

Introduction

If there is any time we need winning marriages it is now. The end-time will have a lot of negative impact on marriage and family life situations. 1 Timothy 4:1-3 says that “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith forbidding to marry”.

Three things will be affected

(i) The seriousness of marriage

(ii) The sanctity of marriage

(iii) The stability of marriage

These can be seen in the increasing divorce rates all over the world.

In the 1920s - 1 divorce in 7 marriages

In the 1940s - 1 divorce in 7 marriages

In the 1960s - 1 divorce in 6 marriages

In the 1960s - 1 divorce in 4 marriages

In the 1972 - 1 divorce in 3 marriages

In the 1980s - 1 divorce in 2 marriages

From 1990 onwards it was predicted that we may have as many divorces as marriages. In spite of this disturbing picture, God wants winning marriages.

Marriages that will win over 7 things:

The decadence of this time

The deteriorations of this time

The deviations of this time

The difficulties of this time

The disorientations of this time

The darkness of this time

The dryness of this time

Our text of study – Luke 1:5-17

In this passage we see a man and a woman who demonstrated the qualities of a winning marriage. Basic thoughts on the passage:

Winning marriages are not very many in different generations

Winning marriages generally touch the heart of God man

They affect society and humanity positively

In winning marriages they live for God and serve Him in spite of negative situations

They live to overcome their setbacks and predicaments

Winning marriages never allow anything that will affect their being occupied for God and showing forth His glory

Winning marriages do not cave in or change with time due to pressures

Winning marriages project their victories and stance in Christ even beyond their generations

We shall look at 3 facts from the text:

[A] Portrait of a winning marriage

[B] Predicaments against winning marriages

[C] Prevailing in winning marriages

[A] Portrait of a winning marriage

Lk. 1:5-23, 57; Ex. 2:1; Dt. 6:6-11, 11:18; Prov.22:6; Mal. 2:14-16; Rom. 4:18; Gen. 18:17; 2Kgs.4:8; Acts 18:24-26; Eph. 5:20-33

There are two main things that will be seen clearly in any winning marriage:

(a)Solid foundation

(b)Sound features

(a) Solid foundation

Lk.1:5; Ps.11:3; 2Cor. 6:14-18; Dt. 7:3; Prov.18:22; Heb.13:4. The foundation will determine the future of the marriage. When the foundation is wrong you cannot arrive at the scriptural winning ways. Verse 5 says: "A certain priest named Zechariah of the course of Abia and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth".

They were both covenant people

They were both from the priestly tribe

They both knew God

They were both godly and blameless

Therefore four things must constitute a solid foundation

The Word of God - Ps.119:128; Mt.7:24-27; Lk.6:40

The Will of God - Heb. 10:7; Mt.26:39; Ps.25:9,14

The Ways of God - Ps.25:12; Is.55:8,9; Lk.14:22

The Worship of God - Jn. 4:23,24; Amos 3:3; Lk.1:6

Note: Everything about a winning marriage right from commencement, courtship to consummation should be based on scripture:

Not going outside God's leadings

Not marrying an unbeliever

Not defiling the bed

Not conforming to the world

Seek God's glory alone in all things [1Cor.10:30-33; Col.3:24; Gal.1:10]

(b)Sound features Luke 1:6

There are four things in the text that will constitute sound features in a winning marriage: (i)

Holiness (ii) Honesty (iii) Hard work (iv) Healthy interactions and inputs

Holiness: They were both blameless before God. Blamelessness before God will help to maintain divine standards in marriage. When there is holiness there will be no room for a secretive lifestyle, stubbornness or selfishness. Holiness will foster and strengthen genuine relationships in marriage. The parties involved will always be conscious of not doing anything to displease God or their partner.

Honesty: When there is honesty, there is no deception. They both live in the light without

cover-ups. They are honest about their frailties, faults and failures without giving excuses or buck passing.

Hard work: There is need for hard work to make our lives what they ought to be. There is need for hard work to keep doing what is expected towards God and one another in the relationship. Winning marriages do not give room for laziness, loafing and laxities. They get involved with God and each other's affairs irrespective of tough times, trying times, tempting situations, tribulations and torments. In our text, Zechariah was occupied in working for God and the wife providing a conducive atmosphere.

