

MARRIAGE: FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING

STUDY THREE

Symphony of Survival in the Key of C

Selected Scriptures

You may find yourself in the backwash of a set of circumstances—harsh circumstances. You may carry with you painful and deep scars from abuse and mistreatment. You may have had a horrific set of parents who cared nothing for you. You may have never seen a model of a marriage, so you didn't even know where to start, and harsh consequences followed. Marriage can survive that.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

A couple seeking marital advice doesn't need to look far. Friends, family, and pastors will gladly share their own experience with a couple. Marriage conferences offer them a chance to retreat and to learn together. Or by just perusing the bookshelves in a local library, they could find volumes—each boasting to reveal the long unknown “secret” to a healthy relationship.

Yes, finding marital advice is easy. *Discerning* the advice, however, isn't. Sadly, much of the advice available today isn't rooted in Scripture. And a piece of advice should be considered good only if it aligns with the timeless truths preserved in the Word of God.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study will consider the accounts of three marriages from Scripture. These couples endured some of the harshest, most extreme, and strangest situations imaginable, and we today have much to learn from the examples of these ancient marriages.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Some of the best advice ever offered is found in a letter from the apostle Paul: “Never stop praying” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This advice applies in all of life’s circumstances—from small moments of joy to long seasons of conflict. Offer this prayer as you prepare to open God’s Word:

Father, thank You for sharing Your wisdom with Your people through Scripture. Grant me understanding today to heed the commandments and warnings, as well as to receive the encouragement contained in Your Word. I pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

After God established the original marriage between Adam and Eve, Genesis 2:24–25 says, “This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.”

From these verses, Pastor Chuck identifies four principles on which a biblical marriage is based: severance, permanence, unity, and intimacy. We build our marriage on these principles using biblical values such as trust, love, affection, self-giving, affirmation, and an additional vital element that is the focus of this study: *commitment*.

Let’s now turn to three separate accounts to see how Adam and Eve, Hosea and Gomer, and Joseph and Mary all endured life’s most difficult circumstances through their commitment—both to God and to their spouse.



Searching the Scriptures Study Tip: Topical Studies

Every *Searching the Scriptures* study follows Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s Bible study method.¹ This study, however, looks different because it focuses on a broad topic rather than a single passage. Instead of answering correlation questions, we will first observe and then interpret three separate passages that each teach an important truth about marital survival. Finally, we’ll develop applications based on all three passages.



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Application: Commitment in Marriage

In Pastor Chuck’s application of this passage, he addresses the necessity of commitment in a Christ-centered message. He discusses two application principles:

First, if a marriage is going to survive, commitment is the key.

Take a moment to consider your cultural context. What kind of marriage would non-Christians around you consider successful? What would they say is the “secret” or essential ingredient to having this successful relationship?

In what ways are your culture’s standards for marriage similar or different from the biblical ideal that commitment is foundational for a healthy marriage?

Second, if commitment is the key, Christ is the lock.

A key without a lock has no purpose. Likewise, a marriage without Christ at its center misses God’s ideal—no matter how committed the couple.



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As you think about your own marriage or another close relationship, what is the glue that binds the relationship together? What steps can you take to move Christ toward the center to complement your commitment?

In a world where advice like “follow your heart” dominates, commitment may sound like a *bad* idea. However, this is a *biblical* idea. And following God is always better than following our own broken and sinful hearts. Truly committing to a spouse may be difficult, but it is essential to surviving and ultimately thriving in marriage.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for never giving up on me. Even though I was a wholly sinful person, You sent Your Son to die for me and welcomed me into Your family. Give me the strength, courage, and wisdom to show this kind of commitment to those closest to me—especially when things are so hard I just want to give up. I pray these things in Jesus' unshakeable name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."

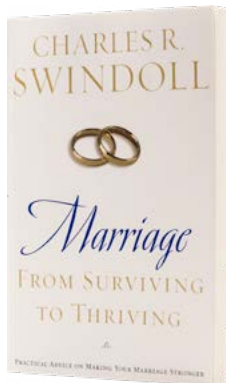


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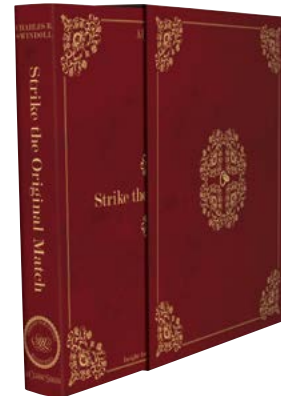
Tools for Digging Deeper



Marriage: From Surviving to Thriving
by Charles R. Swindoll
softcover book



**Symphony of Survival in the
Key of "C": Keeping Marital
Commitment Strong**
by Charles R. Swindoll
booklet



Strike the Original Match
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For the 2022 broadcasts of *Marriage: From Surviving to Thriving*, *Searching the Scriptures* studies were developed by Brad Smith, writer, *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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