



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING
WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Subject: Marriage

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FIVE MARRIAGE KILLERS

It [love] is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails..." 1 Corinthians 13:5-8

"The man who says he can read his wife like a book, only shows how illiterate he really is." I don't know whom to credit with this bit of wit and wisdom, yet it's true. Both men and women struggle with an abysmal ignorance of each other's psychological make up, and subsequently live with myths that seem to be passed from generation to generation. Like what? Like the following:

Myth #1: "If he really loved me, he'd know what I want!" This is not exclusively a woman's myth. Both husbands and wives find difficulty in expressing what is really on their heart, and no matter how much love there is in a relationship, there has to be communication to express the feelings of a heart.

Myth #2: The quality of the time we spend together as a family is more important than the quantity of time we are together. Put this one to rest once and for all. There is nothing you can substitute for being together; no way you can feel what the other feels, experiencing all the flavors and variations of life and love, without being together. Having an hour or two with your son on the weekend is no substitute for just being there, putting him to bed, and reading to him. Your physical presence is an expression of love which cannot be replaced with brief appearances labeled, "quality time." A survey of 3000 couples who consider their marriages to be "strong" and "close" say they spend "a great deal of time together." As one woman with 30 years of marriage behind her put it, "Heartfelt conversations simply cannot be squeezed into little snatches of time."

Myth #3: Having a baby will bring us together. Wrong again! The fact is that having a youngster produces stress in a marriage. While it enriches a good



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marriage, feeding schedules, crying babies, interruptions in your schedule do not automatically draw you closer together. Example, who is responsible to get the bottle for the baby when both of you are tired and it's 3 o'clock on Sunday morning? Uh-huh. Split decision on that already.

Myth #4: Times of crisis make a marriage stronger. While that can well be true, it generally works the other way. A crisis in life, whether it is personal, financial, or a family crisis involving parents or relatives, will do one of two things: it will either draw you closer to each other or push you farther apart. Your relationship with the Lord and your ability to see the hand of God in what happens has a lot to do with either letting difficulty bring you closer to the Lord or come between you as you play the blame game, accusing the other of being the reason for trouble.

Myth #5: My personal happiness is the most important thing in my life. I label this as a myth based upon the fact that happiness is dependent on far more than circumstances, and clearly, changing partners and circumstances doesn't bring happiness when you take misery with you. The fact is that misery begets misery; and almost always, changing partners or circumstances only compounds the difficulty. Presently more than half of all marriages end in failure, and of that number 75 percent will try again, and 60 percent of them will again give up on the relationship.

The solution is not running from problems, but solving them with God's help and your patient persistence. Joy, not happiness, is the great reward of having done the right thing, overcoming the difficulties that could sink the ship of your marriage. Solving problems is not easy. But tough as it is, it's the only way to real happiness.

Resource reading: 1 Corinthians 13:5-13