



Don't Sit



While You Stand



Marilyn Phillipps

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by

Marilyn Phillipps

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If there is one question we get asked again and again it is, "What do I do while I wait for God to heal my marriage?" Scripture tells us "*Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore ...*" Ephesians 6:13-14.

How do you do that? What do you do each day as you wait? For each one it will be different, but for all there is one thing that is true. Don't sit while you stand!

I hope this book helps you to find your own path, God's plan for you as you stand fast on His word for your marriage and family. None of what is happening to you is a surprise to God. He has great plans for you! Open your heart to Him today and seek that plan with all your heart. He will take care of tomorrow as you place today in His hands!

God bless you on your journey! Each one's road is different, but God's goal for all of us is the same--to know Him with all our hearts and to serve Him with all our might. May your particular path become ever clearer to you!

In Jesus,

Marilyn Phillipps

Don't Sit While You Stand

Chapter 1

The Journey

The Rescue

Swiftly the paramedics lifted the lifeless body into the waiting ambulance. There was no time to lose. As the siren cranked to high volume and the vehicle lurched into action, skilled hands worked quickly, establishing an IV line, bandaging, and monitoring. Perhaps it would all be in vain. The victim seemed drained of all life. Perhaps too much of her blood had been lost on that street where she was found. Undaunted, the paramedics continued their efforts.

Slowly the victim opened her eyes. Although she could see and hear all that was going on around her, she felt numb and somehow strangely detached. "Am I going to be okay?" The words formed in her mind, but couldn't make it to her voice.

Too busy to notice her half-opened eyes, her rescuers continued to work feverishly. "Looks like we got to this one just in time," one of them muttered as he checked the cardiac monitor. "Yeah, not much longer and we'd be heading for the morgue," the other one answered. Although her mouth showed no movement, the victim smiled to herself. "I'm going to make it," she thought as she slipped back into unconsciousness.

The Hospital

Bright lights and clanging metal startled her to consciousness again. "Where am I?" she wondered. As if she had thought out loud, a smiling face appeared to answer her question. "You're in the recovery room, honey. You gave us quite a scare. When they found you, you had almost bled to death. You were attacked pretty viciously, but I'm happy to tell you that they've stopped the bleeding and you're on the road to recovery!" The victim smiled weakly.

Perhaps the first sign of life returning was the searing pain she now felt. It seemed to engulf her. It was hard to think of anything else. "Is this what life will feel like now?" she asked the nurse. "Will this pain ever stop or will I hurt like this forever?"

"It'll go away in time, honey, but you're going to be pretty sore for a while. Now try to get some rest. You've got some challenging days ahead of you."

2 Months Later

Thinking back now to those first few hours, she had to laugh. She had only thought she knew what pain was then. Ha! It was nothing compared to the pain of physical therapy. Her hands gripping the arms of her chair, she stared at the door, waiting for it to open. Any moment the person she dreaded the most was going to enter the room and begin working with her.

Sweat began pouring down her forehead as she thought of the hour that lay ahead. The only thing that kept her from bolting that very minute was the realization that without help, she would never again have full mobility. As much as it hurt to push muscles past their pain threshold, it would hurt more to be crippled for life. Just then the door opened and her therapist entered. "Well, here we go." She took a deep breath. One hour at a time. She could do that. One hour at a time.

6 Months Later

A confident young woman walked briskly down the hospital corridor. A slight limp was all that betrayed the pain of the past months. A few more months of physical therapy and even that would be gone. A few small scars were all that remained to remind of her gruesome ordeal. Perhaps they would always be there, but the pain that had caused them was gone.

Today, though, it was not her own trauma that was on her mind. Down the hall, around the corner, in room 242 another woman waited. A few weeks ago she too had been attacked. They found her lying in an alley, unconscious and lifeless. The medical team had managed to save her life, but now it was her soul that needed rescuing.

Rounding the corner the young woman smiled. Becoming involved in the lives of others had changed her life. Her own trauma was no longer a meaningless incident. Now it gave her the basis from which to minister hope and healing to others. Her life had new meaning, new purpose. She knew the woman down the hall would need a lot of love and support. She also knew that total healing was possible because she had walked the road herself. She knew that the trauma was not the end, it was the beginning of a long journey. Again she smiled. It felt great to no longer think of herself as a victim. She stood before door 242. The victor had arrived.

Notes

Chapter 2

The Attack

The story you just read is an allegory. It represents what happened to me and what happened to you. You too have been savagely attacked and left for dead, not physically as the young woman in our story, but mentally and emotionally. Your emotions have been battered, your heart pierced with sorrow, and your self-image ravaged by rejection. There may have been a day for you, just as there was for me, when death seemed an almost welcome end to the pain.

Just as with the young woman in our story, you probably experienced the trauma long before anyone really noticed. You may have felt your life flowing out of you just as the blood of the young victim flowed into the street. You may have felt totally helpless to remedy your situation.

You may have cried out for help, but no one seemed to hear. You may have wept until there were no more tears to cry. You may have become just as lifeless as that young woman lying in the street. That may even be where you are today. If so, don't give up! Help is on the way!

Wherever you are along the journey, the most important decision you will face today and each step of the way is whether or not you are going to enter the next phase of recovery.

The Attacker

There is something very important that you must realize about your trauma. Although the words and actions that have wounded you so terribly probably came from your spouse, you need to recognize who the real attacker is. Your spouse is not your attacker.

The day that you married, Satan, the enemy of your soul, and his forces targeted your marriage for destruction. Demonic forces hate the oneness of marriage that has been God's plan from the very first couple that He created on the face of the earth.

That first marriage was blessed of God. Together they were given a powerful assignment to subdue the earth. Talk about a couple united in God's will! There could never have been a better example of a couple handpicked by God for each other.

The most important decision you will face today and each step of the way is whether or not you are going to enter the next phase of recovery.

They walked and talked daily with the Lord in the Garden. They had His mind and His heart because they were created in His image. If there ever was a couple who had absolutely everything going for them, it was those two.

