

## A HUSBAND'S LONG ORDEAL: AN EXAMPLE OF GODLY COMMITMENT

*Anonymous*

"I, \_\_\_\_\_, take thee, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wedded wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith."

Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God,  
and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice  
of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.

2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.

5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.

6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?

**Ecclesiastes 5:1-6 The BIBLE**

1. Lord, who may dwell in Your sacred tent? Who may live on Your holy mountain?

2. The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous,

4. ... **who keeps an oath even when it hurts, and does not change their mind;**

**Psalms 15:1,2,4 The BIBLE**

I HAD BEEN PREPARING for ministry since my youngest youth. I entered Bible College the year after high school. At age 20 I founded my first church between years of Bible College. After Bible College I met her and her two young children (2 and 4) and spent a year and a half getting to know them, before marrying her – as much because I loved the children, as because I loved her. When we married we had agreed that we'd be going overseas as missionaries.

Within about three months of marrying she vetoed the idea of missionary work – derailing my life's plans. Crestfallen, I said, "Well then, we'll stay in Canada and minister here;" she vetoed that. Knowing that it

takes both partners to minister full time – or at least the cooperation of the wife, I had no choice but to find other work by which to support my new family. I realized that she had married me under false pretenses - simply to obtain a financial provider for her and her children. Over the next number of years I took whatever menial work I could find as my Theological degree was the only training/vocational skills I had, and, in socialist Canada, mentioning a Godly inclination on a resumé is a sure-fire way to be rejected for a job! We agreed that she'd be a stay-at-home Mum, to take care of the children until they were all old enough to be in school, at which point she might take a part-time job outside the home. On my minimal, unskilled labouring

wage, we lived in a basement suite.

We were offered a home in a low-income housing project, but I rejected this because of the rough reputation of the place; I walked the grounds one evening to check it out; its reputation was confirmed. My wife (let's call her, "Diane,") threatened to take the kids and leave me, to go live in the place, but before she did anything we were offered and accepted a better housing alternative. A couple months later a boy, Michael Dunahee, about the same age and appearance as our younger children, was abducted from in front of the very housing unit we had been offered in the housing project, and to this day, decades later, he has never been seen again. A few years later, as housing was so expensive in our city, I moved the family to a small town 250 miles away where we could afford a decent home on my minimum wages, and wouldn't have to rely on society to provide us with subsidized housing!

Throughout the marriage I would get home after work to find Diane sitting on the floor in front of the TV, playing video games (she would admit that's what she'd been doing all day; no housework had been done)! Half an hour later she'd stomp into the kitchen to open a can of something when I asked her where supper was. She wouldn't do housework unless I got angry, and then, only did the basics, and then wouldn't talk to me for two days – so, for the sake of the family, I did that only about every three weeks! She refused to get a license to drive, so, after getting home from work, I'd have to drive her and the kids to the supermarket and follow her around and take care of the children as she shopped. If one of the children were sick I'd have to take the time off work to take them to the doctor. Diane began, "dressing down," to make herself less attractive, and tried to convince me to buy pornography to distract me from her; I refused. Twice a year she would go on vacation for two to three weeks, visiting friends or relatives in another town, despite my wishes. She wouldn't think of phoning home to talk to the children or me; I would have to phone her a few times during her absence so that the children wouldn't feel she was forgetting them. During one of her vacations three of the children had chicken pox when she left, and I had to stay home from work in her absence, with the curtains drawn, to nurse the children back to health in the gloom of semi-darkness.

Throughout all this I kept my commitment to God: I never abandoned my calling to minister, and I spoke to Diane about it periodically, hoping that she'd become more amenable to cooperating in ministry, and that we'd be able to enter full-time ministry. And I never abandoned my commitment to Diane: I had given my word to my wife, on our wedding day, "*for better or for worse, till death do us part,*" and as a Christian it was my responsibility to live up to my word and commitment to continue with her and to do my utmost for my family!

After seven years Diane informed me that she was thinking of leaving me.

About this time I was asked by a friend to help volunteer with the local street mission, and I found real joy as I ministered. When the mission had to close due to lack of funding I saw the clients as sheep without a shepherd, and God started calling me back to the ministry, to fill this gap.

