

WHY MARRIAGES FAIL

By Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION:

1. It is an indisputable fact that an alarming number of marriages are failing.
 - (1) One million divorces a year.
 - (2) One out of two marriages fail in the U.S.
 - (3) Over 18,000 divorces in Kentucky in 1985
2. Many marriages fail that remain legally intact.
 - (1) Separations over disagreements when there is no divorce.
 - (2) Husband and wife continue living under the same roof when there is no togetherness and love.
 - (3) A couple may remain in the same house only to fight, quarrel and make life miserable for themselves and for others around them.
3. It is a disturbing experience for a man and woman who went into marriage with high hopes to become aware that all is not going well.
4. It is sad when they realize their marriage is slipping from their grasp.
5. They find resentment where they once had outgoing love, they know only bitterness and heartache instead of tenderness and affection -- Col. 3:19
6. These couples find themselves "sticking it out" for the sake of the children.
7. Some marriages are hanging together because divorce would mean a big cut in their standard of living.
8. God never intended for the marriage relationship to be such.
9. God intended for the husband and wife to be concerned, tender, kind to each other; to love one another; to genuinely like one another; to enjoy the companionship of each other.
10. Let us now look at WHY many marriages fail.

I. MANY MARRIAGES FAIL BECAUSE IT IS VIEWED AS A PURELY HUMAN ARRANGEMENT

1. Marriage is a DIVINE arrangement -- Gen. 2: 22 - 24
2. GOD JOINS partners in marriage -- Matt. 19: 3 - 6
3. God intended for one man and one woman to live together UNTIL DEATH -- Rom. 7:2; I Cor. 7:39
4. PEOPLE WHO VIEW MARRIAGE AS ONLY A HUMAN ARRANGEMENT conclude that they may do as they please and marry as many times as they please, and it is not any of God's business.
5. These people must be taught that God DOES NOT APPROVE EVERYTHING that the state approves -- Matt. 9:9; Rom. 7: 1 - 3

II. MARRIAGES FAIL FOR LACK OF MATURITY

1. A person who has not matured to the point that he can share life with another is immature and is not qualified to marry.
2. Marriage constitutes the most intimate relationship two people can experience, and each party has to GIVE UNSELFISHLY OF HIMSELF to the other -- I Cor. 7: 2- 5; Eph. 5:25, 28 - 29
3. Marriage requires that each give 100%.
4. There is no closer relationship two people can enter than marriage.
 - (1) In a close relationship great tensions can be aroused.
 - (2) So, there are many adjustments that must be made.
 - (3) ALL marriages INEVITABLY involve the partners in need to make some adaptation to each other.
 1. Commitment
 2. Appreciation
 3. Communication
 4. Coping ability
 5. Spiritual well-being

III. MANY MARRIAGES FAIL DUE TO LACK OF PREPARATION

1. In very few things do ANY OF US succeed at without ADEQUATE PREPARATION.
2. The following are some areas where preparation is needed for marriage:
 - (1) MORAL PREPARATION is a must.
 1. Young men and women must keep themselves pure -- I Cor. 6:18; II Tim. 2:22
 2. A young woman who allows herself to become anybody's playmate is a poor choice for a wife.
 3. A young man who does not stay pure is not fit for a virtuous woman.
 - (2) SPIRITUAL PREPARATION-- Matt. 7:12; Col. 3:12 - 14; Eph. 5:22
 1. One must seek first the kingdom of God -- Matt. 6:33
 2. Seek a Christian
 - (3) PHYSICAL PREPARATION
 1. The body should be kept strong and healthy.
 2. A young person who is on drugs, smokes tobacco, or uses alcohol is a poor risk for a companion.
 - (4) EMOTIONAL PREPARATION
 1. One may be physically mature, but too "emotionally immature" for marriage.
 2. Not content -- I Tim. 6:6
 3. No self-control -- I Cor. 9:27
 4. No control over temper -- Eph. 4:26

IV. MARRIAGES FAIL BY ACCUMULATIVE QUARRELING

1. Almost all marriage have some disagreements.
2. These arguments do not need to cause serious trouble.
 - (1) They need to be settled and forgotten -- Col. 3:13
3. Accumulative quarreling may destroy the marriage.
4. This is the kind of argument in which one or both mates keep bringing up old differences.
5. This adds one quarrel upon another.
6. In such cases, old wounds never have time to heal, but are opened with fresh irritation again and again.
7. Fuel is added to old flames day after day.
8. Finally, things get out of control.

