

How to Have a Successful Marriage in Our Divorce-Ridden Culture

Editor's note: Former Christian purity teacher Josh Harris recently announced he and his wife are separating. A week later, he announced he is no longer a Christian. How should Christians respond to the many divorces in our day? Is there hope for a successful marriage in this culture? Author Laci Swann answers.

The reality of many marriages today, and the marriages of generations before ours, is that several have failed.

My parents are divorced, and I've lost count of how many friends' marriages have failed. I'm fairly certain you know several people who have gotten divorced or wish they were already divorced, too. As a woman in my 30s, I'm admittedly stunned when my peers are already traveling down the road of divorce.

"We're so young," I say in disbelief as I share the news with my husband of yet another soon-to-be-divorced couple. "I can't believe they have to go through this," I tell him in sadness.

Having an empathetic spirit is a double-edged sword, especially when you put yourself in the shoes of those going through a painful divorce process.

Whether you had a front-row seat to your parents' or friends' divorce, or you experienced an unsuccessful marriage, you may start to wonder if marriage can actually last a lifetime.

Does happily ever after exist?

Will I really share forever with my spouse?

Are marriages doomed to failure?

Due to the effects of divorce in a person's life or a loved one's life, those questions commonly swirl around one's mind regarding their future marriage, and that's exactly what the enemy wants—for believers in Christ to believe that marriage is doomed for failure.

Nevertheless, there is a reason that supersedes anything we've seen, experienced, heard and have been told about marriage—God designed marriage as a means for us to feel and experience life's greatest joys, and God makes no mistakes.

Whom you marry and when you marry are major factors in the success of one's marriage, and although I don't have specific answers to lead you to the right decision regarding those factors, I do know that marriage is worth believing because marriage has been ordained by God, and I trust He has our best interests at heart. I trust that there is a lifetime of love for each person, and I believe God wants us to experience this level of happiness and commitment with someone else. God designed marriage to be joyous, and He knows that the love between two people can awaken your heart in ways you never knew.

As a married woman approaching her six-year anniversary, I'm still wet behind the ears regarding marital wisdom, but someone very special to my husband and me had shared wonderful advice with us, a piece of advice I hold dear to my heart and that of which has tremendously helped my marriage: Pursue Jesus together, and remember that your marriage is not only about you and your partner but your relationship with God.

Since God designed marriage, it only makes sense that a marriage worth believing has Christ in the forefront.

No one gets married only to cross their fingers and hope their relationship doesn't end in divorce. However, to put this quite simply, things happen. The truth is, not a single

relationship on earth is 100% failproof. Even those who grew up in a two-parent household, who witnessed loving, healthy marriages and who have a strong foundation of faith all face the chances of a failed marriage.

Because marriage is a bond between two sinners, discord is inevitable; however, when two people seek God's grace and understanding and use that as a base for their union, they welcome Him into the flawed parts of marriage. Perfection does not exist, but healthy, happy marriages certainly do! You may not have seen marriage work, or perhaps your marriage led to heartbreak, but please remember this before writing off marriage for good—God purposefully and lovingly designed marriage, and He created marriage to foretell our everlasting bond with Him.

Since the one and only perfect being designed marriage, my heart rests easy in knowing that He wants to lead us to happily ever after with our partner. {eo}

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