Satan recognized that with the oneness and purpose that they had, they were going to accomplish their assignment. He hated God and he hated His creation. He hated the fact that they were created to rule over him. It became his goal to separate them from the God who loved them so much and to thwart their assignment on this earth.

In order to do this, he had to seduce them away from their relationship with God and their unity with each other. No doubt it was not accomplished overnight. Sometimes we read scripture and it sounds like they were created one day and within the week

they were eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It most likely did not occur that rapidly.

Satan is a master of seduction of the flesh. Over a period of time he must have worked on Eve, getting her to gradually doubt what God had said to them. During that time, using the body of a beautiful serpent, he gained her confidence and trust. The conversation that we overhear between them in Genesis chapter 3 came, no doubt, after some time of talking together.

This seduction also pulled her away from her husband. Something, in this case the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, became so tempting that it meant more to her than relationship with God. It meant more to her than her relationship with Adam. It became something she just had to have.

Why Adam ate of the fruit is the subject of many debates. Whatever the reason, he too was willing to forsake relationship with God to obtain what his flesh wanted.

The story is no different today. The enemy continues to fight against marriage. He hates its oneness. God has said that marriage is the earthly representation of His relationship with His bride, the Church. How the enemy hates that relationship! He will do anything to eradicate that image from the earth. He wants marriages destroyed so that they will not reflect the unity of Jesus and His bride and so that the children of those marriages will be robbed of representation of the steadfast, unconditional love of the Father.

The enemy is not only after marriages, he seeks to destroy generations. He knows that breaking up a marriage not only keeps that couple from fulfilling the call of God on their lives, but also wounds the children and prevents them from enjoying the fruit of family as God planned.

It was Satan and his forces who devised a plot against your marriage. He used something or someone to seduce the affections of your spouse. It may be career, money, another person--the list is endless, but the attack is as old as the Garden of Eden.

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The enemy's first goal was to get your spouse to disobey God and take the bait that he was offering. His second goal is to get you to look at the circumstances and get your eyes off Jesus. Satan's one consistent, never-changing goal since the Garden of Eden, is to move people away from the Tree of Life and get them to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He will use whatever he can and will make it as appealing as possible.

Your spouse has chosen to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but you don't have to. You can choose the Tree of Life.

So, how do you do that? First of all, you get a really clear understanding of who attacked you. It was not your spouse. It doesn't matter what your spouse said or did, the devil is still the enemy. It doesn't matter if your spouse has left, is divorcing you, is marrying someone else, won't give you any money, is fighting you for custody of your children, has the best lawyer money can buy... The devil is still your enemy. Your spouse is not!

That is the first thing you must settle about the attack. If you want help, if you want the pain to end, if you want to live again, you must recognize your enemy. If you do not, you will continue to spend your energy fighting the wrong opponent.

If you allow circumstances to direct your life, if you allow your spouse to dictate your peace and fulfillment, if you pin all your hopes and dreams on what you believe the answer to be, then you are eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil just as much as your spouse is doing.

I know that is a hard thing to hear, but you need to hear it. The Tree of Life is where you need to run right now. You are like that young woman in the ambulance. There are people working with you to help you live again. You are going to hear all kinds of advice from many different people. You must know what will bring life to you and what will not.

If those ambulance attendants had given the young woman the wrong drug, their intentions may have been very good, but the results would not have been. Many are going to tell you that

your spouse is the attacker and that you need to rid yourself of that problem. No matter what the circumstances seem to say right now, you need to remember who your real enemy is.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12). Many people think that scripture applies to every situation except strife between husband and wife.

The battle you are facing right now is no different than any other “wrestling” that you face. The circumstances that surround you right now make it look like a human being is your enemy. That is no accident. Your real enemy wants you to think that so that you will concentrate on your spouse as the trouble maker. That gives a great cover to the demonic forces that are seeking to destroy your marriage. They know that if you recognize that they are the real problem and you begin to fight them according to scripture, you are guaranteed victory. *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart* (Galatians 6:9).

No wonder demonic forces create circumstances that bring strife between people! If we continue to fight against each other, they are free to continue their dirty work!

I don't care what your spouse has said or done or is doing or saying, your spouse is not your enemy! There is an all-out assault against your marriage and the same one who thwarted the call of that very first couple is now fighting to destroy yours as well.

Did you know that? Did you know that God has an assignment for the two of you just as He did for Adam and Eve? The day that you were joined together in marriage, the Lord blessed you and gave you your assignment. Many couples never realize that important fact and never fulfill their destiny as a team. You still have a chance! Don't let the devil, your true enemy, destroy your marriage.

You may have just been “loaded into the ambulance” or you may still be “lying in that street” with your life seemingly slipping away. You may be so crushed right now, it is hard to function.

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I remember days when I first learned of my husband's other woman, when I would just stare at other people and wonder how they could just go on with life. I saw them laughing or talking or walking in the park and I wondered how they could be doing those things because I hurt too much to even move.

I remember crying so hard my entire body ached. I remember thinking I would be swallowed up in the darkness within me. I remember when going about daily activities required a minute-by-minute resolution to push on. I know the pain you are feeling, but step one to healing is recognizing your real enemy.

As you feel that pain within you, recognize who really hates you and wants to see you destroyed. It is not your spouse. Realize it is the one who hates God and hates you because God created you. Recognize that demonic forces are out to destroy your marriage. The circumstances that you face are particular to you and your situation, but the attack is universal.

Whether you are lying in the street or are being worked on as you are rushed to the hospital, take the first step toward your healing right now. Forgive your spouse! You probably don't feel like doing that, but you can't afford to wait for the feelings to come. As an act of your will, forgive the one who has hurt you. Let go of the desire for vengeance, the desire to repay pain with pain, evil with evil. I know this is hard, but there is One who makes it possible.

You are engaged in a tremendous battle for your relationship with your spouse, for your family, for your own health and well being.

Jesus Christ came into this world to pay the price for sin. He was God, but He also was man. He took an earthly body and walked in the same frailties that we all experience. He was tempted in everything as we are tempted, and yet He did not give into those temptations. By the power of the Holy Spirit, He did not sin.

