



—HATE— DIVORCE:

An Insight into the Nature of Marriage
and Causes of Family Crises and Divorce

Bakwaph Peter Kanyip (PhD.)

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Bakwaph Peter Kanyip (PhD)

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to three great women from southern Kaduna, who inspired me to write this book based on my homilies on marriages for the benefit of families in the world:

Mrs. Patricia Jumai Danmaida (Proprietress of Panaf School, Barnawa Kaduna)

Mrs. Amina Yakowa (Wife to the Late Governor Patrick Yakowa)

Mrs. Alice Yaro (Retired Civil Servant Public Complain's Commission, Abuja)

I also dedicate it to all couples facing family crises or being divorced.

May God sustain all families to live in love and peace!

Foreword

One of the institutions that have faced multiple challenges in our modern time is the institution of marriage. For so many in the west, marriage is outdated, accounting for the crashing of several marriages annually. For some who come into marriage, there is the difficulty of remaining in marriage, accounting for the rise in divorce cases. In the face of several questions emerging about marriage, from where shall come the answers needed? In this book titled: *I Hate Divorce: An Insight into the Nature of Marriage and Causes of family Crises*, Rev. Fr. Dr. Bakwaph Peter Kanyip, has not only shown the value and potential of marriage but responded to emerging fundamental questions bordering on divorce.

The Code of Canon Law defines Catholic marriage using key concepts (**Can 1055, 1°**): permanent, lifetime, intimate, consensual and exclusive partnership. This implies that, while marriage and remarriage are possible, the Catholic Church has no place for divorce in marriage. However, there is separation and dissolution. In the case of separation, the person is considered to be in good standing and is entitled to participate fully in the spiritual and sacramental life of the Church. However, the divorced and remarried without a *Declaration of Invalidity* is only entitled to participate in a limited way. The absence of divorce in the lexicon of Catholic Sacramental Theology has shaped the thoughts of Fr. Peter in this beautiful piece of ten chapters.

The author, therefore, presents marriage as a permanent, intimate,

consensual and exclusive partnership or community of life and love; an institution established by the Creator and endowed by Him with its own proper laws. Fr. Peter holds that God has inscribed this union in the very nature of man and woman, not just as a covenant relationship but as a vocation through which God is loved and served. Given the fundamental place that marriage occupies in God's plan and in the life of the Church, it is commendable that Fr. Bakwaph is marking his 50th birthday anniversary with the gift of a book on marriage to the Church. Taking from the benefits of his several years of experience as a pastor and teacher, he combined insightful imagination and originality in substantially treating the issues surrounding divorce. This gives this piece a unique flavour.

For all these reasons, it is an honour and my pleasure to salute this splendid achievement with a foreword. I, therefore, strongly recommend this book for all who treasure good theological/spiritual literature; and most especially for anyone who wishes to be abreast with important teachings and developments on marriage and divorce. Pastors, teachers, experts, researchers, undergraduate and post-graduate students, beginners and casual readers within and outside the parameters of theology are bound to treasure the usefulness of Fr. Peter's unique contribution to knowledge.

Revd. Prof. KANU Ikechukwu Anthony, OSA

Veritas University Abuja

***I*ntroduction**

I hate divorce is a phrase in Malachi 2:16, which demonstrates the hatred of divorce in the sight of God. We live in a world where the cases of divorce are growing higher daily and society sees nothing wrong with it. But that was not the original plan of God when he created Man and Woman and ordained marriage. This book intends to give an insight into the nature of marriage and the causes of family crises and divorce in marriages.

The book begins by explaining the original concept of marriage as an institution ordained by God and raised to the dignity of sacrament by Christ himself. Marriage as an institution is a journey of faith and love with your family with everyone performing his or her role in the institution to develop it to its ultimate goal which is to know, love, and serve God and one another for eternal happiness. The book explains the theological analysis of Christian marriage and the canonical interpretation to prepare those who wish to enter the institution so that once contracted it will be a lasting union.

However, despite the ideal purpose of marriage which is based on spouses' love for one another and the procreation of children, today we still face many crises in the families leading to divorce or annulments. This book is written to prepare those who wish to enter into marriage, to know the sacredness of marriage and do all it entails to make it a loving and admirable institution. It will also correct some wrong and false concepts about marriage so that cases of divorce and family crises will be reduced to uphold the

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original plan of God for man and woman which he ***hates divorce*** (Mal. 2:16).

This book is a journey book for all people married or not married because it is a guide and guard to a happy lasting marriage. It offers ways to live in peace and share experiences that touch the heart and the best way to live a happy married life. Therefore, I present to you a master piece of 21st Century therapy of fulfilled married life that brings and sustains marital happiness and joy.

Chapter one

—MARRIAGE AS SACRAMENT—

Conceptual Clarification

i. Sacrament

The word sacrament is from a Latin word “Sacramentum,” meaning an oath of fidelity, to be faithful to the state. But later it came to be understood as signs instituted by the Church as an instrument of salvation and it came to be known as an inward grace in an outward sign infused in our souls as act of fidelity to God for our salvation. According to the New Dictionary of Theology 811, “Sacrament is a prophetic symbol in and through which the Church, the body of Christ, proclaims, makes an explicit and celebrates in representation that presence and action of God which is called grace.”

ii. Marriage

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium Et Spes*, promulgated by his Holiness, Pope Paul VI, on the 7 of December 1965, teaches that "Marriage is a covenant by which a man and a woman establish between themselves, as partners for their whole life, which, by its very nature, is ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring, and which, between the baptized, has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament." In other words, it is a covenant by which a man and woman contract themselves into life partnership

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of love and become helpmates to each other and for the procreation and training of their children. In the Roman Catholic Church, a marriage is considered to be a valid contract entered into between two willing parties, and ratified by Divine sanction.

iii. The Family

The family is the first fundamental and most natural type of society, composed of a father, mother and children which exists for the good of individual members. God's plan for the family is that the husband is subject to Christ; the wife be in subjection to the husband; and the children be in subjection to the parents. The husband is not to rule over his wife as an absolute dictator, but he does have the authority to make decisions on matters affecting the family.

iv. The Husband

The husband is the head of the family by natural law and obedience and loyalty are due to him from his wife and the children. It is good to know that he is a senior partner not a master and the wife is companion not a slave (Eph. 5:22-23). Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it. In addition, Colossians 3:19 and 1 Peter 3:7 say that the husband is to treat and love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. When this principle is violated, there is a tendency for the family to also break down. The wife will start to lose her respect for her husband's position as a head and will rebel against his authority. The children will notice this attitude and become rebellious. Friction in

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the family is generated when any one of God's divine principles are violated, particularly when the husband fails to genuinely love his wife and provide clear leadership in the family.

v. The Wife

The wife is the husband's companion and one of the family heads, owing love, reverence and obedience to her husband and upbringing of her children. Colossians 3:18 says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." It means that the wife should submit to the desires of her husband as long as they do not involve clear violations of God's will.

Sacramental Marriage

The concept of Christian Marriage is based on its very nature which is Sacrament, Object (spouse), communion of life, God the author and Covenantal contract. Marriage is the intimate, exclusive, indissoluble communion of life and love entered by man and woman (object) at the design of the Creator for the purpose of their own good and the procreation and education of children; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament that shares the following:

i. Intimate Communion of Life and Love: Marriage is the closest and most intimate of human friendships. It involves the sharing of the whole of a person's life with his/her spouse. Marriage calls for a mutual self-surrender so intimate and complete that spouses without losing their individuality become

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“one,” not only in body, but also in soul.

ii. Exclusive Communion of Life and Love: As a mutual gift of two persons to each other, this intimate union excludes such union with anyone else. It demands the total fidelity of the spouses. This exclusivity is essential for the good of the couple and children.

iii. The Design of the Creator: God is the author of marriage and he instituted marriage for the well being of mankind. He inscribed the call to marriage in our very being by creating us as male and female. Marriage is governed by his laws, faithfully transmitted by his Bride, the Church. For marriage to be what it is, it must conform to these laws. Man, therefore, is not free to change the meaning and purposes of marriage.

iv. Covenantal Contract: While marriage involves a legal contract, this must be subordinate to the spousal covenant which provides a stronger and more sacred framework for marriage. A covenant goes beyond the minimum rights and responsibilities guaranteed by a contract. A covenant calls the spouses to share in the free total, faithful, and fruitful love of God because it is God who, in the image of his own Covenant with his people, joins the spouses in a more binding and sacred way than any human contract.

v. The Dignity of a Sacrament: Marriage between baptized persons is an efficacious sign of the union between Christ and the Church, and, as such, is a means of grace. The marriage of two non-baptized persons, is considered by the Church a “good and natural” marriage.

Biblical Foundation of Marriage

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Sacred Scripture begins with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a vision of the 'wedding feast of the Lamb.' Scripture speaks of marriage and its mystery, its institution and the meaning God has given it, its origin and its end, the difficulties arising from sin, and its renewal in the Lord. Throughout the Old Testament, God's love for his people is described as the love of a husband for his bride. In the Old Testament, marriage is primarily an institution for preservation of the husband's clan that is why children are blessing and gift from God (Gen. 24:60). Marriage is also the symbol of the covenant between God and his people (Hosea 2; Isaiah 54:4-5).

In the New Testament, Christ came as the Heavenly Bridegroom to unite himself indissolubly to his Bride, the Church. Christ forbids divorce and casting out women anyhow by man. He insists on the unity of marriage which is the oneness between the man and the woman. For Karl Rahner, the deepest purpose of marriage in God's eyes, is the oneness of man and woman. Christ is able to restore God's original plan for marriage as the norm because, unlike Moses, Christ is able to remove our hardness of heart. His miracle at the wedding in Cana tells the story of marital redemption. If couples have "run out of the wine" needed to live marriage according to God's original plan, Christ came into the world to "restore the wine" in super abundance (Jn. 2). St. Paul expresses marriage as a symbol of relationship between Christ and his Church (Eph. 5:21-33).

Functions of Husband and Wife in Marriage

The roles of the husband and wife can be classified under two: Essential and Non essential functions.

The essential functions of Marriage

- a. Biological function based on sex and reproduction.
- b. Psychological function which is based on love and giving sense of belonging.
- c. Economic function which deals with maintenance in terms of provision of basic amenities like shelter, clothes and food.
- d. Educational/ Social function, which is based on learning values and rules of the society in terms of instruction, acquiring of western education, religious education and moral education; correction and exemplary life.

The non-essential functions of Marriage

The non-essential function is necessary because it makes marriage to function well and it aids in many areas of human life. The non-essential function is as follows:

- a. Maintaining good health.
- b. Having recreation time and break or vacation.
- c. Working hard to sustain the family and acquisition of private property for the upkeep of the house.
- d. Spiritual life to sustain faith, hope and charity

Chapter two

— THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF MARRIAGE —

Pope John Paul II says that we cannot understand the Christian mystery unless we keep in mind the great mystery involved in the creation of man as male and female and the vocation of both to conjugal love. According to the analogy, God's eternal plan is to “marry” us (Hos. 2:19). He wanted this eternal plan to be so present to us that he stamped an image of it in our very being by creating us male and female and calling us to marriage. God is love and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in his own image, God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion. Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. Christian revelation recognizes two specific ways of realizing the vocation of the human person, in its entirety, to love: marriage and virginity or celibacy. Either one is in its own proper form an actuation of the most profound truth of man, of his being created in the image of God.

Thus, marriage and Christian celibacy are not in conflict, but stem from the very same call to the sincere gift of self in “nuptial” love. Every man is called, in some sense, to be both a husband and a father. Every woman is called, in some sense, to be both a wife and a mother. This is why the terms husband, wife, father, mother, brother, and sister are applicable to both marriage and the celibate vocation. Both, in different but complementary

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ways, form us into the one family of God.

Marriage is an earthly foreshadowing of the heavenly reality of love and communion. When Christ calls some to celibacy “for the sake of the kingdom” (Mt 19:12), he calls some to “leapfrog” over the sacrament in order to devote all of their desires for union to the marriage that alone can satisfy: the heavenly marriage of Christ and the Church.

Marriage: Sacrament of Christ & the Church

Christ himself made marriage a sacrament through his teachings and actions, Christ raised Christian marriage to the dignity of sacrament (Matt. 9:15; 21:1). In the gospel of John 2: 1-10, he worked his first miracle at a wedding feast in Cana wherefore he blesses all marriages and in it also an indication that he wishes to be present at all marriages. Through the sacrament of marriage Christ becomes present to the couple in his love and special favour and gives them the grace and opportunity to make this loving divine presence visible in their lives (Mba 1981).

The marriage of Christians is a sacrament by virtue of the spouses' baptisms. In other words, marriage is a living sign that truly communicates the love of Christ and the Church. The spouses' vows lived out in their daily commitment, and most specifically in their “one flesh” union, constitute this living sign. St. Paul says, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the church” (Eph 5:31-32).

Since the “one flesh” union of man and wife foreshadowed Christ and

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the Church right from “the beginning,” John Paul II speaks of marriage as the primordial sacrament. “All the sacraments of the new covenant find in a certain sense their prototype in marriage,” says the Holy Father. This is why Baptism is a “nuptial bath” and why the Eucharist is “the Sacrament of the Bridegroom and of the Bride.” When we receive the body of Christ into our own, in a mysterious way, like a bride, we conceive new life in us, life in the Holy Spirit. It is this same Holy Spirit that forms the bond that unites spouses in the Sacrament of Marriage.

This is the “profound mystery” in which marriage participates. The Eucharist, then, is the very source of Christian Marriage. “In the Eucharistic gift of charity the Christian family finds the foundation and soul of its 'communion' and its 'mission,' that is, to love as God loves.

Marriage as prophetic symbol

Marriage is also a religious and prophetic symbol because it proclaims, makes explicit and celebrates in human world the abiding union of God and his people (Dictionary of Sacramental Worship, 810). Marriage has two tiers: One, it celebrates the intimate community of life and love between a Christian man and a Christian woman and two, it celebrates the community of life and love between God and his people and Christ and Christ's people the Church. The binding love of Christ and the Church is the model for the mutual love of husband and wife what Vatican II refers to as “Domestic Church” (LG11).

Christian Marriage: A Vocation

Theologically, vocation means a call or invitation given by God to Christians for some particular service or state in life. For Christians, it is a specific call to holiness and to a supernatural function in the mystical body of Christ. They are first of all assigned the function of helping each other in the attainment of holiness in their marital state and also share in the proper rearing and education of their children. Marriage is a vocation of a baptized man and woman to that state, consecrated by the sacrament of matrimony, devoted to the service of new life in Christ, which involves the specific spiritual perfection of the spouses as a way of life (New Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. 9, 265). For the Christian man and woman entering to marriage, it is a specific calling or vocation from God, that of responsible and committed Christian Couple. It is not an easy call but that is why they are given the special gift of the sacrament of matrimony, a gift which is proportionate to the task assigned to them.

Christian marriage is an effective instrument of salvation. By the virtue of contracting the sacrament of matrimony, marriage is elevated to the supernatural order which in itself contains a divine call and a means of Christian perfection and eternal salvation for those who chose Christian marriage as their way of life for God does not force his invitation or call on people.

Christian marriage is a vocation to be co-creator with God. The Christian couple has been entrusted the task of transmitting life and education of the life they have transmitted. As co-creators with God they are the interpreters of the love of God to their children. They are also co-creators in

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grace and witness of the faith on behalf of each other, their children and others in the household. It is the responsibility of the couple to maintain by their own life “the unbreakable and sacred character of the marriage bond.”

Christian marriage is a lifelong response to God's invitation. It is a call that has to be answered constantly, consistently and continuously. It is an ongoing process that one must answer the call in order to still have it. All divine calls, once one accepts the vocation, one must keep on making use of all the means available to answering it in all situation and circumstances of one's daily life till death, otherwise one will lose it or be unfaithful to it. The acceptance of a divine vocation is a form of divine encounter as well as commitment. The characteristic of encounters with the Lord is a humble submission to God's holy will and perseverance in this submission till the end (Mba, 1981, 15). Marriage is a great responsibility for it involves costs, patient endurance, anxiety, pains, faithfulness, self giving, sacrifice and full commitment. However, it is also a great joy, a noble calling to be a messenger of, and cooperator with God.

Constitutive Elements of Marriage

1. Minister of the sacrament of Marriage (Couple themselves) Catholic theology understands the ministers of marriage to be the man and woman themselves (Eastern Catholic theology understands the priest to be the minister). The priest is only “A Qualified Witness” or “An Official Witness or 1st Class Witness.

NOTE: *Marriage can be done in the absence of a Deacon, priest, and Bishop at*

the danger of death (Canon 1116).

2. Intention to celebrate Christian marriage

Whenever a man and a woman who do not have a prior marriage bond manifest their consent to enter into “a union for the totality of life” characterized by conjugal love, indissolubility, fidelity, and openness to begetting children, the action has effect. That is, the couple is validly married. Even if one or both of the parties is not a Christian, they will have a valid “natural marriage” (for the natural state of marriage given by God from the beginning is perpetual, faithful, and open to procreation). In the case of a baptized man and woman, the exchange of valid marital consent has a far greater effect because it brings about a marriage that is also a sacrament, a union which has “a special firmness by reason of the sacrament.”

3. Matter of Marriage

This is the mutual self giving to each other to establish life partnership (exchange of consent). The central element in marriage is the marriage bond itself which is referred to as “matter of marriage.” The Catholic Church believes and teaches that the mutually free consent of a man and a woman to enter into a marriage, and the subsequent consummation of that marriage, give rise to a bond that is an irrevocable covenant guaranteed by God's fidelity. “The consent by which the spouses mutually give and receive one another is sealed by God himself” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1639). The marriage bond cannot be dissolved by any human power: “What God has joined together, no human being must separate” (Matt 19:6). In addition to this marriage bond that unites each married couple; Christian spouses have the

grace of the sacrament of matrimony to aid them in fruitfully living out their vocation to marriage.

The Church believes that the very nature of the marriage of Christians based on exchange of consent, has been elevated to the dignity of a sacrament so that the baptized now have more than a merely natural communion in marriage; they enjoy a sacramental one. For this reason, “a valid matrimonial contract cannot exist between the baptized without it being by that fact a sacrament” (canon 1055 §2). That is to say, contained in the very nature of their baptism is the potential for a Christian man and a Christian woman, who are free to marry, to become an efficacious sign of Christ's covenantal union with the Church in the sacrament of matrimony. Therefore, by virtue of their baptism, it is not possible for two Christians to marry without it being a sacrament.

4. Form of Marriage

The form of marriage is on two levels: Juridical form (Priest, 2 witnesses [Practicing Catholic couple]) and Liturgical Form which is the ritual that emphasizes the exchange of consent. Canon 1108 §1 articulates the discipline of the ordinary canonical form: “Only those marriages are valid which are contracted before the local ordinary, pastor, or a priest or deacon delegated by either of them, who assist, and before two witnesses....” Here “assist” has a technical meaning. “The person who assists at a marriage is understood to be only that person who is present, asks for the manifestation of the consent of the contracting parties, and receives it in the name of the Church” (canon 1108 & 2).

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It is also worth noting that the universal law also permits the dispensation of the canonical form in individual cases “if grave difficulties hinder its observance,” as long as there is some public form of celebration (canon 1127 §2). The (arch)bishop or his delegate usually grants such dispensations in the cases of marriages between Catholics and baptized non-Catholics (so-called “mixed marriages”) and marriages between Catholics and non-baptized persons (“disparity of cult”) when the circumstances warrant. Although canonical form is required for the valid celebration of marriage, proper marital consent is even more crucial.

Ends/Purpose of Marriage

1. Bonum coniugum (For the purpose of their own good)

Good of the spouse based on the natural attraction between the man and woman is the primary purpose of marriage. The love that binds them together as husband and wife is paramount and most important in marriage. “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Gn 2:18). Conversely, it's for their own good, for their benefit, enrichment, and ultimately their salvation, that a man and woman join their lives in marriage. Marriage is the most basic expression of the vocation to love that all men and women have as persons made in God's image. Mutual love is the source of institution of marriage therefore, love and interpersonal intimacy between the husband and his wife is a major component of marriage.

2. Bonum Proles (For the good of the children)

The procreation and education of children is the second basic thing in

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marriage because, “By their very nature, the institution of marriage itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children and find in them their ultimate crown.” Children are not added on to marriage and conjugal love, but spring from the very heart of the spouse's mutual self-giving, as its fruit and fulfillment.

