

Married..... But Single (Part 2)

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Marriage is one of the most interesting topics to a great majority of people. The reason for this is not farfetched. Marriage is centered on emotions which many times are sporadically good, lukewarm or just plain bad. In the last issue we discussed how insensitivity in the way that a spouse lives his / her life can affect the well being of the marriage. For instance, work schedules, hobbies, friends and family or ministry commitment can affect the health of a marriage negatively if all the activities are not properly balanced. Sometimes, this happens unintentionally or in some cases, consciously because of unresolved issues. In any case, one person or both parties always end up feeling very alone. God's design for marriage is that the man should leave his parents and **cleave** to his wife in – oneness, companionship, comfort, sharing, and knowing.

When a marriage is centered on only bad emotions, it can make life a living hell. Other areas of that person's activities are usually affected negatively. For some people their businesses or children may become neglected, their appearance also is allowed to degenerate. We have seen many people who either lose weight drastically or put on a lot of weight putting their health at risk just because things are not going on well in their relationship with their spouse. For people in ministry, the spiritual energy is sapped because there is no accord from the home front.

THE WEAPON OF SILENCE

There are many areas that I have identified which we cannot exhaust here. One of the areas is when the spouse ignores or puts off dealing with the issue of loneliness or silence that occurs in a marriage relationship. One woman said in the book, "Magnificent Marriage" by Gordon MacDonald that, "there is a limit to how long you can be ignored and put off. You threaten to leave without meaning it until you keep the threat. You consider all the unpleasant consequences until they don't seem unpleasant anymore. You decide that nothing could be more unpleasant than being alone. You finally make up your mind that you are an individual. You assert your ego and join womanhood again."

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Silence is a weapon that both parties use frequently to try to force the other party to submit over an issue. If care is not taken this may develop into a pattern that sends the other party into a relationship that they have no business developing. Gordon MacDonald states in the book mentioned above that, "Silence is most dramatic when a couple crawl into their double bed at night. There they lie, geographically six inches apart. But the silence gives the emotional sense of being ten miles apart. They almost feel the imaginary spatial distance as they maintain very correct supine positions. No one dares move a leg, arm, or hip towards the middle of the bed, for fear that an accidental touch might signal the resumption of a conversation, or even – horror of all horrors, indicate a desire to apologize and surrender the issue"

The drama described above can make marriage very interesting if it happens on very rare occasions but can create a very great vacuum that may be very difficult to fill if it persists because sometimes one of the parties may decide to move out of the bedroom. When communication breaks down, some couples go off on their own to do the things they used to do before they were married. So even though physically they are not separated, it is as if they are married but living a single life where they are not accountable to anyone especially the spouse.

SINGLE PARENTING WITHIN MARRIAGE

This sounds like a metaphor. Parenting should be done by both parents but it has been seen that sometimes only one parent, usually the mother is deeply involved in the upbringing of the children. Many men feel that their role is just to bring in the money and everything else does not concern them. The children you find are constantly with their mother and the father is usually not available because the mindset is that it is the woman's role to raise the children. So in the household there grows a wall of partition separating the father from the mother and the children. Some women too hoard the affection of the children so much so that it is difficult for the children to relate with their father.

It is necessary to assess your situation and find out if you are parenting alone or you also allow your husband to have a say in how the children are raised. He is capable of babysitting when he is available so that he can bond with the children. Doing things together with the children creates a healthy ground for family fellowship.

AVOIDING DIVORCE

The option that most people choose is either to separate or divorce when they can no longer deal with the situation of loneliness. These do not solve the problem. At least we know that God does not like separation. He said in the book of Malachi chapter 2 verse 16 that, "He hateth putting away....." God is love and if you focus continually on the good things in your relationship instead of the negative, you will be able to overcome the temptation to just drop everything and run. Albeit that a lot of times the bad times may outweigh the good but we can still work it out if there is genuine love from the foundation of the relationship.

Marriage is exciting because it fulfills the relational void and solves aloneness. These are suggestions of steps that you can take if you see yourself in the picture of a married woman who is living like a single person. First, assess your own particular situation and initiate a discussion with your spouse. Also begin to pray that God will give you the strategy to do things differently. Psalm 37 verse 5 states, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" Know your role as a wife according to God's design.

Secondly, seek spiritual counsel. The solution from the world is that if it does not work, drop it but speaking to a man or woman of God who will guide you through the word of God is one of the best things that you can do. Through the word you will be able to see what you are not doing right so as to make the necessary adjustments to enjoy your marriage. Proverbs 24:6 states, "For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in the multitude of counselors there is safety" God desires that you enjoy, not endure your marriage relationship.

Shalom!

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