

Conflict in Marriage, How To Handle It

October 1, 2017



Dear Jesus, please teach us the true meaning of love in marriage.

Well, Heartdwellers, I have had two beautiful souls come into my life that are much in need of marital counseling—although they are still engaged. The Lord has told me that many of you are having the same problems, so I should share.

They are in their thirties, one is 33 the other 36; both have had relationships that have failed in the past. Both were raised in Christian homes, homeschooled, and their homes were just a little different than mainstream Christianity.

The man is occupied all the time with the work he has to do. The woman is always seeking affection from him, to the point of calling him every few minutes when he is away. She is so very insecure, because a previous boyfriend was cheating on her.

She is a tender and spiritual soul, but preoccupied with herself and her needs. He is preoccupied with doing a good job at his workplace and providing the necessities.

I will call them Nate and Barbara.

Because Nate is so taken up with going, going, going, Barbara feels neglected. There are times when Barbara sees something tender: a butterfly on a milkweed plant, or a cat doing cute things. She wants to share that moment with Nate, but he's thinking, thinking—going, going, going...to finish the tasks at hand and go home.

She naturally feels jilted in those moments, because what touched her on a deep level is just an inconvenience to him.

Oh, do I know her complaint so well...

In my relationship with Ezekiel, I was very much the same way. I was always busy doing, doing, doing and he was craving simple companionship from me. You know, the kind that takes time. So, I can relate to what they are going through on a very personal level.

Ezekiel would have to tell me up front, "There's a problem in our marriage, Honey."

I would answer, "What? We have a good marriage?!"

He would say, "You don't know what's going on inside of me. And I'm telling you I am not happy—but you're just not hearing me."

My dear ones, when you decide to marry, you are deciding to die to yourself. You will be required to relinquish and yield to the needs of one another. I was telling Nate: I could be in the middle of an intense message, working in Photoshop or answering e-mails, and seeing to the basic needs of my husband—but not the real needs he has emotionally.

Then I get a rhema from the Lord, “Marriage” and I know Jesus is telling me, “Your spouse needs you, Clare.” Or, it could come as a gentle nudge, and I go and check on him. “Honey, do you need to be together? Do you want to spend time together? Should we talk about something?”

Now mind you, I am enjoying my work, and the last thing in the world that I want to do is lay it down. UGH! But what I am feeling is not nearly as important as what my spouse is going through in the way of a trial or loneliness.

And you know, the demons jump all over us like that. They're always trying to create a problem and lying, lying, lying: “Oh, she doesn't love you. She doesn't care. She just wants to work.”

So, I drop what I am doing and go spend time with him. And afterwards, he is healed of his loneliness and I'm happy and feel relieved and enriched and can return to my work. I just can't work and be settled when I know that he's unsettled and not happy.

If I do not obey the prompting of the Lord to go, a crack begins to develop in our relationship. My heart gets harder, and the situation deteriorates; our marriage begins to weaken and suffer.

This is why Paul said it is better for a man or woman who wants to serve the Lord not to marry, because he must first fulfill his duties to his wife. Things like making an ample living, raising children—which will take his attention away from full time service to the Lord. Unless his wife is of the same persuasion and wishes only to serve God in her entire life.

Paul said this:

“It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman. But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife.” I Corinthians 7:1-4

In this paragraph is the hidden key to a good marriage, “The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife.”

This is not just about sexual relations. This is about nurturing, comforting, growing into oneness with your spouse. Each must yield territory, yield and give up the life they led before they met, in order to make room for the union. God is going to heal their hearts of past failures in relationships. God is going to restore self-worth and introduce things lacking in each of them to become whole human beings.

I was so absorbed in photography and art that I didn't notice people who were living under bridges. When I did, I'd give them a token offering, but never did it occur to me to make feeding the poor a huge part of my life.

I was selfish and self-involved; he had a tender heart and found ways to reach out to the poor with a food bank. Then I began to see how God really wanted to take my hardened heart and make it soft again by showing mercy and giving.

I never would have understood the beautiful anointing and grace that comes with this sacrifice—if it hadn't been for our differences, and the beautiful things in him that I made my own.

And that includes music. Because after I started singing with him, shortly afterwards the Lord called me into music.

The reason why so many marriages are failing (except for choices out of God's will), is that most men and women are not willing to die to themselves. When the Lord brings two souls together, He gives them the extraordinary gift of deep, bonding love. This is the very foundation that proceeds everything else.

It's not about roses and ecstasy; it's about sanctifying grace to soften our hearts, teach us how to yield and give. How to be patient and long-suffering. In short, our spouse is preparing us for Heaven! Jesus lives in our spouse and Jesus is the one sanctifying and healing. It is His healing love that is mending the rips and deep wounds of the heart from previous failures. And even rejection from childhood.

We have lived our lives alone, lonely, needing the warm embrace and companionship of a mate. And one day the Lord finally brings us that special someone anointed to be ours forever, 'till death do we part.

