

10 Lies That Lead to Divorce

You can beat the odds and stay married for life!

MARRIAGE

Too many couples divorce over fixable problems. The numbers alarm me and something needs to change.

In my new book *Divorce Proofing Your Marriage* (Charisma House), I expose 10 common lies people embrace that eventually lead to divorce. Here's a brief overview of the 10 lies. Do your own self-check:

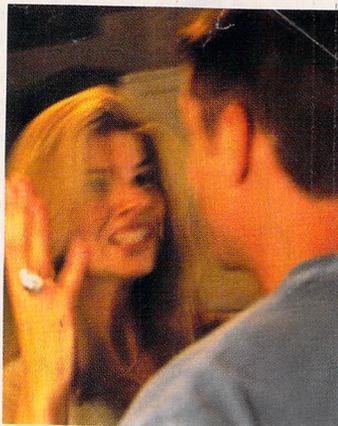
Lie No. 1: Marriage is a contract. Yes, marriage is a legal contract but in God's eyes it is more. The truth is, marriage is a covenant, an unbreakable promise. It is life commitment. It means "for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health." It means loving someone when you don't feel like it, staying faithful, and working through difficulties and bad times.

Lie No. 2: I married you, not your family. The truth is you don't marry just your spouse; you get her family as a package deal! Don't kid yourself and think the outlawed in-laws don't matter. Your spouse grew up in a family that taught her how to be who she is today. Yes, there are other influences and people can change, but family is a primary force in the development of any individual.

Lie No. 3: I can change my spouse. Wrong! The fact that she's continually late or her apartment is a mess is not likely to change because of your undying love. That's why it's so important to pay attention to the red flags you see during the dating relationship, especially the more serious ones such as drinking too much, violent temper, and so on. Chances are these things won't improve but worsen after the honeymoon is over. The truth—all you have control over is your reaction to your spouse—that's the only part you can change.

Lie No. 4: We are too different. Differences are not a major problem as long as the differences are not about life values and morals. Incompatibility doesn't kill a relationship. The real issue is how you handle your differences. You need compatible styles that work for both people. Some differences are unsolvable and couples need to learn to accept those. And the Bible gives clear guidelines on how to deal with conflict in a Christlike way.

Lie No. 5: I've lost that loving feeling, and it's gone, gone, gone! Intense passion doesn't last forever but love can stay for a lifetime. You may not always feel love but you must determine to love your partner as yourself. The loving feeling dwindles when couples lock into negative patterns that lead them away from one another. Criticism moves to contempt and highly defensive behavior that eventually leads to emotional



distance. The truth is you can restore that loving feeling with a number of changes. One is to make five positive statements to your spouse for every negative one. Other changes focus on building friendship and support.

Lie No. 6: A more traditional marriage will save us. Many men feel that if their relationships could be more like *The Brady Bunch* couple, life would be happier. They are confused about gender roles and responsibilities. Submission is a misunderstood and often abused concept. God's intention for marriage is gender equality. On two occasions, God revealed His will on earth concerning gender—in the garden and in the life of Christ. Look to those examples of how men and women should interact. You will find that no matter how you negotiate the relationship, you need mutual submission, respect, honor, empowerment and empathy.

Lie No. 7: I can't change. This is who I am. Take it or leave it. An unwillingness to change is rooted in rebellion. It's doing things your way versus God's. To say you can't change obviates the entire Christian experience of salvation and change of heart. Yes, we are always striving for perfection but the operative phrase is that we should be striving. This requires a willingness to look at your behavior and work toward being more like Christ. If both spouses in marriage would do this regularly, divorce would be less prevalent. Change doesn't happen when you don't embrace it. You can change, but it requires desire, obedience and Holy Spirit-driven power.

Lie No. 8: There's been an affair. We need to divorce. Affairs are serious and damaging, but they are not beyond repair if both spouses agree to try. There must be a commitment to cut off the affair, a time of repentance, forgiveness and a rebuilding of the relationship. The covenant has been broken but can be restored if a couple chooses to do so.

Lie No. 9: It doesn't matter what I do. God will forgive me. God will forgive you if you repent, but it does matter what you do. Your behavior has natural, as well as spiritual, consequences so don't cheapen God's grace.

Lie No. 10: It's too broken. Nothing can fix this relationship. If you've given up, the future looks hopeless, you've grown apart, can't manage conflict, made a mistake or whatever the problem, believe that God can work when you can't. He can change hearts, do miracles and work in the most difficult circumstances. He is the God of the impossible. Draw close to Him, intercede for your marriage, do battle with your true enemy (Satan) and expect God to work on your behalf.