

# God's Love in Marriage

*We love because he first loved us.*

~ 1 John 4.19 ~

# God's Love in Marriage

Week 1

God's Purpose  
for Marriage

Week 2

Cancer and  
the Cure

Week 3

God's Love  
in Marriage

Week 4

The Thorns  
in Marriage

Week 5

Intimate  
Friendship

Week 6

Deep Lasting  
Change

# God's Love in Marriage

## Doing Love

Physical

Active

*Acts of Service*

*Physical Touch*

## His Wounds

By His Wounds,  
we are healed

## Thinking Love

Mental

Creative

*Gift Giving*

*Words of Affirmation*

## His Thoughts

I am poor and needy, but the  
Lord takes thought of me.

## Feeling Love

Emotional

Heart

*Quality Time*

*Quantity Time*

## His Tears

Jesus wept...  
See how he loved him.

God's Love in Marriage

Psalm 107

Desert

We need a King  
(*protection*)

Darkness

We need a Friend  
(*comfort*)

Fools

We need a Counselor  
(*wisdom*)

Sea

We need a Savior  
(*rescue*)

God's Love in Marriage

Psalm 107

Desert

*We must recognize God's Love  
in the desert and the deliverance*

Darkness

*We must recognize God's Love  
in the darkness and the freedom*

Fools

*We must recognize God's Love  
in the affliction and in His Word*

Sea

*We must recognize God's Love  
in the storm and the calm*

*Week 4*

# The Thorns in Marriage

*a thorn was given me...a messenger of Satan*

~ 2 Corinthians 12.7 ~

## The Thorns in Marriage

# 2 Corinthians 12.7-10

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations,

a thorn was given me in the flesh,  
a messenger of Satan to harass me,  
to keep me from becoming conceited.

The Thorns in Marriage

2 Corinthians 12.7-10

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this,  
that it should leave me.

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you,  
for my power is made perfect in weakness.”



The Thorns in Marriage

2 Corinthians 12.7-10

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly  
of my weaknesses,

so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

The Thorns in Marriage

2 Corinthians 12.7-10

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content  
with weaknesses, insults, hardships,  
persecutions, and calamities.

For when I am weak, then I am strong.

## The Thorns in Marriage

Our problem is not our weakness.

Our problem is our delusions of strength  
that keep us  
from seeking the grace we need  
to strengthen us in our weakness.

## The Thorns in Marriage

Our problem is our delusions of strength.

## The Thorns in Marriage

God gave Paul a thorn to help him.

The thorns of Psalm 107 are where we all find our hearts and marriages at times:

*dryness*, *darkness*, *foolishness*, *turbulence*

How can these circumstances be helpful?

## The Thorns in Marriage

Thorns in marriage are unpleasant and  
unavoidable.

But thorns in marriage are also  
opportunities.

*(growth, humility, understanding, chemo)*

## The Thorns in Marriage

Our problem is not the thorn.

Our problem is listening to Satan's message rather than God's message about the thorn.

## The Thorns in Marriage

# Two Messages:

Which will we listen to?

Tim Keller:



(5 min)



## The Thorns in Marriage

The thorn is a messenger  
from Satan.

## The Thorns in Marriage

The thing that discourages you  
is not the thorn,  
but the message with it.

## The Thorns in Marriage

My discouragement or my  
strengthening will depend on  
which message I listen to.

## The Thorns in Marriage

What is Satan's message?

## The Thorns in Marriage

With every thorn,  
there is a message from God.

## The Thorns in Marriage

My grace is sufficient for you.

## The Thorns in Marriage

I sent you this weakness  
to make you strong!

The Thorns in Marriage

Christians are not safe from  
evil things...

rather we are safe from  
the evil of all things.



# The Thorns in Marriage

Satan's  
Message

Doubt  
Rebellion  
Anxiety  
Selfishness

Ultimate Despair



One Thorn  
Two Messages

God's  
Message

Faith  
Submission  
Trust  
Devotion

Ultimate Hope

## The Thorns in Marriage

Satan's  
Message



God's  
Message

“a thorn was given me...”  
Who gives the thorn?

## The Thorns in Marriage

Satan's  
Message



God's  
Message

“a thorn was given me...”

What do thorns look like?

## The Thorns in Marriage

Thorn: Psalm 107... **The Foolishness of Sinful Choices**

Satan's message: *You are going to die. All is lost. Hope is gone.*

*You have left God.*

Our reaction: *Cry out for deliverance. 3 or maybe 300 times.*

*God seems absent.*

God's reaction: *Remind us of His Sacrificial Steadfast Love.*

*God is always near.*

God's message: *Your sin can never deter my love. The chains of your foolishness have been broken by the cross. I can use sin sinlessly.*

## The Thorns in Marriage

Thorn: Psalm 107... **The Wind and Waves of the Storm**

Satan's message: *You are going to die. All is lost. Hope is gone.*

*God had left you.*

Our reaction: *Cry out for deliverance. 3 or maybe 300 times.*

*God seems absent.*

God's reaction: *Calm the storm(sometimes). Outward and inward.*

*God is always near.*

God's message: *I calm the storm that I created for your good and my glory...helping you to trust in and depend on my grace alone.*

## The Thorns in Marriage



Satan's Message:  
“harass”

*to strike with the fists, beat, torment*

**Vision:** *Turn your eyes away from Jesus (focus on your pain)*

*Look not at His wonderful face (focus on your unjust misery)*

## The Thorns in Marriage



God's Message:  
humility

*“to keep from becoming conceited”*

Conceit: *the belief that the cancer of self-centeredness is healthy, right and good. (fine line between confidence and arrogance)*

