

READINGS

1)

The institution of marriage was begun
that a man and a woman
might learn how to love
and, in loving, know joy;
that a man and a woman
might learn how to share pain and loneliness
and, in sharing, know strength;
that a man and a woman
might learn how to give
and, in giving, know communion.

The institution of marriage was begun
that a man and a woman
might through their joy, their strength,
and their communion,
become creators of life itself.

Marriage is a high and holy state,
to be held in honor among all men
and women.

Marriage is a low and common state,
to be built of the stuff
of daily life.

Men and women are not angels, nor are they gods.
Love can become hatred;
joy, sorrow;
marriage, divorce.

But human beings are not condemned to failure.
Love can grow even in a real world.
The wounds of sorrow can be healed,
And new life built
on the learnings of the old.

This is the reason for our gathering today:
to renew our faith
in the strength of hope
and the power of love.

Kenneth W. Phifer

2)

The little things are the big things.
It is never being too old to hold hands.
It is remembering to say "I love you" at least once a day.
It is never going to sleep angry.
It is at no time taking the other for granted; the courtship should not end
with the honeymoon, it should continue through all the years.
It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives;
it is facing the world together.
It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.
It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice,
but in the spirit of joy.
It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.
It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have the wings of an angel.
It is not looking for perfection in each other.
It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding, and a sense of humor.
It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.
It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.
It is finding room for the things of the spirit.
It is the common search for the good and the beautiful.
It is the establishing of a relationship in which the independence is equal,
the dependence is mutual, and the obligation is reciprocal.

Betty Pingel



3)

The Creation of Woman from the Rib of Man

The Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep;
and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs,
and then closed up the place with flesh.
Then the Lord God formed a woman
from the rib He had taken out of the man,
and brought her to him.
The man said "This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman, for she was taken out of Man."
Woman was made of a rib out of the side of Man.
She was not created from Man's head to rule over him,
nor from his feet to be trampled upon by him.
Instead, Woman was taken from his side, to be equal with him;
under his arm, to be protected;
and near his heart, to be loved.

Matthew Henry

4)

When a man and a woman are in love,
His life lies within hers
and her life lies within his.

Each lives as an individual,
yet they also live
for one another.

Each strives for independent goals,
but they also work together
to achieve their dreams.

When a man and a woman are in love,
they will give to one another
what they need to survive
and help fulfill each other's wants.

They will turn one another's
disappointment into satisfaction.

They will turn one another's
frustration into contentment.

They will work as a mirror,
reflecting to each other
their strengths and weaknesses.

They will work together
to alleviate the emotional walls
that may separate them.

They will work together to build
a better understanding of one another.

They will learn to lean on each other,
but not so much as to be
a burden on the other.

They will learn to reach out to one another,
but not so much as to suffocate the other.

They will learn when it is time to speak
and when it is time to listen.

They will be there to comfort each other
in times of sorrow.

They will be there to celebrate together
in times of happiness.

They will be one another's friend,
guiding each other to the happiness
that life holds.

They will be one another's companion,
facing together the challenges
that life may present.

When a man and a woman are in love,
his life lies within hers
and her life lies within his.

Together they will love one another
for the rest of their lives
and forever.

Stephen T. Fader



5)

I love you not only for what you are,
but for what I am when I am with you.

I love you not only for what you have made of yourself,
but for what you are making of me.

I love you for the part of me that you brought out;

I love you for putting your hand into my heaped up heart
and passing over all the foolish, weak things

that you can't help dimly see there,
and for drawing out into the light all the beautiful belongings
that no one else had looked quite far enough to find.

I love you because you are helping me
to make of the lumber of my life not a tavern but a temple,
out of the works of my everyday not a reproach but a song...

You have done it without a touch, without a word.

You have done it by being yourself,
my companion and comforter, guide and friend,
the one I love.

Roy Croft

6)

Marriage Takes Three

Marriage takes three to be complete;
It's not enough for two to meet.
They must be united in love
by love's Creator, God above.
Then their love will be firm and strong,
able to last when things go wrong.
Because they've felt God's love and know
He's always there, He'll never go;
And they have both loved Him in kind
with all the heart and soul and mind;
And in that love they've found the way
to love each other every day.
A marriage that follows God's plan
takes more than a woman and man;
It needs a oneness that can be
only from Christ . . . Marriage takes three.

Beth Stuckwisch



7)

Weave My Love Into Yours

To be married is to enter a new realm of life.
You have left behind the room of childhood and now have stepped over the threshold
into the room of adult love and commitment.
It is within the bonds of this commitment that two distinctly different personalities
are blended into one...this process takes years.
It is like the weaving together of two distinctly different kinds of thread
into a whole new cloth...a cloth with many functions.
It is a tent...
a covering from the hostile elements of the changing seasons.
It is a colorful quilt...
that warms the two who share it.
It is a sheer, gauzy curtain...
that offers privacy while allowing the sunlight to shine through.
But the most beautiful and enduring marriage of all
is not merely the weaving of two lives, but of three...
For woven into the strongest unions
is the golden strand of God's love that endures forever.
May the cloth of your marriage be woven of three strands,
For "...a threefold cord is not easily broken." (*Ecclesiastes 4:12*)

Claire Cloninger

Scripture Readings

- 8) Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. So faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love (*1 Corinthians 13:4-7,13 – Traditional version*).



Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way nor is it irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly ever notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. This kind of love knows no boundaries to its tolerance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope, no limit to its endurance. It can outlast anything. Love is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has failed (*1 Corinthians 13:4-7,13 – Contemporary version*).



- 9) And you husbands, show the same kind of love to your wives as Christ showed to the church when He died for her. That is how husbands should be toward their wives, loving them in the same kind of way. For since a man and his wife are now one, a man is really doing himself a favor and loving himself when he loves his wife! No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it just as Christ cares for His body, the church, of which we are all parts. Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, giving them respect and treating them with honor since they are heirs together with you in the grace of life (*Ephesians 5:25, 28-30; 1 Peter 3:7*).



- 10) If you can find a truly good wife, she is worth more than precious gems! Her husband can trust her, and she will richly satisfy his needs. She will not hinder him, but help him all her life. She is a woman of strength and dignity, and has no fear of old age. When she speaks, her words are wise, and kindness is the rule of everything she says. She watches carefully all that goes on throughout her household, and is never lazy. Her children stand and bless her; so does her husband. He praises her with these words, "There are many fine women in the world, but you are the best of them all!" Charm can be deceptive and beauty doesn't last, but a woman who fears and reverences God shall be greatly praised (*Proverbs 31:10-12, 25-29*).

11) The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they will become one flesh (*Genesis 2:18-24*).



12) Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you. Where you go, I will go; and where you lodge (live), I will lodge (live). Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God (*Ruth 1:16*).