

one
more
try

1



what happened to our dream?

GROWTH ASSIGNMENTS

1. Whether you are separated or in marital crisis, read the next chapter with an open mind. Examine your attitudes and actions.

2



how to start saving your marriage

GROWTH ASSIGNMENTS

1. Which of your attitudes or actions will have to be changed if you are going to work on reconciliation?
Make a list of five statements, each beginning "I will have to . . ."
2. Are you willing to make those changes? If so, why not start today? You need not announce to your spouse what you are doing—simply do it as you have opportunity.

3



change yourself, change your marriage

GROWTH ASSIGNMENTS

1. Ask a pastor or counselor to arrange for you to take the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis or the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory. Either will help you identify personality patterns.
2. You may want to enroll in a class on personality development at your church or community college.

4



turning to God

GROWTH ASSIGNMENTS

If you have not already done so, ask God to bring to your mind the areas in which you have failed in your marriage.

1. Make a list of your failures and confess each one to God. Thank Him that Christ has paid the penalty for those sins, and accept His forgiveness.
2. Begin the practice of reading, marking, and talking to God about a chapter in the Bible each day. You may want to begin with the book of James in the New Testament.
3. Try singing a psalm to God. Make your own tune and rhythm. You may begin with Psalm 1.
4. If you are not active in a local church, decide today which church you will visit next Sunday. Be sure to attend the Bible study class as well as the worship service.
5. Don't give up the search until you find a warm, loving group of Christians with whom you can share life.

5



love is . . .

GROWTH ASSIGNMENTS

1. In an attitude of prayer, think and then prepare a list of specific ways you could express God's love to your spouse.
2. Make another list of the things you must stop doing or saying if you are to be God's agent of love toward your spouse.
3. Pray that God will enable you to cease all destructive words and actions toward your spouse.
4. Select one of the actions you listed under number 1 above and ask God for an opportunity to express His love to your spouse this week.
5. Commit yourself to walk with God regardless of what your spouse does.

6



tough love

GROWTH ASSIGNMENTS

1. Which of the following were part of your spouse's behavior in your marriage? (Put his or her initials by the ones that apply.)

physical abuse

verbal abuse

sexual abuse of children

sexual

unfaithfulness

alcohol abuse

drug abuse

other _____

2. Which of the above were part of your own behavior in your marriage? (Put your initials by the ones that apply.)
3. What steps have you taken to deal with your own destructive behavior?
4. What steps has your spouse taken to deal with their destructive behavior?
5. If any of the above are established patterns in either of your lives, there can be authentic reconciliation only after these behavior patterns have been changed. Almost always, this will require the help of a pastor or professional counselor. If you are not yet seeing a pastor or counselor, you may want to take steps immediately to find such a person and make an appointment.

Also, make sure that your spouse understands that there can be no reconciliation without counseling. Tell them that promises of change are not enough. If your spouse is serious, he or she will be willing to seek help.

6. If your spouse is not willing to go for counseling about these destructive behavior patterns, then you may want to secure your own counselor so you will have help in knowing how to set tough-love boundaries with your spouse.

7



Loneliness: “the deepest pit”

GROWTH ASSIGNMENTS

1. Clarify your feelings of social loneliness by answering the following:
 - Do you feel cut off, removed from all that is worthwhile in the world?
 - Do you see others accomplishing meaningful goals while you sit in the stands and watch?
 - If you could do anything in the world with your life, what would you like to do?
 - Is that goal realistic for you? If not, what would be a realistic goal?
 - If you were to accomplish that goal, what would be the first step?
 - How will that step affect your relationship with your spouse?
 - What will such a step do for you?
 - Why not take that step and ask God to steer you into what is best?

Why not take that step and ask God to steer you into what is best?

2. Clarify your feelings of emotional loneliness by answering the following:
 - Do you feel emotionally alone? That there is no one with whom you can share your honest feelings?
 - What opportunity and freedom do you have to share your feelings with your spouse?
 - Is there a friend with whom you can share without fear of being rejected? If so, have you shared your present pain with that new friend? Why not do so today?
 - Do you feel the need to develop friendships with others? Where, in your community, could you go to develop such friendships?
 - Are you presently involved in a Christian fellowship? If not, what keeps you from doing so immediately?
3. If loneliness is acute, and you have been unable to share with anyone, make an appointment with a counselor or pastor, who can help you see your situation more objectively.



