

HOW TO MAKE YOUR MARRIAGE DIVORCE PROOF

When couples get married today:

- a. They first look for an Ideal
- b. But after a while, their ideal becomes an Ordeal
- c. Then they begin to look for a New Deal.

That is, if things do not work out to their selfish satisfaction, they get a divorce and justify it by saying the person has changed from the person they married. (Adrian Rogers used these three terms. The tragedy is that most 2nd marriages last half the time of the first. Illus.: You know what Elizabeth Taylor said to her 9th husband? She said, "Honey, I won't keep you long."

Illus.: "Did you know that the most popular wedding gowns are 'wash and wear?'"

Illus.: Doris, will you love me when I am old and ugly? She replied, "Of course, I do."

Now seriously, that didn't happen. But Doris and I love each other more and more and more.

God's word could not be plainer in stating that marriage is permanent. God the Father decreed it in Genesis 2:24, God the Son in Matthew 19:5-6, and God the Holy Spirit through Paul in Ephesians 5:31.

But how can we stay married? Four Requirements:

I. You Must Enter Into A Life Long Covenant With Your Mate

No human relationship is as strong as the marriage covenant. When making a contract, you don't have to like the person you are contracted with. Why? Because if the numbers are right and the money is on the table, you will sign the dotted line even though you may not be able to stand the person you are doing business with. But that is not true of a covenant. The thing that makes a covenant different from a contract is that it is not just based on legal connectors; it also based on personal relationships – a relationship between two persons and a relationship approved and witnessed by God Himself. The great tragedy with most marriages today is that God is left standing at the altar while we go on our honeymoon. We know we need Him to get started so we have the ceremony in church, and after that we tend to go our own way.

- (1) God the Father said the man should cleave unto his wife – Gen. 2:24.

- (2) Jesus said the same – Matthew 15:5-6
- (3) Apostle Paul said this – Eph. 5:31

Read Mal. 2:11-16. God says He hates “putting away” (v.16) because it breaks the holy covenant which He Himself witnesses when a couple is married.

My dear brothers and sisters, show me any couple who comes to the marriage altar and who says in the back of their minds, “If this doesn’t work, we can always get a divorce.” That couple has the highest potential of becoming divorced. But show me a couple who come to the altar saying, “Divorce is not in our vocabulary, we’ve thrown away the parachute, that we say, “I Bill, take you Doris, etc.- this couple’s marriage will last.

Illus.: My oldest son asked, “Daddy, did you ever consider a divorce?” “No, not a divorce, but I have considered murder.” I never allowed the “D” word to be uttered in our home. You should never even speak of it, much less do it. If you have already done so, there is forgiveness with the Lord. Divorce is not the unpardonable sin but truly one of the supreme tragedies of the human race.

II. **You Must Also Engage In A Loving Communication** Most marriages get into trouble because husbands and wives won’t communicate. Illus.: There was a man who didn’t tell his wife that he loved her for 24 years. Communication is a key. Most communication is on a shallow level. There are 5 kinds of communication:

1. Frivolous talk – just small talk, time of day, weather, sports, ball scores
2. Factual talk – just stating some inane facts, like the price of gasoline, the President speaks tonight, etc..
3. Favorite talk – talking about our opinions (intellectual)
4. Feeling talk – how you feel, your joys and sorrows, fears (a little deeper than the 3 above)
5. Frank talk – deepest level of communication. Holding nothing back. Genesis 2:25 describes what our communication should be: uninhibited, complete transparency.

Illus.: Men have more trouble communicating than women. James Dobson says God gives a man 25,000 words a day but the woman 50,000. The man goes to work and uses all 25,000 and has only 100 left when he comes home. The woman has 25,000 left and must talk or die and the husband should understand this.

III. **You Must Also Engage in Loyal Confrontation** Some hard matters in marriage which should not be swept under the rug. The time comes when they must be confronted in truth. Illus.: Woman who lost three pairs of glasses.

Let me suggest some areas of conflict which should be talked out:

1. Handling Money – You ought to agree to do two things:
 - (a) Don't go into debt – Live by the economic law of the Christian, "If your income exceeds your outgo...."
 - (b) Undergo plastic surgery now.
2. Sexual Problems - Sex is a sacred gift and the highest form of communication. It is a way of saying "I love you" in ways you can't otherwise express. When sex is out of wack, you need to confront it and seek godly counsel.
3. Sharing Responsibilities in the Home - Illus.: One survey revealed that 50% of married woman say "If I had to do it over again I would never marry the same man." But in the same survey women were asked "Does your husband help you in the home" and 80% who said "yes" said they would marry the same man again.
4. Nagging – Constant fault finding, nit picking over nothing:
 - (a) You didn't put the top back on the tooth paste.
 - (b) You squeezed the toothpaste in the middle.
 - (c) You never hang up your clothes.
 - (d) You snore and wake me up.Illus.: Woman who used limburger cheese on sleeping husband. Old Solomon knew how awful nagging is:
 - (1) Proverbs 21:19 – "It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman.
 - (2) Proverbs 27:15- "A continual dripping of the rain and a contentious woman is alike."
5. In-law Problems – Most in-law troubles come from the wives complaining about their mother-in-law. Why? Because it is the case of 2 women in love with the same man.

I say "there is no answer to in-law problems. You just show up, don't open your mouth and pray for God to have mercy."

Adrian Rogers gave the best solution – to be a good in-law, do four things:

1. Hands off
2. Prayers on
3. Mouth closed
4. Hearts open.

Time helps if you keep the door open (Doris' father)

IV. **You Must Continue to do 4 Simple Things – Together:**

- A. Read the Bible together
- B. Memorize the Bible together
- C. Pray together
- D. Go to church together

I have pastored all kinds of churches and all kinds of people, and I have never known one couple to divorce who did these four things.

V. **You Must Experience An Old Fashioned Conversion** (Matthew 18:1-2)

Conclusion: Each man on a scale of 1-10

1. Is my marriage SUPER?
2. Is my marriage SATISFYING?
3. Is my marriage just SO SO?
4. Is my marriage already SINKING?
5. Has my marriage SUNK?

If your marriage is SUPER, it can be made more super.

If your marriage is SATISFYING, it can be made super.

If your marriage is SO SO, it can be made to sizzle again.

If your marriage is already SUNK, it can be resurrected to new life.