



E X C E R P T

The Secret is in Surrender

*Bearing the Fruit of a
Healthy Marriage*

By Kim Perry

Introduction

It's safe to say that we all want a better marriage. (At least, all who are reading this.) I believe that when it comes down to it, most of us are willing to do whatever it takes. Sometimes it is really difficult work. And sometimes, there are simple things that we have well within our reach that can make a huge difference toward a happier marriage.

When people ask the secret to our long-time marriage, we can't help but give God credit. He's the one who brought us together, and he's the one who has helped us stay together. But it's not all up to God, is it? Otherwise, every marriage would last. Wives and husbands have our part to play in it. Sometimes our part is obedience to God's calling. Sometimes, it's pure grit and determination. Always, though, the Holy Spirit is involved, supplying all the power that is needed. As married people, the very best thing we can do is to humble ourselves and let that power do its work.

I don't claim to be a relationship expert, but I have learned some things during all these years as a married person. This book is a way of capturing some of the wisdom gained, and owning the fact that I am still learning!

It is my hope that this resource will challenge you in your quest for a better marriage. Let's lean in and let the Holy Spirit supply the roadmap and the power to improve our marriages. I wholeheartedly believe that as we learn to love our spouses better, we will also learn to love all the people in our lives better as well. It's gonna be great!

I am praying for your marriage even now.

A JOY-FILLED MARRIAGE IS POSSIBLE WITH GOD. THE QUESTION IS, ARE YOU WILLING TO SURRENDER IN ORDER TO FIND IT?

Joy is a deep sense of “it is well” that is not diminished in difficult circumstances. Joy is closely tied to hope. It is possible to have Joy on the darkest days when our hope is healthy. Hope is something we need to feed.

How do we feed our hope? Of first importance is putting our hope in the right place. While there is nothing wrong with hoping that God will bring an improvement in our circumstances, placing our hope in “improved circumstances” is not the way to go. In order for hope to be strong, it needs to be anchored in something unchanging, like the Goodness of God, the Power of God, and his Loving Nature. These things remain and are never in dispute or disrepair. They are set in stone. Reliable.

Feeding my hope happens when I make the choice to take in and receive His Word like a hungry person devours a hearty meal. It happens when I choose to spend time with other Christ followers who will point me to God no matter what is going on.

Another important step to finding Joy is focusing on God’s goodness. Believing and trusting that God is good and is working for our good in all things makes Joy possible.

What does this look like in the context of marriage? Good question. Have you ever looked at your spouse across the table and thought, “God, help me!”? That’s the first step. (I just laughed out loud a little bit typing that, but I’m not kidding.) Some days, some months...maybe even some

years in a lifelong marriage are going to be difficult. And some may even feel impossible. That's not an exaggeration; it's the truth. With us humans, some things are impossible, but with God, all things are possible. (Jesus said that.)

It may be impossible to experience Joy in your marriage some days in your own strength. But because of Jesus, we're not doing this in our own strength. So begin with prayer - invite the Creator of the Universe to help you. It's the perfect way to move toward Joy. This is where trusting, meditating and believing in God's goodness come in.

When I look at my husband through the lens of God's goodness, I can trust that God put him specifically in my life. Some days, this provision may be for my comfort and protection.

Some days, this may be provision for my growth in areas I'm lacking - maybe patience? Our spouses are God's gifts to us, not to just have fun with. Often, these closest personal relationships help us grow in our faith by exercising our faith. God has never plopped down a perfect spouse so that the recipient could have an easy life. That's not the way being human works. If you have fallen for the lie that some people are experiencing this reality and you are somehow the only one "cursed" with a marriage that takes work, you're mistaken.

Granted, some personality types get along more easily than others, and some people have more practice at being married so it looks easier.

But trust me, your great marriage will be worth the work!


THERE'S HOPE FOR ALL OF US.

When we were just a few years into our marriage (we were still in our early twenties at the time), a coworker commented to me that she admired the way her father-in-law treated her mother-in-law and she wished her husband and her marriage were more like what she saw in theirs. She had said so to her mother-in-law who replied, “Oh, Honey. It wasn’t always like this. We’ve just gotten better at it.”

That has really stuck with me. And with each year that has passed, I have seen this coming true in my own marriage. But it’s not just “happening” - just like running a marathon doesn’t just “happen.” There are grueling workouts and hanging in there during dry or stormy seasons, and offering grace and forgiveness (and receiving grace and forgiveness) again and again. There is yielding and there is surrendering.

Joy is possible when we are walking in surrender to the Spirit.





*Explore the
following
passages and
note what you
learn about
Joy:*

PSALM 19:8

PSALM 28:7

PROVERBS 3:13

ROMANS 15:13

JAMES 1:2-4



What would walking in surrender to the Spirit look like in your marriage?

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing.



About The Author

Kim and her husband, Rob, have been married for 34 years and have two amazing children who are happily married to amazing people. It's the best!

As a couple, they enjoy mentoring couples who are preparing for marriage or wanting to improve their marriage.

They have seen, again and again, that even in the toughest circumstances,

God is faithful to do the "heavy lifting" in bringing health and healing to a marriage when the couple is willing to surrender to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Kim is on staff at a church in a role where her genuine love for people intersects with her passion for processes, systems and details.

She loves strong coffee, beautiful words, and spending quality time with her family.



Kim with her husband Rob

Thanks so much for reading this excerpt about Joy from the book. I hope you found some encouragement here.

If you're interested in exploring the rest of the Fruit of the Spirit as it pertains to marriage, you can order the book [HERE](#).

Warmly,

Kim