THE Unveiled Wife
Embracing intimacy with God and your husband

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Foreword by Dr. Juli Slattery
The ebb and flow of life makes for an interesting journey, one that has been full of sorrow and joy, with everything in between, for my husband and me. Most days it all happens simultaneously. The first few years of our marriage were devastating, and my heart broke over the mess we were living in. Marriage was not meeting my needs as I thought it would when I yearned to be a wife. My husband quickly became a source of disappointment, often failing to fulfill me as I thought he should. I harbored a growing anger toward God for not giving me the marriage I had always dreamed of, believing I was entitled to a perfect life because I did all the “right” things for Him.

The greatest trial that overshadowed my husband and me in our first four years of marriage was a sexual problem. In addition to that struggle, the friction of learning how to be one with each other brought other challenges to the surface. I desperately wanted to blame anyone else—mostly my husband—for the problems we faced, in denial that I could be a contributing factor. I was disturbed to find out that I fell below par, an image of myself I refused to accept for a long time.

Because we struggled during times of sexual intimacy, I felt inadequate as a woman, as if I were in some way broken. Humiliated,
I doubted God’s purpose for my marriage, and I isolated myself from God and from my husband.

In those trying times of conflict and contention, apathy and agony over the desire to separate from my husband, I met God, or perhaps I should say He met me. I thought I had always known Him, yet I struggled in my faith, avoiding Him in anger and feeling miserably stuck in my relationship with Him. Regardless of my rebellion and apparent dissatisfaction, God met me where I was. He taught me who He is, while revealing the intricate details of His design for marriage. In my suffering, God pursued me and carried me to a safe place, an intimate place with Him. As I drew closer to God and allowed Him to show me things about myself that needed attention and change, I learned a few important things about marriage, one of which came through an inspiring message from pastor and author Paul Washer.

How would you ever learn unconditional love if you were married to someone who met all the conditions? . . . How would you ever learn mercy, patience, long-suffering, or heartfelt compassion if you were married to someone who never failed you? Who was never difficult with you? Who never sinned against you? Who was never slow to acknowledge their sin or ask for forgiveness? How would you ever learn grace to pour out your favor on someone who did not deserve it if you were married to someone who was always deserving of all good things?

The main purpose of marriage is that through your marriage you become conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. . . . You are married to a person who does not meet all the conditions so that you might learn unconditional love. You are married to a person who needs mercy so that you learn to give it. You are married to a person who does not deserve so that you learn to lavishly pour yourself out on a person who does not
respond appropriately. And thus you become like the God you worship!\(^1\)

My perspective on marriage changed dramatically after receiving these astounding words. God was teaching me how He could use my experiences in marriage to change me and make me more like Him. He could do the same for my husband. That realization struck me to the core. Marriage serves a greater purpose than I was ever taught growing up. Knowing this gave me hope and faith in my future together with my husband, reconciling and redeeming the love I thought was lost. Only the Lord could overhaul such a broken couple and completely transform us.

Over the last several years, as God continues to transform me and my marriage, I have also learned the value of what it means to be unveiled: to embrace those moments of raw vulnerability in order to draw closer to others in a real way. I have gained a rich understanding of how intimacy is cultivated in relationships by allowing myself to be made known. God gave me the courage to be transparent with Him and with my husband, revealing more about me—my true identity, my heart’s desires, and my personal struggles.

God then used the pain from my marriage to birth in me a passion to encourage others in the midst of their hardships. With encouragement from my husband, I created the Unveiled Wife blog to share what I was learning about marriage in hopes of inspiring other wives to stand together and affirm one another, and to provide resources to help those in need. As I began blogging, I quickly realized it was as if I had reached up and turned a light on, only to discover that I was not the only one standing there. Where darkness had once overshadowed many of us, the radiant light of Christ exposed the truth that none one of us is truly ever alone.

The message of the unveiled wife is based on 2 Corinthians 3:16-18:
Whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (NIV)

When anyone turns toward God, the veil is taken away—freedom to be authentic comes and transformation takes place. This is a powerful message that can radically affect marriages for the better. Since advocating for transparency that leads to intimacy in marriage and being open about my own marital issues, one of the greatest responses I have received about UnveiledWife.com is from women saying, “I am not alone.”