Then He who knew no sin became sin for us. He was crucified in our place. He took upon Himself every sin and suffered the punishment for that sin. Why? Because we were not able to do that for ourselves. We could not be good enough or try hard enough to overcome sin.

Have you ever done something again and again and made up your mind you would not do it again, only to do it again? I remember when I wanted to quit smoking. I was hooked and I knew it, and I wanted to quit. I would make up my mind each night that tomorrow would be different, tomorrow I would stop smoking. I'd make it through the whole day without a cigarette. I set my will as strongly as I could that I would not smoke again.

The next day, though, usually as soon as my feet hit the floor after I awoke, I wanted a cigarette. I would fight against the desire and determine that I would not give into it, but before very long I found myself lighting up again. I simply could not give it up no matter how much I determined to do it.

That is how sin is. We are each born with a sin nature. Watch small children playing and you can see it in action. The child wants its own way, it wants what it wants when it wants it. Our nature is self-focused and although we determine to live differently, there is no power within ourselves to live a victorious life.

That is why we needed a Savior. There was no human being who could change our sin nature because all of us since Adam and Eve sinned have had the same problem. Jesus was the only sinless one who could be sacrificed in our place.

As He hung on the cross He said, "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do*" (Luke 23:34). If Jesus, who was without sin and who was taking our place and receiving the punishment for our sins, could forgive those who crucified Him, then how can we, who have sinned, hold sin against each other? Jesus knew who our real enemy is because Satan and the fallen angels are also His enemies. He stood against those enemies so that we might have freedom from them. Those who surrender their lives to Jesus and receive Him as Lord and Savior, have the same victory over those enemies as Jesus had when He took the

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punishment for sin and then rose again in the power of God. The victory of His resurrection is shared by all who have received Him and declared Him to be Lord.

Have you done that? I am not talking about going to church or being a member of a particular denomination. I am asking you if you have surrendered your life to Jesus and have received Him as your Lord and Savior. This is a crucial question, not only for eternity, but for your life right here and now on planet earth.

You are engaged in a tremendous battle for your relationship with your spouse, for your family, for your own health and well being. I have emphasized again and again in this chapter that you must recognize your true enemy. That is the first step, but you need to take the second one if you have not done so already.

You need to receive Jesus and the power that He has against your enemy. Jesus paid the price for you and for your spouse. He paid the price for your marriage healing and for the healing of your wounded children. He is the only One who could pay that price. You cannot work hard enough or be good enough to pay the price. You cannot heal your broken heart just by willing it to be so. You cannot be clever enough or plan hard enough to see your marriage healed. You cannot heal the heart of a child.

Jesus has already done it all for you! Just before He died on that cross, He said, "*It is finished!*" (John 19:30). He meant it. He finished it all. He didn't pay part of the price and you have to do the rest. He did it all! He has felt your pain, He has walked in your shame. He was despised and laughed at and spit upon. There is nothing you have suffered that He has not also experienced. He was betrayed to His death by a kiss! He knows the betrayal at the hands of someone you love.

As you begin your journey to recovery, this step is critical. If you desire to surrender your life to Jesus right now, there is a simple way to do that. You do not have to pray long enough to be holy or sacrifice long enough to be worthy. Jesus is waiting for you just as you are. He knows your heart. He knows where you've been and what you've done. He saw it all when He hung on that cross paying the price for your life. You need just trust in

Him today and pray this simple prayer.

Jesus, I need You. I can't do it on my own. I've tried and I am weary. I surrender my life to You right now. I repent and turn away from my own ways and I receive you as my Lord and Savior. I receive Your nature, Jesus, and I walk in the victory You purchased for me with Your blood. My old sin nature is gone. I receive new life today, for my time here on earth and for eternity with You in heaven. Thank You, Jesus, for paying the price that I could not pay! Thank You for setting me free and for healing me. I receive all that You have for me today.

If you prayed this prayer and meant what you said, you are now born again and have eternal life in Jesus. You are a child of God and have full access to all that He gives His children.

You need to share with another Christian what you have done today. Scripture tells us *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved* (Romans 10:9). You have done just that! Now on to your next step.

Walking it out

What kind of things has your spouse said or done that made you think that he or she was your attacker?

Now that you know who your real enemy is, can you understand how he is using your spouse's actions and words to wound you?

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Recognizing your real enemy, can you see how impossible it is for you to win this battle without Jesus?

When the Israelites left Egypt to travel to the promised land, Pharaoh and all his army pursued them to take them captive again. At one point they stood with the Red Sea raging in front of them and Pharaoh's army approaching rapidly from behind. The situation must have looked helpless to them. There was no way they could win. Suddenly Moses encouraged the people, "The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still" (Exodus 14:14).

What an encouragement that must have been to them! Then miraculously the Lord parted an immense sea in front of them and they walked through on dry land to the other side.

God wants to work miracles for you too, but you must stop trying to do things yourself and learn to let Him fight the battle.

What kind of things have you been saying or doing with your spouse that have not been working? _____

Are you ready to let Jesus take over?

The first step in this process is for you to forgive your spouse. You need to do that now.

Your emotions probably do not feel like forgiving. The hurt has been so great! It will help to remember that Jesus, who never sinned, took all the punishment for your sin. He has forgiven you for everything you ever did or ever will do and He paid the price for you to be free. When we realize how much He did for us when we did not deserve it, we can forgive others who have hurt us.

Forgiveness is a decision, not a feeling. Your feelings will follow the decisions you make. Our marriage is usually in trouble because we have allowed our feelings to lead us in one way or another. As you choose to forgive your spouse, God will begin to work in your heart to change your feelings. Forgiveness is really an act of trust in Jesus. Why not write your decision here, in your own words. _____

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What Is God Saying to You?

Chapter 3

Surgery

When the young woman in our story reached the hospital, the real work began. Trauma sometimes produces numbness, but surgery and recovery are filled with pain. It would not be our choice if we had one, but sometimes it is the only way to health and wholeness.

