

The Family Friend



A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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Changing Roles

Making marriage Work After the Golden Anniversary (4)

By Norman & Ann Bales

Shortly after we got married more than fifty years ago, all the trash containers began to fill up. One day Ann said, "Honey (Both of us would agree that she said it kindly), the trash needs to be carried out. Norman questioned the need to point out such an obvious fact. Ann said, "Well, it's the husband's job to take out the trash." Norman's response was immediate and definitive. "Where does the Bible say it's the husband's job to take out the trash?"

Looking back on it, Norman said, "I thought that would surely put an end to the discussion. It didn't. It actually took a very long time to sort that one out. As far as I was concerned, the Bible was my trump card, and I played it with confidence if not arrogance. I had to come to grips with the fact that every issue of married life can't be settled by citing a Biblical text. In no way does that lessen the importance of 'thus saith the Lord.' I had overlooked the fact that the Bible doesn't specifically address certain issues that arise in a marriage."

Within the last two or three years, we've both had to make some adjustments to the way we go about domestic living. When Norman had brain surgery in 2007, Ann had to take on several new responsibilities, at least temporarily. At the present time Ann is suffering from a degenerative disease, which severely restricts her mobility. Norman is taking up some of the slack. To make that work we have to do these things.

1. Be flexible. We accept the fact that there are no hard and fast rules about what's the man's job and what's the woman's job. Asking for book, chapter, and verse on that one is not going to cut it.

2. Stay in a learning mode. Old dogs can learn new tricks. If the husband has never cooked, he might need to learn how if the wife can no longer handle meal preparation.

3. Expect less. Norman says, "I do a lot of cooking these days. My culinary skills don't begin to match up to Ann's, but she keeps telling me it's wonderful."

4. Practice the Golden Rule. That principle is addressed in the Bible and we can be assured that Jesus knew what he was talking about when he said, "So in everything, do to

others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

If we want marriage to be golden after the golden anniversary, then we're going to have to practice the "Golden Rule." It's that simple, and it's that complex. Sometimes the Golden Rule means giving more than you've ever given to the relationship.

Positively Prudent

"I, wisdom, dwell with prudence"
(Proverbs 8:12)

One of President George W. Bush's famous lines was "it wouldn't be prudent." I don't even remember what he was talking about, I just remember the statement. "Prudent" isn't a word that seems to be used much. The Message translates the above verse "I am Lady Wisdom, and I live next to Sanity; Knowledge and Discretion live just down the street." The New Century Version goes with "I have good judgment." Prudence has the basic definition of making logical, well-thought out decisions. We have to make decisions every

day. What is the basis of those decisions? If we have wisdom, we have prudence.

The concept of prudence is an important one in the book of Proverbs.

Note what is said about this important word:

The prudent does not tell everyone how smart he is (12:23). There is a high degree of humility with the prudent. Instead, he "conceals knowledge." He may know a lot, but isn't going to reveal it. He speaks when it is appropriate to do so. By way of contrast, Solomon says "but the heart of fools proclaims folly." So the one who doesn't know is doing all the talking!

The prudent lets insults roll off his back (12:16). A fool explodes in anger when offended. The prudent man can ignore the insult and basically "blow it off." This verse confirms that the prudent man has weighed the most appropriate way to respond to the "dishonor" (somebody dishonored or insulted him). His choice is to "conceal" it. He is not going to make a big deal out of it.

The prudent considers his life direction (14:8). He gives thought to what he is doing with his life, and whether it is headed in the right direction. We have to give credit to the prodigal son who eventually considered the direction his life was going and decided to return home to the Father (Luke 15:17). This was a prudent decision on his part.

The prudent stays out of harm's way (22:3). Solomon says he "sees the evil and hides himself." One might say

he is a coward. Sinful associates might say: "What? Chicken? Afraid to do this with us?" Yet the prudent "hides." That is the smart move. The rest of the verse gives the alternative: "But the naïve go on, and are punished for it" (cf. 27:12).

The prudent will be rewarded (14:18). Solomon says they will be "crowned with knowledge." Of course, he already had knowledge. If he didn't, he would have been prudent. This verse is declaring that he will have a crown that declares what he really is (like the "crown of righteousness" in 2 Timothy 4:8).

Sometimes we'll observe someone doing a dumb thing and conclude: "they should have known better." We might even look at some of what we did and make the same assessment. Sometimes we did know better. Thinking things through, and then acting on what we know is right. That is smart! It is positively prudent.

—Neal Pollard

News & Notes

SUICIDE DATA SHOWS HUGE INCREASE.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released data from 1999 to 2014 showing a 24 percent growth in suicides in that 15-year period. The highest growth took place among girls from the ages of 10 to 14 showing a 200 percent surge. Adolescent psychiatrist Victor Fornari attributes this to "teens suffering from anxiety and de-

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pression influenced by websites and blogs dedicated to dark topics and self-destructive coping mechanisms." We would suggest that the lack of active faith is a major contributor to this as well. (Source: *The Week*, May 13, 2016, page 20.)

Also, the National Center for Health Statistics has released data for suicides showing that for ages 75 and older the rate has climbed 24 percent from 1999 to 2014. For men from 45 to 64 the rate has climbed 43 percent and for women in that same age group it has risen by 63 percent. Male suicides are far more common than female suicides overall.

Those over 75 have 40 suicides per 100,000 for men but only 5 per 100,000 for women. We would suggest that not being involved in the work of the church is a major factor in these numbers. Younger males have half as many suicides as age 75 and up. Sitting around feeling useless and watching negative things on television is enough to discourage anyone. Seniors need to be involved! Get your senior group doing something at your congregation! Source: *AARP Bulletin*, June 2016, page 4., via Does God Exist?

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."