BEFORE THE LAST RESORT

3 SIMPLE QUESTIONS TO RESCUE YOUR MARRIAGE

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“I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?”

Jeremiah 32:27 NIV
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Introduction

I have a hunch.

My guess is that a close friend, your pastor, or a family member gave you this book. If so, let’s be honest. You probably forced a smile and, for a quick second, contemplated using it as fire starter the moment this well-meaning person walked away. I don’t blame you. After all, if the “For Sale” sign is planted in the front yard and your lawyer is telling you that you’ve got to get custody of the kids, you must be wondering: What’s this book going to tell me about saving my marriage that I haven’t already tried?

If you are a woman, I imagine you’ve been processing the troubling issues in your marriage for months—if not years. You’ve been to counselors and yet you remain frustrated that the guy you married is so unbelievably “dense,” which is why you’ve probably been planning your exit strategy for weeks.

You’re so done rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic.

Besides, who has time to read, right?

Especially if you’re worried about where you’ll be living after the house is sold.

You’ve got kids to juggle, a spouse who may be uncommunicative or hostile, and a job where you’re not allowed to bring in your problems. You’re sleeping less at night primarily because you’re exhausted from walking on eggshells all day. What you long for isn’t another “marriage saving” book. My guess is that you want to find the quickest way to stop the pain, some shortcut to lead you out of the maze of bitterness, disillusionment, and hurt.

I don’t blame you if you have those feelings.
When you were first married, all you wanted was to love someone special and experience love in return. Now, however, a root canal seems more appealing than spending another day trapped in a difficult marriage. I understand that your heart is capable of withstanding only so many bruises and that even now you may be clutching on to your last ounce of dignity.

Frankly, I wouldn’t be the least bit surprised to hear you say that, after many months of useless therapy, you’ve resolved yourself to the inevitable: a divorce. While you’re numb at the thought of calling it quits—not to mention struggling with the pressure, embarrassment, and guilt over your decision—what choice do you have? You’re exhausted from trying to pull your marriage out of the quicksand.

On the other hand, maybe you’re a guy who’s finally awakening to the fact that something isn’t right between you and your spouse. Like an early morning fog that’s lifting, you’re seeing more clearly what your wife has been trying to get you to see for years. Or, perhaps she moved out in the middle of the night and left you with a note that caught you completely off guard. Now, much like finding yourself on a runaway train, you think all you can do is assume the “crash position” and hope for the best.

Whether you’re a man or woman, it’s also possible that you’ve been caught in an affair and can’t imagine turning back to make things right. You might claim that you don’t love your spouse anymore and you’re convinced your marriage is over. Your choices demonstrate you mentally checked out long ago. And, you’ve probably announced that you never loved your partner to begin with.

No matter what your circumstances are, I am convinced that if you stay with me until the end of this short book, a genuine miracle awaits you.
How can I be so confident?

Simply put, for the last thirty years I’ve witnessed countless miracles firsthand. You see, I pastored a church in Minneapolis where we saw God heal about 90 percent of the marriages of all the couples we counseled.

You might want to read that again.

I’m talking about healing marriages with deep, hardcore problems. Couples ensnared in a thick web of deceit, adultery, physical or verbal abuse—even homosexual or lesbian entanglements. Time and time again, I’ve stepped back in amazement as I’ve watched God radically transform the ashes of a failed marriage into a thing of beauty.

This is why I am convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that He desires to do the same for you. Even if your marriage isn’t in desperate straights, I believe you’ll still find our conversation in the pages ahead beneficial for your marriage or that of a friend who may be struggling.

In this book, I will show you how you can experience healing, renewed hope, and a revival in your marriage. But don’t take just my word for it. Throughout these pages I’ll share with you dozens of power stories from those whose marriages were over and who now—sometimes three, five, even fifteen years later—are happier, healthier, and closer than they ever dreamed possible.

Now, if I have learned anything from three decades of working with couples in your situation, it’s that few have the emotional capacity or time to work through a long list of exercises or homework assignments. This is why, at the end of each chapter, I’ll provide you with the “One Thing”—a simple, yet practical application that will help you move toward healing. These powerful tips and tools will enable you to reconnect with your spouse while the Lord is supernaturally working behind the scenes to restore your marriage.
Don’t get me wrong. There are no quick fixes, silver bullets, or magic wands to wave. I’m a realist. At times you will experience a barrage of doubt or a flood of anger. At other times you may feel as if you’re treading water, barely able to keep your head above the crashing waves of despair.

Let me assure you that you are not alone.