There is a brokenness that comes from pain that is like no other brokenness. If we allow it to, the pain of a wounded relationship can produce a brokenness that results in our total surrender to the Lord. When we reach the end of our rope, when there is nothing more we can do to remedy the situation, then we must turn to the Lord, and Him alone, for help. The pain of a broken relationship can either cause us to turn inward and become bitter or it can afford us a wonderful opportunity to recognize our total need for God.

If you will allow this time of pain to bring you closer to the Lord, you will begin to experience an incredible work taking place in your life. You will find that an empty place in your heart will begin to fill with the unconditional acceptance and love that only Jesus can give. Where others have rejected you, He will accept you. Where others have spoken harsh words of criticism and rejection, He will speak words of love and forgiveness. Sometimes it takes a traumatic experience to drive us into the arms of Jesus.

Fortunately, it does not matter how we get there. Growing closer to Him is all that matters. As His love begins to melt your heart and you begin to know Him as you never have before, the

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circumstances that brought you to that place will not seem so overwhelming. As you surrender completely to Him, your life will never be the same again.

The first place He will begin working in your life is right in your own heart. Somehow that does not seem fair to our finite way of thinking. After all, was it not your spouse that created all this pain and suffering? Why then does God not start working on him or her? If your spouse would just straighten up, then your marriage would be okay, right?

Well, first of all, the Lord wants to heal your broken heart. You are so very special and precious to Him and He wants you to know how very much He loves you. Begin to read His love letter to you, the Bible. To begin with, get a good, modern translation that is easy to understand. Start with the Gospels--Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John--and just read about Jesus. See what He did and what He said.

Although the stories were written long ago, Jesus is the same today as He was then. He loves you as much He did Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus. He is concerned as much about your life as He was with the woman at the well. You are the one sheep He said the shepherd would leave the 99 others to find. Let this become a time of drawing closer and closer to Jesus. Get to know Him.

Find a solid, Bible-based church. If someone recommended this book, they are probably a good person to ask about a church. Religion is not what you are looking for. Religion is man's way of trying to reach God. You want to develop a personal relationship with Jesus.

You need to allow Jesus to build fulfillment and wholeness within you before you can fully relate to your spouse again. Your spouse will never be, nor ever can be, your source of happiness and fulfillment. You may have married thinking that man or woman was going to complete your life and bring you joy and happiness. You have no doubt been disappointed.

Unfortunately, no person on this earth can do that. When we expect our spouse to be the one who makes us whole, we are

always disappointed. If we are human, we are going to hurt and disappoint others. It may not even be our intention, but we will do it. No marriage will ever survive on the ability of one spouse to keep the other happy.

Our fulfillment and contentment must come from Jesus. If we know this before we marry, we are one step ahead. Most of us don't know it, though, and on our wedding day we looked at our spouse with eyes blinded by love, expecting years of bliss and contentment in his or her arms.

You are so very special and precious
to Jesus and He wants you to know
how very much He loves you.

Then the disappoint came. Sometimes in little things and sometimes in earth-shattering betrayal. That person we had counted on to be all we needed was falling far short of our expectations. What we usually fail to realize is our spouse was experiencing the same disappointment.

Fortunately, it's never too late to learn the truth and to begin growing in it. God wants to take this time right now to heal your heart and to begin teaching you how to find your contentment and peace in Him. He is the only one who will not disappoint us. He is the only one who can truly fulfill us and bring us contentment. If you are still looking to your spouse today to do that for you, stop and realize this is never going to happen.

Of course, we will have times of joy and fulfillment together as a married couple, but that should come from the fact that both husband and wife are whole and complete in Christ and are then sharing our lives together. If either one of us is trying to get that from the other, the relationship is headed for a rocky road.

He may show you some attitudes
of your heart that need to change.

He may show you some areas of
your life that need an overhaul.

Are you willing to let Him do
whatever it takes?

So right now, for the time being, forget what your husband or wife needs and concentrate on your life. What does God want to do in your heart right now? Knowing that surgery is painful, are you willing to let Him do what He knows needs to be done? He may show you some attitudes of your heart that need to change. He may show you some areas of your life that need an overhaul. Are you willing to let Him do whatever it takes?

It hurts to have God point out things about us when we think our spouse is the problem. We can be defensive and resist what He is trying to tell us because we feel our hurt justifies our self-acceptance. Are you willing to change? Not just for your spouse or for your marriage, but for your own life. Are you willing to look honestly at your own attitudes, actions, and outcomes?

God is after your heart! He wants to conform it to His own. He wants you to think like He thinks and to act like He acts. When you asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior, your very nature changed to His. You are no longer held captive by those things that held you before. Patterns that have been passed down through the generations in your family are now broken because of Jesus. You don't have to accept things in your life because that is just the way your family is. You can change with His help.

Are you willing to get really honest with Him and let Him get really honest with you? If so, you are on your way to healing! There will be time in the future to work on your marriage, but right now God wants to minister to you.

You may need to forgive yourself just as you have forgiven your spouse. God will not be showing you things to make you feel badly. He wants you to recognize areas that do not conform to His nature within you, not so you will feel ashamed or to show you that you are not a good person, but so that you can repent and let Him change your heart.

God is going to change you from the inside out. As your heart is healed and changed, you will begin to act differently outwardly. Religion chooses to change us from the outside. It gives us a list of do's and don't's that are supposed to change our hearts by changing our behavior. God works in just the opposite way. He changes our hearts and then the change works its way out to the outside.

David said, *"Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!"* Psalm 119:11. He knew that real change comes from within our hearts.

Proverbs 4:23 says, *"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life."*

These scriptures are not talking about your physical heart but your soul--the inner you. God is now changing your heart as you submit your life to Him. Changes are going to occur in areas that you have struggled with for years. It is no longer you working on them, but now God is at work within you to transform those areas of your life.

Whatever happens with your marriage is truly secondary to what is occurring in your life right now. Don't cut this process short. Give God as much time as it takes to transform your heart and to do a work within you.

Walking it out

The first place that Jesus is going to begin working is your own heart. You cannot change your spouse's heart, but you can obey God and allow Him to change yours.

