

UPDATED & EXPANDED

LIES
Women
BELIEVE

AND THE TRUTH THAT SETS THEM FREE



NANCY DEMOSS
WOLGEMUTH



LIES WOMEN BELIEVE . . . ABOUT *Marriage*

Things are pretty quiet around the house at the moment—mostly because Adam and I aren't exactly on speaking terms. We had a big fight last night. I should've seen it coming.

The day got off to a rough start. He had been up all night helping one of the cows give birth. Then he had to leave before breakfast to get the rest of the hay stored. When he finally got home, he was hot and sweaty, exhausted, and not in the greatest mood.

I had been cooped up in the house all day with two sick kids, and when he asked why dinner wasn't ready, I suggested that if he wanted dinner, maybe he'd better fix it himself. I don't know why I chose that moment to remind him that I wished he'd clear out the path in front of the house. (It looks like a jungle with all the weeds.)

One thing led to another, and soon we were arguing about the children. Adam had told Abel he could go on a special hunting trip with him next week. I feel Abel's too young, and besides, I don't think he should take Abel and leave Cain behind.

Adam wouldn't back down, and things got pretty tense. We both said a lot of things we probably shouldn't have said. I went to bed early and pretended I was asleep when he came in.

You'd think after all these years together we would have this marriage thing down. Funny thing is, for the most part, I think Adam would say our marriage is doing fine. But sometimes I feel like we're total strangers—even though we've

known each other all our lives. He always thinks he's right about everything. When I ask him to try and see things from my point of view, he says that nothing will make me happy.

I just wish he would be more sensitive to my feelings.

Marriage was designed by God to reflect the gospel and the story of redemption. What took place in the Garden of Eden thousands of years ago was an attack on that important picture. In undermining that sacred institution, Satan struck a forceful blow against God's eternal plan and His very character.

It's no coincidence that Satan launched his sinister plan by approaching a married woman. He lied to her about God, about His character and His Word, and about sin and its consequences. She believed and acted on his lie, then turned to her husband and drew him into sin with her.

The implications in their marriage were profound. Shame replaced freedom. Pretense and hiding replaced transparency and fellowship. The oneness Eve and her husband had experienced in their original state now turned to enmity and animosity—not only toward God, but toward each other.

Instead of providing loving leadership for his wife, the man was now prone to extremes ranging from domineering control to passive detachment. The protection the woman had been granted under her spiritual "head" was removed, and the independent spirit she had exerted toward God now displayed itself toward her husband, leaving her vulnerable to greater deception and sin. The relationship between a man, a woman, and their God that was intended to be selfless and joyful now became self-protective and toxic.

And so it has been ever since in marriages that attempt to function independently of their Creator.

As with other areas of our lives, Satan uses deception to achieve his destructive purposes for marriage. If he can get husbands and wives to believe and act on his lies, he can succeed in stealing their joy and destroying their intimacy. His lies are legion, lies such as . . .

26. “I have to have a husband to be happy.”

Like many other lies, this lie is actually a subtle distortion of the Truth. The Truth is that marriage is a good gift. It is God’s plan for most people, and there can (and ought to) be great joy and blessing in a Christ-centered marriage. But Satan twists the Truth about marriage by suggesting to women that marriage is their sole ticket to personal happiness and fulfillment and that they can’t be truly happy without a husband to love them and meet their needs.

Once they have a husband, many women start to believe variations of this lie: “I have to have this or that kind of husband to be happy” or “My husband is supposed to make me happy.” Only after years of heartache did “Myrna” recognize the folly of this way of thinking:

After ten years together, my husband and I split up. I had believed that it was his responsibility to make me happy. It never was, and it never worked. Not only was I in bondage, but he was also.

The Truth is that the highest and ultimate purpose of marriage is not to make us happy, but to glorify God. Women who get married for the sole purpose of finding happiness are setting themselves up for almost certain disappointment; they seldom find what they are looking for. And women who believe they have to have a husband in order to be happy often settle for less than what God intended to give them.

“Joan” shared with me how believing this lie led to unanticipated consequences:

During my college years, having a boyfriend, a fiancé, and then a husband who was a good man but not necessarily committed to Christ was more important to me than waiting upon God and asking Him to bring a strong believer into my life to marry. As a result, we have not been able to grow in Christ together. After twenty-eight years of marriage, we do not do many things together. My friends are Christians; his friends are not Christians. My priority is my children; his priority is his work.

This woman believed she had to have a husband to be happy. She acted on that belief by marrying a man who was not a believer, contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture. She got what she thought she wanted—a man—but ended up with spiritual leanness in her soul (Ps. 106:15).

Only by recognizing and embracing the Truth can true freedom be found—with or without a husband, as the following true stories illustrate:

I lost my father when I was fourteen and got married at age sixteen. I see now that I let my husband become my security and my reason to live. As our children grew up and we had struggles in our marriage, I was in bondage to the feeling that I couldn't live without my husband. My husband could not tolerate the suffocation I was causing and started thinking he needed to get out to breathe.

