



Secrets to a Successful Marriage

Principle number Four

Always Forgive

I am going to just touch on forgiveness in principle four. In principle twenty-two I will expound on this subject in more detail.

Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you.

No one can hurt, disappoint, and make you angry like your spouse can. It seems they know how to push just the right buttons to get you angry, hurt your feelings, and put you down. Although many, many times the offense was not intended, the communication was misunderstood. We all say things we don't mean. We all say things that we regret.

The law of forgiveness simply says this: "When someone violates or offends you, if you will forgive them you release that hurt out of your heart, if you do not forgive them you retain that hurt." The hurt turns into resentment and bitterness. The hurt is like a seed in your heart. If allowed to stay, it will grow and it will reproduce itself. You will end up in one form or another doing to someone else what was done to you. You end up doing the thing you hated. When your spouse offends you, forgive them even if you have to do it a hundred times a day. Each time you forgive them, you release that hurt out of your life. God will heal you of that hurt and you can continue in your relationship with your spouse. The moment you do not forgive, your marriage begins to die. It may take several years to completely die, but it started the moment you did not forgive. From this day forward begin thanking God for your spouse. When they disappoint or offend you, begin to say, "Heavenly Father, I forgive my spouse and I thank you for giving them to me."

In marriage it takes time to learn to live with each other. All of us were used to making our own decisions, doing what was best for us. It takes time to change. Be patient with your spouse, allowing them the time it takes to make these changes. While we are learning to change, we are going to offend one another on a regular basis. If we don't understand the law of forgiveness, we will begin to resent our spouse. We will become bitter toward them. The romantic feelings will die. We will begin to think we don't love our spouse anymore. If you would forgive them, the romantic feelings would return. Always remember forgiveness is a

choice. You do not forgive because you feel like it. You forgive because you want to be free from the bitterness and resentment in your heart. After you choose to forgive you still may have hurt in your heart but in time the hurt will heal. You forgive for the sake of peace and for the sake of your marriage. You forgive because it's a law that will protect your heart and your marriage. You forgive because you choose to.

A Time to Reflect

1. When you are at odds with your spouse do you hear the list of offenses against them in your mind?
2. Is there resentment in your heart towards your spouse?
3. Are your emotions dead or dying towards your spouse?
4. Do you take everything your spouse says personal?
5. Are willing to forgive your spouse for the sake of your marriage?