THE CHALLENGES OF A CHRISTIAN
MAN AND WOMAN IN THE HOME
Sylvester Onyemalechi

There is no gainsaying the fact that life is jungle of challenges, and only the tough come out successful. The marriage institution is not left out in this battle of life. For success to be attained, knowledge of the nature of the challenges that face the Christian man and woman in the home is very necessary. This helps to prepare the mind of married people to face, manage and overcome such challenges when they come up. Wrong approach will bring failure, while the right approach will bring victory. Knowledge creates the right and victorious approach.

- Challenges will always come and God promises to be with us.

Isa 43:2
2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.
NIV

The Lord Jesus thought us that as long as we are in the world we will keep having troubles (challenges), but He told us not to worry for He has overcome the world. The marriage institution is not left out. Whatever the challenge, the Lord Jesus has overcome already for you and you need not panic or worry.

- Count it all joy when you are faced with temptations.

James 1:2
2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,
NIV

- You need faith to face challenges in the home. To have faith in God you need to know God personally.

Heb 11:23
23 By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.
NIV

Ex 2:1-10
2:1 Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, 2 and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. 3 But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. 4 His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. 5 Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. 6 She opened it and saw the baby. He
was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said. Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" 8 "Yes, go," she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother. 9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. 10 When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water." NIV

8 STEPS TO OVERCOMING THE ENEMY THAT BATTLES YOUR FAMILY

1. **Recognize that life is full of battles and challenges.**
   Challenges always come to man. No matter what you do (good or evil), they do come. You can’t wish them away; neither can you pray them away. Accept this fact and get prepared for them. Challenges are not a proof of sinfulness, though some may come as a result of our sins and mistakes in life. The righteous also go through challenges. The Lord Jesus Christ went through challenges. Don’t panic when one comes your way.

2. **Analyze the nature of the problem, conflict and enemy that confronts you.**
   An understanding of the nature of the enemy and conflict you are facing will help you to know how to face the enemy and win. Seek an understanding from the Lord who knows all things. Do not be in a hurry; take time to seek an understanding of the situation before action is taken.

   James taught us in the Bible to be quick to hear and slow to speak. The reason is that we need an understanding before we reply or respond, otherwise, we will react or respond foolishly and complicate matters.

   *James 1:19-20*
   19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.
   NIV

   Jesus taught us that we would seek him and find him when we seek him with all our heart. Seek to unravel the mystery of the problem.

3. **Be sincere enough to look at yourself and own up to your faults.**
   Each time there is a conflict; we tend to look first at the other person involved in the conflict rather than ourselves. Jesus taught us to first look at ourselves and first remove the plank in our eyes before we can look at our neighbour and remove the little speck of wood in his own eyes.

   *Matt 7:1-5*
   7:1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. 3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."
Each time there is a problem in your marriage, first, take a good look at yourself and find out if you’re the cause, before you turn to your spouse. By so doing, you don’t chase shadows but deal with the real thing. Own up to your faults as you identify them. Stop shifting blame. It does not help anybody or any marriage. If you are man enough to do something, be man enough to admit it and apologize. Be sincere with yourself and your spouse. Insincerity has destroyed a lot of marriages today.

Addressing your personal problem is very vital if your marriage must work. Divorce is not the way out. If you live your present spouse and marry another without dealing with your personal weaknesses that are responsible for the constant conflicts, you will still meet with the same problems in your next marriage. The earlier you deal with them now the better for you. Except you change, the situation will remain the same no matter where you go or whom you marry.

4. **Self is the greatest enemy man has.**

Stop looking elsewhere. Look at yourself first. Your greatest enemy is not outside but inside you. It is called self. It is self that opens the door for the enemy to enter a man’s life. If you live in accordance with the will and word of God, the devil cannot penetrate into your life. If your ears are not open to gossip for instance, the enemy cannot poison your mind against your husband – the suspicion will not be there.

