

PREFACE

Want a way to improve your marriage, without changing your circumstances one iota? Then this book is for you. Just by changing your mental fertilizer, your marriage can become something far more exciting than what you now experience. Dig your roots down deep into some different thinking and you can be flowering in new directions in no time.

Marriage is a constant process of growing and becoming something together, something that you would never become alone. Buried like two dormant bulbs in the mystery of marriage, you eventually split a crust of earth and change landscapes together. Contrary to what our culture tells us, in this book you will see that marriage is the triumph of the right kind of thinking, not of having a perfect spouse.

This book is an infusion of uplifting, sometimes mind-boggling thoughts to help you, as a wife, improve your marriage through your efforts alone. It is written by an older woman in her 60's to younger women, based on the timeless marriage principles found in Titus 2.

What would be the best book on marriage for men? We suggest *The Garden of Peace* by a Jewish Rabbi named Shalom Arush. It is by far the best

men's marriage book we have ever found—and we've read many. If you give your husband a copy of that book you won't have to say much more to lay a good foundation for your marriage—it is *that* good. Some divorce court judges in Israel make it required reading before they will hear a case. Many who read it never return to finalize their divorce. This book has consistently been at the top of Israel's bestseller lists, and is now sold by many pastors in America. It is not a book for you as a wife. It was designed to be privately read by the husband.

But back to this book, the book for *you*, as a wife. Every book originates from a worldview, whether stated up front or not. This one is written from the Judeo-Christian point of view. Of all of the world views, the Bible got the human condition right. Its explanation of the world best matches what we actually see of the human condition in reality. So this book is written in light of the fact that at the beginning of creation mankind suffered a moral fall (see Genesis 2). This means we begin with the reality that mankind is not good at its source; we need a Redeemer and we need redeeming *thoughts* to guide us into a meaningful marriage and a good life. There will be effort involved in overcoming our fallen state.

In addition to bringing Biblical perspectives to this discussion, we share real life practical help within these pages. This book is authored by a wife who has had the wonderful experience of growing up under a stable marriage in her own childhood home, as did her husband. My husband's folks have now been married for over 65 years, and mine were married for over 55 years when my father passed away.

This means we saw good marriages modeled for us through thick and thin. We scooped up the “crumbs” of both sets of our parents’ philosophies, attitudes, and loving deeds—even when they were unaware of it. We gleaned from them as they unconsciously dropped daily gems from the kitchen table of life, as it was lived.

Since one never arrives at a finished place of understanding what marriage even is, let alone how to live in one, we kept adding to those insights. So in addition to seeing the success of our parents’ marriages, we read scores of materials, interviewed many and diverse marriage experts who deal with marital conflict as a career, and got down in the trenches with not a few women in marital crisis to walk it out with them.

We have been ever-learning and will continue to learn. We have not arrived. No marriage has. Even in the most idyllic-appearing marriages there is always room to improve. We change as people and the chapters of life change as we age, all of which impacts the marriage. Yes, even the golden older years of marriage are filled with new marital dilemmas and opportunities to grow in grace.

There have been many books written on marriage over the past several decades. No particular one of them has ever been a definitive statement that encompasses all there is to say about marriage. No one book can say it all, any more than one conversation can exhaust the discussion of outer space! So we can read each marriage book as part of an ongoing roundtable discussion about a topic steeped in profundity, one that bears looking at from many angles. Authors dive into the discussion from

different shores and come up with different catches.

It is my hope that the insights found in this book will offer you yet another “go of it.” May reading it be filled with many joyful “aha” moments, and offer you a fresh start of making a good marriage better.