

# Witness to Love

## *Praise for Witness to Love*

There is a gaping hole at the heart of marriage and family today. Mary-Rose and Ryan Verret offer not just a soothing and healing balm but a transformational one.

—KATHRYN JEAN LOPEZ, EDITOR-AT-LARGE, NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE

Marriage mentors are needed today more than ever. Nobody likes to hear the staggering percentages of failed marriages. You can make a difference. You can help save marriages. If you don't believe me, read *Witness to Love*.

—FATHER JOHN PAUL MARY ZELLER, MFVA, FRANCISCAN MISSIONARIES OF THE ETERNAL WORD, IRONDALE, ALABAMA

*Witness to Love* by Ryan and Mary-Rose Verret takes a huge step forward in personalizing marriage mentorship for young couples. . . . I am grateful to the Verrets for providing a much-needed framework for a critically important area in today's Church.

—LISA M. HENDELY, FOUNDER OF CATHOLICMOM.COM AND AUTHOR OF *THE GRACE OF YES* (AVE MARIA PRESS, 2014)

In this groundbreaking book, the Verrets share hard-won insights with those who . . . are willing to consider becoming a source of light and comfort to couples considering marriage. . . . This book will help you get started as a mentor couple, as a couple who is willing to share as Saint Peter tells us, the “reason for our hope.”

—ART AND LARAINÉ BENNETT, AUTHORS OF *THE TEMPERAMENT GOD GAVE YOU* (SOPHIA INSTITUTE PRESS, 2005), *A YEAR OF GRACE* (OUR SUNDAY VISITOR, 2014), AND *THE EMOTIONS GOD GAVE YOU* (WORD AMONG US PRESS, 2011)

# Witness to Love

How to Help the Next Generation Build  
Marriages That Survive and Thrive

*Ryan and Mary-Rose Verret*



SAINT BENEDICT+PRESS

Charlotte, North Carolina

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*This book is lovingly dedicated to all the dear friends who have shared their witness and marriages with us. We will also treasure and hold dear the stories of your lives that produced so many moments of laughter and redeeming tears!*

*To Saint Pope John Paul II, thank you for your love, wisdom, and pastoral guidance during the most formative years of our lives. Even beyond your passing, you continue to remind us that we are loved unconditionally by our Father. We love you!*

*To Saint Joseph, you have always been a dear friend of our family. Thank you.*

*To Saints Louis and Zélie Martin, we thank you for the sacrificial witness to love that you lived out every day of your married lives. You are an enduring model of the marital charity!*

*To all the priests and consecrated men and women whom we call friends. We have learned so much from you through your generosity, joy, and commitment to Christ and His Church. Your personal witness to love is an essential nuptial sign in the world, directing us all to the ultimate wedding feast of the Lamb!*



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## *Foreword*

WALT Disney once said: “It’s kind of fun to do the impossible!” Imagine if we could convince you that you had an essential role in fighting the divorce statistics. Imagine if you could help reverse the divorce statistics by preparing young couples for marriages that will stand the test of time. We know this may sound as “long ago” and “far, far away” as the fairy tales filled with beautiful impossibilities and romantic dreams that our five-year-old daughter loves to hear. Who today really believes that they can live happily ever after, especially with a member of the opposite sex? We do!

This book will help you prepare young engaged couples for marriage by providing them with a firm foundation to begin their marriage and offering enduring support as they walk forward those crucial first years. Despite our overconnected world, young couples are increasingly unaware of how to discern commitment and how to strengthen and protect their future marriages.

How do you encourage cohabitating couples to discern marriage? How can you help break the cycle of divorce? You can do this simply by sharing the good in your marriage with young couples. Let them learn from your mistakes,

struggles, discoveries, and triumphs. Share with them your real life, and show them the love you have for one another.

You may be thinking, “Our marriage isn’t perfect. How can we do this?” Well, our marriage isn’t perfect, and *that* is the point.

It is through sharing imperfections that our love grows and our appreciation for God’s original plan for marriage deepens. If you wait until you are perfect to share your lives, you will miss out, and so will the young couples whom God has put in your lives. This book is dedicated to the couples who have touched our marriage with insights from their own. Our hearts are full of awe and appreciation for them.