Simply put, that is why I have written this book. I am a wife who has endured hardship in marriage and can testify to how God turned my mourning into rejoicing.

Shortly after creating Unveiled Wife, I felt a divine urge to write my marriage story, specifically recounting the struggle we faced in the bedroom. I was hesitant at first, terrified of exposing my vulnerability. It was also too painful to revisit those uncomfortably difficult times when my marriage almost crumbled. Yet no matter how hard I tried to push from my heart the thought of writing this book, God consistently brought it back to the surface of my heart with a gentle nudge, encouraging me not to be dismayed. He affirmed that my obedience in detailing what He taught me would provide hope and help to other wives. And when I realized that this book could influence women in a real way, I felt responsible, as if I had to write it.

Penned throughout these pages are moments from my marriage, events God has used to refine me as a woman and as a wife. I caution you that the majority of the content is regarding sex because that has been our greatest marital struggle by far. (My husband gave me permission to share intimate details about our relationship, and I have had his full support from the beginning.)
As you read my story, you may not be able to understand some of our struggles. (I’m still bewildered with this issue myself.) Or you may read my story and feel astonished that someone else understands the pain you’ve felt because maybe our experiences are identical. Whether you grasp the weight of our specific issues or can’t relate at all, I want you to know my motivation for sharing my story is to help the countless wives who suffer in silence as I did. While your struggles may be different from mine, they may be just as painful. And though sex is a serious issue that I feel compelled to address, I also share the transformation God worked in me and the lessons I learned that have the potential to heal wives and their marriages. I also want to drag several other serious issues into the light—things I know with certainty many women also battle with daily.

I hope my story diminishes the lies that we listen to about being alone in our struggles. Specifically, I hope it unveils the truth about the unmet expectations, imperfections, and insecurities in your own heart as you seek to better your relationship with God and with your spouse.

I admit this book is not intended to be a one-size-fits-all resource, and I am not an expert with a proven method of success to share with you. I am just a wife willing to share my messy life and what God has been teaching me through it. My greatest hope is that you will be empowered and transformed, no matter what season you find yourself in, to live in the freedom of Jesus Christ.

Transformation is an incredible process of positive change. For me, it’s a journey of triumph that reflects the awesome power and glory of the gospel. It is the difference between who I was and the God-fearing woman I am becoming. This book is not the sum of my transformation; rather it is just the beginning: the story of a wife saved by God’s grace and the extraordinary experience of learning what it means to be unveiled. I’m confident God will use *The Unveiled Wife* to continually speak into your life and encourage you in your walk with God and your marriage.
Dear Lord,

Thank You for the beautiful covenant of marriage, the mystery of the gospel, and the incredible way marriage—which You have ingeniously designed so that we may better understand and experience true intimacy—reflects the love story of Christ. May the woman reading this book feel You near and know she is not alone. May You stir a desire in her heart to know You more deeply and give her the courage to allow herself to be known. May Your Holy Spirit anoint her as she reads this book and bless her with profound wisdom and transcending peace as You shape her into Your glorious image. In Jesus’ name, amen!
Sitting in our car’s passenger seat, I pulled out my phone to check Facebook. No immediate or pending actions that required my attention, yet scrolling through status after status distracted me from reality. My husband, Aaron, and I made our way through the church parking lot, weaving in and out of congestion, searching for a parking spot. As soon as Aaron turned off the engine, we got out of the car and walked to the sanctuary, synchronized in motion. The morning air was cold, mirroring our emotion. We continued on autopilot, finding our seats just before the service began. Though he sat next to me, emotional isolation left me feeling alone. We didn’t say much to each other; the weight of despair strangled my thoughts, my feelings, and apparently my speech. I felt as if I were wearing a neon sign that flashed “out of order,” but no one seemed to notice.

I was dying inside, sick with regret over the way my marriage of almost four years was turning out. My breathing was shallow, a side effect of the anxiety that relentlessly pummeled my fragile spirit.

