

HOW TO BE A VALENTINE

Philippians 2:1-2

February 11, 2007 Sunday A.M.

INTRODUCTION

- A. By the mid-1990's it was common knowledge that throwing uncooked rice at wedding couples when they left the church would kill unsuspecting birds. The rice would swell in their stomachs and cause them to burst. So alternatives like birdseed, confetti and even bubbles were substituted to wish the new couple off. There's only one problem. According to Cornell University, it's a myth. Uncooked rice does not kill birds, in fact, several species of birds eat it frequently out in the wild.
- B. This is only one of many myths associated with marriage. Some other myths include...
1. Living happily ever after with never any arguments or disagreements.
 2. Another is that marriages are perfect. Did you know that Adam and Eve had the world's only perfect marriage. She couldn't talk about the man she might have married and he couldn't complain that his mother was a better cook.
 3. Still another is that we can change our new spouse for the better.
 4. And on and on and on.....
- C. One woman thought she had the perfect fiancé. As she was getting to know him and his family, she was very impressed by how much his parents loved each other. "They're so thoughtful," she said. "Why, your dad even brings your mom a cup of hot coffee in bed every morning." After a time, they were engaged, and then married. On the way from the wedding to the reception, She again remarked on his loving parents and his mom's morning coffee in bed. "Tell me," she said, "does it run in the family?" "It sure does," he replied. "But you should know -- I take after my mom."
- D. George Barna, a statistician, reported last December, "Boomers are virtually certain to become the first generation for which a majority experience divorce."
- E. Can anything be done to head off this statistic from becoming reality?
1. I think the Bible can do just that.
 2. One such passage that can help is found in Philippians 2:1.
 3. Paul is addressing unity in the congregation at Philippi.
 4. However, his advice is appropriate not only for a congregation, but also for a couple.
 5. What does Paul suggest we do to bring back unity and oneness between a husband and a wife?

I. FIRST, WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER.

- A. Four times Paul uses the word, "if" in verse one. It really should be interpreted "assuming". In other words, Paul assumed his readers would do these things toward each other and experience in the process real unity and oneness. The first thing Paul assumed they would do is to encourage each other.
- B. When was the last time you encouraged or praised your spouse?
1. An anonymous quote says, "Man doesn't live by bread alone, he also needs buttering up".
 2. We all need praise and to know that someone is behind us if we fall.
 3. One "Peanuts" comic strip begins with Linus having just written a comic strip of his own, and he wants Lucy's opinion. In the first frame, he tentatively hands Lucy his comic strip and says, "Lucy, would you read this and tell me if you think it is funny?" In the next frame, you see Lucy patting her foot, and a little bit of a grin comes across her face. She looks at Linus and says, "Well, Linus, who wrote this?" Linus with his chest heaved out and a great big grin says, "Lucy, I wrote that." In the next frame, you see Lucy wadding it up, throwing it to the side, and saying, "Well, then, I don't think it's very funny."

In the final frame, you see Linus picking up his comic strip, throwing his blanket over his shoulder, looking at Lucy and saying, "Big sisters are the crab grass in the lawn of life."

Sometimes this is true of a husband or a wife.

II. SECOND, WE SHOULD COMFORT EACH OTHER.

A. Paul-v.1.

B. A magician accidentally turned his wife into a couch and his two kids into armchairs. He started to panic and thought to himself, "What on earth have I done?" He began to ponder, "How am I going to bring back my beloved family?" So, he thought for a while, and decided a good idea was to take them to a hospital and see if the surgeon could operate and bring them back. He loaded them into his van and off he rushed to the local hospital. He walked up and down the hospital hall and after some serious surgery, he asks the doctor, "Doc, how are they?" The doctor replied, "Comfortable!"

C. How much comfort do you give your spouse?

III. THIRD, WE SHOULD SPEND TIME WITH EACH OTHER.

A. Paul-2:1. Fellowship requires time.

B. A tornado hit a Kansas farmhouse just before dawn one morning. It tore off the roof and picked up the beds on which the farmer and his wife were sleeping. By some miracle, the tornado set them down, unharmed, the next county over.

The wife was sobbing uncontrollably.

"Don't be scared, Mary," her husband said. "We're not hurt."

Mary continued to cry. "I'm not scared," she said between sobs. "I'm happy... this is the first time we've been out together in 14 years."

C. How much time do you spend together?

D. Listen to David Jeremiah's insight in spending time: "You've heard the saying, "It's not the quantity, but the quality of time that really counts." Simply defined, the statement means that one can make up for having minimal moments with his family by making certain that the time he does have is quality time.

On the surface, this concept seems to make a lot of sense. It is possible to spend much time with one's family that is seemingly meaningless. All of us experience times when we are at home physically but our minds are wandering miles away. I can remember days with the family that could have been "scratched" in terms of "quality." So what is the "quality time" myth? It's as phony as the fake diamond in a one-dollar ring. The fact is, there is no quality without quantity.

Too many parents live with the regrets of abandoned moments. It takes time to be silly, to share a secret, to heal a hurt, to kiss away a tear. Moments of uninhibited communication between child and parent cannot be planned; they just happen. The only ingredient we bring to that dynamic of family life is our availability ... and that is spelled T-I-M-E.

May I add this is also true for couples.

IV. FOURTH, WE SHOULD BE TENDER AND COMPASSIONATE WITH EACH OTHER.

A. Paul-v.1.

B. A priest, a doctor, and an engineer were waiting one morning for a particularly slow group of golfers. The engineer asked, "What's with these guys? We must have been waiting for 15 minutes." The doctor agreed: "I've never seen such slow golfers." The pastor noted, "Hey, here comes the groundskeeper. Let's have a word with him."

The pastor called out to the groundskeeper, "Say, George, what's with the group ahead of us?"

George said, "That's a group of blind firefighters. They lost their sight saving our clubhouse from a fire last year, so we always let them play for free anytime."

The group was silent for a moment. The pastor sympathized, "That's so sad. I think I'll say a special prayer for them tonight." The doctor added, "That's a good idea. In fact, I'm going to contact my ophthalmologist buddy and see if we can do anything for these guys." Then

the engineer spoke up: "Well that's great, but in the meantime, why can't these guys play at night?"

CONCLUSION

- A. It may be a myth that anyone can have a perfect marriage.
- B. But we could have a better one if we...
 1. Encourage each other.
 2. Comfort each other.
 3. Spend time with each other.
 4. Be compassionate with each other.