

# Marriage Relationships: Strengthening the Bond Thru God's Love

By Christine Vander Wielen MSW, CAPSW

She walked with great difficulty. Her back was bent so far forward that it was an effort for her to look up and meet people's eyes. Her disfigurement was not due to age, illness or disease but rather from the strenuous work of carrying burdens. Her work began years ago when she was a child. As a child, she carried the burdens of her parents' marriage, the workings of the family, her mother's and father's unhappiness. These burdens became heavier as she grew older, went to college and then married.

His face was tense with pain. His shoulders were rounded forward as if they were being pulled down by an invisible force. He gasped for air as he spoke as if he had been running a long distance. Actually, he had been running awhile. His race began as a child when he learned that he could not meet his parents' demands. They would never be satisfied with him. He was the scapegoat of the family. So he ran. He ran from his family, friends, himself and worst of all from God.

Their marriage began with much hope and promise. At first, they helped each other. He helped to lighten her load. She helped him to stop and rest from time to time. Somewhere a long the way, they stopped helping each other and began blaming each other. Their blame turned into anger. Their anger increased to where they were emotionally estranged from one another. From time to time, they tried to make things better. They tried changing jobs, moving, and having children. Their marriage was in shambles. Their family was falling apart. They were repeating behavior patterns that they had promised themselves they would never do. So they came. They had tried counseling several times before. This time it was different.

They were ready. They were ready to look up and invite God into their struggles and their pain. They were ready to open their hearts to the Lord's healing touch. They were ready to give up the anger, bitterness, and blame. They were ready to give up their ways and replace them with the Lord's ways. She was ready to hand her burdens over to Him and to once and for all leave them with Him. He was ready to stop running the race his parents set for him and to start running the race that was marked out for him by God. He was ready to trust the Lord with his heart and not just with his mouth. The work ahead of them was not going to be easy. It would take some looking back and shedding light on the pain. The work would require each of them to look at their own behavior, their own responsibility in the breakdown. Although the work would be difficult and painful at times, they were going to get to the other side. It was possible because they were ready to put their hope and trust in the Lord.

*Compliments of Practical Family Living, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1676, Appleton, WI 54912 (920) 720-8920*

*You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute our articles in any format provided that you credit the author, no modifications are made, you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, and you include Practical Family Living's web-site address (<http://www.pfl.org>) on the copied resource. Quotations from any article are also permitted with credit to the author and citing the web-site. Any use of other materials on this web-site, including reproduction, modification, distribution or republication, without the prior written consent of Practical Family Living, Inc., is strictly prohibited.*