

It's never too late

Separation and divorce are the heart breaking words spoken in recent days in most of the countries. Once very rarely heard but now practiced everywhere. Government and legal agencies made all provisions to legally address these issues. Hundreds and hundreds of counseling centers and law firms have come up in the recent years, employed many professionals and making millions and millions of dollars in every year. Every other person we meet in this country has a family either already broken or about to break. [1] In America, 50% percent of first marriages, 67% of second and 74% of third marriages end in divorce, according to Jennifer Baker of the Forest Institute of Professional Psychology in Springfield, Missouri. [2] There are 2 million divorces every year. There is a huge cost involved in legally handling divorce. [3] An average contested divorces often range anywhere from \$5,000 to \$20,000. If child custody is involved, the average divorce cost can range from \$10,000 to \$60,000 and more. Divorce attorneys often ask for an average retainer of a \$5,000 before they take the case and they charge anywhere from \$175 to \$350 per hour.

Before making the decision for divorce, one has to ask himself

- What will be the true cost of the divorce, besides thousands of dollars? - Enormous stress, hundreds of hours of valuable time, own health going down, etc.
- Is it worth to take another attempt to save my marriage?
- If I don't take action now, how much regret will I feel if I lose my marriage?
- How much pain am I suffering because my spouse is threatening to leave?
- How would my divorce negatively affect other family members, such as children, parents, and grandparents?

You can't afford to be following a marriage-saving plan that isn't getting results immediately. You tried expert marriage counselors and their plans, would have spent huge amount of money on their services, and would have even tried a trial separation. But none of them worked. You are still stuck with certain unresolved arguments and conflicts. People who came to help through different methods left as nothing worked. Someone told that, all you need to do is just love your partner more and more. But no one really did anything to get the marriage back on track. You have love for your partner. But that love doesn't help you to forget the wounds caused by words came out during heated arguments. Still remember the fights and the sleepless nights. Now that it has gone so deep inside, you are not even able to think of a change.

But remember that it is never too late. You don't need to wait until it breaks. When man gives up, God takes over. Bible says in *Luke 1:37 For with God nothing will be impossible*. Give God an opportunity to work it out for you. Jesus said in *Mark 10:9 therefore what God has joined together let not man separate*. He is not a God who encourages divorce. He wants you to live together as long as you live, *Romans 7:2 for the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives*. You may be worried about the complexity of the issue. But God's wisdom, knowledge and power are much beyond what you could even imagine. This article is applicable for

those who are with strained relationship in marriage and worrying that it may result in separation or divorce if not addressed. The various measures one could take in order to restore and rebuild the lost relationship are addressed with reference to teaching from the Bible [5].

Identify what has gone wrong:

It is better to know what had gone wrong before making any attempt to correct. There was something happened somewhere along the line. It is better to identify the cause and take measures to correct or prevent. The reason many couples have bounced back from a vast range of seemingly irreversible problems, such as:

- unresolved conflicts
- extra-marital affairs
- lack of intimacy
- excessive fighting
- ineffective communication
- not enough quality time for busy schedules
- a suffocating partner
- children issues
- trial separations
- many more complex and difficult situations

Both the partners have a sincere role to play in this to analyze and come out with the real cause of the issue. Once the cause is identified, take measures to correct and not to repeat it again.

Communication:

Communication is an essential part of any relationship. Communication between husband and wife is essential for a healthy married life. Lack of communication leaves expectations undefined. The relationship of marriage is to understand and partner with each other. [4] As marriage counselor and author Dr Gary Chapman points out: “Partnership is shared primarily by communication. One of a wife’s deepest desires is to know her husband. When he talks about his thoughts, feelings, and desires, she feels he’s allowing her into his life. When a husband goes long periods without talking about what he’s feeling or thinking, she senses that he’s cutting her out, which leads her to feel isolated.” The same is applicable for wife too. Such a long period of lack of communication will result in conflicts getting unresolved and eventually will lead to separation and divorce. Before it makes such irreversible damages, it is better to analyze and take measure to get out of the situation.

