

SOME THINGS I HAVE LEARNED FROM MY WIFE

John Edwards

This day marks a special occasion for me. In addition to it being the Lord’s day, the first day of the week, the day upon which our Lord arose from the dead (Mt. 28:1-6), which has made it possible for a sinner like me to have “*lively hope*” (1 Pet. 1:3), it was on this day, 26 years ago, that I proposed to the extraordinary young woman who would become my wife. Neither of us really had any idea what we were getting ourselves into and no way of knowing what the years ahead would bring, but the vocabulary does not contain enough words to describe how grateful I am that she said “yes” to my proposal and followed that with “I do” about six months later! There are lessons to be learned from all facets of life, and there is much that we can learn from the marriage experience.

LOYALTY AND

COMMITMENT. When Naomi intreated her daughters (in-law), “*Go, return each to her mother’s house...*” (Ruth 1:8), the Bible says, “*...Ruth clave unto her*” (Ruth 1:14). Ruth made a commitment to her mother-in-law in these words: “*Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where*

thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me” (Ruth 1:16-17). The story of Ruth is one of unwavering devotion! When God instituted the marriage relationship it was said: “*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh*” (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5). This same word is used of our relationship unto the Lord. Barnabas exhorted Christians, “*...that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*” (Acts 11:23). When I observe how my wife has clung tightly to me through the years, I have come to appreciate even more the loyalty and commitment it takes to be “*...faithful unto death...*” (Rev. 2:10).

WHAT LOVE IS. Some have asked, “What is love?” and exclaimed, “I want to know what love is!” When we read the Bible, we come to understand what love is all about. “*...God is love*” (1 Jn. 4:8). “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (Jn. 3:16). God loved the unloveable as “*we were enemies*” (Rom. 5:10) and now “*friends*” (Jn. 15:14) because of “*his great love wherewith he loved*

us” (Eph. 2:4). The word of the Lord also teaches marital love. Paul taught, “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it*” (Eph. 5:25). Paul’s letter to Titus includes the instruction for aged women to teach the young women “*...to love their husbands, to love their children*” (Titus 2:3-4). I can read “*to love their husbands*” in black and white, but I see it in full “*Technicolor*” when I look to my wife. She has exemplified love in such a way that I can read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and insert her name in place of “*Charity*”. Can you and I put our name in the blanks? “*_____ suffereth long, and is kind: _____ envieth not; _____ vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things; believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. _____ never faileth...*”

FORGIVENESS. For any relationship to endure, there must be forgiveness on the part of all involved. Forgiveness is something this world needs more of! The Lord has taught us forgiveness. One of the better promises of the better covenant is, “*For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more*” (Heb. 8:12). Her forgiveness is just like that,

remembering no more! The fact that she remains by my side is not because I've been so perfect (far from it), but because she is so forgiving! Remember the occasion when Jesus said, "*He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone...*" (Jn. 8:1-9)? How many stones were cast? Not a single, solitary one for they "*went out one by one*" (v. 9). The point is, all have sinned. "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23). "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us....If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us*" (1 Jn. 1:8, 10). Those forgiven must forgive! Jesus said, "*But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*" (Mt. 6:15).

TO BE A GOOD LISTENER.

Being a good listener is something we have to work at every day! Has it been pointed out that we have two ears and one mouth, that the tongue is hedged in by two rows of teeth and the ears are always open, and that speech is silver and silence is golden? The Bible says, "*...let every man be swift to hear, slow*

to speak, slow to wrath" (Jas. 1:19). This is a principle needed in the marriage relationship. By listening carefully to my wife, I come to learn what she likes, enjoys, needs, wants and so on. One thing I have observed is that when there is something that needs my attention (like a stove burner that has quit working or a washing machine that is out of level) that she may make mention of it one time how it needs to be fixed. Then, after some time has passed and I go to use that burner, I may say, "That burner isn't working!" And I'll remember, she mentioned that to me before! I may think, Why hasn't she said more to me about that? Well, you know what, she shouldn't have to! Either I wasn't listening, or forgot, or didn't think it was that important at the time. I should have taken time to take care of it then. I've learned to listen more, because she is not one to make frequent or persistent requests.

INDUSTRY AND HARD WORK. An unmarried fellow once asked what my wife did all day, seeing she was one of those "*keepers at home*" (Titus 2:5). He said, "Do you just watch soap operas?" I thought, try following her around for a day and see how

you fare, good luck keeping up with her! Yes, there are lots of "soap opera-tion-s", doing laundry and cleaning dishes, among other things! Few really know or put forth the effort it takes to "*guide the house*" (1 Tim. 5:14), which she does so well! When I watch my wife, as the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, I learn to not be idle: "*She seeketh*" (v. 13), "*worketh*" (v. 13), "*bringeth*" (v. 14), "*riseth*" (v. 15), "*giveth*" (v. 15), "*considereth*" (v. 16), "*buyeth*" (v. 16), "*planteth*" (v. 16), "*girdeth*" (v. 17), "*strengtheneth*" (v. 17), "*perceiveth*" (v. 18), "*layeth*" (v. 19), "*stretcheth*" (v. 20), "*reacheth*" (v. 20), "*maketh*" (vv. 22, 24), "*selleth*" (v. 24), "*delivereth*" (v. 24), "*openeth*" (v. 26), and "*looketh*" (v. 27). "*...her candle goeth not out by night*" (v. 18)!

These are just a few things my wife has taught me over the last 2 1/2 decades. I could write a book! Knowing her as I do, she will not want me printing this, but didn't Solomon say, "*her husband praiseth her*" (Prov. 31:28)? What lessons are you learning from relationships?

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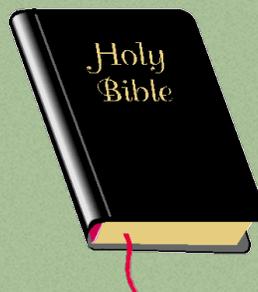
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