

Do You Really Mean “For Better or Worse”?

Are you truly all in? Among the vows we take, we promise to marry for better or *worse*. The following is an excerpt from Exercise 7 of *The Christian Prenuptial Agreement*.

(Please note that if you are in a relationship where physical abuse is a reality or a possibility, get away from your spouse immediately and seek competent professional help. Deal with this from a safe distance.)

A wedding videographer recently told me about a wedding where it seemed like the bride only repeated the good parts: “For better ... for richer ... in health ... in good times ... in joy ... in triumph.” But what about the worse, the poorer, the sickness, the bad times, the sorrow, and the failure?

The following is a list of questions to ponder. Pray and ask God to reveal to you how deeply you are committed to your promises and what He desires for you. Share your answers with your fiancé. Do you have the same responses?

What would you do if:

- Your spouse makes fun of you, belittles you in front of your friends, or complains about your habits in public?
- Your spouse refuses to help with chores that he/she agreed to do?
- Your spouse becomes disabled, cannot work, and requires your assistance for basic functions?
- Your spouse has an accident, leaving him/her in a vegetative state?
- Your spouse becomes an alcoholic who cannot function at work or at home?
- Your spouse spends more than you make, which ultimately causes you to file for bankruptcy?
- Your spouse develops a mental illness that causes him/her to be unsafe around your children?
- Your spouse has a sexually transmitted disease that he/she did not disclose prior to marriage?
- Your spouse joins the military without consulting you?
- Your spouse quits his/her job to accept a job that requires relocation without consulting you?
- Your spouse has a physical ailment that causes sterility?
- Your spouse has a genetically transmitted deformity that could show up in your children that was not disclosed prior to your marriage?
- Your spouse is self-indulgent, spending large sums of money on extravagant clothes, body treatments, big toys, or recreational activities?
- Your spouse is nasty to your family?
- Your spouse has an affair that he/she calls off, and you believe there is true repentance?
- Your spouse has an affair that he/she refuses to call off?
- Your spouse is a kleptomaniac, and you constantly find items around your home that you know were not purchased?

- You find out your spouse has saved over \$100,000 in a secret bank account?
- Your spouse develops a permanent physical problem that prohibits him/her from being able to function sexually?
- Your spouse commits a crime?
- Your spouse becomes addicted to pornography?
- Your spouse is clumsy, constantly breaks things, and ultimately burns the house down by accident?
- Your spouse becomes a workaholic and comes home after midnight every night?
- Your spouse demands sexual activities that you find distasteful or unbiblical?
- Your spouse is only concerned with satisfying himself/herself sexually?
- Your spouse goes out in public in what you consider to be shameful dress?
- Your spouse regularly belches or passes gas in public unashamedly?
- Your spouse develops a gambling addiction causing you to lose your house and cars?
- Your spouse refuses to have sex with you?
- Your spouse commits a crime and goes to prison for ten years?
- Your spouse develops Alzheimer's disease or has a brain injury and no longer recognizes you?
- Your spouse lies to you constantly?
- You find out that your wife had an abortion prior to marriage that has rendered her unable to conceive?
- You find out your husband fathered a child that even he did not know about?
- Your spouse is physically abusive?
- Your wife agrees to have children, but then you find out that she has been secretly taking birth control pills so she can continue in the career that she worked so hard for?
- Your husband promises to be the breadwinner so you can stay home with the children but cannot keep a job?
- Your spouse goes away on weekends and refuses to explain his/her absence?
- You find out your spouse had a sexual relationship with your best friend prior to your marriage?

From the above list, does it matter that the problems are intentionally caused by your spouse, accidentally caused by your spouse, or that your spouse has no fault? Will any of these situations cause you to say that you will no longer love, honor, and cherish your spouse? Is there an escape clause in your vows?

Does it change your perspective if you consider your spouse as your mission field? Whatever they do, will you work to bring glory to God for their lives? How can God be glorified in each of these situations? God did not promise that marriage would be easy. You are promising to love your spouse for worse.

Can you trust God in all these situations? The suffering place is a learning place. We don't truly understand faith until we have been squeezed.

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (Romans 5:3-5).

Satan is the one who opposes us. A marriage that continually strives for godliness is a fortification that Satan cannot penetrate. Sheep that are separated from the flock are easily overcome. Satan is happiest when he destroys homes because it is then when the sheep can be overcome.

This does not mean that you simply put up with miserable situations, but rather that you seek God's help and godly counsel from others. Loving your spouse does not mean being a doormat or an enabler, but it does mean seeking God in everything. God will bless that in His time, and it will count for eternity.