Share your expectations:

This is an important aspect of a healthy married life. Unless the expectations are shared among partners, it is not fair to expect anything. Sharing expectation is not defining rules. Expectations are shared out of love not to take control. In many situations, expectations are not shared among partners due to ego or self-esteem. Having a healthy relationship is much more valuable than satisfying self. Sharing the expectations is not just one partner telling it to the other, it involves further discussions until a response in the form of

commitment is generated. At times if the over expectations are not further discussed and agreed upon, it will lead to disappointment and frustration later.

Spending time together:

Spending time for each other is very important in marriage. It is so important that in Old Testament it was a law that newly married man should not go out to war leaving his young wife. *Deuteronomy 24:5* “When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken. Providing quality time for each other is important for couples irrespective of their age. Spending time together keeps them away from the rest and helps them to share their love, emotions, and desires and brings them to an agreement to build their family life on a common ground. It may involve taking few days off from work, driving away to a lonely place especially in countries where couple live with their parents even after marriage or as joint families. But it still worth taking such time off whenever possible may be once in six months or at least once in a year.

Another aspect of spending time together is to satisfy the physical needs of the couples. When they could share their hearts, they tend to love each from within and eventually end up having sexual enjoyment. It makes more sense here as it emerges out of true love towards each other, not just to satisfy their sexual needs. Bible encourages men to do this as it ensures a covenant relationship between them such that the law of marriage is not broken. *Proverbs 5:18-19* 18 *Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth. 19 As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; And always be enraptured with her love.* According to these verses, certainly spending time together will help couples not to seek for love and sexual satisfaction outside marriage.

Avoid arguments:

This is one of the common issues in most of the houses today. Husband and wife get up from the bed arguing and goes back to bed arguing. Both of them are not really aware of what they are arguing about and why they argue. They won't be able to arrive at any common agreement as they argued enough already. Day by day their relationship strains, children are affected and sought seeking peace from friends and pleasures. That's why Bible says in *Colossians 4:6* *Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.* At times these arguments stir up anger and end up in fighting with each other. *Proverb 15:1* *A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.* There are couples they have not talked to each other for days together, at least in countries where separation is legally not allowed or not very common and has other implications. They live under the same roof, eat the same food, and talk to children but not to each other. They don't enjoy the goodness of marriage and living together. Bible says in *Ephesians 4:26* “*Be angry, and do not sin*”: *do not let the sun go down on your wrath.* This is a very important teaching of the Bible that should be applied for every one of us to ensure healthy marriage. Whatever be the argument of the day, ensure not to go to bed without compromising. Settle the issue before the day ends. It is our responsibility to guard our marriage with all care and sincerity. Try to avoid arguments over sensitive issues as it is known that they will end in

destruction. For the same reason Paul advises young Timothy in II *Timothy 2:23* *but avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.* The author of Proverbs writes in *Proverbs 13:3* *He who guards his mouth preserves his life, But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.* **Listen more and speak less or be quick to listen and slow to speak** is a general advice for anyone that is very much applicable in family life. James writes in *James 1:19* *So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;*

Appreciate each other:

Appreciation is another key element that helps building families. Unfortunately it is missing in many families today. Wives expect appreciation from their husband for every little achievement such as their beauty and attire, the food they cook, taking care of children, ability to earn, housekeeping, etc. Husbands expect appreciation from their wives in areas such as their achievement in business, spending time with the family, surprise they give in terms of presents and gifts, his involvement in spiritual and social activities, etc. All that they try within the family is to impress each other and try helping each other. After doing so much if their effort is not recognized it is certain that they get disappointed. Appreciation keeps one motivated and encourages repeating the good works once done. Bible says in *Proverbs 16:24* *Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.*

Appreciation also brings emotional satisfaction and keeps one in good mind and health.

