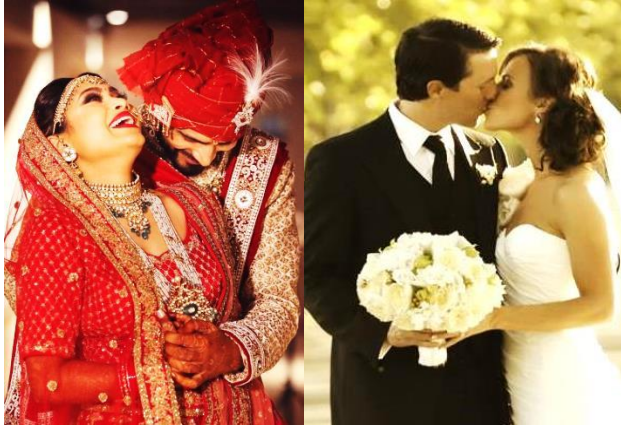


Marriage

How long is, "Happily Ever After"?



During a recent workshop I was asked several times to write about marriage. I don't think that I am at all qualified in that field, but I will give it my best shot. When God created the world it keeps saying, "and God saw that it was good." Only one time he said "it is not good" - What was not good?

"It's not good that man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18)
Man has got to have someone to enjoy life with, so God made him a woman or a 'Wow man'. God knows what men like, because we are made in his likeness, so we are a bit like him.

Opposite Sex

Male and female he created them. Male and female are known as the **opposite sex**. We all seem to like the **sex** part, but don't do so well when it comes to the **opposite** part.

God made men and women so different so we can develop our character to become more mature, forgiving and understanding, as no marriage will survive if we don't learn to embrace these qualities.

We need to come off the Hollywood-dream pedestal "and they lived happily ever after." The reality is that after the honeymoon comes laundry day and who is going to do what. Don't tell that you have a perfect marriage, because it does not exist.

However it can come pretty close to perfect, when we can overlook each other's idiosyncrasies, can say we are sorry and forgive; when we treat all the disasters as incidents and no incidents as disasters. There will be bumps in the road of happiness, but don't let a bump derail your marriage.

Religion Versus God

Some scholars and people who I admire taught that sexual abstinence would be pleasing to God. God gave sex as a gift to mankind and we push the gift right back and say, "You give this to someone else? Give it to the sinners, because I am better and holier than to enjoy that naked stuff."



God does not hate sex; he created it along with all the body parts that make it feel so good. Please know that I am talking about clean, loving, fun-filled, enjoyable sex, not the weird, sadistic and disgusting, perverted stuff.

People think Religion and Sex don't go together. This might be true, BUT GOD IS NOT RELIGIOUS; WE ARE. He is the Creator of us all and the very first thing he told Adam and Eve in the garden,

"be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28)

We are basically too selfish to multiply so he had to make the multiplication act irresistible otherwise mankind would have died out long ago.

God is Love in all Forms.

He is agape, eros, philia & storge. Agape, love between God and men; Eros, intimate sexual love; Philia, brotherly love; Storge, natural love between parents and offspring.

There's an old saying: 'When a marriage goes on the rocks, the rocks are often in bed.'

If we have sex with our partner, little resentments are erased and we overlook the idiosyncrasies, as there is something spiritual about it that relaxes us. It is not the only remedy, but it certainly helps.

What about Porn sites?

Time wasters. Stay away from them; they're like addictive drugs and some perverted stuff is hard to erase from your mind. Jesus taught us: "He that looks on a woman to lust after her has **committed adultery** with her already in his heart." (Mat.5:28)

So spiritually speaking porn sites are like brothels. You'll become dissatisfied with your partner as he or she is not hanging from the ceiling or does not do whatever tricks you have watched on those sites.

And please, don't blame others, or the net for sucking you into those sites, as you have the on/off switch on **YOUR** phone in **YOUR** hand.

"It is not because we are strong in character that we make the right decisions – It is because we make the right decisions that we become strong in character." (Aristotle) **You are your own boss!!!**

Roadblocks to a Successful Marriage


Lines like, "you ALWAYS..." or "you NEVER..." will kill your communication as it puts your partner on the defence looking for a way to retaliate. If you raise your voice your partner can no longer hear what you try to say as the volume is too loud and condescending. We want our spouse to be like us, but we are different and **we need room to breathe**.



Protect your Children from Your Arguments as they will withdraw. Let children be children. Seeing you love each other stimulates their brain functions.

