

Overcoming Hurts Col. 3:12-15

God designed marriage for the happiness of us all. Sociologist Linda Waite and researcher Maggie Gallagher declared that, “The evidence from four decades of research is surprisingly clear: a good marriage is both men and women’s best bet for living a long and healthy life.” Men and women in their first marriages, on average, enjoy significantly higher levels of physical and mental health than others. The research on this is very strong. God knew what He was doing.

We must realize that our faith affects our marriage. Committed Christians who know and love the Lord **deal with conflict and offenses differently that those who don’t have faith** in God. Their love for God means that they take their vows seriously and strive to work through their problems rather than give up when times get tough. The love of God opens the door for them to show their love to their spouses in ways that keep the marriage alive and strong. We can overcome the hurts and offenses of life by following the Lord.

As we enter marriage, we need to remember, every family has learned to handle problems differently, the better we understand how our spouses’ families handled problems the better opportunity we have to understand our spouses.

We must learn to handle our conflicts correctly, so we can keep our marriages healthy. **1 Peter 4:8** says, ***“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.”*** Every day, spouses need to affirm their love and respect for one another. Saying, “I Love you,” “thank you,” Or “I appreciate you,” shows that we care by being open and honest. And, listening attentively and carefully builds intimacy and trust into the relationship. And remember, your marriage is what you make it. If you feed it with good things, it will grow happier; but if you neglect your spouse and become selfish, you’ll ruin your home.

Ephesians 4:29 says, ***“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”*** Keep thinking of your family as more important than yourself. **Phil. 2:3-4** says, ***“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*** To maintain a healthy marriage, you must watch your attitude. When you disagree with your spouse, are you being selfish? Are you acting as a faultfinder? Are you trying to understand things from your spouse’s point of view? Have you considered that your spouse may be reacting to something offensive you have done or said?

Don’t avoid conflict by the silent treatment. This only builds a larger barrier. Don’t try to overcome conflict by acting out your emotions. Anger and shouting break down any opportunity for communication and working out problems. Instead, become an active and empathetic listener. Work hard at trying to understand what your mate is saying. Control your emotions. **Frustration causes much trouble in marriage.** Failing to communicate, neglecting the needs of their mates, and indifference are forms of cruelty. These practices often lead to an end of marriages. **(Men need to learn not to be indifferent; and women need to be careful not to put the**

needs of their husband last on their to do list. Neglecting our spouses leads to frustration and unhappiness. Frustration most often leads to anger and this helps to make life unbearable for both spouses.)

Although all marriages have their bumps and bruises, don't let them outgrow your marriage. If we allow unresolved anger to grow, it will eventually explode and cause deep wounds. **Eph. 4:26-27** says, ***“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.”*** The only way to obey this commandment, ***is to forgive and let your anger dissipate.*** As James tells us in **James 1:19-20**, ***“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”*** And Paul in **Eph. 4:30-31** lets us know we need to put away our anger, because it grieves the Holy Spirit of God.

To help bring this about, we need to give each other permission to call a *“time out.”* When we get angry, we tend to say things we don't mean, we need time to cool down and to honestly reflect on our differences. Paul also said, ***don't let the sun go down on your anger***, because if you do, you give the devil the time and opportunity to work on you. Let us as Paul states, give ourselves the opportunity to calm down. ***Let your love for one another help in working the differences between you.***

Refusing to apologize is selfish and prideful. Refusing to apologize deeply hurts others and builds barriers between people, barriers that may take years to overcome. We all need to be willing to say, ***“I was wrong, and I am sorry. Please forgive me!”*** **Accept responsibility for your mistakes.** The Lord Jesus in **Mt. 5:23-24** said, ***“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”***

We can't maintain a right relationship with God if we are unwilling to deal with our sins against our spouses. **1 Peter 3:7** says, ***“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”*** How we treat our spouses matters to God! **Sometimes** it is better to bear your burdens and forgive, than to blame your spouse for every transgression. After God tells us, ***“Love covers a multitude of sins.”*** And God is merciful, when we show mercy.

Marriage has its ups and downs; and the real test of love is if it can survive the tests of the unlovely. Not every matter is worth confronting your mate over. Sometimes love means allowing them to be what they are, even when it is irritating. **Philippians 4:5** says, ***“Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon”*** (NLT). The Greek is saying that we all need a gentle spirit that is willing to let our love cover a multitude of sins and weaknesses. If you're having problems, focus on finding a solution to your differences rather than arguing, or accusing, or blaming.

