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GrowInGrace Marriage Newsletter

Issue No. 8



Life Lessons I'm Learning by Laurie

Did Someone Say Retreat?

When you hear the word retreat, what does it make you think of? Maybe you think of an army retreating in a conflict situation. Or maybe a wilderness retreat, with hiking on mountain trails and camping under the stars. ★

Then there is the spa retreat, with hot tub soaks, a relaxing sauna, massages 🧖 and a big cozy bed to curl up in and relax. That's my idea of a retreat! In fact that's what Aaron just gave me as a belated birthday present earlier this month. It was great to get away from all the cares and concerns for a couple days and just focus on us and our relationship with each other ❤️ and our relationship with the Lord.

We are given the example in Luke 5:16 "Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray". We need to make sure we take time to retreat to our prayer closet or a quiet place to pray and connect with Jesus.

Jesus also showed us the importance of retreating with other believers. In Luke 9:18-27 Jesus left the crowds to be alone to pray, only his disciples were with him. It's during this time that He questions them on who do people say who He was and ultimately Peter declares that He is the Christ, the Messiah. After that, Jesus tells the disciples of His approaching death and what it will mean to follow Him.

Aaron and I have been part of the FamilyLife Weekend to Remember volunteer team for 5 years now. One thing that is stressed for Married couples is the importance to:

1. **Talk Daily** with your spouse, connecting on a deeper level
2. **Date Weekly** .. this doesn't have to be expensive, that's why we share our [Dates on a Dime](#) ideas
3. **Retreat Yearly** .. the [Vertical Marriage Retreat](#) we're doing August 22 & 23 .. or upcoming [The Weekend to Remember](#) October 3-5 at Kalahari Water Resort in Sandusky. If you're interested in Kalahari, talk to Aaron or I and we can let you know about a **special discount** coming up!

Just like your car needs a tune-up to keep it in good running order, our marriages need tune-ups, even really good marriages!

The TIME is now, why wait.....RETREAT!!! - Laurie



Featured Podcast - FamilyLife Today -

Dave and Ann Wilson with Gary Chapman

I Thought I Married the Wrong Person

[<listen to podcast>](#) .. (July 15, 2025)

Are you longing for a deeper, more fulfilling Christian marriage? Join us on FamilyLife Today as hosts Dave and Ann Wilson sit down with Dr. Gary Chapman, bestselling author of "The Five Love Languages," to unlock practical insights for a thriving relationship! In this powerful episode, Dr. Chapman, co-author of the new book . A Simple Guide for a Better Marriage," shares his own raw marital struggles and the pivotal moment that transformed his relationship with his wife, Carolyn – inspired by Christ's servant leadership (John 13). Listen to the podcast and gain deeper insight into the 3 questions he asked his wife that shifted their marriage toward mutual service. - [<listen to podcast>](#)

Questions for discussion after listening:

- What can I do to help you?
- How can I make your life easier?
- How can I be a better spouse to you?

Do you know your spouse's love language? Do they know yours?

Take the quiz [<here>](#)

THINK ABOUT IT – DISCUSS IT – APPLY IT

- 1.) To what extent do you have the attitude of Christ toward your spouse?
- 2.) Be brave and ask your spouse how closely you emulate Christ's steadfast love
- 3.) What can you do today to demonstrate love to your spouse?

Waking Up Next to a Stranger

'I Do Everyday' Family Life® - By Lisa Lakey (7/19/25)

Rolling over in bed one morning, I was shocked to realize there was a strange man in my bed.

The man looked similar to someone I once knew: red hair (although I didn't recall the white hairs sprinkled in), freckles, broad shoulders, large feet dangling carelessly off the edge.

Once upon a time, I married him.

If we aren't intentional students of our spouses, we may one day find ourselves waking up to a stranger in the bed.

How often have you felt, no one really knows me? Chances are, your spouse has felt the same way.

Proverbs tells us to "rejoice in the wife of your youth" (5:18). When was the last time you got excited over your spouse?

Sure, they've changed. My redhead now has bits of white in his beard, but he is still the man I married. I just need to intentionally learn about the man God is growing him to be—and there is a lot to celebrate about that.

Come to think of it, my waistline isn't what it was on our wedding day. But we have two beautiful children who grew inside that waistline. My husband might not stay up all night talking with me like he used to, but those slightly-more-wrinkled hands work more hours than he did in his 20s to provide for our family.

Your spouse should change. I'm thankful we aren't the same kids as when we met 17 years ago. We've matured (mostly), grown (through good and bad), and life has weathered the two of us.

But there's no one I'd rather wake up next to.

[Click here for more on getting to know your spouse](#)

The Good Stuff: "Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth ... be intoxicated always in her love." ([Proverbs 5:18-19](#))

Action Points: Get to know the person you married, even if it's been 50 years since your vows. Plan a second "first date." Over dinner or coffee, ask them questions to get to know them all over again.

Wifely Wisdom

I was recently reading over some notes in my Vertical Marriage workbook and i saw this quote by Martin Luther I had jotted down.

"Let the wife make the husband glad to come home, and let him make her sorry to see him leave."

The wife sets the tone of the home, even if she works outside of the home.

This really has been making me take a look at myself, what tone am I setting?



Love in Action!

Set aside 30-60 minutes to spend with each other and discuss dating ...

Set a date within the next week to go out for ice cream, a movie or a walk together .. make it a habit 💕



Couples Corner

We're in your corner
praying for your marriage

Please pray for us as we
move forward leading this
Marriage Ministry



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Guilty As Charged

A Prayer Closet Confession - by Aaron Eckard

"You made today all about you!". The words stung and I wasn't about to sit there and be accused of something that wasn't true. 'Shields up' .. defensive stance.