It is with gratitude for their candor, humility, determination, and self-sacrifice that we, too, would like to share stories of those who are true witnesses to love. We hope to inspire you to share your marriage, imperfect though it may be, with those who do not understand how to live out the Sacrament of Marriage. If God found you worthy enough to be married, then you *are* qualified to be a witness! A lamp is not meant to be put under a bushel basket, so let your marriage shine before all so that they can see the good works that God is doing in our world today (see Matthew 5:15)!

Married couples who share their witness are on the front lines battling *the* critical problem in the world today: splintered and broken families. You do not need perfect couples to change the world. Rather, the world needs married couples who are committed to each other, to their families, and to God. Through your example, young couples will learn about God, His love for them, and His desire for their future.

In our experience, couples are not attracted to the appearance of perfection but are drawn to making their marriage more stable in an ever-changing world. A stable marriage is one that has the luster of a sacrament, the uplifting example of self-sacrifice, the joy of mutual dedication, and the ability to forgive. Perfection is not required to be a witness to the love of God and to the beauty of His sacraments. Simply strive to live and to love in conformity with God's desire for your marriage, and you will change the world.



*Introduction:*  
*If Love Is Not Revealed to Them*

Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.<sup>1</sup>

—St. Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*

I cannot remember why I (Mary-Rose) first asked this question of an engaged couple back in 2008. I do not remember the couple's name or even what they looked like, but I do remember their response, which shocked me and is the reason for this book.

Each week, I would have a one-time meeting with an engaged couple to discuss their “premarital inventory” (the results of a long list of questions that couples often need to answer and discuss prior to their wedding). It was often a challenging meeting, and to keep things moving, I would use a few ice-breaker questions if a couple was simply giving yes-or-no answers.

One day, when meeting with a newly engaged couple, I was struck by their unhealthy isolation from friends and family. They lived in their own world, preventing them from welcoming input from others. In their isolated world, there were no markers against which they could measure the impossible height of their expectations of marriage. The insights of close, loving friends and family provide a valuable reality check to young couples. Never an arbitrary downer, these insights naturally correct the tendencies toward isolation that can destroy marriages before they begin.

I realized that I needed to ask this couple a question that I now ask all engaged couples. To date, I have asked this question to over four hundred couples, and their responses to this question have changed the way we offer marriage preparation. Here is the original question broken down into its parts:

- “Do you admire your parents’ marriage, and would you be happy if you had a marriage like theirs?” The majority of couples respond, “no.”
- “Do you know of a married couple whose marriage you admire, and would you be happy if your marriage was like theirs?” Almost every time, they answer an emphatic “yes!”
- “Is this couple a part of your lives? Do they share their marriage with you?” They usually answer that while this couple is part of their

lives to some extent, they wish for a closer relationship.

Over time, the reality of this disconnect hit me: these couples were isolated not because they wanted to be but because they didn't know how to connect with the couples they admired. With the exception of those few couples who admired their parents' marriage, the majority of young couples were looking at others' marriages from afar, often in an unhealthy and idolizing way and with no clear avenue for imitating them.

Those married couples were living out their wedding vows, day in and day out, making mistakes and asking for forgiveness. They started each day anew attempting to love their spouses in the way that God intended. They had no idea that other young couples in their community looked up to them. They had no idea that an isolated, young engaged couple not only needed but craved a small conversation and a deeper friendship with another couple. These engaged couples desired community, fellowship, support, and an organic mentorship. Organic mentorship, which is so vital to healthy marriages, was more prominent in past generations but has become a luxury today.

In today's culture, the young couple who admires from afar needs permission to ask another married couple to be a part of their lives. They need them to walk alongside to the altar and beyond. Ultimately, they need you to become an inspiration and a measure of reality. You are called to pray for them, laugh with them, and to

connect them to their church, to the wider community, and to God.

How do we solve the “disconnect dilemma”? As I asked the same question over and over, the challenge these couples faced weighed on me. Did we need a “program” to make something so natural happen? How could I convince engaged couples to approach the married couple they admired and simply ask them to be their mentors? It was like telling a boy that he should walk up to the prettiest girl in the class and ask her out. No way!

I assured the engaged couples that no married couple would reject them if approached with these sentiments: “We admire your marriage. We want what you have. Please share your marriage with us. Please walk with us.” Why? When the married couple is asked to be a mentor, all that is good in their marriage is recognized, and all that is imperfect blushes and wants to run away but doesn’t. The mentor sees the need in a young couple’s eyes and says, “yes!” Throughout the process of becoming mentors, what is good in their marriage is strengthened, and the areas of deficiency are admitted and shared.

