

# (Testimony) Story How I Almost Divorced My Wife

by David Wilkerson

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*David Wilkerson shares a heartfelt testimony of his and his wife's battle with cancer and the impact on their marriage, emphasizing the importance of faith and honesty in overcoming trials.*

**Duration:** 23:38

**Scripture:** Psalm 103:14, Psalm 130:3

**Topics:** "Divorce"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of preaching on the topic of love. They describe feeling an incredible anointing and pouring out their love for Jesus to the audience. However, after the sermon, they have a moment of doubt and fear, feeling like a phony and unable to continue preaching. They attribute this to their own struggles in their marriage and feeling like they cannot preach about deliverance when they can't solve their own problems. The speaker shares their journey of seeking God's healing and guidance in their marriage and ministry.

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## Transcript

All right, I told you I wanted to share with you a confession. Now, my wife and I agreed she would allow me to share with you what I'm about to share, and though this happened years ago, we felt at this critical time that we should share it because it would help a lot of others who are going through something very similar, because my wife and I just about did not make it. That's right, and it began one day when I walked into the kitchen, and I saw Gwen leaning over the kitchen sink, grabbing her side and screaming in pain, and she said, honey, come here, put your hand here.

There was a big lump. I panicked. I said, my goodness, how long do you have that? She said, a couple months.

She said, it's like a knife. I'm so tired all the time, and I get these weak spells, just drain my strength. She said, I'm afraid there's something there.

I took her to our physician the next day. He probed around a bit, and he said, Mr. Wilkinson, it's just a swollen ovary. It's infected.

Here's some medication. I'm sure it'll dissolve. It'll go away.

We were relieved, went home. The medication helped for a couple weeks. It was the second or third week after we were in Pittsburgh visiting her mother, and we were at Gimbel's department store.

I'll never forget it. She was buying a pair of stockings, and all of a sudden, that scream. She bent over in pain.

She said, honey, it's bigger, and it's worse than ever. It's like a butcher knife cutting me. I really got scared.

I called her mother, and we got the name of an internist, a specialist. I took her in. He probed around, and he called me in the next room.

He said, sir, you get your wife back to New York immediately. Demand a barometum x-ray. You've got serious problems.

You're in trouble. I started playing a game with Gwen. I just told her a lie, and that's where all the trouble begins when you're dishonest, when you cheat, just by being dishonest, even about this kind of a third party, even a disease.

A few days later, she's in the hospital. It's 10 o'clock in the morning. The following day, the doctor called me up, and he said, David, I'm really sorry.

I missed it. I said, what are you talking about? He said, your wife, sir, has a cancer on her lower bowel the size of a lemon, and I want permission to prepare her for surgery. She should be operated on right away, and I was angry.

I blew up. I said, what do you mean you missed it? You told me it's just an infected ovary. He said, well, we're human, sir.

We do make mistakes. Boy, and I slammed the phone down, and when I went in the hospital, I started playing a game with Gwen again. I said, honey, the doctor said that the ovary is infected.

It needs to come out lest it affect the other ovary, so you're going to have to go into surgery. She agreed. The doctor let me wait in the little outer room.

He said, David, I'll be in there about four hours. I'll tell you what happens as soon as I get out. He was in there six hours, and I knew there was trouble when he was two hours overdue.

He came out and pulled off that green mask, and I can still see him. He shook his head. He said, sir, it's a shame that a 32-year-old woman should have such a black, ugly thing like that in her.

He said, I had to cut out all the lymph glands, half her bowels, and he said, we hope we got it. We don't think it metastasized, but we had to take out all the lymph glands in the midsection. He said, it's in God's hands now.

When I saw Gwen at the recovery room, she was coming out. I tried to lie to her again, and this time she said, David, stop it. She said, it was cancer, wasn't it? I've known it all the time.

I said, yes, and so the tension was gone. But friends, that was the beginning of a third party introduced in our home that was absolutely devastating. I had no way, neither of us had any way of knowing how low it would take us in despair, despondency.