In fact, Jeremiah, one of the writers of the Bible, has already thrown you the ultimate lifeline with his observation, “Sovereign LORD, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for You” (Jeremiah 32:17). Nothing means not one thing—including restoring a stagnant, dying marriage. Indeed, the Creator who made heaven and earth longs to rescue you from the deep waters you find yourself in today.

I realize you may have already given up hope. But, I challenge you to dare to hope again as you and I begin an adventure to discover what can happen when we say yes to the power of Jesus. That is the heart of this book. The God that chose you, who loves you and sent His son Jesus to die for you, is a God who has resources in heaven—riches, strength, power, and might—that are beyond your imagination.

Based on my many years of involvement with hundreds of couples, as well as what God has revealed in the Bible, I am convinced that God cares about you personally. He cares about your family, your marriage, and He especially cares about the fact that you are hurting today.

Will you give Him one more chance?

I can think of no better story to set the stage for your personal road to a relationship revival than the story of John and Amy.1 If you’re ready to discover what God can do and what He desires to do for your marriage, read on.
The first time I met John and Amy for counseling, Amy announced that she had already been to two Christian counselors and both had advised her to file for a divorce. I suppose the reason for this assessment was that Amy claimed she didn’t love John anymore. In fact, Amy made it painfully clear that she was in love with someone else, and as far as she was concerned, it was time to move on.

Since John and Amy had been attending the church where I was pastoring, they decided to see me before they called it quits. You might say this was a last resort to salvage things between them. After listening to them vent, I asked them a series of questions, which, frankly, may appear simplistic at first glance. As you’ll see in a moment, I am convinced that the way a couple responds to these three questions is fundamental to their future success together.

Here’s what I asked them:

1. Do you believe that there is a God?
2. Are you willing to apply the principles of the Bible to your life?
3. **Will you pray for God to strengthen you and your spouse?**

Both John and Amy acknowledged that they believed in God. Both agreed to apply the principles of the Bible to their life. And, both said they would pray for God to touch them and their marriage. So far, so good. I proceeded to tell them, “On the authority of God’s Holy Word, the Bible, and the power of His promises, I will absolutely guarantee that this marriage will come back together!”

Then, like pouring cold water on the spark of hope in John’s eyes, Amy informed us that she was unwilling to give up her relationship with her lover. The thought of leaving someone who had become her soul partner was too much to ask.

Amy maintained that her lover understood her ... he knew how to meet her needs ... he cared for her in ways that John never did ... she loved him with all of her heart. And since she no longer loved John, how could she turn her back on her lover? Amy knew that God did not approve of her adulterous relationship—and neither did I. But I also knew that there was nothing I could do to convince her to abandon her boyfriend.

God could.

I was prepared to wait for God to convict her and give her the strength to do what was right. From my experience, such conviction could come quickly, or it might take a number of months. After all, if Jesus could raise his dear friend, Lazarus, from the dead, He could convict Amy of the dead end that pursuing this man represented.

In the meantime, I provided them with a number of “tips and tools” I use in my marriage counseling: I showed them how to do a communication date and how to handle conflict biblically. We talked about sex and examined their family backgrounds. We explored how
they could show love for each other. We also closed our sessions with prayer and my reminder that when God touched their marriage, we would all know it.

Then we waited.

After about nine months of counseling, I recommended that they take a trip to Florida. The other man was still very much a part of Amy’s life, and I thought the time away from him, as well as two weeks alone with her husband, might help rekindle their marriage. Guess what? It didn’t.

When they got back to Indianapolis, a defiant Amy called and fumed, “My time with John in Florida was awful. I have had it. I am canceling our counseling appointment for tomorrow. I have contacted my lawyer and have filed for divorce.”

About thirty minutes later John called echoing Amy’s opinion. He said, “George, our time in Florida was an absolute disaster. Amy is still in love with our neighbor. We’re wasting our time thinking there is any hope for us. I have contacted our lawyer and filed for a divorce.”

My heart sank with the bad news. It was obvious that my best efforts had accomplished nothing. Worse yet, John and Amy both believed in God but were feeling more weak and more hopeless than they had ever felt before.

But God was not finished.

About an hour after her first call, Amy called again. This time I immediately perceived something was different in her voice. “I just got back from driving around the city,” she said. “While I was out, I saw a billboard that had this simple message, 473-PRAY. When I got home, I turned on the TV and I saw the same billboard with the same message. I dialed the number and spoke with a prayer counselor for about fifteen minutes.”
Not wanting to interrupt her, I held my breath.

