



MARRIAGE EDUCATION AND RESOURCE CENTER

## October, 2021

# Newsletter from The Marriage Education and Resource Center (MERCY)

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We recently had lunch with two pastors and our conversation turned to pre-marital counseling/education. Both of these pastors require in-depth pre-marital education with couples before they marry them. We are so grateful for this. Perhaps this is because they didn't receive a lot of advice when they married. Here's the extent of their counseling:

One pastor said he asked the minister who was going to marry he and his fiancée if he had any advice for them about marriage. He said, "The minister pointed his cane at me and said, 'Put the toilet seat down.'" That was it!

The other pastor chimed in and said, "When I asked our minister who married us if he offered any pre-marital counseling," he said, 'When I tie a knot, I tie it tight.' How's that for helping a newlywed get off to a great start.

### Upcoming Marriage Events

Weekend to Remember  
October 22 - 24  
Hyatt Regency Louisville



This is just a reminder that The Weekend to Remember marriage get-away is coming to Louisville next weekend but it is not too late to attend.

For more information and cost, [click here](#)

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The Intentional Marriage Virtual Event - Tuesday,  
November 2 - 8:00 - 9:15 p.m.  
(EST)

And we have to admit ours wasn't any better. We simply talked about the ceremony, but no advice was offered in terms of our marriage.

If you have a story about your pre-marital counseling/education, or lack thereof, we'd love to hear it. Send us an email at: [pdhud9@aol.com](mailto:pdhud9@aol.com) and we will publish it in an upcoming newsletter if you would like.

Please be sure to check out the "Benefits of Pre-Marital Education" at the end of this newsletter.

Grace and peace,  
Penny and David

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How to Embrace a New Season in Your Marriage - Excerpts from Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott



Are you entering a new season in your marriage? If so, here are a few tips from Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott's blog on how to embrace this new season.

Honor the past, but leave it behind -It is important to honor past seasons, but respectfully leave them in the past. Don't hold onto negative or heavy emotions that pull you down or are detrimental to the season you are in today. You can, however, take the blessings and lessons you learned from the past and use those for your future.

Be grateful for this moment - Focus on gratitude in the moment, no matter what is going on in your life right now. Gratitude can shift our perspective on so many things, even



John and Lorie Weires

Join John and Lorie Weires for this **free** virtual workshop where you can intentionally work on your relationship and grow closer to God from the comfort of your own home. During their workshops, you will not be asked to share with others.

For more information or to register, [click here](#)

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Couplettime Online -  
November 5 - 8:30 p.m. -  
"Intimacy Igniter and 621 Challenge"



We hope you will join us as we learn how to grow closer, connect, access one another's hearts and help make a plan to continue to stay connected.

It is believed those who spend 5 hours a week in one-on-one communication are in the top 3% of couples who are satisfied in their marriages. When busyness robs us of time

when things are hard.

Celebrate your accomplishments -  
Whatever this season looks like, there is a possible accomplishment, an achievement or a milestone that you can celebrate. Celebrate everything that has brought you to this moment.

Look to the future - Spend a little time dreaming of where you're headed. Where might this season take you?

To read the entire blog, [click here](#)

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### Trends in Relationship Formation and Stability in the U.S.: Dating, Cohabitation, Marriage and Divorce

Research shows that the formation and stability of romantic relationships have changed considerably over time.

Based on a brief issued from MAST Center Research, here are some Key Findings of trends over 25 years or more generally up through 2010, among same-gender relationships.

- Dating has become much less common among recent generations of adolescents than it was for those born earlier.
- Growing shares of couples have met through the internet.
- The proportion of women who have ever cohabited has nearly doubled over the past 25 years.
- Although most young men and women aspire to marry, the marriage rate declined by roughly 60 percent over a 40-year period.
- Delays in the age at first marriage continue to increase, approaching age 28 for women and age 30 for men.
- About two in five marriages end in divorce.
- The overall divorce rate has declined slightly in recent decades and is currently the

together, we simply co-exist.

To join us for this **free** workshop on November 5, [click here](#)

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Let's Roll - Uncertain Times, Great Marriages - November 5 - 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.



