

GIVING YOURSELF TO EACH OTHER

Sylvester Onyemalechi

Love is all about giving – giving yourself to the one you love. Giving involves your all – your entire life. It is all about surrendering in order to make the one you love happy. To love is to take delight in making the one you love happy and excited about knowing, fellowshiping and being with you. Love is all about freedom of expression of deep thoughts and emotions about the one your heart goes out to. It is about hanging out with the one you have given your heart to. It is about being fond of someone and wanting to be with, speak softly, sweetly and tenderly with and to, sharing your thoughts and feelings, fellowshiping, caring, playing, dreaming together, planning and working together as a team, side by side each other.

Giving yourself to each other is offering your bodies to each other for sexual pleasure and satisfaction.

WHAT LOVING IS

- Loving is bringing out the sunshine in another through your positive actions and affection.
- Loving is ability to overlook an offence committed against you intentionally or unintentionally for the sake of love.
- Loving is bearing with the weakness of your partner and not allowing an evil or provocative experience to get in the way and spoil your mind towards the one you love.
- Loving is making effort to make sure that your love is kept fresh daily no matter what happens in your relationship and the differences in personality that may manifest and abound.
- It is manifesting a firm resolve to keep the peace and make your marriage a bed of roses all the days of your life on earth.
- Loving is thinking good thoughts about your partner and through deliberate positive thoughts overcome all unpleasant words and actions against you for love to remain fresh and happiness to reign.
- Loving is sharing your thoughts and feelings towards each other together in a romantic manner, which culminates in sexual acts.
- Loving is all about living together in openness of heart to each other without selfish motives and actions.

Paul defined love to the Corinthian church in a most simple and practical way:

1 Cor 13:4-8

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love

does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails.

NIV

When an understanding of love and loving is gained then giving yourself totally to the one you love becomes easy. Love is sacrificial and not self-centered as some practice. Jesus gave us a practical example of what love is when he gave himself for and to us and died in our place and bought back our freedom.

John 15:13

13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

NIV

Rom 5:8

8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

NIV

Rom 5:5

5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

NIV

1 John 4:10-12

10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

NIV

Jesus expects us to follow his example of perfect love and give ourselves in love. This kind of love is free from selfishness. It is a giving love. It is more concerned about making the other fellow happy, being a blessing, a plus and helping hand to the other fellow. It is not about getting something from the one you claim to love. It is opposed to pretending to love someone because you want what he or she has. When this kind of love is translated into marriage in practical terms, marriage becomes a wonderful experience – something to be cherished and protected by all means possible.

REASONS WHY MARRIED PEOPLE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO GIVE THEMSELVES TO THEIR PARTNER:

- 1. They were forced into marriage by their parents or guardians, so they never had love for the one they married.**

In this case, they are only trying to get along. Think of having sex with the one you don't love. It will definitely be boring and uninteresting. It will be like punishment and in some cases, like a rape especially when things are not going on well in the marriage.

2. They married when they were not mature for marriage.

Marriage is not for the immature – boys and girls. It is for those who are mature mentally and emotionally to handle the challenges of marriage. Marriage is for those who have understanding of what independence is and for what the marriage relationship involves. It is for those who have knowledge of what the responsibilities of marriage are. When people go into marriage without adequate preparation and being mature, they are not able to handle the pressures of relationship, so their love degenerate and become sour. When this happens, all excitement in the relationship is taken away, and giving themselves to their partner becomes extremely difficult, and before long, they want to end the marriage.

3. They married for the wrong reasons.

Some marry for money. Some marry because of beauty, handsomeness and good physic. Some marry because he or she is an outgoing person. Some marry people who are famous or have the prospect of being famous so they too can become famous. There are many unwholesome reasons that people have that made them marry the one they married. They never concerned themselves with the personal character of the person they married, so when these wrong and disturbing characters begin to manifest, they can no longer give themselves totally to their spouse. It is important that attention be given to the compatibility of intending partners than any other reason one may have for getting married. The purpose of marriage according to God's word is companionship. So if you can't get along well, then, there will always be trouble.