While I encouraged many couples to reach out and consider asking that couple whom they admired to be mentors, I knew deep down that the majority would not ask. Eventually, I began working part time at a small country church that had a mentor-based marriage preparation program. I thought that, at last, engaged couples would have the support they needed. Eventually, we saw that engaged couples would meet with their parish-assigned mentors, but



they would not connect in a way that would give them the support they needed over the years.

One day we heard that a couple with whom we had worked, who had gone through all the requirements and had met for months with their well-formed mentors, was now divorced. Their mentors never knew. The engaged couple never established a trusting relationship with them and did not approach them during their difficulty.

I then realized that trust and friendship are the keys to true marriage mentorship. Trust is the bridge needed to make successful marriage

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Trust and friendship are the keys to true marriage mentorship. Trust is the bridge needed to make successful marriage preparation possible.

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preparation possible. The most important conversations require trust and established relationships. Did we need another “program” to make it all happen? What would that program look like? How would we know if it was working? Father Michael Delcambre, pastor of St. Joseph and St. Rose Parish in Cecilia, Louisiana, and I prayed over and discussed what this would look like. We decided to try it out on our next couple.

We provided guidelines and training, but ultimately we let them choose their own mentor couple. We gave them questions to discuss together, worksheets on communication and finances, tips for great conversations, and a “scavenger hunt” list that kept everyone on track. This list included many

practical things that engaged couples needed to do, but it was also focused on enhancing the relationship between the two couples. It was about breaking down the isolation prevalent even in those relationships.

This process grew and strengthened over the years, and in 2014, we were asked to present this program, called “Witness to Love,” as a simple workshop at the conference for the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers. The overwhelming interest that emerged from this presentation prompted us to write a training manual. The conference experience also prompted the humbling invitation to write this book.

It may take many years before churches around the world realize that the enriching of marriage preparation through couple mentoring is one of the keys to the renewal of marriage and the family. This renewal begins with smallest healing glimpse: a simple invitation into the world of healthy married couples. Some things start best when they start small. Those couples who have never experienced healthy family life will find even the merest exposure to it an inspiration.

You can begin tearing down the wall of isolation that surrounds young couples today when you invite them into your homes, families, and lives and when you share the gift of your marriage with them. The expression “you only get to keep what you give away” is never truer than when describing a mentor couple who shares the riches and blessings of their own relationship. A priest told us recently that while there are many couples with beautiful marriages, too often their example is hidden away. He said that the doors of many “domestic

churches” are closed, but he noticed that our door was open because we shared our marriage, home, and lives with others. What a compliment. We hope that after reading this book you will also consider opening wide the doors to your domestic church!



*A State of Disunion: The Divorce Effect*

*Marriage Defined*

WE live in a state of “disunion.” The word “marriage” has been slowly separated from its original meaning. God is not part of the wedding vows. Couples choose to share a residence rather than build a permanent home. The tragedy of divorce has left an ugly scar on the heart of marriage. Marriage, the “one blessing not forfeited by original sin, nor washed away by the flood,”<sup>1</sup> has been the crown of civilization since the very beginning. For thousands of years, marriage has been a sacred starting point in the new life that a couple shares together. Marriage is a reflection of the permanence of God’s covenant with us: “So great a mystery that in the wedding covenant you foreshadowed the Sacrament of Christ and His Church.”<sup>2</sup> Marriage is meant to be sacred, permanent, and beautiful. It is a reflection of God’s love for us. It is an image of the Trinity. It is an opportunity to share your life at the deepest level possible with another human person. It is an invitation to sanctity and self-sacrifice. Marriage is the cradle for welcoming new life

into the world. It is the domestic church in which we teach our children and family about God. It is our path to Heaven. It is “for better or for worse, in sickness and in health.” Marriage is an amazing blessing!

Battle-weary couples struggle to live out God’s plan for this “one blessing.” We find at every click of a mouse and scrolling of a page some subtle opposition to this blessing that even original sin and the flood could not destroy. We are living in a time in history during which both the beauty and the acceptance of the permanence of marriage are collapsing into disarray. We certainly see “disunion” in the tragedy of divorce, but we also encounter it in the understanding and living out of married life.

