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Canada—How God Rescued our Marriage

By Sarah Hu

Sherman and I had been married barely a year, and already I felt lost and alone. I missed the wonderful, deep conversations we had had during the nine months we dated before our wedding day. I longed for the closeness we had once enjoyed and struggled with the feeling that we had grown apart.



As I sat on the edge of a hotel room bed during a business trip we'd taken together I blurted, "I'm so lonely. Is this all there is?"

Sherman looked confused. "I thought you were happy?" he replied.

At twenty-one and twenty-two years old we were young, broke, inexperienced, and not at all prepared for marriage. I had become pregnant and lost the baby just three months after we were married. And now I was four months pregnant and constantly sick. All I wanted was to free myself from the dark hole I felt buried in. But where could I turn? Where could we turn?

For our first anniversary, our parents gave us a gift that helped set us on the right track. We were very good at putting on a happy front so I don't know if they were aware of how desperate our situation was. But we will always be grateful for their gift of a weekend at a FamilyLife marriage getaway in Vancouver, BC, Canada.

That conference changed our marriage and our lives. We learned the importance of putting God in the center of our marriage, the fine art of communication, and how to invite greater intimacy into our marriage. We took walks on our breaks, talked non-stop over our meals, went to lunch with a lovely speaker couple, and worked on marriage-altering projects.

We came back from that weekend changed. Things weren't perfect, but we had the tools to

restore our marriage, deepen our friendship, and navigate future obstacles.

It's been almost seventeen years since that first conference, and I can still say that it was the turning point in our marriage. We've had many more hurdles to overcome but because of the communication

tools we learned, we're able to jump those hurdles together.

We've had to work hard, but we've had fun times along the way, and it's been worth every moment. For the past eleven years, we've faithfully gone on weekly dates, and each year we go on three weekend getaways. One of those weekends is our planning time when we talk about the past year and look ahead at our goals for the coming year. It's also a good time to talk about potential scheduling conflicts and how to work those out ahead of time rather than in the heat of the moment.

Four years ago Sherman and I were given the wonderful opportunity to come full circle and become speakers with FamilyLife Canada. As we look back on those years, we realize how our difficulties became the teaching tools we use today. It's incredibly rewarding to build into the lives of other couples who may be in a similar place to where we were. God truly does have a plan and I'm so thankful we didn't give up.

Married in 1995, Sherman and Sarah are the parents of two teenagers, one of whom they home-school. Sherman is a web marketing strategist, consulting business owners on their web properties. His measure of success, however, is the love and respect of his family. Sarah is an actor and director in theatre and is currently working on her career in film. Together they love to mentor young couples through the marriage maze.

2012 Events Calendar

Africa

May 12-14	’n Naweek Om Te Onthou (Afrikaans seminar)	Centurion	South Africa
Jun 10	Anger to Intimacy	Centurion	South Africa
July 20-22	Weekend to Remember	Moolmanshoek Free State	South Africa

Europe (Eastern)

May 2	Weekend to Remember	Croatia	Europe
May 11	Marriage Seminar	Lanckorona	Poland
Jun 1	Parenting Conference	Wrodaw	Poland
Oct 5-7	Weekend to Remember	Celje	Slovenia
Nov 9-11	Weekend to Remember	Debelirtic	Slovenia

Europe (Western)

May 25-26	Marriage Seminar for counselors	Zurich	Switzerland
Jun 9	A Day Together	Zurich	Switzerland
Sept 22-23	Marriage Preparation Weekend	Zurich	Switzerland
Sept 28-29	Marriage Seminar for counselors	Zurich	Switzerland
Oct 26-28	Weekend to Remember	Bludenz	Austria (Switzerland team hosting)
Jan 26-27, 2013	Weekend for intercultural couples	Zurich	Switzerland
May 12-13, 2013	Weekend to Remember	Warwickshire	United Kingdom

Middle East and North Africa

Due to sensitive nature of these countries, please contact global@familylife.com for further information.

North America

United States—Phone 1-800-358-6329 or www.familylife.com for a complete listing of conferences.

Canada—Phone 1-800-247-3180 or www.familylifecanada.com for a complete listing of conferences.

Jun 1-3	Weekend to Remember	Fredericton	New Brunswick
Sept 21-23	Weekend to Remember (Mandarin Chinese)	Markham	Ontario
Nov 2-4	Weekend to Remember	Blue Mountain	Ontario
Nov 16-18	Weekend to Remember	Whistler	British Columbia

Oceania

May 19	A Day Together	Newport	Australia
Aug 11-12	Love that Lasts	Hunter Valley	Australia
Aug 25-26	Love that Lasts	Perth	Australia
Oct 13-14	Love that Lasts	Mooroolbark	Australia
Oct 27-28	Love that Lasts	Wameral	Australia
May 5	A Day Together	Te Awamutu	New Zealand
May 19	A Day Together	Tauranga	New Zealand
Jun 22-24	WTR	Auckland	New Zealand
Sept 7-9	WTR	Auckland	New Zealand

View this calendar online at www.familylife.com/global
Just click on “FamilyLife Global Events” under Resources.