Healthy interactions/impartations: There was healthy interaction between Zechariah and Elizabeth despite their predicaments. They manifest 4 strong things:

- Strong convictions
- Strong connections
- Strong concentration
- Strong commitments

- Commitment to pleasing God completely and continually
- Commitment to playing their individual roles as demanded by God
- Commitment to glorifying God in spite of problems, predicaments and perplexing situations
- Commitment to maintain and grow in mutuality and fellowship

- Staying together
- Suffering together
- Sticking together
- Surrendering together
- Seeking together
- Struggling together
- Standing together
- Speaking together
- Supplicating together

In their commitments, they sought the very good of all the parties in the union. They did everything to uphold integrity and a godly reputation. They remained blameless together despite their state. There was no picture of grumbling, complaining, nagging or wanting to quit the relationship. Winning families respect their marital vows irrespective of negative situations. Winning families live and project godly ideals beyond the present. They live and work to surmount their mountains.

Note: That you are a winning family does not mean that you may not have (i) some delays (ii) some difficulties (iii) some demands on your faith.

[B] Predicaments in winning marriages

Lk. 1:7; Gen. 11:30; Jud. 13:2; 1Sam. 1:2; 2Kg. 4:14

A marriage may be a winning one even in the face of problems. We cannot talk of a winning marriage without seeing how they handle predicaments.

Note:

Predicaments are meant to bring the best out of the relationship

Predicaments are meant to show the real stuff of all involved in the relationship

Predicaments are meant to show the real fruits of their faith and confessions

Predicaments are meant to reveal the strength of their foundations

Predicaments are meant to show the true character of the spouses, their person, purpose and priorities.

10 things not seen in winning marriages

They don't demonstrate negative dispositions

They don't live in regret and remorse

They don't go about complaining and murmuring

They don't go about to castigate or insult God

They are not touchy, irritable or irrational

They are not withdrawn or given to self-pity

They don't withhold from God or man

They don't blame anybody for their predicament

They are not pessimistic

They don't misbehave or compromise the ideals of the Kingdom

Rather:

They see their predicaments as stepping stones

They see their predicaments as avenues for miracles

They see their predicaments as tests and trials of faith they must not fail

They see their predicaments as opportunities to prove God

They see their predicaments as opportunities to attest to the sufficiency and supremacy of God

In winning marriages the spouses are:

(i) Calm (ii) Collected (iii) Confident (iv) Committed to God and each other (v) Continuing in their devotion in spite of their predicaments.

They never give in to four things:

(i) Impatience (ii) Individualism (iii) Inconsideration (iv) Insensitivity

They are fully persuaded that:

Nothing negative is final

The devil will not have the last laugh

They can always turn things around

They can have their desires fulfilled in spite of initial problems

They can possess all that belongs to them

They can show that God's words and promises are true

They can have testimonies where others failed

[C] Prevailing in winning marriages

Lk. 1:13, 14:24, 25, 40-46; Phil. 4:13; Lk.1:37; Mk.11:22-24; Mt.16:18

Winning marriages always have the last laugh over problems and challenges. They don't give up or lose hope however tough or rough things may be. They never quit or do anything contrary to scripture – BUT:

They handle every problem as it comes

They never live in defeat or despondency

They never succumb to the weight of any negative situation

They don't run away or turn back from situations

They don't get intimidated by satanic onslaughts or activities

They don't yield to frustration or discouragement

They don't allow failures or fumbling to continue

They don't look for easy way out

They don't look for shortcuts or unbiblical solutions

They never follow the path of least resistance

They keep pulling, praying, persevering and pushing together until they overcome completely

Conclusion

God is looking for people who will make the difference in the areas of godly marriages. The society looks so pessimistic in this aspect. They have seen so many disappointments even in "high spiritual quarters". It is as if things have totally fallen apart in terms of godly marriage and family lives. The saints who are in the light of the world will have to work hard to restore the real standards in marriage and family life. It will take firm decisions and determination. We all can decide to really make a difference through exemplary winning marriages. God will give grace to all who are willing. [Is.1:18-20; 2Cor9:8, 12:9; Mt.5:14-16]

Source:

Africa Pastors Prayer Network, July 2010, Lagos, Nigeria

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