The procreation of children is not a right but a privilege gift from God. Couple should not see gift of children as a right or begetting sex of children one needs as a right or “do or die affairs.” This is a free gift from God to those he chooses to give so couple should know that the love they have for each other is the most important ends of marriage. The procreation of children and their education entails:

Maintenance (Feeding, shelter and clothing)

Instruction (Secular and religious education)

Correction (moral education on what is right and wrong)

Exemplary life by the parents. It is worth noting that the intentional exclusion of children in marriage, contradicts the very nature and purpose of marriage.

Essential Properties of Marriage

Canon 1056 states, “The essential properties of marriage are unity and indissolubility, which in Christian marriage obtain a special firmness by reason of the sacrament.” And as an extension of this, canon 1134 asserts: “From a valid marriage there arises between the spouses a bond which by its

nature is perpetual and exclusive. Moreover, a special sacrament strengthens and, as it were, consecrates the spouses in a Christian marriage for the duties and dignity of their state.”

1. Unity of Marriage

This mean one man and one woman (Monogamy) marrying one another for the rest of their life, exclusion of polygamy (one man and many wives) or polyandry (one woman and many husbands). It means that the man and the woman accept the duty of giving and accepting each other to themselves only thereby excluding polygamy and any form of concubinage or adultery. This implies that marriage is contracted by one man and one woman only and the complementarity of the sexes is essential to marriage. There is such widespread confusion today about the nature of marriage that some would wish to extend a legal “right” to marry to two persons of the same sex. The very nature of marriage makes such a proposition impossible because is meant to be just one man and one woman not same sex. That is why Matt. 19:6 says, “No longer two but one and what God has joined together let....” Gen. 2:24 says “Man leaves father and mother and two become one...” The couple are to be faithful to each other for life bearing in mind the symbol of the rings they gave each other a sign of unending love and fidelity with no room of infidelity in marriage for any reason.

2. Indissolubility of Marriage

This is the perpetual relationship that cannot be terminated once it is validly ratified and consummated because the couple entered into indissoluble communion of life and love whereby, the husband and wife are

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not joined by passing emotion or mere erotic inclination which, selfishly pursued, fades quickly away. They are joined in authentic conjugal love by the firm and irrevocable act of their own will. Once their mutual consent has been consummated by genital intercourse, an unbreakable bond is established between the spouses. For the baptized, this bond is sealed by the Holy Spirit and becomes absolutely indissoluble. Thus, the Church does not so much teach that divorce is wrong, but that divorce is impossible, regardless of its civil implications this is because the spouse share special union with Christ and his Church (Lk. 16:18; Mk. 10:9-12; Matt. 5:32, 19:9). It is worth noting that an absolute Indissolubility of ratified and consummated marriage cannot be dissolved either intrinsically (both parties), or extrinsically (human agency: civil, traditional and ecclesiastical authority) except death. And even in death none of the parties should be involved in the death of any of the other.

Canonical Terms use for Marriage

I. Ratified Marriage

The free exchange of consent properly witnessed by the Church establishes the marriage bond. This become sacramental marriage between two persons (man & woman) validly baptized but has not been consummated by conjugal act.

NOTE: *Marriage of two unbaptised persons become ratified the moment they receive baptism at the same time or day.*

ii. Consummated marriage

This is the conjugal act (intercourse) after marriage not before and it

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must not involve violence but must be voluntary, natural and free. The sexual union consummates and seals, completes, and perfects the ratification of the marriage. The sexual union is where the words of the wedding vows become flesh. The very language that God has inscribed in sexual intercourse is the language of the marriage covenant: the free commitment to a union of love that is indissoluble, faithful, and open to children.

If spouses willfully contradict any of these goods of marriage in their sexual expressions, marital intimacy becomes less than God intended it to be. In turn, spouses, rather than renewing their vows through intercourse, contradict them. In practical terms, how healthy would a marriage be if spouses were regularly unfaithful to their vows? On the other hand, how healthy would a marriage be if spouses regularly renewed their vows, expressing an ever-increasing commitment to them? The often disputed sexual moral teachings of the Church become lucid when seen through this lens. Like all sacramental realities, if sexual union (as the consummate expression of the sacrament of marriage) is truly to communicate God's life and love, then it must accurately symbolize it. Sexual union that is free, total, faithful, and open to new life (that is sexual union that truly expresses wedding vows) symbolizes and participates in the communion of Christ and the Church. Masturbation, fornication, adultery, intentionally sterilized sex, homosexual acts, etc. – none of these accurately symbolize, and thus never bring about the love of Christ for the Church. None of these behaviors are marital. Thus, for sexual union to consummate a marriage it must be performed in a “human manner” and be “per se suitable for the generation of children. Is worth noting to know that for consummation to be valid there must be:

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1. Penis
2. Vagina (with opening for reception of penis)
3. Erection
4. Penetration
5. Ejaculation

iii. Valid Marriage: Marriage that is contracted without presence of any impediment and it has form and consent of the couple.

iv. Consummated and Ratified marriage: This marriage that is consummated before it is ratified. In the eyes of the Church is WRONG but can be corrected.

v. Ratified and Consummated: This is marriage that is ratified and consummated after the ratification and in the eyes of the church is CORRECT

vi. Natural Marriage: Marriage between two persons, one who is baptized and the other is not baptized

vii. Legitimate Marriage: Marriage between two non-baptized persons

viii. Public Marriage: Marriage celebrated in public form and place

ix. Clandestine Marriage: Marriage celebrated without a priest and two witnesses.

x. Putative Marriage: This is an invalid marriage celebrated in good faith by at least one of the two parties and remain putative until the parties become aware of its invalidity or when declare null.

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xi. Attempted marriage: Invalid marriage where one party is aware of invalidating impediments.

xii. Secret Marriage: Marriage without publicity done before a priest and two witnesses.

Reasons for such weddings:

1. Unreasonable opposition from family
2. Annihilation (cut off) from the family
3. Couple who lived notorious concubinage life for long time
4. Lost of widow's or widower's benefit or pension when known
5. Civil/customary law prohibiting marriage from different categories of people.
6. Civil law forbidden religious celebration of marriage

xiii. Pauline privilege: The Pauline Privilege (Privilegium Paulinum) is a Christian concept drawn from Paul's instructions in the First Epistle to the Corinthians:

To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not separate from her husband ... and that the husband should not divorce his wife. To the rest I say, not the Lord, ... But if the unbelieving partner desires to separate, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. For God has called us to peace (1 Corinthians 7:10-15).

In Roman Catholicism and in some Protestant denominations (though most Protestants allow divorce in all serious circumstances), this is interpreted

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as allowing the dissolution of a marriage contracted between non-believers in the case that one (but not both) of the partners converts to Christianity and the other partner leaves the marriage.

The Pauline Privilege differs from divorce in that it leaves the Christian partner free to remarry. It differs from annulment because it dissolves a valid actual marriage, in favor of the faith of the Christian partner, where annulments declare that a marriage was invalid from the beginning.

According to the Catholic Church's canon law, the Pauline Privilege does not apply when either of the partners was a Christian at the time of marriage. Under Roman Catholicism, the Petrine Privilege may be invoked if only one of the partners was baptized at the time of marriage.

xiv. Petrine Privilege: Petrine Privilege or a decree in favor of the faith is a provision in the Canon Law of the Catholic Church granting a previously married person the right to marry under certain specific circumstances.

The implementation of this procedure is reserved to the Pope. It involves the circumstance where one of the parties in the marriage is unbaptized and the other is baptized. If either party wants to become Catholic or wants to marry a Catholic the first marriage can be dissolved, permitting the person to become Catholic or to marry a Catholic. Thus, the Pope may act in favor of the Catholic faith.

Another example may be that a Protestant who is married to an unbaptized man falls in love with a Catholic. The Pope may dissolve the

marriage of the Protestant to facilitate his or her marriage to the Catholic. This is done in favor of the faith of his or her Catholic fiancé.

Marriage Preparation

This is found in Canon 1063 and therefore, has the proper order/description as Remote, Proximate, Immediate and Post marriage assistance.

1. **Remote Preparation:** Parents first teachers, catechism (Religious education) giving to children to prepare them at early age.
2. **Pastoral Care:** Spiritual guidance whereby counseling is giving to couple by their priest
3. **Pre-Marriage Course:** Formal preparation based on holiness and obligation

Main Subject

- I. Nature of Marriage
 - ii. Duties of parents towards children
 - iii. Right and duties of the spouse towards each other
4. **Marriage Liturgical preparation:** Formal preparation for the marriage ceremony. It is not only to make the marriage ceremony but to give other faith (People of different religion or faith) and the Church the mystery of unity and fruitful love.
 5. **Post Marital Assistance:** Counseling and advise given to couple after marriage, how to cope and grow in love and holiness which is meant to promote growth in the sacrament and aim at holiness and witness to the whole community.

Chapter three

-MARRIAGE IMPEDIMENTS AND-

Annulment

REASONS FOR ANNULMENT

Impediment in Law means something that obstructs the making of a legal contract. Annulment is a legal procedure for declaring a marriage null and void. Unlike divorce, it is retroactive: an annulled marriage is considered never to have existed. An annulment is a finding later that there was no actual marriage contracted in God's eyes, and therefore no marriage in reality (from the religious point of view), regardless of civil ordinance or appearance to humans.

A common misconception is that if a marriage is annulled, the Catholic Church is saying the marriage never took place. The parties to the marriage know that the marriage took place. The Church is saying that the marriage was not valid; the valid marriage is what did not take place. Therefore, an annulment of a marriage is much more analogous to a finding that a contract of sale was invalid, and hence, that the property for sale must be considered to have never legally transferred possession, than analogous to a divorce, which is more like returning the property after a consummated sale.

There are four preconditions that give rise to the common fourfold classification for bases of annulment: defect of form, defect of contract, or unwilling/unable parties.

1. The contract is defective in form if the marriage ceremony is invalid, such as the case of two Catholic persons being married outside of the Catholic Church.
2. The contract is defective of contract if it was not a marriage that was contracted, such as if there was a defect of intent on either side. This can occur if either party lacked the intent to enter into a lifelong, exclusive union, open to reproduction.
3. If either party was coerced, they lacked willingness, and therefore lacked intent.
4. If either party was married to another, they were unable to enter into the contract. Also, certain relationships of blood render the parties unable to enter into contract. Also, parties of the same gender are unable to enter into contract.

Marriages are declared null *ab initio*, meaning that the marriage has been essentially invalid from the beginning. Some Catholics therefore worry that their children will be considered illegitimate if they get annulments. Canon 1137 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law specifically affirms the legitimacy of children born in both recognized and putative marriages (those later declared null).

Reasons for Annulment

Marriage becomes invalid when it is contracted with the presence of any impediment and it has no form and consent of the couple. When such marriage is contracted and discovered, it will be annulled and rendered

invalid.

The code of Canon Law lists twelve diriment impediments to marriage as found in Canons 1083-1094:

1. Impediment of Age

A man under the age of 16 and a woman who is not yet 14 years cannot validly marry. This impediment is based on the fact that the individuals concerned may not be matured enough to understand the meaning of marriage covenant and commit themselves to it for life. Part of the reason is also refers to their insufficient sexual maturity, which is needed to accomplish the ends of matrimony. Hence, the legislator establishes the determined age 16 and 14, which can be dispensed. Due to regional circumstances, the Episcopal conference of Bishops can grant the power to raise or lower the minimal age of marriage. Thus in Nigeria, the Catholic Bishop Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) has fixed the age of 18 for both parties.

2. Impediment of Impotence

This is the incapacity to perform marital act that is sexual act needed for generation of offspring. It is different from sterility, which is incapacity for generation of children. Therefore, copulative impotence (coeundi) that is the physical incapacity of a couple to perform sexual act can of its own nature render a marriage invalid when perpetual (that is cannot be cured) and antecedent (if it arose after marriage) (Can. 1084).

The Physical capacity for consummation lacking while a couple need not be fertile, both parties must be physically capable of completed vaginal intercourse, wherein the man ejaculates "true semen" into the woman's vagina.

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To invalidate a marriage, the impotence must be perpetual (i.e., incurable) and antecedent to the marriage. The impotence can either be absolute or relative. This impediment is generally considered to derive from divine natural law, and so cannot be dispensed. The reason behind this impediment is explained in the *Summa Theologica* “In marriage there is a contract whereby one is bound to pay the other the marital debt: wherefore just as in other contracts, the bond is unfitting if a person bind himself to what he cannot give or do, so the marriage contract is unfitting, if it be made by one who cannot pay the marital debt.” Sterility (incapacity for generation) and *impotentia generandi* are not considered as impediments for marriage when they are either natural, accidental, absolute (prevents marital intercourse with all others) or relative (prevents marital intercourse with certain persons).

3. Impediment of Prior Bond of Marriage

A person who is already bound by a previous bond of marriage, being it a natural marriage, a marriage which is ratified and consummated, or even a non-consummated marriage cannot validly contract another marriage. The bond consists in or is derived from the bond, deriving from the previous marriage. Every marriage including non-Christian marriage is by natural law, one and indissoluble.

Another marriage can only be possible after the death of the other spouse or when the nullity or dissolution of the previous marriage is canonically established (can 1085).

4. Impediment of Disparity of Cult

This impediment arises in a marriage where one party is a baptized

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catholic and the other is a non-Christian. This means that one of the parties must be a catholic who is baptized, it has nothing to do with those who have defected from the Catholic faith by formal act; and the other person must be a non-baptized person.

The following conditions must be fulfilled if dispensation from this impediment is to be granted:

- a. The Catholic party must declare his/her intention to remove all dangers of defecting from the Catholic faith
- b. He/she should promise to baptize and raise all the children in the Catholic faith.
- c. The non-Catholic party should be informed about all these obligations and promises.
- d. Both must be instructed about the ends and essential properties of marriage.

5. Impediment of Holy Order/Sacred Orders/Orders

This impediment concern all those who have received Holy Orders: Episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate. It also affects a permanent deacon who has lost his wife and can even extend to those who have lost their clerical state by penalty or rescript of the Holy See. In the Catholic Church, the Holy Orders carry with it the commitment to celibacy. Dispensation from this impediment is reserved to the Holy See.

The reason for this impediment is to safeguard celibacy which as the state of virginity is itself more perfect and besides the fact that celibate

clergy follows the example of Christ and the Apostles and the teaching of the fathers of the Church; it is more effective and enjoys greater respect and authority.

6. Impediment of Vow of Chastity/Public Perpetual Vow of Chastity/Vow

Those who are bound by permanent vow of chastity taken in a religious community cannot validly marry. This impediment concerns only members of a religious institute of Pontifical or diocesan right provided they have taken perpetual vows simple or solemn. It must be public and perpetual (Cans. 1192 & 654-658). It is worth noting that any religious who attempt marriage even civil marriage is summarily dismissed from the religious institute to which he belongs.

7. Impediment of Abduction

Abduction is when a man tries to force a woman who is unwilling to marry him to do so. This can take the form of either the violent abduction from a safe to unsafe place or violent detention in an unsafe place. The impediment of abduction is a canonical crime against human life and liberty (Can. 1397), which can be punished with certain privation and prohibition of the law (Can. 1336). Abduction of the woman with the intent to compel her to marry (known as *raptus*), constitutes an impediment as long as she remains in the kidnapper's power. In theory, the abduction of a man also constitutes an impediment, but no man has applied for annulment on these grounds.

In the case of any abduction, the following must be

evident:

- a. The abductor must be a man and not a woman.
- b. It can take the form of carrying off the woman by force or fraud.
- c. Forcefully retaining the woman in one place.
- d. There must be the intention of marrying her before or after the abduction has taken place.

For this impediment to cease, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

- a. There must be a separation of the woman from the abductor.
- b. She must be left in a safe and free place.
- c. She must be free and willing to marry afterwards.

8. Impediment of Crime/Crimen

This impediment also known as crimen, arises when someone causes the death of his/her spouse with the intention of celebrating marriage with another person. It also refers to when two people conspire or cooperate in killing of one of their spouse even if it is not for the purpose of celebrating marriage. On the basis of the law, when such take place the person involved cannot marry (Can. 1090).

9. Impediment of Consanguinity

The term consanguinity means, within certain limitations defined by the law of nature, the positive law of God, or the supreme authority of State or

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Church, the blood-relationship (cognatio naturalis), or the natural bond between persons descended from the same stock. By the law of nature, it is universally conceded, marriage is prohibited between parent and child, for the reverential relation between them is recognized as incompatible with the equality of relations engendered by the bond of marriage. The universal sentiment of peoples is likewise opposed to marriage between all persons related in any degree in the direct line, thus between grandparent and grandchild. This impediment arises as a result of sexual intercourse persons who descend from a common ancestor that is people who descend from the same parent through carnal generation (sexual intercourse).

10. Impediment of Affinity

This impediment arises from family relationship created as a result of marriage. It originates specifically between spouse and blood relations of the other spouse in any degree of direct line that is between a man and the blood relatives of the woman he marries and between the woman and the blood relatives of the man. For example:

- a. A man and his wife's mother: A man cannot marry his former wife's mother or her daughter
- b. A woman and her husband's father: A woman cannot marry her former husband's father or his son
- c. A woman and her husband son by another woman
- d. A man and his wife's daughter by another man.

NOTE: *It does not arise between a man and his deceased brother's wife or a man who wishes to marry the sister of his deceased wife or a woman who wishes to*

marry the brother of her deceased husband.

11. Impediment of Public propriety/Public Honesty

This impediment arises from invalid marriage (people who have lived together in a marriage which is invalid); or as partners to a notorious state of concubinage. An example of this is a civil marriage that is invalid for defect of form. It is concubinage when there is sexual relationship that has a degree of stability or when a man and a woman live together in a more or less durable basis without marriage. It also becomes notorious after the judgment of a court, confession in an open court and when the act of living together cannot be kept secret or no longer can legal defense excuse.

12. Impediment of legal Adoption/Spiritual Relationship

This impediment is evident when one who adopts intends to marry the one who is adopted. It arises when after a legal adoption has taken place in accordance with civil law, an adopter (parent) wishes to marry the adopted child. This does not refer to his or her parent's brothers, uncles or sponsors. This impediment invalidates marriage between the following groups of persons:

An adopted parent cannot marry the adopted child

An adopted daughter cannot marry a boy adopted by the same parents even if he is not her blood brother.

An adopted daughter cannot marry the natural son of her adopted parents

Nor can marriage take place between brothers and sisters by adoption.

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There are other impediments like Polygamy, Incompetence, Incest, Mental Disability, Duress (use of force), Fraud and Insanity (precluding ability to consent).

- Not intending, when marrying, to remain faithful to the spouse (simulation of consent)
- One partner had been deceived by the other in order to obtain consent, and if the partner had been aware of the truth, would not have consented to marry
- Failure to adhere to requirements of canon law for marriages, such as clandestinity
- the couple killed the spouse of one of them in order to be free to marry
- the couple committed adultery: and one of the couple killed the spouse of one of them, in order to be free to marry.

Some impediments can be dispensed, in which the Church exempts a couple, prior to the marriage, to the obligation to conform to the canon law. While some relationships cannot have the impediment of consanguinity dispensed, a marriage can be sanctioned between cousins. This renders the marriage valid, and so non-annullable.

Chapter four

- MARRIAGE BOND AND SEPARATION -

The Separation of the Spouses

The church does not allow any form of divorce once bond of marriage is established but any marriage where the spouse cannot longer live together because one of the partner's life is in danger or consistently on threat the church can allow what she calls the “separation from bed and bond.” This is a situation whereby the spouses live separately but the bond of the marriage still holds and none of the partner can validly marry again in the church as long as one of the parties is alive. They will continue to live separately until they are able to reconcile to live together again or till one partner dies before the other is free to marry. In conscience no partner should be involved in the death of the other party in any form for the sake of remarrying.

The Effect of the Exchange of Marital Consent: The Marriage Bond

The primary or principal effect of the valid exchange of marital consent is the constitution of the marriage bond. Once a valid consent is given and the marital relationship starts, a perpetual bond, which is not merely long lasting, comes into existence. From now hence, it no longer depends on the will of the spouses for existence, nor does it depend on the strength of the

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relationship of the parties who have entered marriage in order to survive perpetually. It receives these from the essence of marriage itself. As well as being perpetual, the bond is also an exclusive bond because it exists between two married male and female persons and not more (Boyle, 1985). The bond of marriage is also obviously not a physical bond or tie but a non-sensible relation. As a relation it is an accidental quality of the person. Although this relation is non-material and non sensible, it is however very real, and when we speak of husband and wife, we are saying that a man has the quality of 'husband in relation with this woman and a woman has the quality of 'wife in relation with this man.

