

# May 2006: Husbands and Wives on the Lookout

by Aaron Greenway

It comes out in the news, another failed marriage. We know couples that have gone through tough times in their marital relationship, some that have overcome the storms, some that couldn't, and some whose marriage is still up in the air. In each and every case where the marriage went bad, everyone has come out a loser. No one has come out unscathed. My wife, Gleyser, and I were married on May 28, 2005, and for so long before that I had waited and planned for the moment when she would come into my life. I planned everything down to the slightest detail. When the time came, I invited Gleyser out for lunch asking her to pray about the possibility of a deeper relationship that might lead to a marriage commitment. A short time later, I called her father and asked his permission to date her, and six months later I asked him for her hand. Praise be to the Lord that we were able to make it to the marriage bed as virgins in spite of the pressure. A lot of things went very well for us.

But there were also things that we struggled with. Someone had counseled me, before my wife and I met, that I should not pray or read the Bible alone with a girl before I married her because of things that could happen. This brother told me all of this with pure motives, because of what he had seen happen to other couples. But we are now trying to make up for the time that was lost when we should have been establishing that part of our intimacy especially during our engagement. It is certainly a fine-line to walk, and no one's relationship is perfect, but as another brother said to me, "God can begin to build that intimacy at any point in your relationship."

Many talk about all of the things that they are going to do when they get married, that they are going to serve the Lord, that they are going to have a certain type of relationship, but don't realize that the things they do as singles are, in effect, preparing them for their future marriage. The things

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they let slide and don't resolve in their singleness or in their romantic relationships can come back and cause trouble because marriage always has the tendency to expose us and reveal our greatest weaknesses. There are people out there who refuse to deal with their past issues before they take their vows. If we are not careful, all of the bitterness, the anger, the lust, the selfishness and all of the pride will go with us to the altar and then get into our homes.

Recently, we went to see a Christian singer in concert whose wife tearfully shared how important it was to pray that God would protect our homes, how important it was to guard our hearts. She said, "We must pray that the Enemy would not drive a wedge in our relationships." Because, it is true that the Enemy will lay his trap, and in his sneaky way, try to destroy the family without anyone noticing, at least until that moment of truth when everything begins to crack, our hearts are revealed, and our marriage no longer has the support to stay standing.

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What did Jesus have to say about this issue? In Matthew 19:3-9, when asked about whether or not it was lawful to get a divorce, Jesus responded, "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

If you are single man, I entreat you to put away your bitterness, to guard your eyes, and to reject anything that would cause you to stumble spiritually. If you are a selfish man now, you will be one when you are married and there it will be clear for all to see. If you are a dishonest man now, a man who loves his money more than God, a man who has no intimacy with God, you will have trouble when you are married. If you are woman who is a gossip, vain or jealous, your tendencies will only plague you when you are one flesh with your spouse. Our character does not change very much when we get married; but in marriage, everything does tend to float to the top. For this reason, I can see why that in his book "Sacred Marriage", Gary Thomas asks the question, "Did God design marriage to make us happy or to make us holy?"

We must do everything possible to protect our families. We must get on our knees and intercede for our marriages. We must pray for others, for their relationships, and to help hold them up when they are going through the fire. Many folks shy away from getting involved because of the mud that many times is being slung. I know people that have abandoned and rejected couples when they started to have family troubles. What a shame! Because of this, if you are single, purify yourself before the Lord. Be an example. Lastly, give yourself to serve Him completely. The seeds we sow today, either of restoration or destruction, will come to fruition tomorrow.

Something to ponder...

Your brother,

Aaron Greenway