Closing in on two years we've been trying to keep moving forward while it seems everything is spinning out of control since Covid swept into our lives.

How are you doing? Your spouse? Your children? Adapting well or having a little anxiety, depression or maybe just discouragement and doubt creeping in? In uncertain times we need to be prepared and equipped to have the best relationships. With God's leading, our marriages can thrive.

In this **free** workshop, Bob and Carol Esham will provide tools so you can have CALM in your lives no matter what you are facing.

MERCI Barn  
8510 Hwy. 111  
Memphis, IN (closer to Sellersburg near intersections of Hwys. 111 & 60)

For more information, or to register, [click here](#)

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A New Beginning



lowest it has been in nearly 50 years.

- The remarriage rate has declined in recent decades—in 2013, about one in five marriages were a remarriage for both spouses.

November 12 - 14 - Online  
December 10-12 - Nashville, TN

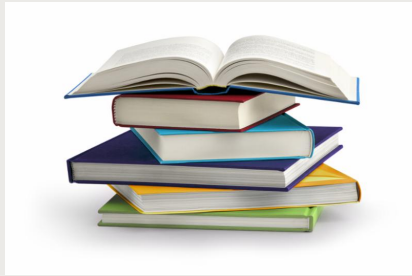


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### New Resources at MERCY

A New Beginning is a counselor-led workshop for couples in crisis.

For more information, [click here](#)



For those who are new to MERCY, we want you to know that we have a library of resources on marriage topics that are available for checkout. There is a refundable deposit, but once you return the resource, you receive your deposit back.

Here are few new resources:



This book is one of the most practical, biblical and helpful books on sex I've

### 3 Reasons to Kiss Your Spouse in Front of Your Kids

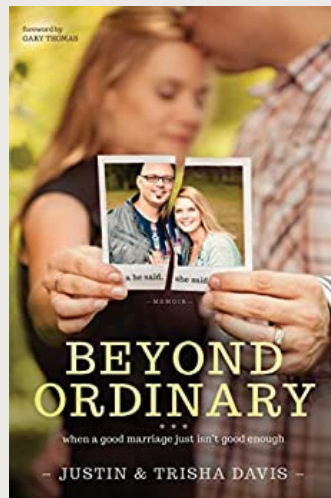


According to Ashley Willis, and other marriage experts, our kids need to understand what a healthy marriage looks like and some of us have forgotten that kissing, snuggling, embracing, rubbing shoulders, handholding and many other respectable gestures, that show love and affection are part of it.

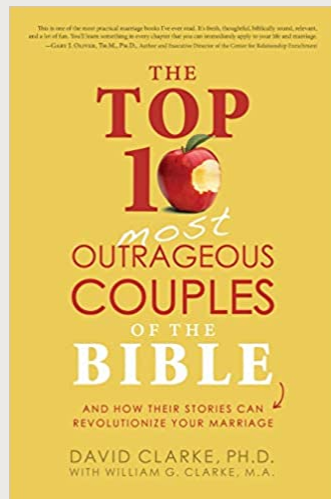
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Destructive Husbands and Wives - Excerpts from Jimmy Evans with Marriage Today

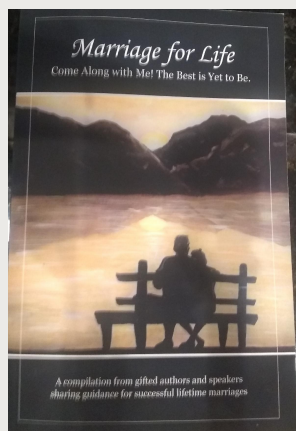
read in a long time.



This couple's failure to recognize the warning signs almost resulted in the end of their marriage, their family and their ministry.



The strengths and weaknesses of these biblical couples apply directly to your marriage and those you love.



As Evans points out in his article on this subject, destructive behavior can doom a marriage. "When one spouse starts exhibiting destructive behavior, the only answer is to correct it and make it right."