“George, I can’t explain it, but I believe God has spoken to me. I think He wants me to end my relationship with my boyfriend and work on my marriage with John. What do you think?”

“Amy,” I said, thrilled at the breakthrough, “this is what we have been praying for over the last nine months. You have just heard the voice of God. Until now you have heard words from me and from others about God, but now you have heard from God Himself. This is wonderful! How can I help?”

She said, “I need to tell my boyfriend what has happened today.” In fact, she felt an urgency to confront her boyfriend that evening and wanted me there for moral support. I assured her I wouldn’t miss it.

Amy and I met about ten minutes before her boyfriend arrived. We prayed together and I encouraged her with several verses from the Bible. Moments later, this man, who had been at the center of the conflict in her marriage, arrived. They met in a warm embrace in the middle of the room. He whispered, “I love you.”

“I love you, too,” she said.

Then, obviously puzzled by my presence in the room, he asked, “So, what’s going on?”

Amy answered, “I have heard the voice of God today. God told me that I need to break off my relationship with you and really work on my marriage to John. I will be moving out of the apartment this week. I think I need to move back in with John.”

“Amy, I don’t understand. You just said you loved me.”

“I do,” she said, taking a step back. “But I have to do what God has told me.”

Stunned, he shot her a bewildered look. “If that’s what you want, Amy, then fine. I’ll leave.”
With that, he left. I am convinced that this fellow never understood what she was saying. Perhaps he thought that when Amy got back together with John, she would come to her senses and realize how awful her marriage had been.

That never happened. Why?

Because Amy had heard from God! We still had more work to do in a counseling setting, but at least now there was hope. With the distraction of her lover out of the picture, it seemed like just a matter of days before Amy felt a fresh love for John begin to bud. Gradually, John learned how to meet her needs. Both learned how to express love in ways that communicated love to each other. It was a miracle of marital healing.

That was about fifteen years ago.

Not long ago Amy stopped by to see me. She was carrying her newest addition to their family. With an infant nestled in her arms and a wide smile on her face, Amy positively glowed. She couldn’t wait to let me know how happy she was, how well they were doing, and how thankful she was to the Lord for what He had done.

I said, “Amy, I have been telling folks for years about what God did for you. I call you the Billboard Lady. What do you tell your friends about what happened?”

Her face lit up: “It was a miracle!”

John and Amy’s story is evidence of what God can do for your marriage. I am convinced that you and I desperately need to hear more powerful stories like theirs. These living examples remind us that God still saves marriages. That, my friend, is what this book is about. No matter what your situation, I’m confident that there is hope for any marriage—as long as you are willing to believe that God, through His Spirit and the wisdom found in the Bible, can radically change your lives.
OPEN TO A MIRACLE

You may be thinking, “George, I’m open to a miracle, but my situation is different. John and Amy were both willing to pray that God would intervene in their marriage. But does God still work when your spouse won’t agree to pray with you for a breakthrough?” That’s a valid concern. Guess what? I have found that as long as there is one partner who is willing to trust God to heal the marriage and who will seek help, miracles happen. Let me give you two brief examples.

First, take Mark and Missy, a couple who attended our church. Mark had had an affair but confessed his wrong behavior and expressed a sincere desire to make his marriage work. For her part, Missy was so hurt by his betrayal, she lost all hope that their marriage would survive. Rather than come to our office, Missy decided to go to the Twin Cities and see a counselor who advised her to seek a divorce from Mark.

Meanwhile, each week in church Mark filled out a prayer request card asking for the staff to pray for his marriage. Aware that Mark and Missy were struggling, I invited Mark to come in for counseling. He did—alone. Keep in mind his wife had become convinced that a divorce was their only solution. So, for several weeks I worked with Mark on what he needed to do to deepen his faith in God and helped him discover how to show love to his wife.

Missy knew about Mark’s efforts to change but insisted she would not put the brakes on her decision regarding a divorce.

Finally, I asked a member of our counseling team to meet with Missy. This lay counselor had watched God work a miracle after infidelity had almost torn her own marriage apart. Missy reluctantly agreed to meet with her and to listen to what the Lord had done in her life. God used
that meeting to persuade Missy that maybe there was a thread of hope for their marriage after all.

Several weeks later, Missy agreed to meet with Mark and me. During our first session she insisted that she still had little hope for their reconciliation, but the next week she came back again. Missy cautiously continued to work on their relationship. Over time they committed to having regular communication dates and they developed a conflict resolution “contract.” However, the real breakthrough occurred when Missy decided to pray with us at the close of a session.

