

For the Love of the Family Ministries  
Missionaries to America's Forgotten Field, the Family  
How Can I Save My Marriage?  
Ministry of Elwood Bible Baptist Church  
504 North 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
P.O. Box 535  
Elwood, Indiana 46036  
Pastor Terry L. Coomer  
(765)552-1973  
[www.fortheloveofthefamily.com](http://www.fortheloveofthefamily.com)  
[tlcoomer@juno.com](mailto:tlcoomer@juno.com)

These messages may be copied in their entirety to help Christians in the rearing of their children for God, strengthening their family, and their marriage. They are not to be changed in any manner or to be sold. This header must be on any copy. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the author.

By the time most people contact me through For the Love of the Family Ministries, they are real veterans of marital wars. They are people who have battle scars and new wounds. They may have been to counseling or talked with their pastor, but they are at the end of their rope. In most instances, For the Love of the Family is the last resort for them. The prospect of divorce is terrifying for most people.

I always wonder how do two people who are Christians get to this point? Have they not been listening in church or applying what they hear? Or is their church a place that teaches the Word of God for church building rather than practical godly Christian living? I know the answer and generally the stories are all very similar with some twists on them. The pain and the agony they are experiencing is real. They are terrified of the future and generally the prospect of divorce. Many times infidelity has happened. (See [How Do Christians Get Involved in Infidelity?](http://www.fortheloveofthefamily.com) on our web site [www.fortheloveofthefamily.com](http://www.fortheloveofthefamily.com)). However, there seems to come a point where one's unhappiness becomes weightier than even the fear of divorce.

The answer that I frequently give to their desperate question, "can our marriage be saved?" is usually quite conditional. It really has a lot more to do with them and how they are going to approach the issue. It certainly has nothing to do with my talent or abilities. It has a lot to do with whether they are willing to have Biblical change take place in their life and learn to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 5:18-21. They must learn the putting on and putting off process the Bible describes in Ephesians 4:22-24, and seek to glorify God in their every day activities of life, I Corinthians 6:19-20. Obviously, to get to the position they are now in, the process has not been happening and they have been following the dictates of the flesh in their life. I find that they are arguing and are angry with each other about several things. They have not understood the process of Ephesians 4:29-32.

I want to give six vital building materials which are essential in order to not only salvage a marriage, but to re-build it into something, solid, intimate, joyful, glorifying to God, and life lasting.

The first building material required in rebuilding a marriage is motivation. Some folks who contact us lack motivation. They really do not want anything to change in their life. They are comfortable living in their sins and going their own way. After all, in their mind, it is the other side of the marriage that needs to change and then I would be happy. No doubt there does need to be change on the other side, but there needs to be Biblical change on your side as well. The Biblical process I try to share with folks is like trying to gut a house while you are living in it. I believe that God wants us to have a Christ honoring marriage. God hates divorce, Malachi 2:14-16. He hates it because it always involves unfaithfulness to the solemn covenant of marriage that two partners have entered into before Him, and because it brings harmful consequences to those partners and their children. Divorce is never God's best and it will

follow the person for the rest of their life. It will also make their life more complicated than they ever imagined. I believe that almost all marriages are both salvageable, and worthy of being saved. I also understand that sin has put some folks in an awful position. I believe that most people would be ultimately happiest remaining married to the person they are currently married to, as long as the issues are resolved and Biblical changes made. When one or both mates lack motivation to change the process is doomed. It will require hard work and commitment to Biblical change in their lives and marriage.

The second and perhaps the most important martial building block, is teachability, Proverbs 18:15. It is the ability to stand back from yourself and openly observe and examine your issues in the light of God's Word without being defensive in the least bit. Most people who are at this stage are extremely defensive. You must be insightful in order to re-build a marriage. In essence, when an issue is identified, we want to know what God's Word has to say about it. Then we want to apply Biblical principles to the issue. To find out what is on the heart, two people must be able to communicate enough to ask the heart questions. Many times the communication has so broken down in a marriage they cannot talk without fighting or insulting one another with anger and sarcasm. By the way that is not controlled by the Spirit behavior. Most of the time, generally the wife says, "I do not love him anymore." She feels her emotional needs are not being met. They are not, but where she is in her relationship with God and her husband does not lend itself to love, but to anger, wrath, anxiety, hurt, pain etc.