Here are the four reasons he believes people become destructive:

1. Ignorance - Hosea 4 says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." You have to be open to having a teachable spirit and open to correction and willing to learn.
2. Past hurts - Darkness is a breeding ground for the devil. He wants shame and fear to stay hidden, because healing arrives when we expose it to the light of God.
3. Bad friends and negative influences Evans reminds us "Do not be deceived," the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:33. "Evil company corrupts good habits."
4. Defensiveness - The behavior of defensive people destroys intimacy and good will. Functional families talk, but dysfunctional families operate in silence, secrets, and

This book is a compilation from gifted authors and speakers sharing guidance for successful lifetime marriages.

(Note: For a complete list of MERCY's lending library [click here](#).)

defensiveness.

Jimmy Evans has a lot more to say on this subject, so to read his entire article, [click here](#)



### WinShape Marriage Retreats

WinShape Marriage creates weekend Marriage Retreats that help couples grow closer to each other and to the Lord.

Located in the hills of Rome, Georgia on the Mountain Campus of Berry College and dotted by 27,000 acres of peaceful pastures, tree-lined trails, and wildlife it is

a place of serenity.

Their retreats fill up quickly so if you are looking for a unique experience to strengthen and grow your marriage, we encourage you to check out these retreats. For more information, [click here](#)

## Benefits of Pre-marital Education

We saw a poster recently that said, "Jumping into marriage without preparation is as dumb as bungee jumping without a cord." We couldn't agree more.

If you are seriously dating, engaged or getting ready to marry, please listen up. If you have a child/grandchild, who fits any of these categories, please encourage them to go through in-depth pre-marital education. Why?

- If a couple goes through an in-depth program such as PREPARE/ENRICH or FOCCUS, they are 30% less likely to divorce.
- 57% of divorces are due to poor communication and conflict-resolution skills. In most instances, a lot of time is spent on relationship skills in pre-marital preparation.
- At MERCY, and with most trained Christian educators/pastors, Christian principles are instilled. For example, we explain the difference between a contract marriage and a covenant marriage. We ask them to read chapters from Dr. Cutrer's book *Sexual Intimacy in Marriage*,

on 'What is Marriage?', 'A Word to Husbands,' A Word to Wives', 'A Call to Purity' and then we give them a copy of the book for them to read before they marry.

- In our program, we also work with them to help them know their Love Languages.
- If we see couples need more help than we can offer, we refer them to a Christian Counselor/Therapist, healing ministry, support group, etc.
- The only cost to a couple is \$35 to the computer company to evaluate their assessment. Mentoring at MERCY is free.

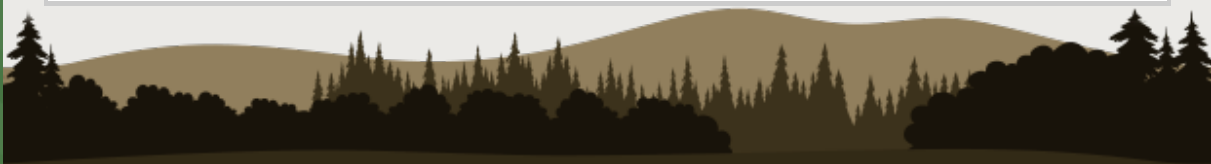
So what's involved in in-depth pre-marital education?

- Couples separately take an online assessment of about 200 questions. Then, they work with a trained mentor couple for six-eight, two-hour sessions.

Through an in-depth program like we use at MERCY, couples will:

- Identify their strength and growth areas.
- Strengthen their communication skills.
- Uncover stressful areas and learn how to resolve conflicts.
- Explore their family of origin.
- Discuss financial issues
- Establish personal, couple and family goals.
- Learn how to manage stress in a healthy way.
- Understand and appreciate personality differences.
- Lay the foundation to have a stronger, more fulfilling relationship.
- Explore their relationship from a Spiritual standpoint and
- Develop a relationship with a trusted mentor who can come along side them after they marry.

So our prayer is that couples will not only have a beautiful wedding, but a beautiful marriage. If you have any questions or we can help in any way, please get in touch with us at: [pdhud9@aol.com](mailto:pdhud9@aol.com) or text or call us at (502) 939-0121.



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