## The Thorns in Marriage



God's Message:  
humility

*“to keep from becoming conceited”*

Confidence (upward help): *the LORD will be your confidence (Prov 3.26)*

Arrogance (inward help): *pride goes before destruction (Prov 16.18)*



# The Thorns in Marriage

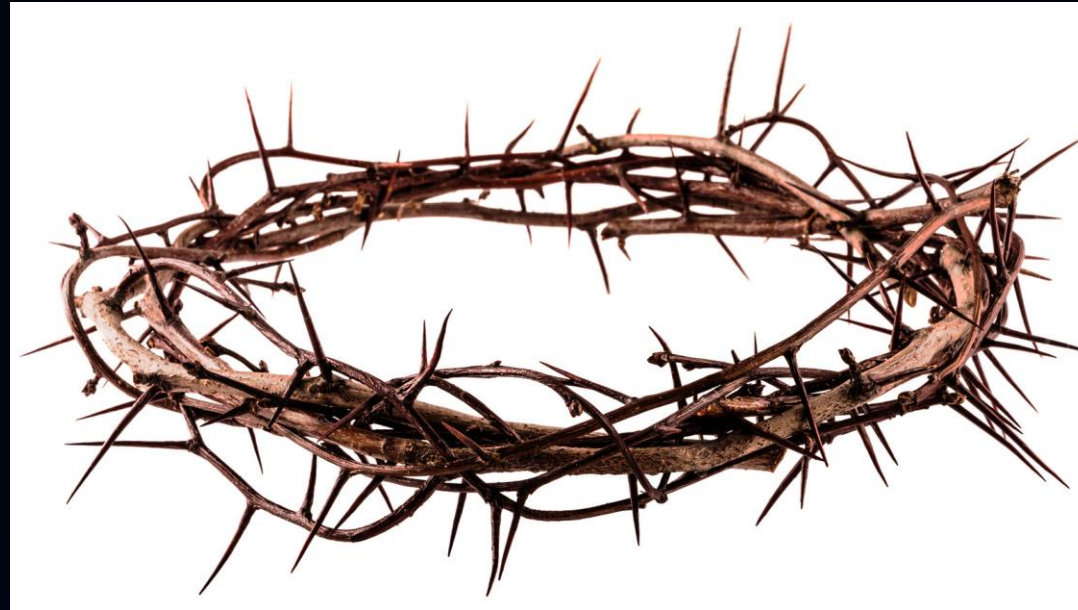
So many thorns...

So many messages...



# The Thorns in Marriage

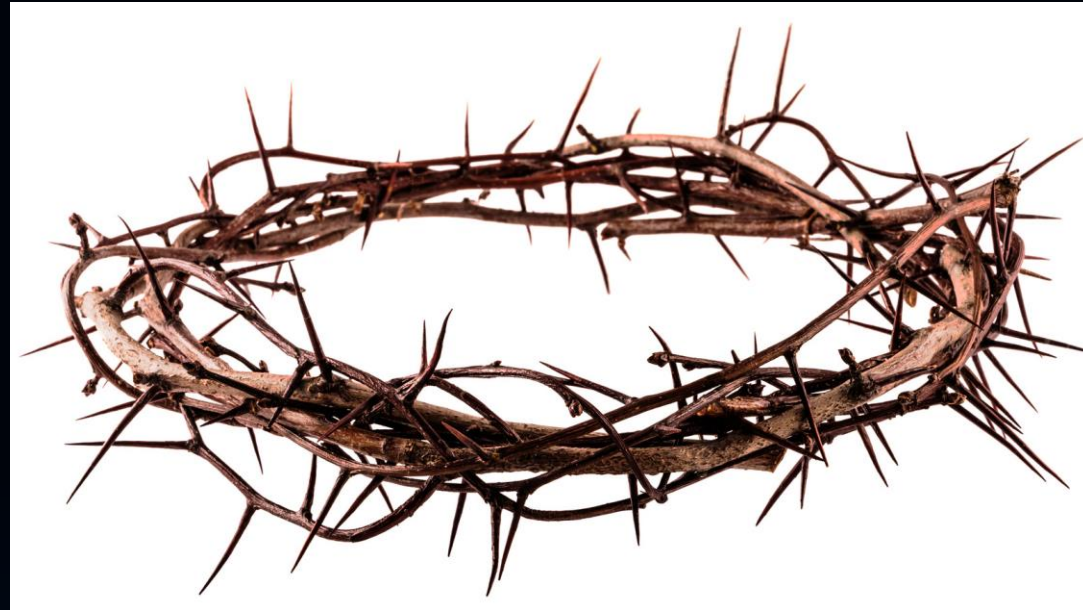
Jesus knows



The Thorns in Marriage

We say we want to be like Jesus

*(but please — no thorns)*



I wonder what messages Jesus heard?

## The Thorns in Marriage

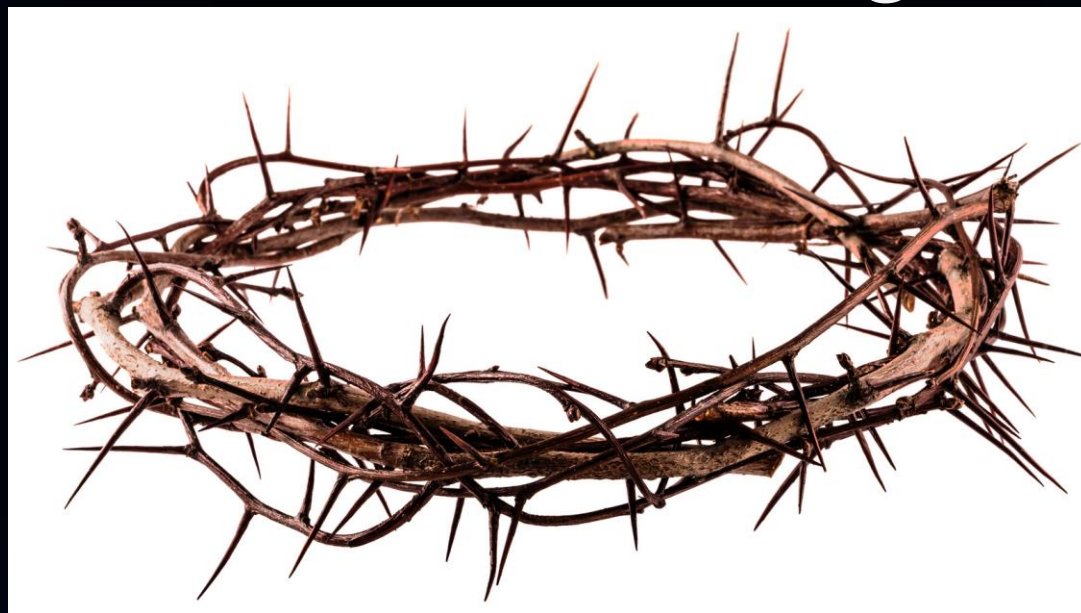
“It won’t work.”