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Are you ready to be totally honest with the Lord and let Him be totally honest with you?

No matter what your spouse does or does not do right now, your goal needs to be to grow closer to the Lord each day. Give your life to Him, let Him work deep within you to change your heart and heal your soul. What things do you feel He is already speaking to you?

Find several verses that talk about God's love for you. Put your name in those verses and write them here.

Are you beginning to realize how important you are to God?

He loves you more than any human ever could and He longs to fulfill you and bless you. Can you think of some things that you expected your spouse to do that was really God's responsibility in your life? What things have you looked to your spouse for that really can only come from God?

Can you now trust God to fulfill these areas in your life?

Have you forgiven yourself for mistakes you have made and things you have done wrong in your marriage?

Once you have repented, God forgives you completely. If you continue to hold things against yourself, you are really saying that God's forgiveness is not enough. Jesus took all of your guilt and all of your shame to the cross. He paid the price for your sin. Release yourself today and walk free of your past!

As painful as these days may be in your life, they can also be blessed and filled with peace and joy. The more you surrender your life to Jesus, the more you will find fulfillment in Him. Have you experienced this yet? If so, what has happened?

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Thoughts? Prayers? Revelation?

Chapter 4

Recovery

As God works in your heart, as you spend time daily reading your Bible and getting to know Him better, you are going to discover an amazing miracle will begin to take place. An awesome joy will gradually replace your sorrow and despair. Hope will begin to grow where hopelessness once gripped your life.

Scripture tells us, *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* Hebrews 11:1. Faith cannot begin to grow in your heart until hope has taken root. Too many people try to just grit their teeth and make faith happen. Faith must grow.

There are ways to hasten the process. Romans 10:17 says, *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* If you want to build faith, you must get to know what God’s Word says.

God sees you and your spouse through eyes of faith. He is not hampered by the circumstances of your life. He knows what gifts and talents He has given you and what He desires for you to be.

You need to learn from His Word what He says about you and about your spouse. What God thinks must become more real to you than the circumstances you are facing.

This is a process. As you learn more about what God says in His Word, you will see more and more through His eyes of faith. If you allow circumstances to paint the picture for you, you

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will only see the negative. If you allow God to paint the picture with His Word, hope will be established in your heart and faith will grow within you.

Faith cannot begin to grow in your heart until hope has taken root.

You are the one who makes the choice. What will you choose to believe? What will you choose to think about? Will you meditate daily on what your spouse has done or is doing or will you keep your eyes on Jesus and what He has done and is doing?

Your own peace will come when you can release all your cares to Jesus and let Him take charge of your life. Regardless of what is happening in your marriage, Jesus is still Lord and has wonderful plans for your life.

*“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”* Hebrews 12:1-2.

Keeping your eyes on Him will build up your faith and help you overcome. Keeping your eyes on the circumstances will build up your flesh and help you despair. The choice is yours. You are engaged in a fierce battle for your marriage and your home, and you must know how to use your spiritual weapons. You cannot outmaneuver the devil in the natural. It is only when you fight the battle in the spiritual realm that you are assured victory.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.

God has given you these weapons to help take your thoughts captive. Every time you begin to think against what

God has promised in His word, you have the ability and the authority to take those thoughts captive. You are not a helpless victim. God has given you powerful weapons, but you must choose to use them.

Just as in our story of the young woman, many times the pain seems the hardest during recovery. Sometimes the initial shock of the situation leaves you numb, but as you begin to walk through recovery, the pain intensifies. You may even feel the pain is impossible to overcome at times. Those are the times when you are going to need Jesus the most.

Carefully choose what counsel you will receive. Well-meaning friends and family may tell you to get on with your life and forget about this marriage. You need to understand that they love you and do not want to see you suffering. They want you to do what seems to them will end the pain.

A patient coming out of anesthesia from surgery must face the reality of pain. They cannot be kept asleep until they heal. There is painkilling medication that will help them, but the goal of those caring for them is to get them up and around as soon as possible. They cannot be drugged forever.

It is not easy for surgical patients to get up and walk or to breathe deeply or to even sit up. Yet to allow them to avoid these things would cause more harm than good. Getting up and walking improves circulation and prevents blood clots. Deep breathing increases oxygen levels and helps circulate air deep within the lungs, preventing pneumonia.

So it is with your healing. You cannot sit wallowing in your pain. You also must “get up and walk.” There are many wonderful ministries that help people stand for the healing of their marriage. There is a list of them in the back of this book.

There are newsletters and weekly Bible studies available to you. There are books and video and audio discs. There is a tremendous amount of help available to you, but you must reach out and take it. You have to get yourself to those support meetings. There are many people available to help you, but their job is to

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push you to take those first steps beyond yourself that would be difficult to do if you were left on your own.

Just as our young woman in the recovery room, you need to know that you are going to be all right. You will make it! And you will grow and become a stronger and more vibrant person as you push past the pain.

You cannot sit wallowing in you pain.

You also must "get up and walk."

The healing will come from the inside out. Jesus is working on your heart. He is healing you and giving you new vision. He is equipping you for warfare and teaching you to be strong in faith. Go at His pace. Just as the patient right out of surgery does not walk through the entire hospital corridors, neither will you be able to run right away.

Give yourself grace as the Great Physician helps you heal.

You will make mistakes. You will say the wrong things and you will do the wrong things. I can guarantee that because you are a human being. There is nothing we do perfectly. As Jesus took me through healing and taught me to stand for the healing of my marriage, I did so many things wrong. I cannot remember them all.

It is not our perfection that brings about what He has promised, it is His! Remember that when you stumble. Your marriage will not be healed because you say and do just the right things. Your marriage will not be healed because you never make a mistake. Your marriage will be healed as you submit your life to Jesus and He works within your heart and your relationship. His is the only perfection that you can count on and the only one that matters.

Begin to enjoy His presence! Lose yourself in His love. Take advantage of this time and learn to hear His voice as you never have before. You can look upon this time of healing as one of the

worst things that has ever happened to you, or you can embrace it as one of the most exciting times of your life. The choice is yours!

Walking it out

Have you reached out to anyone for help? _____

If so, what counsel were you given? _____

Does this counsel line up with God's word? _____

Does it confirm what God has been speaking to you?

Are the people speaking to you more concerned about stopping your pain or healing your marriage? _____

Can you think of something someone has recommended you do that would be similar to a surgical patient getting up and walking or deep breathing following surgery? If so, what?

Are you willing to do the hard things required to heal permanently?

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Or does it just seem easier right now to do something that will end your pain? _____

The choice is yours. Right now it may not seem like an easy choice, but there are many who are willing to work with you to help you heal completely. Reach out to them now!

Chapter 5

Physical Therapy

None of us like to be pushed past our own limitations. Once we find a comfort zone, we like to stay in it and rest. Once intense pain has stopped, we want to rest in that new-found peace.

Following surgery and recovery, when the presence of constant pain finally begins to wane, a person does not want to do anything that would bring it back. It would be very easy for someone who has suffered an injury and passed the initial stages of healing, to avoid any activity that would produce pain once again.

The only problem with doing that, though, is that scar tissue forms and mobility decreases. Muscles can atrophy and become useless. A person well on the way to recovery can become helplessly crippled if they are allowed to set their own limitations of movement.

Physical therapists know well how reluctant people are to push past their own limitations. Their job is to push people past their pain. In their hands, people are forced past their own comfort barriers and assisted in facing new challenges. They do not allow the injured person to set the frontiers, for they know that would be too hard for them. Instead, they decide for the patient how far a limb can be extended or how much counterforce the muscle must overcome. Each time they carefully extend

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the barriers of yesterday until at last there is the greatest possible motion in every part of the body.

You will find that the Lord works the same way in your life. As the initial pain of betrayal or abandonment or rejection begins to wear off and you become stronger in the Word of God, you will have a tendency to find a comfort zone. You may have withdrawn from relationships with others or stopped going to church or ceased attending PTA meetings. Maybe it has just been too painful to cheer your children on in their soccer games or root with the other parents as the swim team pushes on to victory.

Maybe you've stopped doing a lot of things you used to do or stopped going to places that remind you of former times with your spouse. Old familiar comfort zones many times are lost when a marriage is in trouble. Friends that you used to spend time with, now avoid you because they are a couple and you are not. They simply do not know how to include you anymore. Each one of those painful rejections may have caused you to seek your own place of comfort and peace.

Maybe you've stopped doing
a lot of things you used to do
or stopped going to places that
remind you of former times
with your spouse.

Maybe you don't go out much at all any more. Maybe you have begun to find relief from pain in other ways, such as the temporary numbing effect of alcohol or drugs. Maybe you are finding comfort in food. Maybe you have slipped into a fantasy world where you have a lover who cares for you as you desire for your spouse to do. Maybe that fantasy has become so real to you that you don't want to leave it. Maybe it is soap operas that have begun to fill your hours or perhaps you have discovered pornography on the Internet.

As human beings we can grasp at anything that seems to fulfill us and take away the pain of rejection and dishonor. The enemy is more than happy to supply all kinds of answers to our emptiness. At first they really do seem to ease the loneliness, in fact, they are truly pleasurable. As time goes by, though, they seem to lose their power and we must search for something else to accomplish the same pain relief.

Each one of these false answers cripples us just a little bit more. It is like the person who after surgery and recovery, refuses to allow someone else to set their boundaries because they might once again produce pain. Although that person feels he or she is solving the problem, in reality it is only getting worse.

We are all like the young woman in our story who dreaded the approach of the physical therapist because she knew that person would push her past her own comfort level. It is hard to trust our lives in the hands of another and it is hard to endure pain that we think we can possibly avoid. Yet there is no easy road to recovery.

We must place our life in the hands of the Great Physician, Jesus Christ. We must trust Him and allow Him to set our limits. We must not withdraw into our own comfort zones, but we must allow Him to push us past what we want and do what He wants.

This is going to take great courage. I remember when I used to go to the grocery store in our small town. Everyone knew about our marital problems (or at least I thought they did) and it took every bit of courage I could muster to walk up and down those aisles putting things into my shopping cart.

Many times I would see former friends, women that I had spent many hours with socially, turn and walk the other way when they saw me coming. I realize now they were hurting so very much for us and just didn't know what to do. Many times friends feel caught in the middle and don't want to appear to be taking sides in the marital conflict so they just stay out of the way. Whatever their motivation was, I remember I felt so very alone and each trip to the grocery store or other errands I had to run took more courage than I had ever known before.

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School plays and Christmas programs were also difficult. I felt alone and rejected as I sat among all those couples. At the end of the performance, I would hear other families talking about going for ice cream or some other festivity, but I had no money to spend on anything other than bare necessities. It was easy to resent and become angry at times like that. After a while, I just wanted to stay at home and not be faced with that kind of pain.

I needed the One who knew how to push me past my own limitations. I needed Jesus who loved me too much to let me become an emotional cripple. Each time He forced past the shell I was building around my own heart, I learned to love a little bit more again. Each time He helped me to flex the muscles in my legs and walk out the door of my home, I grew a little bit more in confidence. Each time He pushed my arms away from my sides so that I could embrace a sister in the Lord, I was set a bit freer to reach out to others. Each time He touched my vocal cords and encouraged me to talk to others, I grew in my own faith and trust in Him.

They were not easy days. Everything within me wanted to just pull inward and give up, but Jesus, my Physician, would not allow that to happen. He forced me past my own frontiers and encouraged me each step of faith that I took. By helping me to go beyond my own comfort zone, He took my attention off me and my plight and helped me to focus on others.

I learned that not everyone I met wanted to hear every little detail of my life story. Yes, I had suffered and yes, I was hurting, but that was what Jesus and I were working on changing. Others could not do that for me and telling them all the details did not help.

So many times when we are standing for the healing of our marriage, we feel others do not understand how bad things really are. Many times when I meet someone who is standing for the healing of their marriage, they begin to tell me what their spouse has done and what they have been through. I know the feeling. When you feel so all alone and misunderstood, there is a tendency to tell others what you have been through thinking that will help them to understand your pain.

