

What This Unusual Anniversary Gift Can Teach You About Having a Healthy Marriage

We all know the standard gifts for a wedding anniversary: flowers, candy and perhaps even jewelry or a weekend away. But pastor, bestselling author and speaker Dave Harvey begins one of the chapters of his new book, *I Still Do*, with the story of a much more unusual anniversary gift.

“It’s a couple sitting at a table, and of course this is an imaginary scene, but they are celebrating an anniversary ... the husband is somewhat detached, and the wife is trying to rally him, and he’s talking about what’s going on at work and how well he’s doing at work,” Harvey tells host Marti Pieper on the “Hope for Your Marriage” series on the *Charisma News* podcast.

“And the next thing they know, there are two boxes that somebody has dropped off: small boxes, little ... ring-sized boxes, and it kind of stops their conversation. And then they open them up, and there’s a thorn in each one,” Harvey explains. “And there’s a little note attached to it and it’s from Jesus, and the note says, ‘To help you be strong and your marriage to last long.’ And they’re sitting there trying to figure out, ‘What in the world does a thorn have to do with a healthy marriage?’”

But shortly after that, Harvey says, “He actually loses his job. And they go through this really difficult time, and it ends up being an entire worldview shift as he encounters life from the side of weakness, not from the side of strength ... he’s humbled. He’s had to suffer, and life begins to look different; marriage begins to look different. He starts to get grounded by the reality of that. And the Savior becomes bigger

because he truly understands how much he needs a Savior; before, he almost felt like he was his own savior.

“Now, he realizes that he needs Jesus desperately, and the marriage is saved and endures as a result of the thorn,” Harvey says. “And of course this is keying off 2 Corinthians 12. But I don’t think ... a lot of people go into marriage thinking, *One of the things God wants to do through this marriage is to reveal my weaknesses.* ... I went into marriage thinking it was basically to portray my strengths, never realizing that it was ordained by God to reveal my weaknesses.”

For more about how God wants to use times of weaknesses and defining moments to showcase His glory and strengthen our marriage relationships, [click here](#).