“God has abandoned you.”

“You’ve done enough.”

“Save  
yourself.”

“They’re not  
worth it.”



“You don’t  
deserve this.”

“There’s  
another way.”

“I thought you were loved.”

## The Thorns in Marriage

“It won’t work.”

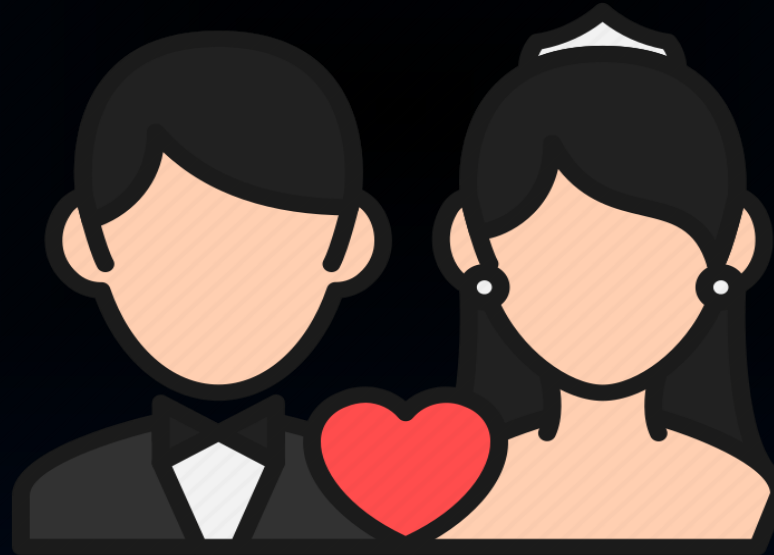
“God has abandoned you.”

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“She’s not  
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“There’s  
another way.”

“I thought you were loved.”

God's  
Messages:

The Thorns in Marriage

“It will work.”

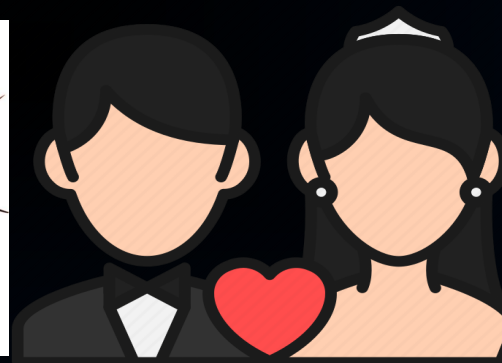
“God has not abandoned you.”

“I've done enough.”

“Don't save yourself.”

“You can do this.”

“She's so worth it.”



“This is the way.”

“You are so loved.”

## The Thorns in Marriage

# Ephesians 5.21,22,25

Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church  
and gave himself up for her.

The Thorns in Marriage

Two Messages:

You've been hurt...again.

*Will you still submit to each other?*

*Will you continue to love each other?*



## The Thorns in Marriage

# Two Messages:

Her: “*You don’t know how difficult it is to submit to someone who keeps hurting me!*”

Him: “*You don’t know how difficult it is to love someone who keeps hurting me!*”

## The Thorns in Marriage

# Two Messages:

1. *Every marriage has thorns.*
2. *Every thorn in marriage hurts.*
3. *When hurt, whose message will we choose to listen to — God's or Satan's?*

## The Thorns in Marriage

I don't want to be "thorny" in my marriage.

How do I know when to bring a thorn up  
or when to quietly allow grace to cover it?

## The Thorns in Marriage

It's more about how and why you bring it up.

Tone of Voice

Timing

Whose Point of View are you focused on?

Motivated by Sacrificial Love or Selfish Love?

The Thorns in Marriage

All Real Love:

Substitutionary Sacrifice

Tim Keller:



## The Thorns in Marriage

If you ever try to love somebody  
who has needs, brokenness, trouble,  
emotionally wounded...

it's going to cost you.

## The Thorns in Marriage

When an emotionally wounded person  
comes at you,  
you want to go the other way.

## The Thorns in Marriage

They're not going to fill up unless  
you empty out.



## The Thorns in Marriage

The only way for them  
to come into safety by your help  
is if you go into their danger.

## The Thorns in Marriage

“What are you doing with her?”

The Thorns in Marriage

Forest Fire

## The Thorns in Marriage

She was willing to die so that  
those under the cover of her wings  
would live.

## The Thorns in Marriage

On the cross, you have God doing  
what you and I have to do every day  
if you really know  
how to love people.

The Thorns in Marriage

Real love always involves:  
Substitutionary Sacrifice

## The Thorns in Marriage

Most parents willingly sacrifice for  
their children...

but not for their spouse.

WHY?

## The Thorns in Marriage

We see our children as completely dependent and vulnerable...

but view our spouse as someone who really ought to know better.



