

Can This Marriage Be Saved...by God?



Joyce Meyer, an evangelical minister and author of *Help Me: I'm Married!*

The Bible, says Meyer, tells us "to be makers and maintainers of peace." There are some things that are worth standing your ground over (like fundamental values) and some that aren't (like your husband's horrendously paired outfits). "If you are walking in love, you don't have to mention every little thing your partner does wrong," she believes.

Ed Young, a senior pastor and author of *Kid CEO: How to Keep Your Children From Running Your Life*

Our culture has "put kids in the corner office," making them the center of the universe, Young believes. But when couples orbit their kids' lives, they lose track of each other. The Bible says the couple's relationship should come first, says Young. Only when this relationship takes priority can the family flourish.

Virginia Todd Holeman, Ph.D., author of *Reconcilable Differences: Hope and Healing for Troubled Marriages* and a licensed family therapist and an associate dean at a theological seminary

"More marriages erode than explode," says Dr. Holeman. What takes time to fall apart also takes time to put back together. After trust has

Need a higher authority than a therapist to keep your marriage strong?

These best-selling authors show how faith can lead the way **BY TRICIA O'BRIEN**

been shattered, reconciliation involves the recognition that you cannot go back to the way things used to be. Rather, "it requires two people committed to the hard work of restoring love and truth and trustworthiness to their relationship," says Dr. Holeman.

Charlotte Kasl, Ph.D., a therapist and the author of *If the Buddha Married: Creating Enduring Relationships on a Spiritual Path*

Relationships are always in flux, as is life, in the Buddhist view, and only by letting go of fixed expectations of others' behavior are we able to live in the present moment. We stop saying things like "But you used to like it that way" or "We've always done it this way." Instead, "Who are you now?" becomes the relationship-building question we ask each day.

Esther Jungreis, a rabbi and the author of *The Committed Marriage: A Guide to Finding a Soul Mate and Building a Relationship Through Timeless Biblical Wisdom*

"There are two ways of looking at every situation," says Jungreis. "You can see light or darkness, blessing or curse. You can choose to be considerate or bitter, patient or angry, loving

or critical. It all depends on how you train your eye." Your decision to "use your good eye," she holds in her book, can determine the health of your union.

Gary Thomas, author of *Sacred Marriage: What If God Designed Marriage to Make Us Holy More Than to Make Us Happy?*

Thomas believes it is important to accept that marriage is difficult and says that once you do, it's easier to deal with the challenges. "The difficulty shapes us as people, it enlarges our soul, it develops our character," he says. Where does holiness come in? Thomas says that marital conflicts should be viewed as a call to change yourself rather than your spouse. In other words, relationship difficulties give you an opportunity to grow closer to God, and to each other.

Christopher and Rachel McCluskey, coauthors of *When Two Become One: Enhancing Sexual Intimacy in Marriage*

"Being sexual is an act of worship. It is part of God's original design and if it is of love, it is of God," say the McCluskeys. In that light, making love may be a good way to resolve a disagreement. "Sometimes conflicts look different after making love," explain the authors. The caveat: It doesn't work if you're up against a serious disagreement or a trust issue, or if your marriage is characterized by anger, hatred, criticism, neglect or disdain. ♦

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