If you can communicate, determine not to do so by being angry, insulting, and sarcastic. You need to find out what is on each others heart. Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life." What is down there must come out and be dealt with Biblically. Every issue of our life and how we handle it will be determined by what is in our heart. Folks, we must learn to listen to His voice in the everyday issues of life to glorify Him. To find out what your spouse's most important emotional needs are you must ask the How, What, When, Where, and Why issues. You have to get into their heart by asking what is on their heart. How do you feel about that? What is it that makes you happy or sad? What do you think I need to understand about you? What emotional needs of your life do you think I need to understand? Write down what is said. Then go away and study the Scripture on the issues that have been brought forth. Ask God to give you wisdom in understanding where your marriage is and what are the needs in his or her life, James 1:5-6. Are you teachable? Are you willing to deal with the things God shows you from His Word about your life? You will need the help of a godly pastor or counselor who can guide you in the areas of your life that you find. Remember, being defensive will destroy the process of re-building your marriage. Also, ask God what areas of my life need to change? Write down what the Lord shows you and then study His Word on the matter. Then apply the Scriptural principles to change your behavior. God is in the behavior changing business and He wants to change your behavior. I want you to understand that your behavior and much of it has been guided by the flesh has been ingrained in your life for years. Change does not come easily on ingrained fleshly behavior. Of course, the devil will whisper in your ear that it is your spouse who needs to change. The devil is seeking to destroy your life and he certainly does not want you to submit yourself to God, James 4:7-10, I Peter 5:6-9.

Folks, this is all about taking a real Biblical look at your life, rather than reactively pointing your finger at your spouse or someone else. The more insightful and teachable you are, the more progress you will make. You will start the process of glorifying God in your life daily, I Corinthians 6:19-20, dealing with your feelings and emotions, and start a true process of Biblical change in your life. Remember, people who are lead by their emotions rather than God's Word will be lead into sin every time. Most people make poor decisions when led by their emotions.

The third building material needed to re-build a marriage is the willingness and ability to embrace and work through what ever emotional pain might come up during the process of taking a Biblical look at our lives and marriage. Basically, it means dealing Biblically and directly with sadness, anger, and fear rather than fleeing from them. Most people employ a variety of addictive behaviors in their efforts to 'numb out', and avoid their pain. They turn to alcohol, drugs, food, anger, excessive recreation, accumulation of things, immoral sexual relationships and other addictive behaviors. We need to study what God says about these behaviors in His Word. Allowing painful feelings to well up, and pour them out to God, will give God the opportunity to help the broken heart, Psalm 109:22, "For I am poor and

needy, and my heart is wounded within me". Psalm 147:3, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds". You see folks; it is like cleansing your heart and mind. It is like having a heavy weight lifted off your chest. The basis of all relationships is learning how to submit to one another, Ephesians 5:21. Part of that submission is learning how and what to communicate. This requires being open with one another and sharing with one another without being defensive and getting angry with one another.

The fourth building material involved in re-building a marriage is trust. Before you can ever trust anyone you must learn to trust God and His Word. Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all thine and heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding, In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths." Have you trusted God today for your salvation? Have you realized you are a sinner and repented of your sin and ask Jesus to come into your heart and be your Savior? If not, you must do so today. That is the first basis of trust. God cannot and will not change your marriage unless you are saved. Are you willing to trust God at His Word to re-build your marriage and to deal with the areas of your life that He will show you? Are you willing to trust God with your life? You and your partner need to learn how to trust each other. That may not be an easy process. If infidelity or chronic lying is involved, trust becomes a real issue. You will need to trust the godly pastor or counselor who is trying to help you as well. You will also have to trust yourself which may not come without true repentance and confession of sin on your part and the desire to build a real relationship with God. Some people are trust damaged from the experiences of their life with others. They find it almost virtually impossible to trust. Trust is earned as a result of progress made, new insights developed from God's Word, as well as the provision of a consistent, safe, caring, connected, environment. You have heard someone say, "I would not trust him as far as I can throw him." When someone says that to me, I say "then don't attempt to throw him". Trust comes back in small steps as progress is made. It all starts with "trusting God who cannot lie."

