



CHAPTER 16

A Partnership

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("Rafe")

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It's Your CHOICE – A Partnership

A PARTNERSHIP

You and your spouse should share the joint and common objectives to please the Lord, to bring glory to God, and to become increasingly like the Lord Jesus Christ. Married life is a great and exciting enterprise. You and your spouse are absolutely intertwined in life. It is sensible for the couple to understand, communicate, and acknowledge the various gifts, strengths, talents, abilities and aptitudes of the husband and the wife. Most certainly a husband will be stronger in some areas than his wife, while the wife will have strengths that exceed those of her husband. When you and your spouse are working together, rather than in competition, decisions can be made to take advantage of and apply the strengths and abilities of both spouses. I am not ashamed to say that my precious Pam is better at many things than I am. Because we know that about each other, and are not threatened by that, we can positively take advantage of each of our strengths and abilities for our mutual good.

We all wish we had more **time**. At some point one spouse may have more available time than the other and it will make sense for that spouse to apply that time toward a particular common objective or task. It is a common sense reality that you are a team. So the team member who can best do it, or who is available to do it, should do it. When the job is done then the marriage unit benefits. In your partnership in life there should be meaningful communication about division of tasks and responsibilities. Some chores or assignments will be the primary responsibility of the wife, others will be the primary responsibility of the husband, and still others will be joint responsibility. There is nothing terribly scientific about this. If the couple will communicate and come to a satisfactory decision on such division of responsibilities and assignments, it will avoid conflicts, resentment, and bickering. Please remember that whatever you do, and whatever your spouse does it, for the common good. That means that what your spouse does is of the same importance to the partnership as what you do.

The respective responsibilities will most certainly change from time to time. For example, it may be that the wife will have some extra time to devote to mowing the lawn during one summer, but because the baby is born before the next summer, she simple cannot help out with the lawn the next summer. Life changes. Keep your communication open. Be a **giver** and not a **getter** in your partnership (See Chapter Five, page 22).

I think too much is made out of designation of certain jobs as being “a man’s job” or “a woman’s job.” On the other hand I have heard out-of-balance radicals say that unless one spouse does at least half of each type of chore, such spouse is cruel, or out of touch, or sexist. Remember, the marriage is a type of equal partnership. You are both plowing the same field. Anything that one partner does will benefit the partnership. It may take some trial and error to learn how to best divide up the assignments and responsibilities **for the common good**. Various jobs have nothing to do with **worth**. You are in this together.

Another important aspect of your equal partnership relates to **earning the family income**. Unless you have a very settled understanding about the equality of your partnership in life and the equal worth of the jobs each of you is doing, there will be fertile soil for tension and conflict. Usually the two spouses are not bringing in the same amount of income to the family pot. If you very consciously attribute the same **monetary** value to the tasks of each spouse you will be less

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inclined to think, “This is my money” . . . or “I am the one who earns the money.” Listen, it is a common and joint paycheck coming into the family pot, and you both **earned** it equally regardless of whose name is on the check.

If one spouse is the sole bread winner, while the other spouse is maintaining the home and caring for a myriad of family chores, they still have contributed **EQUALLY** to the partnership. The money that is brought in by the one spouse working outside of the home is earned just as much by the spouse working in the home.

It is a blessed thing when the wife can devote her full time to the high and holy responsibilities of being a wife, mother and homemaker. That is not always possible and to the extent that the wife must or elects to work outside of the home, there will need to be adjustments in the various responsibilities at home. In your equal partnership you cannot have a husband work at his job and do nothing at home, while his wife works at her job and is expected to do everything at home too. Again, be **givers** and not **getters**.

There is a wonderful possibility that you and your spouse will have children. Your equal partnership in marriage applies to child rearing responsibilities and participation. Both you and your spouse need to be committed to fully participating in the activities and duties of child rearing. Open communication will assist you in maintaining an ongoing understanding about which spouse is to do what with your children.

I repeat. One aspect of the marriage relationship is that of a partnership. You are equal partners in a totality of responsibilities. Apply the time, talents, gifts and abilities of each spouse to get the job done. There must be no one-upmanship. There are no higher jobs or lower jobs. Both partners are of equal value, and the work of each partner is absolutely as valuable as the work of the other. Be sure to communicate about the division of responsibilities. Furthermore, keep a close eye as to the changes that occur month by month and year by year. Regular communication about responsibilities will assist in avoiding conflict and misunderstandings about your various jobs, duties, and responsibilities.