

Overcoming Hurts

Living with the people that you love isn't always _____. God's Word teaches us how to have _____ lives in spite of our weaknesses. When people _____ God, they find their lives grow richer and better. God's wisdom found in the Word truly _____ us to an abundant life. Nothing could be better than to have a happy home filled with love and peace. Following the Lord is the way to find just such a home. God designed marriage for the happiness of us all.

Sociologist Linda Waite and researcher Maggie Gallagher declare that, "The evidence from four decades of research is surprisingly _____: A good marriage is both men's and women's _____ bet for living a long and healthy life." Men and women in their first marriages, on average, enjoy significantly _____ levels of physical and mental health than those who are either single, divorced or living together. The research on this is very strong.

We must realize our _____ affects our marriage. When two committed Christians get married, they're _____ likely to get a divorce than those who have no commitment to Christ. Committed Christians who know and love the Lord _____ with conflict and offenses differently than those who don't have faith in God. Their love for God means that they take their _____ seriously and they strive to work through their problems rather than give up when times get tough. The love of God opens the door for them to _____ 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.

Our reading today comes from Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:12-15.

Perhaps your marriage has suffered from _____ of unhealthy ways of dealing with conflict. We know we can't _____ the past, but we can start fresh for the future. We need to begin by taking responsibility for our part in _____. Husbands and wives have different experiences, concerns, and perspectives about resolving conflicts. People often handle conflict the way that their _____ handled it. The more we can _____ about how our spouse's family reacted to problems, the better opportunity we have to understand our spouses.

We must learn to handle our conflicts _____, so we can keep our marriages healthy. First Peter 4:8 says, "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of _____" Every day, spouses need to _____ their love and respect for one another. Saying, "I love you," "thank you," "I appreciate you," shows them that we _____ by being open and honest. Listening attentively and carefully _____ intimacy and trust into the relationship. Your marriage is what you _____ it. If you feed it with good things, it will grow happier; but if you neglect your spouse and become selfish, you'll _____ your home.

Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is _____ for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear." Keep thinking of your _____ as more important than yourself. Philippians 2:3-4 says,

Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.

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“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with _____ of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for 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’ve done?

Don't avoid conflict by the _____ treatment. This only builds a larger barrier. Don't try to overcome conflict by acting out your _____. Anger and shouting break down any opportunity for communication and working through problems. Instead, become an _____ and empathetic listener. Work hard at trying to understand what your mate is _____. Control your _____ and your emotions. Frustration causes much _____ in marriage. Men don't usually frustrate their wives by what they're doing so much as by what they _____ to do. Failing to communicate, neglecting the needs of their wives, and indifference are forms of _____. These practices lead many women to _____ their marriages.

Selfish and unfeeling women who _____ the needs of their husbands, who put their husbands last in their priorities, and who constantly criticize and complain often alienate their husbands. Neglecting our spouses leads to great frustration and unhappiness. If the frustration doesn't stop, _____ will grow. Life may become unbearable. Deal with your problems _____, and don't let them multiply. Although every marriage has its bumps and its bruises, don't let them _____ your marriage. If we allow unresolved anger to grow, it will eventually _____ into deep wounds and great hurt. Ephesians 4:26-27 says, “Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your _____, and do not give the devil an opportunity.” Proverbs 29:22 says, “An angry man stirs up _____, And a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.”

Give each other permission to _____ a "time out." Each of us may need a little more time to _____ off before we begin looking honestly and fairly at our differences. Don't let the sun set on your anger, but calm your anger before you _____. Let your love for each other work out the differences between you.

Some people think that manliness or strength of character means _____ saying you're sorry, but refusing to apologize is selfish and prideful. Refusing to apologize deeply _____ others and builds barriers between people, barriers that take years to overcome. We all need to be willing to say, "I was wrong, and I'm sorry. I know that I hurt you and I don't want to hurt you again. Please forgive me." Accept responsibility for your _____. **Read Matthew 5:23.**

We can't maintain a _____ relationship with God if we're unwilling to deal with our sins against our spouses. **Read 1 Peter 3:7.** How we treat our spouses matters to _____! Sometimes it's better to be defrauded, neglected, and hurt than it is to _____ your spouse for every transgression. “Love covers a multitude of sins.” God is merciful to us when we _____ mercy.

Marriage can be hard and harsh at times; and the real _____ of love is if it can survive the tests of the unlovely. Not every matter is _____ confronting your mate over. Sometimes love means allowing them to be what they are, even when it's irritating. Philippians 4:5 says, “Let your _____ spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.” We all need a gentle spirit that's willing to let our love

_____ a multitude of sins and weaknesses. If you're having problems, _____ 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 _____ our tongues. Spoken words can cut and bruise the heart, and they're not easily forgotten. Once you speak, you can't take _____ your words. If you say something that cuts and hurts, apologize for it immediately. Using the word "divorce" can break a person's _____. This word wounds, rejects, and abandons hope for a continued relationship. Spouses who use such words plant the seeds of hopelessness and failure.