I’m a strong believer in asking both husband and wife to pray aloud when we close our time together. Soon after Missy agreed to pray with us, God touched their marriage in a dramatic way. What was once a “lost cause” became a miraculous story of restoration, one which they readily share with friends and our church to this day.

Second, consider Grant and Penny.

This couple was very active in our church in Denver. Both sang in the church choir and taught elementary-aged children in our Sunday school. However, Penny suffered from bipolar disorder and, unfortunately, was not on medication. As a result, she lost interest in outside activities. She had regular bouts of depression and went through each day with about as much energy as a houseplant.

Grant, by contrast, was a hyperactive businessman—a high-stakes player who pushed himself as a top achiever in his field. While not exactly an adrenaline junkie, he enjoyed a range of sports. Their chances of finding common ground were as likely as finding rain in the desert. As you might expect, Grant became disappointed with a spouse who frequently was not interested in his company.

By the way, it is not uncommon for a couple to drift apart in their interests, hobbies, and activities the longer they are married. One key
to a successful long-term marriage is to find those areas of common ground where both partners can stay connected on a daily basis. Some wash dishes by hand the old-fashioned way because that gives them time to talk and accomplish a simple task. Others make a point of taking an after-dinner walk each night.

Evidently, Grant and Penny didn’t maintain even basic levels of interaction. Not surprisingly, the distance and the seeds of temptation grew in Grant’s heart. While Grant maintains he never intended to have an affair, a woman he met on a business trip was everything he hoped Penny would be: outgoing, vibrant, professional; someone with whom he could talk business, someone who laughed and enjoyed life. He was drawn to her vivaciousness and quickly developed an intense friendship. In a moment of weakness, they shared a bed. While Grant knew that what he had done was wrong, he attributed his infidelity to his wife.

He blamed Penny saying that the only reason he was drawn to this woman was that he had needs—personal, social, conversational, and sexual—that Penny wasn’t fulfilling, so he found fulfillment elsewhere. Grant was defiant over his affair because, after all, “it was Penny’s fault.” After an initial conversation with Penny, Grant refused to talk further about what he had done. He wouldn’t speak with Penny about it and he certainly was not willing to talk to anyone in the church about the affair.

Frustrated, Penny came to us for help by herself. Grant’s infidelity naturally intensified her depression. We provided Penny tools to help her overcome her melancholy mood. Over a period of time, God gave her victory, and the darkness that once surrounded her began to lift.

Grant couldn’t help but notice the change in his wife and eventually agreed to join us for marriage counseling. He had broken off the relationship with the other woman, so we focused on their future. Grant
was a bit testy at first, but as he and Penny asked God to heal their marriage and as they completed their assignments, God restored their relationship. What’s more, Penny became one of the women I trained to do lay counseling with our team.

Think about it. If you are feeling suffocated by the weight of your circumstances, consider Penny’s transformation. Here was a woman who felt like she was losing her mind and, in fact, did lose her husband to an affair for a season. Yet now, she and Grant give hope to numerous couples who are struggling with their marriage.

Let me ask you something. In spite of how you may view your current circumstances, is it possible that the Lord might one day use your testimony to help reconcile others who are struggling?

STILL CHANGES LIVES

Let me be clear. In each of the stories I’ve shared, I don’t want to give you the impression that there’s a secret formula at work. In case you missed it, the golden thread tying these wonderful tapestries together is threefold:

- **An acknowledgment that there is a God**
- **A willingness to trust what He has said in the Bible and follow His instruction**
- **The commitment to pray for God to heal the marriage**

If that approach sounds just a tad simplistic or naïve, frankly, there was a time when I might have agreed. But let’s step back and think about what’s going on here. When boiled down to the basics, one issue
remains: How big is your God? If you and I trust God for our eternal
destiny—in other words, if we believe Jesus has the power to save us
from hell when we die—can we not also trust Him for a few lesser
things here on this earth?

That question pushed me to the brink of a crisis of faith at one time.
You see, I love the Bible and I love to teach it to people who want
to apply it to their lives. However, I discovered early in my ministry
that many of those who came to church would listen to me declare the
wonderful and dramatic way God had changed lives throughout history
on Sunday morning. But when Monday rolled around, these same folks
claimed that their marriage was the exception to what I had taught.

Talk about disheartening.

As a young pastor in my late twenties, I didn’t know what to do when
these couples came into my office and told me that they didn’t love each
other anymore. They knew that God hated divorce, but they were also
under the impression that God didn’t want them to suffer in a marriage
that made them miserable. Some told me that they had prayed for their
marriage and had tried for years to make things work, but they had no
hope.

