

Why Marriage is the Biggest Challenge Men Face

Four of the biggest recurring challenges men face are marriage, work, health, and money. These are the four areas where most of us will experience our toughest long-term circumstances and problems.

In this excerpt from Patrick Morley's book, *How God Makes Men*, see how God employs the principle of a greater good to make men of us in these areas.

Marriage

This is what I believe is the single biggest problem men as a group face today—bigger than all their other problems combined. Their marriages are not working as God designed. What can we learn from Joseph that God can use to make us into the husbands He created us to be?

For our marriages, the message is stay the course. Trust that God does have a purpose and that He is always at work in your life and in your relationship. You may be in a marriage that seems beyond help. I say “seems” because no marriage is beyond the hope of reconstruction by the strong arm of God. Nothing that has happened in your marriage has surprised God. If we learn anything from Joseph, it's that nothing is beyond His redeeming power.

Consider Charles. All Charles did was work. His wife's heart grew stone cold toward him. He retaliated by thinking about how happy he could be with other women and planning a divorce. This went on for a long time. Yet he knew divorce was not God's plan for marriage. Then one day, while he was driving in his car, God supernaturally gave him a deep, unquenchable love for his wife. And the following week God changed his wife's heart too.

God changed what seemed like irresolvable differences into a greater good—both for them and for others. Today Charles boldly helps other men save their marriages by telling the story of how God intervened in his marriage.

Men routinely ask me how to resolve marriage tensions. A man whose marriage was hanging by a thread asked, “What should I do?”

I asked him, “What do you want to do?”

“I want to make it work!”

“Do you want to be absolutely loyal to God?”

“Yes, more than anything.”

Then I said what I always say: “You can’t, but Jesus in you can; so put your faith in Him, not what you see, and give it a few years.” Give it a few years—that’s the school of Joseph talking.

Once I saw a research report claiming that five years after they were divorced, a majority of people wish they would have worked harder to make their marriages work. In fact, an analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households revealed that 86 percent of unhappily married couples who did stick it out found that five years later their marriages were happier.

So if happiness is what you want, stick it out and give it a few more years. Adjust your expectations. Family systems scholar Edwin Friedman stated, “In reality, no human marriage gets a rating of more than 70%.” The happiness that working through your problems will bring far exceeds the shadow of happiness that divorce might bring. Most divorced men I’ve met have attested that the negative impacts of divorce, especially on their children, seem to go on forever. Besides, you’re not the only one whose happiness is at stake.

However, if your wife pulls out anyway, and you are on your own, you can use that time to stand strong and reveal the power and glory of God. You can continue to live in absolute loyalty to Jesus Christ by putting your faith in Him and keeping yourself morally pure until you remarry, or even remarry her. Over a dozen men in our Friday morning Bible study have done just that. Because they stayed true, God brought them back together again with their divorced or separated wives. And it didn't hurt to have a small group of men to meet with on a weekly basis.

Of course, no one can guarantee any specific outcome for your relationship with your wife. What we do learn from Joseph, however, is that you can trust God's Word that nothing has happened to you by human decision—yours or hers—apart from what is permitted by His will. And what God allows He will also use to put His power on display. What God wants from you now is the absolute loyalty that can come only from putting your faith in Jesus Christ. Remain faithful, and God will use your seemingly dead-end marriage to reveal His glory through a greater good. So stay the course.

Patrick Morley is founder and CEO of *Man in the Mirror*. After building one of Florida's 100 largest privately held companies, in 1991, he founded *Man in the Mirror*, a nonprofit organization to help men find meaning and purpose in life. Dr. Morley is the best-selling author of *The Man in the Mirror*, *No Man Left Behind*, *Dad in the Mirror*, and *A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines*.