

# MARRIAGE THROUGH THE AGES

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## Don't Settle For Average

*Proverbs 5:18 Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice in the wife of your youth.*

We are still living in an age which sees far too many marriages crash. Marriage problems are really relationship problems. If someone doesn't get along with their parents, their co-workers, their neighbors, is it any wonder that they can't get along with their mate.

It seems to me that some folks put so much into the wedding that they forget that there is a marriage behind that. The nicest wedding does not guarantee a nice marriage. If people put as much effort into the marriage as they did the planning for the wedding, maybe some crashes could have been avoided.

Marriage is the coming together of two people. I saw up in Alaska where fresh water and ocean water came together. At first you could see the difference. They didn't blend together. But down a bit, it all mixed together and looked the same. Marriage is like that at first. Two people who love each other, but have their own ideas about how things ought to be, at first can be like fresh water and ocean water. It takes a little bit for things to settle and blend together. Simple things like how do you open Christmas presents: one at a time, with everyone watching you or like pigs at a trough, paper flying and everyone going at it at once? Fresh water and ocean water. How about paying the bills? Pay the bill as soon as it comes in or count back a few days from the due date and pay it then? Ocean water and fresh water. How about washing the dishes? Silverware first or last? Glasses first or doesn't matter? Fresh water and ocean water. It takes some time for everything to blend together nicely.

The leading causes of divorce today are financial troubles, communication problems, unfaithfulness, and a lack of interest in each other. It's kind of like the military when they are in enemy territory. If they know that there are land mines buried in the field, they will be careful, watchful and extra cautious. If a couple understands the leading causes of trouble in marriage, then they ought to be careful, watchful and extra cautious in those areas.

The Christian couple has a step up on the world. They have God. They have Christ in their hearts which brings in hope, joy, forgiveness, grace and God's word to their relationship. They walk with Christ and that walk makes their marriage richer, stronger and different than other marriages.

Our passage reminds us that there ought to be rejoicing in our marriage. That often gets stuffed back behind the bills, dirty diapers, fixing the washing machine and doctor visits. The joy factor lies like a deflated balloon on the floor. Too tired for each other. Too annoyed for each other. Too preoccupied for each other. Too stressed for each other. Marriage shifts to being roommates instead of husband and wife. It doesn't have to be. I was with a couple recently who had been married more than 50 years. We were walking and talking. I noticed that they held hands as they walked. That's more than sweet, that's the way it ought to be.

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Marriage is work. You work to make it the way it ought to be. Don't settle for average. Make your marriage incredible. When you come home, make the people there glad to see you. Turn the TV off (or as the old timers use to call it, 'the idiot box') and talk. Look into each other's eyes. Go for a walk and hold hands. Be spontaneous. Bring laughter back into the home. Worship together. Pray together. Be together.

Rejoice with the wife of your youth. Remember, that was written in an age when most marriages were arranged by parents. Rejoicing in marriage can happen.

You choose to have the kind of marriage that you have. If you don't like it, don't shout at your mate. Don't nag. Don't expect him or her to change. You make it the way you think it ought to be. It starts with you. Put thought into it. Put effort into it. Put yourself into it.

Roger Shouse