

COVENANT KEEPERS

"Dedicated To Strengthening Marriages Through Biblical Principles"

Volume 28 – Issue 1

Spring Edition

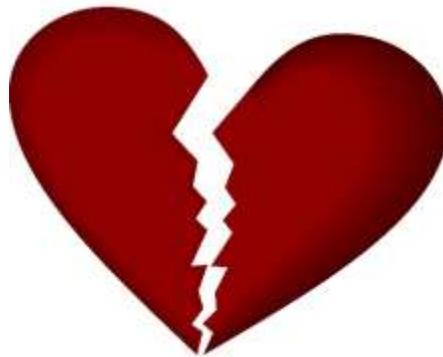
Combating the Lies That Will Destroy Your Marriage!

In marriage, as in any relationship, if you believe a lie about yourself or another, then that lie becomes the truth to you. Believing that lie doesn't make it true, but it does become the basis by which you will live your life. If you live your life based on a lie, it will ultimately bring grave consequences to your marriage. God explained this reality when He told the Jews why their nation would be destroyed. He said, *"Thus says the LORD: 'For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept His commandments. Their lies lead them astray, lies which their fathers followed'"* (Amos 2:4). Lies within your marriage will also bring destruction, because believing lies, is in reality, a rejection of God's voice of truth. If you want to build your marriage to last, then you must believe the truth, and obey it. Remember the wisdom of Solomon when he said, *"A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies shall perish"* (Prov. 19:9). I can't tell you how many spouses have confided in me that when their marriage ended, they and their children perished right along with it. So, I encourage you, don't be one of those who believes lies! Truth versus lies will always determine success or failure in your marriage relationship.

What are some of these lies that will destroy your marriage, and how can you combat them?

The lies I am about to address have all come from my counseling ministry of over 50 years. I have heard people make these statements, and it was my job to tell them the truth of God's Word. Here are a few of these lies.

1. *This marriage can't be fixed! There just has been too much water under the bridge.* When one or both of you think this way about your marriage, you will naturally begin to distance yourself from the other. If you continue with this thinking, you will ultimately give up. Once you give up, separation and divorce are inevitable. In reality, thinking that God can't fix your life or marriage is just simply unbelief. Unbelief then causes disobedience to God's commands. However, the Word of God declares, *"With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible"* (Matt. 19:26). Remember what God said to Abraham's wife Sarah when she doubted God's promise to give her a child? He asked her, *"Is anything too hard for the LORD"* (Gen. 18:14)? So, I ask you the same question, "Is your marriage too tough for God to rescue?"



Lies will always lead to a broken heart!

How do I know it's truly possible for God to restore your marriage? I've seen God heal many marriages when the two people have been at their lowest point. I know it is hard to fathom how He can transform a marriage when two people are at each other's throats and fighting all the time, but He is the miracle worker! All it requires is for one spouse whose heart He has touched to say, "Please, let's stop destroying each other, and turn this marriage around." The change will always begin with one spouse, but it also must be responded to by the other spouse.

You can't save your marriage by yourself. It takes two people to destroy it, and it takes two people to restore it.

One of the most powerful things I've witnessed is when two people, who have divorced, reconcile their differences and get remarried. Is that not a miracle of God working in their lives? When you see this depth of forgiveness and recommitment between two people, you come to the conclusion that God can do anything. But the question is, will you choose to believe that God can do this miracle in your marriage? He has promised, and He is also able to perform His work of transformation, if you are willing to surrender to Him.

2. *The feeling is gone between us, so why should I try anymore.* When one or both of you start singing that old song from the Righteous Brothers, *"You've lost that lovin' feeling,"* you know there is trouble in the marriage. The feelings of love and romance are essential for any marriage to thrive. Thus, understanding why the feelings of love have evaporated is essential if you want to restore them. Why? Because if you don't understand why the feelings of love have dissolved, you will probably continue doing the same things.