ZIP IT, Go for a Walk, Cool Down

Take time out. "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in **lowliness of mind** let each esteem the other better than themselves." (Philippians 2:3)

 Hear from the Lord. "Then shall you call, and the LORD shall answer... **IF you take away... pointing the finger, and speaking vanity***" (Isaiah 58:9)

* (Dictionary for Vanity: Pride, Narcissism, Conceit, Self-importance, Arrogance, Big-headedness, Egotism)

When you have calmed down, apologize for raising your voice. If you want the last word in an argument, a sincere apology will do it.

Nagging is another killer. "He that covers a transgression seeks love; but he that repeats a matter (nags) separates very friends." (Prov.17:9) or separates the best marriage partners.

What is the Solution?

Take time out to open your heart and communicate, be respectful of each other's feelings. The best thing is to start with a prayer and request the Lord's help. Give your spouse the chance to speak first, **just listen** and honestly try to **understand** his/her point of view; just like when you were first together. **Do NOT interrupt** when your partner shares their heart. Now when he/she is finished and you have listened, it's your turn, not to get back but to share your heart. Start with, "I appreciate you and thank you for putting up with me and loving me in spite of being a pain in the neck." Then you should **humbly express how you feel**. I.e. "When this happens I feel like a child, or I think my work is not appreciated." Try to understand each other's point of view and **apologize for your behaviour**. This will clear the air. Then agree on certain changes, i.e. to take weekly or bi-weekly an evening off for a walk together or to go to the restaurant. **Invest in your friendship**.



See how a Disaster Marriage got Repaired

"You never so touch the ocean of God's love as when you forgive and love your enemy."
(Corrie Ten Boom)

I learned that Ome Dirk was a regular drunk, who had even hit his wife, hating her for her faith. She was always praying for **her bad husband to change**. She thought he was a bad man and he made sure to live up to her expectations. Till one day she read "*love your enemies*" (Mat.5:44)

"Lord, my husband is my enemy and I don't love him." - "**Then you need to change and love him.**" - Easier said than done, but she took it to heart and became concerned for Dirk; even loving him behind closed doors. This went on for some time. One day she told Dirk, "Tomorrow I will leave your food in the fridge and you just have to heat it up." - "Where are you going?" She was hesitant to answer as he would usually hit the roof and explode. "I am going to an evangelistic meeting." Dirk was quiet. "How are you going?" "With the bus." - There was a long pause - "What if I take you?" - "That would be nice."

Dirk was checking things out from the back of the hall. The preaching was going way over his head. He told me, "After some time I looked up at the stage. Then it happened, Jesus appeared out of nowhere on the stage. He stretched his arms out to me. I started crying and that night I gave my life to him. That was only a few years ago. I was past 60 years and I felt that I had wasted my whole life, so at least these last few years I want to do something for him and others." "Thank you Tante Aagie, for loving **your beast of a husband, who became a Prince charming and my Hero** to whom I am forever indebted for coming out to the market, bicycling some 20 kms in the winter snow of 1970, to tell me about Jesus."



Domestic Violence

When there is VIOLENCE, bodily harm and danger to life involved, then of course it becomes a different story. It says, "*don't go with a furious man*" (Prov.22:24) "**Deliver me, O LORD... from the violent man**" (Ps.140:1) "*a violent man entices*" (Prov.16:29) Be careful for his enticing words by trying to smooth things over. You should invoke God's help to get you out of that situation. Claim Psalm 91 for you and your family's protection and follow the Lord's

instructions to deliver you. "**You have delivered me from the violent man.**" (Psalms 18:48)

In Conclusion:

In today's me-first society many marriages fail as we feel it is too much for our pride and ego to adapt the divine qualities of humility understanding, forgiving and giving. "Giving is not giving when others are giving; Giving is giving when others are not giving."

The doctor prescribed the anti-depressant '**love-pill**' to heal their marriage pain. Two months later the patients came back, "Doctor it does not seem to work." - "**We'll triple the dose**, and for homework you must do **four exercises** twice daily - **morning and evening**'



1: Tell one benefit of your marriage, **2:** Praise the other, **3:** Express "Have I told you lately that you're amazing?" **4:** A hug & kiss upon leaving & returning.

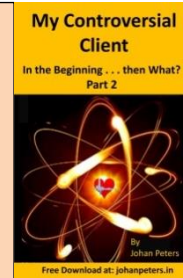
After decades of marriage I am still learning. If we stop learning we'll grow old and stale, as will our marriage. "Lord, help us to keep learning."

One for us Macho men

The cruise-ship sank; hundreds of couples drowned. In heaven they organized the men of the couples in two groups for further training. The left line was for the men where the wife was in charge of the relationship. The right line was for where the man was in charge. Only one man stood on the right. "Sir" the angel asked, "Tell us how you managed to achieve this?" - "Uhhh, I don't know. My wife told me to stand here."

Adapted from "My Controversial Client"

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