

MARRIAGE LIES

Blogs based on Lies Married Couples May Believe)
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MARRIAGE LIES

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LIES WE BELIEVE

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“I MARRIED THE WRONG PERSON” (Marriage Lies 1)

A lie is a false statement with deliberate intent to deceive. It is an inaccurate declaration to mislead. A lie is an imposter of the truth. Lies find their source in Satan because **“there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies”** (John 8:44). Lies are one of Satan’s most productive tools. Why attack head on when he can be so much more effective with deception? If we are to have victory over him we must understand his lies.

Human history starts with a story of Eve believing lies from Satan, the **“father of lies”** (John 8:44). She listened to what he was saying and, because she wasn’t well versed in the truth, she believed him (Genesis 3:3). She distorted God’s truth by adding to what God said (“nor shall you touch the fruit”). Her ignorance of the truth was the weak link Satan needed to get her to believe his lie. He told her that God was withholding something good from her. The truth is that God never withholds anything good (Psalm 84:11). If He doesn’t give us something, He knows it isn’t ‘good’ for us.

Once a lie is believed then it is acted on. Beliefs lead to actions (Proverbs 23:7). And actions have consequences. Eve encouraged Adam to disobey and eat, and the consequence was sin entering the world (Romans 5:12). Satan has been lying to us ever since.

Since marriage and family are foundational relationships for us, it’s no surprise that many of Satan’s most productive lies concern the husband-wife relationship. He tries to work through one mate to spread a lie to the other, as he used Eve to influence Adam to sin (Genesis 3). We are more susceptible to deception if it comes from a trusted and influential source, like a mate. When one believes a lie, it impacts their mate as well.

One of the most common lies Satan feeds a person when there are difficulties in their marriage is, **“I married the wrong person, life would have been better if I had married someone else.”** It doesn’t matter how long you have been married. This lie can pop into your mind at any time. There are a couple of lies behind this lie that make this lie effective.

The first lie behind the lie is, **“There is only right person for me to marry.”** Disney, fairy tales and romantic literature imply that there is one ‘soul mate’ for you out there. When you find them, you will live happily ever after. They picture it with no sin nature, no self-centeredness, no anger, pride or fear interfering. If you find and marry the one right person for you, marriage will be near to perfect.

The other lie behind this lie is the assumption that, **“We must live happily ever after.”** If we aren’t there must be something wrong with the other person. “It’s all their fault.” “I don’t have to try.” “No matter what I do it will never work out.”

The truth is that marriage doesn’t create problems, it reveals problems already within us. Our sin nature flares up when we get hurt, don’t get our own way, have to yield, things don’t seem fair, we are misunderstood, our needs aren’t met, etc. etc. etc. The truth is that there is no person so perfect we won’t have to struggle and stretching, because we all sin continually (Genesis 6:5). Marriage can bring out the worse in us so we can identify our sin and control it through His power. God created marriage to make us holy, not happy. Even if you didn’t consult God and married someone you shouldn’t have married, once you say “I do” God takes it from there and He will use that mate and that marriage to mature both of you to make you more Christlike and bless each of you through the other (Romans 8:28-29). God allowed you to marry that person and He doesn’t make mistakes (Isaiah 46:10).

If you struggle with this lie, remember the truth is that happiness doesn’t come through finding the right person. Rather it is through your being the right person. The world says keep looking until you find that perfect soul mate where you will live happily ever after. God says be the right person,

the person God created you to be, and let Him use your marriage and mate to make you more like Jesus. God never commands us to always like each other, but He does promise to always give us love for each other when we put Him first. And if you aren't married, if you are **single**, a widow or widower, God will use that state to stretch and mature you into the image of Jesus as well.

When is the last time you wondered if you married the wrong person? What do you do with that lie when it pops into your mind?

What other lies about marriage are you believing? You'll know they are lies if they don't line up with what Scripture tell us.

“WE FELL OUT OF LOVE” (Marriage Lies 2)

What should I say when a couple I married several years earlier tells me they are separating because they **“fell out of love”**? They may say they married too young and have grown apart. I remember one young man who wanted to save his marriage but his wife said that ‘loving feeling’ was gone and she wanted to find it with someone else. I worked with them for months but nothing changed her mind and she left. Is it really possible to “fall out of love”? Or is that just a lie Satan uses to undermine couples and destroy families?

The lie behind the lie here is that love is some powerful forces that overtakes us and carries us along. Love must make us feel good or it isn't love. Isn't that what many songs, movies and books tell us? We don't fall out of love; we stop making the choice to love and to pay the price to keep on loving. When we follow this lie, our mind is in not control, we go by our feelings or emotions. A common phrase today is to **“follow your heart,”** but God says **“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure”** (Jeremiah 17:9).

Love based on feelings, i.e., **romantic love, is weak.** It has no way of dealing with sin and hurts. If you marry someone with a sin nature, they will let you down and disappoint you. You will find they are self-centered. Romantic love can't deal with that because it is no elasticity to it. It can't be stretched, it simply shatters. Romance always fades as a motivating emotion, thus the phrase “the honeymoon is over.” Romance is weak because it is self-centered, it is all about me and how I feel. If it isn't replaced with something deeper and more solid, then the relationship will fall apart. That kind of emotion can end, but we can and must still feed the love we have for each other, even if the feeling fades.

Another lie behind the “I fell out of love” lie, is that love is what holds a relationship together. Therefore, when the feeling of love is gone, so is the marriage. Marriage is a commitment based on vows given. “As long as we both shall live” is now often replaced by “as long as love shall last.” When the feeling fades, they think it's time to find it again with another person. Living together instead of marriage makes it easier to move on, and there are no vows to keep or break, so many couples aren't getting married.