4. Impatience and lack of tolerance.

Patience is a golden quality in relationships. It is a necessity – It's something you cannot do without. The Lord our Savior and God is a patient person. He is the author of relationship and marriage. In his relationship with man, he has exhibited a lot of patience to teach us humans that we need to be patient with each other for love to be maintained and to get along well. Tolerance is a combination of forbearance and forgiveness. Without these two, tolerance is not possible. True love is tested and proven in time of offence. Absence of forgiveness is a sign of no love in the heart. It is because God truly loves me, that is why he always forgives me when I go wrong. He gives room for failure. Sometimes, we expect too much from our partners. We all know that there is no one without a weakness. We all err from time to time. It will be wise that we give room for failure and offence. Jesus said it will always come. When you expect it, you make room in your heart to forgive and overlook, and by so doing, you are preserving the love you have for each other resisting the devil in breaking into your marriage. Just as you need your spouse to be patient with you in your own time of weakness and failure, it is also important that you be patient with your spouse. In this way, your love will be preserved, and you will be willing to give yourself to each other joyfully. Anger

leads to unforgiveness which leads to bitterness. Bitterness leads to hate, and all these kill love and marriage. When the heart is polluted with any of these things, giving yourself to your partner will be impossible. Denial can lead to infidelity in marriage. You can only love the one you are at peace with. Sex is an act of love. So, your love for your spouse must be protected for sex to be practiced with your partner.

5. Lack of fear of God.

One of the reasons why people are not able to give themselves to their spouse willingly and joyfully is the absence of the fear of God. A lack of fear of God is responsible for all forms of rascality and infidelity in marriage. It is a lack of fear of God that is responsible for constant nagging and all the fights we have in our homes. It is a lack of fear of God that is responsible for refusal to love the wife as Jesus loves the church as God commanded the husband in the Bible. It is the same lack of fear of God that makes the wife to want to usurp authority from the husband and refuse to submit as instructed by God for peace and harmony to reign in the home. The absence of the fear of God is the reason why many evil abound in the heart and life of man, and the callousness displayed in many marriages. The fear of God will create the atmosphere in marriage that will enable the couple to give themselves to each other without reservation. The fear of God is planted in the heart of man at the new birth in Christ. When a man now submits himself to the word of God and the Holy Spirit, the fear of God begins to manifest as the person obeys willingly the word of God in every area of his or her life, especially in marriage relationship.

6. Lack of affection.

When there is a lack of affection for your spouse, giving yourself to your spouse becomes very difficult. Because love is weak or not existent anymore, the partner concerned does not derive pleasure in being with the partner or having sexual relationship. And since sex is a function of the human mind, it will be practically impossible to give yourself totally and willingly with pleasure to the one you don't love anymore. This is the reason why you need to look into your life properly and be careful how you live your life and relate to be sure that you nourish and keep the love that brought you together as husband and wife.

Listen to your spouse' complains about your conduct. Have a listening ear. Correct what needs to be corrected in your life to maintain love. Don't be selfish. Don't say to yourself, 'I don't care about what you say or think of me and my actions', or 'You are always complaining, is there anything that I will do that you will not complain about'. Listen and make corrections. Care or soon you will have no marriage. It is not living together, but living happily together. It is not staying married, but enjoying your marriage. Let there be fun and laughter in your marriage. Make it as exciting as possible. Keep your love fresh daily. Give yourself totally to your spouse. Create the atmosphere that will make it happen.

7. Lack of understanding of the purpose of sex.

One of the major reasons for people not giving themselves to their spouse is a lack of understanding of the purpose of sex as designed by God. When there is a misunderstanding of purpose, then aberration is inevitable. It is true that sex is meant for procreation, but that is not all it is meant for. When one sees sex only for bearing children, there is the tendency for it to be done in such a way that it is not attractive, or to be desired except for desire to have a child. This attitude can make sex to be so mechanical that romance, love and excitement are taken out of it, and this definitely will make it not to be desired. Once the couple has ceased from bearing children, then their sex life dies. This understanding that "sex is only for bearing children" has made many to look upon sex as a punishment or an obligation when it is desired by their husbands, because it does not give them pleasure.

Sex is for bonding and strengthening the love and unity in marriage. In sex, the two souls involved in it are united together in a bond of love. This is the reason why God planned and commanded that sex be not practiced before marriage and outside of marriage to avoid being bonded to many and wrong people – soul ties. When man or a woman marries as a virgin, the bond in the marriage is stronger because they have not known any other person sexually. This bond is so strong that no matter the crisis that they go through in their marriage, they remain together. It is a fact that marriages of people who married as virgins last longer than those who didn't marry as virgins.

1 Cor 6:16

16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."

