

# The Power of Perseverance in Marriage

## No More Perfect Date Night

**Jill Savage:** You know most of us, during our wedding ceremony, promised some form of commitment that included the words "for better or for worse," and those words rolled right off our tongue.

**Mark Savage:** Right.

**JS:** But they are challenging to live out. [laughter]

**MS:** We just don't know what "for better or for worse" means and...

**JS:** Mm-hmm.

**MS:** Early on we think "Uh, what in the world could be hard?"

**JS:** Mm-hmm.

**MS:** "What, uh, what could this really mean?" But...

**JS:** I don't even think we think about what it could really mean. I think...

**MS:** Right.

**JS:** We just do it and say it.

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** Because hey, we're just trying to to jump through the hoop to get married.

**MS:** Right, yeah.

**JS:** Right? So we don't think about what we're committing to until real life sets in.

**MS:** Mm-hmm. No kidding.

**JS:** You know?

**MS:** For us, uh, financial stress...

**JS:** Mm-hmm. That's been some of our for worse.

**MS:** A son with mental illness. I had breast cancer. And really, you've had a lot of health issues.

**JS:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**MS:** Uh... And honestly, as a man, I have not anticipated the amount of health issues that women tend to have.

**JS:** Mm-hmm.

**MS:** Uh, extended family challenges, gosh, those have been great.

**JS:** We've had some of those. [laughter]

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** Several stints in, uh, marriage counseling.

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** That's been a part of it.

**MS:** My depression, my pornography, uh, attraction, uh, my infidelity.

**JS:** Mm-hmm.

**MS:** Is that enough? [laughter]

**JS:** Yeah, that's a lot to endure.

**MS:** I know! Uh...

**JS:** And and so... I mean honestly, that's real stuff.

**MS:** Right, yeah.

**JS:** We're not unusual.

**MS:** No.

**JS:** We're we're unusual in that we talk about it. [laughter]

**MS:** Right, yeah.

**JS:** We're not unusual in that we've experienced it.

**MS:** Right.

**JS:** Most couples have experienced some form of many of those things. And God's word speaks to this in 1 Corinthians 13:7, where it says that, "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things." But culturally, we're not much into enduring.

**MS:** No. When it gets hard, I'm out of here.

**JS:** Yeah, that's really... We live in the disposable society, all the way down to relationships.

**MS:** Mm-hmm. Right.

**JS:** I mean that's... We do. Uh, really everything you know, "Well, we don't love each other anymore." "Uh, well, it just... We went separate ways."

**MS:** Right.

**JS:** You know, all of those are statements of not choosing love and disposing of relationships.

**MS:** Right.

**JS:** So enduring all things means that we're willing to remain in difficult situations rather than looking for the easier way of escape. I mean, bottomline, it means that we persevere. And it's almost like perseverance is a lost art.

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** You know?

**MS:** Right.

**JS:** It's like a lost character trait.

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** But it's so desperately needed today. And so this means that, you know, when our spouse is making life difficult for us, we don't look for a way out.

**MS:** Right.

**JS:** Now, of course, we are not at all talking about abusive situations, okay?

**MS:** Mm-hmm.

**JS:** That's not what we're talking about here.

**MS:** Right.

**JS:** We're talking about challenging circumstances and times when our spouse's... Maybe our

spouse's personal struggles leak out all over us. [laughter]

**MS:** Right, which... Oh that's a... That's that's a picture.

**JS:** It is.

**MS:** Because it does leak out all over us.

**JS:** It does, yeah, without even realizing it.

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** That's exactly what happens.

**MS:** You know, uh, in my growing up, I didn't really see that type of commitment.

**JS:** That's very true, yeah.

**MS:** I didn't see that perseverance or endurance. My, my parents divorced when I was two, and my, uh, stepdad, that was very creating... A very chaotic environment.

**JS:** Mm-hmm.

**MS:** And that chaos, it just fueled for me a fantasy that I wanted out, and a fantasy that it was gonna be different, uh, in my new family, and that fantasy continued to fuel my unwillingness to endure.

**JS:** Hmm. Right, because in your mind, you had fantasized that this would be a relationship that wouldn't have troubles...

**MS:** Right.

**JS:** Wouldn't have challenges, we think alike...

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** And so then that fed your unrealistic expectations, then your disappointment, and that disappointment is what really like almost leads the way... Disappointment almost leads the way to the exit door. Like...

**MS:** Yeah. And I had...

**JS:** If we don't realize... 'Cause that's one of the slow fades that you and I talk about in our "No More Perfect Marriages" book...

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** Is the slow fade of unrealistic expectations.

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** And that slow fade keeps us in a place of disappointment, which becomes discouragement, which becomes disillusionment, which becomes disconnection...

**MS:** Mm-hmm.

**JS:** And it ultimately works its way out the exit door.

**MS:** Right. And for me, there was always an exit door.

**JS:** You know, sometimes we have to learn how to love someone who's hard to love, too.

**MS:** Right.

**JS:** Like that's that's a part of enduring love. And I... That's during our dark season. That's really what I had to learn how to do 'cause really...

**MS:** Mm-hmm.

**JS:** God gave me the singular call to love you, and I, I mean, it wasn't like I heard a voice from heaven, but it was the only thought in my mind when I asked Him what to do, and I knew it didn't come from me because I didn't feel like loving, right?

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** And so eventually God took me to Romans 12:9-21, and those verses gave me some real specific things uh for enduring love. At that point, I wasn't connecting it to this 1 Corinthians 13 that we were to have an enduring love. I, I wasn't connecting it to that. But here's a couple of verses that were important to me: "Outdo one another showing honor."

**MS:** Mm-hmm.

**JS:** Okay. When I when I honor you, even if you're not honoring me, then it's speaking love. Uh...

**MS:** Mm-hmm.

**JS:** "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." Sometimes when someone is hard to love, I mean what we've got to do is we've got to move in prayer...

**MS:** Mm-hmm.

**JS:** And we've got to go to God and say, "I don't know how to do this. I know you do. You love me when I'm unlovable. Show me how to have an enduring love right now, while my spouse is being unlovable."

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** That's a powerful prayer.

**MS:** It is a powerful prayer.

**JS:** Yeah. So the call in marriage is enduring love. Let's live that out in the good seasons and the hard ones, too.

**MS:** Mm-hmm.

[music]