God can turn any marriage into a masterpiece

Every marriage is unique, expressed by the colorful personalities of each spouse and textured by the circumstances at play in their lives. Blending these to make marriage work is a divinely inspired art form — challenging to master but definitely worth the effort.

Based on the highly successful Art of Marriage® Event, this small-group study includes:

- one leader's guide
- two study guides, each containing group discussion questions
- mini-projects for completion during group meetings
- date-night suggestions for couples
- articles and tips for improving marriage
- one DVD featuring six 25–30 minute video sessions (total meeting time adjustable from 45–90 minutes)

Love Happens: *God's Purpose and Plan*

Love Dances: *Fulfilling Our Responsibilities*

Love Sizzles: *Experiencing Real Intimacy*

Love Fades: *Overcoming Isolation*

Love Interrupted: *Communication and Conflict*

Love Always: *Leaving a Lasting Legacy*

With minimal preparation, The Art of Marriage small-group study equips leaders to engage marriages of nearly every phase and hue.



The Art of Marriage® Small Group Kit

FamilyLife®

Item #: RPK16526

List Price: \$49.99

<http://shop.familylife.com/p-1863-the-art-of-marriage-small-group-kit.aspx>

Australia—FamilyLife radio heals and inspires

By Eric Scattebo

FamilyLife Australia is a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ focused on reaching families with the gospel. Recently a radio listener in rural Western Australia called the office to say she heard a “Marriage and FamilyLife” interview with Lyn Denton on sexual abuse. She said she knew two Christian teenagers—ages 14 and 16—who had suffered abuse and now struggled to recover. One was on anti-depressants. The woman ordered copies of three of our programs on sexual abuse, along with the book *Wounded Heart*, which is FamilyLife Australia’s main resource on the topic. The listener hoped the programs and book would better equip her and others involved to assist the teenagers in their recovery. As a result of the resources FamilyLife provided, both teenagers began to heal and



recover from their abuse.

Rachael Holt grew up in the Melbourne area, the child of loving Christian parents. However, during her teenage years, a rebellious phase caused her to drift far from the Lord. A bit of a free spirit, Rachael eventually made her way to Africa to be a teacher. While there, the Lord took hold of her heart at an orphanage in Swaziland, and she renewed her commitment to Jesus. She decided to stay at the orphanage and become a full-time missionary. During her recent visit to Melbourne, FamilyLife Australia had the privilege of broadcasting her journey. However, the story does not end there. A Brisbane listener greatly inspired by Rachael’s story traveled to Swaziland. Rachael says, “She has come to permanently volunteer in our preschool.” To listen to Rachael Holt’s and Lyn Denton’s stories, click on the radio link at familylifeaustralia.com.

South Africa—authentic manhood

By Isolde Swanepoel

A couple came to see us for counseling after the wife had attempted to take her life. They attended a FamilyLife conference which, according to them, put them on a new path in their marriage. The husband, however, had a lot of baggage. We challenged him to attend The Quest for Authentic Manhood course being presented at our church. His testimony is featured below:

The Quest for Authentic Manhood is a course that has changed the direction of my life forever. This course literally saved my life.

The challenges I had to go through weren’t



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easy, but once I came to realize how meaningless and hopeless my life had become, I made the decision to pick up what was left of the rest of my life and become an Authentic Man.

There is a saying that goes, “Nothing is worth anything if you haven’t fought for it.” Believe me—if you don’t take responsibility for your life someone else

will, and you will become a slave.

The course showed me how to break free from passivity and find my God-given purpose to be a MAN the way God designed me to be and not the way the world almost destroyed me to be.

Through God and this wonderful gift called “The Quest for Authentic Manhood” **I NOW HAVE A PLAN!!!**

Latin America—Art of Marriage®

“We watched people laugh and cry, and at the end I felt as if I was standing on holy ground—it was obvious how God had worked in the lives of those who attended.” This is a message Dan and Lisa Van Zoest sent to FamilyLife after hosting an Art of Marriage® event in Nicaragua. The Spanish version, El Arte del



heard the story about the couple who lost a child, we felt on some level as though we are parallel with that situation. To hear that only 15% of marriages survive that type of trauma allowed some red flags to ‘more freely fly.’ We realized that we need to give our marriage more attention because of the trauma and fire it has taken this past year. We were not in danger of divorce, but without some doctoring we could have been in danger of simply co-existing in the same home. We don’t want that; we want to dance and sizzle our way through each day as long as we both shall live.”

El Arte del Matrimonio is bringing Latin American couples closer together and pointing them to the One who has the power to restore their lives and give them hope for the future.

Matrimonio™, is being used throughout Latin America with great results. A recent event in Costa Rica welcomed over 220 attendees—a fantastic turnout!

Feedback from attendees has been equally positive. One missionary couple wrote, “As you may know, we had a very difficult year last year. The conference shed some light on the fact that we have drifted apart in our personal pain. When we