Why do the feelings of love wane in a marriage? There are two basic reasons. The first is inaction, which is the failure to act in a loving way toward your spouse. The second is overt actions that are offensive and selfish which naturally kill the love between you. If you want to change the relationship between you and your spouse, consider changing your failure to love, or acting in harsh and self-centered ways. If you would like to read more on this topic, please read my article, *"What Causes Love to Die in Your Marriage"* on my web page at: <https://www.covenantkeepers.org/online-articles/47-general-marital-issues/353-what-causes-love-to-die-in-your-marriage>

When you were courting your spouse, you were on your best behavior, and acting as lovingly as you possibly could

"She is your companion and your wife by covenant" Mal. 2:14

to win his or her heart. You refrained from selfishness and being petty over minor things. After couples get married, they usually don't put out the same effort and action as they did before they were married. So, I ask couples that I counsel, "Are you focused on the feelings that are missing, or are you focused on the missing actions that are needed in your relationship?"

You must understand that love is more than a feeling; it is also an action. If you focus on the actions of love, the feelings of love will follow. This is why the Apostle James encouraged us to all, "*Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves*" (James 1:22). Think of this issue in very practical terms. How do you respond when your mate takes an unexpected action of bringing you a gift for no apparent reason, or kisses you in the kitchen just to demonstrate they care? Do you think, *I hate it when they do that?* No! Rather you think, *That was so sweet of them to do that.* Are you not then motivated to also be loving?

Let me ask you, "Do you take those unexpected actions to show your mate that you love them? Are you demonstrating your willingness to resolve conflicts with your mate? Do you make every effort to change the behaviors that your mate does not like, or could you care less about these issues? Are you waiting for your spouse to first be loving toward you, before you act in this manner?" Remember, Jesus said after He washed the disciple's feet, "*If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them*" (John 13:17). So, don't let the sins of inaction, or sinful actions, rob your marriage of those loving feelings.

3. I don't need Jesus to make my marriage work. There are plenty of non-Christians who have successful marriages. Here is another lie that destroys so many marriages. Yes, there are couples who are not Christians that stay married for their entire lives. But the question is, were they truly happy together, and were they staying together for some other reason?

God is the One who created marriage, and I believe He is the One who knows how it works best. When discussing the divine union that occurs between two people who marry, Jesus said, "*So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate*" (Matt. 19:6). From this Scripture it is clear that God is the One

who joins two people together. This means that marriage is a supernatural work of God in two hearts joining them as one. Therefore, without Christ in your life, how can His work of joining you take place? It won't, because something is missing.

Before a person comes to faith in Christ, they are living on only two of the three levels of their existence. The Bible teaches that God has created us, body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). The real you is a spirit, that possesses a soul, which is your mind, emotions, and will, which is then housed inside your body. Before coming to believe in Jesus, a person's spirit is dead because of the sins they have committed (Eph. 2:1). Only after coming to faith in Christ, are you then made alive spiritually (Eph. 2:5).

He has promised, and He is also able to perform His work of transformation, if you are willing to surrender to Him.

My point is this. If you truly want the power to change your unloving behavior, and begin to live in such a way as God intended you to do toward your spouse, then you need the power of God to come and live inside you. His Holy Spirit will make your spirit come alive, and He will live inside you, which will enable you to be the man or the woman God has called you to be. Christ in you and your spouse is what brings the greatest companionship possible in this life.

4. I don't need counseling to resolve the issues in our marriage. Many times, this is true. I have seen couples who have minor problems work through the issues between them by obeying God's commands, and they grow together in their companionship over time. But there are some couples that cannot do it alone. You know that you are one of these couples when things get progressively worse and worse over time. When these couples do not get counseling, or if it is just one spouse who refuses to get help, this will not be a happy home. Conflicts do not resolve themselves; the issues must be dealt with in a biblical way!

