

# It's Not Too Late to Save Your Marriage

**Charisma:** It's no secret that Christian marriages are in trouble today. What's happening to us?

**John:** It's unbelievable to me that the courthouse will give any human being with brains enough to find the front door a license to get married. My father, who pastored for 53 years, often said, "If you have half a mind to get married, do it; that's all it takes."

You can't cut someone's hair without a license. You can't fish without a license. You can't go hunting without a license. But to get a license to get married, a license that empowers you to create new life, destroy your life, or crush the dreams and hopes of your spouse and family, all you have to do is have \$25, and you are an instant player.

**Charisma:** So you're saying many marriages fail because people aren't ready to marry?

**John:** There's more to marital readiness than a blood test. How sad that we spend so many years training for a career and so little time preparing for marriage. A hasty courtship can often lead to a marriage that is a disaster.

Delaying your marriage by choice or because of financial or educational circumstances is usually beneficial. The passage of time allows all infatuation to die, while it tempers and develops true love and spiritual attraction.

Trying to escape from an unhappy home via marriage is like jumping from the frying pan into the fire. More than 60 percent of teenage marriages end in divorce. The more mature you are at the time of your marriage, the greater the probability of your success in marriage.

**Charisma:** You say marriage is not just about sex. But in your book you place a lot of emphasis on the importance of a physical relationship.

**Diana:** I tell women it is very important to show affection to your husband every opportunity you get. Take his hand when you are walking together, or pat his shoulder as you pass by him. Kiss him often. Even if it hasn't been part of your past behavior, try beginning anew by giving him what it is you want in return.

One of the most beautiful pictures of romance I have ever seen is one I witness every Sunday morning at Cornerstone Church. On the front row center of the second section sit a wonderful man and his precious wife. They are in their late 80s. They sit so close to each other you couldn't get a sheet of paper between them. Every Sunday they hold each other's hand. These two wrinkled and gnarled hands are clasped tightly, and the other two hands are raised in praise and worship to the Lord.

What a statement they make! The message of romance they send every Sunday is a memorial to the love they have for each other and the love they have for God.

**Charisma:** You point out that men, in particular, don't realize that women need intimacy that is not always sexual.

**John:** Emotional intimacy includes touch, caressing, hugging, kissing and romancing. There are approximately 5 million touch receptors in the human body. More than 2 million receptors are in the hands alone.

The right hand of touch releases a pleasing and healing flow of chemicals in the bodies of both the toucher and the touched. Studies have shown that even the tender touch of a pet dog or cat can cause people to get healthier.

My mother was a person who could hug you and make the world go away. From my earliest childhood, I watched her reach out and

hug all the people she loved, and many others, too. I adopted that practice as a teenager, and I practice it to this day. I believe it's beneficial for every person to receive affection from another person through touch.

I tell men: Without the emotional intimacy of touch and warm personal communication, sex with your wife is little more than domestic rape.

**Charisma:** A lot of couples say they divorced after enduring years of living together without any passion. What can a couple do if the fire has gone out?

**John:** The first step is to determine that both of you want to improve your marriage. Every marriage can be a better marriage.

Turn off the football game. Put down the newspaper and plan a date night. Sit down and make a list of exciting things you would like to do together, and then do it. "Insanity" defined is "doing the same things the same way and expecting a different result." Your marriage can sizzle, but not without planning to make it happen.

**Charisma:** How can a couple safeguard their marriage from adultery?

**Diana:** In his book *His Needs, Her Needs: Building an Affair-Proof Marriage*, Willard F. Harley Jr. refers to the high expectations men and women have for their marriages. Both want their needs met, yet seldom do they communicate those needs to their spouse or take the time to know the needs of the other.

I have found that many individuals try to learn to "do without" having their needs met. They would rather do without than attempt to convey to their mate their true needs. There is no greater fear on Earth than to stand emotionally naked before the one you love most in life, fearing that person will laugh at your desires or refuse to give you what you

desperately want.

A man who lists sexual fulfillment as one of his needs, and whose wife fulfills this need, makes his wife a continual source of intense pleasure, and his love for her grows stronger.

**Charisma:** Is there anything that women, in particular, can do?

**Diana:** Adultery does not occur overnight. The man usually begins by conversing with a close female friend, someone at the office or a neighbor.

The “conversation only” friendship then develops into a deeper relationship of trust and desire. One step at a time the marriage is compromised by deeper feelings of trust in and emotional dependence on the third party, and if he does not stop himself, adultery will result.

