

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, February 24, 2018

“Marriage is a perilous journey.” according to singer/songwriter Andrew Peterson. Fifteen years into his marriage he composed a song entitled *Dancing in the Minefields*. To the best of my knowledge, the song produced in 2010 had limited success, but the lyrics and message are certainly meaningful to all who hear its poignant message. Perhaps you can relate as I do to the lyrics that follow: *“We went dancing through the minefields / We went sailing in the storms / And it was harder than we dreamed / But I believe that’s what the promise is for.”* Yes, marriage is a beautiful promise and promises are meant to be kept!

Like many, I’ve had the misfortune to experience not just one but two failed marriages. Fortunately, God has since blessed me with a wonderful wife who has stayed by my side through the minefields of marriage. Speaking of minefields, I’ve never walked through a real one, but had the pleasure of knowing a man who took the risk of running into a minefield in Pleiku, Vietnam to save a young soldier’s life who had stepped on an explosive device six months before I arrived in country. We all called him Doc and he was our battalion physician. He received a Silver Star for his act of bravery, but never talked about it. He was a humble soul who I enjoyed befriending during our short time together during the conflict.

The minefields of marriage can be so subtle that one partner may have no idea that their spouse has been injured. That’s pretty much the story of my early experiences in marriage. It’s quite easy to be so consumed with yourself that you don’t even sense the damage you cause. Before you know it, you are caught in the divorce process in the throes of “irreconcilable differences” with little likelihood of mending the wall that has fallen one brick at a time.

The song continues: *“Well ‘I do’ are the two most famous last words / The beginning of the end / But to lose your life for another I’ve heard is a good place to begin / ‘Cause the only way to find your life is to lay your own life down / And I believe it’s an easy price for the life that we have found.”* Many couples fall for the misnomer that marriage is a 50/50 proposition. I now realize it requires a 100/100 commitment to each other. In fact, I’ve learned that I must put the needs of my wife before my own needs.

This idea of “irreconcilable differences” is not biblical. It’s a man-made concept born out of convenience. Since Adam and Eve were created in the Garden of Eden, God has sent us a strong message on the proper union of man and woman. They become “one flesh” and once united they are not to be separated until death! Their union is for a distinct purpose – to produce future generations – to procreate. Marriage is a beautiful proposition and the idea of marriage is to be taken seriously. This world has lost sight of the significance of the marriage covenant.

In Hebrews 13:4-8, the writer instructs us *“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’ Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”*

That pretty well sums it up folks. We must simply live accordingly.

Passages to Ponder: Genesis 2:23-24; Proverbs 18:22; Jeremiah 29:6; 1 Corinthians 11:11-12; Ephesians 5:25-28; Hebrews 13:4

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Genesis 2:23-24 New International Version (NIV)

²³The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called ‘woman,’
for she was taken out of man.”

²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Proverbs 18:22 New International Version (NIV)

²²He who finds a wife finds what is good
and receives favor from the LORD.

Jeremiah 29:6 New International Version (NIV)

⁶Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.

1 Corinthians 11:11-12 New International Version (NIV)

¹¹Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. ¹²For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

Ephesians 5:25-28 New International Version (NIV)

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

Hebrews 13:4 New International Version (NIV)

⁴Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.