And some of you people here tonight may have been through it, and maybe you're going to have to go through it, and the Holy Ghost is trying to prepare you. And this is very, very difficult for me. But we've lived through it.

My wife and I both agreed that so many people could be helped if you could just listen. Because when I was in Bible school, we would have ministers come, and they'd stand there, and I'd be sitting in chapel with all my problems, and all these evangelists would be talking about all their great victories and all the things that they'd accomplished. And I'd sit there with all my problems, and I said, that doesn't make sense.

They can't be all right, and I'm all wrong. And I thought, Lord, if you ever give me a ministry, I want to get up and confess some of my problems so that the people who are going through it like me can relate to it. That's the reason I'm like this.

I can't help it anymore. Friends, she got along for a year or so and regained some strength. But boy, those tired spells would hit her again, and then another lump.

In the next five years, Gwen had, I think, five operations, three malignancies, two non-malignant. It goiter, other midsection problems, and she was cut four times across, crisscrossed the stomach. And after the fourth operation, I think it was the fifth operation, she seemed to be regaining strength, but becoming very weak.

And we used to, we lived in Staten Island. She used to like to walk around the block. And we were taking a walk one night, and she really shocked me.

She said, David, they've cut me so much, I don't feel like a woman anymore. I want another child. We almost passed out.

I said, that's the worst thing in the world. All you've been through now to carry a baby? She said, I want a child. And I knew, I know now why God put that in her heart, because soon after that, she'd not be allowed, able to have anymore.

We planned our fourth child. That's Greggie back there now, 10 going on 11. Healthy and strong and call of God in his life.

He's going to be a preacher, he said. It was a year later. After that, she seemed to be gaining strength.

We were so happy. We were coming home from Memphis General Council. And on the way home, she had one of those attacks.

Started to bleed. We rushed her into the nearest town, into a hospital. They sedated her, stopped the bleeding, said, get her to a hospital.

You've got problems. And once again, dear Gwen was down at this time. A surgeon friend of mine did the operation.

Very fine Christian, spirit-filled man. Thought it would make it a little easier. This time a radical hysterectomy.

And I mean, it was radical surgery this time. When Gwen came out this time, she said, they'll never lay another knife on me ever. I don't care, they'll never.

It used to grieve me. People would come to me and say, David, you've got faith to believe God for miracles, for drug addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes. Why can't you believe God to heal your wife of cancer? And it hurt us because God had done something wonderful for us.

He'd given us what I call the faith of the Hebrew children. The Hebrew children stood in front of the fire furnace and they knew in their heart God was able. And their message to the whole world was simply this.

We know our God is able, but if we have to go through the furnace, he'll take us through. And friends, God saw fit to take us through the furnace. But it was in the furnace that we came out, came out with his hand on ours.

That's where we met him, in the furnace. God takes you through the flood. He doesn't bypass it.

You go through the wilderness, through the fire, through the flood, and that's where he meets you. This time a surgeon calls me in the next room and he said, Rev. Wilkerson, you're a man of God, but you've got to know something. We've taken two of the three lines of defense against disease away from your wife.

She has no more hormone system being produced, no more goiters, so there's no thyroid. She has to take thyroid, hormone, and he listed all the medications she'd take the rest of her life. He said she's going to go through massive sudden changes in her body and in her psyche, and she's going to feel depression like she's never felt.

She's going to feel fits of jealousy and temper, and she's going to go through every range of human feeling, so high and so low it'll be devastating. And unless you're prepared, unless you're patient and understanding, you can only make it more difficult and hurt yourself. Sir, be prepared.

I'm just telling you, you're in for it. You're going to see things you've never saw before, and your wife's going to be another woman. And I couldn't understand then what he was talking, couldn't even begin to comprehend it.