“i’m so angry”

GROWTH ASSIGNMENTS

1. Express your anger in writing. Ask God to guide you as you try to express your feelings. You may begin, “I am angry because . . .”
2. Think of a friend who will be objective, with whom you may share what you have written. Ask him or her to listen as you read and then to help you find constructive ways to deal with the issue.
3. Do you feel that you have allowed your anger to develop into bitterness? If so, are you willing to confess it as sin and accept God’s forgiveness?
4. If you have never invited Christ into your life, as you confess your sin, why not invite Him to come into your life and give you power to deal with your present problems?
5. For additional help in processing anger, see Gary Chapman, *Anger: Handling a Powerful Emotion in a Healthy Way* (Chicago: Northfield, 2006).



rebuilding

GROWTH ASSIGNMENTS

1. No one, including God, will force you to work on your marriage. That is a decision that only you can make. But if you decide, you will have all the help of God at your disposal. You have talked with and observed many who have experienced divorce. Would you be willing to find a couple that has a good marriage and ask them how they obtained it? Perhaps you could interview several married couples and ask what problems they have overcome to find fulfillment.
2. If you decide to take the road "less traveled by," you may want to use the checklist below:

Steps we have taken:

Date:

Made my decision to seek
reconciliation_____

Talked with God about my decision
and asked for His help_____

Asked my spouse for a
dinner date_____

Spouse accepted invitation_____

Related my decision to my spouse_____

Spouse agreed to seek reconciliation_____

Arranged for session with pastor or
counselor_____

Did assignments made by counselor_____

Additional counseling sessions_____

Completed additional communication
assignments_____

Additional counseling sessions_____

Completed additional communication
assignments_____

Books we have read and discussed:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Podcasts or DVDs on marriage we have listened to and
discussed:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Marriage workshops, seminars, or classes we have
attended:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

10



and if it doesn't
work out . . .

GROWTH ASSIGNMENTS

1. If your spouse insists on divorce and refuses to take any steps toward reconciliation, ask God to give you strength and wisdom in accepting this decision.
2. Keep the door of reconciliation open from your side and pray that God will continue to stimulate the mind of your spouse.
3. Seek the counsel of a lawyer, a pastor, or a friend in the areas in which you have questions.
4. Seek to be equitable in all legal arrangements.
5. Select one or more of the books or websites from the resources listed in the resources list at the end of this book, and continue seeking personal growth.



resources

Whether you are able to move down the road of reconciliation, or you are forced to accept divorce, reading the right books and exploring helpful Internet content can be a tremendous aid in helping you make the most of life. You may not agree with all you read, but look for practical ideas that may assist you in accomplishing your goals. God has not left us without direction. Books written from a biblical perspective can help you find God's way. Remember, it is not enough just to read. You must apply truth to life. You may need to make radical changes in your present thinking and behavior. If so, you have all of God's power to aid you.

RESOURCES FOR GROWING WHILE SEPARATED

Carder, Dave, with Duncan Jaenicke. *Torn Asunder: Recovering from Extramarital Affairs*. Chicago: Moody, 2007. There is hope for recovery from the devastation of extramarital affairs. This book offers practical counsel for beginning the recovery process. Carder analyzes why affairs happen and provides step-by-step help for recovering and rebuilding.

_____. *Torn Asunder Workbook*. Chicago: Moody, 2008. This workbook applies the principles in the original *Torn*

one more try

Asunder with a series of projects and responses that can bring healing to the wounds created by marital unfaithfulness.

Chapman, Gary. *Anger: Handling a Powerful Emotion in a Healthy Way*. Chicago: Moody, 2007. Anger can be productive and generate positive change if it is valid and expressed in a constructive manner. But how do you know the difference between valid and distorted anger? And how can you use anger to effectively build up a personal relationship rather than tear it down? The book answers these questions and offers practical suggestions for controlling your anger so it does not control you.

Clinton, Tim, and Gary Sibcy. *Why You Do the Things You Do: The Secret to Healthy Relationships*. Brentwood, Tenn.: Integrity Publishers, 2006. There is no one person who feels, acts, and thinks exactly like you. Dr. Tim Clinton and Dr. Gary Sibcy present four patterns of relating that help explain why you do the things you do, and how your behaviors are rooted in your past and specifically in your bond with your parents. Learning this information about yourself will help you see how it affects and can improve your relationships.