NIV

Gen 2:24

24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

NIV

Sex therefore is for bonding in love. It strengthens the love and the bond between you and your spouse. This is the reason why you should not deny each other your bodies.

Sex is for pleasure. Pleasure relaxes the mind and body. It renews your youth as happiness is achieved. Happiness is medicine to the body.

Prov 17:22

22 A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

NIV

Excitement and happiness affects the brain, nerves and muscles of the body and destroys all tension, this makes the body to function better. Mechanical sex cannot achieve this. This can occur as sex is practiced in a spirit of true love and romance. So,

giving yourself to your spouse will help both of you. Research has shown that unloved people are dull in their thinking and weak in productivity. Much love is good medicine for the mind and body. It is all about pleasure and happiness and the effect of happiness on the life of man. Give yourself to your partner in the spirit of love. Sex is not a punishment, obligation or a burden. It is fun and a creation of God for enhancing and strengthening your love and marriage and bearing children. And this is why it should not be practiced outside your spouse.

Prov 5:15-21

15 Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. 16 Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? 17 Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. 18 May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. 19 A loving doe, a graceful deer--may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love. 20 Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife? 21 For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD, and he examines all his paths.

NIV

8. Unhealed memory of the past, especially in the area of sex.

When bad memories of the past is not healed and put out of one's mind, it will continue to haunt and torture the one who has the experience. Someone who suffered abuse from either the father or the mother or close relation will definitely have problems with sex except healing has occurred through a counseling process. Those who have suffered from rape can also from time to time have problems until the problem is dealt with mentally. It is possible to have "flash-backs" each time the partner makes advances, and instantly, the person is turned off. It is also possible that while engaged in a sex act, suddenly, there is a recall and automatic loss of interest occurs, and it is all over. Every other thing that is happening there, he or she is not involved. Unhealed memories need to be addressed. If you have been having this kind of problem, go for help immediately. Your pastor will be in a position to help you recover and healed permanently. Do not let your past ruin your love life and leave you miserable. If you don't deal with this kind of problem once and for all, you will be in more trouble when your marriage packs up.

9. A partner's affection has been stolen by another person.

Infidelity in marriage is another reason why married people find it difficult to give themselves to each other. When one has found another outside and strong love exists between them, his or her interest in the partner is eroded away, so giving him or herself to the partner becomes extremely difficult. God is against adultery.

Heb 13:4

4 Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

NIV

Mark 10:11-12

11 He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. 12 And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

NIV

All adulterers will end up in the lake of fire. Protect your marriage and keep your marriage vows which you made in the presence of God. God himself says he was a witness. Never consider separating or divorcing your spouse for another. Be faithful. Protect your love and turn away from all others, and the Lord will bless you and answer your prayers always.

10. Lack of romance and rigidity in the way sex is practiced.

Rigidity in sex style will affect your sex life. The thought of carrying the man's weight during sex has made a lot of women to deny their partners sex. Someone protested and called it a punishment. The funny thing is that these women most of the time never tell their husbands why they cannot. As these denials continue, the man is driven to the street or the woman looks for some other person who will do it the way she wants and likes it. Couples should sit and discuss this in order to satisfy each other and not allow infidelity to come in as a result of lack of sexual satisfaction. Be creative in this matter and make your bed as exciting as possible to make you want each other. You can have sex without lying on the body of your wife. There are styles and positions you can use and find satisfaction without discomforting each other. So, the thought of sex after a hard day's job should not frighten and scare you from having sex with your spouse. Moreover, there is no law that says sex in marriage must only be done at night. Don't be rigid, but discuss your sex life together and let your spouse know what you want. Help each other have sexual fulfillment. Be willing to learn from each other about your sex life, and adjust to satisfy your spouse.

Don't be in a hurry to jump in and jump out. Be considerate. Do not forget your spouse. It takes two to have sex. Think of the pleasure your spouse will derive from the whole exercise. Do it in such a way both of you will derive pleasure from your sex acts. Do not be selfish. Be romantic enough to get your partner involved. Do not lie there on the bed like a log of wood or a slave waiting for the master to do what he wants and set you free so you can sleep. Be involved with the whole of your heart. Prove to your spouse you also love and want him/her each time he/she comes to you. Otherwise, he will soon lose interest in going to bed with you because you make it so boring. Sex is all about wanting your lover and your lover wanting you. Let your bed be active and lively, filled with love and fun, and your marriage will be strengthened and filled with happiness.