[6] *"Feeling appreciated is one of the most important needs that people have. When you share with someone your appreciation and gratitude, they will not forget you. Appreciation will return to you many times."*- Steve Brunkhorst. The extent to which appreciation is required is unimaginable. People in this world is longing for love and encouragement. When they both lack in families, it leads to disappointment and emotional strain. [7]According to Mother Teresa *"There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread."* People those who appreciate others are considered valuable. Generally no one approaches the person who is always condemning in nature. People tend to hang around the person who could find something good in someone and appreciates to do better. [7]According to Sara Paddison, *"The word "appreciation" means to be thankful and express admiration, approval, or gratitude. It also means to grow or appreciate in value. As you appreciate life, you become more valuable—both to yourself and others."* She also says that, *"Appreciating each other is a true family value, one that will bail out much of the stress on the planet and help strengthen the universal bond all people have."* All the above show that what an important role appreciation plays in keeping the marriage bond together.

Showing it in action:

The reason for couples not trusting each other is not keeping up to the word. No one believes what is spoken; everyone wants to see them in action. Apart from the marriage oath made in the church, many other commitments were made and agreed upon, but repeatedly found not followed. This kind of situation within families leads to total mistrust. Promises and commitments have no value unless they are followed. As husbands and wives, strive to keep up to the promises made without complaining and

murmuring. This will ensure mutual trust and help to count on each other. Bible says in *Philippians 2:14 Do all things without complaining and disputing.*

Forgive and forget:

Forgiveness is an important characteristic of any Christian family. We learn this forgiveness from our Lord. He says, *“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” Hebrews 8:12.* Many of us forgive each other quickly, but carry that grudge or hurt within us. This is highly dangerous as it will wait for the next opportunity to show up. This is a typical problem among many Christian couples. They are taught to forgive, but not to forget. In *Ephesians 4:31-32 we read, Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.* When discussions evolve into arguments and arguments result in hurt of feelings, there is a need for forgiveness. The wound created by the harsh words is difficult to be forgiven. Even if it is forgiven the wound takes its own time to cure. Even after it gets cured, it leaves a scar back. This scar may last permanently or takes years together to fade away. We are talking about removal of the scars. The scar is removed, when the person who has the scar is not only able to forgive but also to forget the reason for the scar.

Recently I read a true story about forgiving and forgetting that shocked me for a while. I am sure reading this will let you know the real meaning of “forgiving and forgetting”. Understanding the real meaning of it will bring healing in your family life. [8] Karl and Edith Taylor lived in a small apartment in Waltham, Massachusetts. They lived happily for 23 years and they loved each other very much. Karl was a government warehouse worker. In February 1950 the government sent Karl to Okinawa, Japan for a few months to work in a new warehouse there. Although he was in the habit of sending to his wife some small gifts and postcards wherever he was sent to work, a short time after Karl went to Okinawa, hardly any postcards or gifts reached her. Also his assignment, which was supposed to have been only for a few months, got extended mysteriously. Edith thought, her husband must be very busy; now he may have to work, cook, do shopping, clean his place of stay, etc. Perhaps he did not have enough time to write. In the meantime, Edith who was a deeply committed Christian got an idea; why not I give a surprise to Karl when he gets back. She worked hard and gave a down payment to buy a small house. However, after a short time Edith got a letter from Karl: "Dear Edith, I wish there were a kinder way to tell you that we are no longer married..." Karl married a 19 year old servant girl called Aiko, from Okinawa. Edith was 48. Although it was surprising and shocking to Edith, she took the whole matter to the Lord in prayer. Instead of getting filled with anger and hatred towards Karl, she felt compassion for Karl, a lonely man who always leaned on Edith for help. She felt compassion for Aiko too, a penniless, perhaps illiterate girl who desperately needed a life partner.

Karl wrote one day that he and Aiko were expecting a baby. Marie was born in 1951; then Helen in 1953. Edith felt compassion and sent little gifts for the children. After sometime she got a letter to say Karl was in the hospital dying of lung cancer; he had

hardly any money for the hospital bills. Edith sent some money. Also, she did all that she could so that Karl could die in peace.

After his death, Edith offered Aiko's two girls education in America, as all the money Karl saved for the children were spent on hospital bills. Although it was very hard to part with the children (they were the only reason for her to live on this earth), she finally accepted the offer and sent the children to Edith. Edith worked hard to take care of the children and for their education. In a few years time she became very weak and sickly. She realized, she was getting old and the girls needed help. She decided to bring Aiko from Japan. However, Aiko was still a Japanese citizen and the immigration quota had a long waiting list of many more years. By this time, newspapers published this wonderful story of forgiving love. Many petitions were forwarded to Congress. A special bill speeded through Congress and in August 1957 Aiko Taylor was permitted to enter the United States.

