

## EXTRA MILES TO FAMILY STABILITY AND HAPPINESS

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Marriage was created to be enjoyed and to last a lifetime. It will take extra effort from the husband and wife to make their marriage work well. The personal differences in both persons involved - their character, habits, taste and desire, temperament, and attitude will have to be handled well for marriage to work.

You must be willing to go the extra mile. God does not encourage divorce or separation. You must therefore do what is necessary to keep the marriage going on a happy note. By extra mile, I mean, going beyond your normal limit, swallowing what you will normally not swallow, stomaching, and tolerating all that would have enraged you under normal circumstances. Extra mile means, remove the limit. Extra mile means, stretch yourself - become elastic.

Extra mile means, "Though it is painful, I must bear it for love". Extra mile means practical demonstration of, "*Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins*" (1 Pet.4:8). Let your love for your spouse always cover every wrong he or she commits against you.

*"So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man'. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame"* (Gen. 2:21-25).

*"Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked him, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" 'Haven't you read', he replied, 'that at the beginning the creator "made them male and female", and said, for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh"? So they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate. 'Why then' they asked, 'did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?' Jesus replied, 'Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery'. The disciples said to him, 'if this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.' Jesus replied, 'Not every one can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it'" (Matt. 19:3-12).*

From these passages, it is obvious that God is calling man to work hard at making marriage work, rather than seeking an end to marriage through divorce. Divorce encourages intolerance, impatience, and unforgiveness. It also gives encouragement to adultery. People no longer make

effort to improve themselves for their partners because they think that a divorce will end it all. God hates divorce, and encourages his children to bury their differences and make their marriage work.

Ephesians 5:21-30 calls for submission, love, and a new mentality to enable marriage work and free from divorce.

### **ANALYSIS:**

#### **1. Submit to one another.**

Before going on to ask the wives to submit to their husbands, Paul asked for submission to one another. Husband must submit in many ways at appropriate times to the wife as much as the wife is to submit to the husband completely in all things.

#### **2. The husband is to love the wife more than ever every passing day.**

This love will provoke submission from the wife, while the wife's submission will provoke more love. It is a chain.

#### **3. Both husband and wife must see themselves as two halves that make one.**

Husband, your wife is your body. Wife, your husband is your body. *"After all, no-one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church"* (Eph. 5:29). What is good for you is good for your spouse. If you demand respect, show respect. If you demand love, show love. If you demand gifts, give gifts. If you demand rest, give rest.

### **THE CALL FOR EXTRA MILE**

*"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth'. But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. 'You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy'. But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect"* (Matt.5:38-48).

### **AREAS WHERE YOU NEED TO GO EXTRA MILE**

#### **PATIENCE:**

1. In the time of adversity and trials.
2. With each other's mistakes or even deliberate acts of provocation.
3. In the time of child bearing and rearing.
4. With children's irritations.

5. In the time of sexual adjustments as in sickness, conception and childbirth.

### **TOLERANCE:**

1. Tolerate all the unavoidable nonsense of marriage.
2. Tolerate the nagging habits of either husband or wife.
3. Tolerate the strange actions that may come from your spouse, contrary to your expectations.
4. Tolerate the unusual behaviours of pregnant or nursing wife.
5. Tolerate the unusual actions of a husband who is under financial pressure.
6. Tolerate the time wasting nature of your partner and do something to help in the given circumstance.

### **UNDERSTANDING:**

*“If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married” (Deut. 24:5).*

The purpose of this long honeymoon is for acquaintance. They need time to understand each other. And Peter advises we should relate based on knowledge. What you know about your spouse should help you to relate well and create peace and happiness in your home.

*“Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1Pet. 3:7-8).*

1. Make deliberate efforts to understand matters before taking decisions.
2. Show maturity by seeing situations from the other person’s point of view.
3. Study and understand your partner’s lifestyle and ways of life.
4. When there is an unavoidable misunderstanding, avoid explosion and humbling yourselves and resolving the issues through effective communication.

### **FORGIVENESS:**

*“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” (Mark 11:24-25)*

*“This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins”. (Matt 6:9-15)*

1. Make room in your heart for offences and other mistakes.
2. Forgive and forget all confessed and unconfessed offences.
3. Admit and humbly ask for forgiveness, whenever you know that you are wrong.
4. Forgive even when apologies do not come.
5. Do not keep records of your partner's offences.
6. Do unto your partner, as you will want him or her to do to you in the family.

### **FORBEARANCE:**

*“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” (Col 3:13)*

1. Develop marriage “shock - absorbers”.
2. Forbear some bad habits of your partner, which go away with time.
3. Forbear whatever you can, to have a good marriage.

### **CONCLUSION**

May the Lord give you grace to stretch yourself a little for the sake of love. May your elasticity know no limit. May you not break, but be strengthened by the Holy Spirit of God in Jesus name.

## **WORD OF WISDOM**

1. **Love is an out-flowing of the heart, demonstrated through kindness, compassion, tolerance and forgiveness, giving, companionship, friendship, service and encouragement.**
2. **The one that stands by you in time of hardship and challenge truly loves you.**
3. **Crisis time reveals the nature of your spouse' love.**
4. **Offence reveals how deep the love in the heart of the offended is.**
5. **Pretending to love for gain is dangerous and callous. Pray that God will unmask every one seeking a relationship with you before you finally commit yourself to that person.**
6. **In matters of love, follow your spirit and not your emotions for emotions can be wrong and deceptive.**
7. **Doing and saying things that cause your spouse pain continually is very wrong and a sign of lack of commitment to the success of your relationship.**
8. **Competing to out-show love by couples makes marriage healthy and richer. Don't just wait to be loved and receive love, give and show love.**
9. **Allowing money to bring bitterness and quarrels into your marriage proves too much attachment to money and material things.**