## The Thorns in Marriage

What if we began to view our spouse  
as completely dependent and  
vulnerable...

a bit fearful, needy, insecure, lonely

## The Thorns in Marriage

How to heal  
from the painful thorns in marriage:

## The Thorns in Marriage

Solution 1: a more accurate portrayal

Solution 2: a more willing forgiveness

Solution 3: a more authentic worship

## The Thorns in Marriage

### Solution 1: a more accurate portrayal

See our spouse as completely and totally dependent and vulnerable...

See ourselves as completely and totally dependent and vulnerable...

The Thorns in Marriage

Solution 2: a more willing forgiveness

*“I was wrong. Will you forgive me?”*

Not: *“I’m sorry.”*

(Will you absorb the cost of my sin?)

*“Yes, I will be happy to forgive you.”*

Not: *“Don’t worry about it.”*

(I will absorb and release your debt.)

The Thorns in Marriage

You've been hurt...again.

*Will you forgive?*

*again and again and again?*

*(Two Messages...)*

The Thorns in Marriage

Satan's message:

*How can you keep forgiving this person?*

God's message:

*After all I've forgiven you,  
how can you not forgive this person?*

## The Thorns in Marriage

### Matthew 18.21-33

Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?”

As many as seven times?”

Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. (or 70 times 7)



## The Thorns in Marriage

Those who are concerned as to whether the figure should be 77 or 490 have missed the point...

There is no place for keeping a tally of forgiveness already used up.

If one is still counting, one is not forgiving.

## The Thorns in Marriage

### Matthew 18.21-33

“Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.

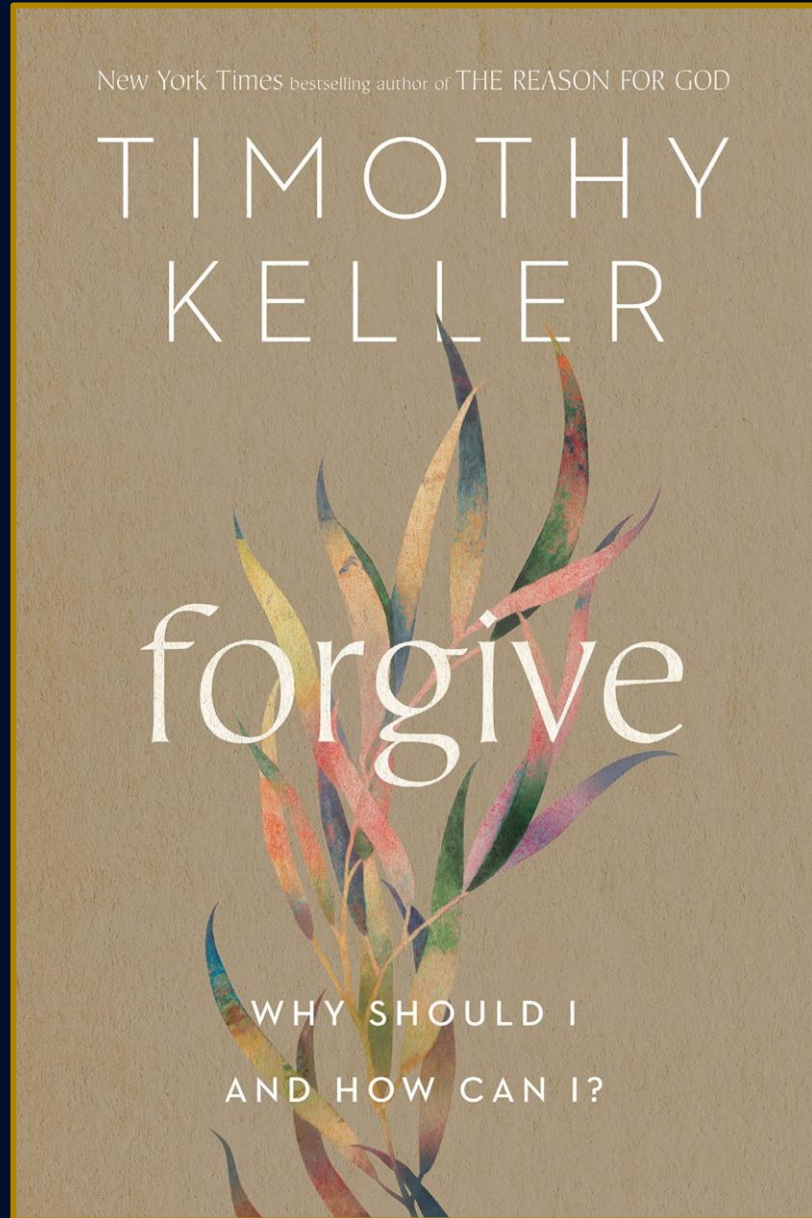
When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents...

## The Thorns in Marriage

God has forgiven us  
such a massive debt...