If there's physical abuse, unfaithfulness, or drug or alcohol abuse, then seek some _____ to keep your marriage alive. 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, "Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you're also doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Just as we ought to encourage our church family, so we ought also to encourage our _____ and to assure them of our love. If someone verbally attacks, or criticizes, or blames you, don't _____ in the same manner. Romans 12:17 says, "Never pay back evil for evil to anyone." Then verse 21 says, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with _____." Think of the wonderful example of Jesus, **read 1 Peter 2:23**. Even while suffering on the cross Jesus didn't verbally abuse or threaten anybody. First Peter 3:9 reminds us, "not to be returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a _____ instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing."

Your spouse might get angry with you, but you don't have to _____ in the same way. Proverbs 15:1 says, "A gentle _____ turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger." Choose to respond with gentleness. There's no greater _____ in a relationship than to apologize and to forgive. When you've done something _____, apologize immediately. When your _____ has penitently asked your forgiveness, then, by all means, forgive.

Forgiveness is "forgetting against"; it means that once you've forgiven your mate you _____ bring up the transgression again or hold it against them. Forgiveness opens the _____ to reconciliation, which means that we become "friends" again. Second Corinthians 5:19 explains, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not _____ their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation." When God forgave us, He never again counted that sin _____ us. Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, So far has He _____ our transgressions from us."

We have to _____ the temptation to start figuring out ways to hurt the one who hurt us. We must not tell everyone that we know that he or she said or did something to _____ us. We should never bring up our spouse's _____ in front of others. Holding a grudge destroys any opportunity to grow beyond the problem. **Read what the Bible says in Ephesians 4:31-32.**

Forgiving our loved ones is not just God's suggestion. It's God's _____! When we fail to forgive our spouses, actually we condemn _____. The Lord Jesus said, "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will _____ forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions" (Matthew 6:14-15). Instead of being haughty

when we approach our loved ones who've hurt us, we should _____ ourselves and approach them gently. **Read Galatians 6:1.**

When you decide to forgive, you're free to _____ a more healthy method of resolving conflict. A man who was telling his friend about an argument he had had with his wife said, "Oh how I hate it, every time we have an argument; she gets historical." The friend said, "You mean hysterical." He said, "No, I mean historical. Every time we argue she drags up everything from the _____ and holds it against me." Folks, this is not forgiveness; forgiveness lets a matter go, and it lets it go for good. It _____ brings it up again.

Here is what should _____ between Christian husbands and wives. When a spouse is truly hurt and needs to deal with an offense, he or she needs the _____ gently and humbly to tell the one who offended, "I was hurt when you said this or did this." They need to _____ what hurt them and why it hurt.

In response, the other spouse needs to say humbly and penitently, "I'm sorry I hurt you; please forgive me. I'll make every effort never to do this again." Once a sincere and penitent _____ is given, the offended spouse needs to say, "I forgive you, and I will never bring this situation up to you again." This process of dealing with conflict is _____, because it opens the door to reconciliation. The promise not to repeat the offense and the promise not to hold it against the offender gives a _____ to maintain the relationship. This is how God treats us and how He wishes us to treat one another. Once the fires of marriage begin to cool, it's easy to take our spouses for _____ and become complacent. People stop being as kind and courteous as they ought. They may neglect their spouse's needs and selfishly _____ their own desires. In the end, someone gets devastated.

I hope you aren't listening today with a broken heart. I hope your marriage is everything you hoped for. If you're broken hearted, you may be asking, "How do I forgive this deep wound in my life? How do I stop holding these offenses against my spouse?" Think with me. How did Jesus forgive you of all your sins?

Can you recall the worst sins you have ever committed, the sins of which you're most ashamed? When you became a Christian, Jesus forgave them. Can you recall the smallest sins that you've ever committed, things that you don't think are so bad but which offend God? When you became a Christian, Jesus forgave them, too. Every one of those sins – big or small – brought and still brings spiritual death if not forgiven. Where would we be without the blood of Jesus? His forgiveness and His grace is a blessing to us.

If the Lord Jesus could forgive us, can we not forgive? Forgiveness is better than forgetting, because forgiveness offers the hope of reconciliation. Forgiveness makes 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 to 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 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's good. Upon the confession of your faith, be baptized into Christ. And in baptism, the blood of Jesus will wash away your sins. Get right with God today!