

Helpful hints about marriage

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By Judith Biggs

BIG SANDY, Texas—If you have been to bridal showers, you know the organizers of those event often ask the guests to write helpful words of advice and encouragement for the engaged couple. Those of us who have been married for a while enjoy trying to help.

As I was reviewing something I had written in the past, I decided to share some of those same thoughts in this article.

I have been asked many times why our marriage has lasted. Oftentimes the people who ask the question are aware of the traumatic events we have seen in our marriage. Not only do we still have a marriage, but we are more in love than when we first tied the knot. I want to give some helpful reminders about how to survive the bad times.

I will first give you a little background. Our marriage has been a practical marriage. Chuck desperately needed a helpmate and a good mother for his two children. I was getting older and needed a new direction in my life. I needed to be needed.

We met the first week of January 1966. I started helping with the kids with no intention of marriage. We became such a good team that we tied the knot on May 1, 1966.

Little did we know that we would be ravaged shortly by all kinds of weird maladies, sickness, death and poverty. This had continued for years with little letup.

A few reminders

So why did we not only stay together but continue to love one another?

Notice the following nine factors.

- Appreciation. Don't let a day go by without a morning hug.
- Kindness. Some of the ways we show kindness to each other are serving morning coffee in bed, offering to help the other person and asking the other person for help.

- Let each person have his own pet projects. This may sound trivial, but it's not. In bad times it may be the only thing that is helping that person deal with extreme emotional distress.
- Manage money. Do it together. Both of you need to feel secure about where the money is coming from and how it is spent.
- Be a team. Both of you need to know how to do whatever needs to be done and to do it.
- Bulldog determination and dedication. We set out to make a go of our marriage, and we did it. If you need to sit down together and really talk turkey, then do it. Don't hint, say nasty things or walk away.
- Never, ever lose your sense of humor.
- Be forgiving, because you will both make your share of mistakes. Some of those mistakes could cost you dearly.
- Pay attention to the needs of the other person.

Some great benefits

If you follow those reminders (as well as other good suggestions), you can have some great benefits in your life. Here are five benefits that jumped into my mind.

- You will still have a marriage and not just two people living in the same house.
- You will not have to deal with hate.
- There will be no divorce or wishing for one.
- You won't have to deal with fighting. You can have peace.
- Most of all, you have the hope of being joint heirs with Christ.

Just maybe Chuck and I will be a team forever. It is worth working for, don't you think?

Here's my last piece of advice: Start practicing now and when a bad time comes, you will know exactly what to do.