If you asked me, '*Do you have conflict in your marriage?*' I'd be quick to affirm that I do. You see, I'm the type that likes to lay it all out and deal with it right now. Using my gift of teaching and my animated personality, I'm eager to lean into our arguments and show Laurie how she was wrong, again.

If you then asked me, '*How often am I the source of our conflict in our marriage?*' I'd probably take a long pause .. like I just did, trying to figure out what to write next .. then if I'm honest, I'd have to say 'I'm the cause of way more than I realize'.

The battle within. Paul writes that the very thing he wants to do is where he fails, and he ends up doing that which he despises. As a perfectionist, I tend to hold myself to a high standard. A standard that I often don't measure up to. It's frustrating and causes me to feel defective and inadequate, and I react by being defensive and accusational when I'm in conflict.

It's the classic case of seeing past the log in my own eye and focusing on the splinter in Laurie's.

Time to grab my chainsaw and carve something out of that log. Maybe an eagle or even a bear .. It's a pretty big chunk of wood.

I'm tired of finding fault in everyone BUT ME! More than that, I want to be done fighting, but the minute we have a disagreement, there it is again. That ugliness rises right back to the surface.

Who can save me from this wretched man? You know the answer and I do too. Thank You Jesus! .. For Your forgiveness and grace, and thank You for Laurie's as well. I love her and I want to be a man she respects, one who cherishes and values her .. for who she is, flaws and all. After all, it's not like I'm perfect!

Forgiven people [need to] forgive people. -Aaron

How often
am I the
source of our
conflict in our
marriage?

"Resolving Conflict in Marriage" - [bible.com](https://www.bible.com) ([plan link](#))

Conflicts in marriage are rarely ever one-sided. It's always easier to see others' faults than it is to see our own.

When we *do* notice a fault in ourselves, we tend to drastically underestimate it. We see our fault as a speck, and our spouse's as a huge log.

But as *Dennis Rainey* says, even if your spouse is 99% responsible, you are still 100% responsible for your 1%.

Jesus says we need to take a good hard look at our own sins *before* we can see others' sins clearly.

If you really want to resolve conflict in your marriage, you can't just focus on your spouse's behavior. You need to look closely at your own too.

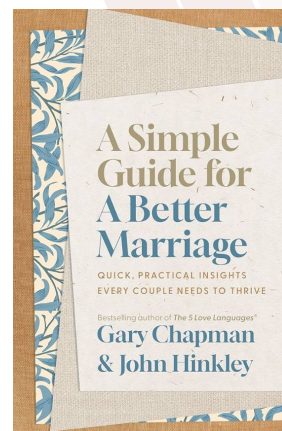
Spend some time in prayer, asking God to help you see conflict with your spouse through His eyes.

Are there any logs in your eye that need attention?

Featured in This Issue's Podcast

(by Gary Chapman)

A Simple Guide for a Better Marriage:
Quick, Practical Insights Every Couple
Needs to Thrive



Take it Back!

'I Do Everyday' Family Life® - By Ed Uszynski (8/9/25)

We learned it on the elementary playground. Then it saved our marriage.

Throughout our first few years together, Amy and I kept setting each other off. We'd get into these wild arguments and not even realize how we got there.

At some point we started asking, "How can we stop this before it gets started? Is there some way to head it off before it turns into something we didn't intend for it to become?"

So we instituted the "take it back" clause.

Let's pretend I say something that strikes a nerve in Amy. Could be about anything, but it's causing an escalation of negative emotion inside her.

And I don't know it. I'm not trying to start something, but it's happening.

Or maybe I do know it. I'm intentionally trying to poke at her and start something.

In either case, Amy can say "Take it back." That immediately signals to me that I'm going down a path that is not going to end well.

I can then either reply with "I take it back" or keep plowing forward into the dumpster fire I'm choosing to fan into flame.

If I say, "I take it back" and really have no idea why she's getting upset, we can take some time to unpack and explore how I'm making her angry.

If I say, "I take it back" and I know exactly what I am doing to stir her up, I can thank her and the Lord above for allowing me an escape before plunging into a self-dug communication grave. If I recklessly choose to keep going, then we'll wait for the CSI report to assess the relational damage done.

It's a clause we both use as needed.

Sounds hokey, but it works, and it's usually triggered by the Holy Spirit in our lives—if we'll listen.

Really, "take it back" is just our strategy for living out James' encouragement to be "quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry" with each other ([James 1:19](#)). A silly plan that's had seriously positive results.

[What's your strategy to avoid conflicts before they become conflicts? Try these six steps.](#)

The Good Stuff: The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out. ([Proverbs 17:14](#))

Action Points: If either of you start feeling tensions or emotions rising in a discussion this week, take a moment to pause and see if you need to "take back" words you said. If you can, calmly discuss why this might be a hot topic between the two of you.

✉ Receive the 'I Do Everyday' email daily <[link](#)>

**"Love doesn't make
the world go round.**

**Love is what makes
the ride
worthwhile."**



Now pay
attention
boy!



- Husband Hack -

Laurie asked me at the end of the day today if I liked the top she had on earlier. Now .. you must keep in mind that we always wear the same color each day, so I have a leg up on this one guys .. and guess what?

- I did not remember which top she wore -

Honest oversight? .. for sure (I hope) but it had me thinking, how much of **my attention** does she get? What else did I miss?