
Married for How Long?

Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

The rate at which marriages are falling apart is now in epidemic proportions. This unscriptural practice is coming down the middle aisle of our evangelical churches. Included are prominent evangelists, missionaries, pastors, Christian educators, and TV ministers. The church's silence indicates the removal of all restraint, and has produced an endorsement of such action. With the lack of Biblically-based convictions, many believers have resorted to man-centered, sympathetic immaturity, and emotional responses, which reveal their lack of absolute, unchanging Scriptural standards.

Where did we ever get the idea that marriage is not permanent? From where comes the motivation for coveting our neighbor's wife or husband? Can we legitimately take the place of another wife or husband? Has God's declaration of marriage in Genesis 2:23,24 changed? "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh."

Moses' Divorce

Christ states the only divorce in the entire Bible was granted by Moses. "He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so" Matt. 19:8. Endeavoring to assist people out of a bad marriage, some have concluded that fornication is grounds for divorce. Note the Disciples question, "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement and to put her away?" Of course the Son of God gave Moses' answer - fornication (vs. 9). to interpret this Scripture, that Christ changed the marriage standards of His Father, is not valid. In fact the disciples did not interpret his statement as promoting divorce on any basis. They were so disturbed at no divorce by Christ in this passage, they stated, "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry" (vs. 10). Christ continues His answer about Moses; divorce including remarriage. (vs. 9). Remember His challenge of this fornication exception in verse eight. "But from the beginning it was not so."

Cause of Divorce

Today's situation remains unchanged. Moses granted divorce because of hardness in their heart. This same mental attitude destroys today's marriages. Such hardness leads to the breaking of the marriage vow, which removes them from the lordship of Christ and the authority of the Scriptures. Self-centeredness is always the basic cause of any and all marriage difficulties.

Instead of getting bitter, waiting for a change on the part of your spouse, why not allow God to make you the husband or wife He has outlined in His Word? Why not attract again the one who claimed to love you dearly once? Let God begin to turn your marriage around by starting with YOU! Bitterness, resentment, and hostility removes you from a Holy God's assistance. If God can answer the prayers of one in your family, what a difference you have to look forward to.

We Are In Love

If you think this alone is needed for a couple to live together till parted by death, you are in for a rude awakening within the first year of your marriage. Do you know one another's emotional makeup prior to your wedding? Has it improved since you claimed to love one another? It must be recognized and dealt with prior to

marriage; for people bring along their insecurities, hostilities, and emotional outbursts on their honeymoon and afterward.

What about your goals? What do you want to do with your life? Where are your directions coming from? Who or what is your personal authority? Better know if you are apart in this very important matter. What is going to happen when you both are called into account by God? Will one, who is not resigned to the accomplishment of God's plan and purpose, pull down the other mate?

You are in for heartache and disillusionment if not on a mutual level of reasonable equality in your intellectual abilities and interests. Your mental maturity plays a very important part in complementing each other. Are you learning and developing your mind? Do you both have a deep passion to know the Lord better and more effectively demonstrate His power and love to others?

Three families are involved in every marriage. They are the newlyweds, the wife's family and the husband's family. Take a good look at your future bride's mother; for her daughter will grow to be like her. The same is true of the boyfriend's father. (There are few exceptions.) Your cordial relationship with your future in-laws is a must. This three-way family relationship can either enrich or cripple your marriage. Friends are a very revealing factor of a person's character. If you are not satisfied with his or her friends, you better begin to look elsewhere for a lifetime companion. A Christian's choice of a married companion is limited by God's standards. A truly happy, buoyant Christian young person should marry one who is living a consistent Christian life. An easy way to find out about the other person is to take a survey. Here are your questions: Does he or she read the Bible and pray DAILY? What about attending a Bible-teaching church? What about obedience to the Word of God? Does he or she invest money in the Lord's work? Is there within both of your hearts a passion to please the Lord in all that you do and say? If your marriage becomes a battlefield, it will probably be from not knowing each other prior to your marriage. When two people become one in marriage, they are to complement each other in the enrichment of the one person they are to become. Don't think that love alone is sufficient to grant you a lifetime of happiness and fulfillment. It is not so! The uneducated spouse will have less motivation for self-improvement. It is very easy for one partner to outgrow the other in many different ways. Boredom can start because of a lack of mutual interests and evaluations.

Many an educated intelligent, and talented young person has fallen in love. If that is all involved in marriage, great! You better take a good look at the education of your partner and not allow yourself to start with one who is miles behind. A good education opens areas for a greater appreciation of life and qualifications for a job, demanding skills that are paid for. If a bride is accustomed to the nicer life, she better consider if the life her husband will be able to provide for her, not to mention her children.

The health of both young people is very important and demands consideration in saying "yes" to that all-important question. I know she is sick, but I will help her and together we can nurse her back to good health. Are you prepared for 20 years of it?

Solution

Have you met the wife who has analyzed problems with her husband, and has reached the conclusion that she wants out because he will never change? There are many husbands who will discuss their wife's failures for hours. Where did we receive the concept that we can bail out of marriage because of rough times? Where is the option of choosing to make personal changes; to build an intimate marriage within the existing one? Most marriage counselors will give you sympathy and get into the emotional conflict with you. Especially if the listener is involved in divorce, or a close loved one is, their sympathy is with a breakup of your marriage. Many a woman has stated that divorce is more painful than death because it is never really over, especially with

children involved. There is always hope for your marriage when one partner obeys God and becomes part of the marriage that God can answer prayers in behalf of the other. Who says it is easy when the other person resists change? Torn relationships did not occur overnight, nor will the restoration be immediate.

A Hopeless Marriage

There is no such thing if partners are not remarried to someone else. Your commitment to God, spouse, and witnesses was “for better or worse.” Did you mean it? If your marriage is in difficulty this moment, I want to give you some statements you should NOT make:

1. I have a responsibility for myself.
2. I have my rights too.
3. I know I am the innocent party.
4. Divorce is not the worse thing that can happen to me.
5. I have done nothing to deserve this.
6. My children will be better off away from such arguing and hostility. (Why don't you stop such action?)
7. No one else understands what I am going through.
8. God will understand if I break my wedding vows.
9. Times have changed. Many others are breaking up. (Has God changed his standards of marriage?)
10. I will not have to allow myself to become a doormat.

Spend time in prayer and Bible Study. Place yourself under God's control instead of reaction to your partner. Then the Lord will assist you to obey the plain instruction of His Word.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” Eph. 5:22, 25.

With one person in your family, thoroughly relying upon the Lord to bring themselves to the place of obedience, God can undertake because of the prayers of a clean and pure heart that is fulfilling His plan and purpose for your marriage. Don't wait on your partner, if you desire God to intervene and restore your marriage to accomplish His plan and purpose. What a difference when God begins to take control.

I hope you will take the time to honestly answer the following questions.

1. Are my wife's needs more important than my own?
2. Am I committed to stay married regardless of any difficulties?
3. Does my wife know that divorce is never an option for me? Have I told her so?
4. Do I really admit when I am wrong?
5. Must I always have the last word?
6. Do I discuss different issues with my husband?
7. Am I patient with my wife, when she is under emotional or physical pressure?
8. Do I still court my wife? When was our most recent date?
9. Am I keeping my mind free from books, magazines, entertainment, including TV, that stimulates fantasizing or thoughts that are morally impure?
10. Do I avoid sarcasm, hurtful remarks, and public criticism of my wife?
11. Is my husband my closest friend?
12. Do I constantly let my husband know of my appreciation for his provision of a home, etc.?

13. Do I value my wife's opinion? Do I listen attentively when she speaks to me?
14. Am I observant and express appreciation for the time and energy my wife devotes to me, for her physical appearance our clean home, and the welfare of our children?
15. Do I highly value my wife and her worth to God, to me, and our children?
16. Do we spend time all alone together?
17. Does his or her presence mean more than anything else in this world?
18. Does my wife know she has free access to me anytime she desires it?
19. Do we pray together about our spiritual, material, and physical needs?
20. Do I work hard to resolve misunderstandings as soon as possible?

“Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass” Psalm 37:4, 5. “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation to which ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love” Eph 4:1, 2.

“Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another” Rom. 12:10. Forgiveness is vital in every marriage. “And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you” Eph. 4:32. God is the person who instituted marriage in the first place. He provided the most glorious, intimate relationship on earth, between husband and wife. It was God who ordained love and sex in marriage (only). Since He provided it, Satan and all hell opposes this most wonderful, fulfilling human relationship. Obedience to God's plain and clear directions in his Word is the solution to all marriage problems. There is to be no separation except for one reason and that is with warning. “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband” I Cor.

7:5, 10.

Have you considered the serious issues in marriage? If in a troubled marriage, here are two verses that assure you of God's help in becoming one member of the family, whose prayers God will hear and answer. A demonstration within your life of loving obedience to God makes the difference.

“I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me. But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” Phil 4:13, 19.

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