Marriage has borne the brunt of every sordid sitcom satire and has unwillingly become a hot political pawn. St. Pope John Paul II prophetically said, “As the family goes, so goes the nation, and so goes the whole world in which we live.”<sup>3</sup> Look at our families, our nation, and our world today. When married couples forget what marriage is really about, it should be no surprise that the definition of marriage is “updated” to become more inclusive. If we do not protect the meaning of marriage by living out our own marriages with purpose, then we should not be surprised when it’s emptied of real meaning and subsequently used for political agendas.

The word “marriage” comes from the Latin word “matrimonium,” which means “the state of becoming a mother.” Today, the very word marriage points neither to an abiding reality nor to its original intelligibility: Its true meaning is no longer considered “politically correct.” Having children is an optional part of marriage. A man can be a “mother,”

or a woman can decide to be a “father.” I may be forgetting some other variations, but suffice it to say that today marriage means as many different things as the number of people you ask. The meaning of marriage, and the definition of family as well, suffers tremendous assault. How can we expect couples who do not even understand the meaning of marriage to be able to form a healthy family? No wonder there is so much confusion!

Here is another example of the “disunion” that we see in marriage today. God, the Author of marriage, has been removed from the relationship

between man and woman to the point where oftentimes any reference to God is removed from the wedding vows. Some couples write their own vows, and as sweet as that is, they are often not promising each other the same things found in traditional wedding vows. The wedding vow should include a marital promise of permanence, fidelity, obedience, mutual help, and openness to life between one man and one woman. Consider yourself fortunate if you hear more than one of these promises in the personal vows recited at many contemporary weddings.

Such weddings often exclude God, and any sense of sacred is obscured. Whereas the focus should be on presenting yourselves to God and to your community, and having

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your vows to God and to each other received by a witness (i.e., the priest, deacon, or pastor), very often the focus and theme highlights a couple's love for each other *without* the help of God. The "vows" make no reference to how they will witness God's love to each other and to their family. This "vow" is a contract; it is *not* a sacrament. A contract is an exchange of goods and services over a period of time that can be negotiated or terminated if one party fails to fulfill his or her obligations.

A sacrament, by comparison, involves a pledge that goes beyond an obligation. In a sacramental marriage vow, you abide, for the rest of your life, by an oath made between you and your spouse and between you as a couple and God. It is not a negative restriction but an oath that opens up the door to give of yourself freely and totally. Unlike a contract—which is about limitations, expectations, and rules—a sacrament is an oath or a covenant that provides an environment of giving of yourself beyond restrictions. It is a commitment that cannot be broken, and treating it as merely a contract risks eternal disappointment.

### *The Cohabitation Effect*

So many young couples today are choosing to cohabit rather than present themselves for the Sacrament of Marriage or even the civil contract of marriage. Why is this the case? Can we really blame them? Perhaps the touted 50 percent divorce rate scares them off. Perhaps they do not believe in sacraments and the grace they bestow. Perhaps their parents were divorced and they fear commitment. It is very



easy for couples to linger outside the Sacrament of Marriage and to settle for a “social marriage” or “romantic partnership” because they truly do not know what they are missing.

Who is reaching out to them and sharing the quiet, transforming love of the Sacrament of Marriage? Who is helping strengthen marriages that are struggling? Who is preaching the good news that the majority of first-time marriages *do* in fact make it?<sup>4</sup> Studies show that the number one reason for cohabitation is “fear of divorce,”<sup>5</sup> but cohabitation only leads to more divorce!<sup>6</sup>

When discussing cohabitation with young couples, it is a challenge not to paint them into a corner by immediately judging their decision to live together. We must not evaluate their actions based on our understanding of right and wrong. Many cohabiting couples don’t understand why anyone would think what they are doing is less than ideal. Many parents support the decision to cohabit because they think it is important for their kids to make sure this is the “right one” or that they are “compatible.”

