

LIVING WITH A DIFFICULT PARTNER

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Love sometimes brings us in contact with all sorts of people – the good, the bad and the ugly. Sometimes we meet nice, sweet and lovely people, sometimes, we meet people that leave scars and pain in our lives. The desire of all is to be joined to the best man or woman who fits our type of person perfectly. Some times, whom we thought will be the best for us becomes a nightmare.

Living with a difficult partner is not an easy or sweet experience. It is a most painful experience. It is such that make people seek divorce and fight at home. We are going to look into this matter in this teaching. As we discuss this issue, I want you to look at yourself closely and find out if you are a difficult person, and picture what your partner must have been going through trying to live and cope with you. Then make a change where necessary.

DEFINITION OF A DIFFICULT PARTNER

1. A difficult partner is someone who is difficult to please or satisfy.
2. A difficult partner is a person who keeps repeating the same thing the partner is always complaining about as offensive.
3. A difficult person is someone who is incorrigible (refuses to be corrected or change).
4. A difficult person is self-centered, and only interested in his or her own pleasure. He or she does not care about the partner's feelings or interest as long as he or she is satisfied.
5. A difficult partner is an unfaithful person in marriage. He or she is adulterous and cheats on the partner and denies it, and in some cases acknowledges it and makes no effort to stop it.
6. A nagging person is a difficult person. In fact the Bible says it is better to live in the desert than to live with such a woman.

Prov 21:19

19 Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.

NIV

7. A difficult person is difficult because he doesn't want to forgive and forget offences. Such people make life unbearable.
8. A difficult person never agrees he or she is wrong. Such people are difficult to correct and work with. A person who is always right in his own eyes is bound to make many and terrible mistakes which of cause will cost him or the family miserable moments.
9. A difficult person is that person that is addicted to a very bad habit, and refuses to break it or finds it very difficult to break away from it.
10. A difficult partner is that person who makes your marriage boring and tiresome through many unpleasant things he or she is constantly doing.

Leaving with a difficult partner is not easy at all. It is frustrating, painful and boring living with such a person.

WHAT TO DO

1. Accept the situation as a challenge that must be overcome.

Matt 10:38

38 and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

NIV

Every married person should remember that the marriage vow bounds the couple till death. So, as a result if you find yourself in such a condition, all you need to do is to accept the situation as your cross and find a way of making most of the situation. In order to do this, you may be on the receiving end. Any prize to pay for your marriage to work is worth it.

It is your responsibility to look for a means of solving your problem. You may have to adjust and forgo some of your rights and privileges to accommodate some of the excesses of your partner in order for peace to reign. Most times, what we do is to demand that our partner change, and sometimes this brings a lot of quarrels and fights in the home, thereby complicating the problem. Wisdom demands that we look inwards to see what we can do or adjust to give more room and tolerate our erring partner.

It is a challenge that must be overcome. Quitting the marriage is not the solution to the problem, but adjusting and bearing in hope that God will soon intervene and settle the matter.

2. Don't go confrontational every time, for that will complicate rather than solve the problem.

Eph 4:26-32

26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold. 28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. 29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

NIV

God hates quarrelling. Anything that will help you to avoid quarrels in your marriage is welcome. Confronting and giving it to your partner any time he or she does what you do not like will make the home a peace less place to live in and raise children. Confrontation always leads to quarrel especially if it is very

offensive and your partner is such that never admits wrong. And quarrels will lead to rage, bitterness. Bitterness will lead to malice. Malice will lead to hate. Hate will end your marriage.

The only way out of it is control your temper each time you are offended. Determine to only speak words that will benefit your partner and build him or her up despite what has happened or may be happening. I am convinced that all you want is to live in peace with the woman or man that you married for love. The way of peace and not confrontation is the answer to your heart desire.

Another thing I want you to know is that your partner unknown to you may not be happy about his or her attitude and behaviour, and is sincerely looking for a way to come out of it. Your partner needs help. Render all the help you can to him or her with your understanding action and words. Think about it! Your duty is to help him or her recover that is why you are a helper that is fit for him or her.

3. Forebear and forgive always.

Col 3:12-14

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

NIV

Forgiveness is the evidence of love in the heart. Forgiveness is the healing balm of every relationship. Without forgiveness no relationship can survive. When offences are piled up in the heart, hate takes over the place of love, and that spells doom for that relationship. The fact that your spouse is a difficult person does not mean that you will continue to pile up offences in your heart. Forgive each time you are offended as the above scripture has instructed. Learn to forbear crimes committed against you by your partner in love.