The Bible is very clear on this topic. Solomon taught, "*Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety*"

(Prov. 11:14). This is why every church should have several pastors and elders who are trained to counsel marriages. Solomon also warned, "*Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established*" (Prov. 15:22). If you don't want God's plans for your marriage to be thwarted, then find a good biblical counselor, and get your marriage established on the rock of His truth. If you are reading this article and want to be trained to counsel others, check out the manual I have written, and the ten hours of video training as I teach through this material. This manual is entitled "*Counseling Couples in Crisis*" <https://www.covenantkeepers.org/books/counseling-helps>

5. It's my spouse's job to make me happy. When a spouse believes this lie, they are blinded to how selfish and self-centered they are. Thinking that anyone or anything can make you happy in life is just unrealistic. Why? A personal relationship with Jesus is the only way you will ever be truly happy in this life. As I wrote before, the real "you" is a spirit, and only the Holy Spirit can fill and satisfy the spiritual void in your life. No emotional or physical experience can ever satisfy the spiritual hunger you have within. This is why the psalmists wrote, "*Happy are the people whose God is the LORD*" (Ps. 144:15)! And again, "*Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God*" (Ps. 146:5). If you are hoping to find happiness anywhere else in life, you will always be disappointed.

Acknowledge this truth to your spouse and stop looking to your mate to satisfy the emptiness in your soul. God cried out to His people and said, "*Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you-- The sure mercies of David*" (Is. 55:2-3). So please, listen to the Lord, and come to Him, and He will cause you to experience real life, and you will never be the same again.

6. I can't change--this is who I am: take it or leave it. Again, this kind of thinking reveals a very selfish and egotistical person. When a person is unwilling to even attempt to make changes in their behavior to demonstrate love, it shows

that they really don't care in the least about you. In addition, this statement is contrary to everything the Bible teaches about salvation, repentance, love, and following Christ in a mature way.

When you are married to an individual like this, they have probably believed the lie that they are incapable of change. This results sometimes because these individuals are not believers in the first place. Others, simply don't want to make changes in their behavior. Still others don't know how to make the changes that are necessary. In all of these cases, you need to sit down and counsel with your pastor or an elder of your church. The first thing I do when I sit down with a new couple is to ask them to rate their willingness for change from one to ten. If they answer a one, I know that they don't really want to be there, and they have probably been forced to come. But if couples answer with a seven, eight, nine, or ten, then I know I have a chance to help them. Where do you rate yourself on this scale of willingness?

7. I just need a break from my spouse so I can have some peace. This lie sounds so good and so right. But you may be thinking, *What's wrong with a little relief from the fighting so I can have some peace?* There is nothing wrong with peace, but leaving your home or having your spouse leave will only provide a false peace. Why do I say a false peace? Because there is always going to be relief and peace in the absence of conflict. Anyone can be at peace when they are by themselves! If you went to live on a deserted island by yourself, you would never ever have another conflict with anyone for the rest of your life, but you sure would be lonely. However, what you really need to do is learn how to reconcile conflicts with your mate, so you can have peace while *in* your home. Leaving is seeking to escape reality. This is why Jesus spent so much of His ministry teaching His disciples how to get along with others (Matt. 18:15; Matt. 5:23-24; Luke 17:1-4). If you believe the lie that getting away from your spouse is how you can find peace, then what will keep you from the next step of seeking a divorce?

Before I leave this topic, there are exceptions to this rule of staying together. The exceptions would be when there is physical harm occurring to you or your children, or there is extreme verbal or emotionally abusive behavior by your

spouse. Please see my articles on these two topics for more guidance on how to deal with these issues. Just remember that you are the only one who can determine when it is more harmful for you to stay in the home, than it would be to leave.

8. I can disobey God and His Word, and I will be okay. This is the lie that Adam and Eve believed in the garden, recorded for us in Genesis 3. If you believe this lie, I have one question for you: How did Adam and Eve's disobedience work out for them? Did it make life better for them? I don't think so, and neither will it be better for your marriage.

