In Sickness and in Health: Renewing Your Commitment

Are you truly committed to your spouse in sickness and in health?

by Erin Prater

When you first met your spouse, you were attracted to his shining qualities: his rugged handsomeness, caring heart, strong hands and sense of humor that made you downright giddy. The two of you married. But living side-by-side with your spouse may have caused you to become disenchanted by some of his habits – serious or otherwise – you were previously unaware of.

Deployment was painful, but it served as a "reset" button for your relationship. The hurts of the past were replaced with longings to be with your spouse again, to have him hold you and to simply hear his voice. Your homecoming experience was equally romantic. You'll never forget that moment, that embrace, as long as you live.

It's been a few months, and the homecoming buzz has now faded away like the honeymoon phase of the newlywed years. Your service member is irritable, moody and distant. He has trouble sleeping and often wakes up crying from nightmares. Sometimes you worry he'll hurt himself. You find yourself wondering, "Is this the man I married? Where's my husband? Where's my brave, strong protector? Where's the man who used to care about me? Where's the father of our children?" You're trying to adjust to your "new normal," but every fiber of your being is rebelling against your attempts.

God delighted in gifting you with your spouse – a man with all the wonderful qualities that initially attracted you to him. But just as God refuses to love you and leave you as you are, He challenges you to become more like Jesus through qualities of your spouse, and situations in your marriage, that aren't as alluring.

Marriage isn't a fairy tale, and it isn't forever. Aside from the production of children and pleasure, God practically designed it for spiritual growth and companionship. Adopting this practical view makes it easier to take in stride the not-so-picturesque moments of marriage.

Are you truly committed to your spouse in sickness and in health? Just as God provided you with your mate, He will provide you with the strength to live out your vows, one day at a time. Frequently remind your spouse that you're "in this for the long haul." Stick it out with sheer determination when times get tough. Frame your marriage vows, and display them in a prominent place.

Rely on God for the strength to "be Jesus" to your spouse, and watch Him extend to you the same grace and love through your spouse.

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