

“A Cord Not Easily Broken”

M) Sharyn and I have been married for 15 years. Prior to our marriage I was divorced twice so I have, unfortunately, a very broad view of marriage. My first two marriages I focused on me and how married life would benefit me. It's safe to say I unintentionally traded in my mother for a wife; someone to cook, clean and take care of my needs. I didn't realize what true love really was and what it involved. It wasn't until I surrendered my life to Christ that I understood true love and commitment.

S) I dreamt of my knight in shining armor who rides in on his white horse and sweeps me off my feet and carries me away to live happily ever after... however I never imagined what the “happily ever after” really looked like and how hard it can be to achieve.

My prince came not on a white horse but in a rusty VW Rabbit and the armor was not shiny or smooth as one would imagine but it looked like it had been through many battles. However Michael was my handsome knight and after 15 years he still sweeps me off my feet. He is a knight that is willing to love me no matter how crazy I drive him, a knight that prays with and for me, one who will communicate with me, deal with conflicts and if needed lay down his life for me.

M) Love is not that warm fuzzy feeling we have when we are infatuated with someone. Do you realize that the first six to ten weeks of a relationship is the infatuation stage? So for at least three months couples are pretending to be someone they may not necessarily be. It is only after a good four months that the real “person” begins to emerge. Love is a decision and a covenant we make, a decision to hang in there with a person no matter what, for better or worse, in sickness or health, richer or poorer, fatter or uglier... Unfortunately many relationships are based on the physical characteristics of a person.

We can't depend on our emotions to carry us through the tough times; our emotions are fickle and change as fast as the Ohio weather. If there is not binding love, the decision to love no matter what, then what is going to anchor you when someone better looking comes along? Without a commitment to love there is nothing to keep us dedicated to that "one".

Early in my life I always searched for that someone or something to fill that void in my life that only God can fill. Relationships and "things" would work for a time but after the novelty wore off I was right back searching for that thing that made me whole.

I eventually found my identity in Christ and with Sharyn's identity in Christ the combination makes us strong and able to withstand all that life throws our way. Ecclesiastes 4:12 tells us; though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken; Christ is the third strand in our marriage and the adhesive that holds us together.

Sharyn and I depend on each other all the time but we're not dependant on each other. While we can stand and function on our own and do, we watch the others back and champion the other's causes and dreams, supporting each through the successes and the failures.

s) Marriage requires hard work, willingness, and the commitment to go the distance when times are tough. Marriage requires unconditional love that is patient, kind and not self seeking (1Corinthians 13). I can be a selfish person but I learned through the years, what I want, when I want it, is not always the best. For instance, I have learned to trust my husband when he says we need to wait before making a purchase; such as a new car. I find that he is usually correct and the times I rushed in and did it my way, the results were disastrous. Marriage requires faith, communication, fun, excitement, passion, and intimacy and it can be the best part of who you are. It requires continuous dating and making each other a priority. I wish I could share with you all that we have learned but there is not enough time. We have

faced issues of blending families, learning to communicate and when, (ladies, wait until the commercials), breaking down walls of past hurts, learning to not avoid conflict but how to handle it correctly, being able to admit when you are wrong, and how to face issues such as finances. I can honestly tell you that every year is better than the last; because we want it to be. With God as our third cord we can face anything together and will.

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