Until Death Us Do Part

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At The Christian Education Work Shop, Prospect Church of God Manchester

Apart of the marriage ceremony states “MARRIAGE IS AN INSTITUTION ORDAINED BY GOD” This means that marriage as an institution was ordained and organized by God and nothing that originates with God fails. It is persons who are engaged in marriage fail.

 John Saxon in his book “The Individual, Marriage, and Family” states that in:

 1944, 44% of all marriages ended in divorce – for Christians 50%

1971, 51% of all marriages end in divorce – for Christians 61%

1981, 60% of all marriages end in divorce – for Christians 70%

He identifies five types of divorce or five ways in which it can be said that divorce exist in a particular relationship.

1. Legalistic divorce
2. No fault divorce – Just cannot be bothered with him or her
3. Migratory Divorce
4. Legal Separation – Limited privilege of the spouses. For example, for convenience they may live under the same roof but they do not share a marital relationship.
5. Annulment – Declares that the marriage never existed.

Some of the causes Saxton identified: a. Childhood background: b. black versus white and c. educated versus illiteracy. Emotional maturity and also physical maturity plays a large part in divorces. The age at which one gets married; this is illustrated in their level of maturity / immaturity.

 The main cause, the number one cause for failure in marriage is simply because there never was love in marriage. I believe the Bible, love never ends and I know that the level of love about which Paul writes is AGAPE and Agape is intertwined in EROS, which is romantic love. If then, love cannot end then the wife or husband who arrives at the conclusion that she / he no longer loves their mate then they never did began.

 In Matthew’s Gospel chapter 19:1-12 Jesus deals with the issue of Marriage and Divorce and when He was asked why did Moses “commanded to give a writing of divorcement and put her away?” Jesus replied that because of the hardness of your hearts He suffered you to put away your wife: but from the beginning it was not so. So then marriage is a life long relation.

 One of the causes highlighted by Saxon is the matter of intimacy in marriage. In Proverbs chapter 17:9 Salomon states “He who covers over an offence promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends”. One can be close to a good friend that one has known from childhood. One can be close to a sibling, one’s parents, or a cousin who is about the same age. But nothing rivals the closeness that’s experience between a husband and a wife. Marriage is the most intimate of all human relationships.

 That is why we need it so much. Each of us comes into life with an in born hunger to be known, loved, and accepted. We want people to know our name, to recognize us when they see us, and to value us for who we are. The prospect of sharing our home with another person who knows us down to the most intimate detail is part of the deep pleasure of marriage. Yet this great blessing is also the site of its greatest danger. Someone who knows us this intimately at depths we never imagine, or can wound us in ways from which we may never fully recover. That might be called both the fire and fear of marriage.

 If the home is not considered a place of safety, you will both be tempted to seek it elsewhere. Perhaps you might look to another person, initiating a relationship that either flirts with adultery or actually enters in. One way look for safety and comfort in work or in outside hobbies, something that practically shields you from intimacy but also keeps you around people who respects and accepts you.

 Marriage has actually unloaded another person’s baggage into your life, and yours into theirs. Both of you have reasons to feel embarrassed that this much has been revealed about you to another living soul. But this is your opportunity to wrap all this private information about them in the protective embrace of your love, and promised to be the one who can best help him or her to deal with it.

***Some of these secrets may need correcting.*** Therefore, you can be an agent of healing and repair – not by lecturing, nor criticizing, but by listening in love and offering support.

***Some of these secrets just need to be accepted.*** They are part of the persons make up and history. And although these issues may not be very pleasant to deal with, they will always require the gentle touch.

I believe that love must and can only be demonstrative when the following four components are in evidence:

1. **RESPECT:** this writer’s definition of respect is value or honour. If you love your mate, then you value / honour him or her. You will never demean your mate.
2. **HONESTY:** and honesty does not only involve what you tell your mate but what you fail to tell your mate. In other words hiding things from your mate, anything at all constitutes dishonesty.
3. **TRUST:** Trusting your mate means listening to your mate and not to gossip or unsubstantiated things said about your mate. In other words, you ought not to take hear say – it matters not who the person conveying that piece of information is. You see, if your mate loves you, then your mate respects you, that means that your mate is honest to you in all things and therefore your mate is trust worthy.
4. **FAITHFULNESS:** Hear you are assured that your mate belongs to you, lock stock and barrel, and no one else, therefore, he / she has no authority to give what is no longer his / hers to someone else.

The late Dr. Martin Luther king in his book “Strength to Love” he states (this author’s interpretation of his statement in regards to marriage) the wife cannot be the wife she was meant to be until the husband is the husband he is supposed to be; and the husband cannot be the person he is supposed to be until the wife is the wife she is supposed to be. This means that there is a very very deep interdependence in marriage.

According to Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 7:1-5 and in particular verse 4, “the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband: likewise also the husband does no have authority over his own body, but the wife.” In this Paul is stating; this writers understanding that ownership is paramount. When one states that you are my husband / my wife, are you not saying **YOU ARE MINE, YOU BELONG TO ME.** Therefore, Paul states, again in 1 Corinthians 7:5 **“DEFRAUD YE NOT ONE THE OTHER, EXCEPT IT BE WITH CONSCENT FOR A TIME….”** No wife / husband has the right to deny the other access to that which belongs to him / her.

Marriage then is a simple, despite the human participation, despite the human tendencies towards selfishness is as Jesus states it: **“FOR THIS REASON A MAN WILL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE UNITED WITH HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO BECOMES ONE FLESH”**