

Reading: I Peter 3:1-12

Topic: The Seven Stages of Relationship & Marriage

INTRODUCTION: When one reads a drama _____ or views a romantic _____, one may get the impression that marriage is some kind of a utopian existence on earth.

STAGE 1 – ACQUAINTANCE:

1. The first time you _____ your present partner, perhaps there was something that attracted you to that individual and made you want to get to _____ them better. Gen. 29:10,11
2. After a few times of _____ with the individual, you then decide that this person is in the realm of possibility of being your life's partner. Gen. 29:14-18

STAGE 2 – ROMANCE:

1. Now that you have decided that this special individual is in your realm of possibility, the _____ of so-called " _____ " begins to take place inside.
2. The romance stage is what experts call the period of "infatuation" in which everything is _____ through the "eyes of love" and viewing the person as almost _____ for you!

STAGE 3 – MARRIAGE:

1. The period of romance leads to a _____ that you cannot live without this person, so a decision is made to make an engagement to become _____ to each other.
2. Preparations and _____ are made to celebrate the marriage on a special "wedding day" be it a large gathering with many people or a small more intimate _____ with just family and close friends present.

STAGE 4 – DISCOVERY

1. It has been stated that you don't really _____ a person until you have lived with them for a while, and then you get to _____ them for who and what they really are.
2. Experts say that the state of "infatuation" with your partner lasts into the marriage for a _____ of about eighteen months to a maximum of _____ years, and then that image begins to evaporate.
3. Once the infatuation fog has lifted and the air is _____, you begin to see who you really married, and you begin to discover that your partner has a _____ to them that you never seen before!
4. The discovery stage of the relationship is both discouraging and _____, for you now see that your life partner has some bad traits that you never knew about, but also some very _____ traits that were hidden.

STAGE 5 – PERSEVERENCE:

1. The discovery stage of marriage leads to conflict and sometimes almost _____, as each individual finds out how awful this _____ that I thought was perfect really is!
2. With many couples who do not know _____, often the quality of perseverance is lacking, and in a short time, they will break up and _____ one another, fighting over many things.
3. For the couple who has _____ in their lives and in their marriage, they will persevere through the time of conflict, learn forgiveness and overcome opposition and each _____ on themselves to improve.
4. The couple who serves _____ will take seriously the commitment to God and to each other, persevering through the _____ times and coming out stronger, better and more in love than before. I Cor. 13:4-7
5. Perseverance in marriage brings great rewards in the _____ relationship.

STAGE 6 – TEAMWORK:

1. As the couple makes the _____ to persevere through their situations, the relationship moves from the conflict phase to a teamwork phase where the partners now are _____ one another together instead of competing with each other for position and control.
2. Just as a _____ and a transmission work together in a car to make it go, so the husband and the wife each also have very important _____ to fulfil in the marriage relationship.
3. When the two individuals in the marriage realize that they are not put together by _____ to compete with one another, but instead to _____ together to form a union that will benefit them and glorify God, the union will become stronger and will be more harmonious. I Pt. 3:7-9

STAGE 7 – MATURITY & FRIENDSHIP:

1. As time passes, the relationship between a couple develops to the _____ where most conflict is avoided because experience and _____ have taught them that their marriage is worth much more than the little things that they have fought over in the past.
2. The couple now knows each other well enough that they can tell what their spouse is _____ without them even saying a _____.
3. Your spouse will be your best _____ for many years, so pray together, live together, love together, and let God _____ your marriage for many years to come. Eph. 5:33

CONCLUSION: Unfortunately, many marriages in the _____ tend to fall apart after a period of time, mostly because _____ are not willing to recognize the stages of relationship and marriage, but for the children of God, blessing awaits those who recognize and _____ through the good times and the bad.