Cloud, Henry, and John Townsend. *Boundaries in Marriage: Understanding the Choices That Make or Break Loving Relationships*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002. Authors of the bestselling *Boundaries* present the ten laws of boundaries that can make a tremendous difference both in marriage and in relationships in general.

McGinnis, Alan Loy. *The Friendship Factor: How to Get Closer to the People You Care For*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2004. This

book is a must for couples who want to become friends. It is filled with ideas on how to deepen relationships, cultivate intimacy, handle negative emotions, and forgive. The section on salvaging a faltering friendship has particular application to those who are separated.

Rooks, Linda. *Broken Heart on Hold: Surviving Separation*. Elgin, Ill.: David C. Cook Publishing, 2006. Written by a woman who has gone through the pain of marital separation and come out on the other side with a stronger, reconciled marriage, this book has the power to encourage, comfort, and give hope to those who are in a similar situation. Providing biblical insight along the way, Linda Rooks reminds the reader that God is still there and should be trusted.

Scruggs, Jeff, and Cheryl Scruggs. *I Do Again: How We Found a Second Chance at Our Marriage—and You Can Too*. Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2008. Jeff and Cheryl Scruggs share their story of a happy beginning, a downward spiral, a traumatic affair, and a painful divorce that left their family in pieces. Jeff and Cheryl share the secrets of what was really going wrong in their marriage before the divorce, and also take the reader on their journey to reconciliation and eventual remarriage. Their story proves what God is able to do by His grace with two forgiving hearts.

Talley, Jim. *Reconcilable Differences: Healing for Troubled Marriages*. Nashville: Nelson, 1991, 2008. Are our differences too great to be reconciled? Talley believes the answer is no. The goal of reconciliation is to cause those who are angry, bitter, and hostile to become friendly again and to discover harmony. The book offers practical help on resolving con-

one more try

flicts and developing a relationship based on mutual love, respect, and trust.

RESOURCES FOR REBUILDING A MARRIAGE

Begg, Alistair. *Lasting Love: How to Avoid Marital Failure*. Chicago: Moody, 1997, 2002. When marriages are shaky, couples need to return to the biblical basics, such as understanding the meaning of the marriage vows. This book includes a helpful study guide that couples can complete together.

Chapman, Gary, and Ramon Presson. *101 Conversation Starters for Couples*. Chicago: Northfield, 2002, 2012. One hundred and one questions are listed in this small and fun booklet to help couples “disclose and discover”—both key elements to creating or restoring intimacy in marriage.

Chapman, Gary, and Jennifer Thomas. *When Sorry Isn't Enough: Making Things Right with Those You Love*. Chicago: Northfield, 2013. No matter what state your marriage is in, rocky or solid, everyone eventually does something they regret. This book walks you through the different forms of apologies and why one “method” may be more meaningful to your spouse than another. Discover how the power of apology can heal your relationships and bring great rewards to your marriage.

Chapman, Gary. *Desperate Marriages: Moving Toward Hope and Healing in Your Relationship*. Chicago: Northfield, 2008. A marriage can come under fire from alcoholism, verbal abuse, a controlling personality, or unfaithfulness. This book shows how to deal with these and other “tough issues.”

_____. *The 5 Love Languages*. Chicago: Northfield, 2010. What makes one person feel loved does not necessarily make another feel loved. The key to keeping love alive in a marriage is discovering the primary love language of your spouse and choosing to speak it regularly. Dr. Chapman describes each of the five love languages and gives guidance for applying these principles in marriage. Includes self-assessments.

_____. *The Marriage You've Always Wanted*. Chicago: Moody, 2014. Once you make the decision to seek reconciliation, this book will point the way toward marital growth. Dr. Chapman covers such key issues as finances, sex, communication, and much more, emphasizing the importance of marital unity. Each chapter concludes with specific “growth assignments” so spouses may act on what they’ve learned.

Dobson, James. *Love Must Be Tough: New Hope for Marriages in Crisis*. Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale, 2007. This book is for spouses who have tried numerous strategies and offered many second chances. Dr. James Dobson offers hope to those who are close to walking away, sharing a new way to love their mate, even if they are the only ones willing to give the marriage another try.