This lie to disobey comes in many different forms over many different issues in your marriage. Let me cover a few of them. These examples, are not the only lies, but they are the ones I see the most in counseling.

A. I can hold resentment toward my mate and our marriage will still be okay. If you believe this lie, I can assure you that things in your marriage *will not* be okay. In fact, things between you and your spouse will slowly deteriorate. Why? Because you have set up a wall of resentment that will divide you from one another. Sin always divides people, and resentment is sin!

However, God's Word teaches that if you are resentful toward anyone, or you know someone is harboring resentment toward you, then you are commanded to seek reconciliation. Jesus said, *"If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift"* (Matt. 5:23-24). Jesus also dealt with the opposite circumstance when He taught, *"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother"* (Matt. 18:15). If you obey this simple instruction then this wall of resentment can be broken down. Only then can things get back to normal in your marriage.

B. I don't have to be spiritually or emotionally connected with my mate. I don't have to meet his or her needs, and we will be alright. When you believe a lie such as this, you are missing the entire purpose for why you are married. God has designed you to connect spiritually, verbally, emotionally, intellectually, recreationally, parentally, and sexually

with your spouse. This is why you are married! God designed you, and the relationship of marriage, so that you might find real companionship with your spouse. God declared in the book of Malachi, *"The LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant"* (Mal. 2:14). For true companionship to occur in your marriage you must connect and be knit together with your spouse in all these areas (Col. 2:2). If you don't think this is the case, how would you like it if your mate said to you, "I don't need to be connected with you sexually, or in some other area you considered important?" You would probably say at this point, "That's not fair, this is what a marriage partner does." You must conclude that if someone truly loves you, he or she will naturally want to connect with you in all areas of marital companionship.

C. I don't have to be completely honest with my spouse, and we will be okay. Lying comes in many different forms. If you recount a story, do you omit facts that make you look bad? That is lying. If you exaggerate facts, or add information that didn't occur, this also is lying. When you tell half-truths you will always be considered a liar, when all of the facts come to light. When you lie to your spouse, your mate will eventually find out the truth, because liars are never good at remembering their lies. I've watched people lie to each other so often that their lies become like a cancer in their relationship, eroding all trust between them. You see, the only basis of trust in a relationship, is truth. Note that the first virtue Solomon relates concerning a virtuous wife is that her husband trusts her. He asked, *"Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain"* (Prov. 31:10-11). Trust is the most basic building block of any marriage. If you don't possess absolute trust in your marriage, your relationship will not be okay.

D. I can get away with having an affair behind my mate's back. One thing I have observed with spouses who cheat, is that in 99% of the cases, somebody usually tells. God warns us in His Word, *"Be sure your sin will find you out"* (Num. 32:23). One way or another, your sin will always come to light. Either your conscience will torment you until you confess, or the

other person's conscience will give up the truth. And don't forget that all will be revealed at the final judgment. In other words, no one is ever going to get away with the sin of adultery.

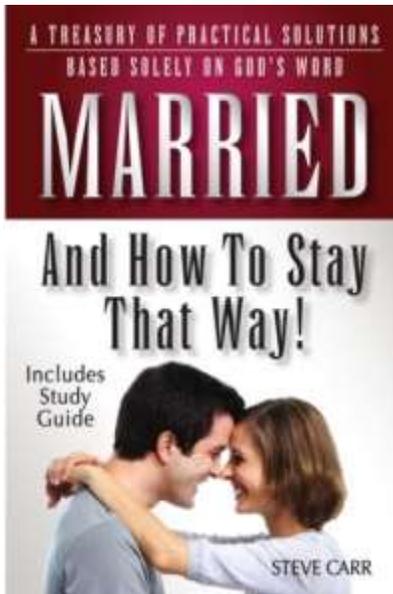
Can a marriage survive adultery? Yes, I have seen it many times, but it requires a total transformation of both marriage partners, and a turning from the issues that caused the adultery in the first place. The best thing is not to believe the lie that adultery is going to be a positive thing for you or your marriage. Think of it this way, if you go on to divorce your spouse and marry the person you are having an affair with, how could you ever trust your new spouse, or how could they trust you? If they committed adultery with you, why wouldn't they commit adultery with someone else when things become difficult in your relationship? The best course of action is to not believe the lie that adultery will bring something beneficial. It won't!