As Aiko came down the stairs from the plane at New York Airport, what happened? Naturally Edith had every right to hate and to be furious and take revenge against Aiko. She could have told her, "You are the one who destroyed my marriage of 23 years. You destroyed my life, my family, my future, my happiness, my health, my wealth, and my husband". Instead, Edith went and warmly hugged Aiko and Aiko wept on Edith's shoulders! Aiko found in Edith a love and compassion which she could not get even from her late husband. No wonder, Aiko the one who "pierced" the heart of Edith and "stole away" her husband of 23 years, looked at the "one whom SHE pierced" and found great blessing and favor! Aiko, the heathen girl was transformed, as she found Christ like love and forgiveness in Edith.

What an amazing life Edith lived in this world. Just imagine how we would have reacted if we were there in the place of Edith. But Edith displayed the Godly love as said in *Luke 6:27* "*But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you*". One has to have a heart that forgives and forgets others in order to love and do good to the enemies who left the marks of permanent damage.

Sacrifice:

Yet another important aspect of a happy marriage is self sacrifice. In today's world matrimonial websites specify the exact requirement for a boy or for a girl. Parents who are looking for a match browse through the pages to find out the exact fit for their son or daughter. The main reason for delay in marriage is not finding the exact fit. Finally with great difficulty the closest match is found and got united. As they live together they get to know each other more and more. After few months they find that even though the specifications posted in the matrimonial website were matching they are totally irrelevant to what is seen in real life. Later it is realized that she is beautiful but not able to control her mouth, she is very soft and gentle with others but adamant with her husband, she is lovable but always complaining about her in-laws, he is caring and loving but prefer to hang around with his old friends, he goes to church with her but forces her to clubs and bars, and so on. Unfortunately they both start looking at what they don't have rather than

looking at what they have. Few years later they have decided to separate as that they cannot live anymore together.

Can we pause for a moment here? I wish someone could have told them what they are going through. This is true for all of those who expect perfection in marriage. Remember God has not created us as angels; He has created us as human. None of us are perfect to expect perfection in others. The question here is that, can we stop looking at what is not there and start looking at what is there? There are many positive characters seen in both of them such as she is beautiful, soft and gentle, lovable, he is caring and loving and goes to church with her regularly. Once they start appreciating each other for these positive aspects, I am sure the negative will not be evident and slowly diminish away. The question here is that, how far one is willing to sacrifice what is not there for what is there? Bible says in *Philippians 2:3-4* *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.* Once we start looking into others interest and sacrifice what is not there for the sake of what is there, life becomes easy and there will not be any issue in living together. Bible teaches in *Galatians 6:2* *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.* If it is true for believers who are bought by the same blood of Christ, how much more true it is for the couple who are bonded in marriage. Take a moment and realize this fact, I am sure it will bring tremendous amount of healing in your relationship.

Love each other:

Do you know why your relationship is strained and about to be broken? Why is she sleeping in the bed room and you are sleeping in the couch? Why are you sitting in front of the TV for long hours late in the night? Why does she yell at you even before you open your mouth? Why does he come home late after hanging around in the club or bar? Why is your weekend hell? Why do you prefer to have a job that requires travel? Why are your children not willing to stay at home? Why do you need to wet your pillow without anyone knowing about that? Why are you not willing to attend any party or function while your friends do so? You look perfect outside but there is a feeling of loneliness and rejection deep in your heart. Why is it so? The answer to these entire questions is the missing ingredient in your marriage that is LOVE.