God used some friends to show me that I needed to turn loose of "Carl" and take hold of Him. Once I did so, I was free. My husband grew through all this and never did leave. We praise God all the time for bringing us through to celebrate thirty-six years of marriage.



I have struggled with the lie that without marriage I have no value, that perhaps something is wrong with me that I'm still single. Believing this lie has robbed me of the joy of serving God and others (because I have been so absorbed with my own goals).

It has taken me many years to trust that God is sovereign and that He has a plan for me. My focus now (at age forty) is to spend my remaining years taking advantage of the many opportunities to serve Him and allowing Him to change me into the most Christ-like woman I can be. This life is so short. He has helped me have an eternal perspective so the sorrows and disappointments of this world can be happily endured.

I love the final sentence of that last testimony. In this fallen world, no one, married or single, is exempt from “sorrows and disappointments.”

There simply is no such thing as cloudless happiness this side of heaven. However, as this unmarried woman has learned, we can “happily endure” whatever circumstances we may face here on earth by looking beyond this life and gaining an eternal perspective.

Between here and heaven, neither our marital status nor, for those of us who are married, the status of our marriage can provide or deprive us of ultimate happiness.

I have known both single and married women who were chronically unhappy. I have also known both single and married women who were truly happy in spite of facing “sorrows and disappointments.” They had found a source of joy that is not dependent on their marital status.

I have been on both sides of the marital divide myself. Until my late fifties I was single. Those years included periods of loneliness and longing for companionship. But throughout that lengthy season, which I was sure would be for the rest of my life, the Lord kindly allowed me to experience His friendship and His all-sufficiency and gave me the privilege of serving Him and others “without distraction” (1 Cor. 7:35 CSB). By God’s grace I received those years as a gift and was blessed with contentment and joy in that calling.

Then the Lord surprised me (to say the least) by bringing a wonderful man into my life. I love Robert dearly and am deeply grateful to be loved and cherished by this tender, humble, godly man. But Robert Wolgemuth is no substitute for God, and as much as he might want to, he cannot meet the deepest needs of my heart. And this new season of marriage, sweet as it is, has brought new challenges as well as new opportunities.

Still, I am receiving these years as a gift and finding contentment and joy in this calling. And if God, in His wisdom and providence, ordains for one or both of us to be incapacitated or for me to be widowed at some point, I know that the spring of joy that Christ has been to me all these years will remain unchanged and will sustain me through those seasons of loss and grief.

In all this, I am relying on the same Truth that has sustained me through the years:

- The source of deepest happiness is not found in (or out of) any particular marital status. It is not found in any human relationship. True, lasting joy cannot be found in anything or anyone other than Christ Himself.
- Happiness is not found in having everything we think we want, but in choosing to be satisfied with what God has already provided.
- Those who insist on having their own way often end up with unnecessary heartache, while those who wait on the Lord, while not immune from heartache, always get His best.
- God has promised to give us everything we need and to conform us to the image of His Son. If He knows a husband (or a changed husband) would make it possible for a woman to be more like Jesus or to bring greater glory to Him, then He will provide what is needed, in His perfect way and time.

27. “It’s my job to change my mate (or children or friends or . . .).”

Many of us women are born “fixers.” If something is wrong, we’ve got to fix it. If *someone* is wrong, we’ve got to fix him or her. The instinct seems almost irresistible, especially when it comes to those who live under our own roof. But the mindset that it is our responsibility to change others invariably leads to disappointment and discord.

In the context of marriage, this thinking places a wife’s focus on someone else’s failures and needs—which she can do very little, if anything, about. Further, it takes her focus off of her own needs and her own walk with the Lord—which she *can* do something about.

As I’ve often heard my husband say, “You can’t change your mate [or your office mate or your roommate]! The only person you can change is *you!*”

Years ago a friend shared with me something she was learning in her marriage—a Truth I have found important to remember in my own marriage: “I am not my husband’s mother,” she said, “and I am not his Holy Spirit.” Simple enough to say, isn’t it? But so easy to forget!

So does that mean that when we see sin or blind spots in our mate’s life we are to say and do nothing? Not at all. Your husband needs your timely, respectful, kind input (as you need his). But when we’re obsessed with trying to change our husband or correct what we perceive to be his faults and flaws, we’re likely to end up frustrated and resentful toward him and perhaps even toward God. We may also limit God from doing what He wants to do in our spouse. I sometimes wonder how God might move in our mates’ lives if we were willing to let Him take over the process.

What many women may not realize is that we have two powerful tools available to us that are far more effective than lecturing, nagging, or whining. The first is *a godly life*, which God often uses to create irresistible conviction and spiritual hunger in others (see 1 Peter 3:1–4).