Love is not love until it is tested through offences. Anybody can say "I love you". The one that truly loves you is the one that sees your wrong and decides to forgive and overlook. Prove that you have this genuine love for your partner. Leaving with a difficult partner demands that you forgive him or her even before the offence is committed. Give room for offence for it will come. Man is capable of anything good or bad. What ever you see take it like that. Bear until God changes things to be the way you want it.

4. Intercede regularly in your closet for your partner.

1 Thess 5:17

17 pray continually;

NIV

Praying for your partner is very important if you are serious about improving the quality of life of your partner. It is obvious that change is not by power nor by might, but by the Spirit of God (Zech. 4:6).

Rom 9:16

*16 It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.
NIV*

This understanding makes us to resort to seeking God's help for ourselves and our partners. The role of prayer in changing lives cannot be over emphasized. Let us pray rather than quarrel with each other about things we cannot change without God's help.

Breaking an evil habit or changing a lifestyle requires the help of God. Man must make effort. Effort alone without God can't do it. That is why Jesus came to die that we may be free from all evil habits and characters. So, if you have not given your life to Christ, you need to do it now. He alone can change a man. If you have given your life to him, allow him to work on you and help you overcome. So many Christians are still under the bondage of evil habits because they don't want to change. They refuse to give Jesus a chance to help and change them. Let the word of God move your heart always. Put it to use and submit to the Holy Spirit and all will be well.

In praying for your partner, pray in your closet. You don't need to let him know that you are praying for him by screaming out loud so he or she can hear you. It is God that answers prayers and not your partner. Be specific in the things you want God to do in the life of your partner and marriage.

5. Speak what you want to see and not what you are seeing in your partner.

Mark 11:23

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

Power is released through the mouth. The things we say normally come to pass with time. The Bible teaches us that there is power of life and death in the tongue of man, and that we will always harvest everything we have spoken. An understanding of this compels us to be careful about what we say.

Don't say what you don't want to see. Don't use your mouth to amplify the weakness in your partner. Don't strengthen it through your words. Speak what you want to see in the life of your partner. To do this, you need to control the kind of thoughts you think about your partner and the problems you are having with him or her. Do not brood evil in your mind. If you do, your mouth will speak it.

Your life is a reflection of your thoughts. Out of the abundance of the thoughts in the mind of man, the mouth speaks (Matt. 12:34). Carefully select your words before you speak.

Words provoke reactions. Your partner will always react to every word you speak whether it is positive or negative. If you want a positive response, speak positively. Words meant to correct or solve a problem all of a sudden stir up more trouble due to wrong presentation. Speak the right words with wisdom.

6. Encourage your partner to attend seminars and programmes that will help him or her overcome and recover.

Prov 4:5-9

5 Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them. 6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. 7 Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. 8 Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you. 9 She will set a garland of grace on your head and present you with a crown of splendor."

NIV

Marriage problems are wisdom problems. Seminars and programmes will help to enlighten the couple on principles of God that will help marriage to be sweet. Tactfully persuade your partner to attend such meetings with you. Attending alone is recommended only when your partner is unwilling to attend or so committed that he or she cannot come. Encourage your partner to attend such meetings. Whatever you can do to persuade your partner to attend marriage seminars is encouraged so long as it is not evil in the sight of God.

7. Buy books and tapes that will bless him or her, and both of you read and listen to them over and over again.

Tapes retain the original message or lecture, and ministers more effectively. Listening to it again and again makes it possible for more understanding to be gained and life affected. Play it in the house for your partner to hear. He or she may not want to sit and listen to the message, just slot it in and allow it play in the house. As he or she is moving around in the house, it will be entering. One day, the conviction will come.

Buy books and encourage your partner to read. When you lay your hands on marriage publications, journals and books, read and give to your partner to read also. In this way two of you will grow and improve together.

8. Stop reporting your partner to just anybody.

Not everybody is qualified to speak into your life, especially your marriage. You need a wise counselor and not just any counselor. Reporting your partner to those who cannot help you or him or her is not the best thing to do. Situation may be tough and rough, you still need patience and discretion in handling matters.

Your Pastor is in a better position to counsel you according to God's will. Not all family members or friends should be approached. Share only with those you trust can help and will give godly counsel and assistance.

9. Hope for a change.

Never give up on your partner. God will hear your prayer and help you. You may need to wait a little more, but wait. Have faith in God, and soon, the change will come (Mark 11:22-24). Keep faith alive and don't give up. Change what needs to be changed in your own life and look up to God to change what needs to be changed in you partner.

Remember this, you need change also. Don't allow the devil deceive you to believe that only your partner needs change. Once there is a problem, two of you in the relationship should examine yourselves to find out each persons share in the crisis. Make corrections where necessary and it will be well you.

May God grant you peace in your home. Shalom.