

Trouble:

Experiencing problems, difficulties, or adversity



Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 7 that “those who marry will face many troubles in this life.” We live in a broken world - a world crying out for the return of the Savior. Trouble is a fact of life, yet when most couples experience trouble, they react as if they can not believe trouble could happen to *them*. Statistics show that couples believe the fairy tale that they will marry and live *happily every after*. Divorce rates skyrocket for those who experience financial difficulties, long-term illness, or loss of a child. For heaven’s sake, people are now divorcing when they experience the difficulties of aging. This is not what God meant for marriage! Marriage is meant to be a natural support mechanism when we experience trouble.

Jesus told us that we would experience trouble in the world, but that we could take heart, because He has overcome the world (John 16:33). Problems, difficulties, and adversities should not surprise us and should be a time when we pull together as a couple, not allow those troubles to drive us apart. Carmen and I have experienced tremendous difficulties throughout our marriage. Sin within our marriage, trouble with children, financial loss; the list is quite long. We haven’t make it through the troubles because we are such great Christians; at times, it has been *very* difficult, but by God’s grace and strength, we have faced the troubles *together*. We have grown (in our faith and in our marriage relationship) because of and in spite of the trouble we have faced.

There isn’t some secret that we can impart to you for working through difficulties; there isn’t some formula of seven steps to working through adversity. It is a matter of knowing that trouble *will* come in life and then trusting the Lord and focusing on Him through the trouble. Get help; through trusted friends, the church, counseling if needed, we are not meant to walk through trouble alone.

Couples can also prepare *before* the adversity comes. Preparation involves building the foundation for a strong, growing marriage and continuing the work of building relationship:

Pray together daily	Build and maintain healthy boundaries	Use healthy communication tools
Grow in intimacy	Meet each other’s needs	Connect with others

You cannot avoid pain and loss in life. How will you handle it? Will you run from adversity or depend on Christ and grow through it?

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

Chapter 11 of the Fortified Marriages Manual & Workbook discusses the challenges couples face in life; it is a great way to build a strong marriage and prepare for the challenges you will face in life. Also see:

You’ll Get Through This: Hope and Help for Your Turbulent Times by Max Lucado
Why Suffering? Finding Meaning and Comfort When Life Doesn’t Make Sense by Ravi Zacharias, Vince Vitale

Hope for the Heart Ministries: www.hopefortheheart.com