Singles deal with many of the same issues in their relationships with family and friends. “Feelings” come and go in all relationships and aren't to be depended on. Solid friendships go deeper and don't depend on emotions.

Feelings are unreliable. How many parents always feel deep love for their children? When things happen that stretch that love, should they say that this parent-child relationship isn't working so they need to find other children to raise instead? That is ridiculous. The parents are committed to that child for better or for worse. The same as in marriage.

The solution is to remember that **love is a choice**. It is an act of the will, choosing to see good in the other and letting God fill our hearts with love. Much of the world has arranged marriages. We see them all the time in India. Couples unite with entirely different expectations and assumptions in these kinds of marriage. They aren't looking for a Hollywood romance to sweep them off their feet. When they commit to treating each other in loving, respectful ways, love grows. The truth is, **a good marriage takes hard work**. It means falling in love over and over again, but always with the same person. Ask God to fill your heart with love for your mate so you can love them as He loves them. God is good (Psalm 136:1) and all things do work together for good for those living for Him (Romans 8:28). The same is true if you aren't married. You still need God to work in you and through you to unconditionally love those in your life.

What expectations did you bring into marriage? How have they played out? How have you adjusted? Where do you need to continue to adjust?

How do you see your marriage making you more like Jesus?

"I SHOULD BE HAPPY BUT I'M NOT" (Marriage Lies 3)

Are you as happy now as you expected to be when you got married? If you say "yes", it means you've worked through some hard times, made adjustments and grown together. If you say "no", then you're stuck back where you started. The world promotes the **"I should be happy"** lie, everywhere: TV, movies, ads, music and books. But is happiness God's highest purpose for marriage? Let's start with some of the lies behind this lie which Satan uses to destroy marriages.

Behind the "I should be happy" lie is another one stating **"It's their responsibility to make me happy."** Our entitlement mentality, taught from childhood on, is that I'm supposed to be happy. "Others are to meet my needs and put me first." "If this mate can't make me happy, there must be someone else who can." Lies, all of them.

A couple who had been married over 15 years, with children old enough to have a life of their own, came to me because they weren't happy. They were bored, in a rut, and constantly picking at each other. They didn't try to keep the peace as they did when the children were younger. He had promised he'd make her happy if she married him, and it wasn't happening. She wasn't making him happy either.

The truth is that **no one can MAKE you happy!** First, you have to define "happy." When you do, you'll find it's a very shallow, self-centered emotion that is easily challenged by the reality of life. If the purpose of marriage is to make us happy, how can single people find fulfillment? Actually, we were made to need something much deeper than happiness and that is joy.

Satan uses this lie on **singles** as well. They can believe they need to be married to be happy. This lie makes them dissatisfied with the life God has given them. They look to others to meet needs only God can meet. Finding happiness can become the most important thing in life.

The **pursuit of happiness is an idol** we must destroy, or it will destroy us. Joy is deep inner satisfaction despite outer conditions. Happiness is dependent on our circumstances. Happiness is self-centered, joy is all encompassing. Happiness comes from being served, but joy from serving, as Jesus serves us. Life doesn't always make us happy. It is hard. We stretch and grow through trying times. Our goal in marriage is oneness, not happiness. Take your unhappiness, discontent, etc. to God, not to your mate.

The other lie behind the “I should be happy” lie is, **the purpose of marriage is to be happy.** The entertainment industry sells us on the idea that we are to “live happily ever after” if we are with the right person. Yet most people “live miserably ever after.” But that isn’t the fault of marriage. As Christians, we are sometimes guilty of putting too much responsibility on the husband to meet all his wife’s needs and make her happy. We do the same to wives, whose submission is to bring happiness to marriage. When those impossible expectations aren’t met, we become discouraged with our mate or ourself.

The truth is that any time you take two very imperfect, self-centered human beings and put them together 24-7 you won’t get perfect unity. Not only do they have a sin nature, they are of the opposite sex, temperament, and often birth order. That is a recipe for disaster, not ecstasy.

The purpose of marriage is for our growth and God’s glory (Colossians 1:16-18). Holiness is much more important than happiness (1 Peter 1:16). Marriage gives us opportunity to face the ugliness in ourselves and grow through it so we become more like Jesus. Happiness is temporary, holiness is eternal. Happiness costs us nothing, it just happens to us. Holiness comes at the high cost of sacrifice, pain, obedience, self-denial and continual forgiveness. It is a fruit God’s Spirit produces in us (Galatians 5:22-23).

Instead of striving to be happy, **seek contentment.** It doesn’t come naturally; it is a learned skill (Philippians 4:11-13). **Don’t expect marriage or your mate to meet all your needs.** It will never happen. God won’t let it happen. He is a jealous God and won’t let anyone replace Him in your life. He will make sure your mate falls short so you still need and go to Him. Marriage can’t and won’t meet all your needs, but it can turn you to the One who can meet all of them (Philippians 4:19). Don’t expect a finite being to meet needs only an eternal God can meet. Your relationship with your mate is temporary, but your relationship with God is eternal.

Marriage is a means to an end, not an end in itself. The end is to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 9:29). Marriage, when faced from a Biblical world view, helps accomplish that. We see areas where we need to change and we have a mate who loves us unconditionally and helps us make those changes. God’s purpose for your marriage is that you each look more like Jesus because of each other.

Has your marriage been accomplishing that? What is happening in your relationship now to stretch you and make you holy?