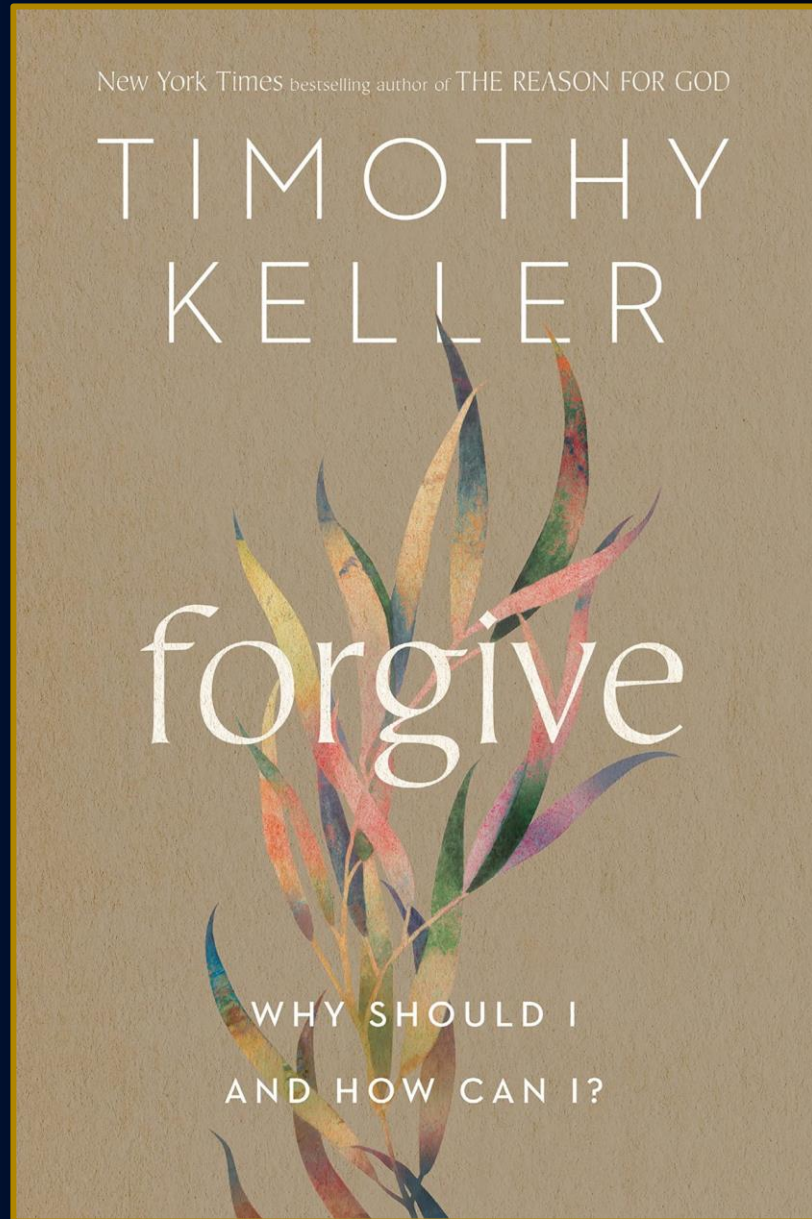
Should we not also forgive  
such a small (*in comparison*) thorn?

## The Thorns in Marriage



forgive  
Why should I  
*and*  
How can I?

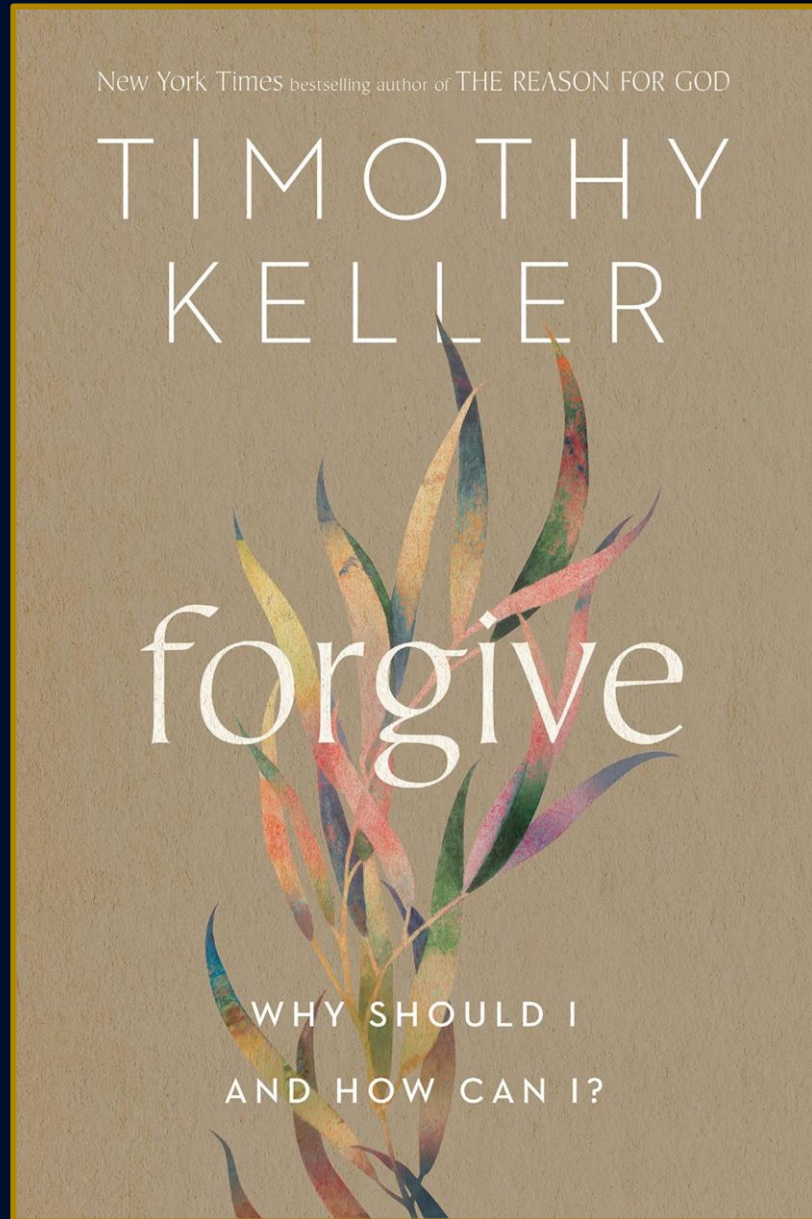
## The Thorns in Marriage



forgiveness:

Absorbing the debt.  
*(it will cost you)*

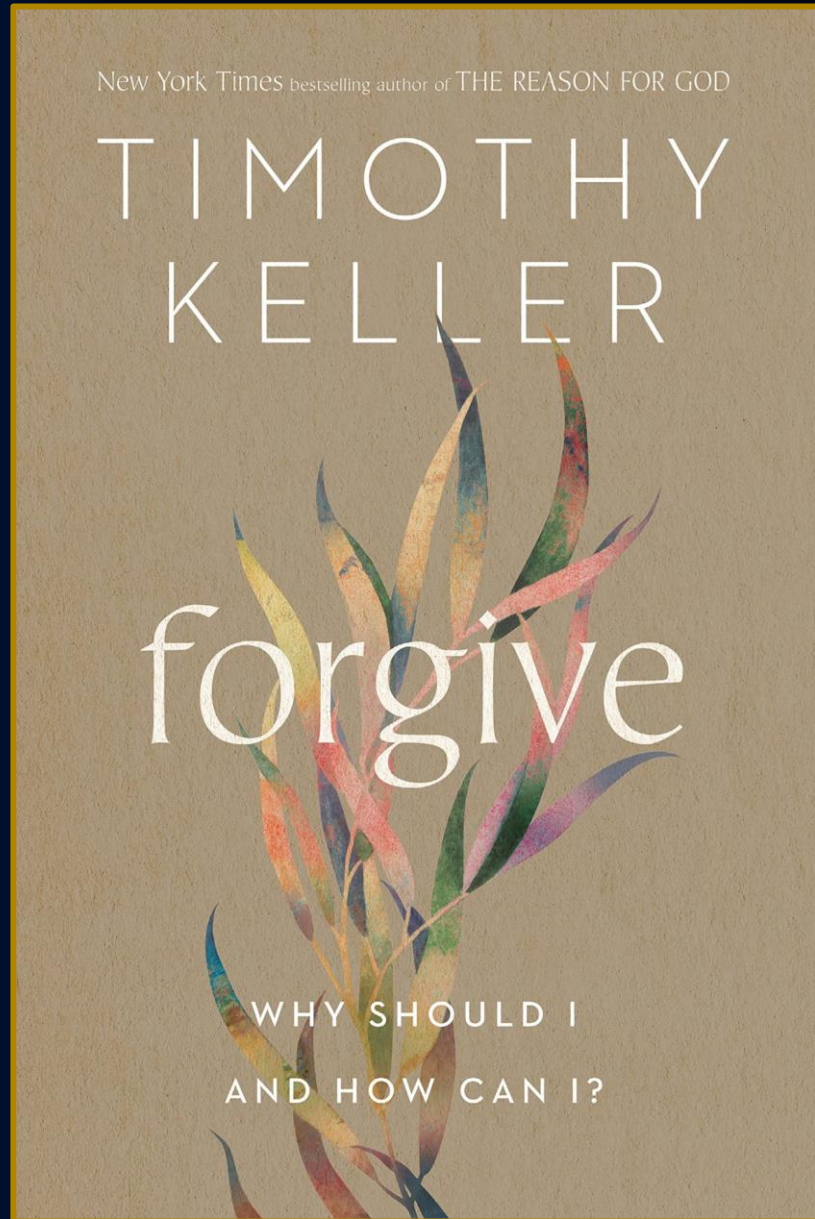
## The Thorns in Marriage



forgiveness:

Not bringing it back up.  
*(even though you want to)*

## The Thorns in Marriage



Some think that by remaining angry, they are giving the wrongdoers what they deserve.

But in reality, you are enabling their actions to continue to hurt you.

## The Thorns in Marriage

Solution 1: a more accurate portrayal

Solution 2: a more willing forgiveness

Solution 3: a more authentic worship



## The Thorns in Marriage

### Solution 3: a more authentic worship

#### Application:

You're having a **semi-serious conflict** on the way to church...how will you proceed?

And, how will your decision affect your children who are watching?

## The Thorns in Marriage

### Solution 3: a more authentic worship

#### Matthew 5.23-24

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go.

First be reconciled to your brother,  
and then come and offer your gift.