I (Mary-Rose) remember one summer spent with a family in Germany. They had a son and a daughter. The son had a boyfriend, and they disapproved of the relationship but would not say anything. The daughter lived with her

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boyfriend for seven years, and the parents said that they would pay for her wedding only if she made it to ten years. The issue was not that they disliked him but that their fifty years of marriage taught them that it was very hard to tolerate each other, and they wanted to make sure their daughter knew what she was getting into. In the nineties, this philosophy seemed *laissez-faire*, but now it is simply commonplace. Marriage rates are falling, and cohabitation rates are going up.<sup>7</sup> Statistics also indicate that divorce rates have plateaued or even started to decrease.<sup>8</sup> If divorce rates truly are falling, the most likely cause is the increase in cohabitation and not that marriages are getting stronger or lasting longer.

In other words, as cohabitation rates go up around the world, divorce rates will fall. This is not because marriage has been tried and found good but because fewer couples are finding their way to the altar. Couples today will tell you that cohabiting is no big deal and that most couples do it. Statistics show that over 60 percent of couples who get married have cohabited prior to marriage. Eight percent of the US population is currently in a “cohabiting relationship.” This is no small number!

Think about the couples you know who are cohabiting. Think about their children, jobs, finances, families, and faith. Often, they always seem to be just getting by. They are more isolated from the couples who could share the witness of what marriage is all about. These couples, more than other couples you know, need your witness of the gift and permanence of marriage! Is this just about trying to convince all the couples we know who are cohabiting to get married? Not necessarily. The fact that the majority of engaged

couples are sexually active can cause us to lose focus on what these couples need to learn about marriage and themselves. Instead of working with these couples, we frequently try to ensure that those who are cohabiting get married ASAP! This does not help anyone. Instead, we should encourage deeper conversations with these couples so that they can fully understand the “more” that is there for them: the gift of married life and love.

The point is to love everyone we know so that they can see a little glimpse of God in us and to help them see a future full of the hope that God has in store for them. Often cohabiting situations present a couple with an unfounded belief that there is nothing else for them. In some cases, they see marriage as an impossibility, which makes it even more important that they develop a relationship with a couple whose marriage can help inspire and encourage them. Sharing the gift of your witness with those who are disillusioned and caught in a fear of failure is needed to combat the many moral and marital tragedies displayed today.

### *The Question of Divorce*

Lest you think the urgency of what you are reading is unfounded, we will dedicate the rest of this chapter to a simple “state of the union,” or rather “disunion,” with regard to marriage. While the divorce rate seems to have slowed down and perhaps even changed direction,<sup>9</sup> the esteem for marriage is at an all-time low. Even those who have good marriages live in fear of losing theirs because of the rampant tragedy of divorce. This is due in part to the frequently cited divorce

rate of more than 50 percent that everyone seems to know, and it is also due to the number of friends and family that couples see going through divorce.

If you think about it for a minute, you will realize that 50 percent of the people you know probably are not divorced. You may then wonder where that 50 percent divorce rate comes from. Even many of those conducting the studies are in disagreement. The fact of the matter is that the divorce rate peaked around 50 percent (some would say it peaked at 41 percent)<sup>10</sup> back in the late seventies after “no-fault divorce” was declared. However, a couple’s backgrounds and choices are very distinct factors that determine their likelihood to divorce. It is far more helpful and effective to focus on understanding and battling the main indicators for divorce rather than wringing our hands over generalities or stressing out over which statistic is most accurate.

Those vague studies that many just assume are accurate begin to weigh heavily on society. That often-quoted 50 percent divorce rate has done its damage. If you try to play a game that seems impossible, then how hard will you really try? For example, if I am a terrible Scrabble player, I go into the game knowing I will lose. I do not enjoy the game, I do not get passionately into it, and yes, I usually lose. This is what that haunting 50 percent divorce rate quote does to many couples. It condescendingly mocks, “If you don’t make it, that’s OK. Most won’t make it” or “When you feel like it won’t work out, don’t think you are the only ones.” Do you see what this does to a couple’s marital morale and on what should couples be focusing? They should know the key indicators for divorce, work to resolve those issues, seek help

or mentorship from those who are skilled in those areas, develop a game plan for solving and discussing those issues, and most important, ask God to reveal the plan He has for their relationship.