Let me conclude with an encouragement. If you are not believing any of these lies in your marriage today, then shout hallelujah! Please keep believing the truth given to you in Scripture concerning how to govern your life, and safeguard your marriage. Keep doing what you know is right. Listen to the God who knows how marriage works best!

COVENANT KEEPERS © 2022

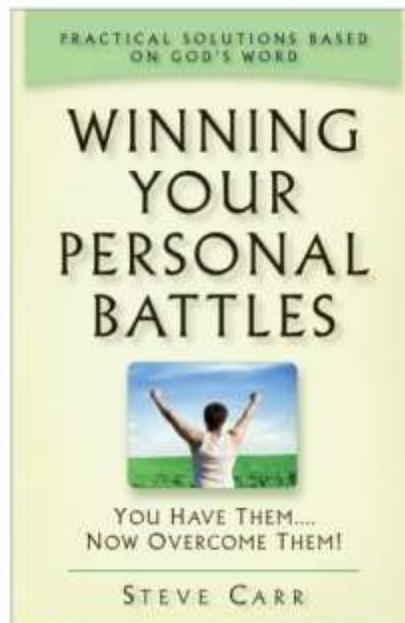
Please visit our website www.covenantkeepers.org for a complete list of available resources and over 600 articles, Bible studies, and discipleship material to help you and your marriage.

Married And How To Stay That Way: (New updated version includes study guide.)

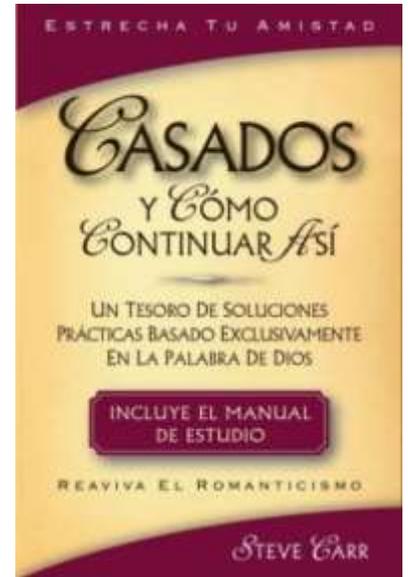


Winning Your Personal Battles:

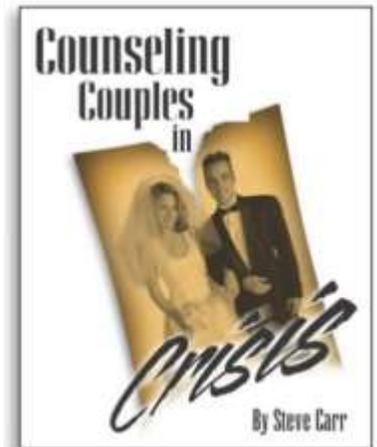
This is an invaluable resource that deals with the common struggles we all battle with throughout our lives. The issues covered in this book are the complicating problems that always seem to frustrate your marriage and other relationships.



Spanish Edition of Married and How To Stay That Way! (Study Guide included).



Counselor Training Manual: The *Counseling Couples in Crisis* manual with accompanying video training material has been developed for pastors and lay counselors to assist them to counsel couples in crisis.



Telephone orders: (805) 489-9088
Have your VISA or MasterCard ready.

E-mail orders: Send all shipping and credit card information to:
scarck@lightspeed.net

Internet orders: www.amazon.com

Postal orders: Pastor Steve Carr, PO Box 463, Arroyo Grande, CA 93421

Book Prices: See our website
www.covenantkeepers.org