But the tendency of most everyone is to begin changing the things about our spouse that we don't like. We begin to focus on things that don't live up to our personal preferences and expectations. Then we begin the process of judging, which leads to deep internal wounds and disrespect. Our motive switches from loving them with all our hearts, to getting them to change and be more like us.

This leads to disappointment and alienation. They question if it will really work. "What is this? You fell in love with me for who I am—and now you want me to change?"

We can answer, "But I fell in love with the good things about you; these other things I don't like and they put me off." Or we can be thinking we want to make them more like us so we can share more experiences together, which—in all honesty—may or may not be possible.

This is not God's plan, dear ones. Yes, the Lord wants change in both partners, but not necessarily the changes we envision. He wants spiritual growth and the maturity of one who says, "This habit of his is a real challenge to me. I can see God wants me to be more giving, loving, and prayerful." Some changes happen in the first few weeks; others after a decade.

If change needs to come, for instance in eating habits, the Lord may very well have put you together so that you could be healthier. But it won't happen by nagging and griping. "My mother used lard, why can't you?"

On the other hand, she is saying, "Honey, you are killing your heart with that kind of diet. There is a better way and it tastes just as good." So you see, you have just defined an issue in the relationship.

We can fix healthy meals for him with a little compromise: make the beef lean; fresh hot bread instead of fry bread.

What I am saying is that there are ways to offer compromises that do not injure the other party. And if the other party's gracious about it, after time, they'll get used to it and they'll receive it. And that won't be an issue in their marriage anymore.

Instead of saying "I don't like your cooking." Say, "Honey, do you think we could have (that favorite fattening food) one night a week—at least?" And if she is wise, she will yield. But if she's got her agenda and not interested in seeing him get any fatter, she may balk at pleasing him and an injury is done.

Lord, would you please take over?

He began, "My people, your marriages are turbulent because you do not know how to die to yourself, graciously. You have lived alone and done it your way for how many years? And you've cried out to Me, 'Please bring me a life-mate.' And finally I bring you together, but you are not willing to yield in the relationship.

"Do you understand that you are not perfect and neither is she/he? Do you know that there are deep gifts in you and in her that will make your life richer, but you will have to be willing to try new things. That is why I have established you in love, because the road ahead is rocky and loaded with pitfalls that can kill a marriage. The bond of love must be strong.

"At first, you pretend to love everything they do and are so agreeable. But then you miss your little habits, things she doesn't agree with or like and you've not told her that just yet. But after a while, you feel like you're living in a straight-jacket, trying to please her and deny yourself.

"Honesty is so important—but you fear that if you're honest with her, she will not marry you. Consider carefully, you are going to get married and one or two years later you will have built up great resentment, because you've hidden these things from her, or yielded when you really didn't want to. You want the freedom to have your habits back in your life, and you are growing in resentment and irritability.

"The resolution is in both of you seeking Me first. Is this something I've been trying to get you to drop, or is it a necessary thing? Is this something she could yield to or something she needs to understand is important to you?

"Dear ones, I have brought this person into your life to help you become a better person and be prepared for Heaven. Both of you have blind spots; both of you have needs—and some of those you don't even recognize. I brought you together, because what the other one has is crucial for your maturity and happiness.

"But if you are unyielding and set in your ways, not only will you experience conflict and a cooling off of your love for one another, but you will miss the great blessings I have in store for you when you are willing to let go of your former life to embrace a new and wonderful life with one another.

"There is a misconception that you get married because you are alike and can enjoy so much together; the other person becomes a tag-along friend when you pursue your goals. But there is so much more

merit to a marriage that has opposite traits as well—as long as both of you are flexible and loving one another without an agenda. Which, by the way, demons will constantly be trying to engage you in: 'But you like this...not what she likes, she needs to change! Not you.'

"Do I want you to cleave to your old ways or do I want you to change them? Getting My Mind and Heart for your lifestyle is key. You will be happy if you obey; you will not be happy if you ignore Me. Without good communication skills, honesty, humility, flexibility, brotherly love and prayer—changes will be very turbulent and hurtful.

"Perhaps there is a bad habit that needs breaking and you both agree to it. There is a right and a wrong way to go about changing it. Prayer and positive support, with yielding when necessary, will make it happen so much sooner and in such a better way. Some changes happen in the first few weeks; others after a decade.

"When I bring two souls together, it is because I see their hearts and their futures. I see they will eventually be very compatible, because their heart goals are the same, but it will take great commitment to Me and one another.

"When two people come together, there is a dying to selfish and destructive ways to make room for the hidden gifts in one another to bloom into one exquisite flower. The two become one flesh, one heart, one mind.

"Both have much to learn about one another, and both have numerous faults that must be given up in order to succeed. When the love is strong, there is a willingness to really try over the long haul to see one another's perspective from the inside looking out, and be willing to make room for new life by dying to the old.

"Pray much for one another, Dear ones, and you will see many miracles come to pass. I brought you together for a purpose. Nurture that and My blessing will be upon your marriage."