- Remove the log in your eyes before you see the speck in your spouse’s eyes.
- It is our weakness and faults that break the hedge around us and open the door for the devil to enter our homes.
- The door you open allows the devil to come in. The door you close keeps the devil out of your life and marriage.
- There are many doors to a man’s life and relationships:
  1. Your mouth (what you speak).
  2. Itching ears for stories and gossips.
  3. Your character and behavior.
  4. Your temper.
  5. Bitterness and unforgiveness.
  7. Evil or bad company.
  8. The TV programs you watch.
  9. The books and literature you read.
 10. The music and things you listen to.
 11. The places you go to.

If you can discipline yourself very well, you will shut the devil out of your life and marriage.

5. **Before you start binding the devil and blaming outsiders, deal with each other’s weaknesses, and close the door against the devil.**

Until your own obedience is complete, you have no right to bind the devil.

*2 Cor 10:6*
6 And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.
NIV

You cannot be at fault and be binding the devil and pointing accusing finger and expect God to back you up. It will not happen. God will only respond when you are in obedience. Be sure you are in obedience before you start looking outside yourself and your spouse.

6. **Firm decision will deliver you from repetition of evil and crisis.**

Sometimes, we Christians pray too much. We pray when what we need is a decision. Decide to do away with what is causing trouble in your marriage. Decide to please your partner. Decide to stop what your partner has been complaining he or she does not like and want to see.

7. **Cut off from those that need to be cut off from.**

Every unprofitable relationship to your marriage, family and career should be broken. There are some people you don’t have to continue moving with if your marriage is to work. From such, separate. Move with those who will enhance your marriage and contribute meaningfully to your life. Avoid gossippers and those who are in the habit of giving counsel that are not according to scripture.

8. **Make changes where necessary without hesitation and delay.**

Change is part of life. It is a sign of maturity and that one is growing. Change is a proof that one is teachable. Change is a proof that one is aware that his or her life is affecting negatively his or her spouse and loved ones and desires to see them happy rather than sad. Change is a continuous exercise.

*Prov 29:1*

*A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy.*
NIV

Change, when necessary and without delay. Don’t wait to be told before you make a change, for it is a sign that you are alive in the relationship.

**SEASONS OF ATTACK ON THE HOME**

1. When there is about to be a promotion.
2. When your spiritual progress is attracting attention to the devil.
3. When a child is destined to be great.

**TYPES OF ATTACKS**

1. Spiritual oppression.
   * Becoming weak in prayers and study of the word of God.
   * Loss of zeal for God.
   * Heaviness in the spirit
   * Satanic induced and projected dreams meant to torment, oppress, mislead and depress the dreamer.
2. Financial and business frustrations.
   * Low business or sales
• Loss of investments
• Loss of money and property as a result of banditry, robbery, fire disaster or accident.
• Retrenchment at place of work.
• Problems rising up to devour money meant for the family use.

3. Relationship problems with family and in-laws.
• Sudden confrontational attacks by family and in-laws.
• Fault finding and nagging over little issues.

4. Attack on health of family members.
5. Intense and constant misunderstanding and quarrels with spouse.
6. Another person attempting to snatch your spouse.

CONCLUSION
Your thoughts as you go through these trying periods are very important and more important than the trials. Allow this study to prepare your mind and heart to go through such and overcome it without being bruised and battered by them. Your faith is essential for success. Trust God with all your heart and maintain peace with all in your life and marriage while you go through victoriously.

WORD OF WISDOM

1. The atmosphere you create determines your experience.
2. Don’t give your ears to gossip. What you hear repeatedly, you will eventually believe. Please read proverbs 26:20-28.
3. Never allow what people say about your spouse to form your opinion about him or her.
4. Never allow what people say about you to change your scriptural opinion of yourself. You are who God says you are. You have what God says you have. You can do what God says you can do.
5. Never allow what people say to change your godly principles upon which your marriage and relationship is built.
6. What you think of your partner is more important than what people think about him or her.
7. Like the soil to seeds, so also the mind to words.
8. Give your mind to what will enhance love, unity, happiness and celebration in your home.
9. Guide your mind with all diligence.
   “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the well spring of life”. (Prov.4: 23)