

Put the Past Behind

God's plan for your marriage begins with getting rid of everything you've ever done to hurt the marriage. He wants you to put the past behind. What happened 5 minutes ago is irrelevant to what you do 5 minutes from now.

One translation of Phil. 3:13 says, "I put all my energies into forgetting (or changing) my past and instead look to the future through Christ."

Wherever you're at in your marriage, God wants to take you to a new level. If you're strong, God wants to make you even stronger so you can be a mightier force for the kingdom.

If you're weak and ready to crumble, God wants to pick you up, dust you off and make you strong for the kingdom.

Too often, we lose sight of what our marriage is supposed to be: A reflection of God's love for people. It's not about populating the planet. It's not about your personal happiness. It's about God.

Throughout the Bible, God's people are referred to in marital terms, most often as his "bride." God does this for a reason: He wants us to think of our relationship with Him with the same passion a bride eyes her groom. But along with intensity, there's a purpose to our marriage as it creates the cornerstone for God's work on Earth.

Put simply, people should be able to look at our marriages and see God's principles at work:

- Love
- acceptance
- forgiveness
- mercy
- patience
- kindness
- goodness
- faithfulness
- gentleness
- self-control

Unfortunately, many of us are self-centered in our view of marriage. It's what *we think* it should be.

And inevitably it misses God's mark.

*Excerpt from Enjoying Marriage
By Rick and Charlotte Redding*

A New Beginning

God always restores and makes new. To begin the process, He wants each of you – each person, not each couple – to prepare yourself for a new beginning. A new marriage.

Your marriage has to be built upon commitment. **Your first commitment is to Christ.**

Over and over in the Bible, we're told God has to be the foundation and center of all we do or else, as Jesus said, our lives will crumble like the house built on sand.

This isn't some fanatical "religious" thing. It's about building your life – and then your marriage – on the Truth (John 14:6).

Maybe you're strong in your relationship with God. Maybe you've haven't talked to Him in awhile. Maybe you don't even know God.

Regardless of your current relationship with God, ask yourself a sincere question: "Am I ready?"

- Are you ready for the truth?
- Are you ready to fight for your marriage?
- Are you ready to learn and practice solid principles that will radically transform your marriage?

Are you ready for change?