## The Thorns in Marriage

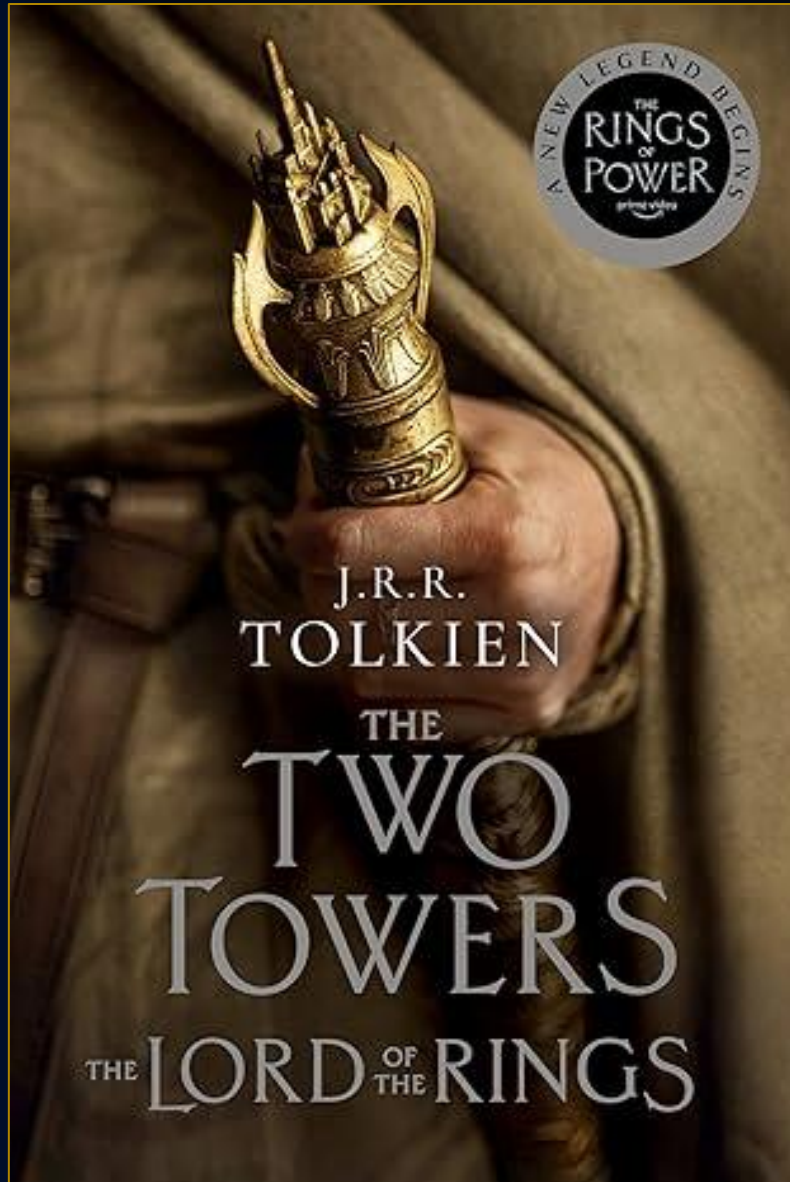
# Solution 3: a more authentic worship

## Application:

1. Continue to church...deal with the conflict after.
2. Turn around – be reconciled – then worship.

What will your children learn?

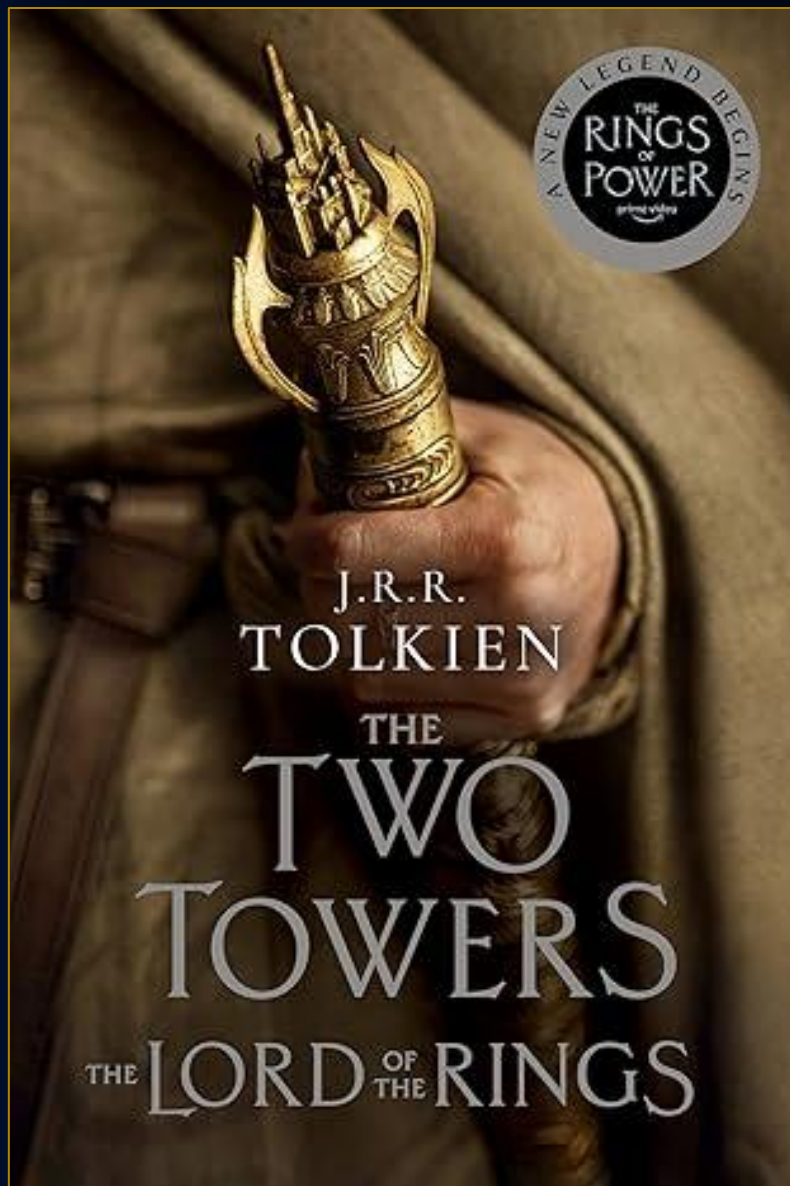
## The Thorns in Marriage



# Frodo's Thorn:

“It's like in the great stories, Mr. Frodo. The ones that really mattered. Full of darkness and danger they were. And sometimes you didn't want to know the end...because how could the end be happy?”

## The Thorns in Marriage



# Frodo's Thorn:

How could the world go back to the way it was when so much bad had happened?

But in the end, it's only a passing thing...this shadow.

Even darkness must pass.”