The first three months we were able to take it pretty well. When I'd come home from Teen Challenge and walk in the streets and walk in the house and see her handshake when she's drinking coffee, I could take her to the room and pray with her, and she was relieved. But friends, it went downhill, downhill for the next six months.

It got worse and worse until finally it got on my nerves. I'd say to myself, now look, I'm walking the streets, I'm giving my life, and to come home to that torment. Maybe she's not trying because I came home one time and she was screaming at the children, and I couldn't understand that.

And she'd run to the room and say, David, why do I do that? You know that's not me. And we'd pray. But after a while, friends, the depression got so bad, she slipped so low physically, she said, I'll never get it.

Came home one day, she said, you don't love me. The kids don't love me. Nobody loves me.

I don't want to live. And suddenly that loss of a will to live. Nobody cares.

And friends, I've been going around the country preaching and asking prayer, and she had more people praying. We had flowers and telegrams, and people praying, and more friends you never had in your life. But the enemy trying to say, nobody cares.

You don't care. Nobody cares. And boy, I would come home and go into the garage where I had a little prayer room and say, God, it's not right.

I can't carry this kind of a battle. And friends, for a whole year, I traveled around the country preaching crusades. And at the stand and hearing in my subconscious mind, David, you're a phony.

You preach deliverance, and yet you can't solve your own problem. You're going to wind up in divorce court, and the millions of people ready to cross and switchblade are going to laugh, and you're going to bring reproach on the ministry. And one night in California, I was preaching for Miss Kathryn Kuhlman, 4,000 people, and in the middle of the sermon, it rang through my mind, you're a phony.

You have no right to preach. You're a phony. And I was paralyzed.

I couldn't move. I grabbed the pulpit, and nothing came out. I stood there for three minutes, just petrified, and suddenly turned and walked off the stage, walked off in front of 4,000 people.

Right in the middle of my message, Miss Kuhlman had to take over the service. I went up to the side, and Brother Aaron Vick was there. He said, David, what's wrong? I said, I'm a phony.

He didn't know what he was talking about. I just walked out. I said, I can't preach.

I can't stand up anymore until what God can do, until God heals our marriage, because we were not making, we were arguing now. We were not understanding. We were not communicating.

I knew she loved me, and I knew I loved her, and there was no other third party, but this disease, and it was crippling, but I knew the enemy was going to use this, trying to destroy our home and marriage. Our children knew it, and some of our closest friends knew it. I went home and did what most people do when they're headed for trouble.

They think a second honeymoon will solve everything, as if geographically removing yourself from the area of your problem would solve it. Friends, you take your problem with you. You don't solve it by going somewhere.

You solve it right here in your heart, and so I went home, and I said, honey, I've got to go to California for Crusades next week. Let's get somebody who wants the kids. Let's take a second honeymoon.

She said, we need something, David. We flew to California, arrived at Friday, checked into the hotel in Anaheim, and I had a Saturday afternoon banquet for some 400, 500 ministers and their wives, the Southern California district, and then a big crusade that night at the Long Beach Auditorium. Thousands of people expected.

It was Saturday afternoon. I was dressing to get ready for the crusade, and I don't know what triggered it, but for some reason or another, we started arguing, and I blew up. I said, that does it.

God doesn't expect that of me. I said, we're not making it. We came here to California.

We're not solving our problem. I said, I'm having a hard enough time preaching. I feel like a phony now.

I've lost the victory. You're not coming in the car with me. I flipped her a telephone number.

I said, here, you call Ralph. Eileen, if you want to come, you come with them. You're not coming in the car with me.

I got in my Hertz rental car and drove off in a huff to the banquet. They had my book set up down in the lobby, and when I appeared, kids came running up, wanted me to autograph the cross and switch blade. And if you'd have seen me then, you would have never known with that phony smile on my face that I was dying inside and going through a ravishing period in my life.

Ten minutes before the banquets to start, here comes my wife in with the pastor and his wife. And we'd learned by now to put on a big front. So she smiled and sighed up to me.

