

Dear Zinnia,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You told us that you have been in a verbally and physically abusive relationship on and off for 8 years. You wondered if you should continue to pray and wait for God to make things better. You said that you were confused because although you and your husband love each other and have children, you do not feel happy. You wanted to know if you should “get out” of the situation or stay and pray that the Lord will fix things.

As Christians we believe in the sanctity of marriage. In fact, the Bible presents marriage as a divine institution. God himself united Adam and Eve in holy matrimony, saying, “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). “Cleaving” suggests the idea of being permanently glued or joined together. Therefore, it is the obligation of both parties to prayerfully ask the Lord for guidance to help them find a way to repair their union when there is discord.

Assuming that your husband is a Christian, we would strongly recommend Christian marriage counseling for both of you, as abusiveness has no place in a Christian household. Perhaps, with counseling and prayer the underlying issues that have caused your husband to use abuse as a coping mechanism will be brought to the fore and, over time, both of you will learn to communicate your needs in a more positive manner. A marriage must be nurtured. It requires time and work but it is well worth the effort. The Apostle Paul gives much good advice to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5:22-33. He ends by saying, “Each of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.” (Ephesians 5:33)

Since no adultery has been committed, divorce is not an option. The Bible states that the act of fornication on the part of one or both Christian partners is the only legitimate ground for divorce. (See also Matthew 5:27-32.) However, no one should have to endure verbal, emotional, or physical abuse. We would suggest that if, after marriage counseling and ardent and sincere prayer on both your parts, the situation does not improve, a physical separation is in order, both for your sake and for the sake of your children.

We hope we have answered your question. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.net. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio