

The Golden Rule

What is the secret of a successful marriage? It is this and only this: the Golden Rule. Matrimony is the sacrament which consecrates human love. Grace builds on nature. There can be no real love unless the husband and wife are willing to commit themselves to live by the Golden Rule.



Differences can be overcome and problems solved when the two treat each other with respect and set their wills to be faithful to one another for life. Unfortunately, in today's world, the success of the wedding day seems to be more important than the success of the commitment itself.

Marriage is more than a one day event. Here's a little parable to make my point:

There was a father who offered his daughter \$10,000 to elope. She and her mother wouldn't hear of it, they wanted a celebration. The gown had to be just right, even though everyone knew it would be put in a box after one wearing. The flowers had to be spectacular, the stretch limos had to be white, and the reception had to be lavish.

As the bills kept mounting, the father became nervous and he raised the ante. "I'll give you \$20,000 to cancel the wedding and elope." They laughed at him. The bride wanted to be queen for a day. The mother wanted to be the hostess with the mostest. The groom secretly wanted the \$20,000, but he didn't have the courage to mount any meaningful opposition.

So the wedding went forward. The festivities lasted about five hours, and then it was all over.

Twenty-two months later the couple began divorce proceedings. Apparently, they didn't know anything about patient endurance or conflict resolution.

This story is not uncommon. In our culture, the wedding day is more important than the marriage itself. Our young people have been allowed to indulge their highly exaggerated romantic expectations of marriage, and they are paying a heavy price for it. Too little attention is paid to the essentials. Preparing for marriage is preparing for a life-long commitment or it is nothing. The will to bear discomfort and swallow one's pride is in short supply these days.

When a couple goes up the aisle they should be praying for the courage to carry out their good intentions. It takes courage to enter into an exclusive, life-long union. When they pledge their solemn vows before God, they are invoking His blessing on all their hopes and dreams. But most of all, they

pledge their determination to follow the Golden Rule.

The wedding reception is merely the celebration of their love commitment; it is not the main event. And what is the nature of this love commitment? It is the surrender

of their individual lives to the new life they will be sharing in common. A married couple really becomes two in one flesh. Either that, or they divorce in 22 months.

A happy marriage is possible only when the two agree to follow the Golden Rule:

"Do unto others (your spouse) as you would want others (your spouse) to do unto you."

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