“MARRIAGE IS A 50-50 PROPOSITION” (Marriage Lies 4)

Did you believe the common lie that marriage is 50-50 when you got married? Do you still believe it? Like all lies, it sounds true when you first hear it. It seems to make sense to think that if both marriage partners do their half they will meet in the middle and everything will be fine. After all, it isn’t fair for one to do more than the other, is it? When they do their part, then I’ll do mine. Sound familiar?

Similarly, those who aren’t married can see their **friendships** and other relationships the same way. “What’s in it for me?” “What am I getting out of this relationship?” “Is this friendship worth the effort?” “I won’t reach out to them unless they reach out to me first.”

Satan subtly weaves these lies into our culture to feed on our pride and self-centeredness. It’s very easy to forget we are to serve others as Jesus serves us and instead expect them to serve us as well (John 13:14-15). Servanthood is the key, in marriage or in friendship (Philippians 2:3-8).

The truth, of course, is that **relationships demand 100% from each person**. Both mates must be fully committed to do their very best all the time no matter what. If we do any less the relationship will fail. If you only do 50%, who will determine what 'half' is? Where is this 'middle' where we are supposed to meet? Just where is the middle where we need to meet? Jesus doesn't meet us half way. He doesn't say that if we do our 50% then He'll do His 50%. How would that work? Jesus does 100% when it comes to salvation, and continues to do so as He guides, forgives, restores and uses us. We are to be like Him. We are to give 100% as well (1 Corinthians 13:7-8).

Be aware of subtle lies that will undermine your marriage. We believe lies because **we deceive ourselves**. Our pride, self-focus and ignorance open us to self-deception. We will believe what we want to believe, which agrees with what we think. We think we are wise but really, we are fools (1 Corinthians 3:18-20).

Truth does not come from within us, it comes from God's Word (Psalm 119:15-16). The better we know God's Word the more clearly, we will see the lies of the enemy. If we fill ourselves with worldly thoughts and ideas by what we watch and listen to, we will be secretly fed lie after lie. Nourish yourself on God's Word and know His truth instead. Only God's truth can bring freedom (John 8:31-32).

Do you have trouble meeting your meet more than half way? Do you secretly keep score to make sure they are working as hard as you are? What would it look like if each of you totally gave 100% all the time?

"IGNORE THE PROBLEM AND IT'LL GO AWAY" (Marriage Lies 5)

If only this lie was true, we'd all have perfect marriages and friendships! Single or married, we are often tempted to avoid facing difficulties in our associations with others. What if we could ignore every difficult issue and live happily ever after? It doesn't take long to find that doesn't work!

Of course, Satan doesn't want us to face and work through sins in our lives or relationships. He is using them to bring hurt and damage to all involved, so he wants them to continue. He wants us to keep them secret so he can feed them and keep them alive. He loves it when we keep our problems and defeats in the darkness, but the darkness is where he rules and reigns. He loves when we think if we ignore a problem it will go away.

The lie behind this is that **a great marriage doesn't take work – it just happens**. "Our great love overcomes all obstacles, just give it time." "If we ignore the issues long enough, they'll fade and be gone, so don't make a big deal of it." The same lie is used to undermine relationships of those who aren't married as well. It can be easier to let something painful go because we feel it'll be even more hurtful to face it and work it through.

The truth is that **marriage takes commitment, work and forgiveness**. It's been said that great marriages are made in heaven. They come in kits and you have to put them together yourselves. And believe me, it's not easy assembling a godly marriage! It takes honesty, openness, confession, forgiveness and a humble, teachable spirit. It also takes time, both quality and quantity, to work through issues and keep growing. A marriage ceremony takes about an hour, but a marriage takes a lifetime.

Instead of overlooking uncomfortable situations, identify the problems and face them together. It's not about blame or whose fault it is, but about what each person can do to overcome the problem. The enemy is not your mate, it's the problem. Your mate is your teammate in overcoming it. Attend a marriage retreat, get godly Christian counseling, read good books and talk to mature Christian

couples who have worked through similar situations together. However you do it, you must **face the problem**.

That's not just true of current, ongoing problems, it's also true of difficulties and sins from long ago. **Problems in the past don't stay in the past.** Even issues from before you met your mate must be worked through. Past baggage like pornography, unhealthy past relationships, sexual immorality, addictions, dysfunctional family of origin, rage, abuse, etc. must be dealt with. Don't think you can ignore them and they will go away, they pop up again and can be very destructive. It takes courage to recognize, admit, face and work through these matters. God forgives all sin in our past (1 Corinthians 6:9-11), but the consequences often remain and need to be overcome. If it's something you can deal with together, do so. If it's bigger than that, get help. Just don't believe the lie that says that if you ignore it then it'll go away!

If there are any issues in your past or your mate's past that seem to pop up and influence your relationship today, pray about them. Pray together regularly, and follow God's leading as He starts working to heal these areas.

"MY MATE NEEDS TO CHANGE" (Marriage Lies 6)

Every counselor knows they can't listen to just one side of the story when there are relationship conflicts. No matter how clear everything seems or how convincing the person may be, the other side needs to be heard before conclusions can be drawn. That's because there are always two sides. Seldom is it all one person's fault while the other is completely innocent. Counselors know that, but Satan feeds that lie to anyone who will listen.

Single people can feel this way about their relationships with family or friends. Difficulties arise there as well. Are they faced or do we pass the blame off on someone else? It's very easy to see the speck in someone else's eye and miss the log in your own (Matthew 7:5).