Furthermore, this relation is a relation of unity, that is to say, a relation that unites the persons by the common end or purpose, as the purpose of doing business, for example, brings a certain union, which we may call a 'business partnership, between the persons involved in the common endeavor of doing business (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*). The matrimonial bond does not emerge from a biological process, just as paternity and filiation, but it springs with a juridic procedure actualized through the mutual consent legitimately manifested {*matrimonium facit partium consensus*, can. 1057, § 1), which has as its object the reciprocal gift of self and the mutual acceptance (can. 1057, § 2) (Cikappetta, 1990).

The Nature and Sacramental Bond of Marriage

This bond is referred to as a natural bond wiser: marriage takes place between two non-baptized persons or a baptized and a non-baptized person. This bond has a sacred character, but lacks the indissolubility that the

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sacramental marriage enjoys and in certain situations such marriage can be dissolved. Once a baptized Christians validly celebrate marriage, there arises a perpetual and exclusive bond (sacramental bond) between the spouses, which cannot be dissolved. The Baptismal status of the parties determines the degree of indissolubility of the bond.

Marriages which are non-sacramental (involving at least one non-baptized person), or the natural bond may be dissolved by the power of the Church through the Pauline privilege or privilege of the faith. The Supreme Pontiff in virtue of his ministerial or vicarious power may likewise dispense the bond arising from a sacramental marriage, which has not been consummated. Once a sacramental union has been consummated by sexual intercourse, *homano modo*, the bond takes on a character of absolute indissolubility beyond the power of the parties themselves but more especially the power of any earthly authority (Boyle, 1985).

Simple Separation of the Spouses with the Bond of Marriage Remaining

The Separation of the Spouses with the Bond of Marriage Remaining permanently is treated in Canons 1151-1155. This section of the Code of Canon Law gives two types of separation of those who are married but cannot possibly continue to live together as a result of failure of their marriage. Permission for both of these separations does not give the spouses the license to celebrate a new marriage. When the spouses are permitted to separate either temporarily or permanently, arrangement must be made concerning the children's maintenance and education.

Temporary Separation

This form of the separation of the spouses only interrupts the common life of the partners momentarily, that is, only for a time. This is done in order to avoid a probable evil that may befall marriage in the future. In this case, the separation is effected by the decree of the Bishop and immediately the cause of separation ceases, common life must be reassumed. Reasons that could justify separation are:

- a) Grave danger for the physical integrity of the person and the family: physical attack, maltreatment, serious contagious sickness, reckless and dangerous behavior, danger of serious bodily harm inflicted upon the spouse or children, and serious mental problem.
- b) Grave harm for the spiritual life of the spouse: injury, insults, fights and other manifestations of credulity in the manner of life that excessively and impossibly renders common life too difficult.

Perpetual Separation

In this situation, the married life (common life) of the spouses is interrupted definitely due to the fact that they no longer stay together. In the case of adultery (deliberate and completed act of adultery) the innocent party, who has not accepted condoned/pardoned) the accomplished act, has the right to deacease from common life together. This can be done either tacitly, when the innocent party after being aware of the adultery decides to continue with common life or presumably, when the innocent party continues to

maintain a common life together for six months without presenting a -course for separation from the ecclesiastical or civil authority.

The Dissolution of the Bond of Marriage

The dissolution of the bond of marriage is regulated by canons 1141-1150 of the Code of Canon Law. This it does after reaffirming the absolute indissolubility of ratified consummated marriage in canon 1141 in which the ecclesiastical magisterium has excluded not just the civil authority but also even the authority of the Roman Pontiff, vicarius Christi, in exercising the potestas vicaria to dissolve the bond of a ratified and consummated marriage. There is no doubt that there is only one case of absolute indissolubility in all circumstances, this is a marriage celebrated between two baptized persons and is at the same time consummated. Such marriage does not fall under the vicarious or ministerial power of the Roman Pontiff. In certain circumstances, both Church law and practice do dissolve certain marriages in virtue of the ministerial or vicarious- power of the Roman Pontiff. This is meant to differentiate ratified and consummated marriage, which is absolutely indissoluble, and these marriages, which for very serious reasons and with concern for the good of the faith and salvation of souls, could be dissolved. For such marriage to be dissolved, they must not be consummated if they are sacraments or they must not be sacramental if they are consummated.

These latter categories of marriage are defined and regulated by the following canons of the Code:

1. Dissolution of Ratified non Consummated Marriages (super rato)

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(c.1142; cann. 1697-1706). According to the norm of canon 1142, a marriage, which is not consummated between two, that is baptized persons or between a baptized and a non-baptized person can be dissolved by the Roman Pontiff when there is a just cause for doing so. These just causes are as follows: sickness that brings about intolerance between the spouses; discord without any hope of reconciliation; and civil marriage by one of the spouses after a divorce. In these cases, provision is made to dissolve the marriage bond that has not been consummated.

The consummation of marriage is effected by conjugal sexual intercourse, which has been defined according to its physiological elements as the penetration of the vagina by the male organ, the ejaculation and the emission of true semen within it. There is no consummation when any of these elements is wanting. Intercourse before marriage is not a consummation of the marriage, as this must occur after and not before marriage. Though a non-consummation marriage is naturally Indissoluble, that is indissoluble by the parties themselves or by any merely human power, it can be dissolved extrinsically by the Church using the divine authority entrusted to it by Christ. The dissolution of such marriage can occur either *ipso iure* by solemn religious profession or through papal dispensation using vicarious power. Non-consummation must be proved by the following arguments:

1. Lack of opportunity-lack of time and place.
2. Physical argument-examination of the parties especially that the woman is physically intact.
3. Moral argument-depositions by the parties and witnesses.

For detailed treatment of eon-consummated marriages confers:

2. The Dissolution in Favor of the Faith (in favorem fidel) through Pauline Privilege (cc. 1143-1147)

The doctrine concerning the dissolution of a lawful marriage between two non-baptized persons (of which one party accepts to be baptized) in favor of the faith (Pauline Privilege), is contained the Holy Scripture (1 Corinthians 7: 12-15) and is regulated by canons 1143-1147. The three essential conditions for the valid use of Pauline Privilege are:

- 1** There is a valid marriage between the two non-baptized persons.
- 2.** Subsequent baptism of one of the spouse.
- 3.** The departure of the spouse who is still not baptized or is willing to continue a common life but "peacefully without offence to the creator."
- 4.** The 16th Century provision for Polygamous Marriage (Can. 1148) and the Dissolution through Privilege of the Faith (privilegium fidei) known as Petrine Privilege

Petrine Privilege, that is, when for other reasons rather than the one stated concerning Pauline Privilege, a non-sacramental marriage, a natural marriage between two non-baptized person is dissolved by the ministerial authority of the Pope for reasons such as conversion of pagans and those who cannot continue to live as husband and wife, inability with a married life due to deportation, slavery, imprisonment as well as persecutions either religious or ethnic Can. 1148 (Bouscaren and Ellis, 1946).

Chapter five

- CAUSES OF DIVORCE AND FAMILY CRISIS -

Marriage is not a mistake

Most times when a marriage is in trouble, people tend to see their marriage as a 'mistake' rather than seeing the mistakes they are making in their marriage. At this point they regret marrying their wife or husband, begin to think of a new partner, imagine marrying their ex or fantasizing a marriage without issues. Some even divorce or remarry and later wish they had remained with their first spouse, as they find greater trouble in the new spouse. This is because the first marriage was not a mistake, and the mistake has not been discovered yet.

So you can remarry as many times as you like, you will still experience problems in marriage until you discover the mistakes you are making in your marriage and correct them. So divorce or separation is not a solution to consider when you are having problems with your marriage. When your car has a flat tyre, you do not abandon it, but repair the tyre and move on. When we have a headache, no matter how excruciating, we do not cut off the head but take care of the headache. When a bulb blows out in the room we do not change the room or the house, we replace the bulb and light up the room. When we have challenges at work, we do not refuse to go to work, we go there to solve the problems. So when marriage has an issue, we don't have to try to change the spouse instead of changing the 'attitude' that is creating

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the problem.

Most times when we see some couples enjoying their marriages and enjoying each other to the fullest, we admire and cherish them, but the opposite is seen in our own marriage. The reason is that some people have worked on their marriage by paying the necessary price and that is why they are enjoying the fruits of their labor. It is said, “The way you make your bed is the way you will lie on it.” Your marriage is as good or as sweet as you make it. Some couples, because of the negative things they are seeing in their marriage, accuse each other of being responsible. They point accusing fingers at each other for being responsible. Some even say many bad things about their spouse, even calling him or her names; some think that marrying that man or that woman was a mistake. It is not so, your marriage was not a mistake, but you are the mistake. Your habit is the mistake, your character is the mistake, your manner, anger, unforgiveness, laziness, lack of love, lack of affection, lack of attention, impatience, bitterness, selfishness, ignorance, stinginess, not being considerate, infidelity and lovelessness are the mistakes. Be content with your spouse, build your marriage because it is not a mistake and divorce or separation are never options unless it is *life threatening*.

Malachi 2:16 says “I hate divorce, says the Lord God of Israel. I hate it when one of you does such a cruel thing to his wife.” Make sure that you do not break your promise to be faithful to your wife.” Universal experience reveals that marriage is wrought with difficulties. The discord we notice so painfully does not stem from the nature of man and woman nor from the nature of their relations, but from sin. As a break with God, the first sin had for its first consequence the rupture of the original communion between man and woman.

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History affirms the poignant story in Genesis attesting to the havoc wrought in the sexual relationship as a result of our disobedience to God. Male and female differences, rather than complementing one another and bringing about communion, are often a cause of great tension and division. Sexual attraction itself, originally given by God to be the power to love as he loves, tends to be because of sin a desire for self-gratification at the expense of others. All of this inflicts deep personal wounds on husbands, wives, and their children who, in turn, often grow up to repeat the same fallen patterns of relating. Hence, it becomes easy to lose faith in marriage. Even Moses conceded to human weakness and allowed divorce. Yet, as Jesus says, “For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce.” But then he adds that “from the beginning it was not so” (Mt 19:8).

The process of divorce usually begins with an emotional separation. Often one partner is unhappy and looks beyond the relationship for other forms of validation. Dissatisfaction increases until the partner decides he or she can no longer stay. Physical separation follows although it may take time for the relationship to be over emotionally (Insel and Roth, 2006). According to a recent Gallup Poll, the divorce rate has doubled in the last ten years. If this trend continues, a conservative prediction indicates that almost half of all marriages will end in divorce. As painful as the statistic is, the next one is worse: Two out of every five children born in the past ten years will live in single-parent homes. (Landorf, 1981). Vulliamy (2016), Statistics show 42 per cent of marriages end in divorce, and 34 per cent of married couples divorce before their 20th wedding anniversary. The statistics show that many couples who were previously in good relationships end up getting divorced within 20 years

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of their nuptials. Below are some of the reasons why marriages do not last long.

CAUSES OF DIVORCE AND FAMILY CRISIS

1. Pride

Couple who are full of pride and they lack elements of humility can hardly live happily together. Pride has made many couple to divorce because when one partner fills he or she is better off or “major bread winner” of the house tend to look down on the other partner and also influence the children to do the same and that brings about arrogance and disrespect leading to constant fight and separation. The inability to apologize when one party goes wrong because of pride or superiority tends to weaken the couple relation leading to constant disagreement that can cause family crisis. So pride is the root of all conflict, insecurities, and sin. Instead of thinking about yourself better or superior, spend your energy and love by giving your spouse grace and love. “Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found with those who take advice” (Proverbs 13:10).

2. Anger (Abuse)

Couple with high temperament and emotional instability tends to quarrel and fight consistently leading to physical or emotional abuse in some couples. Anger has made many couples to consistently keep fighting because they

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cannot control their temperament. Little thing can easily provoke them and they can flame up and begin to exchange words and then begin to fight which can be very violent that can easily kill the love they have for one another. It doesn't always stem from the abuser being a “bad” person; deep emotional issues are usually to blame. Regardless of the reason, no one should provoke or abuse one another. No marriage is easy because even couples with the best intentions are sometimes unable to overcome their challenges and end up in courtrooms. From bickering about chores to arguing about the kids; incessant arguing kills many relationships. Couples who seem to keep having the same argument over again often do so because they feel they're not being heard or appreciated. Many find it hard to see the other person's point of view, which leads to a lot of arguments without ever coming to a resolution. That's why it's important to address issues in your relationship early on. Don't wait until they are beyond fixing. Practice kindness, make intimacy a priority, go on holidays and seek marriage counseling (even when things are fine) to preserve the health and longevity of your relationship. Try your very best before you decide that things are beyond your control and it is time to give up. That way you can have the peace of knowing you tried all of the alternatives before the big step. If you have a short fuse, you need to find out why and stop making excuses. Get help to overcome this destructive and addictive habit. “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice” (Ephesians 4:31).

3. Greediness and self centered

You were created to be satisfied only in God's presence. Don't feed grief because the things you want will not satisfy you. There are situation

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where one partner or both parties tend to be greedy and self centered in their relationship, whereby each party considers his or her interest first before anyone. Such family they hardly share things together because they lack common interest to build a family together giving room to greedy life and isolation. The effect of such action is total withdrawal from one party which will subsequently lead to separation or divorce. Couples should know that sharing is the basic foundation of love and love is the root of marriage.

4. Unfaithfulness/Infidelity

this is a top cause of divorce in Nigeria. The first characteristic of conjugal love is fidelity. Faithfulness is essential to a happy life in marriage. In marriage, the man and woman are supposed to be faithful to each other. To have affairs with another person of the opposite sex means practically to “divide” oneself, which eventually leads one to withdraw from a real love relationship.

Extra-marital affairs are responsible for the breakdown of most marriages that end in divorce. The reasons why people cheat aren't as cut and dry as our anger may lead us to believe. Anger and resentment are common underlying reasons for cheating, along with differences in sexual appetite and lack of emotional intimacy. Infidelity often begins as a seemingly innocent friendship, “It starts as an emotional affair which later becomes a physical affair.”

This is why promiscuity, either on the side of the woman or the man, often times leads to marital breakdown. In the storms of problems and

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difficulties, a marriage can only stand firm if it is rooted in faithfulness. Hence, whenever a man or a woman betrays the promise to be faithful to the other party by engaging in extra-marital affairs, the seed for the breakdown of the marriage is sown therefore, couples should try their best to channel their sexual needs to their partner and find fulfilling in each other not outside. According to Atchley (1993), the entertainment industry glorifies "recreational sex," the news media reports on "casual sex," and superstars advocate for "safe sex." But who ever speaks up for "sacred sex?" God does. In Exodus 20:14, God says You shall not commit adultery. He wants us to keep sex sacred.

5. Lack of Communication

Every relationship has a communication climate. Positive climates are characterized by confirming messages, which makes it clear that the parties value one another. Communication in negative climate is usually disconfirming. In one way or the another, messages in disconfirming relationships convey indifference or hostility. Communication climates develop early in a relationship, both from verbal and nonverbal messages (Adler, 1993). Lack or inadequate communication can lead to ill feelings which can trigger the quest for separation/divorce.

Many marriages have broken because of the lack of communication. If husband and wife cannot freely talk or discuss their problems, there will always be problems. .Communication is crucial in marriage and not being able to communicate effectively quickly leads to resentment and frustration for both, impacting all aspects of a marriage. On the other hand, good

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communication is the foundation of a strong marriage. Yelling at your spouse, not talking enough throughout the day, making nasty comments to express yourself are all unhealthy methods of communication that need to be ditched in a marriage. Practicing mindful communication, to change age-old marriage mistakes, can be hard but it is well worth the effort to improve and save your relationship. Avoid keeping malice and never allow resentment to lead you to sin; the sunset must not find you still angry. Do not give the devil his opportunity (Eph. 4:26-27). Couples should never allow themselves to begin a new day without talking out their differences.

6. Childlessness and Infertility

Childlessness in marriage is one of the major causes of divorce/marital maladjustment and final breakdown of marriages in Nigeria. Given the premium which Africans in general and Nigerians in particular attach to children, any marriage that has nothing to show for it in terms of children after two years is usually in tension. Even where the man claims that he is not perturbed and is not worrying the wife about the childlessness, the woman herself does not feel at ease. The family of the man usually blames the woman for the childlessness even when the man is responsible for the problem. She is often called all sorts of names including being “a man”.

As a result of this problem of childlessness, it will be very important for two people entering into marriage to go for a fertility test. Experience has shown that some men who know before the marriage that they are Azoospermic, that is, that their sperm count is Zero, and so incapable of impregnating a woman or fathering any child, hide this fact from the other

party. Some of these men usually have problems traceable to their childhood or adolescent. Some marry with the hope that the woman will agree to be getting her pregnancy from “outside”. Azoospermia is different from oligospermia, which is low sperm count, caused mainly by an infection of the urethra, epididymis or prostate, and which can easily be cured.

On the side of women, it has been discovered that some hide the fact of their not ovulating or menstruating at all to the other party before the marriage. Such women tactfully claim to be pregnant shortly before the marriage to pressure the man into tying the nuptial knots without further delay. Usually, such women claim to have suffered a miscarriage after the marriage. However, whenever the man or the woman discovers this kind of foul play, the marriage usually hits the rock. So in spite of the belief that it is God that gives children, a fertility test is still a human way of cooperating with God in that area, and will go a long way to preventing the unhappiness that will come from a culpable neglect of it. It is also important to know that procreation of children is the secondary ends of marriage and that children are gratuitous gifts from God. Couple who also put choice of sex of their children as the bases of their unity of marriage should also know that it is God that bestows what he chooses to give without our consent.

7. Lack of Preparation

According to Knox & Schacht (2005), the strongest predictor of getting divorced is getting married as an adolescent. Individuals who marry in their teens have a greater risk of divorce than those who delay marriage into

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their mid-20s. Many young people today dabble into marriage without any adequate preparation. It is true that at the age of 14 for a girl and 16 for a boy, they are already physically matured for marriage, but then physical maturity is not all that is required for marriage. There is need for two people who are about to enter into marriage to be prepared for it. This preparation can come in various forms – emotional, psychological and intellectual. They are supposed to know what marriage is all about, what is expected of them in terms of the duties and obligations, and how they are to relate with each other meaningfully after marriage. In interaction with many young men and women whose marriages have broken down, it is a known fact that at the very time they entered into the marriage, they knew next to nothing of what marriage actually entailed.

Unfortunately, many of those who want to enter into marriage today are not patient enough to undergo a formal marriage course or instruction. They have no time and would even want the marriage done within the shortest time possible. It is sad that a young man would spend 5 to 7 years in apprenticeship to learn a trade or to graduate in the university but would not deem it necessary to be informed about marriage, which is a lifelong commitment. This is why the story of many second marriages is the story of people who learned the hard way of the perils of rushing into a first marriage without preparation, meant to dispose them to holiness and the obligations to their new state.

8. Lack of Courtship

Many people enter into marriage without any courtship and without the basic knowledge of the other party. The period of acquaintance should of necessity be followed by a sufficient time of engagement, at least several months. This period offers the young people the opportunity to see whether their first love, if any, is based on a solid foundation. They should confront each other with conversations and gradually become acquainted with their mutual background and interests, their ideals and religious convictions. This is necessary if they are to choose each other with the sufficient insight, which such a vital decision deserves.

While sexual intercourse is irresponsible and ruled out completely at this stage, the two people who are engaged are nevertheless permitted manifestations of love, which would be deemed improper for other unmarried couples. Hence, engagement is the period when the two people intending to marry should be close to each other and find out such things like their blood group, their genotype, their HIV status and their fertility status by going for the necessary tests. These findings are very essential for the success of any marriage.

The practice in Nigeria where some parents simply order their children to marry a particular person for their selfish interest leaves a lot to be desired. This does not give room for engagement and the necessary freedom for marriage. The practice of paying or accepting the dowry within a few weeks that a couple came to know each other, or that a couple were introduced to one another, tends also to militate against engagement. It puts

the couple in a cultural situation of viewing themselves already as man and wife, thus closing the door to a meaningful engagement.

9. Incompatibility

Many a time, when divorced couples are asked why their marriage has broken down, the answer that one often get is this: “we are incompatible”. By that he or she means that they cannot agree on anything, that they are opposed to each other. One wonders what effort they made at the initial stage to find out whether they were compatible or not. Physical attraction is one element of compatible relationship, but it alone will not be enough to make a boy and a girl compatible, and their marriage successful. For total compatibility, there is need also for mental attraction, emotional attraction and spiritual attraction.