The second tool is *prayer*. When we continually and critically point out the things we wish our husbands would change, they are likely to become defensive and resistant. But when we take our concerns to the Lord, we are appealing to a far higher power—to Someone who is far more effective than we are at helping him see his needs and motivating and enabling him to make needed changes.

Mike Neises has served with me on the *Revive Our Hearts* team for over twenty years. I’ve often heard him share the sweet story of how he and his wife came to know Jesus. They had been married for several years and had two children when Chris, sensing her need for spiritual guidance, turned to a Christian neighbor for help. This neighbor offered to do a couple’s Bible study with Mike and Chris in their home. Mike acquiesced, knowing this was important to his wife but assuming he was immune to anything “religious.”

It wasn’t long before Chris became a follower of Christ. Mike quickly realized something was different in her life; he was intrigued, but something held him back from following her. At the time, he remembers,

Alcohol was my besetting sin. I worked hard to keep it separate from my family, but it was bankrupting me morally, emotionally, and physically.

Over the next several months, however, Chris quietly prayed for the Spirit to work in her husband's heart. Mike recalls:

Chris remained respectful of me and never pressed me. She never tried to be the Holy Spirit in my life. I know I would have resisted if she had started preaching at me. What struck me the most was the incredible patience and restraint she showed when it could have been easy for her to lecture, scold, or prod.

Finally, one evening "it all came crashing down." After playing racquetball, Mike stopped at a bar with a friend for "just one drink." Five hours later the bartender called his name to let him know he had a phone call. It was Chris. The Lord used her calm response in the midst of that crisis to open Mike's eyes and heart to the gospel.

I was ashamed and remorseful, and after I sobered up it was the wake-up call I needed, showing me that I had no control over this and that Christ was my only hope.

Immediately following that episode, the Lord completely took away Mike's desire for alcohol—he walked away from that lifestyle and never looked back. And within the next couple of months, he trusted in Christ and received assurance of his salvation.

As Mike and Chris have walked through many different seasons, Chris has continued to be a quiet, praying woman of God, trusting Him to lead and to work in both of their lives.

WHEN GOD STEPS IN

Of course, the answer to prayer doesn't always come as quickly as it did in Chris' case. Some time ago a woman I didn't recognize approached me at a wedding reception and said, "You saved my marriage!" When I asked her to refresh my memory, she reminded me that we had met seventeen years

earlier at a ministry event. At the time, she had shared with me her burden in relation to her husband's spiritual condition. "You told me back then," she said, "It's not your responsibility to change your husband; that's God's responsibility. Tell your husband what's on your heart and then back off and let God do the rest." She continued, "For all these years, I have practiced that advice and have shared it with many other wives."

She went on to tell me what it had meant for her to wait on the Lord to change her husband. For sixteen long years she had prayed and waited, without seeing any evidence that God was hearing or answering her prayers. Though her husband professed to be a Christian, the lack of spiritual hunger or fruit in his life had made her question whether he had a relationship with the Lord at all.

Then, "unexplainably," after all those years, the Spirit turned on the light and brought about a dramatic change in that woman's husband. It was as though he had come out of a coma. All of a sudden he couldn't get enough of the Word. He even started keeping a notepad with him to record what God was saying to him through his study. She said, "Before this change I could hardly get him out of bed for breakfast. Now, he's going to a men's prayer meeting at six thirty every morning!" Recently, he had even talked about the possibility of selling his business so they could spend more time in some form of ministry. There is no human explanation for what happened to change this husband—except a faithful God and a faithful wife who persevered in prayer for her husband.

I love the example of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in this regard. An angel appeared and told her she was going to be the mother of the Messiah—an incredible experience. But you had to be there! When she told Joseph what had happened, initially he apparently did not believe her explanation. He hadn't seen any angel. Reason led him to conclude that she had been unfaithful to him.

There's no indication that Mary pressured Joseph to believe what she knew God had told her. Instead, she waited on God and gave Him the opportunity to communicate directly to her husband—which is exactly

what happened. Once the angel appeared to Joseph, Joseph was quick to respond and believe. Mary knew how to keep things in her heart and ponder them (see Luke 2:19). She could afford to wait quietly because she knew the power of God and trusted Him to fulfill His plans for her life and her family.

To be clear, your godly life and prayers, no matter how faithful and earnest, do not guarantee that your husband will turn to the Lord or that he will repent of sinful choices and habits. But as you pray and trust the Lord for your marriage, I can guarantee that *something* will change. You will grow stronger and wiser. Your example may influence others and inspire them to trust God too. And you can experience supernatural peace as you steadfastly entrust yourself, your mate, and your marriage to Christ to do what only He can do.

Interested in the whole book?
Select your preferred book seller:

[MOODY PUBLISHERS](#) 

[AMAZON](#) 

[APPLE BOOKS](#) 

[GOOGLE PLAY](#) 

[TARGET](#) 

[BARNES & NOBLE](#) 

[CHRISTIANBOOK.COM](#) 