

Divorce Statistics, How Not to be One

By Evangelist Patrick Sims

This morning May 8, 2010, I had a dream. Yes! Another one. This time my husband, Ken and I were teenagers back in high school. We were very much in love. Even though we didn't talk a lot in this dream, we knew what each other was thinking. As we walked from place-to-place, we held hands. When we were sitting, we would lay our heads on each other. There were many smiles exchanged and affectionate touching. When he went away, I longed for him to return and vice versa.



Art by Bishop

Action still speaks louder than words. It's not in what we say, but rather what we do. Actions are obvious to all. Though we are still very much in love, this dream was not really about Ken and me. This dream was for you - those of you who are reading this and having difficulty right now in your relationships. It was a fore shadow to me of what can be for you again. I'm just one channel for God's river of life to flow through. Anything is possible to him that can believe. *"For with God nothing shall be impossible."* (Luke 1:37) What once was, can be again - if you are willing. If you desire, the Lord can take you back to the place where you first met and fell in love.

Bishop Sims and I have been doing much marital counseling with different couples this quarter. I believe that is the reason for the dream. As you will remember, the first quarter e-zine was focused on end-time prophecy. Just as the many phone calls and face-to-face questions sparked the *Armageddon is Coming* topic for the first quarter, the many counseling sessions this quarter has sparked the topic, *Divorce Statistics, How Not to be One*.

My original intention was to gather some comforting scriptures for a friend during a very difficult time in her marriage. I can type 80 plus words a minute so it's a lot easier to get on the computer than it is to write it out. As I typed, my mind became flooded with more thoughts and scriptures on the matter. I soon realized that, once again, this was something on the heart of God for families. So I allowed him to develop it.

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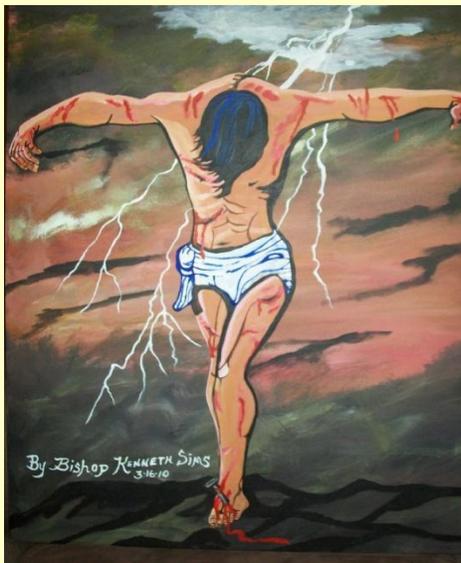
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What we have been given, we freely give. At 1:00 p.m. we had a counseling session with a couple and they left as changed individuals. We certainly cannot take credit for the obvious transformation in their attitudes; but we are so grateful and willing for every chance to assist in mending the broken.

By the grace of God, we will celebrate 34 years of marriage on July 31 and have a total of 38 years of experience as a couple - by no means are we experts. However, a man with experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument. There have been many trials and errors in our own relationship, but we know that we possess the ability to impact the lives of others in a positive way.

We gave assignments to the couple that will strengthen their resolve to save their relationship. They were both willing to make very necessary sacrifices. The very nature of the word sacrifice denotes pain. Sacrifice is a hard thing. It means give up, abandon, relinquish, lose, surrender, let go, do without, renounce, and forfeit.

Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice, thus empowering us to make necessary sacrifices in our relationships with others.



This is the time for **Philippians 4:13** to be real in life and not just another cliché. The referenced scripture says, ***“I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength.”*** Sometimes it is a Gethsemane experience. Not my will, but God’s will be done.

Bishop often teaches that marriage is not 50/50. It is 100/100. You bring everything you have to the table and your beloved must bring everything that he or she has to the table.

I read an article today by Dennis Rainey. It stated that in the United States more than one million children each year experience the breakup of their families and that about one in four of American adults age eighteen and older are divorced.

I was a product of a broken home and can relate to the pain these children suffer as many of you can. Though I have never been divorced, I was devastated by the breakup of my Mother and Father’s marriage. However, I am pleased to testify

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rate than people in the world who do not confess Jesus as Lord and Savior. How can this be? He has given us power. An ancient Greek word for power is dynamis. Dynamis is the root of the English word for **dynamite**. That's the kind of **power** that you possess if you are a born-again child of God. We are clueless – most of us. Please, don't be insulted. That is never my intention.

Ephesians 3:20 declares, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us..." So what is the problem? The problem is often Jesus is Savior, but not Lord. If we insist on sitting on the throne in our lives, he will step aside. He won't force himself on you like Satan will. The times that I sat on the throne, in my life, were the most disastrous times of all. So what's the answer? Give Him the right to sit on the throne of your life.

Scripture says in **Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end of it is total death."** Also **Proverbs 3:5** commands, **"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths."**

We suggest pre-marital counseling as it results in a higher survival rate for marriage. If you did not obtain pre-marital counseling, we suggest post-marital counseling from biblically based organizations. It's never too late with Jesus. He is the key to everything. He has an answer for every problem that we are faced with. It's up to us to take his advice or not. He is alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. It behooves all of us to hear Him.

My husband taught years ago that marriages fail because of selfishness on behalf of one or the other, or both. Then we tend to take the same issues within us to the next marital relationship and it fails also. Why? Because we never addressed

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the root cause of our problem. If the problem is within you, changing locations will not solve it. If the problem is within you, changing husbands or wives will not fix it. In fact this will often (not in every case) explain why some get married four and five times. You are still you and cannot run away from yourself. Until you get help or deliverance, your issues will proliferate.

In network marketing years ago, I learned a new definition for insanity – doing the same thing over and over expecting to get different results.

Please understand! I know that divorce is often unavoidable and I'm sensitive to the matter. I'm familiar with women whose lives were in grave danger in their marriage. I'm familiar with men and women who were deserted by their spouses for various reasons. God has called us to peace.

Allow me to be vulnerable and share with you one of my own experiences. In the '90s I was in Germany visiting our daughter, KaShanta and her family. I was taking my evening worship walk and just talking to the Lord about my life. I remember asking (almost demanding) the Lord to change my husband. To my surprise, the Lord responded, "*Why don't I change you?*" I was totally shocked. "Me? Why, me? I'm not the problem Lord. He is."

Obviously the Lord disagreed with me. I was so focused on the fact that he was not behaving as I had designed for him to. Did you get that? He was not living up to my expectations. But guess what? Neither was I living up to his expectations of me in many ways? I was so focused on what I felt he needed to do that I totally missed my shortcomings – that is until the Lord started to point them out. I was ashamed and had to submit to what the Father said. It was not easy, but I surrendered and said, "Okay, Lord. Help me to change then." That was the beginning of a renewed relationship to this day. We had to go back to the place of our first romance. God revived our fractured marriage.

Everything is not about you, Beloved. I'm sorry, but the world does not revolve around you or me.

Our marriage never would have survived if Jesus had not been a constant in our lives. You will not survive either without the Lord in your life. You will exist but that is quite different from living a joy-full life in the Lord.

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When teaching marriage classes, my husband often shares that marriage is not a permanent state. It is hard work. It requires diligence – long steady application.

The only person who is always right is the Father. We miss the mark as humans because we are finite. Only God is infinite (limitless and boundless). That's why His way is always the right way. ALWAYS!

The truth offends and it hurts. But thank God that you are His child and that He corrects you.

Relationships of selfishness will never succeed. Although **self-sacrifice** is not natural, it must replace **selfishness**. Daddy always said that self preservation is the first law of nature. No one has to be taught to be selfish. We have to learn how not to be that way.

Teamwork, in the relationship, is necessary to make your dream work. No man is an island. Even the Lone Ranger had Tonto. (I'm telling my age, but that's okay.)
☺

Marriage is a covenant. A covenant is a serious, binding agreement between two or more people to do or not to do a certain thing. This definition is etched in my brain. This covenant is not between two people but between three. Did you just have an aha moment? That's where most miss it. We think it's between the man and the woman only.

Think back to your wedding vows. It went something like this: "*Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here **in the sight of God to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony, which is commended to be honorable among all men; and not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly – but reverently and solemnly.***"

Marriage should not be entered into **unadvisedly**. In other words, you should receive counsel - advice. Marriage is far more than a meeting of the flesh. We are three part beings. Therefore, it's a meeting of the hearts (spirit of man), soul (mind, will, emotions, imagination and intellect) and body. You can both be Christians and still be unequally yoked, but we will not develop that at this time. Just remember that counsel is vital.

Did you know that you made a vow (promise) to and before God at your wedding celebration? Ponder these scriptures in **Ecclesiastes 5:⁴** *When*

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you vow a vow or make a pledge to God, do not put off paying it; for God has no pleasure in fools (those who witlessly mock Him). Pay what you vow. ⁵It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. ⁶Do not allow your mouth to cause your body to sin, and do not say before the messenger [the priest] that it was an error or mistake. Why should God be [made] angry at your voice...?"

Let's go a little bit further. Do you GROOM take BRIDE to be your wife – **to live together after God's ordinance**, to comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health, for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse, in sadness and in joy, to cherish and continually bestow upon her your heart's deepest devotion, forsaking all others, keeping yourself only for her as long as you both shall live? This same vow is confessed by the bride. Do you Bride take Groom, etc.?

In my opinion, "for better or for worse" sums it all up. Did we pay any attention to the words that proceeded out of our mouths, or were we just caught up in the awe of the moment? Please read again what we committed to. Most of us were so nervous and in perfect rapture that we were just talking heads. Talking loud and saying nothing – unless you really meant what you said.

To reiterate, do you take each other **to live together after God's ordinance**? What is an ordinance? It is a rule, order, law, standard, direction, principle, or a command.

Let's take a look at some of God's ordinances. I like the scriptures that Bishop used today: **Galatians 5:22** *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."* He also referenced the 'Love' chapter below.

The first fruit mentioned is love. Love and lust is not the same thing. Let's take a look at the love chapter. I Corinthians 13: ⁴*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.* ⁵*It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.* ⁶*Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.* ⁷*It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.* ⁸*Love never fails.*

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If each of us practice these scriptures alone, our homes and lives would be much more successful. I want us to take a more detailed look at the scriptural definitions of love again and simplify it even further. Love is **patient** (bearing or **enduring** pain, difficulty, provocation, or annoyance with calmness). Love is **kind** (tolerant and considerate). Love does not **envy** (having a painful desire for another's advantages or possessions). Love does not **boast** (express excessive pride, about oneself). Love is not **proud** (having an exaggerated opinion of your importance). Love does not **dishonor** (to treat in a disrespectful or demeaning manner). Love is **not self-seeking** (concerned only with promoting one's own interests). Love is **not easily angered** (having strong hostility). Love **keeps no record of wrongs** (an unjust or injurious act). Love does not delight in **evil** (morally bad; wicked). Love rejoices in the **truth** (a proven or verified principle or statement). Love **always protects** (shield from danger, injury, destruction, or damage). Love, **always trusts** (believe in, have faith in, depend on, count on, lean on, rely upon). Love **always hopes** (optimistic, confident expectation). Love **always perseveres** (remain constant to a purpose, idea, or task in the face of obstacles or discouragement). Love **never fails** (changes, dies, run out, neglect, disappoint, abandon, desert or forsake).

Now let's practice. Re-read the above portion that I amplified and substitute yourself. Say, "I am patient. I endure pain, difficulty, provocation, and annoyance with calmness." Say, "I am kind. I am tolerant and considerate." Go through each definition to the end. Sometimes you have to say it to believe it and then you can say it because you believe it and because it's true. We will always have to press on this side of heaven. When we get to the other side we will be just as He is. The press will be over. Hallelujah!

I trust that the above amplification gives you a new outlook on your relationship. Often we overlook the fact that we should practice these principles with our spouses. We tend to take for granted the people who love us most.

Busting Myths

In an article by Dennis Rainey, statistics showed that 64% of college students in a poll agreed that living together as a couple before getting married is a good idea. However, the Bible teaches that marriage should come before sexual intimacy. Although it seems like trying out relationships before marriage is good, research shows that the divorce rate is actually higher among those who live together before marrying later.

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None of us are perfect and we all need help. Here are some pointers that can help your marriage go in the right direction:

- Humble yourself. **Romans 12:10** *“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;”*
- Exhibit the response that you want from your mate. **Luke 6:31** *“Do to others as you would like them to do to you.”*
- Learn to disagree, agreeably. **Amos 3:3** *“Can two walk together, except they are agreed?”*
- Confirm your love to each other daily. **John 15:12** *“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”*

Advice to women:

- Communicate your feelings, but don't nag.
Proverbs 25:24 *“It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop than to share a house with a disagreeing, quarrelsome, and scolding woman.”*
Proverbs 27:15 *“A quarrelsome wife is like the dripping of a leaky roof in a rainstorm;”*
Men respond more favorably to praise – not criticism.

Proverbs 15:1, *“A soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.”*

Advice to men:

- It's important to women to know that they are loved (that includes saying I love you) as well as showing them, especially in the little things. I.E. remembering anniversaries, birthdays, etc. **Ephesians 5:25**, *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”*
Ephesians 5:28, *“In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.”*
- Security is another important issue to women, especially in the financial department. **Ephesians 5:29** *“After all, no one ever hated his own body but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church.”*

It is very critical that husbands and wives, pray together, study the word of God together and play together.

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*In closing, let's ponder the words of Jesus in Mark chapter 10 verses 2-9. Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? **What did Moses command you?** Jesus asked. They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away." "**It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,**" Jesus replied. "**But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.**"*

In case you missed it, the most important decision you can make in your life is to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. If you are willing, he will teach you how to have harmony in every relationship in your life: family, work, church, etc.

Let Jesus take you to the place in your marital relationship that you never even dreamed possible.