It's so easy to think that whatever happens **is all their fault**. We say, "If they were like when we first met, we'd be fine, they've changed and expect too much of me." "I've tried for years and it hasn't helped, now it's up to them."

The lie behind the lie here is quite obvious: **"It couldn't be my fault."** "I'm doing OK." "If they would change it'd be all right." "If they would accept me like I am and stop trying to change me, our marriage would be OK."

Sometimes the lie is the opposite: **"It's all my fault."** "I'm a mess and hopeless." "I'll never change." "I'll never be good enough for them." "It's impossible, so why should I even try?" "I'll never be perfect." Satan doesn't care which form the lies takes because it all comes from pride and self-centeredness. He is the originator of pride and knows all about it (John 8:44; 1 Timothy 3:6).

The solution in both extremes is the same, **look for where you can grow**. Unrealistic expectations of ourselves, our mate or our marriage are the basis of many marriage problems. We bring assumptions into our relationship that are often idealistic and not possible, then wonder what is wrong when they aren't met. Singles do that as well as married people. The truth is that no human being can meet our deepest needs, only God can do that (Philippians 4:19).

When we believe the lie that it's my mate that needs to change, not me, then we develop a taker mentality, not a giver. We need to confess our critical, judgmental attitude. Jesus condemned those who look for fault in others but ignore the bigger problems in their own life (Matthew 7:5). To

change John Kennedy's famous quote, we should ask not what our mate can do for us but we can do for our mate. That's what Jesus does for us.

We can't change anyone else, only ourselves. We are called to unconditionally love our mate, like Jesus loves us (1 Corinthians 13). We need to honestly and humbly ask God to show us where we need to grow and mature so we can be a better Christian and mate. God promises to help us grow (Philippians 1:6). There is nothing we can't overcome with His grace (2 Corinthians 12:9). No matter what issues we face in our life or our marriage, God's grace can help us cope and, through it, grow to become more Christ-like.

The only person you can change is yourself? How are you coming along with that? How willing are you to let God change you? Take a few minutes to give Him the authority to change you where you need to be changed.

"IT'S TOO LATE, THINGS WILL NEVER CHANGE" (Marriage Lies 7)

If you never perform maintenance on your car it will deteriorate to the place where it can't be fixed. It'll be too late. A little preventive upkeep can prevent a disaster. The same is true in marriage. Relationships need continual care to function at their best. If that is neglected your marriage can get so bad it may seem hopeless and impossible to fix. Then it's easy to believe Satan's lie, **this marriage has gone too far to be fixed**. "It's beyond repair, love can never return." "Once trust is broken it can't be restored." "It's easier to divorce and start over with someone new than try to fix this impossible mess." Satan's goal is to defeat God's kingdom on earth, and he does that by attacking the church through the families and singles in it. He undermines relationships by feeding people the lie that the relationship can't be restored. We need to know how to have victory over these lies and attacks.

The truth that defeats these lies is that **nothing is too hard for God** (Matthew 19:26). He is a miracle-working God and specializes in impossible situations, for then He gets all the credit. He is the healer of relationships, but He does that through us. It takes work on our part: forgiveness, humbling ourselves to apologize and be willing to change, putting the past behind and starting again, turning our hurts over to God to heal and not replacing them with anger, going to God with unmet needs and becoming totally dependent on God to give us His love for our mate. These things take commitment, time and often outside help such as godly counseling. But things can change, it's never too late. This lie becomes an excuse to blame and not keep trying. God never quits on us and we, to be like Him, can never quit on each other.

To move away from this lie you need to **make an unbreakable commitment** to your mate: no divorce. That has to be completely off the table as an option. No matter what, you can't even think of it. "Till death do us part..." Your mate needs to know you are committed whatever the cost. Every couple needs to make and keep that commitment, for there will be times it will seem easier to divorce than work through problems. You also need to make a commitment to not make things worse: don't blame, argue, fight, do or say things to hurt each other, passively withdraw or talk to others (except a godly Christian counselor).

When things fall apart for a sports team, they fall back to **focusing on the basics**. The same is true for marriage. Following Jesus' example, men need to love their wives unconditionally, putting their needs first – just like Jesus does for us. Wives need to show respect to their husbands and trust God is working through them – just like we trust Jesus. Ephesians 5:21-33 expands on this. I have some good articles about how to do this. They are on my web site

<https://www.christiantrainingonline.org/our-ministries/family/articles-books/> or email me at jerry@schmoyer.net and I'll send them to you.

Marriage starts when we marry the one we love, but it grows when we **love the one we marry**. Getting married is easy. Staying married is more difficult. But having a growing marriage throughout your life is rare and can only be done with much commitment and God's help. Remember what you did to win the heart and hand of your mate? You need to keep doing that to stay married. If you left your first love, return to it. Give your mate the very best you have, not just what's left over after you have given your best to everyone else. Trust God's promises to forgive and forget the past (Romans 8:1), provide all your needs (Philippians 4:19) and always be with you (Hebrews 13:5). God can be trusted. Make sure you can be as well.

Are there areas of your marriage that you have given up on, thinking they will never change? They can, or at least your attitude to them can change. Are you willing to pay the price for one of those two to happen? If so, talk it over with God right now.

"IT'S OK TO FIGHT SOMETIMES" (Marriage Lies 8)

When I was growing up, I knew a couple that fought over and over. I had never seen anything like it. There was yelling, cursing, complaining and criticizing one day, then the next day all would be normal. I never knew when it would start or stop. It went on their whole married life. It embarrassed me and it scared me, but it was just a way of life for them. It was normal – or was it? Is it OK to fight now and then?

The answer is no. We won't always agree, we will hurt each other and bring out emotions in each other, but fighting to win and/or hurt someone is never right. Still, that **it's OK to fight sometimes** is a common lie to that many believe. The lie says that it's no big deal because every couple fights from time to time. "Fights aren't that bad; they help clear the air and let emotions out – or so they claim." But it's a lie. If it's between married couples or friends doesn't matter. Fighting does much harm but no good.

The opposite side of the coin is that we should never disagree about anything because if we do, something is wrong with our marriage. That isn't true either. **Disagreements are inevitable, but not fights.**

Satan is all about anger (John 8:44) and loves to provoke people who love each other to get angry with each other. That's a weapon of his we need to know how to counter. The Bible says to **never go to bed angry** (Ephesians 4:26) – and that doesn't mean to stay up and fight all night! It means we need to learn to communicate and work things through. No one really wins in a fight. One person may get their own way, but the relationship loses. Usually the louder, angrier, stronger person comes out on top, except when the quieter one is so good at their passive aggression, they 'win.' When we are wrong, we need to admit it and when we are right, we need to keep quiet. That's good advice!

Each couple needs to learn to **communicate**, which really means to learn to listen and understand what the other is saying. One person, usually the more introverted person, should talk first and explain their concern in a gentle, quiet way (1 Peter 3:4). The other must focus on understanding what is said. When the listener can repeat to the speaker what they are feeling and saying, then the other can address what is said. But they shouldn't speak, argue, disagree or say anything until they can repeat the first person's words in an acceptable way. Speaking we can do – listening we are very poor at. Make it your goal to be a good listener. If you want to read more about

this look on my web site <https://www.christiantrainingonline.org/our-ministries/family/articles-books/> or write me at jerry@schmoyer.net.

Most fights are not about the thing you are arguing about. You probably follow the same pattern with different topics or subjects. What's really behind them is a person's pride and ego. She feels unloved and is hurt. He feels disrespected and is hurt. Stubbornness, pride and self-centeredness are what fights are about. **Discussions are about issues; fights are about control and winning.** No, it's never OK to fight.

Do you and your mate fight to win? Or do you listen to each other to better understand where they are coming from? Do you feel 'listened to and understood' in your marriage? Does your mate?

"THERE IS TOO MUCH TO FORGIVE" (Marriage lies 9)

Have you ever been so badly hurt by your mate you didn't know if you could ever forgive them? It may have been done accidentally or on purpose. Perhaps they haven't apologized. Maybe they continue to say or do the same thing. What if it gets to the point where you no longer want to forgive? Poison spreads within you that robs you of all peace and joy. You become critical and negative, distrusting and bitter. You feel trapped because you think the offense is just too much to forgive. That's a lie. So is the lie behind the lie: they don't deserve to be forgiven, instead they deserve to hurt like I am hurting. "They need to earn my forgiveness, but I'm not going to give it."

Satan is the epitome of bitterness and revenge. He promotes unforgiveness wherever possible by reminding us of past hurts, magnifying present issues and focusing our thoughts on ourselves and our pride. Unforgiveness is a great tool of bondage that Satan uses whenever possible. The only antidote is forgiveness, that is our only way of victory. If Jesus can forgive us everything, how can we withhold forgiveness from those who have done far less to us? It's been said that a good marriage is the union of two good forgivers and that is very true. That's true of friendships between those who aren't married as well.

God commands us to forgive (Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:31-32), so if we don't, we are disobeying Him. He is so serious about it that He says He will forgive us the same way we forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15; Luke 6:37). When we forgive, we are freed from bondage, for unforgiveness is a leading cause of demonization (Ephesians 4:26-27). Forgiveness reflects Jesus in our lives and is a beautiful testimony to others (Ephesians 4:32).

Jesus had some very strong, sober words to say about those who do not forgive others (Matthew 18:32-35). He commands us to forgive 77 times (Matthew 18:21-22). There are many reasons for this. One is that unforgiveness is one of the most direct ways of opening one's self to demons (Ephesians 4:26; 2 Corinthians 2:10-11). This is especially true in marriage.

Forgiveness is not easy to do. Often, we think it means saying that what was done to us is OK, or that we aren't going to think about it anymore. We may feel like we are letting them off the hook for what they have done. "They don't deserve forgiveness." True. No one deserves forgiveness from Jesus, yet He gives it freely. Understanding what forgiveness means is important for us to be free.

Anger is a secondary emotion, used to cover pain. When we hit our thumb with a hammer, we feel pain but we react in anger because that's an easier emotion to express. In order to forgive, though, we must admit and confront the pain we feel when others wound us. Our pride wants revenge, to hurt them back – but then we are trapped in unforgiveness and bitterness. Forgiveness is a mental choice, not an emotional feeling.

Forgiving means giving up your right to hurt the other person back because they hurt you. Forgiveness has a price – you give up your right to revenge, to see them hurt for hurting you. That’s what Jesus does when He forgives us!

Instead of covering pain with anger, turn your hurt over to God in prayer. You need to do it over and over, each time you remember the pain. If not, it will turn into anger and unforgiveness. Rely on God’s power to help you handle the pain in a healthy way. Experience the hurt so you can move beyond it. Often times making a list of past hurts, from your mate or others, is the first step to forgiveness. Make sure you have forgiven those in your past: parents, those in past relationships, friends and enemies. Until you do, you’ll be in bondage.

Forgiveness is not a quick emotional switch in your heart, it takes time to heal and move on. It is a process that must be repeated each time the painful memory comes back. Gradually the pain will lesson and be gone. When it tries to come back you cannot allow it to stay.

