

On the Blessing

Barbara ten Wolde
October 1980



One of the first things I was amazed to discover after my blessing was how much God is intimately concerned about our marriages. I already had an idea of this through watching Father talk about the blessing and about matching us, or through hearing of his counseling of couples. But after the blessing I was jolted to experience how quickly and precisely God would answer any prayer concerning the relationship, and how interested Father and Mother were as to how things were working out.

From such experiences, one can begin to grasp what a blessed couple means to God. Understanding this is to know how precious is the spouse that heaven has given one, and how precious the relationship that will unfold between oneself, one's spouse and God. If one finds one's relationship in a jam, where couples in the fallen world consider separation and divorce, God will assist in breaking up the jam and enabling a flow to continue. There are many amazing and wonderful tales concerning the recent matchings, and faces and lives have been brightening: all a further testimony to God and our Parents... But there are also disappointments and uncertainties. It's

important not to be disheartened by the one before us. Each of us is or will be matched to an uncut diamond; how soon and how beautifully our spouse will be shaped greatly depends on ourselves.

It's important not to come to the matching with a certain image of what we want, or feel we need, in a spouse. In the fallen world people are generally attracted to mates on the basis of immediate needs. When God and our Parents are involved, they look not at what we are but at what we have the potential of becoming and at what our lineage can become. Although the rewards may not be immediate, have patience with one's spouse and one's self. Over the years, seek out what God wants for your spouse and for yourself to become. I once heard Father counsel one struggling couple, commenting that the problem was that the brother wouldn't accept his wife for what she was. He proceeded to say that he knew what type of woman the husband wanted and purposefully did not give him such a wife because that was not what he needed, and that he should not try to make his wife into the type of person he had wanted, first, because she would never become that, and second, to become a well-rounded person the husband desperately needed the woman Father had given him.

Once Father asked the sisters gathered at a Sunday morning talk if they wanted to be blessed. "What if the man you get blessed to has only one leg?" he queried, laughing. "Would you be willing to take a saw, cut off your own leg and give it to him?" He continued hilariously, asking about the arm, eye, etc. When we talk about marriage... long for it... we so often think about what we will receive. We think about the end of our desperate loneliness, about someone who will help us realize all the things within our characters which are so buried that we can't even get to them, and about someone who will always be intimately there, who will love us, who will fulfill our sexual needs, who will comfort us in sorrow and laugh with us in joy, who will protect us and defend us, who will honor us and support us.

But who among us is so whole? Am I? Are you? So often our longing is for someone who is perfect. Are you prepared for a cripple? Some of us are obvious cripples; but it's amazing how even the most confident and talented appearing among us may indeed be confident in some areas, but in other more secluded areas that involve the marriage relationship may be lacking. What if you are confident in your mission and then suddenly find yourself matched to a cripple? Are you willing to allow yourself to become crippled that your spouse might walk whole? Can you descend to his/her level that you may begin to build the relationship that will eventually lift him/her up? Can you be patient for that day (year) that, in greater wholeness, your spouse can lift you up?

In the marriage of friends, prior to my own blessing, I had a number of years to watch the expectations of the blessing be consumed by the reality of it. God gave me time to think about and prepare for mine. I realized that marriage is hard work, and the more stable and mature one is when entering it, the more prepared one will be to allow God to create the miracles of give and take that one needs to build a fruitful

marriage over the years. It's much easier to grow and change as a single person. Growth enters a new and much more complex and cumbersome dimension in marriage (though very rewarding).

Observing this, I had to change my whole way of looking at my life in the church. I had been pocketing my needs and longings for that day when my prince would come to draw them all out and fulfill them. I realized that in all practical fairness to God and my future spouse, I had better have these out and resolve them myself in preparation for the work to come in marriage. I became serious about committing myself to love those around me. It's difficult to love. It takes so much time, energy and patience. It takes the capacity to force oneself beyond the fear involved in reaching out to another, not knowing how the other will respond, and not being at all confident that one has what one needs to respond back. We become so vulnerable in loving. I began to pray for those who repelled me instead of avoiding them, and to serve them secretly or openly, making time to listen to them and help them. I also had to face my own loneliness and self-hatred, instead of saying, "Someday I will get blessed and my husband will resolve it all."