Downs, Tim, and Joy Downs. *Fight Fair: Winning at Conflict Without Losing at Love*. Chicago: Moody, 2010. Conflict is “the art of disagreeing while still holding hands,” and the authors remind every married couple that conflict is part of marriage and of life that they cannot escape. Readers learn to establish their own rules of engagement and to

one more try

employ the appropriate underlying attitudes, which include humility, generosity, and gentleness.

_____. *One of Us Must Be Crazy . . . And I'm Pretty Sure It's You: Making Sense of the Differences That Divide Us*. Chicago: Moody, 2010. This companion book to *Fight Fair* presents the seven areas where most conflicts occur and prescribes how to resolve each conflict when alienation has set in.

Gottman, John, PhD, and Nan Silver. *What Makes Love Last?* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012. Drawing on decades of research, psychologist and counselor Gottman looks at why some marriages thrive and some wither, and explores the central role of trust.

Leman, Kevin. *Sheet Music*. Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale, 2003. With typical candor, Kevin Leman tells couples everything they need to know about building a healthy and rewarding sexual relationship. He looks at attitudes, techniques, and much more.

Penner, Clifford, and Joyce Penner. *The Gift of Sex*. Nashville: W Publishing, 2003. One of the most comprehensive and practical guides to discovering mutual sexual fulfillment in a marriage, this book deals realistically with common struggles and frustrations. It speaks to the most often asked questions of couples who want to find sexual harmony.

Smalley, Gary, with Dr. Greg Smalley and Deborah Smalley. *Winning Your Wife Back Before It's Too Late*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999, 2004. The veteran relationships expert addresses men whose marriages are in crisis—

“whether she’s left physically or emotionally.” Combines straight talk, Scripture, and humor, presented in a “game plan” theme.

Weiner-Davis, Michelle. *Divorce Busting*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992. A marriage therapist offers practical, tough-minded help for couples “on the brink”—and reflects on the reasons why divorce is not the answer.

Williams, Joe, and Michelle Williams. *Yes, Your Marriage Can Be Saved*. Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale, 2007. A Focus on the Family book. The authors share insights gleaned from their journey through separation and reconciliation.

RESOURCES FOR COPING WITH DIVORCE

Birdseye, Sue. *When Happily Ever After Shatters: Seeing God in the Midst of Divorce & Single Parenting*. Colorado Springs: Focus on the Family, 2013. When your marriage has failed, it’s easy to turn to bitterness and despair. Sue Birdseye shows you another route: turning to God, and trusting and honoring Him even in the midst of divorce. Sharing her own story along the way, Sue provides practical advice in areas such as single parenting, forgiveness, and bringing glory to God even in the hardest of circumstances.

Burns, Bob, and Tom Whiteman. *The Fresh Start Divorce Recovery Workbook*. Nashville: Oliver Nelson, 1998. A step-by-step program for those who are divorced or separated, this book points the way to healing. Questions, self-tests, exercises, and practical information will enable readers to regain self-esteem and faith in God; move beyond bitterness and anger into forgiveness and spiritual freedom; help children handle

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adjustments; and gain personal strength to complete the journey toward wholeness after the trauma of divorce.

Kniskern, Joseph Warren. *When the Vow Breaks: A Survival and Recovery Guide for Christians Facing Divorce*. Nashville: B&H, 2008. A survival and recovery guide for Christians facing divorce. In this sensitive and thorough guide, attorney Joseph Kniskern describes the walk through the emotional aspects of his own failed marriage and unwanted divorce. He provides a comprehensive study of what the Bible says about marriage and divorce. More importantly, he shows how God can and does continue to work in people's lives to provide hope and encouragement in the aftermath of a divorce.

Petherbridge, Laura. *When I Do Becomes I Don't: Practical Steps During Separation and Divorce*. Elgin, Ill.: David C. Cook Publishing, 2008. There are many concerns in the midst of a separation or divorce, and it can be difficult to find practical answers in the midst of the pain. Laura Petherbridge asks the hard questions and gives helpful answers to areas such as identity, finances, forgiveness, singleness, legal issues, returning to work, criticism, and trusting God.

Smoke, Jim. *Growing Through Divorce*. Irvine, Calif.: Harvest House, 2007. When reconciliation is impossible and divorce a reality, this book points the way to life beyond divorce. This very practical book deals with such subjects as assuming responsibility for yourself, finding a family, finding forgiveness, your children, your future, and new life.

