

**Mal 2:15-16 NLT**

*Didn't the LORD make you one with your wife? In body and spirit you are his. And what does he want? Godly children from your union. So guard yourself; remain loyal to the wife of your youth. "For I hate divorce!" says the LORD, the God of Israel. "It is as cruel as putting on a victim's bloodstained coat," says the LORD Almighty. "So guard yourself; always remain loyal to your wife."*

**How to Save Your Marriage by Yourself**

*(A summary of Key Thoughts from Love Life by Dr. Ed Wheat)*

***Prepare for the Battle of Your Life***

1. Clarify your thoughts - your goal is to please God in everything you say and do.
2. Stabilize your emotions - trust in what God says and not what your feelings are telling you.
  3. Learn to love - Memorize and meditate on 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.
  4. Prepare for the worst - things often get worse before they get better.
  5. Prepare to be rejected - don't become the "desperate salesman" - never beg.

***Practical Suggestions from Those Who Have Been in Your Shoes***

1. There can be no growth in your relationship as long as there is doubt as to your commitment to your marriage.  
Make your commitment!
2. When your spouse withholds their love, trust the Lord to meet your emotional needs. He won't let you down.
3. Give your spouse honor, love, and Biblical respect even though their actions do not deserve it. Give them warm acceptance no matter what. The more hopeless your situation the more your loving behavior is apt to be accepted as genuine.
  4. Don't try to reform your spouse. Just love them.
  5. Live one day at a time.
  6. Don't try to do it on your own. The God of the Universe is with you!
7. Don't be bitter toward anyone in the situation. Never turn your children against your spouse. Forgive!
  8. Don't ask family and friends to take sides against your spouse.
  9. Don't discuss your intimate marriage problems. Don't give fuel for gossip. Confide in the Lord, your counselor, and perhaps a close Christian friend whom you can trust to keep silent. Never discuss your problems with a friend of the opposite sex.
    10. Choose your Biblical counselor wisely.
    11. Spend as much time in the Word of God as possible.
  12. Concentrate on yourself, redeeming the mistakes you have made, and asking God to show you how to change, rather than concentrating on your partner's failures.
    13. Avoid separating. Encourage your spouse to stay in the home.

14. Do everything in your power to delay and prevent a divorce. If you must consult with an attorney, make it clear to the lawyer that it is only for your financial protection and that of your children. Find a Christian lawyer who will help you preserve your marriage.
15. Spend your time with people who will encourage you in your spiritual growth.
16. Do not overcompensate with your children. They need your love and stability in this difficult time, but they also need your discipline.
17. Do not try to defend yourself from gossip or criticism. Keep your mouth shut. The Lord will fight for you.
18. Remember that the most innocent thing you say will get twisted. Avoid loose talk and do not listen to gossip.
19. When you do anything to pull the marriage apart, you are going against God's will. Let that be your guideline for all decisions.
20. Don't expect your spouse to change overnight when they do re-commit to the marriage.
21. The hardest time may be when you are reconciled and you have a tendency to fall back into old habit patterns. Don't do it!
22. Hope all things, believe all things, endure all things.
23. Read the love story in the book of Hosea

*Luke 6:27-36 NLT*

*27 "But if you are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. 28 Pray for the happiness of those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. 29 If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn the other cheek. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. 30 Give what you have to anyone who asks you for it; and when things are taken away from you, don't try to get them back. 31 Do for others as you would like them to do for you. 32 "Do you think you deserve credit merely for loving those who love you? Even the sinners do that! 33 And if you do good only to those who do good to you, is that so wonderful? Even sinners do that much! 34 And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, what good is that? Even sinners will lend to their own kind for a full return. 35 "Love your enemies! Do good to them! Lend to them! And don't be concerned that they might not repay. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to the unthankful and to those who are wicked. 36 You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.*

**\*Historical Note -** Until the writings of the humanist Desiderius Erasmus(1466-1536), it was the almost unanimous view of the Church fathers that there were no Scriptural grounds for divorce, and that if divorce should occur, there was positively no Scriptural basis for remarriage. Ambrosiaster, a Latin writer of the fourth century, was the one dissenter to this view.

**VIP -** After 35 years of study, I am embarrassed to say, that I still have no firm and final conviction regarding either the Bible's teaching on *legitimate* grounds for divorce or if re-marriage to another is an option in God's eyes. Consequently, I have chosen to be charitable to the many different views on divorce and re-marriage that are held by those in the Body of Christ. All I would ask of my brothers and sisters in Jesus is that we would not so glibly or quickly recommend divorce as a solution to marital problems.

## Why I Personally Never Recommend or Encourage a Person to Divorce Their Mate

### Because:

**1. I cannot, in good conscience, recommend something that God says He "hates."**  
(Mal 2:16)

**2. There is strong support from Scripture, Jewish literature, historical background, and immediate context that the "exception clause" of *marital unfaithfulness* (Greek-*porneia*) mentioned by Jesus in Matt 5:32 and Matt 19:9 referred to "technically illegal marriages" prohibited by the Hebrew "Law of Holiness" (Lev 18:6-20). Thus, a person who discovered *porneia* during the betrothal period could legitimately dissolve the union on the grounds that it was a:**

- a. marriage between two people of the same sex  
(a homosexual marriage)
- b. marriage between close relatives  
(an incestuous marriage)
- c. marriage where the bridegroom discovers that his bride is not a virgin  
(a fraudulent marriage)

**3. Divorce doesn't really work - each of the parties simply carry their hurts, habits, and hang-ups to another relationship.**

roughly 50% of first marriages fail; 74% of second ones fail; and 84% of third marriages fail.

**4. Divorce does irreparable damage to one's children.**

Matt 18:6 NLT

But if anyone causes one of these little ones who trusts in me to lose faith, it would be better for that person to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around the neck.

**5. Divorce is a terrible witness to the non-believing world**

1 John 2:9-10 NLT

If anyone says, "I am living in the light," but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is still living in darkness. Anyone who loves other Christians is living in the light and does not cause anyone to stumble.

**6. Divorce hurts other struggling marriages**

The greatest hindrances I have in talking people out of a divorce are their friends who tell them how happy they are since they have divorced and remarried.

**\*Ultimately, I never recommend divorce; I labor with all God's resources to help struggling couples who seek my assistance to save their marriages; and if a couple divorces, I endeavor to love both parties.**