Ryan and I were greatly relieved the first time we saw a study done on seven predictors of divorce dealing with just the wedding. The study showed, for example, that those who were together for more than two years; had large, inexpensive weddings; went on a honeymoon; made enough money; and bought a decent engagement ring (i.e., not the cheapest one in the display) had much higher chances of marital permanence than those who had a small or expensive wedding. When we read this study, we felt that a weight had been lifted. Why? Because Ryan and I had been good friends for two years before we dated; we had a great many friends and family at our wedding, but we did not break the bank; and we went on a honeymoon to Mexico. We thought we were just doing what we “preferred.” In retrospect, all those choices became indicators that pointed toward a marriage deeply rooted in a community of support and friendship. Studies show that couples who are supported by a wide group of friends and family are more likely to succeed and flourish.<sup>11</sup>

Returning to the Scrabble analogy, there was a time when Mary-Rose was invited to play with a group and was told that there was one person playing that “always lost.” So Mary-Rose played hard and thoroughly enjoyed coming in “next to last.” Even though she came in next to last, she was only a few points behind the friend who came in second. Not “losing” when it comes to marriage is just as good as

winning, but you have to play *and* stay in the game! Studies show that even if you are in a challenging marriage now, if you decide to stick it out and work on your issues, you will be happily married five years from now.<sup>12</sup> How many couples do you know who have experienced huge challenges, even infidelity, and are happily married now? We know many. Why? Because they were not afraid to share their stories with us, to be vulnerable, to give credit to God's love and mercy, and to witness to the love and the hard work that it takes to stay in the game!

### *Predisposed to Divorce*

Young couples who are not aware that there are specific factors that indicate a higher or lower chance of divorce will simply assume that they have a 50 percent chance of divorce. This is not the case! They may have a 10 percent chance or a 90 percent chance. To tell them that their chance of divorce is 50 percent without looking at their specific indicators would be a missed opportunity to strengthen a future marriage! So many couples say that divorce "happens" to someone as if they caught a disease. Yes, divorce does "happen" to many couples, but as we have shared, they are not simply victims of a tragedy.

An important analogy comparing the different ways that couples view their increased risk of marital failure can be made by comparing the following approach of two men whose families have a history of heart disease. The first man knows that his grandfather died from heart disease. He knows that because of his background and personal

decisions, he himself has high blood pressure and cholesterol. He now knows that it is important for him to live a healthy lifestyle, and he sees his doctor regularly and checks in if something out of the ordinary happens. He keeps himself educated and informed on ways to recognize signs of a heart attack. He surrounds himself with those who will encourage and support his change of lifestyle. With the proper care, self-determination, awareness and support, he will outlive his projected years.

The second man knows that men in his family have a history of heart disease, but he tries not to let that get him down. When his time comes, it comes. No use fretting over something he can't change. He lives his life as if he does not have a higher risk for heart disease. Tragically and without warning, he has a heart attack and dies young. Yes, it is a tragedy, and yes, it was unexpected, but it could have been prevented! In comparing the two men and their approaches to the way that they handled the reality of their predisposition to heart disease, we can see a correlation in the ways that couples with a predisposition for marital "heart disease" often approach the issue. "Heart disease" in marriage causes the tragedy of divorce, but in most cases it could have been avoided!

If couples with a predisposition for marital heart disease change their lifestyle, get help regularly, stay educated and informed, and know how to recognize an issue before it gets bad, they will have a much higher chance of marital success. Most important, if they stay surrounded by those who support them, their marriage will live to a ripe, old age, and they will celebrate fifty, sixty, or even

seventy years of marriage. Their witness will strengthen their family for generations to come. They will change the statistics and turn the tide, but they need your help getting there. If they continue to live unsupported and uninformed, their marriages will die young, and this will impact future generations and their children's chances of having healthy marriages.

There are two main kinds of studies about marriage and divorce: The first looks at the "red flags" that can be noticed *prior* to marriage and how those issues can be remedied. The second looks at the potential red flags that can be seen *in marriage* and how couples can prevent becoming a statistic.

The standard approach that most studies on divorce take is that they look for clues that a tragedy was more likely to happen based on the presence of the following in already divorced couples:

- certain personal traits
- experiences
- decisions or family-of-origin dynamics

These are examined for each partner individually and then considered collectively to determine a couple's statistical chances of divorce or success.

Other studies focus on the following:

- an individual's chances of divorce
- a couple's chances of divorce
- indicators for divorce that occurred prior to marriage



- situations, reactions, events, or decisions made in marriage that increase chances of divorce or increase marital satisfaction

For your mentoring purposes, we will cover the premarital “red flags” in Chapter 7 and the red flags for married couples in Chapter 8.