We walked in hand in hand and sat at the speaker's table at the banquet. And friends, I felt like I was in an echo chamber. I didn't hear a word for the first hour of preliminaries.

I was in an echo chamber and I was so low and I reached in my pocket and I had \$500 in traveler's checks. Now it's not because I carry a lot of money, but the tickets alone were \$300 and we were going to be there for a week, we thought. And suddenly a scripture came to me.

It's a scripture that David used. It was what David said when he was going through a trial and he wanted to run away from it. He said, oh, that I had the wings of a dove, that I could fly off to some distant wilderness and escape this tempest and storm.

Oh, that I had wings of a dove. I could fly away to a wilderness. And on my way to the meeting that afternoon, I'd seen a bus pull out of the station there.

It said Mexico city. And all of a sudden it hit me. God doesn't expect this of you.

You've got \$500 in your pocket. Just get up, walk out and go to the bus station and get a ticket, go to Mexico city, take your Bible and your clothes and check into a hotel down there and write another book, maybe on family problems because now you can relate to them. Fast and pray, call New York and tell Paul to the treasurer to give your paycheck to your wife and take care of the family.

Don't let anybody know where you're at. And one of these days when she really tries, when she starts praying and seeking God like she should, then she'll come crawling back to you. Then you can come home.

God doesn't expect it. Friends, I did the stupidest thing ever did in my life. I got up, put the chair under the table and walked out.

People must've thought I was going to the restroom. I headed for that bus station feeling sorry for myself and hurt and depressed. The lowest I'd ever been in my whole ministry.

I got that bus station and I'm standing there getting ready to lay money down for a ticket. And friends, all of a sudden I began to shake and tremble because the fear of God came on me. The Holy Spirit fell on me and I heard it ringing through my subconscious mind.

David, what a fool, what a fool. You talk about being hurt. You talk about not being understood.

And yet you haven't had the knife laid on you. You haven't had the tubes down your throat. You haven't had to face the trauma of cancer.

She has done all the suffering. You don't even begin to know what suffering is. She's gone through it all.

If anyone has a right to run away, she does, not you. Get back before it's too late. And I'll tell you, I literally ran.

I remember jumping over a car. I put my hands in the front and leaped right over the front of it, over a fire hydrant, and I hopped and puffed my way back and I got there five minutes before they introduced me to speak. My wife later said she knew what I'd tried to do.

She wanted to do the same thing. I don't even know what I spoke, friends. I got through it.

But after the banquet, about 515, 530, I handed my wife a key to the room they'd given us there at the hotel. I said, honey, we're not making it. And I said, I can't go on.

I'm at the end of my rope. I said, you go to the room. You know, I love you.

I know you love me, but I can't go on another day. I said, no, I've got to preach to thousands of people tonight and I'm not going to do it unless God meets me, unless God heals our marriage and our home. And I went up to a little dressing room.

It's still there, up at the Long Beach Auditorium, dirty old filthy dressing room. I slammed the door and I pouted my fist against the wall almost till I bled, said, God, like Jacob wrestling with the angel of God, I'll not let you go until you answer prayer. God, you've met me all these years.

You've met my financial need. You've healed boys like Nicky Cruz. I've seen your miracle working power.

And this burden is too much. And I'll tell you, friends, he said he'll make a way of escape. Hallelujah.

God said he'd make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it. And friends, after an hour or so, something happened in that little room. God poured on me a fresh anointing, an anointing like I had never experienced in all my life, even fresher than when God first called me to the streets of New York.

And suddenly all that poison was worst out. Glory to God. It doesn't take God all night.

Just takes God a few moments. He works to add all the fear and he works out the depression. And I knew God was going to bring healing to my wife and our home that night.

Friends, at seven thirty, I walked out and the place was packed and jammed. I didn't even have my Bible with me. I didn't even know where I'd left it.

Didn't even have a note. All I remember, I was in a daze. I was in the spirit and I heard someone introducing me and I stood before thousands of people.

And I remember for just a half an hour I preached on love. Who God, if God marked iniquities, who among us could stand. He remembers our frame.

He remembers that we're but dust. No, I began to just pour out of my heart the love that I felt for Jesus and the love that he was giving back to me. All the love I spoke for half an hour through tears, stained eyes and halfway through my message.

And I'd never experienced such anointing. It was though I'd stepped out of my body and the Lord himself just speaking through my lips. You're just pouring out.

I couldn't wait to hear what the Holy Ghost was going to say next. Just poured out and halfway through my message, the Lord let me pick out Gwen's face, went back out. Thousands of people, I could see her and her hands were raised and tears streaming down her cheeks.

And suddenly I had a Holy Ghost premonition. God is healing your wife right now. God is healing.

The miracles happened. And boy, they just rolled off of me and I knew it. I knew it.

I gave an invitation that night and over a thousand people came forward. I've never seen anything like it. And people were crying and making up with each other.

It was a beautiful experience. And about 10 minutes later into the altar service, I heard somebody going, I turn and there's Gwen behind the curtain going like this motion for me to come here. Boy, and I walked away from thousands of people.

I went over and I picked her up and hugged her. She said, I feel like a 13 year old girl. I have never felt like this in all my life.

She said, you know, you preached your whole sermon right at me. I said, honey, there's a thousand others there thinking the same thing. She said, no.

She said halfway through your message tonight, the anointing of God came on you. So your face lit up. She said, I saw a ring around your face.

She said, and God took that anointing and broke the yoke in my life. The anointing on you touched my life and broke the yoke. She said, the depression snapped.

She said, the glory of the Lord filled my heart. And she said, God told me I'm healed. She said, I am healed.

She said, the depression is gone. She said, let's get out of here. And we got out of there.

We walked away from thousands of people didn't tell anybody in French that second honeymoon was 10 million times better than the first. And we've been going on it ever since. Hallelujah.

It's just been absolutely beautiful. You say you got no more problems. Oh yes.

But we always make sure I'm there first, honey. I'm the one that's sorry. We've learned the sorry secret.

Hallelujah. Glory be to God. Now I'm going to tell you something.

You tell me your marriage is hopeless. You say, well, it used to be nice. Come on.

You stood one day and with this, I close. You stood one day with your husband or your wife before an altar. I don't know whether you were in a right dress or not, but you stood there either before justice, the peace of the gospel.

You said, I love you until death do us part. And you were married in the sight of God. And I don't know what's happened in the meantime.

I don't care if you're retired. Maybe you say the magic is gone, David. I'll never be able to sense what I had before.

Well, friends, we don't live by feelings. We live by faith that if by faith, you'll come to him. Now pray for a miracle.

God can heal you. God can heal your marriage. And he said, here's what the Bible said.

I've got something against you because you left your first love. You didn't lose it. You left it.

So remember how it was and repent and go back and do it all over again. Come on, remember how it was and go back and do it all over again. Now I used to have people come forward that wanted their marriages healed and I'd have them repeat the marriage vows until I saw how stupid that is.

Those are just words. I didn't mean anything. It's the act of kindness.

It's determining in your mind, I'm going to make this work. I believe in miracles. I believe in God.

I believe God can keep my home. I'm not going to give up. I'm not going to let the devil destroy my home and ruin my kids, break up my husband and my wife.

I'll not allow it. Never. Some of you young married couples needed this so much tonight.

Look what's happened. All the press of this age. Father, I've made a confession.

Now we've all got to make a confession. Lord, I needed this tonight. This is exactly what I need.

I need it. I acknowledge it. I admit that I need help.

That's where it begins. Amen. For additional copies of this cassette or a listing of other Dimension tapes, contact your local bookstore or Bethany Fellowship, 6820 Auto Club Road, Minneapolis, MN 55438.

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