No matter how troubled, frustrated, or angry we become, **we must guard our tongues.** Spoken words can cut and bruise the heart, and they are not easily forgotten. Once you speak, you

cannot take back your words. If you say something that cuts and hurts, apologized for it immediately. (Using the word divorce can break a person’s heart. This word wounds, it is also planting seeds of hopelessness and failure in your relationship.)

Everyone in an argument needs to step back in humility and ask, “Is winning this argument really worth losing my spouse?” When you love and respect your spouse, you want to build them up and encourage them. You want them to know that you admire them and are thankful to have them as your partner in life. Paul told the church in **1 Thess. 5:11**, “*So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.*”

Just as we ought to encourage our church family, so we ought also to encourage our spouses and assure them of our love. If someone verbally attacks, criticizes, or blames you, don’t respond in the same manner. **Romans 12:17** says, “*Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.*” Think of Jesus’ example found in **1 Peter 2:23**, “*When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*” Even when suffering on the cross, Jesus didn’t verbally abuse or threaten anybody. **1 Peter 3:9** reminds us, “*Don’t repay evil for evil. Don’t retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing.*”

Your spouse might get angry with you, but you don’t have to respond in the same way. **Prov. 15:1** says, “*A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.*” Choose to respond with gentleness. *There is no greater need in a relationship than to apologize and forgive.* When you have done something wrong, apologize. When your mate has penitently asked for forgiveness, then, forgive.

Forgiveness is “forgetting against”; it means that once you have forgiven your mate, you never bring up this transgression again or hold it against them. Forgiveness opens the door to reconciliation, which means that we become “friends” again. **2 Cor. 5:19** explains, “*... in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*” When God forgave us, He never again counted that sin against us. **Psalm 103:12** says, “*as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*”

We have to avoid the temptation to start figuring out ways to hurt the one who hurts us. We should never bring up our spouses’ faults in front of others. Holding a grudge destroys any opportunity to grow beyond the problem. The Bible in **Ephesians 4:31-32** says, “*Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*”

Forgiving our loved ones is not just God’s suggestion. **It is God’s Law!** When we fail to forgive our spouses, we are also condemning ourselves. The Lord Jesus in **Mt. 6:14-15** said, “*For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*” Instead of being haughty or self-righteous when we approach our loved ones who have hurt us,

we should humble ourselves and approach them gently. **Galatians 6:1** says, ***“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”***

When you decide to forgive, you are free to begin a healthier method of resolving conflict. If you hold your spouse’s past offenses up every time a problem comes along – this is not forgiveness; forgiveness lets a matter go, and it lets it go for good. It never brings it up again.

Here is what should happen between a Christian husband and wife. When a spouse is truly hurt and needs to deal with an offense, he or she needs the courage to gently and humbly explain to the one who offended, **“I was hurt when you said this or did this.”** They need to explain what hurt them and why it hurt.

In response, the other spouse needs to humbly and penitently say, **“I am sorry I hurt you; please forgive me. I will make every effort never to do this again.”** This process of dealing with conflict is vital, because *it opens the door to reconciliation*. The promise not to repeat the offense and the promise of forgiveness give a foundation to maintain the relationship. This is how God treat us and it how He wishes that we would treat one another. Once the fires of marriage begin to cool, it is easy to take our spouses for granted and become complacent. People stop being as kind and courteous as they ought. They may neglect the spouse’s needs and selfishly pursue their own desires. And in the end, someone gets devastated.

If the Lord Jesus could forgive us, can we not forgive one another? **Forgiveness is better than forgetting, because forgiveness offers the hope of reconciliation.** Forgiveness brings reconciliation, making friends again; and Jesus bore the cross paying for our sins so that we might be forgiven and may be able to be a friend of God. God wants us to remain close to Him, so He made the way possible through the blood of Jesus for us to be forgiven.

To become a Christian, you must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart. Out of love for Him, you must repent of your sins by turning away from all evil and turning to what is good and right in the sight of God. Upon confession of your faith, be baptized into Christ. And in baptism, the blood of Jesus will wash away your sins. What are you waiting for? Come to Jesus today!