

Foreword

They had come to me for counseling. Now Jeff and Ellie sat across from me on opposite ends of the couch. The air was heavy with tension. They had been married for fifteen years, and had reached a point where they could barely say a civil word to one another. Almost everything they said was an accusation, their words spit out with extreme anger. My heart was sad. I knew there was a time when they had adored one another. I knew that they had once hung onto each other's words and loved each other's company. Though they had once anticipated their marriage with excitement and hope, it was now a place of anger ("I can't believe he/she did this to me!") and regret ("I wish I had never been married!").

Dave Harvey knows exactly what is wrong with this couple. He knows what has brought them from adoration to acrimony and he knows how to get them to where God designed their marriage to be. That is what I think is so practically helpful about the book that you are about to read. It is written by a man who understands. It is not because he is a pastor (although that surely helps), or a good theologian (although this book is rich with theology), or that he understands the destruction

FOREWORD

and restoration of a marriage. No—he understands what is wrong with the marriages of the Jeffs and Ellies of the world because he has been willing to look at himself in the mirror of the Word of God and admit to what he has seen there. It has been said that the best pastor is always the one who is willing to sit under his own teaching.

This book grasps the core drama of every married couple. This drama is no respecter of race, ethnic origin, location, or period of history. It is the one thing that explains the doom and hope of every human relationship. It is the theme that is on every page of this book in some way. What is this drama? It is the drama of sin and grace.

What do all of us do in our marriages in some way? We all tend to deny our sin (while pointing out the sin of the other). By denying our sin, we devalue grace. What is important about this book is that at the level of the hallways and family rooms of everyday life, it is very honest about sin and very hopeful about the amazing resources of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

I can't help but wish that Jeff and Ellie had been able to read this book. I can't help but wish I had been able to read it years ago as well, because again and again I saw myself in it.

This book reminded me once again of some very important things. It reminded me that I am my biggest marital problem (hard to accept, but biblically true). It reminded me, in ways that are very practical, that Jesus is the only solution. It encouraged me to remember that grace makes new beginnings possible. And it challenged me to live like I really believe I can be a tool of God's grace in Luella's life.

It doesn't matter whether you are looking forward to your marriage or have been married for many years. There is one thing I know for sure—your relationship isn't perfect. And because it isn't, as a couple you need to look into the mirror of God's Word once again. This book will help you to do just that.

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