**GOOD NEWS ABOUT MARRIAGE**

“*Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge*.” (Hebrews 13:4)

"*For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence," says the LORD of hosts*.” (Malachi 2:16)

Yes, God will still judge the “adulterer.” And yes, God does still “hate divorce.”

But there is actually some good news on the marriage front. I strongly encourage you to read the book, *The Good News About Marriage*. It is written by Shaunti Feldhahn. She does an excellent service for us by debunking the oft quoted statistic that the divorce rate in America is around 50%. After doing extensive research on that ghastly statistic, she discovered that is simply not true.

The actual number is about 25% for all first-time marriages! The inflated number was based on *projections* by researchers back in the 70’s when so many states were passing no-fault divorce laws. They *projected* it would hit 50% and that magic number stuck. In reality, divorce rates have never come close to that high number.

Would you do me (actually, yourself and your marriage) a favor and go online and type in “Shaunti Feldhahn” and look for YouTube videos of interviews with her. There is one that even explains, in her own words, a full summary of her book for those who don’t have time to read it. It is so stirring and encouraging to see the real facts and figures on how marriage can be, and should be, great. One particular point I discovered was that nearly 80% of marriages that have stuck it out for at least five years are now considered “wonderful!” That is truly “good news” for marriages, for we all need a healthy dose of positive reinforcement that our marriage can last “until death do you part.”

It’s true, even 1% divorce rate is a tragedy that should never happen. If only every couple would follow God’s prescription (see below), there would be zero divorces. But let’s get back to reality of “what is” and not “what if.” Since three out of every four (75%) marriages do not end in divorce (and oh, by the way, “Christian” marriages are shown to be close to 90% intact), then that truly offers hope for couples who are hesitant about making wedding vows. It is discouraging to think you only have a 50 / 50 chance of success. But when you see the truth that if both of you are Christians then you have a 90 / 10 chance, that is a game changer! You don’t have to start your marriage in survival mode, but in success mode. Bring that optimism to your marriage makes all the difference.

Our culture is so influenced by statistics and “news.” It seems most everyone treats the media as truth proclaimers. Whatever they report from these “experts” is supposed to be gospel truth. Be careful, so much of what we read today from the media, especially social media, should be held in suspect. This false report on marriage as Russian Roulette is a terrible lie. Young men and women, hear this loud and clear - you CAN have a successful marriage and happy life!

Take hope, and take heart, your marriage can be a happily-ever-after tree of life. God’s way works! And *God’s way* is found in the greatest marriage manual ever written, the Bible. If you are looking for statistics that are guaranteed – and I mean 100% infallible if ***both*** husband and wife live by them – read these following scriptures:

Here are those rules for success:

[Proverbs 18:22](https://www.biblestudytools.com/proverbs/18-22.html) - *He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord*. (Husband, always maintain an attitude by telling her often – “Sweetheart, in you I have found a good thing!”)

[Proverbs 19:14](https://www.biblestudytools.com/proverbs/19-14.html) - *House and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord*. (Wife, look up the word “prudent” and set your mind to be that!)

[Proverbs 21:9](https://www.biblestudytools.com/proverbs/21-9.html) - *It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife*. (Wife, determine to be a show-horse, not a nag).

[Proverbs 12:4](https://www.biblestudytools.com/proverbs/12-4.html) - *An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones*. (Wife, be his crown, not one who crowns him!)

[Hebrews 13:4](https://www.biblestudytools.com/hebrews/13-4.html) - *Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous*. (How is marriage “honored”? By building trust that he or she is your “one and only.” You make a “covenant with your eyes” to look at her / him – Job 31:1, and letting them know beyond all doubt that she / he is trustworthy sexually and all other ways).

[Genesis 2:24](https://www.biblestudytools.com/genesis/2-24.html) - *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh*. (Never, ever, never compare him / her to daddy and momma! That is the source of far too many marriage troubles).

[Ephesians](https://www.biblestudytools.com/ephesians/5-31.html) 5:22-33 – *Wives, submit … Husbands, love …* (What you see in the church in its relationship with Christ, is what you should practice in the home – and vice versa).

​I Peter 3:1-7 - *Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear*… *Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered*.

My parents used these rules to live happily for 66 years! Benita’s parents used these rules and were happily married for 66 years! Benita and I have used these rules and have been happily married 43 years and counting. That’s 175 years of marital success in just three homes! I know legions of couples, both in this church, and throughout the brotherhood, who can proudly boast the same results.

Yes, there is “Good News” about marriage. Faith in God’s word says that you can absolutely “live happily ever after.”

I love you --- Benita. Thank you for loving me.

Rick