

# Family Helps

## 10 Suggestions for a Happy and Lasting Marriage



1. Even in your most heated arguments as husband and wife, NEVER use the word divorce. Once the seed for divorce has been planted, it is very difficult to forget.

2. Do not think that intense disagreement means there is trouble in your marriage. Be honest when you disagree. Express your hurt. Let your feelings show. People who keep things bottled up inside are candidates for all kinds of illnesses.

Because you have intense disagreements, do not think you are becoming “allergic” to one another. You’re only human, and you might as well mark it down that you will have disagreements at times. Learn to get it all out quickly. Don’t ever think of giving up your marriage because you are still weak in the area of communication. People who look for a perfect relationship are heading for disappointments.

Never go to sleep back-to-back. Take the humor stick and knock the stuffing’s out of your pompous attitude. Laugh at how ridiculous you both are.

3. Never make your mate the butt of jokes, privately or publicly. Making jokes about the stupid things your husband or wife did at home is another way of putting him or her down. Joke about anything else, but NOT about your spouse.

4. Practice complimenting each other sincerely and often! It is not a sin to build each other up with sincere compliments. Anyone who can stand before a sacred altar with a partner and exchange vows for life surely ought to see enough good in that partner to talk about it.

Quit sarcasm, and encourage each other instead. Wives tend to become as beautiful as the compliments their husbands pay them. They become radiant when told how attractive they are. And a husband will do almost anything to live up to the compliments and encouragement of his wife. The Bible says, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Proverbs 25:22).

5. Never smother each other; set your love free! Create in the home an atmosphere in which your spouse can reach his/her full potential. Do not smother each other by not wanting to let one out of the sight of the other.

6. Learn how to say, “I’m sorry!” – and mean it! Along with taking the initiative in saying, “I’m sorry,” be ready also to forgive.

7. Never shut each other out; be open at all times! Never “clam up” or walk out when things get shaky. It is wrong to say to your husband or wife, “Just leave me alone. I’m going through a rough place – let me work it out by myself. I just don’t want to be around anybody right now.” What is marriage all about if it is not for sharing and helping one another through every crisis? You do not have the moral right to shut out someone who loves you. Keep the door of your heart open in order to accept help in time of need.

8. Make a conscious effort to keep the joy flowing! If “the joy of the Lord is our strength” (Nehemiah 8:10), then strong marriages should abound with joy. When marriage loses its joy, it becomes weak and vulnerable. A happy home is the result of a joyful couple. Husbands and wives who no longer laugh and play together are losing their love for each other. There is a joyful childishness about true love. Marriages are suffering from too many sober husbands and sad wives. “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine but a broken spirit drieth the bones” (Proverbs 17:22)

9. Never turn to a third party for consolation in time of trouble! There is always someone eager to console a hurting husband or wife. And when there is no one to talk to at home, many go seeking a friend elsewhere – “just someone to

talk to.” That is where almost all adultery begins. It may happen on the job, at the office or in the church choir. Husbands and wives sit at home while their troubled mates gravitate to a sympathetic friend. Secret affairs begin innocently enough, just talking about mutual hurts. Then follows the “leaning” process. All too often they end in transference of affection and adultery.

Never, never tell your marriage troubles to a third party, not even to the closest friends of your own sex. They may be the first to expose your troubles. And they are in a position to hurt you when you need them most. Lean on Jesus! He never tells anyone except the Father! It’s true, there are so few to talk to about your problems. But husbands and wives should be each other’s best friends. They should lean on one another. Leaning in any other direction may lead to a fall. The Bible says, “Bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel” (Proverbs 20:17)

10. Consult Christ about every detail of your marriage! Adam and Eve brought deceit into their marriage and then compounded their rebellion by hiding from God’s presence. God never hides – only man does. But God was vitally involved with that first marriage, and He is just as concerned about every Christian marriage today. Marriages without at least one partner who keeps close to Jesus have less likelihood of survival.

There must be a hotline to the throne room. It works best when BOTH husband and wife are talking to Him – but, if there is one partner running from God, it is imperative that the other be able to run to a secret closet for help and direction. A praying wife can often save the marriage – as can a praying husband. Human love is not enough to keep a marriage strong; only God’s power can do that. That power is at work right now healing and keeping marriages! Divorce is the result of one or both parties losing his/her faith! But where Jesus is King, the marriage survives!

- *By David Wilkerson (edited)*