The fifth needed building material used in order to develop a new and greatly improved marriage is trustworthiness. The lack of personal trustworthiness has sabotaged many attempts at getting the marriage re-built. In this context, trustworthiness means following through with your commitments. Doing what you say that you will do. Many times people are well intentioned, but they lack the discipline, focus, and responsibility that they would need to complete any type of re-building project. I find this to be the biggest hindrance to trying to help people in the matter of re-building their marriage. Many times their irresponsibility has gotten them into serious issues with their spouse. Lack of trust has developed and the person just does not have the responsibility in their life to do much. They won't go to work, they are basically lazy and do not have the discipline to even read their Bible or attend church regularly. Let me give you a scenario. The person says "I want you to help me with my marriage." Okay, we are done with the session and you give them a reading assignment for the next class or session. When they arrive, let's talk about what we read. Well, "I did not get it read." That is the way their life operates. Many times I have had someone say, "I need your help pastor." I tell them, "that the first step is to commit yourself to being in church to hear God's Word." They say, "I will see you in church this Sunday." They do not show up. They do not have a good priority system and they lack responsibility and discipline. They always have some excuse. Many times this same person wonders why their children or wife do not have any interest in the things of God. They do not understand that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, Romans 10:17. Or that "the just shall live by faith." Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Generally, when someone contacts me through For the Love of the Family, and shares their problem(s), I direct them to the articles on the web site, and ask them to get back to me after they have read the material. If they lack the discipline to read the article and do not have the motivation and responsibility to do so, I probably will not be able to help them. They want you to wave a magic wand over their life and make it all better instantly. It does not happen that way. Discipline and responsibility are two things that a person must learn to be accountable for. When I find a person who will not take responsibility for themselves, we try to set up some accountability for them. In essence, they have to meet with someone and the person watches them read the material. However, this still generally is not going to work. They do not show up for the meeting etc.

The sixth building material is an obvious one-lots of patience and lots of time. People are used to instant results. They want quick fixes. There really are no quick fixes if your goal is to truly make your

marriage significantly healthier. Sometimes this takes many months rather than weeks. Think about how deeply ingrained issues are. They are many times part of the foundation of our personalities. They literally have been part of us for decades. That simply will not change very quickly. You may realize the problems and seek the Biblical answer, and try to apply some of the principles to your life and then fall back into the same old habit. That habit has to be dug out by the root or it will spring up again, Hebrews 12:15. A root is something that goes deep. Let me say, the change must be genuine and Biblical to be long lasting. Many people talk about wanting change, but are unwilling to put the time in that is required to have true Biblical change in their life. There must be the desire in the life for a real, intimate, personal, passionate, relationship with the Savior. There are several areas that need help. Progress may be slow. All areas will not change immediately.

Most marriages can be saved. People just need Biblical direction and be willing to accept Biblical correction in their life. Before they come and ask for help, many times they are fumbling around in the dark, being angry at the darkness they think is their spouse. When both parties are willing to work hard on their own issues and seek Biblical answers, turn their lives over to God, and they are patient and realistic in their expectations for change, their marriage can be saved.

Many folks think the grass is greener on the other side of the hill. In essence, I do not care anymore, and I will get rid of her or him and find someone who will really love me. They find out that the issues they had did not go away. They now are in the second marriage. Folks, of those who divorce, which is 57.7 percent of all marriages, then remarry, 75 percent of those folks end up in divorce again. Obviously, people who believe it is all about my rights and what I want will never have a satisfying life or marriage.

If you find yourself thinking about your marriage in this manner and saying the following things: "I do not love him or her anymore. I am so unhappy. I am an emotional wreck. All we ever do is fight and we have nothing but tension. He or she just doesn't talk to me anymore. This other person at work listens to me, I wish my spouse would. I am fed up with this or him or her. I just don't know what to do." Stop now and get some help. You are on the way down.

God loves you and he wants to help you. Contact your pastor today and ask for help. Pass this article on to a friend or co-worker you know is struggling. There are several articles on our web site at [www.fortheloveofthefamily.com](http://www.fortheloveofthefamily.com) to help you. Our desire is that you learn what it really means to have a good marriage and the whole purpose of For the Love of the Family is to help people. We try to help people to think about their life and where they are before the disaster hits. We also help them after the disaster hits. The hurt and pain you feel today can be helped by the Savior who loves you.

Terry L. Coomer is the Pastor of Elwood Bible Baptist Church, and the Director of For the Love of the Family Ministries. He has also served as the Publisher of the nation's fastest growing daily newspaper. Pastor Coomer holds Family Conferences in the local church. To have a meeting at your church or other needs he may be contacted at (765) 552-1973, [tlcoomer@juno.com](mailto:tlcoomer@juno.com), [www.fortheloveofthefamily.com](http://www.fortheloveofthefamily.com)