I wanted to tell them that if they just trusted Jesus, He would heal
their marriages. But that seemed to be too simplistic; besides, I knew
realistically that they probably had heard similar advice before. At one
time, maybe they believed Jesus could save their marriage, but too many
emotional scars and too much pain had robbed them of any vestige
of hope.

Looking back at the couples I counseled then, typically one spouse
had committed adultery. Usually, at least one would say that they didn’t
love their partner anymore, and often they would go as far as to say
that they had never loved their spouse in the first place. Some even
said that they believed the only way to get back into God’s will was to get a divorce.

If there was no love and if there had been an affair, what hope was there? I kept asking myself that question at the same time I was preaching on Sunday, “With God all things are possible!” (Matthew 19:26). Can you imagine the conflict in my soul? Eventually, I came to the point where I found myself asking God, “Are the truths I preach on Sunday meaningful at all for those with hurting marriages? Are You and Your promises in the Bible powerful enough to provide hope and healing when all hope is gone?”

In my heart, based upon what I knew from my study of God and the Bible, I knew the answer to those questions was yes. But practically speaking, I was at a loss as to how I might help the hopeless regain hope. Then the answer hit me. I wouldn’t say I heard the audible voice of God, but His message was unmistakable. I heard God say, “George, you preach from the Bible. Do you believe it?”

I said, “Lord, you know I believe what You have said in the Bible is true.”

God said, “Good, tell folks who are hurting to follow what I say.”

This crisis of faith occurred while I was in the process of taking courses toward a Ph.D. in religion at the University of Iowa. In my program I had taken several courses in counseling. I also took several psychology courses as I completed M.Div. and Th.M. degrees at Trinity International University. I was tempted to find solutions for these troubling marital problems in psychology, but for the more intense marital problems, my background in psychology was not the answer.

What I now know is that God wanted me to see that He alone is the answer! I thought I had always believed He was the answer. What transformed me was a moment I had with God when He told me to
dare people to believe His promises in the Bible and to trust Him for what they needed. Ultimately, that led me to start asking those three key questions of every couple that I counseled.

Ever since I started to embrace the beauty and simplicity of this approach, I have witnessed repeated evidence that an affair isn’t enough to keep God from working. The conviction that love is gone cannot stop the power of God to change lives. Even the certainty that there is someone else whose love is purer and better than our spouse’s will not thwart the work of God—if we will say yes to all three questions.

As I said previously, from that time more than 90 percent of the couples I’ve worked with have rebuilt their marriages and their love for one another after acknowledging that God exists, applying the principles found in the Bible, and praying for God to strengthen their marriage. They now enjoy a fullness, a closeness, and a friendship with their spouse that they never thought was possible.

You might be wondering, “But what about the 10 percent who don’t find healing for their relationships? Why doesn’t this approach work all of the time?” Good question. Let me set the stage by sharing with you the heartbreaking story of Alex.

A FORK IN THE ROAD

Alex was a highly successful executive in the food industry. He enjoyed the finer things in life, not the least of which was a home worth more than three-quarters of a million dollars in a highly sought-after suburb. He wasn’t the flashy type. In fact, everybody who met Alex found him to be a likeable and engaging person. I was introduced to him because he was having difficulty in his marriage.
As we began to dig around into his situation, it became apparent that Alex was having an affair—with a younger man. Since his boyfriend didn't have money, you might say Alex was kind of keeping this guy. Alex and I would have regular conversations about what Jesus would think of this arrangement. Without skipping a beat he'd say, “Given my background in the church, Jesus would think this was wrong.”

Alex was not ignorant of what the Bible said on the subject. Nor, to his credit, did he attempt to twist the Bible to accommodate his behavior. On more than one occasion I’d ask, “What do you think Jesus would have you do?” Without hesitation, he’d say, “I think Jesus would have me break off the relationship.”

With my encouragement, Alex got involved with Sex Addicts Anonymous and began attending regular meetings. Several weeks later, he confessed that on the way home from the meetings he’d sometimes drive into his old cruising neighborhoods. On more than one occasion when he was either going to or coming from his SAA meetings, he would fall into temptation because he was thinking about the part of his life that he would be denying.