V. MARRIAGES FAIL BECAUSE OF HUSBAND'S BEATING THEIR WIVES.

1. According to FBI statistics A WIFE IS BEATEN EVERY 30 SECONDS in the United States.
2. More than one million wives are beaten a year.
3. These women are driven from their homes with broken bones and bruised bodies.
4. These battered wives come from homes in every social strata.
5. The husband that physically abuses his wife has no understanding of his responsibilities to her.
6. God expects husbands:
 - (1) To PROTECT their wives -- I Pet. 3:7
 - (2) To LOVE their wives as their OWN BODY -- Eph. 5: 28 - 29; 5:25
 - (3) To fulfill the EMOTIONAL NEEDS of their wives -- I Cor. 7: 3 - 5
7. God gave woman to man in marriage that she might COMPLETE HIM; that they might LOVE, SHARE and REPRODUCE.
8. The man who abuses his wife stands under the CONDEMNATION OF GOD -- I Pet. 3:7

VI. UNWISE FAMILIARITY CAUSES MARRIAGES TO FAIL.

1. The social and economic structure of our society provides too much temptation to too many people.
2. In our society, men and women work together day after day in very close relationships.
 - (1) These associations should only be casual.
 - (2) But, frequently they lead to overwhelming temptation.
 - (3) These relationships create jealousies by the REAL COMPANION AT HOME.
 - (4) When these familiarities become too intimate, they lead to passion, lust and fornication.
 - (5) There are unscrupulous females and males who have no qualms about breaking up a marriage.
3. All who have to work with the opposite sex, DO NOT PERMIT YOURSELF to become too intimate -- be aloof, if you value your marriage and your soul.

VII. MARRIAGES FAIL BECAUSE OF LACK OF COMMUNICATION

1. Marriage counselors list COMMUNICATION at the very top of needed marriage skills.
2. It has been said that this is the number one marriage problem.
3. The REAL PROBLEM is NEGLECT
 - (1) The husband and wife no longer seem interested in one another.
 - (2) The husband may be more engrossed in his favorite TV program, hobby or job.
 - (3) The wife may be more engrossed in her house, children, clubs and friends, than in her husband.
4. STEPS in OVERCOMING the problem of COMMUNICATION:
 - (1) The first step is to have some TIME TOGETHER without the TV going . . .
 - (2) Take time to DISCUSS the day's activities.
 - (3) Communication begins the moment you wake up, and it lasts all throughout the day.
 - (4) Take rides together and walks together.
 - (5) Say from time to time, "I love you".

VIII. MARRIAGES FAIL BECAUSE OF FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

1. Married couples quarrel as much about money as they do about anything.
2. Especially, if their financial resources are LIMITED enough to require skillful handling to avoid going into the red.
3. We are told that about 60% of quarrels are about MONEY.
4. Some basic principles for the management of family finances:
 - (1) All facts about the financial matters should be FULLY KNOWN by BOTH PARTNERS.
 - (2) All available money should be regarded as BELONGING TO BOTH PARTNERS.
 - (3) The way to use the money should be agreed on by BOTH PARTNERS.

IX. MARRIAGES FAIL BECAUSE OF SEXUAL INCOMPATIBILITY

1. Sex is the means by which love is expressed -- Prov. 5: 19
2. This relationship expresses, sustains and renews a couple's deepest and most tender feelings for each other.
3. The husband and wife need this expression of love over and over -- I Cor. 7: 2 - 5
4. Sex is the servant of love. If the emotional attitudes between husband and wife are right, the couple's adjustment to each other at the physical level of sex will usually follow naturally.
5. When something is wrong with the emotional attitude on the part of one or both partners, then satisfaction and adjustment cannot be achieved until some attitude toward one another is changed.
6. Satisfaction increases in marriage as true love increases for each other.

X. MARRIAGES FAIL BECAUSE OF RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

1. The breakdown rate for marriages between people of different religions is between two and a quarter, and two and a half times the rate for marriages where both partners are of the same religion.

2. Mixed marriages are in for trouble.

(1) Another study was released with this information:

1. Couples with the same religious background had a divorce rate of 26.3% after 19 years of marriage.

2. Couples with different religious backgrounds had a divorce rate of 39.1% after 19 years of marriage.

3. Those who were non-affiliated had 34.2% rate of failure.

3. When both partners are true Christians it brings great stability to marriage.

4. It is high time parents who are CHRISTIANS START EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF MARRYING A CHRISTIAN!

Mt. Washington, KY 1987; Erwin, TN 1987; Campbellsville, KY 1987; Hebron Lane 1991; Grandview, KY 1991; River Bend 1991; Lewisburg, TN 1994