

Remedy for an Unhappy Marriage

Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. –Ephesians 5:33

An unhappy marriage hardly needs defining. We are talking about when you are stuck with spending the rest of your life with someone with whom you are not happy. It is a thorn in the flesh; it is painful. Paul said he prayed three times for his particular situation to be resolved. Perhaps you have prayed thirty-three times, or even three thousand thirty-three times, for your situation to improve. In your dreams, you saw only marital bliss. But, no, it has been anything but bliss. You have watched others separate, and you have envied them. Others get divorced and you think, I wish that could happen to me, but you have stuck it out. You are not happy.

Can this actually describe a Christian? Yes. Does God truly want this in a Christian marriage? No. Have you said to yourself, Is this all there is? It is like going to that place on vacation when you say, “Is this it? I have looked forward to this?” So it is with marriage. Yet, if you put Jesus Christ first, this nightmare of a marriage can be the greatest source of blessing.

A wife must submit to a husband who is not very nice, and a husband must love his wife even if she, at the moment, may not seem lovable. This is the pattern. Husbands, love your wives. That means you must respect her, build her up, and care for her. This is the challenge to see whether you are a real man. Do you think you are a man merely because you can attract women? Or because of how strong or how good-looking you are? Do you want to be a real man? Then love your wife! That is what builds character.

No marriage is perfect. Most marriages can be saved, and you can fall in love all over again. Love Jesus Christ more than you love each other. Don't wait for the other person to get it right, and you may one day realize that that thorn is part of a rose, beautiful and fragrant.

Excerpted from *The Thorn in the Flesh* (Charisma House, 2004).