

How We Killed and Resurrected Our Marriage: A 10-Year Anniversary Story

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Video Transcript

Hi! I'm Ellie, if you don't know me, and today is my tenth wedding anniversary. And I couldn't think of a better way to celebrate that than by telling you the very, very short version of why that is such a big deal to me.

I have been married 10 years, we've been together 11 years, and about halfway through we almost got divorced. So I want to tell you why we didn't and why we almost did.

My backstory isn't that interesting. I didn't do drugs. I wasn't in a gang. I did almost die a couple of times, but other than that, the worst thing that ever happened to me is that my parents divorced when I was five. And that's so boring because it's so common, and my parents worked really hard to stay friends after. It's hard to claim trauma when your mom still takes her ex-mother-in-law grocery shopping 30 years later.

But the best kind of evil is sneaky evil, you know? It's a tiny acorn that cracks a house's foundation.

By the time I got married at 25, I had earned a reputation for being a homewrecker. I threw myself into whoever excited me at the time, regardless of who they or I belonged to. And when the excitement wore off, I was gone—on to the next one.

And that behavior was just Miracle-Gro for the seeds divorce had planted in my soul. It fed that thing that said if a relationship didn't serve me, that I could walk away at any time. And that I should walk away.

And unfortunately, my marriage is no exception. It took a long time for the warm fuzzies to wear off, but when they did, I found myself responding the same way I always had: “Either fix this, or I’m gone.”

But it’s harder to leave when you’re married. There’s a lot more paperwork, for example.

Over the next three years, our amateur efforts at making peace resulted in a bloody civil war. Ultimatums and withholding led to lies and adultery—on both sides.

We tried everything. We went to counseling; we read self-help books; we talked for hours, and not talked at all; and we spent time together, and we spent time apart.

By the time we tried church, we were seeing other people. It was my last, most desperate idea. I figured if things can’t be good, they can at least be fine.

Spoiler alert: They were not fine.

When we finally closed up our marriage again, we were less connected than ever; the lies and withholding continued. And when another adulterous episode came to light, I was faced with a choice: I could either make good on years of threats and leave, or I could go against everything that I felt and stay.

And as I looked into my husband’s face in that moment, I heard a still, small voice say, “Stay.”

So I did.

Two weeks later, God honored that moment and met me full-on. One minute I am standing in worship in an Easter service with my hands in the air, and the next minute I am down on the ground, bawling my face off because Jesus is touching my spirit for the very first time. And it felt so good that it hurt. And I knew that nothing could ever be the same.

I wish I could tell you that in that moment, that all was forgiven, that all of our wounds and wrongs were healed and forgotten. But that's not how it works. I was saved—I was *saved*—forever and always a precious, found daughter of God, but there was still a lot of work to be done.

A couple months later, I am laying in bed, looking at my phone, and I have another thought that doesn't belong to me. And this time it said, "You started it."

And it was such simple statement, but it totally crushed me. Because it was true. I had entered into our marriage with this attitude that if it didn't serve me that I could just walk away at any time. And I had dangled that over my husband's head for the last six years. And all that did was breed insecurity that led to division and doubt and deceit. Just like Eve giving Adam fruit in the Garden and damning them both, I had made my husband eat from the fruit of my parent's divorce and ruined what was should've been paradise.

Our marriage was dead because of me.

I turned to him in our bed, and I said, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry that I never committed to our marriage. That I did this to you. But I promise you right now, that I'm here. That whatever happens, we're gonna get through it. I'm not going anywhere."

That's when things started to change. Love and respect started blossoming where fear and resentment had grown, and slowly, we started to rebuild.

And then God told me to have a baby.

And, honestly, I was pissed.

I didn't want to want to have a baby, and my husband and I were just starting to enjoy each other again, if you catch my meaning. Why would we mess it all up when everything was going so well?! Babies are notorious buzzkills!

But then God made me a promise.

That by staying married, and having this child, that we would see generations of our families changed and saved. And not just going forward starting with her, but going back—our siblings, our parents, and grandparents. That by allowing Jesus to resurrect our marriage, we've broken a generational curse. There will be no more divorce, no more broken homes, no more lost children. We're a new kind of family. Instead of growing up surrounded by emotional and spiritual death the way that her father and I did, our daughter is going to grow up in a family that is whole and undeniably alive.

How could I say no to that?

What started in unfaithfulness should have ended in unfaithfulness. But because God is faithful, what was dead is now alive.

The story of Jesus isn't just a pretty metaphor. It's a real, true story of God made flesh, and suffering the indignities of humanity and death, then rising again in triumph so that stories like mine don't have to end the way that they should.

It's an exchange. It's his life for mine. And for ours. And for yours.