It is therefore very important that before two people give their final yes to each other in marriage, that they do their utmost best to study and assess each other's likes and dislikes, so as to see whether they would be able to achieve a balance and harmony after marriage. They should observe closely each other's temperament, which is the combination of inborn traits that subconsciously affect human behavior, as well as observe each other's character and personality.

It is good to know that you and your spouse may have live by opposite standards, which can cause contention and frustration. Try to remember that God holds you accountable for your actions; live your life and don't focus on what your spouse is doing or not doing. “How can a young person stay on a

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path to purity? By living according to your word? I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands” (Psalm 119:10-11).

10. Lack of Openness

Many people enter into marriage with a hidden agenda. Any marriage that begins with insincerity is most likely to hit the rocks. The greatest illusion in marriage is for one to enter it with a hidden agenda and at the same time believe that the other party will not mind when the alarm eventually blows, and the cat is let out of the bag. Some men, in order to get a particular girl to marry them, tell a lot of false stories about their work, social status, finance and health.

Unfortunately, some girls do not go the extra mile to verify or establish the veracity of such claims. Some girls on the other hand do also hide significant information about their earlier life or marriage from their partner. Hence, some people select a marriage partner for all the wrong reasons and introduce their selfish agenda into the new union, thereby destroying their interpersonal relationship and erasing all feeling of love. The consequence of such machinations and lack of openness is evident: marital breakdown. Couples should learn to be sincere to each other through openness, transparency and honesty.

11. Age Differences

In marriage, the couples are supposed to be first and foremost friends. This by implication means that their ages at the time of the marriage do play

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an important role in the success of the marriage. A man of 40 years of age marrying a girl of 15 years of age may be in for a surprise, which he never bargained for. It means that by the time the man is 65, already an “old man”, the woman will only be at her prime, which is 35. Many women are not so comfortable to walk along the street with a man old enough to be their father. More importantly, a boy of 30 years of age who marries a girl of 40 years because of her money or the wealth of her parents may be in for a shock because she may have only a few years to enter the period of menopause, and with chances of having children much reduced. Again, many men who marry women much older than they are usually complain that these women neither obey nor respect them.

It is advisable to marry someone with an age difference of not more than five years. It is very important that the intending couples know each other's date of birth. Falsification of date of birth may bring about lack of trust and eventually a strain to the marriage.

12. Academic qualification, exposure and illiteracy

When one partner has no basic education, the tendency is that the other partner looks low on the other. Lack of basic education has broken marriages. It has been observed that many traders who never went beyond the primary school go for university graduates as wives, because they feel that they have enough money to maintain them. A woman by going through the university has been exposed and has imbibed a certain culture or civilization. Where such a woman marries a man who has plenty of money but is illiterate and uncultured, there may not be harmony in their relationship.

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Experience has shown that there is usually a serious tension arising from their difference in mentality, habits, taste, and discipline. Of course, this is not to say that every illiterate and uncultured trader that marries a university graduate as wife will find it difficult to live with her. Nevertheless, it is important to know that this is a possible source of conflict in marriage, and that this kind of conflict has led to the breakdown of many marriages in Nigeria.

13. Unfulfilled Expectation

It has been observed that some men marry hoping for material or financial benefits from the family of the woman. The underlining element and motive of the marriage is the assistance to be received. In such a situation, the love necessary to sustain the marriage is basically lacking. Many a time, this expectation is not usually met and it brings about friction and tension in the marriage, and consequently its breakdown.

A man should never agree to marry a woman he does not love, and who is much older than he is, only because he hoped that through the marriage, the family of the woman would transfer their wealth to him. This hope is rarely fulfilled after the marriage. Such unfulfilled expectation has been the cause of many broken marriages in Nigeria.

14. Poverty /Laziness

Poverty and laziness can cause divorce. God commanded man to work and keep his home (Gen. 2:15). A situation where the husband fails to provide the basic needs of the family and they are living in object poverty couple with laziness where no job or zeal to seek for job the family will

continually live in crisis that may lead to divorce. A lazy couple will hardly stay together for life. Where poverty is the problem, couples must remember to pray for God's provision and work hard together to provide bread to the house, instead of despising one another.

15. Refusal of Sexual Relationship

Stronger sex partners have always forced weaker ones to resort to divorce. This is because they cannot bear their strength. In line with this too is sexual weakness mostly in the part of the man. People with this problem often become unfaithful and end up having crisis or seek divorce. In 1 Cor.7:4-5 St. Paul admonished couples never to deprive each other sexual gratification except on both mutual agreement. Couples see sex as sexual union meant to build relationship, means of healing wounded relationship and avenue of consolidating and strengthening relationship. They should develop the habit of giving each other this sexual gratification for the sake of peace and continuity in the family by act of sacrifice to please one another.

16. The Influence of Parent-in-Laws

Many divorces have occurred as a result of the intervention of parents-in-law. How do parents-in-law break up marriages? Some marriages that were broken due to the intervention of parents-in-law are based on the following reasons:

i). When the woman is not able to bring forth children: Barrenness has brought about many divorces in Africa. The purpose of marriage should

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not be to have children in order to stay together.

ii). Bad attitude of the woman towards the in-laws and vice versa: This comes as a result of pride, jealousy, hatred, lack of harmony, etc. The attitude of mothers and daughters-in-law should be like that of Naomi and Ruth.

iii). The persistent death of children: The parents-in-law would not tolerate a marriage where children delivered always die. Accept God's will in such a case and pray for a change.

iv). When the woman consistently bring forth female children. Lack of male children in some families has made some parent in-laws to consistently cause confusion and problems in some homes leading to divorce and remarrying.

17. Marriage Imposed by Parents

Most imposed marriages, most often, end up in divorce. This is because the individuals did not make the choice. The love may not be there at the beginning and the couple may not be compatible which may lead to so many misunderstanding and disagreement and at the end divorce. Is it good to force a wife or husband on your children? If you have done that or you are planning to do that, the consequences may be divorce, if care is not taken. Even if your marriage was imposed, learn to love yourselves and correct your differences in an amicable way.

18. The Secular Law Court Encourages Divorce

People no longer take time to pray and seek for advice when there is a problem, since the law allows for divorce. In the western world, this is very

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common. The right of women has caused many homes in the west to be put apart. What do you understand, by “Women Liberation”? The changing world is bringing many new ideas. Let women and men not accept things which the Bible does not accept. Most women are conscious of their rights and any small issue they try to go to court for settlement which often leads to divorce. Couple should try to understand one another and settle their differences amicably within the family circle than settling issues in court. The couple should know that court is the last place of settlement after individual family friends, family, church and then the court.

19. Deceit by friends, relatives and neighbors

There are some unfaithful couples who do receive bad doctrines from friends or the ones with whom they commit sin. They mingle with bad friends or relatives that are not helpful to their marriage because of their way of life or bad pieces of advice they give them. Often they are led astray into a different life style such as extramarital affairs which has brought sickness that has caused divorce or death. How faithful are you in your marriage home? Couples should not allow friends or relatives or neighbors who have questionable characters to influence their way of life and decisions in life.

20. Use of Juju (Voodoo) and prayer houses

Today in Nigeria the use of juju and all kinds of charms to sustain home or find solution to marital issues is the common game in some families. Families are always deceived to visit juju man or go to questionable prayer houses seeking for different helps which at the end of the day does not offer any profound solution. Some women visit such places either seeking for the fruit of

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the womb or to take absolute control of their man's wealth and movement which often time the juju man ends up collecting money from them, or eating their food or sleeping with them and they become losers. Men on the other hand visit such places in search of success like riches and promotion in their careers which they end up joining dangerous cultic set or become ritualists to be offering their family members as sacrifice for riches and firm. How faithful and contented are you in your marriage home? Couples should not allow friends or relatives or neighbors to influence them or take them to such places for any family solution be it whatever. Always seek advice from the pastor or priest that assist in your marriage and always take your problems to the Lord in prayer especially the church you wedded should be your covenantal church where you encounter your Lord to voice out your heart.

21. Absences

Constant absence is another internal cause of divorce in a case where there is regular absence of one partner in the home. Absences from home cause many divorces in a situation whereby the husband or the wife is constantly absent and this can give room to many atrocities like marital unfaithfulness, immoral way of bringing up children, lack of family coordination which may lead to separation. What time do you come back to the home? Do you inform your partner where you always go? Parents should build the habit of staying home with their children and avoid jobs that will keep them apart except there is no any better alternative.

22. Marrying because of situation on ground

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Marrying for the wrong reason such as a means of escape, pity, rebound, filling a void can lead to divorce, since the marriage was not built on love but as a means of averting unpleasant or unwanted situation(s) that one is facing in the family. A person might marry to escape an unhappy home situation in which the parents are often seen as oppressive, overbearing, conflictual, or abusive. The parents' continued bickering might be highly aversive, causing the person to marry to flee the home (Knox and Schacht 2005). Most single persons always force their way to marriage as a means of escaping the difficulties or frustration they are facing in life and often time the married life tend to be difficult for them because they may end up living under pity not love which can lead to sickness like high blood pressure, stroke, death or divorce.

CAUSES OF FAMILY CRISIS THAT CREATES FAMILY UNREST

The below mentioned points may not necessarily cause divorce or separation of aboard in marriage but can consistently create problem in the family and make the family have crisis always and lacks peace and progress. However, if it continues the tendency of breakdown or separation is possible so couples should be careful to avoid them for the sake of family peace and continuity.

1. Money Problems

Problems can arise when it comes to money if husband and wife have different value bases, for instance, if one person likes spending money freely and the other is more frugal and prefers saving. The way out of this is develop

order of priority and use funds prudentially.

2. Affairs

If one person is having an affair, this is likely to break down trust and lead to difficulties in establishing honesty in a relationship. The only solution to such crises is to decrease from such external relationship for the sake of peace and family continuity because no woman wants to share her husband with another woman nor any man wants to share his wife with another man.

3. Interfering Ex-Partners

When establishing a new relationship, an ex getting your partner's attention can create tension. It can feel like they're still married to the ex, or that the ex is more important. Remedy to such situation is to avoid contact and if possible communication.

4. Differences in Sexual Libido

It's a stereotype but not far off the mark. Many men want more sex than women and if couples have different levels of sexual libido this will lead to problems in the relationship. To remedy this problem, couple have to understand with one another and cooperate in giving to each other or abstain based on genuine reason and mutual agreement.

5. Children from Previous Relationships

There is a big difference between how people react to their own children and how they react to children they have become parents to. Parents make different allowances for children who are their own. When they are somebody else's children, it may be more difficult to establish the same

relationship. Parents should learn to treat all children equal without showing preferences to some than others. If this issue is not properly handled it will lead to generational problem of hatred based on prejudice, hostility and animosity. As a remedy, parents should develop affection, devotion, fondness and love for all the children equally.

6. Intrusive Parents

If parents are interfering, or if a partner perceives them to be, this can be a problem. If one partner spends too much time talking with their mother, for example, this can create a breakdown of intimacy in the relationship. Most couples find joy giving their parents especially their mothers attention and taking instruction from them not minding the other partner's feeling or opinion on any matter regarding the family. Whenever there is excessive use of slogans like, “mommy's boy” or “mommy's daughter” or every time “my mommy says this or that” then it can create problem because the couple cannot take decision of their own. Family should learn to understand each other's feeling and be independent in their decision without parents interfering.

7. Difference in How You Resolve Conflict

If someone has grown up in a family where arguing is very common and they're in a relationship with someone who doesn't like arguing or isn't used to it, this can cause difficulty. Since you have different ways of solving problems, it's likely that these problems will never get resolved due to consistent argument and disagreement.

8. Differences in Communication

If one partner is the type of person who shares all their intimate

thoughts, but their partner is not, this can cause problems. If one partner isn't sharing with the other, this will often be interpreted by the other as meaning 'they don't love me, they're not interested in me' or not open to discussion. Partners should be opened to free discussion especially what would help in building the family.

9. Extrovert Problems

Another problem can be when one person has a different view of what should be kept within the relationship. If one person shares all the intimate details of the relationship with their friends or too much posting on Facebook of every event, this can be an increasingly difficult thing to manage. Couple should know how to keep their family affairs and secret within their family. They should also know that the stomach is not for food only but for information and secrets therefore, let the extrovert learn to talk less and listen more.

10. Freedom and privacy

Freedom and privacy is basic human rights that when one partner infringes the other person right in terms of intruding into the other person freedom and privacy it can lead to constant fight and crisis in the family. The checking of one partner's phone in his absent or her absent should be avoided completely. Marriage should not make any of the partners a slave in the house or deny the other person the right to privacy because a home where no proper exercise of freedom and privacy will make the couples to live as hypocrites and it will lead to lack of trust. Couple should be able to live free and express themselves without duress. Therefore, each partner's freedom and right to privacy must be respected to create conducive atmosphere of love and satisfaction.

Chapter siX

- EFFECTS OF DIVORCE AND SEPARATION -

Why Divorces are Painful

A breakup or divorce can be one of the most stressful and emotional experiences in life. Whatever the reason for the split and whether you wanted it or not the breakup of a relationship can turn your whole world upside down and trigger all sorts of painful and unsettling emotions. Even when a relationship is no longer good, a divorce or breakup can be extremely painful because it represents the loss, not just of the partnership, but also of the dreams and commitments you shared. Romantic relationships begin on a high note of excitement and hopes for the future. When a relationship fails, we experience profound disappointment, stress, and grief.

A breakup or divorce launches you into uncharted territory. Everything is disrupted: your routine and responsibilities, your home, your relationships with extended family and friends, and even your identity. A breakup also brings uncertainty about the future. What will life be like without your partner? Will you find someone else? Will you end up alone? These unknowns can often seem worse than being in an unhappy relationship. This pain, disruption, and uncertainty means that recovering from a breakup or divorce can be difficult and take time. However, it's important to keep reminding yourself that you can and will get through this difficult experience and even move on with a renewed sense of hope and optimism.

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Relationships are like waves, we have some good days and some bad days, but the ramifications of each situation reshape our personalities and modify our thought process. In today's very independent world, many marriages end in divorce, and the negative effects of divorce on children and families are prevalent. Depending on the nature of the divorce, each couple has a different way of going about the divorce. While one couple may be able to have a relatively amicable divorce, another may spend years sorting out legal issues. Whatever the situation, divorces can be brutal, and many studies by psychologists have noted the negative effects of divorce on children and families result in a consistent change in the psychological and emotional nature of an individual, which further alters their social and personal life at a time when they may need stability. According to National Center for Health Statistics, the rate of divorce in 2014 was 6.9% per 1000 of the total population, in contrast to an 8.2% in the year 2000.

Impact of divorce and separation on Women

Most couples marry with the idea of getting their happiness but it is clear with the high divorce rates that this doesn't always happen. Divorces affect everyone differently, and many women see a change in their psychological state. This may be exacerbated by the extra stress of caring for her children while dealing with a divorce or having to bare deal with the seemingly constant problems that arise during a divorce. The lone parent often has to battle on half a dozen fronts at once. Although she knows she can't do it, she is trying to be both a mother and a father to this child. To maintain two households is far more expensive than keeping one, divorce usually means that both parties experience a lower standard of living. Typically, the mother

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experiences the greatest decrease in her standard of living (Neifert, 1991). In many cases, financial and emotional stresses are the two biggest problems for women going through a divorce.

1. Financial Effect

The Effect of Marriage and Divorce on Women's Economic Well-Being, an article published in 1999 in the “American Sociological Review”, stated that the average divorced woman has a more limited monetary support than an average married woman, consequently leaving women in a state where they never fully recover from the financial setback, until they remarry. Divorce always makes women poorer because often the woman is the one to move out to start life all over and her children find themselves in new schools surrounded by strangers. They have left their longtime friends, who could have helped them through this and now she resumes the full responsibilities of the kids.

2. Emotional Effect

An article published in 2006 by Journal of Health and Social Behavior, “The Short-Term and Decade-Long Effects of Divorce on Women's Midlife Health” stated that divorced women reported significantly higher psychological distress levels than married women in the years following the divorce. Juggling between making ends meet and trying to sort her life, a woman is evidently going to go through an emotional roller coaster; feelings of unhappiness, loneliness, and depression surround her. These negative feelings could further cloud a woman's judgment leading her to find support in alcohol or sometimes even drugs.

Women are generally thought to be more emotional than men, and

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after going through a divorce and seeing how someone they once loved and seemingly do so much damage may make it harder for her to trust in the future. These trust issues will not only extend to potential partners or men in general but may even cause her to second-guess her own decisions and doubt herself.

IMPACT OF DIVORCE AND SEPARATION ON MEN

1. Emotional Setback

Emotional set is one of the most common effects of divorce on men today. After divorce, men are left with a lot of thoughts but no one to share them with. It is been said that men have a harder time dealing with divorce than women. It's thought that this may be caused by the cultural norm of men keeping to themselves and not talking about their emotions. In the article *3 Reasons Divorce is Harder on Men than Women* published in The Huffington Post (2013), men going through a divorce tend to suffer from depression because they don't know how to express the loss they're feeling. In most cases when a man is divorced it affects the entire family and not just his wife and that makes him to worry and be depressed.

According to *'Psychological and Emotional Aspects of Divorce'* an article published in 1997 by Kathleen Corcoran, men have issues dealing with emotional adjustments because they relate to divorce as loss of intimacy, reduced finances, loss of social connection, and possibly as though they are losing their children.

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As stated above in regards to self-esteem and trust issues, like women, men also go through similar emotions and have issues trusting women. Even though this fact is true for men going through a bad divorce, men are still known to remarry quicker than women.

2. Financial issues

After divorce, a man is liable to pay alimony to his wife and money for the education of his children. This additional financial liability along with the fees of lawyers is a financial effect of divorce on men that prevails for a much longer time than we think. Sometimes, even the property gets divided between the two individuals, and if a man loses a property that was once an investment, it can prove as a setback in most cases

IMPACT OF DIVORCE AND SEPARATION ON CHILDREN

Divorce is always stressful for children, but not all divorces are created equal. Some divorces are disruptive but essentially amicable, others are what professionals call high conflict divorces. In a high conflict divorce, former spouses lack the cooperation necessary for effective co-parenting and children may even be used as go-betweens in parental conflict. Any family's greatest difficulty is when the parents' relationship ends. With about four in ten marriages ending in divorce or separation, more and more children will experience family change. Over 70 per cent of children whose parents divorce are under ten years of age. Marital instability has a greater effect on young children than on adults. The negative effects of divorce in children

are long lasting and are also observed in their own intimate relationships. *Children go through major behavior issues, low school performances, anger issues, impulsive behavior and poor social skills.* Some of the negative divorce consequences are due to the transition a child has to make between a 2 home family, financial custody and emotional support.

1. Low School Grades and Aggressive Behavior

Researchers have suggested that bad divorces have an effect on a child's school performances such as low school grades and aggressive behavior with their peers. In many cases, teenage children even drop out of school and get into drugs. It has also been studied that these negative effects are more evident in boys than in girls. Boys tend to have greater issues when dealing with broken homes; they reflect more aggressive behavior and are less focused in school, resulting in fights with peers. Girls on the other hand exhibit higher rates of depression which hinder their concentration level at school and otherwise.

2. Depression, Loneliness, and Low Self-Esteem

Older children and adolescents may experience depression, loneliness, low self-esteem, and shame about the divorce. Their schoolwork may decline and they may act in a delinquent manner. Often they express embarrassment about their parents' overt sexuality and reveal secret about having a failed marriage of their own in the future. Although they may know friends whose parents are divorced, they may not openly discuss their own family situation (Neifert, 1991). As a result of divorce, many children harbour intense anger towards their parents, which can periodically erupt in a variety

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of age-related outbursts, including temper tantrums, shouting matches, flagrant disobedience, and excessive demands (Neifert, 1991).

Besides low school performances, children also go through low self-esteem, poor judgment, anxiousness, high feelings of insecurity and extreme pain. Drug abuse, alcoholism, promiscuity, violence, depression, and suicide are all symptoms of broken hearts and broken families that don't know how to connect but depending on a child's age and family relations, negative attitude may vary and in some cases may not even be very prominent.

Legal actions, particularly custody battles, tear adolescents apart. Often they end up blaming both parents for the anguish they experience and so they have no trust left. They discount adults and rely only on peers for comfort and companionship.

