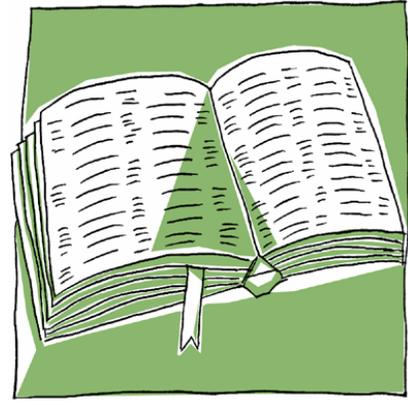


Scripture Reflections on Marriage



Reflection One

Scripture Reading

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:1-10)

Reflection

This beginning to the Sermon on the Mount has been described as the manifesto or job description for Christian living. Every disciple of Jesus strives to follow what Jesus teaches in these passages. God gives each married couple, sealed with the bond of God's covenant of love, the grace to practice the Beatitudes *together*, as a living, breathing

sign of God's kingdom. God is so generous with his blessings.

Prayer

God of all blessing, be present with married people living their holy Sacrament. Bless their efforts to live the Beatitudes. May they know joy in loving each other and in serving you, through Christ Jesus, you Son, who is always present with them. Amen.

Reflection Two

Scripture Reading

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another. (John 15:12-14, 16-17)

Reflection

In *Love and Marriage*, Bill Cosby says, "For two people in a marriage to live together day after day is unquestionably the one miracle the Vatican has overlooked." Marriage is a miracle. The love that is

required in marriage *is* a miracle! How else can one explain the “until death do we part” kind of love, the utterly unselfish, gutsy giving of self...when sometimes it would be so easy to turn around and walk away? Yes, Bill, marriage is a miracle. Loving each other day in and day out...what an adventure.

Prayer

Jesus, show us the way to love each other. Show us so that all marriages and committed relationships will be a living sign to the world or your saving, all-loving presence. Amen.

Reflection Three

Scripture Reading

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ (John 2:1-5)

Reflection

“Do whatever Jesus tells you to do.” These are the only words in Scripture that Mary directs to us...and she directs them to every couple who is living the Sacrament of Marriage: “Do whatever Jesus tells you to do.” Jesus tells us to love deeply, so deeply it is going to hurt sometimes. To forgive, over and over again. To heal wounds. To reach out to others who are in need. You know the rest of the Scripture story. Jesus tells the servants to bring him stone jars filled with water. Now why would servants bring Jesus jars filled with water? What good is water going to do when they need wine? But notice, the servants do what Jesus

asks. Jesus transforms the water into wine, and the wedding couple experiences honor rather than shame. The abundance of Jesus’ love is evident.

Prayer

God, grant us the grace to respond willingly to the demand of Mary, the mother of Jesus your Son when she tells us, “Do whatever he tells you to do.” Grace our lives with unselfish love, with forgiveness, with healing, with service to others, and with your abundant blessings. May our love for each other grow everyday. Amen.

Reflection Four

Scripture Reading

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (John 15:9-12)

Reflection

“Abide in my love.” Spend some moments of silence together. Hold hands if you wish. Simply rest in the words of Jesus, “Abide in my love.”

Prayer

Lord, we rest in your love. In our love for each other we find joy, in our love for you our joy is complete. Your love fills our hearts, and fills our home. Thank you. Amen.

Reflection Five

Scripture Reading

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us; we have boldness before God, and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him. And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us. (1 John 3:18-24)

Reflection

In marriage, love is our guide. But it is not a lip-service kind of love. It is love as a verb, love that is action; it is love that we practice every day. Married couples discover the truth about love throughout the days, months and years of their relationship. Many will say something to this affect, "I didn't have a clue about what love *really* was when I first got married!" The reality of love, the Jesus Christ kind of love where we lay down our lives for each other, unfolds as marriage vows are lived out. How do we demonstrate love? To our spouse? To our children? To friends, work associates, to those in need, to those we don't particularly like?

Prayer

Dear Lord, help us to love, not in words only, but in our actions, in the way we live day to day. Help us to show each other, and the members of our family, the kind of love you have shown us. May we experience

your love by expressing it through our actions. Amen.

Reflection Six

Scripture Reading

But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. (1 Corinthians 12:31, 13:1-8)

Reflection

Paul's letter to the Corinthians gives us the fundamentals about what Christian love is. It is a directory about what the unifying mission of the Christian home is. We are called to a love that is unselfish. This kind of love in a marriage is the sign of an open and full relationship.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, help us live with your kind of love: love that is patient, love that is kind, love that is not jealous or resentful, love that rejoices in truth, and bears all things. May our love for each other be like yours, love that never ends. Amen.

Reflection Seven

Scripture Reading

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-35, 37-39)

Reflection

Deeply inseparable. Jesus holds us close. His love is constant – through trials, tribulations, and all that life dishes out, Christ still loves us. Nothing can separate us from the love of God through his Son, Jesus. What an awesome image (and challenge!): married couples who model their love for each other on the love of Jesus for us. Thank God for marriages that give witness to Jesus unending love. Simply inseparable!

Prayer

Holy Lord, nothing can separate us from your love. Grant us the grace to love each other with constant, abiding love. Amen.