In fact, it does just the opposite. The very people that you need to surround you and support you will begin to withdraw when they see you coming. People do not need to hear your story. Jesus knows what has happened and He is working to heal your heart and your marriage. That is enough.

When was the last time you asked someone else how they were doing and really meant it? When was the last time you asked someone else if you could pray for them? When was the last time you listened to someone else pour out their heart and did not “try to top” their story with your own?

These are hard things for us to consider when we feel our own world has fallen apart, but they are all an important part of our healing. Next time you are tempted to go through your story again, ask yourself this. “Am I trying to convince this person of how much I have suffered or am I trying to convince them of what a terrible person my spouse is?” Either answer is not a good option.

How much are you willing to trust God? Can you place your broken heart in His hands and allow Him to take off the protective wrapping you have placed on it? Can you trust Him to protect your emotions and the deepest feelings of your heart or are you going to take care of it yourself?

Can you give your legs and your feet to Jesus today and go where He leads you? Can you entrust your arms and your hands to Him today and allow Him to wrap them around someone else who is hurting? Can you give Him your voice today and not speak out those things you long to tell others, but allow Him to give you words of comfort and encouragement for others?

Physical therapy pushes us past our own limits. Like the young woman in our story, many times we want to run and hide when the Lord is encouraging us to go beyond ourselves. Yet, like the young woman in our story, we must realize it is the only way to healing.

There are many emotionally crippled people on earth today who were injured deeply by a relationship and never allowed the Lord to push them out of their comfort zone of limited motion.

There are many emotionally crippled people on earth today who were injured deeply by a relationship and never allowed the Lord to push them out of their comfort zone of limited motion. They are self-focused and self-absorbed. They do not trust people and are often hostile toward others. They reject others easily and often create circumstances that cause others to reject them.

They may even try one marriage after another in hopes that they will find that perfect love and peace they are seeking. Unfortunately, they have never learned that it must come from inside.

This is your time to allow God to work from the inside out. He is going to ask you to do things you will not want to do. He is going to send you places you do not want to go. He is not going to allow false fixes or counterfeit painkillers. He knows they will only cripple you more. He wants you healed and whole and free.

Can you trust Him to do these things? Some days will be harder than others, but as you learn to yield to His work in your life, you are going to begin to experience the most wonderful freedom and joy in Him. It will not be a temporary peace, but a lasting one that circumstances cannot rob. God never promised us happiness, but He did promise peace and joy in the midst of all circumstances and He keeps His promises.

Let go of your own counterfeit painkillers that you thought would bring happiness and allow Him to heal you from within. That is a work that will last! Trust Him to take you out of your comfort zone and into full range of motion. He has great plans for you and to accomplish them you must be flexible and easily

moved in His hands. Embrace this season of physical therapy and the results will last a lifetime!

Walking it out

Have you found a counterfeit painkiller? _____ If so, what is it?

Are you willing to let it go so that Jesus can bring you permanent healing? _____

List some things that are hard for you to do right now.

Are you crippling yourself by avoiding doing these things?

Can you trust Jesus to help you move out of your comfort zone?

Write a scripture here that has been an encouragement to you lately.

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Chapter 6

Reaching Out

Remember the final chapter in our story about the young woman? When we left her she was heading to the room of someone else who had been wounded. Out of her own healing, she had begun to reach out to others.

This book is called “Don’t Sit While You Stand.” Too many times we have seen people put their lives on hold as they wait for the Lord to heal their marriage. All their hopes and all their dreams focus on that one thing and they can do nothing until they see it happen.

God does not want your life to be on hold. He has a plan for you. *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”* Jeremiah 29:11. He does not want any part of your life to be spent as a spectator.

Yes, God wants to heal your marriage. His plan is for you and your spouse to serve Him together, making a difference on this earth. But He also wants you to serve Him with all your heart while you are awaiting the fulfillment of His plan for your marriage.

This is not a time of sitting and waiting. It is a time to wait on the Lord in the way a waiter waits on tables. *“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint”* Isaiah 40:31. The way to keep your strength as you

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stand for your marriage healing is to ask God what He wants you to do and then do it with all your heart.

The way to keep your strength as you stand for your marriage healing is to ask God what He wants you to do and then do it with all your heart.

When we work with young people who desire to be married some day, we encourage them to find out what the Lord wants them to do before they are married and to do it with all their heart. Instead of wondering where their future spouse is or being afraid to go to a foreign land because they might not ever met the right person, we encourage them to do what God is asking of them and He will know where to find them when it is time for them to marry. We say, "Get so busy serving God that one day He will just tap you on the shoulder and say, 'Look who I've brought to you.'"

That is what you need to do while you are waiting for the Lord to heal your marriage. You need to stand in faith for your spouse and do the warfare that the Lord shows you to do. You need to develop the faith vision that the Lord gives you for your spouse and believe God is working. But you also need to begin serving the Lord with all your heart.

As you do what the Lord tells you to do, He will know where to find you when your spouse is ready. God will not lose your address or forget to notify you when your marriage is being reconciled.

As you serve the Lord with all your heart, the days will pass quickly and you will be fulfilled in Him. You will not be lonely, for He will surround you with wonderful friendships. You will not feel useless, for He will show you how very much your life

counts. You will not sit at home counting the days and feeling sorry for yourself. You will not put your life on hold until your spouse is back.

In fact, as you grow in relationship with the Lord you will come to realize more and more that your spouse is not your source of fulfillment. As you grow content and peaceful in your relationship with the Lord, you will become more the spouse the Lord wants you to be when your marriage is reconciled. As you realize that no human being can ever make you completely happy, you will not look to your spouse's return for your fulfillment.

When your marriage is reconciled you will be free to give from the fullness that the Lord has established within you. And, in the meantime, you will bless countless others by ministering into their lives from the depth of your relationship with Jesus.