Chapter seven

- COPING WITH DIVORCE SITUATION -

Grief is a natural reaction to loss, and the breakup or divorce of a love relationship involves multiple losses: Loss of companionship and shared experiences (which may or may not have been consistently pleasurable), Loss of support, be it financial, intellectual, social, or emotional and Loss of hopes, plans, and dreams (which can be even more painful than practical losses). Allowing oneself to feel the pain of these losses may be scary. You may fear that your emotions will be too intense to bear, or that you'll be stuck in a dark place forever. Is good to remember that grieving is essential to the healing process and so the pain of grief is precisely what helps you let go of the old relationship and move on. And no matter how strong your grief, it won't last forever.

Common Reactions to Divorce

Dealing with divorce can bring up just about every emotion under the sun. Anger, sadness, fear, relief, guilt and these are all normal reactions to divorce. Reactions to divorce take emotional and physical dimension.

Emotional reaction

Going through a divorce can cause the same emotional response as the passing of a loved one. In fact, many people coping with divorce find that they move through the same stages of grief after the loss of a relationship as

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they do with the loss of a loved one. There are stages of grief people who are divorce pass through:

Stage 1: Shock and Disbelief

This can take a while to accept that your reality is dramatically, permanently changing. Each time you remember that you are going through a divorce, you may feel shock and/or disbelief. Eventually, the separation will become a normal part of your life, and allow space for other feelings to arise.

Stage 2: Denial

This phase includes any type of denial related to the event itself or your feelings about the event. It might not be a denial that you're going through a divorce. Denial can also manifest as hiding the divorce from other people at first, or denying how deeply it is affecting you. Denial happens when you are not quite ready to be open to other people's reactions or your own feelings. For some people, this stage lasts a long time, while for others it's very short.

Stage 3: Guilt

This stage may cause you to blame yourself for everything that is happening and you begin to be ashamed of yourself and lead to withdrawal from people and events.

Stage 4: Anger and Bargaining

People coping with divorce often find that they are angry. Angry with themselves, angry with their partner, angry with their situation and they may even become angry with people who have nothing to do with their separation.

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With that anger comes bargaining. You may find yourself thinking about things you “should” have done differently. You may try to find ways to turn things around.

Stage 5: Depression, Loneliness, Reflection

Depression after divorce is very common. You may start to reflect on the past, analyze your situation, and think about your journey from the beginning to the end of the relationship. This is actually the first glimmer of acceptance.

Stage 6: Reconstruction and Working Through

This is the phase when you begin to weave yourself back together and become a bit more functional. You can think logically about problems, find solutions, and work out how to live a normal life again.

Stage 7: Acceptance

In the last stage, acceptance, you have more or less figured out how to cope with divorce in a way that makes sense for you. It doesn't mean you no longer feel sad or that you're over that person or the relationship. It does mean that you have started putting one foot in front of the other, and have begun to feel like yourself again.

Physical reactions

Divorce or separation can cause physical reactions in addition to all of the emotions it causes. It's not uncommon to experience symptoms, such as shortness of breath, nausea, headaches, loss of appetite, fluctuations in weight, insomnia, and fatigue. Some people may experience panic attacks.

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Emotional and physical distress also affects the immune system, making you more vulnerable to getting sick. Before you address your emotional reactions, it's important that you first take care of your body. Make sure you're eating and drinking enough and getting 7–8 hours of sleep per night. Sleep deprivation takes a toll on your mental and emotional health and can exacerbate symptoms such as depression. Sleeping too much or too little can be a sign of depression.

HOW TO OVERCOME DIVORCE TRAUMA

Every enduring marriage involves an unconstitutional commitment to an imperfect person. That means we can gaze at each other's imperfections and say, "Those brown leaves do irritate me, but I'm going to find out what caused them, and see if I can help. No matter what shape you're in - I'll be around and help you grow." Without this kind of commitment, we're more likely to say, "I can't stand all these brown leaves. They have bothered me for years! That's it I'm leaving," (Smalley and Trente, 1989, p.109). Here are some helpful tips that will make you feel better and get you up and going once again and prevent some of the negative effects of divorce on children and families.

1. **You are important**

Remind yourself that you are important and you still have a future. It is not easy when you commit to another person; you created many hopes and dreams for a life together. After a breakup, it's hard to let these aspirations

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go. As you grieve the loss of the future you once envisioned, be encouraged by the fact that new hopes and dreams will eventually replace your old ones. Don't fight your feelings because it's normal to have lots of ups and downs, and feel many conflicting emotions, including anger, resentment, sadness, relief, fear, and confusion. It's important to identify and acknowledge these feelings. While these emotions will often be painful, trying to suppress or ignore them will only prolong the grieving process. Reminding yourself that it's not your fault and that you have nothing to feel guilty about is essential. You might feel like you're surrounded by darkness and negativity, but take a step back and look at the bigger picture. This period of your life won't last forever. It's temporary, and there are so many things to look forward to. Let yourself be happy and hopeful, and always remind yourself that it will be okay in the end.

2. Surround yourself with people you love

Even though it is difficult for you to talk about your feelings with other people, it is very important to find a way to do so when you are grieving. Knowing that others are aware of your feelings will make you feel less alone with your pain and will help you heal. With everything that's going on, you might feel like you want to hide away and stay away from people, but having a support system is important for making it through. If you can't talk to loved ones, think about getting some professional help. You might find that talking through what you're going through will help you organize your thoughts and see what's really important. Also, social relationships are shown to help lower stress and anxiety symptoms, so surround yourself with love whenever you can.

3. Eat well and stay motivated

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You are responsible for your own well-being, and having this responsibility in your life when you feel like you have control over so little can be empowering. You have to be your own motivation and get yourself to eat well, sleep well, and get the exercise you need. You may not be up for running miles on end, but you can try dancing, go to yoga, or anything else that gets you moving. Take care of yourself, and stay away from substances that will hurt you in the long run, like drugs or alcohol.

4. Take up a new hobby

Take the time to learn something you've always wanted to do, or spend time doing something you love doing. If you've always loved painting, get yourself new brushes and let yourself paint. If you love music, allow yourself to really appreciate music. You have the time and ability to do anything you want.

HOW TO HELP KIDS TO COPE WITH DIVORCE SITUATION

Kids and divorce can be especially tricky. They may be having a hard time, but aren't sure how to express themselves, which results in poor academic performance or behavioral problems. Even though your children may not be talking to you about their feelings, try to use your intuition to know how they're feeling. Children have stronger feelings and their needs are more wanting. Here are tips to help your children cope with a divorce.

1. Open conversation

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Spend time with your kids, take them to happy places and be a listener. Your children need you. Just like you need a listener, they need someone too. You as a parent are closest to your kids. Let them know that you love them. If they still don't open up, think about seeing a specialist who can help them share how they're feeling. It is important that they don't feel guilty for the situation.

2. Keep routines as much as possible

Divorce with children means a world of changes. They'll be going from a family to a single-parent household, they might have to change houses, and some kids might even have to change school which also means making new friends. There are so many changes happening in their life that they need to feel a sense of security and stability. In a time where you're not feeling either of those things, you need to be a rock for them. Let them know you are there for them and will help them cope with any difficulties. Take them to see their friends more often, surround them with love and loved ones.

3. Start a new activity

Pick a hobby that you both enjoy. It could be as simple as going out to the movies or playing a game on the computer together. Just knowing you are there for your kids will help them with their emotions

WAYS TO AVOID DIVORCE

1. Don't try to control your partner

In healthy marriages to avoid divorce, both partners must have mutual

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respect for one another and don't demand their own way for eager to satisfy one another not minding the cost. As couple to who wish to live in peace keep the following in mind:

- Don't try to monitor or control each other.
- Give your partner room to be the person they are.
- Learn to collaborate on big decisions (such as spending money and raising children).
- Let your spouse have the freedom to come and go without having to ask your permission.

Partners who attempt to control one another risk becoming emotionally abusive. They might display signs of financial abuse—which frequently leads to divorce.

2. Give each other space

One of the hardest things to balance in a marriage is the right amount of time to spend together. Too much can feel like smothering while too little can be interpreted as inattentive. When your partner needs space or a night out with friends, offer to watch the kids or run the errands to ensure they can get that time. On the other hand, you also want to make time to spend with your partner. If babysitting issues or financial constraints make that difficult, plan a fun, cost-effective date night at home. The key is that you both make a concerted effort to spend quality time together while also allowing each other the space to have an outside community that may always reduce tension or crisis at home.

3. Forgive quickly

Marriages often begin to fall apart when one person is holding a grudge. Research has shown that feeling contempt toward your partner always festers and can lead to divorce if it's never resolved. Try to forgive your partner as quickly as possible. Remember that forgiveness is just as much a gift you give yourself. Holding a grudge takes up mental and emotional space and almost always impacts your health and stress levels. Opt for a forgiving spirit and you will reap the positive benefits, be it better sleep or stress relief. If you have wronged your partner, sincerely apologize and ask for their forgiveness. Really listen to what they have to say and try to understand why they are upset. Let them know you will work on how to do things differently in the future and also amend the wound you have created in their lives.

4. Share financial expectations

Many marriages are fraught with disagreements over finances and most couples always have different expectations about money in a relationship and they always find it difficult to see the financial situation from the other person's perspective. To avoid situation that can lead to divorce on financial grounds, couples can agree on how their money and account can be handled because is a critical component of a successful marriage. Couple should agree on a budget, an approach to debt, and make a plan to live within your limits and it is also important to differentiate between needs and wants and learn to prioritize your needs. Even though both needs and wants are legitimate, couples can face problems if they try to fulfill all their wants

without considering their budget. They should learn to incorporate some flexibility in their budget to allow for entertainment, gifts, vacations, and other activities that will strengthen their marriage.

5. Find help when in crisis

The best custodian of secret is the stomach because is not only meant for food but information too. It is advisable for couples to try as much as possible to resolve their differences in secret and to keep their family affairs close to their hearts alone without discussing with outsiders. However, it is always preferable when couples begin to have challenges in their marriage or fear that divorce might be imminent to consider counseling or couples therapy or go through marriage encounter program. If you are not sure where to look, start by considering meeting with a trusted religious leader and those who sponsor your wedding as godparents. It is advisable when challenges are persisting and leading to unruly behavior, the husband can approach and seek the advice of the parent in-laws of his wife and the wife too in any case can share with the parent in-laws of her husband. And parent in-laws on this matter when contacted ideally supposed not to take side but be objective in their judgment and advise. Religious leaders, sponsors and parents together with the couples are all defenders of bond of marriage so everyone should try as much as possible to sustain peacefully and harmonious marriage and family and together build a family of God church on earth.

Chapter eight

- SUSTAINABILITY OF MARRIAGE -

Ways to a Successful and Sustainable Marriage and Family

If men and women are to experience marriage as God intended it in the beginning, they must consciously renounce all that is contrary to God's plan and continually surrender themselves to the grace of redemption. The cross of Christ, therefore, lies at the center of the Church's theology of marriage. Since it was man and woman's turning away from God that distorted their relationship in the first place, it makes sense that restoring marriage requires a radical return to God. Thus, an authentic theology of marriage is not only informational but, above all, transformational. It calls couples to a life of ongoing personal conversion. Only as spouses renounce themselves and take up their crosses to follow Christ can they experience the true joys of marriage that God ardently wishes to shower upon them. For a marriage to be successful and sustainable couples should be able to keep the following virtues in mind:

1. Holiness

Couples holiness should not be based on prayers together alone but their prayer life should extend to an open door policy of charity to all people that come their way in life. Visitors should be welcomed and feel at home and no particular side of the family of the couple should be entertained or dominate more than the other. Couples should always spend quality time

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together as husband and wife and be with their children to always give them sense of together and correct and instruct them. Holiness is expressed in constant dialogue between the couples to keep in touch and resolve any family issue not keeping malice. It could further be expressed in their daily lives like; eating together, forgiveness when one goes wrong and in any misunderstanding or quarrels, it should be done for the purpose of correction not for wickedness or separation or divorce.

2. Honesty: transparency, accountability and trust

Couples should be honest to each other and their honesty should be reflected in their daily lives in terms of transparency and accountability. Honesty and trust become the foundation for everything healthy in a marriage and trust takes time. You can become selfless, committed, or patient in a moment, but trust always takes time. Trust is only built after weeks, months, and years of being who you say you are and doing what you say you'll do. It takes time, so start now and if you need to rebuild trust in your relationship, you'll need to work even harder.

Transparency demonstrates one's accountability and a couple who is accountable earns trust, and trust strengthens the relationship and builds the love to an high esteem which becomes the pride of marriage that should never die even after death it lingers in the mind of the surviving partner.

3. Hard work

The secret to a happy marriage is a hard working husband who

spends a reasonable hours at work to cater for his family and provide their needs. Marriage does take work, and like anything else in life, you have to do the work to reap the reward. It is the responsibility of the father to take care of the capital project of the house in terms of building a house or paying rent, paying children school fees, provision of major foodstuff and health of the family. The mother should support the husband in minor projects like paying small bills (light, water, television etc), food ingredients, clothes etc. Both parties should be hardworking and supportive to one another for the good and progress of the family.

4. Humility

We all have weaknesses and relationships always reveal these faults quicker than anything else on earth. An essential building block of a healthy marriage is the ability to admit that you are not perfect, that you will make mistakes, and that you will need forgiveness. Holding an attitude of superiority over your partner will bring about resentment and will prevent your relationship from moving forward. If you struggle in this area, grab a pencil and quickly write down three things that your partner does better than you – that simple exercise should help you stay humble. Repeat as often as necessary.

5. Love/Commitment

The very responsibility to be the lover in your house lies in loving your wife. Before a man can properly love his children, the family dog or even the pet gerbil, the man of the house must first love his wife (Kroll, 1995). At its core,

love is a decision to be committed to another person. It is far more than a fleeting emotion as portrayed on television, the big screen, and romance novels. Feelings come and go, but a true decision to be committed lasts forever – and that is what defines true love. It is a decision to be committed through the ups and the downs, the good and the bad. When things are going well, commitment is easy. But true love is displayed by remaining committed even through the trials of life.

6. Sexual Faithfulness

Sexual faithfulness in marriage includes more than just our bodies. It also includes our eyes, mind, heart, and soul. When we devote our minds to sexual fantasies about another person, we sacrifice sexual faithfulness to our spouse. When we offer moments of emotional intimacies to another, we sacrifice sexual faithfulness to our spouse. Guard your sexuality daily and devote it entirely to your spouse. Sexual faithfulness requires self-discipline and an awareness of the consequences. Refuse to put anything in front of your eyes, body, or heart that would compromise your faithfulness.

7. Patience/Forgiveness

Great marriages involve a lot of give-and-take, a lot of compromising and adapting. And if one person submits lovingly, the other person is likely to submit in response (Warren, 1998). Because no one is perfect, patience and forgiveness will always be required in a marriage relationship. Successful marriage partners learn to show unending patience and forgiveness to their partner. They humbly admit their own faults and do not expect perfection from their partner. They do not bring up past errors in an effort to hold their partner

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hostage. And they do not seek to make amends or get revenge when mistakes occur. If you are holding onto a past hurt from your partner, forgive him or her. It will set your heart and relationship free.

8. Time

Relationships don't work without time investment. Never have, never will. Any successful relationship requires intentional, quality time together. And quality time rarely happens when quantity time is absent. The relationship with your spouse should be the most intimate and deep relationship you have. Therefore, it is going to require more time than any other relationship. If possible, set aside time each day for your spouse. And a date-night once in awhile wouldn't hurt either.

9. Communication

Successful marriage partners communicate as much as possible. They certainly discuss kids' schedules, grocery lists, and utility bills. But they don't stop there. They also communicate hopes, dreams, fears, and anxieties. They don't just discuss the changes that are taking place in the kid's life; they also discuss the changes that are taking place in their own hearts and souls. This essential key cannot be overlooked because honest, forthright communication becomes the foundation for so many other things on this list: commitment, patience, and trust.

10. Selflessness

Although it will never show up on any survey, more marriages are broken up by selfishness than any other reason. Surveys blame it on finances, lack of commitment, infidelity, or incompatibility, but the root cause for most of

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these reasons is selfishness. A selfish person is committed only to himself or herself, shows little patience, and never learns how to be a successful spouse. Give your hopes, dreams, and life to your partner. And begin to live life together.

This is a simple call to value our marriages, treat them with great care, and invest into them daily. Accomplishing the items listed above will always require nearly every bit of yourself... but it so worth it. After all, a successful marriage is far more valuable than most of temporal things we chase after with our lives. And will always last longer.

11. Attention

Any longstanding relationships need the spices of attention to bring out more flavor. Every woman needs attention and caring to enable her function effectively in her matrimonial home. Taking each other for granted can dull a relationship. If couples friendship is their priority in life, they need attention based on Chapman (1995) Five Love Languages: words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service and physical touch.

12. Be independent

Independence is extremely important in a marriage because is the key to a happy relationship. Wives and husbands must continue to take out time for themselves to enjoy their personal hobbies, and in general, spend some time apart. Not only does absence make the heart grow fonder, but in the time we spend alone, we get to reunite with our spiritual side, re-establish our sense of self, and check in with the progress of our personal preferences, goals, and achievements. Being dependent, on the other hand, weakens your resolve and

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ability to move forward as a free thinker. When we maintain our independent sense of self, we will always have something to talk about at the dinner table, and we are forever stronger, healthier, and more attractive to our partners.

13. Be a good listener

While all women should work at the art of active listening, men should give special attention to listening in their marriage life. Too often, men do not realize that all their partner needs from them is a listening ear. This is due to their programming and the way in which they are taught to relate with others. Listening and hearing are not the same thing because listening involves our hearts. Husband should open his ears to what his wife says, look at her while she speaks, paraphrase even, and reassure her because listening is the real key to a happy marriage, for that matter, to every relationship

14. Agree to disagree

Being good together does not mean that couples agree on every little thing. Most couples actually had varying attitudes, opinions, and belief systems; and even held opposing views on major areas in some cases. All couples should have some level of disagreement somewhere. Successful, loving couples respected the point of view of one another, and even had a sense of humor over their points of contention. Recognize that of two opposite views, one of them does not have to be “right” so learn to tolerate and accept one another the way he or she is.

15. Know your partner's 'Love Language'

Knowing your partner's preferences and hobbies, metaphors can be used in communication that relate to something the person understands well.

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Observe the physical way in which your partner shows love. This could be, washing your car, or picking up the kids. From the woman, it could be keeping the toiletries stocked and ironing her husband shirts, use of words, letters, and affection. Figure out your partner's love language so you will always know how to speak to him or her. Love languages are often talked about but couple don't heed as much attention to this that what they should. Understanding love language is the secret to a happy relationship.

16. Acceptance

A major relationship killer, lack of acceptance is a trait more commonly attributed to women, who are known for their nagging. Remember, we married our spouse for who he was then, and who he is now. Even if we wanted to change him now, we can't.

When urging or persuading him, you are only focusing on his weaknesses or problems. Change your perspective immediately and start focusing on positive traits instead.

17. Take responsibility

It is that easy and one of the secrets of a successful marriage. When you participate in a project, take responsibility for your successes and your failures. When you and your partner have a disagreement or argument, remember to take responsibility for your actions, including anything you did or said, especially if it was hurtful, unthoughtful or created adversity.

18. Never take one another for granted

Taking one another for granted may be the most toxic pathogen of all. Once couples are comfortable, it is easy for them to begin to slip into a

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complacent state and expectations form. This is actually only a matter of human nature, as we get comfortable with what is familiar, but in marriage, you absolutely should never come to a place where you take your partner for granted. Pledge to respect your partner indefinitely no matter what. Avoid assumptions, and offer to do nice things for your partner whenever possible.

19. Date night

Date night is the most ignored aspect of couples life and most overlooked, especially those who have been married for a while. It does not matter what a couple does on their date night. Simply having a night when they spend their time just with each other strengthens the bond and maintains it over time. When you have date night, you should turn your phones off and put them away so you are free of distractions. Watch a movie at home together in the bedroom without distraction or go out for movie and eat popcorn together or take vacation and travel for fun together. Change it up often and be helpful and positive for one another.

20. Add romance

Romantic acts can be many, try giving her what she or he likes someday or place a love note in his briefcase or backpack or her handbag. Surprise him with his favorite meal, or watch the sunset together. There is no shortage of ideas; and you'll be amazed at how far a little romance goes toward strengthening your marriage.

21. Keep intimacy alive

Sex is very important to a healthy marriage. Sex should be regular, and therapists suggest doing it even when you're not in the mood! It is

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suggested that keeping it interesting by talking about what pleases you, and adding any fantasy role playing, positions, or bedroom props you may want to introduce to keep it exciting.

