

Marriage--Time Is Short

by John Newton

Marriage is a relationship in which God's providence is at work, and it can be blessed or cursed depending on one's relationship with Him.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5, Matthew 6:33, Colossians 3:23, James 1:17, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Christian Marriage", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

John Newton delivers a heartfelt message to a newly married couple, expressing his wishes for their temporal comfort, spiritual growth, and increased usefulness in the world and the church. He emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance and grace in every aspect of married life, reminding them that all blessings are from God and should be used in service to Him. Newton encourages the couple to view their gifts and comforts as tokens of God's covenant love, leading to gratitude, obedience, and a deeper relationship with the Lord amidst life's uncertainties and trials.

Transcript

April 13, 1776.

Dear Madam,

I am rather of the latest to present my congratulation to you and Mr. **** on your marriage, but I have not been unmindful of you. My heart has repeatedly wished you all that my pen can express,, that the new relation in which the providence of God has placed you may be blessed to you in every respect, may afford you much temporal comfort, promote your spiritual progress, and enlarge your sphere of usefulness in the world and in the church.

by this time I suppose visits and ceremonies are pretty well over, and you are beginning to be settled in your new situation. What an important period is a wedding-day! What an entire change of circumstances does it produce! What an influence it has upon every day of future life I How many cares, inquietudes, and trials, does it expose us to, which we might otherwise have avoided! But they who love the Lord, and are guided by his word and providence, have nothing to fear; for in every state, relation, and circumstance in life, he will be with them, and will surely do them good. His grace, which is needful in a single, is sufficient for a married, life.

I sincerely wish Mr. **** and you much happiness together; that you may be mutually helps meet, and assist each other in walking as fellow-heirs of the hope of eternal life. Your cares and trials I know must be increased; may your comforts be increased proportionally! They will be so, if you are enabled heartily and simply to entreat the Lord to keep your heart fixed near to himself.

All the temporal blessings and accommodations he provides to sweeten life, and make our passage through this wilderness more agreeable, will fail and disappoint us, and produce us more thorns than roses, unless we can keep sight of his hand in bestowing them, and hold and use the gifts in some due subserviency to what we owe to the Giver. But, alas! we are poor creatures. prone to wander, prone to admire our gourds, cleave to our cisterns, and think of building tabernacles, and taking our rest in this polluted world. Hence the Lord often sees it necessary, in mercy to his children, to embitter their sweets, to break their cisterns, send a worm to their gourds, and draw a dark cloud over their pleasing prospects. His word tells us, that all here is vanity, compared with the light of his countenance; and if we cannot or will not believe it upon the authority of his word, we must learn it by experience. May he enable you to settle it in your hearts, that creature-comforts are precarious, insufficient, and ensnaring; that all good comes from his hand, and that nothing can do us good, but so far as he is pleased to make it the instrument of communicating, as a stream, that goodness which is in him as a fountain. Even the bread which we eat, without the influence of his promise and blessing, would no more support us than a stone; but his blessing makes every thing good, gives a tenfold value to our comforts, and greatly diminishes the weight of every cross.

The ring upon your finger is of some value as gold; but this is not much: what makes it chiefly valuable to you is, that you consider it as a pledge and token of the relation you bear to him who gave it you. I know no fitter emblem of the light in which we should consider all those good things which the Lord gives us richly to enjoy. When every thing we receive from him is received and prized as a fruit and pledge of his covenant-love, then his bounties, instead of being set up as rivals, and idols to draw our hearts from him, awaken us to fresh exercises of gratitude, and furnish us with fresh motives of cheerful obedience every hour.

Time is short, and we live in a dark and cloudy day. When iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold; and we have reason to fear the Lord's hand is lifted up in displeasure at our provocations. May he help us to set loose all below, and to be found watching unto prayer for grace to keep our garments undefiled, and to be faithful witnesses for him in our places! O! It is my desire for myself and for all my dear friends, that whilst too many seem content with half profession, a name to live, an outward attachment to ordinances and sentiments and parties, we may be ambitious to experience what the glorious Gospel is capable of effecting, both as to sanctification and consolation, in this state of infirmity; that we may have our loins girded up, our lamps burning, and, by our simplicity and spirituality, constrain those who know us to acknowledge that we have been with Jesus, have sat at his feet, and drank of his spirit.

I am, &c.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-newton/marriage-time-is-short/>

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