

Resisting Satan's Assaults Against Holy Matrimony, Part 2: The External Assault:

Just as you get good at minding the garden at home and continue gently tilling the fertile soil of good communication, you must also step away from the garden in order to tend to work (employment/occupation), school and the rest of the world. Satan will seek new niches to disrupt your peace in holy matrimony in the external realm. The Word of God warns against his schemes:

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions – is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." (1st John 2:15-17)

"Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." (1st Timothy 6:6-10)

"But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God...'" (Genesis 3:4-5)

"I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'" (Luke 12:18-20)

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33)

The external attack occurs subtly. You're rejoicing for your new life with your new spouse. You mean well. After all, you want to provide for your family (which is a holy impulse and commitment according to Scripture), but then it happens. The allure of things becomes hypnotic; we are mesmerized by the world. In time, we may even say that we're working so hard for the person we love, but before you know it, we are only serving mammon. We begin to rationalize the situation, but it's too late. We've become addicted to transitory things.

As I write this, I see it happening before my eyes yet again. It is an old and tragic story. A parishioner, a very talented and gifted man with a wife and two children, has been promoted, his ego has been sufficiently stroked, he is getting more money and there are other carrots put out for his future and he is

becoming a workaholic. In the name of the job, he is exhausted. His hours are ridiculous and it is his marriage and his family that is paying the price. Switch families. I am also currently serving the aftermath of the crash. The carrot this time was overseas, a tremendous offer, the money represented instantaneous affluence, but the separation between spouses and the ludicrous pressures were Satan's tools for adultery to occur. We are currently trying to put the pieces together.

Our American culture is primed to increase the temptation. If you work for a law firm, your firm will not base your schedule on what is best for your marriage, but what is best for the firm. What is best for the firm? Money. The lines were drawn a long time ago. Add to this the fact that the culture already degrades marriage, most people do not mind going along with this. The herd instinct is to serve the priorities of the world system. You will be expected to play ball.

What will you do? How much is your marriage worth? Is it worth a \$100,000.00? Is it worth a million? Is it worth a billion? The answer is there is no amount of money that even begins to scratch the surface of the gift of husband or the gift of wife. This gift according to God is capable of helping us in our relationship with God (1st Corinthians 7). This gift affects our eternal security. This gift gives us *agape* love and shows us God's love through a human being. What is this worth monetarily? These are crass questions, but I use them to reduce this to the base issues. Nothing is worth compromising your marriage. Nothing is worth risking your family. Nothing.

Greed is also the source for compromising when it comes to children. Psalm 127 says simply that children are a reward. We don't behave as if we believe this when we are anxious about money to the point of treating the prospect of children with fear of not having enough money. It is one thing to plan (Luke 14:28ff.) in the spirit of good stewardship, but it is another thing to allow concern for money to overcome our love for God's commands (e.g. the first command: "Be fruitful and multiply." Genesis 1:28). Those who avoid having children for the love of money are self-centered and unquestionably selfish. They degrade marriage, because they reject the divine purposes for marriage.

The fact of the matter is that the external assault must be countered through faith in Christ. God has promised to provide for you; He has promised "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Notice the context of these words, "Keep your life free from love of money and be content with what you have, for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:5-6)

So Christians, hold to your spouse, have children, trust God, do the job that will provide for your needs; do not live in greed; love God, love your spouse, love your children. Do not love money. Do not excuse jeopardizing your family for the "brass ring." Instead rejoice in the ring given to the prodigal child. The greed and lust that knew no limits was covered by the Father's love and mercy which was even more abundant. This grace of God in Christ is our protection in the world and it will also keep your marriage safe.

In the Lord's providence, He sometimes makes certain of His children monetarily wealthy. He did this for Abraham; He did this for David. This is a gift, like other gifts are given. If this occurs, then be mindful of

why: it is to serve the Church and those in need; it is to be salt and light to the world. But this providential working is not forced by men; it is not empowered by greed. Keep these things at bay. God will take care of the rest. Let nothing compromise your family.

One last thing: don't get weird in the handling of your money within marriage. For heaven's sake, you share the marriage bed, so do not have separate bank accounts. It is never "my money," and "your money." It is "our money." There should be equal knowledge, equal handling and equal planning. Even the spouse who is primary "bread winner," should be humbled by the spouse that is working in the home, especially when children are involved. Do not develop his and hers ledgers. This is a wedge against living as one. There must be total trust. Discuss all major purchases. Strive to accomplish together those things deeply desired by one, but then keep a balanced perspective and serve each other in fairness even as you serve one another as extensions of good conscience and good counsel. Sometimes we must challenge the other about the wisdom of certain purchases, it is good to be accountable to each other and it is good to also be generous when we are able. Make special occasions just that. Allow money to serve these celebrations, but do not be totally dependent on money to do so.

Don't forget to financially support your Christian congregation. Christian's are called by God to do so. Be faithful in this. If you don't "feel it" -- your church offerings should never be "left overs" or spare change -- then you're probably not giving offerings as you ought to. Review the first part of 2nd Corinthians 8.

In your service & to Christ's glory,

Pastor Espinosa