22. Compliments

It is said, “A compliment a day keeps the divorce attorney away.” Acknowledging your partner's positive attributes every day, and paying compliments, will go a long way in your relationships. Stay positive, and keep track of what your spouse does well. When the going gets rough and his not-so-great attributes come forward, rather than focusing on the negative, try switching gears, and point out the positive stuff instead.

23. Look for the soft emotion

It is often said, “behind every ‘hard’ emotion is a soft one;” this is a concept taught by psychologists. When we feel anger, it's usually masking another emotion behind it, such as sadness, disappointment, or jealousy. We often just use anger as a disguise to protect our vulnerabilities. Looking for the “soft” or, vulnerable emotions underneath someone's hard display of anger, will help keep you connected as you are better equipped to empathize with that person's true emotion.

24. Do not control

Married people often come to a stage where they start to lose themselves, they give in to jealousy or feelings of inadequacy and they may be tempted to start controlling their partners. Most of the time this is done inadvertently, as expectations may grow over time. Avoid controlling your

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partner rather, communication, independent time, and healthy indulgences will keep any couple on track and happy. If you sense you are being controlling or are the controller, decrease from it and try to see each other as equal helpmates.

25. Never use the D- word

Presuming you don't really want to get a divorce, don't threaten to use the word for your partner for whatsoever reason. Couples that use the D-word or talk about separation during fights use this as a control mechanism. Couples using it in a threatening way are more likely to see Divorce come to fruition. Making threats is not a mature strategy for solving any problem, so don't use it to threaten your partner because it weakens relationship. **Note:** Any *misunderstanding is meant for corrective measure not divorce therefore couple should agree among themselves on the day of their wedding that never will they wake up the following day still keeping malice no matter the problem between them. This will go a long way to sustain their marriage life and family.*

Chapter nine

- BASIC FACTS AND STORIES ON - MARRIAGE LIFE STYLE

BASIC FACTS OF MARRIAGE

Secrets in Marriage

One: Everyone you marry has a weakness: Only God does not have a weakness. So if you focus on your spouse's weakness you can't get the best out of his or her strength

Two: Everyone has a dark history: No one is an angel. When you get married or you want to get married stop digging into someone's past. What matters most is the present life of your partner. Old things have passed away. Forgive and forget. Focus on the present and the future.

Three: Every marriage has its own challenges: Marriage is not a bed of roses. Every good marriage has gone through its own test of blazing fire. True love proves in times of challenges. Fight for your marriage. Make up your mind to stay with your spouse in times of need. Remember the vow for better for worse. In sickness and in health be there.

Four: Every marriage has different levels of success: Don't compare your marriage with anyone else. We can never be equal. Some will be far, some behind. To avoid marriage stresses, be patient, work hard and with time your marriage dreams shall come true.

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Five: To get married is declaring war: When you get married you must declare war against enemies of marriage. Some enemies of marriage are: Ignorance, prayerlessness, unforgiveness, third party influence, stinginess, stubbornness, lack of love, rudeness, laziness, disrespect, cheating etc. Be ready to fight to maintain your marriage zone.

Six: There is no perfect marriage: There is no ready made marriage. Marriage is hard work. Volunteer yourself to work daily on it. Marriage is like a car that needs proper maintenance and proper service. If this is not done it will break down somewhere exposing the owner to danger or some unhealthy circumstances. Let us not be careless about our marriages.

Seven: God cannot give you a complete person you desire: He gives you the person in the form of raw materials in order for you to mould the person that you desire. This can only be achieved through prayer, love and Patience.

Eight: Getting married is taking a huge risk: You cannot predict what will happen in the future. Situations may change so leave room for adjustments. Husband can lose his good job or you may fail to have babies. All these require you to be prayerful otherwise you might divorce.

Nine: Marriage is not a contract: It is permanent. It needs total commitment. Love is the glue that sticks the couple together. Divorce start in the mind and the devil feeds the mind. Never ever entertain thoughts of getting a divorce. Never threaten your spouse with divorce. Choose to remain married. God hates divorce.

Ten: Every marriage has a price to pay: Marriage is like a bank account. It is the money that you deposit that you withdraw. If you don't deposit love, peace

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and care into your marriage, you are not a candidate for a blissful home.

PROTECTION OF MARRIAGE

Even if you are married to the best spouse in the whole world, if you do not guard your heart, you may end up "falling in love" with someone aside your spouse and eventually ruin your marriage.

No one gets married and plans to have affair but a lot of married men and women are in affairs today because they slept when they should have been wide awake with their five senses.

1. Don't be too Friendly with the Opposite Sex: This is where lots of married people land into trouble. Over spirituality and pride will destroy your marriage! You can't handle close friendship with the opposite sex as a married person. Your heart is involved so Set boundaries, be disciplined be respectful, be cordial, be godly and be holy.

2. Stop Focusing on Your Spouse's Weakness and Appreciate their Strengths: If you always see the bad side of your spouse, you will be angry, bitter, critical and look for someone who can "understand" you and make you happy aside your spouse. That is the beginning of an emotional and sexual affair. It is the beginning of the end of one's glorious marriage!

3. Protect Your Family by not Sharing Your Personal or Family Problems with an Opposite Sex Friend: It will bond you together. Problem bond people.

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4. Don't Contact any Opposite Sex You are Fond of: If you secretly admire them, you are fond of them and there is a tingling in your heart at the mere thought of them, don't contact!

5. Avoid Eye Contact: Avoid unnecessary eye contact that lingers with the opposite sex and also stop saying "I love you" to the opposite sex.

6. Avoid Romantic Teams: Don't tell an opposite sex you romantic or sexy life. That private information is for your spouse only.

7. Don't Chat with the Opposite Sex on the Days You are Vulnerable: Avoid discussion with the opposite sex when you are tired, very sad, depressed, sorrowful, drowsy, sleepy or very sick. This can cloud your judgement and make you say silly things. Talk to your husband or wife instead.

8. Work on Your Marriage: Keep the fire of love and romance alive in your marriage and never flirt with the opposite sex.

9. Mind the Pictures You Post on Social Media: Limit pictures that show your curves or portray you as sexy.

10. Keep Distance from Your Ex: Do not contact all your EX after marriage especially if you know that it will not be healthy for your marriage.

WHO IS A WOMAN?

A woman is an influence, a nation and a helper. Having vagina, boobs, and hips doesn't make you a woman. A woman is the one who feeds a

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man with encouragement and ideas, who helps a man to save and invest wisely. A woman does not run her mouth with sarcasm and insult just to prove a point, rather her words are gracious and can heal a broken heart. A woman is the one that knows when to talk and to keep Quiet and doesn't leak secret. A woman is the one that is content with what she has, and not the one that sells herself for material things but a manager, a caretaker, a womb that can nature and birth destinies. A woman doesn't do trending things, but she is reserved and has a taste of a Queen. A woman doesn't look down on any man because of his present state of life and financial status, rather she encourages any man to get better. A woman is the one that does not just bears babies, but bear ideas and inspiration anytime, anywhere and a man can cry on her shoulders and not feel humiliated for doing so nor lose his value. A woman is not the one that deceive a man just to get his money, but the one who is honest and sincere in any relationship and a man can run to for comfort and feel honored and respected.

WHAT SOME WOMEN CAN OFFER MEN

A lady once said, ladies remove sex from relationship and marriages you will discover that most of ladies have nothing to offer in relationships and some marriages. What else do they offer aside from sex? Remove money from a relationship and you will discover that over 90% of ladies won't see a reason to be in a relationship or marriage. We want our men to take care of us but we add no value to their life other than sex and

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troubles. Let's change our mindset, let's learn to be valuable in a relationship and marriage. Let's support them financially too, let's pray for them while they are down. Motivate them to hustle harder, give them listening ears, let's give them reasonable advice, let's play a role of a mother in their life and support them and be there for them in good times and bad times. They need us as their multivitamin.

“My Father's Advice to me when I was searching for a Wife...”

My son, I will be very raw and sincere with you. Do not worry about the size of a woman buttock or breast but worry about the size of her heart and brain. Worry about the size of her love and endurance. Because after 5 or 10 years, it will not be about the breast or buttock. As you can see, your mum now has a flat chest and almost flat buttock but we still live together happily, I still love her and she still loves me. Be careful of a woman that loves money. I mean the woman that talks 'every time' about her hair, cloths, shoes, bags panties and make-ups. Marriage is not all about these things. Without make-up, cloths, shoes and panties a good marriage will still stand but without love, no marriage can stand. When I got married to your mum, I didn't have a car or house of my own. I was not even educated. But I had dreams and she appreciated and supported me. Any woman that does not support your dream is not worth thinking-a- minute about. There are women that will see your dreams better than you, you are lucky if you find one, My son, open your ears very well, there is a kind of woman you should avoid, do not make a mistake to marry this kind of woman or you will regret it. I mean a woman that always has bad things to say about everyone. If you see this kind of woman, run away. One of the worst kind of women you can marry is the one that

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complains about everything. If you buy this, she says you should have bought that, if you do this, she said you should have done that. Please stay away! Most women enjoy talking but the one who talks for two hours and listen for two minutes is a potential 'bomb'. Be wise and very careful of a pretending partner. A pretending woman is not hard to know. She will always know everything about everything, she will be careful. Just close your eyes and open your heart and you will see! No woman is perfect. If you see a woman who believes in your dream, who respects you who is committed and who is not all about herself alone then don't let her go. But remember, you must not be a wayward man. I have trained you! If you find a good woman but you are a bad man, you won't have a good marriage! I won't pick a wife for you but I have given you my advice. When you find her, bring her for my blessings. May you find a woman that will increase you not decrease you.

NB: “Parents don't Shift Your Responsibility to Teachers”

Parents are the first teachers of their children. **It is AT HOME that children should learn to say:**

01 - Hello

02 - Good afternoon

03 - Good evening

04 - Please

05 - May I

06 - Sorry

07 - Forgive me

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08 - Thank you very much

09 - Thank you

10 - I was wrong

It is AT HOME that we also learn to:

01 - Be honest

02 - Be punctual

03 - Not insult

04 - Be polite

05 - Respect everyone: friends, colleagues, elders, teachers, authorities

Again at home we learn to:

01 - Eat everything

02 - Not speak with a mouth full

03 - Have personal hygiene

04 - Not throw waste on the ground

05 - Help parents accomplish their daily tasks

06 - Not take what does not belong to you

Still At home we learn to:

01 - Be organized

02 - Take care of our business

03 - Not touch other people's belongings

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04 - Respect the rules,

05 - Speak our mother tongue (s), master our culture and ancestral spirituality

Because AT SCHOOL teachers should teach all the subjects needed to develop the child such as Mathematics, English, History, Social Science, Chemistry, Physics, Biology etc. Teacher only reinforce what the student has learned AT HOME. Because it is from what we learned AT HOME that we, individuals will be respected, that we will respect the life, freedom and property of all.

HOW TO KNOW YOU ARE A FAILED PARENT

1. If your kids dressed naked on the street and you call it fashion or civilization or during birthday you dress your female child half naked and post on social media expecting positive comments.
2. If your kids in primary and secondary schools have their personal android phone in the name of doing assignment. Get ready to raise rotten children.
3. Your kids have access to any channel of their choice in your television even when you are not present. Be sure that you will raise vagabonds.
4. Your child is doing something wrong and nobody can correct him/her because you will always fight for him/her. Don't worry Government may parade him/her on media for different offenses.
5. A teacher corrected your kid in school and he cried home to report to you, then you organize a protest to the school for the teacher to be sacked or you

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went on social media defending your child for what everyone knows that he did wrong.

6. The father/ mother is correcting a child and you are there shouting please don't kill him for me.

7. You are giving a child of less than ten years old pocket money and say is for your weekend. The tendency to start visiting banks to enable them raise money for their Christmas and Salah celebration is there in the future.

8. You are expecting your child to become the bread winner of your home at less than 18yrs. The gun powder you are cooking will soon explode.

9. You have the means to sponsor your children in school but you told them school is a scam.

10. Insulting your spouse in the presence of your kids. Calling all manner of names. Continue that seed you are planting. It will soon grow as the children will see it as part of the family lifestyle.

11. You bribe the school for your ward to gain admission or pass exams; you do well, but watch out for his final results.

12. A girl of 15 years in your house cannot cook nor wash her clothes by herself because there is a house girl in the house. Get ready to give her house girl when she gets married.

13. Your child refuse going to church on service days in the name of I want to visit friends or busy with something else and you kept quiet. Don't worry you won't be quiet at old age.

14. You are pushing your children to just get married not withstanding their

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interest. Just because you want to have grandchildren. Prepare a room to receive your divorcee.

15. You want your children to read a course of your choice in the university, it doesn't matter if they can cope.

SOME SOCIAL RULES THAT MAY HELP IN LIFE

1. Don't call spouse more than twice continuously. If he or she does not pick up your call, presume they have something important to attend to and send message and wait for response. But always keep one another posted on your daily update.

2. Return money that you have borrowed even before the person that borrowed you remember or ask for it. It shows your integrity and character. Same goes with umbrellas, pens and lunch boxes etc.

3. Never order the expensive dish or drink on the menu when someone is giving you a treat either lunch/dinner except if it comes from the sponsor.

4. Always open the door for the person coming behind you. It doesn't matter if it is a guy or a girl, senior or junior. You don't grow small by treating someone well in public especially your family.

5. If you take a taxi with a friend and he/she pays now, try paying next time don't be a liability to anyone in life try to contribute something.

6. Respect different shades of opinions between you. Remember what's 6 to you will appear 9 to someone facing you. Besides, second opinion is good for

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an alternative.

7. Never interrupt people talking. Allow them to pour it out. As they say, hear them all and filter them all.

8. If you tease someone, and they don't seem to enjoy it, stop it and never do it again. It encourages one to do more and it shows how appreciative you're.

9. Say “thank you” when someone is helping you and praise publicly but criticize privately.

10. There's almost never a reason to comment on someone's weight. Just say, “You look fantastic.” If they want to talk about losing weight, they will and allow them to follow their heart.

11. When someone shows you a photo on their phone, don't swipe left or right. You never know what's next kindly respect each other's privacy and freedom.

HOW TO LIVE A DECENT FAMILY LIFE

1. Put your kids in schools you can afford because expensive schools don't guarantee good results. Just ensure they attend a good affordable school

2. Rent apartments you can pay for conveniently. Don't live in a house you struggle to pay yearly. Let's plan our lives and live within our means. Save more and spend less.

3. Some women buy food for their children every morning before going to school or even for the whole family, do you know it's cheaper to cook at home? Eat healthy meals

4. Don't copy your neighbor's lifestyle, especially if she earns well and her

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husband is wealthy. Cut your coat according your size because you are not in competition with anyone.

5. Keep your circle small, keep only friends that can add value to your life
6. Have the fear of God, have integrity, don't be lazy and be prayerful.
7. Planning is the key, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail and don't plan more than your budget

REALITY OF LIFE IN THE FAMILY

1. The sincerity of a husband is known during the sickness of his wife. That of a wife is known during the financial difficulty of the husband. True love of children is known during the old age of the parents.
2. The true nature of siblings is known during distribution of inheritance and true relatives are known when one is far from his country, lonely or sick.
3. The sincerity of friends is known during hard times and true love is known when there is no means of benefit. A true believer is known during times of hardship.
4. Be careful not to hate your lovely spouse because of a dirty rumor you heard about him or her which was created out of jealousy and envy.
5. Forgive when betrayed but be careful and watchful
6. Even if you kill yourself for some spouse, he or she may still complain that you didn't die in a proper way. Do your best and leave the rest, you can't satisfy human being hundred per cent.
7. If you are always worried about what others are saying about you, you will

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never be happy. Everybody cannot love you, don't lose your peace over those who hate you. Those who convinced people to hate you cannot convince God to hate you.

PSYCHOLOGY OF POSITIVE THINKING: TIPS FOR FULFILLED LIFE

1. Don't complicate life. You won't be here forever. Once this day is over, it's gone forever. Your time is too valuable to waste on nonsense. No matter what knocks you down in life, get up and keep going. NEVER GIVE UP. Great blessings come as a result of great perseverance.
2. Talking about your problems is your greatest addiction. Break the habit and talk about your joys because good things come to those who believe; better things come to those who are patient, and the best things come to those who don't give up.
3. Do not pray for an easy life; pray for the strength to endure a difficult one. Disappointments are not meant to destroy you, they are meant to strengthen you and give you fortitude to accomplish your God-given destiny.
4. We tend to forget that happiness doesn't come as a result of getting something we don't have but by appreciating what we do have. When you love what you have, you have everything you need. Never let the things you want make you forget the things you have. Learn to be grateful and contented in life.
5. Your child will follow your example, not your advice and one day, you'll be just a memory for some people so do your best to be a good one. Also learn to associate yourself with people of good quality for it is better to be alone than

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in bad company.

6. Don't fear change. You may lose something good, but you may also gain something great. The greatest act of faith some days is to simply get up and face another day. Every day is a NEW beginning, take a deep breath and START AGAIN.

7. Commitment means staying loyal to what you said you were going to do, long after the mood you said it has left you. When you make a commitment, you build hope. When you keep it, you build trust. Remember being honest may not get you a lot of FRIENDS but it will always get you the RIGHT ONES.

8. When you choose to forgive those who have hurt you, you take away their power. Patience is not the ability to wait, but how you act while you are waiting.

9. Isn't it ironic? We ignore those who adore us, but adore the ones that ignore us. We love those who hurt us, but hurt the ones that love us. Sometimes good things fall apart so better things can fall together. Every story has an end, but in life every end is just a new beginning. Be happy not because everything is good, but because you can see the good side of everything.

10. Know that you are loved. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. You are beautiful. You have purpose. You are a masterpiece born to win although to be a winner, you must plan to win, prepare to win, and expect to win. Be selective in your battles. Sometimes peace is better than being right.

11. Don't compare your progress with that of others. We all need our own time to travel our own distance. Learn to surround yourself only with people who are going to lift you higher. Bad things happen every day to everyone.

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The difference is in how people deal with it. Being defeated is often a temporary condition; giving up is what makes it permanent.

12. Two things define you: Your **PATIENCE** when you have **NOTHING**, and your **ATTITUDE** when you have **EVERYTHING**. Working on yourself is the hardest part of life. Keep growing up, no matter where you are. Keep people in your life who truly love you, motivate you and make you happy. If you know people who do none of these things, let them go.

13. Be optimistic in your family:

NO→Shortcuts

NO→Quick fixes

NO→Blaming others

NO→I'll do tomorrows

NO→EXCUSES

THE 10 ENEMIES OF LIFE IN FAMILY PROGRESS

- (1) **Fear:** It prevents you from seizing opportunities to progress
- (2) **Ignorance:** It prevents you from making good decisions.
- (3) **Anger:** It prevents you from seeing clearly.
- (4) **Envy:** It prevents you from focusing on yourself.
- (5) **Ego:** It prevents you from learning from others.
- (6) **Doubt:** It prevents you from believing yourself and taking risk to follow your dreams.

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- (7) **Hate:** It prevents you from becoming a better person.
- (8) **Unforgiveness:** It prevents you from living a free person.
- (9) **Lying:** It prevents people from trusting you.
- (10) **Pride:** It prevents you from seeing and learning from your mistakes

STORIES AND EXPERIENCES IN MARRIAGES

Lesson 1: Pride verses Humility

“When Mothers Take over the Role of Fathers Because Wealth Has Changed Hands”

My experience is about my mum who claimed to be a man, and how we (especially I) grew up with a frustrating mentality of her actions, that made my sister lose her marriage.

Back then I was just nine years old, and the first in a family of four. Mum was a business woman selling bags of garri out of a capital dad gave her while he was working at the defunct Marketing Board.

According to what dad told us and what I saw, he added mum's capital whenever he could and provided for us and everything that kept the family going until Marketing Board closed its doors, and they paid dad some small money which he used to complete our house and added mum's capital.

She supplied bags of garri to many women, and since dad was no longer working, he gave her all the support she needed. He pushed heavy bags of garri in a truck, loaded and off loaded, just to help mum who had now

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become ALL BOSSY because her business had become the source of our daily living.

She started despising dad. Talking to him anyhow in front of everyone. There were times she called him by his name Evaristus as a house boy in front of her clients, and ordered him to bring out the bags of garri the customer ordered for from the store just to humiliate him.

She made friends with some high class women and bought dresses only for herself and at times us, neglecting dad, who had started farming to support her. Dad took care of mum when he was working. She wore good George wrappers with costly jewelries.