I found a building that would rent to us on Sundays, and started Sunday services, combined with a food/clothing bank, and also conducted personal evangelism during the week. I felt proud that we had more First-Nations people (Native American Indians) in our congregation than probably any other congregation in town. Within a year we were seeing about seventy people of all races at Sunday services. We held outdoor baptisms in a local lake. For the first time in my adult life I felt genuinely happy and content: I had a family and I was pursuing the calling (albeit in a modified way) that I had been commissioned to by God!

However, Diane was not pleased. If ever I needed a hand in something ministerial (for instance, transcribing song lyrics onto transparencies for the overhead projector, because my handwriting can be less-than-legible) she might do it, but only under protest. Eventually, she began taking the children to a different church. She would snub my parishioners as she passed them on the street; the congregation numbers plummeted.

Eventually, while I was holding a Bible Study in our home one evening, she took the children (ages 6, 8, 13, 15 [we had had two more children] ) for a walk, and asked them if she should leave me, because I was holding the Bible Study in our home! She was by this time sleeping on the sofa at night (I refused to, as it wasn't

my desire to stop living as husband and wife; it was hers).

Diane continued her semi-annual vacations. By this time the church had shrunk to just two people.

Finally, soon after returning from an extended absence, Diane announced that she would be leaving me, and wanted me to move out. She refused to let me have the children (I knew that to leave the children in her custody would be disastrous for them!) And then she walked to a friend's home a friend a few blocks away. As Diane had refused to permit her previous husband to see his children, despite a court order after she had left him (he had committed adultery) I knew that she would similarly refuse me access to my own children. I had been forced just recently to take some weeks away from work to watch the children while Diane was away for another extended period, so I had been, "laid off," and had no way to support myself and the children in town, nor place to live and the children. Diane had just received a large amount of money from her mother, and had her own ideas of how to spend it, so she had what she needed. So I bundled the children into the car, with a few possessions, and we drove the 250 miles to a place where we could stay with relatives while we resettled and re-established ourselves in the town in which the children had been born and spent most of their lives, and where our friends and relatives were. I contacted the last two people in the congregation and told them that I could no longer minister; I was completely drained, emotionally, financially, and physically. A few weeks later I returned to town to get our possessions. As I had no one I could leave the children with I took them with me, and to see their mother. She brought the police, the ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE, and they abducted the children from me without court order, saying, "if ever there's a choice between parents we take the children from the father and give them to the mother!"

Soon after this Diane moved herself and our children into her boyfriend's home (I later learned she had met him half a year earlier, at the church she began attending when she stopped attending mine). Over the next number of years I commuted those 250 miles between the home I was establishing for my children and myself, and the home of their mother and her common-law boyfriend, where the children were living with her, and while I pursued child custody in the courts in her town.

The courts gave me access every second weekend to the children, and I ensured that I maintained that access every single time, taking the ferry from the island where I was living, and driving across the mountain passes. Friday night I would sleep in my car on a Native Reserve, parked behind a house owned by those last two people in my congregation. This was a desert, so, in Summer, it was stifling; in Winter, there was bitter cold and snow – lots of it! Saturday morning, I would pick up the children from their mother's house and drive them to a relative's house up in the mountains, for the day and night, take them to church there the next morning, drive back to the desert and drop them at my wife's place, and drive back across the mountains to the coast, hoping to be back in time to catch the last ferry back to the island, at 9:00 PM; when the snow prevented my catching that last ferry on time I would be sleeping in the car again that night. I'd be back at work Monday morning. Literally half the times I would arrive at my wife's place to pick up the children, she would have a gang of up to seven people, male and female, waiting at the curbside, who would be yelling at me, throwing things, trying to break the antenna off my car, physically bumping into me, and actually opening the passenger door and climbing in beside me! Etc. Often I would have to call the police to protect me from the gang, those same ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE who had abducted the children and put them into the hands of a mother who was less than ready to care for them adequately! And on those occasions I would also be yet again prevented by their mother from seeing my children, having to drive back across the mountains without having seen them, and with nothing but stress to show for it. Neither the courts nor the police nor the Social Services ever made any kind of effort to enforce the children's right to see their father. I felt alone and abandoned by the services commissioned to protect the children and myself. I was indeed alone, in a town where my wife had claimed that I, a pastor, had left her! For the next week I was sickened by those confrontations.

