

OUR KITCHEN AND OUR COVENANTS

By Bonnie L. Ford

Work with my husband for hours every day? That was the last thing I wanted to do.

The day I told my husband to move out is forever ingrained in my memory. Despite a temple marriage of 13 years and five children, it seemed that our relationship had become irreparably damaged. We had allowed pride to seep into our hearts, which caused us to lose sight of our goals as husband and wife. Our days were spent focusing more on blaming each other for problems that existed in our marriage rather than accepting that we were both at fault and simply forgiving each other. The flame of our love had died down to embers, and we had allowed it to happen. The only thing that held our marriage together now was the covenants we had made in the temple.

Thankfully, our love for the Lord and our desire to choose the right were still strong, so we decided to seek help through LDS Family Services. At a counseling session, we were asked if there was anything that we liked to do together. My initial response was, “Nothing!” But my husband spoke up, saying that we worked well together on projects.

My mind went back to our first date. I was serving as activities chairman in my young single adult branch, working as a preschool teacher, and attending evening classes, trying to finish my degree. I often took projects to young single adult activities, and my husband became my most diligent helper. On one occasion he even helped me clean and prepare my preschool room until late into the evening for a state inspection the next day. We enjoyed each other’s company so much that we always considered that to be our first date. I admitted to the counselor that we did work well together.

That was our common ground. The foundation of our temple marriage was not only the sacred covenants we took upon ourselves but also friendship and service, which I had forgotten. Now the hard work of repairing our marriage was before us. We agreed that the kitchen in our home needed renovation. So, with some awkwardness and trepidation, we began talking civilly to each other again.

As the kitchen remodel progressed, we rediscovered how much we

enjoyed working together. Our friendship began to flourish and I began to develop a more forgiving heart. I realized that the problems in our marriage were not as devastating as I had come to believe. With faith, service, and most importantly forgiveness, our problems could be overcome. We began attending the temple on a regular basis and praying together again. Family scripture study with our children became a regular routine. We looked for times to be together, like going for walks and holding hands. By spending time together and living the gospel more fully, we became best friends again.

It took nearly four years to finish the work in the kitchen. We did it together, and it saved our marriage. It forced us to control our selfish impulses and communicate without screaming. We were able to talk things over calmly and rationally. I also began to notice that there was less arguing among the children. Even amidst the chaos of remodeling, our home became a peaceful place of refuge from the



storm, instead of the center of it. We realized that the key to a successful marriage is the sacrifice of time and talents for each other. But most of all, it reminded us why we fell in love.

In February we celebrated 21 years of marriage, and it is stronger than ever. Now I can't imagine living my life without my husband, my best friend. We know that without the covenants we made in the temple, our marriage would likely have ended in divorce. When there was nothing else keeping us together, the covenants we had made with the Lord became the anchor we needed. Our kitchen renovation taught us to continue to hold together the building blocks of our marriage—namely, faith, hope, love, sacrifice, friendship, and most of all, forgiveness. ■

The author lives in Ohio, USA.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, my servants, that inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses, even so I, the Lord, forgive you.”

Doctrine and Covenants 82:1