

## Couples In Bloom – Presents and Presence

September 2010

**God's blessings are SO good that we may develop an attitude of entitlement.** This lack of appreciation and humility is how badness comes from mishandling goodness. It may not be that we wanted to sin, but perhaps our carelessness allowed us to sin. There are sins of commission (doing something) and sins of omission (not doing something).

Couples In Bloom has seen some intense situations, which is not what we expected. God assigns tasks **beyond our ability**, perhaps to keep us dependent on Him. It is good that HE is God, especially when we do not understand. His ways are *better* than our ways ⇒ Isaiah 55:9. The world is getting *worse* and worse ⇒ 2 Timothy 3:13. God wants to move us from glory to glory ⇒ 2 Corinthians 3:18. This requires HIS hand in our life.

Why does the marriage vow state **“for better or for worse”** when we cannot know what the future will hold? It is a crazy vow... unless God is involved. God gave mankind a free will... another crazy vow. It brought Him pain ⇒ Genesis 6:6, but He did it for the **end result** ⇒ John 3:16. **This is a key when marriage gets difficult**; end results are the purpose of trials, not the trials themselves. We need to feed on this truth during our trials.

Marriage was created from this very model of love, crazy as it may be sometimes. This promotes marriage far beyond the mere interpersonal relationship the world thinks it is... making marriage spiritually accountable. When we get to Heaven, **God will not say**, “You took Christianity too seriously.” **Nor will He say**, “You took your marriage too seriously.” What we do in marriage (from arguments to intimacy) is just as accountable before God as everything else... public and private ⇒ Ecclesiastes 12:14. It all matters.

**This needs to humble us.** We need to fear (yes, literally be afraid of) God ⇒ Proverbs 15:33 **AND** be loved by God ⇒ John 15:13. **Of all created things, marriage is the closest thing to the costly love of God.** We dare not have the audacity to treat it lightly. Realizing that it is **beyond our ability** to love our spouse is the beginning of loving our spouse. We look to God and say, “I cannot love my spouse without You putting Your love into me.”

We could never pay for God's goodness or do anything to get “one up” on God. God never answered Job's questions; He basically just replied, ‘Job, you need **ME**.’ Again: end results are the purpose of trials, not the trials themselves... even Job's severe trials. **Our need of God Himself is bigger than our need of answers to all our problems.**

God is ready to answer our cry... **once we get this straight first.** We know we **got it** when **we authentically want God's presence more than God's presents.** The same is true in marriage: intimacy with our spouse is genuine when we want them more than we want their blessings. Blessings are very important, but cannot compare to the giver. This is how God loves us, His Bride; He empowers us to do the same. ♥ Loren & Kathy Falzone

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