Mum became insulting, especially during school time when she had to pay for our fees. She made dad feel useless. I remember one school year when she was busy and dad suggested she gives him our fees so he can go and pay. I haven't been able to forgive mum for what she told dad till date.

She reminded him that he was not man enough to speak when it comes to money, because he was just a woman in the house and that the earlier he started cooking and cleaning the house for her, the better for him. I saw how much mum loved to humiliate dad, until he could take it no more. He relocated to the village when mum refused to share his bed like before, and died two years after. While he was at the village he visited us after every three months with food stuffs. When he brought small money, mum will ask him to give it to me, and she will later collect it with humiliating slangs.

After dad's burial, I refused to go back with mum because she was the one who frustrated dad and sent him to his early grave. I can't tell whether

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he committed suicide, but he went back to his father's compound and joined his brothers to work on their family cocoa farm. We were told that he came back from the farm as usual that fateful Wednesday and did not wake up on Thursday morning till date.

Mum buried him in a sophisticated coffin and did a grandiose funeral, whereas all those things could not bring dad back. All he needed was just an understanding and loving wife to stand with him during those trying moments. I was forced to go back with her even though I didn't want to, but I had no choice. She started taking praises for having buried her husband with honor and together with some of her friends, she developed more wings.

She wanted to prove tough she enrolled us in good schools and was snubbing some married women around us who were not as financially powerful as she was. She disrespected people saying she was better than 1 000 men, until they named her 'Mami 1 000 men'.

She was WRONG trying to compare with men, until my kid sister Bea got married and tried to ride over her husband like mum did to dad, but her husband threw her out and married a humbler girl. Mum took her police attitude to go and threaten her husband, but Uncle Bernard put her in her place and today Bea my sister and mum are cats and dogs, because she followed mum's instructions and tried to take the place of a man in Uncle Bernard's house, where he threw her out without hesitation. I thought I would never get married because I was my mother's daughter. Her attitude was being condemned everywhere.

God blessed me with a man who loves me. Personally, I earn more

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than my husband and I hide behind him as a wife and let him carry out projects for our family though I finance most of the projects.

My husband was plagued with hardship about three years ago, but I refused to be like my mum and stood by him, giving him every necessary support, until he picked up a small job. I have never for once humiliated my husband and I have told my mum not to intrude into my marriage because she is an example of a VERY BAD WIFE and MOTHER.

The fact that you are a woman who has been financially blessed by the man you are married to, or the one who impregnated you, does not make you a man, I know people would want to know what has become of my mum. Yes she started dating younger men and even shamelessly got pregnant for one of them and the child is 11 years today. She has come of age. Business collapsed. She now has a small table in front of the house where she sells small things.

She and my sister Bea are cats and dogs. My other two siblings I took them away from mum's intoxication and gave them my own education on the realities of life. She should be regretting now, though pride cannot let her speak out.

My advice to women is that behind every successful man, there is a strong woman. Being a strong woman doesn't or shouldn't make you think you are a man. Just because you can support your family shouldn't make you despise a man. Learn to be humble and submissive is not a weakness but a strength that not all women have.

LESSON 2: ANGER VERSES PATIENCE

"Too Late to Apologize and we need to be patient"

"Where are you coming from by this time of the night?" He thundered. "Honey you won't believe what happened today. Oh God I'm so tired right now." She replied as she yawned. I asked where you are coming from and you are vomiting rubbish. Does that answer my question? Are you trying to pretend you don't know there's no food in this house? He said fuming. "Honey I'm sorry but you should hear me out first. I...." Before she could complete that sentence, a thunderous slap kissed her left cheek and she passed out on the sofa. "Get my dinner ready, after that you will tell me why you switched off your phone." He said as he walked towards the bedroom. When he noticed there was no response from his wife, he was infuriated. He rushed towards her to unleash the rest of the demon in him but on getting close to her, he discovered she has passed out. He was shocked. Cold sweat appeared on his forehead and raced down his temple. Fear gripped him. He began to panic. He dashed into the bedroom, picked his car key and darted out of the house to open his car. He rushed back into the house almost immediately, lifted his wife and headed to his car. As he made to start the ignition, the car key fell off his hand. He was visibly shaking. Picking up the car key proved to be a difficult task to him as he couldn't get hold of it. He succeeded but had to use both hands to start the car ignition. His shaky hands turned against him. His heart was racing. He couldn't hold the steering firmly but he managed to drive his way to the hospital. Getting to the hospital, he alerted the nurses. His wife was rushed into the emergency ward. He became restless. After about five minutes, his doctor appeared to him. "Good evening

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Mr. Collins." "Good evening doctor, how's my wife?" He said with great panic. "Your wife was here few hours ago. She brought your mum to the hospital before going home and if she had been ten minutes late, your mum would have died. She wanted to alert you but her phone battery went flat. I would have called you but she said she will notify you when she gets home. What really happened?" The doctor asked. "Doctor, is my wife okay?" He asked with teary eyes. "Your mum is in the other ward Mr. Collins." The doctor replied. He couldn't hide his impatience as he gripped the doctor's shirt. "What about my wife doctor? Is she okay?" The doctor managed to pull his hands off his shirt before letting the cat out of the bag. "I'm sorry Mr. Collins, your wife couldn't make it. She's dead. He was shocked. Cold shivers ran down his spine. He began to shake. Hot tears welled up his eyes and as he made an attempt to speak, they raced down his cheeks. Liquid fluids leaked out of his nostrils and wetted his lips. His shirt became drenched with sweat. He wanted to man up but he couldn't. He groaned in pain and let out a mad shout. "Noooooooo!!!" But then, it was too late to correct his mistake. He should have heard her first as requested by her. He should have controlled his anger. He shouldn't have laid his hand on her. He should have been patient with her. He shouldn't have.... He should have.... But he didn't. It was too late to apologize. Don't make such a mistake. Marriage is about patience and tolerance never allow anger to be the rule of the game.

LESSON 3: INSINCERITY VERSES TRUST

"My Dishonest Woman"

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My husband walked into the house looking dull....No hug, no kiss, no hello! "He must have had a very rough day" I thought to myself, "after all, Abuja to Ijebu-Ode is a very long journey." He went straight to His room, without uttering a word. (Dennis and I had separate rooms.) Though, we were free to sleep together in any of our rooms, I allowed him to rest and slept in my personal room instead. By sunrise, I had prepared his favorite meal and set the table. Dennis came out of his room, fully dressed ready to hit the road. "Hi Honey, hope you had a restful night?" I tried to engage him...He just nodded grudgingly, but did not say a word. "Oh! How I miss his soft touch and his romantic style of greeting...the way he calls my name, kiss my face, and sometimes he gently lifts me off the ground"

Whistling, he simply carried his briefcase, picked his car keys and zoomed off without even tasting my food or saying goodbye. I was perturbed and dumbfounded. "What is wrong with this man? In our eight years of marriage, I have never seen him like this. This is so strange!" I managed to put myself together, as my son was already late for school. I served junior his breakfast and we set out for school.

On getting to school, I realized that I had forgotten the school's bank teller at home. It was a new term and we needed to pay school fees. After sending the boy to his class, I went straight to the Administrative block to pick up another teller, so as to pay my ward's tuition. "Good morning, Madam Bridget, how may I help you?" "Good morning Mr. Nelson. Please I need another bank teller so I can pay my son's tuition. I left the previous teller at home." "But madam, didn't your husband tell you?" "My who? My husband? Tell me what?" "Madam, your husband was here yesterday around noon, he

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requested for a bank teller and made instant payment by transfer to our bank. He settled all your child's bills. "What! You mean my husband was here yesterday?" "Yes madam, he even spoke to the Head Mistress, you can confirm from her." "Mister Nelson, are you okay at all? Do you know what you are saying?" "Yes Madam...Wait, let me quickly get you the details" "Mister Nelson, you must be out of your mind! Why did you give him the teller, without directing him to me? Don't you know that I am the one responsible for making payments? Why didn't you call me to notify me first? You must be very stupid to commit such a blunder" Gosh! I was very furious, I wanted to literally tear him apart. I knew that his ignorance and negligence was going to cost me. Only that I didn't know that it would cost me everything. By this time, I had created a big scene in the school. Teachers/staff ran towards us from every direction. The shouts of "madam sorry", "take it easy ma" filled the air.

I wanted to quickly do a damage control. I pulled away from the crowd, opened my bag, pulled out my phone to call my husband but his iPhone was switched off. While I was standing there, thinking of the next step to take, a call came in it was My husband's Travel Agent. He called to inform me that my husband had cancelled our flight and our travel plans for vacation (a seven nation tour around Europe). My husband has also asked that my passport be withheld until further notice. (He gave me the information in confidence)

Just when I was lamenting about my shattered dream of a sweet vacation with my husband, my bank Account officer's call came through, she informed me that my husband had pulled out from a major international business deal. The deal was at the final stage and my husband had earlier promised me that he would fund the project 100%. (I wanted to just enter the

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ground.)

Not quite five minutes after, my husband's car dealer also called to inform me that my dream car would no longer be delivered as planned. The bad news were just too much for me. Suddenly, my bones grew weak, my voice was gone, and my throat was very dry. (I thought I was having partial stroke). I left the school premises feeling totally exposed and naked, dejected and heart broken. I sat down in the car and wept bitterly. I didn't realize that the little foxes can really mess up the big vines. My secret sins have finally caught up with me.

Sitting in my car, even with the air conditioner set to the lowest temperature, I was sweating profusely. I cannot forget in a hurry how I allowed my bestie, Tega, to brainwash me with her sweet talks. She often told me how she makes a lot of money (off her husband) from the house keep allowance, house help allowance, school fees, NEPA bills, estate security/maintenance bills, even at every opportunity she gets. (She calls it extra income for the "Super-Smart Big Girls")

Ever since Junior entered primary school, I made up my mind to become a super-smart big girl....Since, I was the one in charge of liaising with the school and sorting out everything about junior's academics. It was very easy for me to cut corners. My husband usually sends the money to my account, He sends whatever amount I ask him to send for school fees. (Since he works outside the city and only comes home fortnightly).

While our son was in Primary 1 & 2, on many occasions, I collected up to 4 times the total amount requested by the school from my husband. Now

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that our son is in primary 3, my husband called me to send details of the school bills to him. Even Yesterday morning, he asked me to confirm the details again to him via SMS or chat. He promised to send the money, latest today by 12 noon. Though the total bill was just about one hundred thousand naira, I sent inflated figures to my husband, requesting for a sum of about half a million naira (about 5 times the real value.) My husband totally trusts me and doesn't have any reasons to doubt me until now. Eventually, I managed to put the car back on the road. (Though I wasn't -? if I was the one driving the car, my heart was racing). On getting home, fidgeting, I went to my husband's room there, lying on his table, I found a note written in my husband's handwriting:

“TO THE STRANGE WOMAN IN MY BEDROOM” Yesterday, I came home much earlier than you expected. I wanted to surprise you with a piece of property (a multilevel building) that I just acquired for you in central district of Abuja. In fact, I purchased the property in your name. While I was looking for a safe place in your room to put the building documents, I stumbled on junior's school bill for this term. I also noticed that you have clearly doctored the bill. I didn't believe it so I gave you another chance to tell me the truth (when I asked you to confirm the bill again via chat, yesterday morning) but instead, you sent me exaggerated figures again. I was forced to trace the school yesterday afternoon, just to confirm what you sent to me (hoping that I was wrong about you) only to discover that what you sent to me is way over and above what the school actually require. I can't believe that I have been living with a lying woman and a cheat. How am I sure that the one I call Junior, is even my son? When I get back to town, we will go for a DNA test.

That was when I realized what Jesus meant when he said: "it is

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finished." My marriage of 8 years was completely finished! I had betrayed my husband's trust. How would I ever earn his trust again?

Even if he forgives me, can he ever trust me again? Can I say I still have a marriage? can this marriage still work?

I want all women (single & married) to learn from my story. No matter the freedom or freehand you are given please don't abuse it. It is the little foxes (of lying, hiding things) that spoil the vine of good relationships/marriage. Be faithful, loyal, open, truthful, and straight forward with your partner, in all things and at all times. Cheating is not only by having extra marital affair but also cheating in some other underground or silent ways (Written by Otulana Funso).

LESSON 4: SELFISHNESS VERSES CHARITY

"Do unto others what you want done to you"

A husband said to his wife: I miss my family, my brothers and their children, I hope you will prepare lunch tomorrow, and I will invite them today, since a long time ago we did not meet. The wife said with a sigh: God willing, it will be good. The husband said: I will invite my family then.

The next morning, the husband went to work, and at one o'clock he came home, and said to his wife: Did you cook lunch? My family will come in an hour. And the wife said: No, I did not cook because your family are not strangers, and eat what is in the house. The husband said: God forgive you, why didn't you tell me yesterday that you won't cook and after an hour they will arrive, what should I do? The wife said: Call them and apologize to them,

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they are not strangers, they are your family. The husband left the house upset, and after a few minutes, there was knocking at the door of the house and the wife got up and opened the door and was surprised that her family, brothers, sisters and children were entering the house. Her father asked her, "Where is your husband?" She said to him: He left a little while ago. Her father said, "Yesterday, your husband invited us to lunch with you today. Is it possible for him to decide for us and leave the house?" The wife was stunned by the news and began rubbing her hands, puzzled that the food in the house was not befitting her family, but her husband's family. She called her husband and said to him: Why didn't you tell me that you invited my family for lunch? He said to her: My family and your family, there is no difference". She said to him: "Please bring ready-made food with you, there is no food at home." The husband said: I am now far from home and your family is not strangers. Feed them from the food in the house as you wanted to feed my family.

Every family should operate an open door policy in their homes and learn to welcome everyone who comes to the house irrespective of their relationship to the family. There should be no selfish interest but general interest be it husband's relatives or wife's relative because they are all one happy great family.

LESSON 5: UNFORGIVING VERSES FORGIVENESS

"The danger of keeping malice"

I was angry with him. I was angry to a point I ended our friendship and told him to move on. He called a thousand times, but I neglected his calls.

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He sent countless messages telling me how sorry he is. He wrote me poems and made sure he sent it to me on a daily basis. Every morning, I woke up and logged on my WhatsApp and the first message I saw was his. I simply deleted it without even reading it. But he was determined to make peace. I just didn't want peace. I didn't want to give a second chance to be hurt the way I was. One day, I logged in WhatsApp, and didn't see his text as I used to. He had actually crossed my mind that day. I check his last message and discovered he had sent it 3 weeks back. I logged on Facebook and went to check his profile. He had last logged in 3 weeks ago. For a moment I was restless. Five years of friendship, and he had never for once gone 2 days without logging in, or trying to contact me. I hid my number and tried his line just to make sure it was on. But it was switched off. I could no longer sleep. My thought wandered all night. I kept thinking of him. And that's when the memories of our beautiful moments together crossed my mind. I kept trying the number over and over again. I tried it for one full week and one day it rang and his sister picked and greeted me. I introduced myself as Celine, and told her I wanted to talk with her brother the owner of the number. She asked if I was Celine, I said yes, then she told me her brother left me a message, and that was the only reason she was still holding onto the brother's sim card. "My brother asked me to beg you to forgive him because he knows that he has wronged you and you are the only person whose name he sang every day even while at the hospital." I immediately asked why her brother was at the hospital and she told me her brother suffered from 'Dilated Cardiomyopathy.' A sickness that affects the heart chambers, thereby making it dilated, and as a result of heart muscle weakness, the heart finds it hard to pump blood properly and he died 3 weeks

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ago at the General Hospital. A day before he died, he called me and told me everything that happened. He feared he could go to hell for what he had done to you, if you do not forgive and let go. He said you have refused picking his calls. Even when he called to tell you about his condition. He sent you messages but it was never opened nor read. But he told me, whenever you call, I should tell you he is sorry and beg you to please forgive him. Please Celine, forgive him, so my brother's soul shall rest in peace. She spoke amidst tears.

I hung up the call and cried bitterly. I had long forgiven him. I didn't know why I refused communicating with him. My heart bled. I picked my phone and went through the last message he sent to me. It was a poem. A poem about heaven and earth, and how every good friend shall be together in heaven someday. At the end was a message: "Please forgive me. I want to die knowing that I have made peace with everyone I ever hurt. I have forgiven you too Celine. My hearts is clean. Make yours clean too, by forgiving me." While I read that message, I pondered about life.

Life is short; very short. One minute you are alive and the next minute you are wiped off the surface of the earth. Death is uncertain. Whatever you do, ensure you do not leave this world holding a grudge against someone. Every minute should be a moment of forgiveness for one person who has wronged you. I forgive everyone who has hurt me in the past. I forgive all those who played with my emotions. I forgive all those who took advantage of me. I forgive those who did me wrong in one way or the other. I forgive because I want to have a heart that is light, and not a heavy heart. I want to have a heart that is free from grudges.

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Now search your heart, call that person you are angry with, and say the words "I forgive you."

Husband, wife and children should have a rethink and change of heart towards those who wrong them especially those who believe forgiveness is not possible.

Chapter ten

- PRAYERS TO SUSTAIN MARRIAGE AND - HEAL MARRIAGES IN CRISES

Marriage is one of the toughest relationships to maintain because any disagreement or a fallout can leave a strain on any marriage that when left unresolved, can lead to marriage failures. That is why couples need to pray together. A daily prayer especially morning and night prayers together helps to create a stronger bond between couples enabling them to face marital challenges with love and courage. It also offers solace and reassurance during challenging periods. Prayer is one of the ingredients that a couple needs to sustain their marriage. A home that is built on the solid rock of God will always overcome every challenge or storm of life. As Christian, prayer is one of our weapons of warfare that opens many doors to success in marriage. It is also used to destroy every plan of the devil against our home. Marriage journey can be hard but at the same time, it's easy and beautiful when you surrender and commit it to the one that instituted the union. The day you say I do, you have entered into a life covenant with someone who is completely different from you. You will disagree to agree on many occasions. You will hurt each other time without numbers. The only thing that can strengthen your relationship is prayer. So I encourage every couple to take prayer as a priority in their home and never an option.

Benefits of daily prayer

Daily prayers for marriages are very important and the most important thing you can do for your marriage to grow and flourish is to pray. In prayers couples will receive wisdom and clarity on many issues. It will make life easier for them and their partner. Because it makes them dwell in the word of God and be their guide. But most of all, marriage prayers allow couples to share a spiritual bond that grows not just in their faith in God but also in the joy that overflows to other areas of their marriage. Start praying for yourself and your spouse, you may never know how impactful your prayer for marriage can be. When you fight for your marriage in prayer, God will fight for you as well. Some of the themes one can focus on marriage prayers are prayers for unity, relationship strength, and marriage restoration. Prayer also makes marriage stronger and brighter. Whenever we pray for our home, it brings understanding, peace and increase in faith. In the place of prayer, it is very easy to forgive and let go of many things. It helps to allow God to take the lead of our life and be in charge of our home as it allows God to speak life into our marriage daily.

1. Marriage Prayer for Newlyweds

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways when they carry out their wicked schemes (Psalm 37:7).

The thought of living and being together with your spouse till death do you part is a wonderful thing. However, it may also be unsettling at the same

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time. And it is natural to feel this way. “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well,” (Matthew 6: 33). Marriage litters are almost always inevitable. Nonetheless, remember to give thanks to God for this day that He has made. You can give thanks for the simplest of things, like this prayer here:

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we commit our marriage unto you today. Give us the grace Lord to wait patiently for you and help us not to be moved by the success of the wicked people. We also thank you Lord for this place in which we dwell, for the love that unites us, for the peace accorded us this day, for the hope with which we expect the morrow, for the health, the work, the food, and the bright skies that make our lives delightful; for our friends in all parts of the earth.

Thank you for blessing us as spouse that loves and cares for each other. As we enter into a new life phase together as a newly wedded couple, we seek your guidance to show us the way to have a blissful marriage. We ask that you intervene in this marriage and be the center of it. Let this union bring us closer to you and one another. May we seek you first in all things and align our marriage covenant to your will. We surrender this new beginning into your loving hand and we pray you will give us the grace to seek your kingdom first before any other thing in our home. We pray our marriage will become divorce-proof and will stand so mighty against the fiery darts of the enemy, Amen!