11. Not happy with spouse.

Sadness closes the door of love. Love brightens a man up, but sadness is a weight and covering that needs to be destroyed for love to flow. Bitterness is evil and destructive to the mind, body and relationship. It is true that marriage has her ups and downs. It is also

true that it takes a personal commitment and effort from the parties involved to manage the differences in their lives for peace and love to abound. The Bible teaches us forbearance and forgiveness are tools for maintaining peace and love. It is important that you and I commit ourselves to forgiving and maintaining peace and love in our marriages. Determine in your heart that unpleasant events in your marriage and weaknesses of your spouse will not kill your love, and that you will always forgive as you are offended just as you expect your spouse to forgive you when you wrong him or her. When your mind is free, giving yourself to your partner will be your a joy and delight. Never forget, bitterness is a killer of love.

12. When one becomes un-kept and untidy.

Many people, as soon as they get married do not care anymore about their looks, body weight and size, because they feel their search for a life partner is over and it doesn't matter anymore how they look or appear. As a result, they gain weight and become fat, and in some cases, lose their figure and become unattractive to their spouse. Women are most guilty in this. That you are married does not mean you should become fat, dirty, have un-kept hair, wear dirty and sometimes lousy clothes and live in a dirty environment. When this happens, your spouse' interest and desire for you begins to die. You are supposed to be attractive to your husband all the time.

Woman was created to be admired and pursued by man. That you are married does not mean you should become unattractive to your husband. Let him keep chasing after you. Avoid looking like his mother or grandmother. Stop tying wrappers like an old woman all the time you are in the house. Do not let your spouse be the one to be telling you, you need to take your bath, wash you're under wears, clean up the house especially your kitchen and toilet, or to take care of your hair. Look and appear young before your husband to retain his attention and his desire for you to be strong as ever.

Husbands, make yourself attractive to your spouse also. Respond to her feelings and comments about your appearance. Watch your size, especially your stomach. Have clean breath through regular mouth wash. Take care of your armpits and perfume your bodies if body odor exists.

Make sure your bed sheet is always clean to avoid offensive odor when in bed. It pays to be clean, well dressed and attractive to your spouse all the time. Your marriage depends on it.

Conclusion

Loving doesn't speak of selling yourself or body for a price. Giving yourself to your spouse after he has bought you what you demanded or given you what you requested is likened to prostitution. Betting with sex is evil and against the will of God for marriage. Stop using sex to profit from your spouse. What you do not know when you do this is that you are telling your spouse, I don't want you, it is what you have that I want. You are telling your spouse that you have to pay me to sleep with me. It means you are not a

spouse but like any other person out there on the street using what they have to get what they want. Think about this. If you truly love your spouse, you will give yourself freely without reservation.

Using sex to subdue or compel your spouse to say sorry when you know you are the guilty one is dangerous and can backfire. You can widen the gap between the two of you by so doing, and that can lead to the end of your marriage as your partner seeks love elsewhere.

Giving flimsy excuses for not wanting to give yourself to your partner is not good. When the excuses become too much and your partner is beginning to complain about it, you know that your marriage is in danger. The funny thing about this subject is that they who are in the habit of denying their spouse their bodies are the ones who are worried and jealously watch out for their spouse's movement in suspicion. Is it not foolishness that you are not satisfying your partner sexually at the same time you don't want him or her out on the street and you suspect every move he or she makes? Don't you think it will be better if you take care of him or her at home and satisfy whatever desire he or she has so that you will be appreciated so much that the desire to go out will not exist? Don't be foolish, stop asking questions about his or her movements; settle down to take care of your partner.

1 Cor 7:1-7

7:1 Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. 2 But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. 3 The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. 5 Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6 I say this as a concession, not as a command. 7 I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

NIV

The truth is that when love is weak and sour, you cannot give yourself to your spouse. And when you start denying your partner your love and body, the marriage is going down the drain. So be careful about your marriage and how you relate with your partner. Keep love fresh in your marriage. Forgive when offended. Get rid of all bitterness and malice. Never allow them in your heart. Remove all restrictions as far as your sex life with your spouse is concerned. Sex in marriage is not a sin. An active sex life in marriage is not a sign of carnality or spiritual weakness. A lack of it can make you carnal and weak as lust begin to rage within you. An active, fun filled and exciting sex life will enrich and preserve your love and marriage. Give yourself to your spouse freely

willingly and joyfully when he or she needs you. May God bless and preserve your marriage in Jesus name.