

Marriage

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AS FOR ME AND MY MARRIAGE
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A LIVING EPISTLE

When asked to write about marriage, I laughed as I am not currently married and wondered what I have to say about this subject.

I was married 23 years before my husband passed. We had three amazing children together and shared a life full of ups and downs, which I will tell you all about in my upcoming book, *Sidetracked to Surrender*. Unfortunately, the last four and a half years of our life together were filled with hardship and disappointments and encompassed our children's teen years.

I was shocked when I felt led by the Holy Spirit to ask my two married children to tell me five things I'd taught them about marriage, good or bad. I'll be honest, probably not unlike many of you; my first thought was of ways I'd failed to teach them. But I knew it was the Spirit, so I asked.

My daughter returned hers to me in less than 15 minutes with a comment, "It was so easy and required no soul searching." Touched deeply, I was brought to tears. It showed me how God's mercy and grace go before us even when we feel we are faltering. Please allow me to use their words.

1 - TILL DEATH DO WE PART

"Even when it was the worst of the worst, and us kids were begging you to leave Dad, I clearly and vividly remember you saying, 'Till death do we part.' It taught me that what happened didn't matter in light of a covenant before God. God would honor that faithfulness and equip me in whatever way I needed to keep pushing through, and that has gotten me through some pretty hard times."

Let me add something here. My children and I suffered verbal abuse, which was ridiculously hard on all of us, but we did not fear for our lives and were not physically in danger. If you are, please leave and get to someplace safe.

2 - GOD FIRST IN PRIORITIES, HUSBAND SECOND

"You were the ultimate example of this: when God is first, it doesn't matter what comes up. He always supports, equips, and prepares us. When God is first, a successful marriage is possible."

I often told my children, "God makes roadways in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." We must focus on Him; He gets us where He wants us to go.



3 - DO YOU WANT A MARRIAGE, OR DO YOU NEED A MARRIAGE?

"You taught me to be confident in myself, my abilities, and who God made me to be. That helped me choose the right guy because I didn't need a man to complete me. It gave me the ability to wait on God."

"This applies to currently married people too. Do I **want** my husband's presence, or do I **need** my husband's presence? Meaning, my husband doesn't complete me; God does. I love being around my husband, but he doesn't meet all my needs and shouldn't be expected to do so. You have always had God meet your needs; maybe your serious trials taught you that, but it also taught me the same. I feel confident that my successful marriage is due to what I learned from you."



4 - ALWAYS REMEMBER WHO GOD CALLED YOU TO BE

"Being married simply means being who God called you to be while being one with your spouse. This means that when God calls you to be married, He is not asking you to change who you are for that person. When it is a Godly marriage, everyone remains true to who God called them to be. You taught me this by refusing to be someone you are not, even when your spouse, and anyone else for that matter, wants you to be."

Many times in their lives, my children have seen me decide to lose my friends before I would choose the traditions and doctrines of man as my lifestyle. It isn't popular by any means, but it is correct. And ... many of those friends returned because I did not argue my point. Instead, I told them we all need to do what we feel God is calling us to. That is what we answer for when we stand before Him.

5 - MARRIAGE ISN'T EASY. THERE IS NOT ONE EASY THING ABOUT IT

"Watching you choose to be faithful to Dad every day taught me that every day requires a choice. Every day required an active decision to stand by Dad. Some days, it was a fun and easy decision; some days were downright painful, but every day required a choice you made with an open heart."



My son's list was similar, with the addition of this point:

6 - BEING THE SPIRITUAL LEADER OF OUR HOME INVOLVES REIGNING IN OUR EMOTIONS AND BEING A GODLY EXAMPLE. REMEMBER, THE EXAMPLE YOU SET MATTERS

Recently, I was on a podcast, and I was asked what, in my opinion, makes iconic women. I was immediately reminded of the scripture, "And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ," (1 Corinthians 11:1 NLT). To me, the answer has always been simple. Someone is watching and imitating me, whether I am aware or not. Being iconic means I concern myself with what they are imitating.

My marriage was far from perfect. But I learned from this tiny venture in my day that the best lessons are caught, not taught. I am so thankful to my Gracious Father for using my marriage as an example to allow my children to catch His truths about marriage. We must be intentional, go forth, and be an example of Christ for the children and adults watching us.

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LET EVERY WORD YOU SPEAK
BE DRENCHED WITH GRACE
AND TEMPERED WITH TRUTH
AND CLARITY. FOR THEN YOU
WILL BE PREPARED TO GIVE A
RESPECTFUL ANSWER TO
ANYONE WHO ASKS ABOUT
YOUR FAITH.

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