2. Prayer for Unity in Marriage

The plan of the enemy over marriage is to steal, kill and destroy. So, don't allow this enemy to devour your beautiful marriage and steal your joy. Since we cannot fight the spiritual battle with our physical strength. So the only available weapon that we have is prayer. Unity is an essential theme in any prayer for marriage because marriage is a union between man and woman that God has deemed as holy. Through marriage, husbands and wives are considered as one flesh.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we come before you to thank you for bringing us together, give us the spirit of unity to continue to unite us together in your love daily. Don't allow anything to separate us from you or one another but help us to grow in unity in every area of our marriage and let your peace continue to reign in our home. In areas where the enemy tries to divide us, our finances, time, priorities, we pray that we remain united and draw close to you. Make us one, Lord, in every area and every decision. Let our union also exude your presence and grow in us as a testimony of your faithfulness. Amen.

3. Prayer for Strength in Marriage

Living together as a married couple is never easy, there will be times when your marriage wavers in conflicts. Therefore, asking God for strength in marriage is a compulsory prayer for married couples. Couples that pray together stay together. Prayer should be a daily habit for a lasting marriage. When you surrender all to God in prayer, so you will indeed see a remarkable

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change. You can also rebuild your failing marriage with prayer. Because you have to fight like a warrior to make it work. Determine to pray for each other daily.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, today, we surrender our marriage to you. We are both emotionally and mentally drained and it has become so increasingly difficult to endure the hardships. But Lord, we know that you are the Lord over our marriage. In you, all things are possible. Therefore, hear our prayer, Lord. Strengthen us that we may become each other's comfort and support. When we have you as our rock and fortress, we can get through the difficult seasons together. Renew in us the strength to fight for our marriage and one another as we work and seek your face daily in our marriage. We will forever be grateful to see your powerful hand in our homes now and forever. Amen!

4. Prayer for Forgiveness in Marriage

Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others (Colossians 3:13).

In prayer for marriage, you are encouraged to pray for forgiveness especially during times of anger and frustration, one might say the wrong words to hurt a spouse. Pray to ask God for enlightenment, you that you may know what you have done wrong. Pray that the couple's hearts be opened to forgiveness for you have sworn to love your spouse for better or for worse.

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Prayer:

Dear God, we humbly come before you gracious and forgiving God as your compassion never runs out. May we be able to live as a reflection of you both in words and actions and teach us to forgive one another as you have forgiven us our sins. Strengthen us to bear no resentment to one another but love and forgive. Lord, as we try to strengthen and sustain our marriage daily, help us to forgive and tolerate one another as you taught us, help us not to harbor anything against each other but give us the grace to always open up for each other and never to raise past hurts and mistakes. Give us the heart to forgive each other and extend it to other people around us. Amen!

5. Prayer for Intimacy

For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. (Ephesians 5: 31). Intimacy goes beyond the physical because couples share emotional and spiritual intimacy. In your daily prayer for marriage, remind one another to also pray for deeper intimacy between you and your spouse. Here is a prayer for husband and wife:

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you have given us to each other in marriage and we pray that your plan for us to be one flesh would be expressed in every area of life. Starting with our vows and commitments to each other, we pray for purity. We pray that we would honor each

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other completely and that we would put each other's needs in front of our own. Lord, grow a trusting relationship between us that would be unbreakable. We pray that when others look at us they will see you in us and a closeness in our union that doesn't come from the world. Reveal any false intimacy in our relationship and replace it with exactly what you had in mind when you created us for each other. Increase our intimacy with you and with each other both physically and spiritually to bind us together as husband and wife. Kindly reveal to us any character that will limit our closeness and intimacy with you and one another.

Husband says: *Father, help me to love my wife as you love me and to give up even my life if you call me to do so. Until then, help me to die in any selfish way that would keep my wife from trusting and following me as I follow you.*

Wife says: *Lord, help me to respect my husband a n d trust that he has the good of our family in mind with every decision he makes. Help me to follow him as he follows you. Make us one as you are one. Help me to bear the fruits of the Spirit every day: joy, love, patient, long-suffering, faithfulness, gentleness, kindness, peace, and self-control. Help me to show love to everyone around me so that your name will be glorified in our lives every day through Christ our Lord. Amen!*

6. Prayer for Honesty in Marriage

Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth. (John 17: 17).

Honesty is one of the pillars of any relationship. It helps strengthen a

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relationship in truth. Praying for honesty is thus also a prayer for relationship strength.

Prayer:

Father, you are the way, the truth, and the life. In you, there is no deception. In the same way, we ask of you today to show us how to live and love in truth. Remind us to be honest and yet gentle during confrontations and discussions. May we be honest about our sins and keep each other accountable. Allow us to stand righteous before you in one flesh. God helps us to always say the truth to each other no matter how hard it may be. Give us the grace daily never to lie to each other. Help us to always come before you whenever we make mistakes. Because nothing is hidden before you. If there is any way we have been untruthful to you and to each other in the past we pray you will have mercy and help us to make it right through Christ Our Lord. Amen!

.7. Prayer for Health for Couples

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes, we are healed. (Isaiah 53: 5).

Always, remember to pray for each other's health, because you are part of the body of Christ and a holy temple made to do his good works. Here is how you can ask for good health:

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Prayer:

Our Father in Heaven, thank you for blessing us with a living physical body that we can glorify your name. We ask that you will make known to us the unhealthy habits that do not honor your holy temple. Purge from us all things that harm our bodies and heal us from the illnesses that plague us.

Give us the grace to always acknowledge your sacrifice that gave us access to divine healing through your blood. Help us to do everything that is aligned with healthy living for our body, spirit, and soul so that we can serve you the way we ought to serve since our bodies are the temple of God, so help us to honor you with our bodies daily. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

8. Prayer for Unconditional Love in Marriage

Love is not just a feeling, it is a choice and is choice to be with your spouse despite his/her flaws. It is a choice to respect and honor him/her, for love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4: 7).

Pray today for unconditional love for your spouse: It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts always hopes, and always perseveres. 1 (Corinthians 13: 5-7).

Prayer:

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God, teach us to love each other unconditionally as you have loved us. We pray you will help us to be honest and transparent to each other in everything we do. Father, thank you for giving us a true picture of what love looks like. Help us to take whatever preconceived or worldly definitions of love that we have and replace them with the truth of your word and true unconditional love in our marriage. We pray that our love would be patient with each other and slow to give up. Help us to be kind to each other, never lacking in compassion. We pray that our love would be good-willed and always humble before each other. Help us to always speak highly of each other in private and in public. May your grace in our lives cause us to be slow to take offense and quick to forgive with each opportunity. Lord, we pray that we would be each other's greatest shield, always defending each other from other people or situations that would attempt to cause us harm. And may we have an eternal optimism in regards to our relationship and your intent and purpose for bringing us together. Lord, bless our marriage. May it never fail, and may your name be made great through it. We ask this in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen!

9. Prayer for Joy in Marriage

My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long. (Psalm 71:8).

Prayer of Joy: To remain joyful in all circumstances and to remain joyful in each other's presence is very important.

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Prayer:

Almighty God, you have blessed us with such a wonderful marriage and we cannot thank you enough. As we continue our lives together as a married couple, we pray that you bless us with abundant joy that even in challenging times, we do not stop in our thanksgiving to one another and you. May our marriage be a union that glorifies your name and let your joy be our strength daily in our marriage because we cannot do or achieve anything by our own power. Fill our mouth Lord with your praise, give us the grace to always acknowledge you every day of our lives so that we will continue to testify the good works you have been doing in our marriage. Amen!

10. Prayer for Trust and Understanding in Marriage

Trust and understanding are some of the things couples should ask for in their prayer for marriage as well. Without them, the strength of a couple's relationship will falter. Let us ask God to help us build our trust in our spouse and to be understanding partners.

Prayer:

God, you have brought us together in this marriage for your purpose, we pray that you build up our trust in one another, that we may honor one another. We pray for wisdom in our interaction, that we may become understanding and supportive partners to each other. We thank you for the love you have implanted in our hearts. May it always inspire us to be kind in our words, considerate of feelings, and concerned for each

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other's needs and wishes. Help us to be understanding and forgiving of human weaknesses and failings. Increase our faith and trust in you and may your prudence guide our life and love. Bless our marriage God with peace and happiness, and make our love fruitful for your glory and our joy both here and in eternity. Amen.

11. Prayer for Faithfulness in Marriage

For a marriage to remain strong, both parties need to remain faithful. With all the distractions that life throws at us, to remain faithful is becoming increasingly difficult. Let us pray that God removes any seeds of unfaithfulness and remain pure in spirit.

Prayer:

Almighty God, we thank you for bringing us together in this holy union, we pray that by your grace and mercy, both of us can remain committed and faithful to you. Give us a discerning spirit to flee from any unholy sexual temptations and your Holy Spirit to fill us that we may be able to resist any temptations. Remove in our hearts any seeds of unfaithfulness that we may remain pure in spirit and our covenant to one another. Help us to remain content and in love with one another for all our days to come, lovingly and harmoniously in this marriage. Amen!

12. Prayer for Better Communication in Marriage

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person (Colossians 4: 6). One of the most common petitions in prayer for marriage is for better communication. Effective communication helps couples to understand each other and prevent misunderstandings too.

Prayer:

Father, we thank you for blessing us with the ability to speak and communicate. Help us to become better communicators that we can talk things through effectively. Help us to use words that edify one another in love and gentleness. May our communication bring us closer to one another and closer to you our Lord and God. We pray you will help us to control our tongues so that we will not hurt each other with our words when we communicate. You said in your word that life and death are in the power of the tongue, help us to be prophesying life and good things into our marriage in Jesus' name. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen!

13. Prayer for your Marriage

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29: 11).

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Prayer:

God, help us to be the couple you want us to be. But let your plan for our marriage be fulfilled. Let our home be prosperous in every area. Lord, increase our hope and faith in you. Give our marriage an expected future, and continue to take us higher, from grace to grace and from strength to strength. Help us to see our own flaws and mistakes and make the adjustments in our hearts that allow us to reflect on you. Show us the areas where we can do better and give us the courage to ask for help when we need it. Pour your blessings out on us as we long to grow in you, and use our marriage to be a testimony to a world that needs to see Christ's love.

Give us the grace and wisdom to see which area we need to improve daily. Help us to communicate better with each other and to be good listeners. Give us the ability to love each other as you do love us. We want our marriage to reflect your kind of commitment that last forever. Remind us, especially in the hard times, that we made a promise to each other and to you to be committed for a lifetime. Let your Holy Spirit work within us so that we will be the first to forgive and the first to say "I am sorry." We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

14. Prayer for Marriage Restoration and Healing

Brokenness in marriage is common but there is nothing our God cannot do to restore and heal our hearts. In situation where nothing seems to be going right in the marriage, too upset to deal with many issues as the couple argues over

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so many things and walk out in anger or silence. Sometimes couple fuss about little problems that don't really matter or hide things that really are important. Our prayers should focus on how to communicate simply talk to each other again with courtesy and kindness. Have faith in him and come to him in prayer, and see what God can do for you.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, the enemy wants nothing more than to slowly erode the strength of our union. It wants to divide us over our differences and to pull away from each other. However, we give you access and authority over our marriage and we ask that your grace be the bridge for any division. We invite your presence into our home and pray that it produces perfect harmony that results in the oneness of purpose. May we be one together and one with you as we submit to your purpose for our marriage as we pray for the restoration and healing that will exist in our marriage forever. Amen!

15. Prayer for a Troubled Marriage

Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up. (Psalm 71: 20).

When troubles in life come crashing into your marriage, don't sit on it and wait for it to blow over but come to God immediately and seek his counsel to make your path straight again.

Prayer:

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Lord Almighty, we pray that you look upon our marriage with eyes of mercy and graciousness. The troubles in our lives are threatening our marriage to falter but Lord, we know that you are greater than any storm that may come our way. Father, we pray that peace and joy will reign over our marriage once more. Rekindle in our hearts the love and a desire to remain committed to each other despite the trials. Remind us daily to stay rooted in your word and gain strength and wisdom from it so that we may know how to become better spouses for one another.

Help us to find refuge in you when the storms in marriage come, wash away our selfish ambitions. Help us to be there for our spouse when they are weak when their spiritual life seems dry when we can't see where they are coming from, or when they simply don't care to try in return. Help us to be patient with them while continuing to hope for a better marriage, better communication. Help us love them as our brother or sister in Christ. May you be at the center of our marriage, helping us withstand the rain and droughts of rough seasons. May our love be a fire, burning for you as you help us strive side by side for the gospel. We pray for your blessings Lord to make this marriage work as we lift up our marriage that is passing through storms unto you and pray that you will restore peace back to our home and let your love flow in our marriage once again. Amen!

16. Prayer for Marriage Protection

Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go

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well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the Lord your God gives you for all time. (Deuteronomy 4:40).

When we unite in holy matrimony, the evil one will do its best to break this union. Hence, we need to be wary and pray. In this prayer for marriage protection, ask God to be your shield and protect this holy union he has created and ordained for you.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we come before you today, help us to keep your decrees and commands which you have giving us today. So that it will be well with us and our children to live long in the land you give us. Lord be our light when the darkness seeps in, brighten our days with the power of praise. Lord be our light and shield when the arrows of hurt tear us down and help us to hold a covering of gold. Lord be our shield and hope, when despair starts to rise and keep us afloat, as you sails our hearts. Lord be our hope and sight, when confusion ensnares us and free us to see and hold onto our dreams. We make this prayer in the name of Christ our Lord. Amen.

17. Prayer for Husband and Wife

A couple's prayer for each other is powerful. When we pray for our spouses, we grow to learn more about them. As a result, we can better support them. In your prayer for marriage, take some time to pray for specific things for your spouse.

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Prayer for Husband:

Wife: Lord, I pray that you would strengthen my husband to resist any temptation that comes his way. Deliver him from evils such as adultery, pornography, drugs, alcohol, gambling, and perversion. Remove temptation especially in the area of... (name specific temptation). Make him strong where he is weak. Help him to rise above anything that seeks to erect a stronghold in his life. Lord, you have said that “whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls” (Proverbs 25:28) I pray that... (husband's name) will not be broken down by the evil one. Help him to take charge over his own spirit and have self-control to resist anything and anyone who becomes a temptation in his life. Amen!

Prayer for Wife:

Husband: Lord, show me how to really cover... (wife's name) my wife in prayer. Enable me to dwell in her with understanding and give honor to her so that my prayers will not be hindered (1 Peter 3:7). Renew our love for one another and heal any wounds that have caused a rift between us. Give me patience, understanding, and compassion and help me to be loving, tenderhearted, and courteous to her just as you ask me to love her the way that you do (1 Peter 3:8). Amen!

18. Prayer for our finances

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be contented with what you

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have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you. (Hebrew 13:5).

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we know that money is important in every marriage. You Lord makes poor and makes rich, humbles, and also exalts (1 Samuel 2: 7). We lift up our marriage to you today, help us to be humbled and make us rich in every area of our lives. Help us also to be faithful to each other with our finances and give us the grace to be content with what we have and the wisdom to handle our finances without causing any problems between us. Let the love of money not take us away from you but help us to serve you and one another. Bless us financially so that we can bless those who are in need around us in Jesus' name. We ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.

19. Prayer for Good Children

He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect” (1 Timothy 3:4). Children are precious gift from God, when the challenges of life come along, it is easy to fear for their futures but we have the gift of praying for our children that we have and love, and those around the world who may be facing difficult times. Praying for children and family is one of the most powerful things you can do as a parent.

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Prayer:

Dear God, we pray you cover our family for generations to come, bless our children, their children, and their children's children. Wrap your loving arms around our family, be our guide, and be our shield through the years. Kindly *protect our child/children, keep them healthy and help them to thrive as you watch over them in every areas of their life. Amen!*

20. A Blessing Prayer for Marriage

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:8).

Prayer:

God, we pray you will bless our marriage abundantly and meet all our needs at all times, physically, mentally, and spiritually according to your riches in glory as you bless the work of our hands. May our marriage always bring glory to you, joy to one another, and blessings to our family for many generations to come. May love and laughter fill our hearts and home for all the days of our lives. May we face every challenge hand-in-hand and side-by-side with you by our side, knowing that we will conquer all obstacles together. And may the world be forever a better place for the two of us and our children forever and ever. Amen!

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Secret of Happy marriage

For you to be successful and remain happy in your marriage observe the following tips:

- a.** You need to control your anger and temper even when things are not normal
- b.** Say sorry even if you are right for the sake of peace and continuity
- c.** Handle disagreements and conflicts maturely
- d.** Maintain trust and fidelity in a committed relationship no matter the temptations
- e.** Care much about your partner's happiness and wellbeing
- f.** Handle the responsibilities of parenthood well
- g.** Support your partner's aspirations, ambitions, dreams and goals
- h.** Accept your partner's faults, imperfections and for who they are for the sake of peace and happiness
- i.** Finally it takes stupidity and tolerance to remain in marriage so learn to be the fool if that is the only way to happy married life.

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the sweet fellowship of the Holy Spirit abide in each family both now and forever more Amen!!!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rev. Fr. Dr. Bakwaph, Peter Kanyip is a Nigerian USA citizen and Roman Catholic Priest of Kaduna Archdiocese, Nigeria, ordained in 2003. He is an Associate Professor with Veritas University (Catholic University of Nigeria), Abuja, Nigeria, and the Dean of the Faculty of Education and Chairman of Admissions Committee. He had his Primary Education in Badarawa Kaduna and Secondary Education at St. Joseph's College Vom, Plateau State. He has two Bachelor's Degrees in Philosophy and Theology, from Urbanian University Rome and University of Jos, respectively. His Master's Degree and PhD. in Higher Education Leadership, Management & Policy, both at Seton Hall University, NJ. USA. Fr. Bakwaph is a Member of many learned and professional societies and groups and held many responsible positions in the University. He received many awards in the fields of academics and community service. In addition, he is a distinguished scholar and orator, with a lot of publications locally and internationally.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Rev. Dr. Bakwaph, in this book has dived deep into the mystery of marriage, revealing its complications and rich graces when properly understood. We read with delight the author's critical analysis and observations on why divorce occurs and possible ways to avoid the disintegration of the matrimonial union. He offers a practical guide towards building solid and healthy relationship. This book is an excellent resource to aid perfecting the couple's love and to strengthen their indissoluble unity. This is an amazing contribution to eliminating divorce and broken hearts. **Rev. Fr. Vitalis Anyanike, Omaha, Nebraska USA**

The title of this book, I Hate Divorce is apt, given the rate of divorce in recent times. Instead of marriage being for better or for worse, it seems to be "for better for stay, for worse for good". Marriage is today misunderstood and misplaced. It is not all about the celebration; but about love, trust, patience, understanding, kindness and forgiveness. This book helps us to achieve these.

I commend **Fr. Dr. Peter Bakwaph** for this masterpiece. **Hon. Justice Rosemary Indinya Dodo Kanyip**

I HATE DIVORCE is a pact of unique values for marriage put together by Fr. Dr. Bakwaph. The book is a must read for all peoples, from young adults who desire to go into stable marriages through young couples to the elderly married who wish to nourish and stabilize their marriages. As one who has been in a very stable marriage for up to four decades, and still counting by the grace and mercy of God on high, I highly recommend *I HATE DIVORCE* as a companion to all intending and married couples. **SIR SHIJA IYORKAR ABELLEGAH, KSJI, FNIMN, MNIM, MBA**

Rev. Dr. Bakwaph, an astute writer, theologian and educationist, has in this book he rightly titled: I HATE DIVORCE, delved into the WOMB of one of the greatest monsters in our 21st century marriage - DIVORCE. His daring and well-researched expository excursion into the subject matter vis-a-viz: the causes, the effects and the solution, has left his readers with a sure answer to the questions in their troubled hearts with respect to DIVORCE! The book, by its practical posture, is a real supplement to the reality divorce and provides us with the option of re-aligning our marriages with God's original blue-print for marriage based on an unbroken covenant relationship that only death can dissolve. This book will no doubt serve as a valuable resource material both for the marriage counsellors and the married couples. **EMMANUEL CHIDI NGADI, BSC. HONS. PHYSICS, PGD B.ADM, MBA. Author, "Marriage Counsellor & Charismatic Minister". Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja.**

I HATE DIVORCE, is a book that aims to correct the present day concept and practice of marriage that is based on trial and error. The author takes the reader into institutional journey of marriage from its origin to the modern way of living marriage which most cases is full of crises and divorce. The author tried to present why despite the fact that marriage was ordained by God as a sweet institution of union between man and woman but it still has serious crisis and high rate of single parenthood. The Book presents causes of these crises and divorce and means of sustainable marriage. For sure you will find this book very interesting, inspiring and insightful for a better marriage. **Rev. Fr. Dr. Bakwaph, Peter Kanyip**



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