

Marriage Advice for our Grandchildren...

“It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.” (Ecclesiastes 5:5)



Valentine’s Day is upon us again and in a day of short lived commitments (an oxymoron?), one has to wonder what the real significance of such a day is for many marriages today? Romance has replaced devotion as the cornerstone for a desirable relationship – a shaky foundation for a marriage relationship when it does not find its source in genuine love and commitment. Many will be purchasing cards, candy and flowers with little sense of a "for better or worse" lifetime commitment in marriage.

Today’s commitments are largely focused on the “better” side of the equation. Any hint of the “worse” side becomes grounds for divorce. It is a frightening prospect when we realize that our grandchildren are growing up in a world where 50 and 60 year marriages are rapidly declining and disappearing. Where will they find role models for what a “healthy” (not perfect) and Christ-honoring marriage relationship is all about – one where conflict, self-centeredness and annoying differences yield to unconditional love, respect, graciousness and forgiveness?

Fortunately, there are still some of those role models around today, and this issue is devoted to honoring those marriages that have weathered the storms and steadfastly refused to yield to worldly principles or philosophies which promote personal happiness over holiness. We want to introduce you to several couples who are practicing Biblical principles of love and devotion. We have asked these couples to answer one question, and their answers have been reprinted for your blessing and benefit. The question is this...

“What one piece of advise would you give to your grandchildren NOW that would help them enter into a lasting marriage relationship that would still be going strong 50 years from now?”

From Howard and Vangie Oliver – married 50 years this June; 3 grown children, and 8 grandchildren.

Howard: “My words to give a young person that could help in a lasting marriage in ones future... Please and Thank you are ALWAYS good words to use.”

Vangie: "Always be willing to make compromises"

Earl and Helen Harper: Just celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary; 6 grown children, 16 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

“If I had a grandson or granddaughter come to me and ask, “How long have you two been together and how have you made that happen?” ... I think my answer would be “Honesty & Patience”!

You see, if you are honest, you then are trustworthy and truthful ... you never break a promise!

It is like when your mother, just as she sees you to bed for the night, says to you, “I want you to clean up your room in the morning right after breakfast”.

Your reply, “OK mom, I’ll do that.”

The next morning, after you eat, you return to your room and make the bed and hang up your clothes, but then you realize that Power Rangers is coming on TV and you just have to see that. Well that still leaves the dirty clothes on the floor, your books and papers scattered around and the things you were playing with last night still on the floor. But you run down and jump in front of the TV. Mom comes in and says, “Did you get your room cleaned up?”

Now is the time to test your honesty...A “Yes” is only a half truth. You just started to clean it. You did NOT complete what you had promised your mother that you would do. You have broken a promise!

You see when you get married you make a promise to 3 people the person you are marrying, to yourself and to God. The promise? That you will love and care for that person “until death do you part”! Not just when you have the time, not just when you don’t have other things to do, not when you just feel like it. You do NOT break promises!! You must be honest, truthful and trustworthy. Only then will your relationship last.

AND ... remember God heard your promise and He will hold you accountable for eternity.

But you also have to remember to have patience! Your mom and dad are 2 different people with 2 different personalities ... and it is like you and your brother or sister. You don’t always like the same places, TV shows, food, etc. But you live in the same house and I hope you try to understand each others differences.

That is just like it is with your mother and dad, and like it will be when you find someone you want to spend the rest of your life with. Be willing to listen and trust the other person. You will not always agree, but with love and trust, guided by patience, you can work it out.

So start developing patience and honesty ... make it a part of your life now ... so that a few years from now it has become your way of life.”

From Gary and Elise Erickson: married almost 39 years; 3 adult children and 4 grandsons.

Elise:

* Psalm 127:1 "Unless the Lord builds the house, it's builders labor in vain". A lasting marriage is built upon godly principles and so is your life.

* If you believe you can fall "in" love, you'll believe you can fall "out" of love. Marriage is based on a life long commitment, not changing emotions.

* Marriage takes work to keep your relationship healthy and strong. Guard and treasure it like a precious jewel.

Gary:

* Marriage is both a spiritual and physical union, to destroy that union is as painful as tearing your flesh from your bone.

* Your marriage mate is God's personal gift to you as your primary source for daily happiness; learn to choose to be happy in your marriage.

* Your marriage mate is God's gift to complete and complement you (and you for your mate), not as a source of competition, contention and strife.

From John and Connie Chapin: married 40 years; 4 children and 7 grandchildren.

John: “Keep Jesus at the center of your life.”

Connie: “Be a forgiving person - grant forgiveness and ask for forgiveness when you have said something or done something to hurt another person.”

From Cavin and Diane Harper: married 37 years, 2 grown children, 5 grandchildren

Cavin: “Marriage is not about making us happy, but making us holy. Honor the vows you make regardless of the circumstances, choose to love your spouse without conditions, and you will enjoy a long life with that spouse ... and you will know what it is to be blessed.”

Diane: “Always look to the Lord for direction and answers, seeking to see your spouse as Christ sees him. Loves as He loves, forgive as He forgives, which you can only do if you stay close to Him. He will give you the ability. Remember all that God puts up with in you; yet He forgives and continues to draw you to Himself because you are precious to Him. Remember His love and what that truly means.”

Perhaps you will find some encouragement from these thoughts for strengthening your own marriage and for being in a position to share similar advice with your own grandchildren. Take the time to share your thoughts about marriage and the truth about commitments and vows. Marriage vows are made to each other in the presence of many witnesses and God Himself. God says plainly, “when a man (or woman) makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must NOT break his word, but must do everything he said.” (Numbers 30:2)

Grandparents, we can have an impact upon our grandchildren’s lives that will help them enter into relationships, whether in marriage or otherwise, that will give glory to God and result in blessing to others and ourselves. In the midst of a world where they have few examples of such relationship commitments, why not be that example for them? In fact, why not send a card to your grandchildren this year written by you that speaks of the value God places on marriage, the lessons you have learned, and your prayer that they will know the blessing of an honorable and long lasting marriage as well?

CGN’s Legacy Journal is a great tool for recording your thoughts about marriage and many other important topics that your grandchildren can read and remember for years to come. Order your complimentary copy today if you haven’t already done so. Visit www.legacyjournal.org and order your copy now!