



There have been many ups and downs throughout my marriage of 19 years. Some folks said my husband and I wouldn't last six months; we were so different! I like things in order and I take commitments seriously. Spouse, on the other hand, is laid back, even catch-as-catch-can on occasion.

At times I wanted to disappear and not look back. I am sure my husband felt the same way.

Then it hit me one day: Our marriage is not about how we make each other feel. Our marriage is about keeping our vow to love and honor each other even in the midst of problems, and in doing so, imitating the faithfulness of God to his unfaithful people.

Such an imitation of God's faithfulness gives God glory, a minister friend assured us. It is why every single human being on earth exists — to give our Creator glory, and to trust God's promises of eternal life with him in paradise for those who do not grow weary in doing good.

At first I could not see how washing dishes I did not dirty or paying more than my share of bills gave God glory.

I sought counseling, talked to long-married couples and read everything I could get my hands on that encouraged me as a wife. Then I asked myself: What was more important — prevailing when in conflict or my husband's well-being physically and spiritually?

The answer became apparent to me one night when I found him fast asleep in front of the TV, the TV remote practically welded to his hand, his slumped shoulders free of the weight of the world.

Thinking that my being in his life could impact his eternal destiny was very sobering. Far be it from me, I thought, to be the reason he hated or did not forgive. We loved each other and needed to work harder at not allowing issues to blind us to this fact.

So I washed those dishes I didn't dirty, for a clean home was important to me. And

I paid bills we both had entered into without waiting for him to sometimes, for that too was a matter of honor and I had been blessed with the means to do so.

I draw comfort too from two Scripture verses: *"All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God. They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus"* (Romans 3:23-24). They remind me that while I am married to someone who, like me, is at war with a human nature bent away from God, we are not alone; God is with us — and in us! — to help us make the right choices in life.

What an awesome duty it is, then, to be entrusted with the fuller knowledge of another's struggle, to be the voice that cries out to God on that person's behalf.

What a privilege to imitate Christ who both demands and freely offers unending faithfulness!