When Paul writes to the church in Corinth, he discloses certain truths about love. He defines what love is and he makes a comparison that no one would have ever imagined. Paul compares love with the spiritual gifts. He says spiritual gifts such as prophecies will fail but love never fails. In a nutshell he says that even if you don't have spiritual gifts, be sure to have love. *1 Corinthians 13:4-8* *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.*

While dealing with issues with families, often I come across one common issue that is he or she doesn't know how to express love. Love is an emotional or inherent aspect of human being. But, unless it is shown outside there is no way one can make out there is love. Husbands and wives need to take time to express this love with each other. Easier way to express love is by setting a trigger. This trigger can be external such as beauty, external appearance or internal such as character, behavior and attitude. One strong point I would like to make here is that love is not just having sex with the partner. It is much beyond that. Of course, setting external triggers to express love as said above can eventually leads to enjoying sexual pleasure with each other depending on when and where they are. The fact is that love needs to be expressed. Couples have to find their own way of expressing their love towards each other.

One such example is given in the Bible where the writer of Song of Solomon, King Solomon and a Shulamite woman expressing their love with each other. Here it looks like the trigger is the physical appearance of the Shulamite woman. *Song of Solomon 4:9-15 You have ravished my heart, My sister, my spouse; You have ravished my heart. With one look of your eyes, With one link of your necklace. How fair is your love, My sister, my spouse! How much better than wine is your love, And the scent of your perfumes Than all spices! Your lips, O my spouse, Drip as the honeycomb; Honey and milk are under your tongue; And the fragrance of your garments Is like the fragrance of Lebanon. A garden enclosed Is my sister, my spouse, A spring shut up, A fountain sealed. Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates With pleasant fruits, Fragrant henna with spikenard, Spikenard and saffron, Calamus and cinnamon, With all trees of frankincense, Myrrh and aloes, With all the chief spices— A fountain of gardens, A well of living waters, And streams from Lebanon.*

Expressing love towards each other brings healing to the broken heart and gives a confidence that they are wanted by someone. In general, man expects to be well taken care and woman expects to be loved. Woman has only one way to know what man thinks about her is by the love that is expressed. When such love is missing in families, woman easily gets into loneliness and depression. That frustration is slowly seen in her activities towards him. Eventually leads them into think about separation. The only solution is to start loving each other. Remember you have all the reason to love her or him. Take time, relax and think about the external and internal attributes that may trigger your love.

Sex in marriage:

Often this topic is not addressed in a correct sense in many of the literatures. When we say sex in marriage, we are dealing with the sexual relationship between partners within the ambit of marriage. Bible clearly distinguishes what is sex in marriage and what it is not. The confusion comes as the world altered the boundaries of sexual relationship in marriage and mixed with what Bible calls it as adultery or fornication. Many young children are fallen into this trap without knowing what it is meant for. According to the Bible, there is no sexual relationship outside the marriage. Bible considers marriage honorable and expects purity in it. *Hebrews 13:4 Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.* In the world today there are two different extreme approaches of sexual relationship adopted among

families. One approach looks at having sexual activity within marriage is only to bear children, not to have lifelong sexual relationship between partners. Another one treats partners as sexual objects and practice violent methods to satisfy sexual pleasures with each other. Bible teaches a well balanced approach towards sex in marriage. This section deals with the importance of having a disciplined sexual relationship among couples and the adverse effects of not having so.

When Adam and Eve sinned against God in the Garden of Eden, Bible says in *Genesis 3:7* “*Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.*” In *Genesis 4:1* *Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have acquired a man from the LORD.”* The sexual relationship between man and woman began when they could differentiate themselves physically. Cain’s birth is a result of Adam having sexual intercourse with Eve. Since then, such an act of sexual activity continued between partners generation after generation and the result is what we see as today’s population in this world.

Having a healthy and disciplined sexual relationship between partners is essential for a married life to be happy and long lasting. One of the major causes for separation and divorce is not having proper sexual relationship between partners. During the initial years of marriage, when the partners are young, they find each other physically attractive and even a little exposure to any one of the five senses leads to sexual activity within no time. If their sexual relationship is not based on the love, as the years go by, they find themselves no more attractive and the five senses slowly lose their sensitivity. This results in seeking for the sexual pleasure outside marriage. This is one of the major causes of separation and divorce. The fact is that any sexual relationship that is not triggered by the love partners has for each other will not last. When to involve in sexual activity, how frequently and how long one should involve in sexual activity are other areas if not handled in a balanced manner will lead to frustration and loss of relationships. The best answer would be whatever is comfortable and mutually agreeable between both the partners. At times this depends on age, health, surroundings, etc. As long as it is acceptable to both partners, such factors will not cause threat to the marriage.

