama. They lead marriage retreats and conferences through Third Cord Secret Ministries. They have written two books, Third Cord Secret and Power Marriage. Their desire is to see marriages experience God's best. The Kingdom Marriage concept was revealed to them in their own marital struggles. Even though they were Christians, they wondered why they were having so much trouble. This sent them on the course of discovering the role of the Holy Spirit in the marriage relationship. Visit them online at [and](#) on Facebook.*