Remember how God has forgiven you. Think about what Christ did for you on the cross and recall His mercy to you in so many ways. Ask Him to help you forgive through the power of His love. We can forgive the unforgiveable in others because God has forgiven the inexcusable in us.

When someone sins against you, forgive them immediately, even while they are still committing the offense. Even if they are doing it unintentionally, forgive immediately. Don’t wait for them to apologize or admit their wrong. Forgive as quickly as you except God to forgive you. If not, your prayers will be hindered and evil can gain access to your life.

When this happens in marriage reach out to your mate immediately. Withholding love is a form of revenge and shows forgiveness has not been given. Forgiving means treating them as if the offense never occurred – the same as God forgives you. By forgiving others for having hurt us we can let go of the painful past and create a healthier relationship. That’s important in marriage as well as in all relationships in life. Learn to forgive. Forgiveness is a very important tool we all need to learn to use and use regularly.

When you think of forgiving those who have hurt you, does God bring anyone to mind? If so, make sure you have forgiven them, and continue to do so each time the hurt returns. Make sure there isn’t anything you haven’t forgiven your mate for. If you need their forgiveness please ask them right away.

“THE HONEYMOON SHOULD NEVER END” (Marriage Lies 10)

When two people love each other and are in the center of God’s will when they marry, their whole life should be like the honeymoon – right? Not right. “Shouldn’t true love overcome everything?” Eventually, but not right away. It takes work, sacrifice and forgiveness for marriage to work. Even Paul said “Those who marry will face many troubles in this life” (1 Corinthians 7:28). Paul is referring to the extra pressures on marriages during times of persecution, but the truth is that married tests people in ways they haven’t been tested before. Outside pressures can’t destroy a marriage, it is the couple’s response to the pressures that can cause trouble.

The same is true with all relationships. If a **single** person makes a new friend, things go great at first. But the closer the people get the more likely hurts or misunderstandings will arise. That’ is natural and inevitable for people with a sin nature.

The lie behind the lie here is that if my relationship takes this much work, we must not be right for each other. We think that after all these years it shouldn’t take this much work. But that isn’t true.

Two sinners, who are opposites in many ways, are now together 24-7, will find many points of friction. God uses marriage to unveil those rough spots so they can be smoothed over as we become more Christ-like. The truth is that marriages go through similar stages. Basically, we can say there are three stages of growth to maturity.

Stage one is when the couple function as **lovers**. They fall in love and marry. The relationship is characterized by romance. They see their mate as the answer to all their problems. Their commitment is untested, conflict is avoided and the mate is idolized because their strengths are in focus and weaknesses are ignored or denied.

The second stage is when they become **antagonists**. The pendulum moves to the opposite extreme and weaknesses are magnified while strengths are forgotten. Pressures of life, children, work and financial stress grow during this stage. Our unrealistic expectations of ourselves and our mate come crashing down and we become resentful of each other. Power struggles develop and hurts are not forgiven. The couple questions their commitment because conflict and resistance keep growing. This is a bad stage. Romance is gone. The best they can hope for is efficient teamwork and to decrease the hurt they cause each other. Many couples stay in this for the rest of their marriage. Some divorce, others stay together legally, but live separate lives under the same roof. But no one has to stay in this stage forever. In fact, some couples move through it quickly and with a minimum of pain.

When the problems of stage 2 are overcome, they enter stage three where they become **allies, partners** in life. Maturity brings acceptances of themselves and their mate just as they are. Growth continues, but they help each other through the changes. They have learned to adjust their expectations and live in harmony. Each one honestly and humbly recognizes their own sin and faults so that a balanced view of self and their mate results. Their commitment has been tested and is dependable because it has lasted. Unconditional love grows and they feel safe and secure with each other. They have learned how to face conflict and resolve it in healthy ways. Peace and harmony are present. That doesn't mean there aren't still issues that pop up nor trips back to stage 2 to resolve problem areas, but it does mean that, for the most part, life is good and the relationship is sound and secure.

Yes, the honeymoon will end, and the going may be rough for a while. But the end result, stage 3, is much better than the honeymoon. Love is deep and secure; it is tested and proven. Two really do become "one flesh" when their very souls are knit together.

How to get from stage 2 to stage 3? Return to the basics of forgiveness, communication, showing unconditional love and respect, humble service and sacrifice and totally depending on God to do His work in you individually and in your marriage. You can find more detailed help on these at <https://www.christiantrainingonline.org/our-ministries/family/articles-books/> or write me at jerry@schmoyer.net.

Which stage are you in? If you aren't in stage 3, what do you need to do to keep moving in that direction? If you are in stage 3, what do you need to do to stay there?

LIES WE BELIEVE

By Rev. Dr. Jerry Schmoyer © 2018

WHAT AM I WORTH? (Lies we believe 1)

Time was when we could take what we are told as truth. Integrity and honesty were on the top of the list of character traits. Not anymore. Now power and wealth seems to be what everyone is after. It doesn't matter how it is attained. Telling the truth just gets in the way. We need to be very careful about everything we hear or we will be deceived. The most dangerous lies are the ones that hide inside truth so they aren't noticed so easily. The closer to the truth they are the more deadly they become. The same is true of spiritual lies.

Human history starts with a story of Eve believing lies from Satan, the "father of lies" (John 8:44). She listened to what he was saying and, because she wasn't well versed in the truth, she believed what Satan said (Genesis 3:3). She distorted God's truth by adding to what God said ("nor shall you touch the fruit"). That was the weak link Satan needed to get her to believe his lie. He told her that God was withholding something good from her. The truth is that God never withholds anything good (Psalm 84:11). If He doesn't give us something, He knows it isn't 'good' for us.