If you do not already know, you need to begin asking what it is that the Lord has planned for you to do. Do you enjoy working with children? Youth? Adults? Older folks? Do you like long-term relationships or short-term, more intense relationships? Do you like helping people recover from problems or do you prefer helping people grow in strength? Do you prefer outdoor activities or would you rather work indoors? Do you like to teach? Do you like to mentor? Do you have a special talent such as painting or wood working that you could use to share Jesus with others?

The questions are endless. Begin to explore your heart with the Lord. Perhaps you have never asked these questions before. Maybe it has been a long time since you thought about what you like to do. I remember the first time we went for marriage counseling and the counselor asked me what I would like to do if I could go anywhere and do anything. I truly had no idea. I had spent so many years co-dependently focusing on keeping my husband happy, I had not thought much about what I enjoyed.

God puts desires in your heart and He wants to work through them so that you can touch the lives of others. Begin to discover what God has placed within you for just such a time as this.

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One caution as you reach out to others. It is important that you guard your heart from relationships with members of the opposite sex. Right now you are tender and vulnerable and the more the Lord works within you, the more you are going to radiate His love to others. Members of the opposite sex may be drawn to you and you may find yourself drawn to them. You must not allow this to happen. You are standing in faith for your spouse, the one you have vowed to be faithful to unto death. No matter what your spouse is doing, you need to be obedient to God's plan for you.

Do not counsel members of the opposite sex or begin praying together. Do not co-lead groups or committees with a member of the opposite sex. Do not go for coffee or dinners alone with a member of the opposite sex. Each one of these situations may seem very innocent and your intentions may be very pure, but you are placing yourself in a potentially unsafe situation.

In scripture we read of the bridegroom who went away to prepare a home for his bride. During the time that he was gone she was to remain faithful to him. In those days, the young girl would dress in a certain way that indicated she was betrothed. Today she would probably wear an engagement ring or some other symbol of commitment. This is a sign to all that she is waiting for her man and is faithful to him alone.

Right now you have (or should have) a wedding ring on your finger. That is your symbol of commitment. You have promised to be faithful to your spouse and while you are waiting on the Lord as He works within you and within your spouse, others are to see that sign of commitment and know that you are faithfully waiting.

Not everyone else will honor that sign of commitment and so you must be the one to set the boundaries. When you are feeling lonely and think that it would be good to just spend a few minutes with a member of the opposite sex, spend them with Jesus instead. When you long to have someone tell you how special you are and how much you are loved, listen to the voice of the Lord in your heart.

You have the opportunity to show people that kind of commitment and love as you remain faithful in the face of unfaithfulness.

No one else is going to set the limits for you. You are the one who will determine your faithfulness. The choice must be made daily, sometimes hourly. You must know your limits ahead of time, not when temptation comes knocking.

“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” 1 Corinthians 10:13.

God is faithful. If you are sincere about not wanting to fall into temptation, He will give you a way of escape every time.

Perhaps God will call you to work with others who are standing for the healing of their marriage. There is such a need for good, solid biblical teaching about marriage covenant and faithfulness. Many support groups exist across the country that encourage and teach those whose marriages have been attacked by the enemy. As you are strengthened, perhaps this is a place the Lord will open for you to serve others.

Whatever He has planned for you, it will be a place of fulfillment and a place of growth. Every place the Lord puts us, every heart He gives us to reach, is a place of stretching and growth for us. We will never stop growing as long as we are willing to be used by Him. Our ability in Him is endless and our frontiers are forever expanding outward through His power and grace.

I pray that this encourages you. There are so many wonderful books and Cds and DVDs that will teach and encourage you during this time. God will get them into your hands.

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There is also much material available that will encourage you to give up on this marriage and just trust God for a new spouse. They are filled with scriptural explanations and encouragements. Those books will contradict many of the things I have said in this book.

I can only tell you that God says in His word that marriage is the earthly picture of the relationship between Jesus and His church. When we come to Jesus, we count on the fact that He is going to be faithful to us no matter what. That is the basis for our covenant with Him. We can trust Him to never leave us or forsake us.

We are not always so faithful to Him. We place other “gods” before Him, other things in our lives that become more important to us than our relationship with Him. We sin, sometimes with complete knowledge and full intent. We despair and lose faith in Him. We become discouraged and question Him. Yet, through it all, He remains faithful to us.

You now have an opportunity to show the world, and the Body of Christ, the earthly picture of that faithfulness. Jesus is faithful in spite of our unfaithfulness. You have the opportunity to show people that kind of commitment and love as you remain faithful in the face of unfaithfulness.

Is it easy? NO! Does it make a difference in the lives of others? YES! It will cost you, though. Anything worthwhile does. The choice is yours.

Today I pray that you understand, just as the young woman in our story did, that you are not a victim. Jesus Christ lives within you. He has overcome the works of the enemy. He is victorious! And because He lives in you, you are also victorious.

So rise up, Victor, and go forth in His power and His love! There is much for you to do.

Walking it out

Find a scripture that helps you understand your victory in Christ.
Write it here.

Next time someone is feeling sorry for you, perhaps you can share that scripture with them.

The most frequently asked question by folks who are standing for the healing of their marriage is, "What should I do each day? I just don't know how to get through the day!" If you fill your day with Jesus and do what He is saying to do, the days will pass very quickly.

What do you believe the Lord is calling you to do for others?

Are you willing and able to begin doing that now?

Can you trust God to work on your marriage as you serve Him?
_____ Can you trust Him to be your companion and friend
instead of waiting for your spouse to fulfill your life? _____

If so, you are in for a great adventure. More lives than you can imagine will be changed because of your faithfulness!

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Lord, with your help I resolve to

Support and Encouragement

Covenant Keepers

Support groups throughout the U.S. and in several foreign countries. Weekly meetings, Bible studies, yearly convention.

Website:

<https://www.covenantkeepersinc.org>

Rejoice Ministries

Online newsletter that encourages and teaches, books.

Website:

<https://www.rejoiceministries.org>

Family Foundations

Seminars, books, audio/video. Strong understanding of covenant.

Website:

<https://www.familyfoundations.com>

Forged in the Fire Blog

Encouragement as you stand

Blog:

www.discoverthepower.com

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