*Is this it, God?* I wondered. *Is this really it?*

My husband had been silent all morning. His eyes reflected pain and defeat. Bent forward with his elbows resting on his knees, it looked as if he were wasting away faster than I was.
Why is this happening to us?

I’d never seen my husband so disheartened, and I was clueless about how to respond to him. I wanted to comfort him and say, “Everything is going to be okay,” but I felt like I would be lying. We were miles from hope, lost in a world we were not prepared for.

The grief welled up in tears that sat on the rims of my eyes. My husband’s head hung low for most of the sermon. As the pastor spoke, I was distracted by negative thoughts. I was angry with God for letting us endure so much hardship, bombarded with familiar and convincing thoughts that I deserved better. I thought following God and being a good Christian guaranteed blessing. I didn’t understand that all marriages encounter hardship. So when my marriage didn’t meet my expectations, I questioned if I was “good” enough. Doubt stirred in my heart, making me feel inadequate as a Christian and as a wife.

*I’m not cut out for this,* I thought. As thought after negative thought continued, I turned my frustration toward my husband.

*Pretend everything is fine! I can’t stand seeing you like this . . . seeing us like this.*

I was convinced we would be discussing divorce over lunch.

I wondered how many other people sitting in church that day felt as if they were being buried alive—trapped beneath the weight of a growing pile of dirt. I was ready to make any kind of sacrifice just to survive, yet I wanted to die to escape the pain. I was completely worn out.

When we married, we were adamant that we would face life as a team, committed never to opting out through the “D” word. But already the battle was wearing us down. Unwanted circumstances aroused an unwanted desire for divorce. Contemplating the end of our relationship became an emphatic reality I could not ignore.

Seeing my husband slumped over in church, rotting in despair, made me cringe. In that moment I realized how my actions over the years had taken a toll on his life. I’d been so busy dwelling on
my pain that I’d failed to consider how our marital issues were affecting my husband, how I was affecting my husband.

That morning as I sat in the church service, I knew this had to be the end of my selfish ways—it had to be or my marriage would die. God finally had my full attention. I knew that only He would have the power to transform me as a wife and heal my broken marriage.

I was humbled, and all I could do was surrender the wreck I’d helped cause. I looked at my husband and prayed, “Lord, please save us. I don’t want to divorce this man. Lord, please help us!”

Behind the Veil

1. Unmet expectations became a catalyst for the bitterness growing in my heart toward my husband. I believed he should live up to the standard I held of him in my mind, and when he failed me in any area, discontentment over my whole marriage tainted my attitude. In what ways do your unmet expectations affect your attitude toward your husband? Toward God?

2. I thought that as a Christian I had to be perfect so that I wouldn’t misrepresent God’s gospel to others. Stepping into church and seeing how other people were seemingly so perfect only confirmed my conviction. I didn’t want to be the Christian having marital problems, so I pretended my life was great. In reality, smiling on the outside while suffering on the inside never benefits His gospel; it only corrodes my soul. Have you suffered silently in church? If so, what motivated you to hide your pain from others?

3. With all my attention focused on my needs and what would fulfill me, I neglected to consider my husband’s needs. I knew what was happening to me, but I figured my husband
could never understand how deeply wounded I felt. In my
hurt, I justified that my pain was more important than his.
What are some reasons you might consider your pain or
frustrations about marriage to be more important than your
husband’s?

4. “Unwanted circumstances aroused an unwanted desire for
divorce.” Have you ever contemplated divorce? If so, what
unwanted circumstances motivated you to consider the end
of your marriage?

Thank you for taking the time to read the first
chapter of my book The Unveiled Wife. This was a
climactic part of my marriage and a situation I
believe many other wives may have experienced as
well. I would love for you to read what happened
leading up to this point and what happened that
day at church that radically impacted my view of
marriage and my view of God. You can Pre-Order
The Unveiled Wife now which releases March 3rd,
2015 and be one of the first to receive the full
story.

PRE-ORDER TODAY

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