Once a lie is believed then it is acted on. Beliefs lead to actions (Proverbs 23:7). And actions have consequences. Eve encouraged Adam to disobey and eat, and the consequence was sin entering the world (Romans 5:12). Satan has been lying to us ever since.

One of the most common lies that we believe is that we lack worth, we are inferior and failures. Believing this lie takes away our joy and peace, and it leads to trying to earn approval and acceptance from God and others. We think we haven't been successful in life, we aren't smart, or our appearance is lacking. That's because we compare ourselves to others using an imaginary standard of perfection. What really matters, though, is what God thinks of us, what He thinks we are worth.

The value of something is determined by what price will be paid for it. That is true of jewelry, homes, clothing and everything we purchase. It is also true of our souls. What price was God willing to pay for us? Hebrews 12:2 says Jesus endured the cross, disregarding its shame, because of the joy awaiting Him (Hebrews 12:2). Sometimes we think that joy was heaven, but He already had been in heaven and left it to attain this joy. He could have returned to heaven any time without having to go to the cross. The joy He gained through the cross was having US with Him in heaven! That shows how much we are worth to Him. It dishonors Him when we think we are without worth. It is a lie of Satan to defeat us and take glory from God. Don't let it work with you! (October 22, 2018 Doylestown, PA)

John 8:44 "The devil ... was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

Psalm 139: 13-14 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Do you still believe the lie that you aren't worth much, that something is lacking in you? Spend time thinking about the price Jesus paid for you. He thought of you on the cross. If you would have been the only sinner He still would have done it just for you. His love gives us unimaginable worth. Thank Him for it.

I'M ENTITLED! (Lies we believe 2)

Today in the USA we very aware of our rights. They are guaranteed us by the US Constitution. Advertisers promise we have the right to be happy, understood, loved, successful, healthy and prosperous. We expect all our needs to be met: food, medical help, possessions, mate and children, etc. If something is lacking we are quickly aware of it and complain to God or others (or both). But are we right to believe this, or is it another lie of Satan to deceive and defeat us?

Jonah felt he had a right to hate the Ninevites because of their cruelty to his people, possibly his very own family. He felt he was entitled to choose to whom he wanted to minister. He was angry when God wanted to spare the Ninevites and to use him to bring that about. He felt his rights had been violated and asked God to take his life (Jonah 4:1). God asked him what justification he had to be angry because God didn't do everything he wanted (Jonah 4:4). God could often ask us the same question. Who are we to demand of Him, to question Him, to accuse Him of being unfair to us or of making life too hard on us? As Christians, we want to claim our rights from God. We want all we feel we are entitled to from Him.

But suppose God gave us what we were entitled to, what we deserved and what was rightfully ours? Where would we be right now? Yes, in hell for all eternity. We can be glad God doesn't give us we warrant! Instead of trying to claim our rights we need to yield our rights.

When we feel God owes us something, or is withholding something good, we are believing a lie from Satan. It's the very same lie he used with Eve (Genesis 3:1-5). God's purpose is to make us like Jesus and to be glorified through us, not to give us heaven on earth. Heaven will come later, now is the time to grow and serve Him. Thinking He is withholding something we have a right to just makes us question and doubt Him. We aren't thankful, don't worship, don't trust Him and turn from Him to meet our own needs. And that is exactly what Satan wants to happen! (October 29, 2018 Doylestown, PA)

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Philippians 4:11-13 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs (not wants) according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

How content are you with your lot in life? Do you hold back from God because you think He is

I NEED MORE TIME (Lies we believe 3)

Despite all our labor-saving devices and means of instant communication today, we seem to be busier than ever. We look forward to the kids being grown, then gone and then to retirement – thinking at each of these junctures we won't have so much to do. Still, we seem to be busier than before. We spend our time doing good things and then don't have enough time for the best things. Our relationships with God and others suffers because we lack quality and quantity time to invest in them. Then we live with guilt because we don't have time to pray and read the Bible or to spend with family and loved ones. Books are written, seminars held and many claim to have the cure – but

nothing changes. Is this the way life is to be, or are we being somehow deceived (lied to) about what we need to do?

I think we are. The lie is that we don't have enough time to do everything. But the truth is that we have enough time to do everything God wants us to do. The tricky part is separating what God wants us to do from all the other 'stuff' we want to do. That may seem impossible to do, but Jesus did it. He made an amazing statement recorded in John 17:4 "I have finished the work which You gave me to do." When is the last time you said you were done with everything that needed to be done? When do you end up with extra time at the end of the day and a feeling of completion with everything checked off your list?

Well, you say, He was Jesus so He could do that. But remember He went through everything as a person like us, not as God ("kenosis" Philippians 2:7). His key to success is seen in what He said: "I have finished the work which YOU gave me to do." Everything wasn't done. The New Testament still had to be written, churches started, leaders trained, theology developed, etc., etc., etc. There was more to be done, much more – but God didn't give that to Jesus to do. God gave Jesus 7 24-hour days in a week and expected Him to accomplish all that NEEDED to be done in that time. He expects the same with us as well. And that includes stewardship of our bodies, relaxation, time with God and investing in relationships, to say nothing of taking one day off a week to rest! So either God is giving us more to do than He is giving us time to do it, or we are adding to the things God wants us to do. That is wrong because it takes time from what He does want us to do. We end up doing them instead of, not in addition to, what God wants, even if we neglect our health and relationships to do so. The solution is to not try to squeeze more into a day, but to be sensitive to what God wants us to do. Martin Luther once said, "I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer." Oh that we would say that today! (November 5, 2018 Doylestown, PA)