This went on for several months. Every time I was with Alex, he would mention how great it was to talk to me because he felt condemned wherever he went. Evidently, he sensed the love and compassion of Jesus, so he continued to return to my office. Don’t get me wrong. I wasn’t sugar coating what the Bible taught about his choices. I constantly asked him, “What do you think Jesus would have you do?” He clearly knew the right path, but invariably he couldn’t bring himself to do what Jesus would have him do.

Keep in mind, throughout this ordeal his wife was involved in our women’s activities at church. Both were active attendees of the church, too. They came together every Sunday and loved hearing the weekly
teachings from the Bible. One problem. He was struggling between holding on to this young guy and preserving his marriage. Finally, we reached a point where I felt the Lord prompting me to pin him down to make a decision on what to do with his life.

I asked him, “Alex, what are the implications if you don’t get back together with your wife?”

He thought a moment. “Well, George, if I don’t choose my wife, I know I’ll be rejecting Jesus. I know I’ll be rejecting my Christian friends, I know I’ll be turning my back on God, and I know I’ll probably get AIDS and die. And on the other hand, if I choose my wife, then it’s the good life of a follower of Christ, the wholeness that I’ll have, it’s even eternal life. I know that. I realize that eternity could even weigh in the balance.”

Here’s the tragedy: That day Alex left my office and chose death. This is an example of a marriage that didn’t work out. Why? It boils down to a decision: obedience or disobedience. Alex failed to obey what he knew to be true. Here was a guy who said that he wanted what God wanted, but refused to do what God would have him do—even given the choice between life and death, cursing and blessing. Alex consciously chose cursing and had to live with the results of that.

As you’ll see in a moment, our need for obedience (which leads to God’s blessing) is actually found in a book from the Bible named after Micah, a prophet from biblical times. In other words, you and I have to be willing to stop engaging in destructive behaviors once they are pointed out—or there can be no chance of growth or healing in our marriages.
TRUST AND OBEY

Micah had been given a message from God because the people in Micah’s day were “theologically orthodox,” which is to say that they believed in God and in His teachings. However, there was little evidence of God at work in their lives because they failed to put His instruction into practice. At the time of Micah’s writing, the people of Israel, also known as the children of God, were a hopeless, powerless people. What was even sadder was that they didn’t know any better.

Evidently they thought they were living the way that God intended them to live—even though they were not obeying Him. Micah challenged them with these words: “Is the Spirit of the Lord impatient? Are these His doings? Do not My words do good to the one walking uprightly?” (Micah 2:7 NASB). Don’t miss what’s going on here. The Lord has personally promised you and me that He is patient and will “do good” for those who obey—who are “walking uprightly.”

Talk about good news!

That’s where obedience comes into the picture. Go back to the story of Alex. He knew what he should have done according to God’s instruction in the Bible. He enjoyed coming to church, too. However, Alex didn’t follow through with obedience. Jesus rightly asks, “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46). Indeed, how could we expect Alex’s marriage to succeed?

Like Alex, we say we believe in God and in the promises of the Bible, but too often there is little evidence of the power of God in our lives because we don’t follow through in obedience to His instruction. So, when a marriage becomes desperately hopeless, we can’t imagine doing
anything but calling it quits. We, like the people of Israel in Micah’s day, just don’t get it.

God wants to give you a hope and a wonderful future. As the Lord said through the prophet Jeremiah, “Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you” (Jeremiah 7:23, emphasis added). What an awesome promise!

Are His promises difficult to believe?

If so, consider what He has done for John and Amy, Mark and Missy, and Grant and Penny. Each of these couples is proof that God does heal hurting marriages. Your name could be on that list, too. There can be hope for any marriage as long as you are willing to believe that God, through His unlimited power, can radically change your life.

That said, how would you answer these three questions?

1. **Do you believe that there is a God?**
2. **Are you willing to apply the principles found in the Bible to your marriage?**
3. **Will you pray for God to strengthen you and your spouse?**

If you are ready to cling to the promises made by the Creator Himself; if you are ready to trust and follow His guidance; and, if you are hungry to discover what God can do for you and your spouse, I’ve got good news. The tips and tools that I use to help couples discover God’s best for their families are right here in this book.

These tools are totally transferable and are based on what is taught in the Bible—thoroughly biblical. And they work! What’s more, you don’t have to be a trained counselor to use them. The first tool is learning how to utilize the gifts God offers you to steer your marriage toward healing. I’m excited to explore those truths with you in chapter 2.
THE ONE THING

Using a 3x5 card or sticky notepad, write out this Bible passage from the book of Jeremiah and then place it on your bathroom mirror: “I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?” (Jeremiah 32:27). Use it as a daily reminder about the power of God to change your marriage.