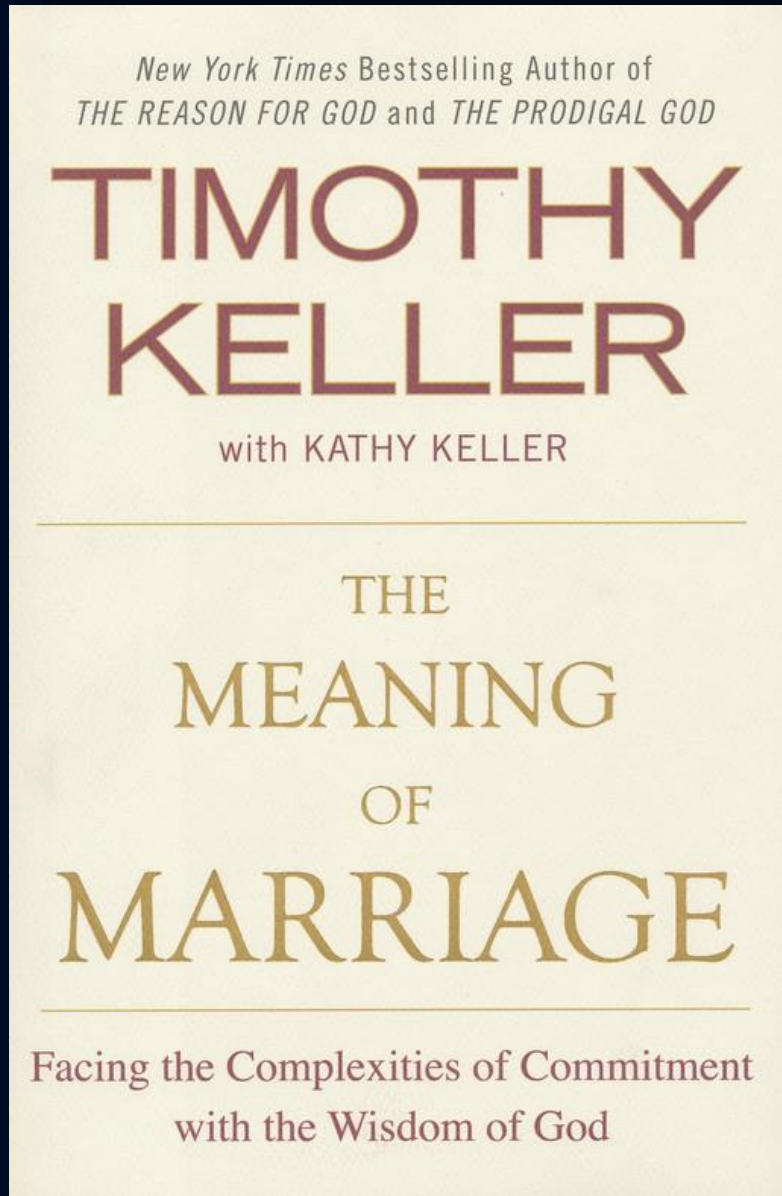
## The Thorns in Marriage

# God's Message:

Yes, the thorns in marriage hurt  
but I want you to also know:

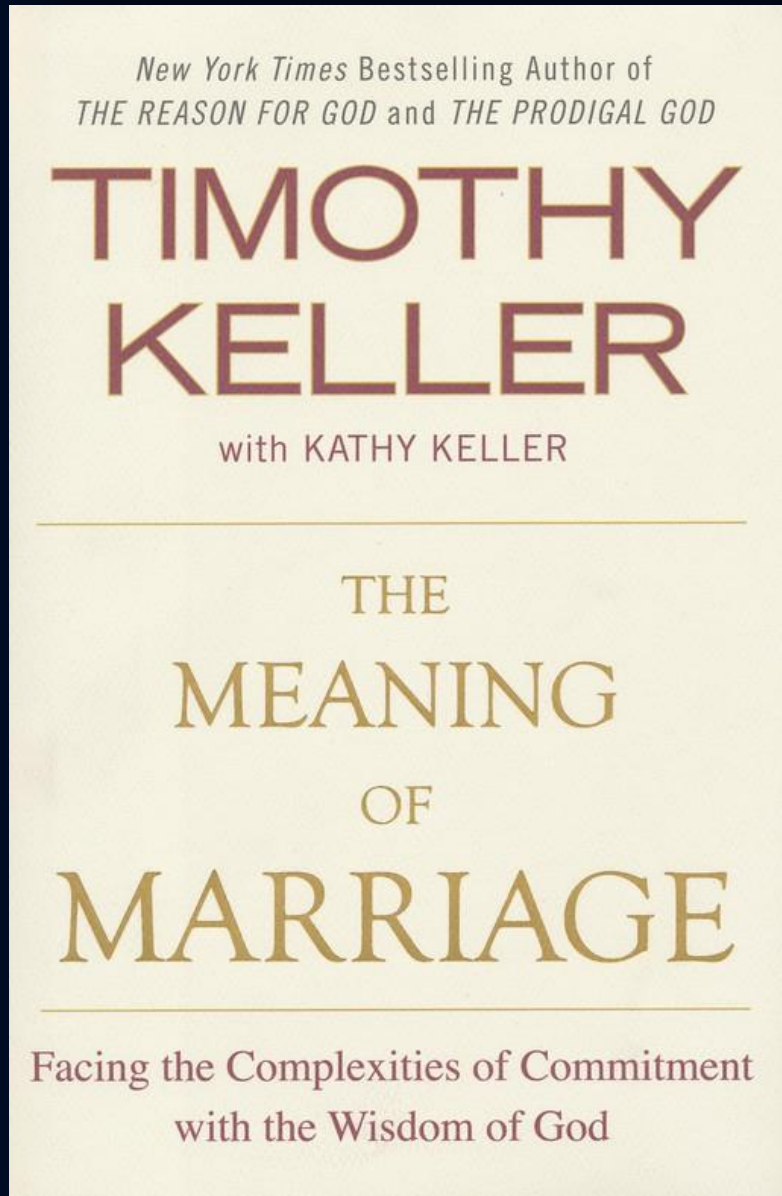
My thorns have a purpose, and any  
darkness will soon give way to glory.

## The Thorns in Marriage



“The best marriages are pointers to the deep, infinitely fulfilling, and final union we will have with Christ in love.”

## The Thorns in Marriage



“It’s the most ecstatic,  
breathtaking, daring,  
scarcely-to-be-imagined  
look at the glory  
that is our future.”



# The Thorns in Marriage

*a thorn was given me...a messenger of Satan*

~ 2 Corinthians 12.7 ~