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

Do you believe the lie that you need more time in a day? You need more money, but you prioritize to pay what comes first so you can live within the amount of money you have (at least I hope you do!). Can you do the same with your time? What good things can you cut out in your life so you have time for the best things? Do you skimp on your time with God and family in

GOD IS LIKE MY FATHER (Lies we believe 4)

God gave us parents so that, among other things, we would learn to receive love and protection from a powerful authority figure who we would, in turn, love and trust. At least that was the plan. I don't have to tell you how often parents fall far short of that. In fact, many times the impact parents have on their children in exemplifying God is more negative than positive. When a child grows up with a parent, especially a father, who is harsh, cruel, distant, manipulative, unfair or self-centered, the child naturally attributes those same traits to God. We believe the lie that God is just like my father. Similar lies include: "God is never there for me," "God expects too much from me," "God is disappointed with me," and many others. This gives us a wrong picture of God and undermines, or prevents, a close personal relationship with him. I've had to work through some of those lives in my life and I'm sure you have had to as well.

The truth, though, is that God is not like any human parent. He is far above any person, not even close enough to be compared. Only as we get to know God as He really is will we grow in love and trust in our relationship with Him. God is totally and only good (Psalm 136:1). He loves us and wants us to have His best (Romans 9:32-39). There is nothing we can do to earn or deserve His love. There is nothing we can do to have Him love us any more, nor is there anything we can do to have Him love us any less!

We are complete and accepted in Him (Ephesians 1:4-6). Others show conditional love and acceptance, but with God we already have all His blessing now and forever. He truly cares about us, or He wouldn't have left heaven to come to earth to pay for sins on the cross! He will never reject or condemn us (Romans 8:1). He will meet all our needs (Philippians 4:19). He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). He guarantees us eternal life with Him – forever (1 John 2:25).

God promises to protect, provide, teach, guide and sustain us. He promises to be our best friend, companion and servant. As His children, He wants us to honor and respect Him (Exodus 20:12), follow His counsel (Proverbs 1:8), obey Him (Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20) and serve Him in any way we can while on this earth.

If you struggle with seeing God as He really is because of a poor relationship with your parents, think about how your parents have wounded you and how you carry that over to God. Ask God to help you forgive them and take your pain to Him. Talk to a mature Christian about these things. Look for a good role model of a godly man and get to know him. Use what you see in him as a foundation to change how you see God. Remember God is your Father, your Heavenly Father, not your earthly father (or mother). (November 12, 2018 Doylestown, PA)

Psalm 103:13-14 As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! –1 John 3:1

What hurts and disappointments from your own parents influence the way you see God? Ask Him to show you and then to reveal His truth to you. Ask Him to help you see Him as your

TRUTHS THAT SET US FREE (Lies we believe 5)

Every area of bondage in our lives can be traced back to a lie we believe. When we exchange God's truth for a lie, we find ourselves in slavery to it (Romans 1:21-25). The lie becomes our master (2 Peter 2:19) and we serve it. We only have freedom when we ask God to show us the lies we believe (Psalm 139:23) and replace them with His truth (John 8:31-32). Only as we know His truth will we be truly free. There are hundreds of lies we could talk about, but it is better to learn His truth. Counterfeiters are trained by studying real money for when they know it in detail they can tell anything that varies from it. When we know God's truth we can discern lies and deceptions of the enemy. Listed below are basic truths about God. I have adapted them from "Lies Women Believe and the Truth that Sets Them Free" by Nancy DeMoss. (November 19, 2018 Doylestown, PA)

THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD:

God is good in all He does (Psalm 136:1)

God loves us and wants the best for us (Romans 8:32-39)

God is enough to provide for all our needs (Psalm 23:1)

God can be trusted to keep His promises (Romans 8:1; 1 John 1:9; 2:25; Philippians 4:19; Hebrews 13:5)

God doesn't make any mistakes, ever (Isaiah 46:10)
God's grace is sufficient no matter what (2 Corinthians 12:9)

THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS

Jesus totally accepts and fully completes us, unconditionally (Ephesians 1:4-6)
Jesus' blood is sufficient to cover all sin (1 John 1:7; Psalm 103:12; Micah 7:19; Isaiah 44:22; Jeremiah 31:34)
Jesus' work on the cross conquers all sin (Romans 6:6-7)

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit enables us to do anything God commands us to do (Philippians 2:13) including loving those who hurt us, rejoicing in difficulties, etc

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE BIBLE

God's Word is sufficient to lead, teach and heal anyone (Psalm 119:105)

THE TRUTH ABOUT MYSELF

There is no higher, holier career calling than being married or a parent. (Titus 2:4-5)
Personal holiness is more important than temporal happiness (1 Peter 1:16)
I am personally responsible for my behavior, responses and choices (James 4:17)
I will reap what I sow (Galatians 6:7-8)
I find true joy when I relinquish control to God or the authority He has placed over me (Matthew 16:25; Ephesians 5:21)
I don't have to feel guilt about my past when I confess my sin (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)
God is more concerned about changing me and glorifying Himself than about solving my problems (Romans 8:29)
I can't grow in Christ-likeness without suffering (1 Peter 5:10)
My suffering will only be in this life (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)
It's not about me, it's all about Him (Colossians 1:16-18)

John 8:32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Think of some areas where you struggle. Which of these truths apply to them? What lies are you believing that allow these to be problem areas?