Bible shows us an example of expressing love towards each other in the book of Song of Solomon. Keeping this as a basis to express the love will trigger sexual desires between partners and will result in successful relationship forever irrespective of ages. *Song of Solomon 2:6 His left hand is under my head, And his right hand embraces me.*

Song of Solomon 4:1-7, 1 Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove’s eyes behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, Going down from Mount Gilead. 2 Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep Which have come up from the washing, Every one of which bears twins, And none is barren among them. 3 Your lips are like a strand of scarlet, And your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil Are like a piece of pomegranate. 4 Your neck is like the tower of David, Built for an armory, On which hang a thousand bucklers, All shields of mighty men. 5 Your two breasts are like two fawns, Twins of a gazelle, Which feed among the lilies. 6 Until the day breaks And the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh And to the hill of frankincense. 7 You are all fair, my love, And there is no spot in you.

Song of Solomon 4:11 Your lips, O my spouse, Drip as the honeycomb; Honey and milk are under your tongue; And the fragrance of your garments Is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

Song of Solomon 6:3 I am my beloved's, And my beloved is mine.

Song of Solomon 7:1-10 1 How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! The curves of your thighs are like jewels, The work of the hands of a skillful workman. 2 Your navel is a rounded goblet; It lacks no blended beverage. Your waist is a heap of wheat Set about with lilies. 3 Your two breasts are like two fawns, Twins of a gazelle. 4 Your neck is like an ivory tower, Your eyes like the pools in Heshbon By the gate of Bath Rabbim. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon Which looks toward Damascus. 5 Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, And the hair of your head is like purple; A king is held captive by your tresses. 6 How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights! 7 This stature of yours is like a palm tree, And your breasts like its clusters. 8 I said, "I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches." Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine, The fragrance of your breath like apples, 9 And the roof of your mouth like the best wine. The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved, Moving gently the lips of sleepers. 10 I am my beloved's, And his desire is toward me.

Immorality:

Sexual immorality is one of the serious issues today. Hundreds and hundreds of families are crushed by this giant who keeps families under bondage. Some of these statistics below show how deeply this sin is rooted in families, especially in Christian families.

- [9] Recent studies reveal that 45-55% of married women and 50-60% of married men engage in extramarital sex at some time or another during their relationship.
- Spouses who get hooked on Internet porn are a growing complaint among spouses filing for divorce, according to a survey of 350 divorce attorneys. "If there's dissatisfaction in the existing relationship, the Internet is an easy way for people to scratch the itch," said lawyer J. Lindsey Short, Jr., president of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, which conducted the study.
- 17 percent of divorces in the United States are caused by infidelity.
- [10] 59% of married Christian men regularly fantasize about sexual relations with someone other than their spouse.

In this modern age churches and families are heavily influenced with this sin of sexual immorality and struggle to come out of it. Parents live such a sinful life and children perceive life as what they see. Children choose to live with someone of their choice even when they are still teens and separate in the early years of living together. Young girls and boys even at their early 20s are made single parents. This opens an opportunity for all sort of sexual immoralities to creep in during their late 20s and early 30s. God hates such an immoral act of man and pours out His wrath in the form of sexually transmitted diseases. Sexual immorality is such a great sin in the sight of God pushing mankind into separation, divorce, poverty, diseases and eventually death. [11,12] A WHO survey of 2007 shows that 33.2 million people were living with HIV in 2007, 2.5 million were newly infected with HIV in 2007 and 2.1 million died due to AIDS deaths in 2007.

Such a great destruction can be avoided in families and generations can be preserved by taking wise decision to come out such immoral activities. The blessing of God is in 3 *John 1:2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.* God brings blessing and healing into families when they turn back from the immoral ways. The knowledge of what Bible talks about sexual immorality is essential for anyone to make an attempt to come out of such bondage.

