

How to Say No to Divorce and Yes to Lasting Marriage

My wife and I have experienced a lot in 12 years of marriage. Good, bad, exciting, sad and everything in between.

We've witnessed many friends' marriages end in divorce. We have friends who knew us "way back when" who would have never imagined us together—or still together.

I always wondered why and how we made it when our peers didn't. Now I believe I've discovered it, and I'm certain if it worked in our marriage, it will work in yours. Two ideas served as the glue to keep us together and the inspiration to push us forward.

We Said No

While taking a class on marriage a few months after getting married, we learned God hates divorce and to never let it be an option in our marriage. So we said no to divorce once and for all in our marriage. It was never to be considered, joked about or mentioned in our marriage whatsoever!

Was that easy? Not by any means. There were times we both felt trapped. Times we questioned our decision to get married in the first place. But we remained true to our agreement for the most part. There were times we let emotions and anger—and stupidity—get the best of us. But it didn't last long.

Taking this stance put our backs against the wall and forced us to make our marriage work. Our choice was to remain married unhappily or find a way to remain married happily.

We Said Yes

More recently, we have come to understand that our marriage is being watched. Other people, beginning with our children, are

watching how we act in marriage. How do we talk to one another? How do we handle ourselves when not in each other's presence?

We realized our marriage provided a great way to minister to others. We have the opportunity to share our marriage with others.

Realizing this and having witnessed up close and personal the devastation that happens when a couple divorces, we were encouraged to be even better than just saying no to divorce in our marriage.

Our prayer is that we encourage marriages, that we relate to their struggles that are typically similar to ours, and that we show them they can still make it and be happy through it all.

Will you say no and then yes?

Your marriage is a ministry too. Who and what you are ministering to is up to you. It can be a ministry that shows how to make it and give hope that other couples can make it too.

Related Resouce: Forgiveness in Marriage

Will you work to say no to divorce and yes to giving hope to other married couples?

Mark Merrill *is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit .*