

THINGS FOR THE MARRIED TO REMEMBER

by G. F. Failing, D.D.

Perhaps the first counsel concerns more particularly those about to be married. Remember that you marry the total individual, body and soul, just as he (she) is. You are not marrying an ideal, but a person. Happy marriage is a good ideal, but it becomes an actual everyday experience with all the factors involved. When you marry, you marry the other person's tastes, habits, friends, etc. If you marry a short person, they will not grow taller. If he is slow of wit now, he will probably continue that way after marriage. If he is careless and rude, those habits tend to persist after marriage.

Of course, all the other side is true also. Devotion, high ideals, participation in mutually enjoyed activities will continue after marriage and will enrich the life. This is only a reminder that you marry your partner on every plane of life. After marriage, therefore, do not be surprised if he is just like he was before you married him!

Again, remember that marriage is a partnership. "We" has been substituted for "I". This is true in the handling of money, in vacation plans, in items for home furnishings, in purchasing a new (or second-hand) car. One of the best ways to preserve this "we" feeling is to agree on finance. For one to require luxury maintenance which the other cannot support or live up to, is to ask for trouble. Entertainment of friends ought to be mutually agreed upon. Children in the home are to be planned and welcomed by both.

But this is a "play" partnership as well as a "work" partnership. Don't lose the ability to tell or enjoy a wholesome story, to play games for fun and relaxation. Don't fail to have some flowers, candy, dinners out—after marriage.

In the third place, marriage involves a separation. "Leave thy father and thy mother, and cleave unto thy wife." No doubt father and mother have valuable counsel to give, counsel that may prevent some disappointments or tragedies. Listen to the counsel, but go and talk it over with your partner. Then agree on the procedure, and go forward together because you both agree on it. Each partner needs to feel the absolute trust and confidence of the other. For any one else to come in for counsel or respect closer than the marriage partner is to invite most serious danger.

Allied to this truth is the suggestion that each partner ought to maintain the utmost respect for and pride in the other. Nothing derogatory should be said about the partner in the presence of others.

In the fourth place, marriage vows must be kept in absolute purity of intent and act. To trifle here is most disastrous. Many times, a flirting with impurity has led to situations for which there seems to be no human remedy. As strange as the thought of it may seem to you at the moment of marriage, you may be tempted to impurity. David fell into sin by looking—and looking again. Job made a covenant with his eyes (Job 31:1) and Jesus warns against the impure look (Matt. 5: 27-28). A godly woman remarked: "When I married, I locked my heart and threw away the key." That's the safe thing to do.

Finally, be content in your marriage. A good rule might be: Before marriage, carefully select the one you want, then take what you get! Remember, the other person is in for surprises about you, too.

I think it was Adam Clarke who advised couples to have their eyes wide open before marriage, and at least half-closed afterward. Carping and repeated criticism does not bring rich rewards to marriage partners. Accept the

man, the woman, you married. Work out an agreement with him (her) on every level of life you can, then maintain silence about the areas that are not yet perfectly to your liking.

THE KEY TO REVIVAL

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this: "Lord, save me from the disgrace of tears!"

Nevertheless, the tenderness of a Christlike compassion, the sensitiveness of a bleeding heart of love, is a part of the cost we must pay down if the Church is to march redemptively.

Have you ever heard the story of "Miss Toosey's Mission"? Miss Toosey, youder in England, was a commonplace sort of Christian up to the time she was seventy. Then her life was revolutionized by a missionary sermon she heard preached by a bishop from the foreign field. So moved was she, that she went to her rector and offered herself as a missionary to Africa. Of course, there was a touch of childishness in what she did. But then, what are rectors for, if it is not to interpret these things wisely and handle them tactfully? He told her that her mission was to stay at home and be a prayer-partner of the younger, stronger ones who went out to the field. He encouraged her, further, to give all she could to the financial support of missions.

In time, the whole town came to know of her exertions and her self-denials for the missionary cause. It was amazing how much she saved by skimping here and economizing there. In the village was a young man of wealth, a sporting fellow who loved his dogs and horses, and for purposes of decency, he had his name on the church roll. Many of the villagers laughed at Miss Toosey, thinking her a bit daft on religion, and especially on missions; but not John Rossiter—he paid visits to her, gave her money, and received her blessing. One night he heard that she was ill. Calling on her, he found her in tears. Self-pity? No! Physical pain? No! Between sobs she said:

"John, my money counts up only a few small shillings, and my influence is not anything for the people only laugh at me."

Her tears were not for herself, but for the Kingdom of Christ, for which she felt she was doing so little. That night Miss Toosey died. The next day John Rossiter sat for hours in the little cottage where she had lived, most of the time with his face in his hands. Something in that noble, self-sacrificing life had pinned him, and would not let him go. To Miss Toosey's Christ he surrendered himself; and that night, twenty-four hours after her death, he wrote to the Missionary Society of the Church of England offering himself as a missionary to Africa!

A creative sorrow had been hers—the sorrow of fellowship with Jesus Christ in his love for unredeemed mankind. It was costly. It was also fruitful; and that is the way the Church was meant to march.

Think of the compensation which comes to a marching Church: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Please observe two things: (1) it is a guaranteed compensation, for he shall "doubtless come again... bringing his sheaves with him," and (2) it is a gladsome compensation, for he shall "come again with rejoicing."

The church that sows will reap. The church that ministers will prosper. The church that shares will be strong. The church that forgets itself will never be forgotten. The church that marches will win.