(I am quite capable of standing up for myself! I am not a slight person, nor some milquetoast incapable nor unwilling to defend myself. I am, however, a Christian, and:

- 1) We are commanded by Christ to, 'turn the other cheek;'

39 But I say unto you, That ye **resist not evil**: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, **turn to him the other also**.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

**Matthew 5:39-41 The BIBLE**

(I also paid my wife twice the alimony I was required to by the courts.)

2) I had/have never laid a hand on my wife, and I had no intention of starting;

3) If I had made any attempt to defend myself from this gang, being the male of the marriage, and also being outnumbered by up to seven-to-one, “witnesses,” I would have been deceitfully made to look like the aggressor: any male-female contest, I had already been told by the police, would be automatically decided in favour of the female! As it was, the police refused to do anything about my attackers even when I was physically assaulted by them; had I made any move in defense, however, being the male of the marriage, I would have been arrested and charged.

As I had consistently refused to defend myself from any attack, when Diane eventually lied to my employer and the police, managing to have me fired, and trying to get me arrested, the courts granted ME a Restraining Order, protecting me from Diane and her gang. SHE was NOT granted a Restraining Order! After learning what happened my employer re-hired me. For this reason I purchased a chest-pocket tape recorder to record all contact with Diane, and all phone calls. (I was eventually permitted to present a dozen of these tape-recordings in court, as testimony to both her/their attacks, and my lack of response.) The week after I would return from a weekend of such assaults I would be recovering from the attacks; the next week I would be preparing myself emotionally for the next weekend’s attacks! My health suffered; I have never recovered.

I kept my ring on; Diane had not, to my knowledge, committed adultery, so, in God’s eyes we were still mar-

ried! Over the next couple years it became obvious that the marriage was over, but I knew what God says about marriage: its sanctity and permanence! At first, I had no idea that Diane was living common-law with another man; she and her friends were very careful to keep that fact secret from me and from the judge, before whom I was appearing as often as possible to present the evidence as I sought custody of the children! I would pray that, “IF Diane is going to commit adultery eventually, I pray that it will be sooner than later, so that I can KNOW that I am freed from her, and can potentially remarry, should I wish!” Eventually, however, I realized that I was, in effect, “rejoicing in iniquity,” contrary to I Corinthians 13, 19:

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

**I Corinthians 13:6 The BIBLE**

So I began praying that Diane WOULD NOT commit adultery at all! And soon afterwards - in fact, within perhaps a month - I discovered that she was living with a man! God had been waiting for me to pray for her, to stand in the gap between God and her, and pray for her betterment, rather than secretly hope that she would sin, so that I might be free!

10 “And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends ...”

**Job 42:10a The BIBLE**

Eventually Diane divorced me – on my birthday (the kids told me later that she laughingly took great delight in that fact) - and married her boyfriend a month later - three years *to the day* after leaving me. I sat on the edge of my bed the night of my birthday and finally removed my ring at seven minutes after midnight, as the day finished. I had felt that I would have been justified in removing it the moment I discovered her adultery, and actually considered myself freed, in God’s opinion, as, in God’s eyes, it is adultery that constitutes divorce,\* but, to ensure that I maintained my integrity before both God and man, I waited until the papers were final before I took the last official step.

\* 32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, **saving for the cause of fornication**, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

**Matthew 5:32 The BIBLE**

( **POSTLUDE:**

*I eventually gained full shared custody of both children, with the older one’s being placed into my care, after his mother threw him down the stairs, bloodied him, and rejected him for years after. I had to get \$1100 in dental repairs done on his*

*mouth, one of his ear drums replaced, and another injury attended to. The younger boy was left in her care by the judge who ruled, "while Mr. \*\*\* is technically able to take better care of the boys, the younger boy needs his mother's love!")*