

Newsletter

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www.Mourning-Dove.org

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FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING TO GLORIFYING

During tumultuous times, such as we're currently experiencing in every part of our economy, families are placed in much higher levels of stress. The loss of jobs, difficult financial decisions and uncertain futures put added tension on marriages and families - many of which were already in states of crisis. As a result, many of those relationships are barely surviving.

Mere survival is not God's plan for our lives or our marriages. However, many couples are living in a state of mediocrity that causes them to wonder where the joy and happiness went. We often hear the words "this is not what I signed on for." The survival state of marriage is characterized by a monotonous, predictable routine devoid of laughter and intimacy. It is not dependent on one's financial status or season of life.

In the survival mode, husbands and wives have often stopped being "best friends." And many times, they are simply tolerating one another rather than loving one another unconditionally.

How does a couple break out of this downward, painful cycle and develop a thriving marriage? The first step is one of introspection - to ask yourself several questions,

"What am I doing that falls short of loving my husband or wife in a manner that brings ever-deeper intimacy to our relationship?"

"Am I putting more energy into blaming my spouse for the situation instead of taking the initiative to pursue his or her heart?"

"Do I truly seek to know my husband's or wife's dreams, passions and fears...and allow myself to be deeply known by him or her?"

Often the biggest difference between surviving and thriving is simply making the decision that you don't want to live this way anymore. Don't wait for your spouse to make changes - you can only control *your* choices and decisions. One person CAN make a vast difference in a marriage. Don't settle for less than God's best for your marriage and family. If you're in doubt as to what that looks like for you, ask Him!

God's deep desire is that your marriage will glorify Him - for you to have a marriage that compels others to ask the question, "How can I have a relationship like yours?" Does the way in which you love your spouse bring joy to the heart of God? Does your relationship represent all that God intended for marriage? If not, what can *you* change...starting today?

JOIN OUR PRAYER TEAM

Shortly after launching Mourning Dove Ministries as a full-time counseling ministry, we established a Prayer Team to cover the ministry and the couples with whom we meet with the power of prayer. We believe that the miracles we've seen in marriages are directly related to those prayers. Prayers are indeed life-changing.

We are always looking for those who feel called with the special gift of prayer to join the Prayer Team. The requirements are simple: to commit to pray for the ministry, for the couples involved with the ministry, and for the MDM team. Updates and special requests are periodically sent via e-mail. We use only the first names of the clients and ask Prayer Team members to hold all information in the updates as strictly confidential.

To join the Prayer Team, please send a note, stating your interest, to Gary Delaplane at GDelaplane@aol.com.

WE NEED YOUR HELP - TWO KEYS WAYS TO PARTNER WITH MDM

We thank every one of you for your generous support, your encouragement, and your prayers in 2008. As we enter the second quarter of 2009, we are experiencing an almost predictable paradox: more couples than ever are in

need of marital counseling, but they feel that they can't afford even our modest fees.

We are working with local churches and former clients to remind people that we work with couples regardless of their ability to pay. However,

to maintain the viability of the ministry we need: 1) your financial support and, 2) your client referrals. Every donation makes a difference and is deeply appreciated. We wouldn't exist without you as our partners.

MDM is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. Please send your gifts to Mourning Dove Ministries, 870 Doe Hill Lane, Roswell, GA 30075 or securely through PayPal on the ministry's web-site: www.Mourning-Dove.org.



Weathering the Storms of Life

MDM'S DIFFERENT APPROACH TO COUNSELING

"I'm glad that we didn't wait to heal our marriage."

"My wife and I have become best friends again."

These are typical of the comments that we have heard from couples recently.

We don't have all the answers, but we do offer an alternative approach to healing and strengthening marriages.

Key differences include:

- Couple with couple interaction
- Standard session lengths of 2 hours; extended sessions are available
- The creation of a warm and safe environment - the "living room" approach
- Intimacy Therapy as our core theory - to promote

healing and to address *causes* rather than symptoms.

- The integration of coaching into the sessions to equip couples to interact in new ways in their relationship.

Call to Action: Please pass on our contact information to those couples who may benefit from this approach.

The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother

Theodore Hesburgh

Marriage is our last, best chance to grow up.

Joseph Barth

I got gaps; you got gaps; we fill each other's gaps.

Rocky

CHANGED LIVES

In the midst of the pain and hurt that we see on a weekly basis, nothing stirs our passion more than a couple who is dedicated to changing the marital legacy for their children.

One such couple was John and Sue who first met with us in early 2008. They were struggling with deep pain in their marriage, but both were committed to take their marriage to a different place...for their sakes and for their precious 12-year-old daughter.

John and Sue not only began counseling with MDM, but they also attended the four-day Marriage Intensive at WinShape retreat center. They said the experiences were truly life-changing.

In Sue's words, "...I prayed for a 'sign' from Him. I got one, quite literally, hanging on a wall in a Hobby Lobby store. It read 'Heal the Past, Live the Present, Dream the Future.'"

"This time I had hope. I thanked and praised Him right there in the store. Just

as the plaque read, God was 'Healing the Past.' From then on, I could see God's hand everywhere. I was ready to let Him take the lead. He was making 'me' new. He was making our marriage new."

"The Lord led us, through prayer, to counseling before attending an Intensive at WinShape. Mourning Dove Ministries was the 'safe place' where healing and restoration took place. There was reassurance in having another married couple mentor us. 'Living the Present' became my new mantra."

"Almost one year later, my 'Dream of the Future' came true with the renewal of our 20th wedding vows. In the presence of God and our closest family and friends, I once again walked down the aisle as a 'new' bride, exchanging vows with a new understanding of our marriage covenant. We are together now, 'Living the Future.'"

Perhaps the most poignant moment at the renewal of their vows came when John

and Sue's daughter read the following prayer she wrote:

"My God, my God, O hear me God, how the love between these two doves is simply much more than love. As you know, doves mate for life. This is true between the two without much strife. The love between the both of you is true, and you must know who it comes through - the father almighty, the God of all, who brings us winter, summer, spring and fall. He reigns over the heavens and earth, and created the world with just a few words. He loves us so much, why can't you see, even more than we love each other in our family. Your marriage has come to twenty blessed years, now let it remain my wonderful dears. You have been blessed beyond belief, even more than you may see."

This young lady's life was changed forever by her parents' decision to fight for their marriage and to create a strong, healthy example for her to take into adulthood.

God honors perseverance.