

How This Couple's Marriage Went From Fairy Tale to Near-Disaster—and Back

Brad and Marilyn Rhoads had the kind of whirlwind courtship found in romance novels or fairy tales.

"I had just made a pact that I wasn't going to date anyone for the entire year," Brad says. "And then I met Marilyn. And then in eight months, I was married."

But the fairy-tale aspects of their relationship faded with that same kind of speed, the Rhoadses explain. The two are founders of Grace Marriage, described on its website as "a proactive approach to marriage ministry."

Brad says at first, he and Marilyn followed the world's attitude toward marriage: "Once you're married, you're just married." An attorney, he says he was busy building his law practice and "took all my attention off her and onto my business. And I thought everything was going well.

"Marilyn didn't," he says. "She cried regularly. She was really upset with me. Within a year, she cried out, 'Lord, am I sentenced to a life of this?'"

Brad says at the time, he didn't understand. As far as he knew, he was providing and not yelling at her or causing other problems. But soon, the Holy Spirit spoke to Marilyn in a way that changed everything.

"Well, when we got married, I was in graduate school in social work, so I'm getting this degree to counsel with people," Marilyn explains. "And I'm learning all these theories. And I'm thinking, *If I don't tell him, he won't know*. So I was telling him everything that was bothering me because I didn't

want us to get into [negative] patterns. And he was focused on building a law practice.”

And fairy tale again collided with reality. “I brought to marriage this idealistic view that we’re going to live happily ever after,” she says. “And he was going to be my Prince Charming, and he wasn’t, and I was telling him about it. And so probably about once a week, I would have a breakdown and cry. And about a year into that, the Lord really broke my heart ... He just revealed to me that ‘I’m your hope, Brad’s not, and you have put him in My place, a place that only I can satisfy.’”

Marilyn felt so convicted that she had to ask Brad’s forgiveness: “I need to apologize to you, because I’ve been expecting you to be God to me. And that’s putting you on a pedestal that you can’t be, and you’re not going to be perfect. And I’m not perfect. And so I’m sorry. And I’m just going to focus on loving you, and not expecting you to be something that only God can fulfill in me.”

But it took more than that to change Brad’s heart. To hear how He moved to transform both Brad and Marilyn and bring them into the marriage ministry that now serves thousands of couples, listen to the entire episode of the *Strang Report* podcast here and be sure to share it with friends who need to know how the Holy Spirit can transform lives. Subscribe to the *Strang Report* on Apple Podcasts and at our home on the Charisma Podcast Network for many more stories of inspiration and encouragement. {eoa}

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