

Dear Elaine,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You asked if it was acceptable for your husband of three months to leave because you and he have argued over minute things. You wanted to know if marriage vows could be taken so lightly. You also wanted to know if your husband should be responsible for your well-being.

In the eyes of God marriage is a sacred institution. The vows to love, cherish and be faithful for better or worse, in sickness and health unto death are serious promises that a couple make to each other before God and before a congregation of people. As Christians who choose to live in accordance with God's will, those Biblical principles governing marriage should be highly respected. 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. In the sight of God it means wholehearted commitment, exclusivity, and unswerving loyalty to one's marital partner. Jesus adds in Matthew 19:6, "So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Because marriage is a covenant made before God, it is not meant to be broken.

Nevertheless, the Bible also states that the act of fornication on the part of one or both partners is a legitimate ground for divorce. Matthew 19:9 says, "I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, **except for marital unfaithfulness**, and marries another woman commits adultery." (See also Matthew 5:32.) These scriptures are very clear that the only acceptable reason for divorce between two Christians is marital unfaithfulness (adultery).

Divorce is NEVER pleasing to God. It breaks the most sacred earthly covenant made between two people and should only be broken in the most dire of scripturally based circumstances. Not being happy is not a reason to divorce. Not being fulfilled is not a reason to divorce. Not feeling equally yoked is not a reason to divorce. We must approach divorce with the highest spiritual insight possible and only see it through when there has been fornication AND there is NO possibility of reconciliation.

Since the Christian marriage is an earthly picture that symbolizes the heavenly union of Christ and his bride, when there are problems in a Christian marriage it is the obligation of both parties to prayerfully ask the Lord for guidance to find a way to set matters right. Along with prayer, commitment is the ultimate determining factor in the success or failure of any marriage. As long as the couple is committed to the marriage covenant, each will find unselfish reasons to love and cherish the other, even when disappointment, imperfections and lost expectations prevail.

A marriage must be nurtured. It requires time and work but it is well worth the effort. The prophet Malachi expresses the value God places on marriage. "Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth." (Malachi 2:15) 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)

You asked if it was acceptable for your husband of three months to leave because you have been arguing over minute things. The answer is NO. Marriage vows are to be taken very seriously. You also asked if your husband should be responsible for your well-being. It is important for both of you need to put forth strong effort into your marriage covenant. It is not unusual for the first year of marriage to be challenging because two very different personalities are learning to merge into one cohesive unit. Lastly, you stated that your husband is watching television all day long, seven days a week. Although it is difficult for us to comment on this behavior since we do not know the circumstances, the behavior itself may be symptomatic of depression. He may feel powerless or frustrated and is retreating into a shell. Be kind and supportive. Communicate. Pray to the Lord for help and guidance. Then follow His leadings. It may also be necessary to seek Christian counseling as you strive to stay committed to your vows. Be patient with each other and with yourselves, and, with time and effort, you will reap the Lord's blessing in your marriage. We hope we have answered your questions. Please write us again.

Sincerely,  
Christian Question Radio