

November, 2006

Pause Ponder Profit

What's Happening To Us?

by Dee Bowman

I'm almost afraid to answer the phone or talk to my neighbor. Seems like every time I turn around another person whom I respected and loved and whom I thought to be trying to serve God has blown the coop, jumped headlong into the pit of putridity, defected the ranks of the righteous. And it's not bad enough that they take the plunge, the sad thing is they do it without compunction. There is no remorse, no feeling of guilt, just total obstinate rebellion. They will tell you that they are doing it because they want to. *What's happening to us?*

Furthermore, these actions are not the whims of the weak or the deeds of the immature in faith. They are the actions of those who have before shown themselves to be faithful, dedicated Christians, folks who have prayed public prayers, led the congregation in songs, preached the gospel, taught others what to do to be saved, attended and taught Ladies Bible Classes. You might expect some of this kind of defection from the weak and immature, but not these folks. Not those who seemed to care. *What's happening to us?*

We live in times when sin is easy, when there is not much stigma attached to it, when no one much cares what you do or with whom you do it. All people want is to be left alone to do as they please. They want to be free from any accusation or any pangs of conscience. After all, it's their "right". *Pray tell, what's happening to us?*

It's sad to me to see what has happened to the media in the past few years. There is no responsible reporting anymore, it's all just so much commentary, and most of it calculated to sensationalize or terrorize. Today's story is not gory enough for tomorrow. There must be something all the more horrible, something more shocking, something all the more lewd and lascivious. *What's happening to us?*

"Toleration!" is the cry of the present society. All manner of sin is acceptable under its umbrella. People not only see no harm in committing crimes against God themselves, they see none in eroding the moral character of others, if need be, to exact from some ungodly activity the thrill they want for that moment. They will use others to get their thrill and then walk away unconcerned. *What's happening to us?*

I'll Tell You What's Happening

I'll tell you what's happening to us, we're becoming just like the people Paul describes in Romans one.

"When they knew God, they gloried Him not as God" (1:21). Listen carefully. If you can't thank God for it, you better not do it. If you can't allow God to participate, you best leave it alone. And if you can't look up to Him for guidance on how to do it, you better turn away from it,

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Factors That Contribute To A Successful Marriage

by W. R. Jones



A successful marriage is no accident. Yet, in few areas of life is so little preparation made. It is generally thought that the infatuation of “early love” will “carry us all the way.” This thinking has proved to be disastrous for many couples.

Marriage must be a building process and we must put the blocks in their place. It is important to remember that these “building block” factors will not fall into place by themselves. We must set them in order and respect them. Don’t be deceived into thinking it will all happen without an effort on your part. It will not! As I said at the beginning, “successful marriage is no accident.” Perhaps we should consider some factors that contribute to a successful marriage.

Man — Woman — God

You must acknowledge that there are three hands involved in marriage. Couples have a tendency to ignore the third hand, the hand of God. He gave us marriage and He also gave us the laws that regulate it. (Gen. 1:27-2:24) (Matt. 19:3-6) When you realize that marriage is a product of God and not of man, you are likely to treat it with greater respect. It is simply on loan from God for the benefit of the human race.

Commitment

You must come to grips with the fact that marriage is not a “contract” but a “commitment.” Not a contract that may or may not be broken, but a commitment for life. When people are “committed” they are more inclined to work out problems that may arise as opposed to quitting. Remember; “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Matt. 19:6)

Unselfishness

It doesn’t take a Solomon to see that when two people become one in marriage each of the original two will have to do some “giving up.” What has to go? The answer is; selfishness! Rather than “what I want” or “do it my way” the “common good of our marriage” must become the “common goal.” The “me” generation has produced a very high divorce rate. The remedy is love; which “seeketh not her own.” (1 Cor. 13:4-8)

Meet Each Other’s Needs

This may be nothing more than an embrace, a pat on the shoulder, help in the kitchen, fixing one’s favorite food or just talking. One thing for certain it includes taking care of one another’s sexual needs when health permits. Married couples should carefully read 1 Cor. 7:1-5 and not defraud one another.

Maturity

A good degree of “maturity” is necessary if you are to have a successful marriage. Someone has said; “marriage is not for children.” It is not a play thing to be enjoyed for a while and then tossed aside

in boredom. Maturity enables us to view our problems objectively and solve them sensibly. Maturity is a must!

Communication

Communication between a husband and wife is extremely important. From creation God observed that "It is not good for man to be alone." He made the woman for Adam, not just for procreation, not just for satisfaction, but to interact with him, to communicate with him, to be his "helpmeet." (Gen. 2:18)

Preparation

Many couples are not prepared for marriage. This lack of preparation usually turns into a "stumbling block" later. Here are a few ways couples should be prepared for marriage.

Physical: Keep your body as strong and healthy as you possibly can.

Emotional: Of course, emotions are an important part of marriage, but to be an emotional cripple brings disaster. One may be physically mature, but emotionally immature for marriage. If you are not ready to leave home you are likely not ready to start a new one.

Moral: You need to "keep thyself pure" (1 Tim. 5:22) I do not mean that immorality previous to marriage cannot be overcome, but it is a plus to be able to look in your mate's eyes with nothing to hide. Live a life that allows you to march down the aisle in purity.

Financial: As a friend of mine says, "When either one or both want to live a champagne life on a soda water salary they are in deep trouble." Money ranks near the top of any list of marital difficulties. Learn to be responsible with money.

Respect: There must be mutual respect for each other. If you can't respect a person, don't marry that person. There will always be a few things about your mate that you don't exactly like.

Couples may try to help each other improve in these areas, but it is the deep respect that cements couples. True love and respect is never predicated upon trivial things. It is never wise to say; "I will love you IF . . ."

Spiritual: This is the most important of all. When a man and a woman are both spiritual most of their problems are already solved. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" Paul states in (2 Cor. 6:14) Beware lest an unequal yoke lead you away from Christ.



God's Promise

*God has not promised
Skies always blue,
Flower strewn pathways
All our lives thro,
Sun without rain,
Peace without sorrow,
Joy without pain.*

*But God has promised
Strength as our day,
Rest when we labor
Light on the way,
Grace for our trials
Help from above,
Unfading kindness,
Undying love*

— J. Harvey Daily

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because chances are it doesn't have His approval.

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." We are so smug, so impressed with our broad-mindedness, so inflated with our own importance. We better wake up! We better come to see how foolish it is to leave God out of our plans. One thing is certain: He will figure in our plans sooner or later. It's just a matter of time. God is not impressed with our silly little playthings nor does He admire the altars of praise we erect to ourselves.

"God gave them up to vile affections." Is there anything we don't do in this age? Is there any sexual crime that society disapproves? What is it? Name it. Could it be that God has given us up to vile affections. I pray not.

"Who, knowing the judgment of God . . . not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Christians, wake up! You can't rate "R-rated" movies as bad at the movie house, but alright to watch at home. You can't teach your children that pornography is evil and hide it some place for your own private moments. And you can't condemn sin as evil and then enjoy watching as others pollute their bodies and destroy their souls on soap operas or late night television.

It's time for parents to take the lead, time for fathers to begin to control their children, who they can fraternize with, what they can do and see, where they can go, time for them to return to spiritual leadership. It's time for mothers to be mothers instead of merely a second salary, time for them to set the tone for morality in the home. And it's time to remind children that they are just that, children.



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