COPING WITH YOUR SPOUSE’ WEAKNESSES
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Love brings people together, but, understanding of their personality and adjustment to change their lives to accommodate each other keeps the marriage together. **Godly character keeps love fresh and makes the relationship exciting and successful.** Refusal to change and insistence on remaining the same causes cracks on the wall of marriage, and weakens love. It is essential that couples acknowledge their weaknesses and make every effort to change where necessary to please the spouse and make the marriage successful and full of joy. **Marriage becomes difficult when a partner refuses to acknowledge that he or she is causing the partner pain through the behaviour or character.** It is essential that those in relationship do all within their power to keep their spouse happy and enthusiastic about their relationship. It takes good behaviour, communications skills, wise speaking, positive attitude and actions, and a cheerful personality to keep marriage alive and exciting.

Complications set in when a partner refuses to make effort to change though complaints have been made in the past that his or her weaknesses are causing the spouse great pain and sadness. Many do not care about others but themselves. Some never accept fault, but will always defend themselves in order to escape rebuke, correction, or apologizing. Any relationship that is to succeed requires the input of both partners. Consideration must be given to the feeling and happiness of each other. Living as if there is no one in your life is selfish and a blatant display of arrogance and an unwillingness to see the marriage succeed. If success is on your mind, then, you have to take into account the complaints of your spouse and make adjustments and complete change where and when necessary. Nobody likes to be offended or be at the receiving end. No one wants to endure pain. Since you as a person do not like pain, stop causing your partner pain. Make effort to correct all the ills in your life and make your relationship a heaven on earth.

It is important that we come to terms with the truth that sometimes, change is slow and sometimes difficult in coming. In some cases, your spouse may not be willing to make a change that you so eagerly desire to see in order to be happy in your marriage. It may even be that your partner has not accepted that he or she has a weakness that needs to be dealt with. What do you do in the interim? You have to make most of the situation. You have to determine no matter what, to make your marriage work, and a happy one too. Coping with your partner’s weaknesses will have to be your challenge. And you must win over this challenge with God’s help, and determination on your part.

**SOME WEAKNESSES THAT UPSET MARRIAGES:**
1. Talks too much and anyhow. Doesn’t listen to another when talking. Quick to insult, curse and pass judgment on others.
2. Quick tempered and uncontrolled anger.
3. Unforgiving and keeps malice.
4. Dirty and disorganized.
5. Never reports back – lacks accountability.
7. Cooks very late.
8. Stubborn – never yields to advice.
9. Opinionated – Never shifts ground or submit to husband’s authority.
10. Don’t like admitting fault, or apologizing for any wrong done.
11. Wasteful – bad manager of resources – extravagant and spending on non-essentials and not what is needed.
12. Too stingy to spend on the needs of your spouse and family.
13. Too secretive.
14. Starves the spouse of sex.
15. Lazy, and not enterprising.
16. Lack of respect for husband.
17. Quarrelsome
18. Not willing to learn new things – holding unto the old.
19. Impatience and intolerance.
20. Keeping company with wrong people which leads to wrong counsel, decisions and actions.
21. Too busy with work and other things and not giving enough time to spouse and family life.
22. Disrespect for spouse’s family members.

**TIT-BITS ON COPING WITH THE WEAKNESSES OF YOUR SPOUSE:**

1. Guard your mind against negative thoughts that may arise as a result of the unpleasant things you are witnessing in the life of your spouse that upset and anger you.

   *Prov 4:23*

   **23 Be careful how you think, your life is shaped by your thoughts.**

   *GNB*

   Your thoughts determine how you feel, while your feelings determine how you speak and react to the things you see, hear and experience. Your thoughts determine how you evaluate the situation, the conclusions you reach, the decisions you make and the actions you take in response to the happenings in your marriage. Therefore, you need to guard your mind, and be careful what you think because your marital life is shaped by your thoughts. Your response and reactions to your experience are shaped by your thoughts.

2. Be resolute and determined on making your marriage work at all cost.

   *1 Cor 7:10-11*

   **10 To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. 11 But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.**

   *NIV*

   Be willing to pay any price to succeed in your marriage. Decide within you that despite the weaknesses of your spouse, your marriage will work. Make up your mind that your marriage will not fail. There is no one without a weakness. You have one or more, your spouse has one or more. If you leave your spouse and marry another, you will soon discover that your new spouse
has a weakness or more in his or her life. The best thing is to see how you can improve your life and that of your spouse to make your marriage peaceful and happy. Be willing to stay with your spouse and work things out. Never consider separation or divorce. Look up to God and see how to make things work out well.

