**7 Ways to Protect Your Marriage
in Hard Times**

*By LifeWay Leadership*

I was speaking to a man from our church this week and he was telling me about some major struggles he and his wife were facing. Talking with him for ten minutes inspired me and challenged me to look at life’s difficulties as an opportunity to grow closer to my wife and grow deeper in my faith. If you will prioritize these seven actions in your own marriage, I’m convinced that you will be giving your marriage every opportunity to thrive even during difficult circumstances.

1. **Surround yourself with the right people. You need friends who love you, love your spouse AND believe in marriage**.

Your support system will be critically important during seasons of difficulty in your marriage. You need people who will be encouraging you and praying for you; not people tempting you to numb the pain through unhealthy behaviors and you DEFINITELY don’t need people who are encouraging divorce. Be very intentional about who is in your inner circle during these difficult times. The right people will help immensely, BUT the wrong people could cause your marriage to unravel.

1. **COMMUNICATE with your spouse about everything. Don’t hide your feelings or keep secrets**.

The level of your honesty and transparency will determine the level of your intimacy. Communication with your spouse in difficult times is a lifeline keeping you connected. If you stop talking, you’ll both drift apart instead of facing the challenges together. Talk about everything.

1. **Be willing to WORK HARD. Don’t expect problems to be fixed on autopilot. Work together to find solutions.**

One trait that is present in almost every healthy couple is a strong work ethic. Don’t get on autopilot. Tenaciously identify areas where you can improve and work hard to improve in those areas. There will certainly be times when you need to rest, but you must also be willing to work. Your marriage is always worth the effort!

1. **Have faith. Remember that God is with you and He is bigger than anything you will face**.

Christians can find a great deal of strength and perspective in the Bible, praying, talking about God’s promises and engaged in serving others. When we put our faith into action, our thoughts shift away from our worries and are replaced with more peace and courage. Jesus promised that He would never leave us or forsake us. Take comfort in knowing that in your marriage and life in general, God is with you in the struggle.

1. **Keep your sense of humor. Even on the hard days, find reasons to laugh together**.

Joy is a gift that can’t be stolen away by cancer or bankruptcy or any other struggle life can throw your way. When you choose to smile and you choose to laugh, it doesn’t mean you’re being fake and it doesn’t mean you’re not taking the struggles seriously. It means that you are choosing to rise above. You can’t always control your circumstances, but you can always choose how you respond. Choose to keep laughter alive.

1. **Live life one day at a time. Be present in the moment. Don’t get preoccupied with all the things that might happen in the future.**

Jesus taught us not to worry about tomorrow, because worry doesn’t do any good and tomorrow will have enough troubles of its own. We can only live one day at a time. It’s still okay to plan for the future, but we can’t be preoccupied with the future. Focus on the blessings right in front of you today and ask God to give you the strength to face today’s challenges. He’ll do the same thing for you tomorrow, but not until tomorrow, so don’t get ahead of yourself.

1. **Refuse to give up. Remove your exit strategies. KEEP GOING**

There are going to be so many moments when you feel like quitting, but you’ve got to keep going. You need to decide ahead of time that you’re going to stay committed to your marriage no matter what. The level of your commitment will determine the level of strength you’ll have to endure the difficulties. Resolve together that you’re going to persevere “for better or for worse” and then refuse to give up. Your commitment will make all the difference!