



CHAPTER 8

Marriage is Permanent For Life

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("Rafe")

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It's Your CHOICE – Marriage is Permanent for Life

MARRIAGE IS PERMANENT FOR LIFE

The commitment in marriage must be irreversible.

In my law practice, I decline to represent clients in divorce cases. We are all aware of the statistics which show that more and more marriages end in divorce. My heart grieves at the fact there is an increasing incidence of divorce in Christian marriages. This is not right. Divorce is NOT God's way. God created man, and God created woman. God created marriage, and it is God's perfect will that the couple will never get a divorce.

“That from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh: consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Mark 10:6-9; Matthew 19:4-6; Genesis 1:27; 2:24; 5:2). **God hates divorce** (Malachi 2:16). God made the marriage relationship the highest and holiest human relationship. As previously shared, God uses the marriage illustration in explaining the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Christian church (Revelation 21:2, 9). Please do not diminish the high sanctity that God Himself places upon the marriage relationship, by ever even thinking that divorce could be an option.

The marriage ceremony itself contains the **marriage vows**. A **promise** is made by the husband to God that the husband will remain married and faithful to his wife for life. The wife makes a **promise** to God that she will remain married and faithful to her husband for life. The husband **promises** the wife that he will remain married and faithful to the wife for life. The wife **promises** to the husband that she will remain married and faithful to the husband for life. **THESE ARE SACRED PROMISES. THE HUSBAND HAS GIVEN HIS WORD. THE WIFE HAS GIVEN HER WORD.** Why is that not enough by itself? Do not break a promise to God! Do not break a promise to your spouse! Do not trash your own integrity before God or before your mate by being unfaithful or by terminating the marriage relationship.

God treats vows very seriously. God expects that when vows are made to the Lord, the person will fulfill them. The Bible declares that God requires the person to keep the vow and that it is sin for one to violate a vow once it has been given (see Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Psalm 50:14; 61:8; 76:11; 1:14, 16, 18; Ecclesiastes 5:4).

A number of years ago I listened to a tape recording of a message delivered by Pastor Stuart Briscoe of Elm Brook Church in the greater Milwaukee area. He gave a word picture which has stuck with me and which I believe is very profound and accurate in describing how, from the very first instant of marriage and throughout life, the couple must appreciate the commitment involved in marriage and the permanency of the marriage relationship. Pastor Briscoe stated in substance the following:

When the husband and the wife get married they voluntarily enter into the marriage room. Once inside they see that there is only one means of departure from the marriage room which is a door clearly marked “fire escape” with a key visibly protruding from the lock of the door. Because of the commitment to the Lord and to each other the husband and wife join hands and walk directly

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to the fire escape door, turn the key until the lock is fully and firmly engaged, and then together they remove the key and destroy it. From that point forward they both know that there is absolutely no option of either person to leave the marriage room. Because of that agreement and knowledge, whenever there is the scent of smoldering fire or even an outbreak of fire within the marriage room, neither party takes a step toward the fire escape. That option was totally and permanently removed. Instead, they immediately concentrate their attention and joint efforts to putting out the fire.

Pastor Briscoe's illustration is so true. In the Christian marriage, the husband and the wife are **TOTALLY UNITED**. God has joined the husband and wife together. **NO** person (not the wife herself or the husband himself) is to tear asunder the marriage relationship. For one spouse to sever that unity is in fact an act of self-mutilation and self-inflicted pain. By contrast, the most sensible and logical thing for you is to please and to build up your spouse and to work to preserve and enhance the marriage.

If the husband and wife will in fact put away forever any thought that the marriage relationship can end short of death, there is great security in the relationship. That knowledge and security give the couple the freedom to give to each other without reservation. They are really free to dream and plan together knowing that such dreams and plans cannot be and will not be short circuited by either of them moving toward the fire escape . . . there is no fire escape. **THE MARRIAGE IS FOR LIFE**. Remember, it is your **CHOICE**.