We women must ask ourselves these questions: What are my husband’s needs? What am I doing to meet his needs? What am I doing to create frustration in him? Have I communicated to him what my sexual desires and needs are?

**Charisma:** John, what have you done over the years to cultivate the spark in your marriage?

**John:** Diana and I have something between us we call . It’s an acronym for One Way Everyday. One way, every day, I seek to find a way to make Diana feel good about herself or to help her accomplish a task that is becoming overwhelming.

Last night we washed dishes together. Some days, it’s a rose from the rose garden. Other days, it’s a card. Other times, there is a date night. But one way, every day, there has to be the transmission of my effort to make that day a better day.

**Charisma:** Diana, you spend a lot of time in your part of the book talking about honesty and communication.

**Diana:** So many times we hear men tell us that we are so much more “emotional” about the events of our lives than they are. Because of that, it is sometimes easier for a wife to keep her emotions hidden from her husband.

But it will be difficult for your husband to give you the emotional support you want and need from him if you cannot openly express your emotions—positive and negative—to him.

Because you have not given him your emotional honesty, he will disappoint you by his lack of understanding the emotions you are feeling.

I used to hide my feelings from John. Well, that has changed!

I am so honest with what I need and want from him now that I write it on the bathroom mirror with lipstick! I leave notes in his briefcase and in the pages of his sermons! Notes are left on his office calendar: “Diana needs a date night—now!”

Satan is present to destroy the works of the Lord in His people. He wants to keep you from communicating honestly with your husband. If you are dishonest, you will be falling right into the evil one’s trap to rob, kill and destroy your marriage.

**Charisma:** You give some amazing testimonies about how various marriages have been repaired—including those that were torn apart by addiction and unfaithfulness. You even describe a couple who were about to divorce because the husband had a gay affair. Is reconciliation in such cases truly possible?

**John:** Let me tell you the story of Robert and Rachel. Robert was a very successful stockbroker. He had feminine characteristics, and he was homosexual. He came to the church and confessed that he wanted to make a change in his conduct

and become a Christian. He began to serve and serve well in a number of ways in our church.

He met Rachel, who was far more successful in her business than Robert. Rachel was extremely intelligent, a type-A, turbo-charged woman who lived in a man's world and was extremely successful. They met and were married within six months.

For the first year, life seemed to be a thing of beauty. And then the thing that I had feared from day one began to manifest itself. Robert told Rachel he was having an affair with a man.

Rachel came to my office shaken but committed to solving the problem. She said, "If it were another woman, I know how to fight that fight. But how do you fight a relationship with a man?" I had no intelligent answer.

I asked Robert and Rachel to come to my office together, and I asked Robert the question I have asked everyone in the first five minutes of the first counseling session: "Do you want to save your marriage?"

Robert said yes, and we began to work toward removing the roots in his past life that would bring him to reconciliation with God and Rachel. What we did and said and experienced is in and of itself worthy of a book, but the point of this story is to say that, years later, Robert and Rachel are living together in divine harmony with their children without another homosexual manifestation. Yes ... a marriage can survive even homosexuality.

***Charisma:*** How important is it for couples to pray together?

**John:** A man and a woman talking to God, bound together in prayer, is an unbreakable union.

**Diana:** My husband and I have prayed together for almost 30 years. When we pray together, we get answers from heaven. And it is simply not possible to be angry with each other when you pray.

I tell couples to make a prayer list and to find a private time and place for prayer. John and I like to have our prayer time while we walk. We are away from intrusions and able to call on the Lord in freedom.

First, we come into a time of repentance, asking forgiveness for anything we have said, done or thought that has grieved the Holy Spirit.

Our list then begins: We pray for our children by name, their spouses and our grandchildren. We pray for the protection, direction and prosperity of our church, TV outreach, and school and for everyone associated with them.

Then we submit any personal petitions we may have. Finally, we pray for the peace of Jerusalem and end in a time of praise for our Lord and His blessings.

Learn to pray in agreement, not in competition. There is a sweet sound in heaven when a husband and wife are in harmony before God.

The more this divine communication occurs, the more you will want to talk to each other about other things. You will find that the “things” you speak about will not include gossip or tale bearing. Your conversation will concentrate on your petitions and the testimonies associated with those prayers.

You will share the dreams and aspirations each of you has as you come into agreement. Your children will know that when Mom and Dad pray, things happen.

This teaching is far greater than any book or class you will ever enroll them in. Without communication, your marriage will

become dry and wither, just like the soul when it has no time with God.