To my amazement, I began to find internal peace and joy for the first time in my life. The more I gave, the more I learned and the more I had to give. In opening up to others, God began to teach me many new and beautiful things; I discovered that I wasn't so terrible after all. I could resolve the bulk of my loneliness even without a spouse, and I lost my impatience for the blessing to come to me. My desire to be grafted onto the tree of life was allowed to overtake my personal desires.

We often hear that the wife is in the position of mother and the husband in the son's position for the first three years of marriage. Aside from all else, this is a very practical way of beginning a marriage. It just doesn't work to try to build a relationship with two people "on the take". If things are going to grow, someone has to give. (And if the sister isn't capable of being a mother first, perhaps the brother can be the father.)

On a deeper plane, Eve took Adam's manhood, the key to perfection and freedom. Eve is the one who can restore this, even at the sacrifice of her own needs. Father has said that when the woman fulfills this mission, bringing fullness to her husband, he will possess the capacity to turn and bring fulfillment and womanhood to her.

In the process of working with spiritual sons and brothers, I began to see what physical mothers could do in twisting the lives of their sons in the name of mother's love. I saw the negative influence my own mother had in my brothers', as well as my dad's, lives. I was deeply troubled by those same traits I saw in my own life and worked very hard to overcome them that someday I might be a different kind of mother/wife.

In entering the blessing, I have seen some sisters interpret the mother's role as: "I'm your mother. You have to obey me. You do as I tell you and be as I want you to be!" (Tisk. We women are capable of more subtlety than this!) One of the greatest facets of a mother's love is that of acceptance. No matter what her child may do, she accepts him eternally as her child. I believe that this is the first step to our spouse's freedom. To accept that which is beautiful and that which is ugly... that which is him, now, and love it all.

If we are too busy trying to force the other into the mold of who we think he should be, we are nailing the lid onto the casket of what should be a dynamic relationship of blossoming growth. Men tend to share of themselves less easily amongst each other than do women. A man needs a place where he can open himself freely with no need to "put on" and no fear of penalty. "The first step to overcoming a problem is recognizing it," is the old cliché. We may not like everything that comes out, but without honesty, there can be no true growth of the depths of the heart (that which we take with us to the spiritual world). Also, when "demons" are allowed to come to light, they are never so great and terrible as they seemed to be when lurking in the shadows of one's soul.

One sister helped me with one important element of this. She gave me the simple balm of being told over and over again, "I need you, I love you, you're wonderful." If you can't say this to your spouse from the heart, ask Heavenly Father to give you a glimpse of what (s)he will become; then you will be able to say such things genuinely. (Remember the story of the frog prince?) A true mother is a total and sacrificial giver. Thus one must come to the blessing with the desire to receive absolutely nothing for three years. I was surprised in my own blessing at how much I did receive, but took each thing as a gift unto itself. I realized I could not hold onto any such gift or expect it to be repeated. (Though he gave to me yesterday, I won't expect it again today.) How long can you give without resentment? It's important not to destroy what God has done through one with an attitude such as: "I gave to you for the last three years; now you owe me."

I've seen some relationships that start out so terrible. It seems as if one (or both) of the spouses are driven to crush the other into the depths of hell. I feel sure that "nothing comes from nothing" and that this must be connected to ancestral (personal to international) karma; not to mention the difficulties that lay in the immediate family background. Either one must learn through love to work out that karma before one is

blessed or in the relationship of marriage during the years after the blessing. Heaven in marriage does not come for free. Talking to a gathering of blessed couples once, Father addressed one couple who had been having a particularly difficult time. He spoke tenderly of the suffering that some couples go through, saying that the greater the depth of suffering, the greater the depth of the love to follow, that their relationship to come would be closer and far richer than that of those who experienced love from the beginning.

I have been deeply impressed by such couples I have known, impressed that they have been able to work through the oppression of the initial suffering and find the beauty beyond.

The blessing is probably the most difficult and most rewarding mission we will be given to accomplish. In it lies much of the cleansing of our lineages, as well as of our own souls. Our entrance into heaven depends upon its successful fulfillment. The true success of our missions is cradled in its arms.

Because it takes so much work, we must realize how precious is the time we spend prior to marriage (and in marriage, prior to having children). The more we strive to understand and truly love and serve Heavenly Father and our brothers and sisters from the depths of our hearts, and to truly love ourselves, the greater the trousseau that we bring to the task. Don't wait until... Do it now!