

Perseverance:

Steadfast effort to continue forward in spite of difficulty or delays.



Every couple enters marriage thinking they will succeed, that they will go the distance and remain married for life. Yet, somewhere around 50% of marriages fail and for those who lose a child or go through prolonged illness, the divorce rate rises to about 80%. How can the church affect the world when people in the church divorce as much as those outside the church? What is wrong with this picture? Simply, there is a lack of *perseverance* in people today. When things get tough, they walk out. Do you know that researchers have found that 86% of unhappily married people who remained in their marriage found that, five years later, their marriages were happier, rating very happy or quite happy? Just persevering can lead to happier times!

Perseverance means that we remain together through the tough times; that we continue to move forward in spite of difficulties or things not happening when we think they should happen. One writer said that when you finally understand the root of the word *success*, you discover that it means ‘keep going forward.’ Success in marriage isn’t some point we attain or ‘making it to the end;’ It *is not* giving up when our spouse doesn’t act right or doesn’t *get it*. Success in marriage *is* continuing to move forward through the problems, the set-backs, the trials and tribulations, and yes, even the sin we experience in life together as husband and wife. It is seeking help when things aren’t going right rather than finding a ‘better’ partner or giving up on the marriage.

We recently counseled a couple where the wife did not feel loved by or connected to her husband. Rather than giving up, she sought help and asked him to go for help. He committed to doing the work to connect with her and help her feel loved. Now comes the test of whether or not they will *persevere* and continue the work of building a strong marriage. This kind of perseverance develops from faith in God. In fact, James, Chapter 2 says that actions demonstrate that a person’s faith is true. God saves us by our faith in Christ, but *perseverance*, holding true to the Lord demonstrates our faith. We are to trust in Him, giving our spouse and our marriage to the Lord, persevering through the difficult times, and working together to build a better marriage.

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

The *Fortified Marriages Manual and Workbook* is a great tool to help couples grow in their marriage relationship. Additional information about perseverance in marriage can be found in the following:

Perseverance, a key ingredient to a lasting marriage by Shari Rigby - extraordinarymovie.com

Perseverance in Marriage: How To (Happily) Go The Distance by Callie Huft - youmeusfirst.com