Living with own spouse: Bible is very particular about each man living with his own wife and woman living with her own husband. Bible does not promote having sexual relationship with many. *1 Corinthians 7:2 nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.*

Immoral behavior inside home: This sin is one of the reasons for separation in places where people live together as joined families. Such condition arises either due to illiteracy or due to modernism. With an eagerness to explore more of sexual pleasure, men and women get into this immoral behavior everywhere. Knowing what Bible says about this behavior helps one to quit from this habit. *Leviticus 18:6-18, 6 'None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I am the LORD. 7 The nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover. She is your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness. 8 The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not uncover; it is your father's nakedness. 9 The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, whether born at home or elsewhere, their nakedness you shall not uncover. 10 The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for theirs is your own nakedness. 11 The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father—she is your sister—you shall not uncover her nakedness. 12 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is near of kin to your father. 13 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is near of kin to your mother. 14 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother. You shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt. 15 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law—she is your son's wife—you shall not uncover her nakedness. 16 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness. 17 You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness. They are near of kin to her. It is wickedness. 18 Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive.*

Homosexuality: Bible considers man having sexual relationship with another man and woman having sexual relation with another woman as an act that displeases God. *Leviticus 18:22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. Leviticus 20:13 If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them.* Today the sects of people including gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender who also practice homosexuality are found everywhere. Bible supports or condemns homosexuality is still a controversial topic. But the outstanding truth is that even though God hates such immoral acts, He still loves those who are involved in. Involving in such

immoral activities diverts one's attention away from marriage relationship as they start finding pleasure and satisfaction in homosexual acts. Any relationship leads to homosexuality if interferes with marriage relationship between husband and wife will eventually lead towards separation and divorce.

Adultery and fornication: These are acts of sexual intercourse between man and woman who are not married to each other. A man or woman who would like to have a healthy married life cannot accept their partners having sexual relationship with another woman or man. Such an act causes heavy damage to the marriage relationship and leads to separation and divorce. Bible condemns the act of adultery and fornication in *Exodus 20:14* "You shall not commit adultery and in *Ephesians 5:3* But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; Bible also gives guidance on how one can protect himself from not falling into such temptations. *Proverbs 5:20-21* 20 For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, And be embraced in the arms of a seductress? 21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He ponders all his paths. *Proverbs 6:23-29* 23 For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life, 24 To keep you from the evil woman, From the flattering tongue of a seductress. 25 Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, Nor let her allure you with her eyelids. 26 For by means of a harlot A man is reduced to a crust of bread; And an adulteress will prey upon his precious life. 27 Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? 28 Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared? 29 So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her shall not be innocent.

As a note of caution Paul writes to Corinthians in *1 Corinthians 6:18-20* 18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. Knowing the expectations of God and heeding to what Bible teaches us will help to protect our marriage by not giving room to any of the above said immoral behaviors seen in this world today.

Don't wait until it breaks:

Having said all these, it is important to reflect upon your life to identify the missing links. In order to identify what has gone wrong, consider the various aspects discussed above such as, Communication, Share your expectations, Spending time together, Avoid arguments, Appreciate each other, Showing it in action, Forgive and forget, Sacrifice, Love each other, Sex in marriage and Immorality. Once you know what has gone wrong, never take the risk of waiting until it breaks. It is never too late to settle the issues with your partner. Never forget God has a blessed future for you. Being together is such a great joy and blessing as long as you live in this world. As it is said in *Isaiah 52:2* Shake yourself from the dust and arise...Shake off the pestering issues leading towards separation and wake up as you know what God has in store for you. Take time to discuss it out with your partner and come to an agreement. God is at your side to help you out. Your decision makes the heavens rejoice as you remember the oath you took on the day

of your marriage which the heavens heard already. Divert your attention from what has happened in the past and involve yourself in other activities such as bringing up the children, useful hobbies, planning for your future and spiritual activities. Make attempts to bring light in the lives of others who got tangled in the net called strained marriage. As you had gone through it already and you know what it means, you are the right person to show them the way to come out of the mess.

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