_____. *Moving Forward: A Devotional Guide for Finding Hope and Peace in the Midst of Divorce*. Peabody,

Mass.: Hendrickson, 2000. Drawing from his years of counseling experience, Smoke offers day-by-day devotions that explore—from a positive and compassionate point of view—the issues confronting those going through divorce. With words of encouragement and understanding, the book addresses feelings of loneliness, insecurity, anxiety, and anger. It offers insight on issues of forgiveness, children, hope, and peace in the midst of divorce.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- [5LoveLanguages.com](#): Advice and resources on relationship issues from world-renowned author, speaker, and counselor Dr. Gary Chapman. Also features the 30-second assessment tool for determining your love language.
- [CloudTownsend.com](#): Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend offer a wealth of resources particular to couples struggling in their marriage, including free advice, videos, articles, upcoming and online workshops and events, and online coaching.
- [DivorceCare.org](#): DivorceCare groups meet weekly for a time of support with other adults going through divorce. Top experts address divorce and recovery topics. There is also time to discuss the topics as a group and hear what is going on in the lives of the other group members. This website provides a search tool to find a local group.
- [FocusontheFamily.com](#): An abundance of resources on many areas and issues pertaining to marriage, family, divorce, and separation.

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HomeWord.com: HomeWord, partner of Azusa Pacific University, provides a wealth of information to strengthen and encourage couples and families, including material covering marriage, divorce, adultery, separation, and parenting.

Notes



Introduction: “I Can’t Take It Anymore”

1. Samuel Rainey, email, November 2013.

Chapter 1: What Happened to Our Dream?

1. Gary Chapman, *Desperate Marriages* (Chicago: Northfield, 2008), 34.
2. See Leviticus 21:14, 22:13; Numbers 30:9; Deuteronomy 24:1–4.
3. Gary Smalley, *Winning Your Wife Back Before It’s Too Late* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 101.

Chapter 2: How to Start Saving Your Marriage

1. Ed Wheat, *How to Save Your Marriage Alone* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).
2. Michelle Weiner-Davis, *Divorce Busting* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 27.
3. Judy Bodmer, “My Loveless Marriage,” *Today’s Christian Woman*, <http://www.todaychristianwoman.com/articles/2006/january/14.46.html>.
4. Gary Smalley, *Winning Your Wife Back Before It’s Too Late* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 27.
5. Michael J. McManus, *Marriage Savers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 28.
6. See Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee, *Second Chances: Men, Women, and Children a Decade After Divorce, Who Wins, Who Loses—and Why* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1989).
7. Michelle Weiner-Davis, 21.
8. Britton Wood, *Single Adults Want to Be the Church, Too* (Nashville: Broadman, 1977), 82.

Chapter 5: Love Is . . .

1. Gary Smalley, *Winning Your Wife Back Before It’s Too Late* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 33.
2. Michelle Weiner-Davis, *Divorce Busting* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 75.

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Chapter 6: Tough Love

1. Robert Frost, "Mending Wall," ed. Edward Conery Lathem, *The Poetry of Robert Frost* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969).

Chapter 7: Loneliness: "The Deepest Pit"

1. Email, November 2013.
2. James J. Lynch in an interview with Christopher Anderson, *People*, 22 August 1977, 30.
3. Maya Pines, "Psychological Hardness: The Role of Challenge in Health," *Psychology Today*, December 1980, 43.
4. "Divorce," *Christian Medical Society Journal* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1976): 30.
5. Robert S. Weiss, *The Experience of Emotional and Social Isolation* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1973), 54.
6. *Ibid.*, 57.
7. James Johnson, *Loneliness Is Not Forever* (Chicago: Moody, 1979), 21.
8. Paul Tournier, *Escape from Loneliness* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 23.

Chapter 9: Rebuilding

1. Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken," ed. Edward Conery Lathem, *The Poetry of Robert Frost* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969).
2. Gary Chapman, *The 5 Love Languages* (Chicago: Northfield, 2010).

Chapter 10: And If It Doesn't Work Out . . .

1. Michael J. McManus, *Marriage Savers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 230.
2. Mel Krantzler, *Creative Divorce* (New York: New American Library, 1975), 220.
3. For a fuller discussion of how to discover your child's primary love language, read Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell, *The 5 Love Languages of Children* (Chicago: Northfield, 2012).
4. See H. Wayne House, *Divorce and Remarriage: Four Christian Views* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990).
5. See Matthew 5:32, 19:9; Mark 10:11–12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:15.