3. **Strengthen your love for your spouse.**  
   *Col 3:18-19*  
   18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.  
   *NIV*

If love is not strong, coping with the weaknesses of your spouse will be difficult. Marriages break when love is weak. When love is made strong by focusing on the good side of your spouse, your marriage will survive under the weight of the weaknesses of your spouse. If your mind is concentrated on the weaknesses, you will become discouraged and give up on the marriage. Give attention to your spouse’s areas of strength, good points, character and behaviour. Do not focus your attention only on the negative side of your spouse. The negatives will weigh your mind down, while the positives will energize you to keep going and loving your spouse.

4. **Be patient.**  
   *Eph 4:2-3*  
   2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.  
   *NIV*

1 Thess 5:14-15  
14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.  
   *NIV*

Change does not occur in a twinkle of an eye even when effort is being made to change. Change takes time. Give your spouse time to change. Be patient with each other. Be patient with God as you call on Him to help salvage your marriage by changing you and your partner. Do not give up on your spouse if he or she is not willing to make change. Sometimes, it becomes obvious that your spouse is not making effort to effect change in his or her life, do not let that upset you to the point of losing control and wanting to quit, rather, submit to God through prayer and fasting, and He will step into the situation to make things right.

5. **Look up to God through fervent prayer and faith.**  
   *1 Thess 5:16-18*  
   16 Be joyful always; 17 pray continually; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
Prayer makes things better. Prayer changes what quarrels and fights cannot. Only God can change a man and not fighting. Seek God for your marriage and your spouse and soon you will see how good God is. The fervency of prayer shows how desperate you are in getting things changed. Faith and prayer are two pairs that never fail to produce result. Pray in faith with fervency and sincerity and you will soon testify. Never give up, but keep praying in faith.

6. **Get help when needed from qualified counselors.**

   *Isa 28:29*
   
   All this also comes from the LORD Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom.

   *Ps 32:8*
   
   I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

What is lacking in you is in another. God designed man to need each other. Every man contains certain knowledge, gift and experience that will benefit others. Seek out those who have what it takes to bring the change you seek in your life and that of your spouse and marriage. Seek out qualified marriage and relationship counselors who can help you overcome and win. Your pastor is anointed to meet your specific needs. We all need help from time to time. Acknowledge this and allow the instrument of God to speak into your marriage and lives. Be open when you go for counseling, for what you might hear is not what you may have hoped will be spoken to your partner. You may think your partner is the one with the problem, but the counselor by the Spirit of God may find out that you are the problem or have a share in the problem. Remember that it is the counsel that you **receive** and you **apply** that works for you.

7. **Prophesy over your marriage.**

   Speak good things over your spouse and your marriage. There is power in the tongue of man. There is creative power with all of us.

   *Prov 18:20-21*
   
   From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied. 21 The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

The nature and life of God strengthens our authority expressed through the mouth even more. The Holy Spirit anointing increases the power of the tongue. You have to use it to speak positively over your spouse and marriage. Stop speaking negatively over your spouse, and marriage, for you always have what you say. That’s what the scripture teaches. Use your God-given authority to change your spouse and marriage. Prophesy what you want to see. Speak away the wrong things from your spouse’s life.
Mark 11:22-23
22 "Have faith in God," Jesus answered. 23 "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, `Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.
NIV

Speak into existence the things you want to see. Like a creator, begin creating what you want to see in your spouse by proclaiming or decreeing them into existence. Rather than speak negatively and compounding your marriage, carefully and diligently speak good things into the life your spouse and marriage and soon you will see them manifesting.

8. Get marital knowledge from books and seminars. Read about how to make your marriage successful.
Prov 4:7
7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.
KJV

Knowledge is power. Ignorance is expensive because it will cost you many nights of sorrow and pain. Ignorance will cause you to make many mistakes and that will cost you. Knowledge will guide you in the right direction, keep you from pitfalls and dangers, and preserve your love and marriage. Invest in books and teaching CDs and tapes on successful marriage. Learn the principles of God concerning marriage from those whom God has given special revelation. Learn from the experiences of those in marriage. Learn why they are succeeding or failing. Attend seminars on marriage, parenting and relationship related seminars. Use the knowledge gained to enrich your marriage. Consider what you have gained from this teaching because you read it. So, if you keep reading and listening to teachings that will help you overcome your challenges, you can imagine how your marriage will look like.