

## **Leaving Marriage: A Survivor's Prayer**

For richer, for poorer, for better, for worse.  
I made these vows, God, before you and witnesses.  
You know I meant them.  
But how worse is worse?  
What does faithfulness mean when he hurls his dinner at the wall?  
What does honour mean when he throws me to the ground by my hair?  
What does love mean when sex is always about what he wants?  
You know I'm not perfect.  
My words, my thoughts, my actions have been far from loving.  
But this situation is impossible.  
I lie down in fear, and I wake in fear.  
What will I do wrong today that will set him off?  
After the explosions, he apologizes; he is sorry and charming.  
I've forgiven more than seventy times seven,  
and still there are these bruises.  
I vowed to be a part of this marriage,  
but his violence has broken this partnership,  
and I cannot put it back together alone, no matter how hard I try.  
Our union now is more about anger and terror  
than love and tenderness.  
In the despair, in the hopelessness,  
in the futility and self-blame,  
can I meet you even here?  
You are the God who loves me, who cherishes me,  
who thinks I'm worth something, who wants the best for me,  
who would see good done for me, and not my destruction.  
After so many years of praying for my marriage,  
and praying for him to change,  
today I pray something different.  
Help me leave. Help me make it out of here alive.  
Give me courage to think of life after marriage.  
Help me trust that even if I leave him,  
you will never leave him.  
Even though he has destroyed the love we had,  
your love for him is never ending.  
Take care of him,  
because I cannot do it anymore.

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