

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 14

Dearest Grandchild,

Today's letter is about marriage. I'm sure it must seem out of place for a scruffy old man like your Grandpa to attempt such a task. The subject of your marriage, however, is so important that I must take the risk. For the record, you are one of 26 grand children. Some of you are already married, and others are too young to think about it. Please forgive me if this letter does not apply to you at this time.

Unfortunately, society does not hold marriage is the same high esteem that the Bible does. Someone quipped: "Grandma can remember the first time her husband kissed her, while her grand daughter may not even remember her first husband". This is too true to be funny! The Bible describes the first marriage in Eden as a life long union between one man and one woman. Unfortunately, even the very definition of marriage is now under attack. Consequently, you face an uphill struggle in seeking to establish a strong marriage in today's crumbling society. The good news is that God will help you succeed in having a happy family. A happy family, as you will someday discover, is worth the effort.

An interesting insight into marriage comes from the Spanish language. Their word for "wife" is "esposa", and their word for "handcuffs" is "esposas". How vivid! Being married is like being handcuffed to someone. If you are going to be handcuffed to someone for the rest of your life, doesn't it make sense to be very selective about who that person is?

In this regard, please be patient and wait for the very person God has chosen to be your mate. To help illustrate this point, please take time to view this interview with Chuck and Carol Slote. The link is: <http://vimeopro.com/wotruth/venture-in-faith/video/110904109>

As you will see, Chuck was born with severe physical handicaps. He has had over 30 surgeries, and has spent between 10 and 15 years of his life in the hospital. Obviously, his handicap made it difficult for him to have a date or find a wife. This only makes the story of his marriage all the more wonderful. I hope the way that God guided him will help you to understand some of the ways that God can guide you. Again I ask for your indulgence, and pray that you will find the time to listen and learn from this godly man's testimony.

Chuck is a professional tax consultant and therefore thinks analytically. Consequently, he prayed to God for a wife in an analytical way. He listed 10 qualities in a wife that he felt would be important in a happy marriage. He appropriately points out, however, that God is Sovereign and it is totally inappropriate for us to order God to do anything. Even if God decides to slay us we should still trust Him (Job. 13:15). God apparently honored Chucks's humble and submissive spirit and granted him all ten of his wishes.

As you watch the video you will hear about the ten things that Chuck wanted in a wife. Permit me give a shorter list of only five. As you begin to think seriously about marriage, perhaps you will compose a list of your own. Here are five things that are important to your Grandpa.

1. Faith - The most important part of marriage, in my judgement, is spiritual. It involves your faith, and the choice of the person you will marry. If you have the saving faith required by Jesus, it is irrational to be “handcuffed” for life to someone who does not share that faith. To disregard the commands of Christ regarding marriage is like building a house on the sand. When the storms of life come, as they inevitably will, a house build upon the sand will fall (Matt. 7:24 - 27). The importance of marrying a believer is underscored by the Biblical injunction that a widow is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord (1 Cor. 7:39). Please do not marry someone who does not share your Christian faith!

2. Family - In marriage, we leave our father and mother and start our own family. Strong families do not occur by accident. They require diligent effort by both husband and wife. A strong family is difficult to build by only one person. One secret to building a strong family is to make Christ the Lord of the household. When you love Christ more than family (Matt. 10:37), you become a better husband, wife, or child. Loving Christ is the key! When the husband loves Christ, he will be a better husband. He will endeavor to love his wife in the same way that Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. When the wife loves Christ she will be a better wife. Her loyalty to Christ will help her to be sensitive and submissive to the needs of her husband in the same way that the church is subject unto Christ (Eph. 5:22 - 33). When children love Christ they will be better children. Remember! The man who does not care for his immediate family is worse than an unbeliever (1 Tim. 5:8) Please do not consider marrying someone who does not love the family.

3. Finances - Many couples, regardless of income, argue about money. Money problems are often cited as “reasons” for a divorce. I know of one family that failed because the wife expected her husband to be as rich as her father. The husband, however, did not want to be rich. He was happy to live on a limited income. He made no attempt to attain to the life style his wife desired. Obviously, they would have been wise to discuss these differences before they got married. In counseling another couple the young man was shocked to learn that his fiancé had huge unpaid hospital bills. This did not prevent them from getting married, but knowing about these debts in advance helped avert a crisis later. Please do not consider marrying someone until you have come to a meeting of the mind regarding finances.

4. Love - Love is, of course, an essential ingredient in marriage. The love that makes for a successful marriage is much deeper than a momentary infatuation. It involves a disciplined desire to do what is best for your mate, even under difficult circumstances. In some societies marriages are arranged by parents. This does not keep husbands and wives from loving one another. In Christ we have the power to even love our enemies. Please prayerfully consider this inspired teaching about love from the Bible ! Like a beam of light passing through a prism becomes many colors, the light of love also manifests itself in many beautiful ways. Here is a brief paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13:4 - 8. Love is patient, kind, and without envy or pride. It is not rude, self seeking, or easily

angered. It does not keep records of a wrong or delight in evil. It rejoices with truth, always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. LOVE NEVER FAILS. Selfless love is an essential ingredient to a happy marriage. In the ideal marriage the husband is continually seeking to meet the needs of his wife, and the wife is continually seeking to meet the needs of her husband (1 Cor. 7:1 - 5). Please do not marry someone whom you do not love!

5. Faithfulness - Faithfulness is mentioned in Galatians 5:22 as a fruit of the Spirit. This is another reason why it is wise to marry a believer. The marriage vows involve finality. They are “for better, or for worse; for richer or for poorer; in sickness or in health; until death do us part”. One of the most wonderful aspects of marriage involves its finality. When both husband and wife commit to a life time relationship it creates a wonderful sense of security . In marriage, the insecurity of dating days are replaced by the security of a life time commitment. When circumstances separate you from your spouse for a period of time, it is comforting to have complete confidence in their faithfulness. Should an accident or illness create physical or mental handicaps, it is comforting to know that your loved one will be faithful regardless of the circumstances. Please do not marry someone whom you cannot care for should they become an invalid!

Uncle John provides insight into a happy marriage by recounting what happened on a mission trip to Panama. A local native was riding his horse while his pregnant wife was walking. An outraged member of the mission team found a translator and asked the man why his pregnant wife was walking? He had a puzzled look on his face and stated what to him was obvious: “She doesn’t have a horse”! The thought that he should walk and let her ride apparently never entered his mind. While the story may seem humorous, it illustrates the danger in marrying someone from a different culture. Not all cultures see marriage in the light of Scripture. I hope every grand daughter who dates someone from a different culture will remember this story!

Well, guess I’ll close for now. I feel something like the hound dog barking at the evening train. He didn’t change a thing but it sure made him feel good to get it off his chest.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce

P.S. If you have trouble linking to the video with Chuck Slote, check out

<http://vimeopro.com/wotruth/venture-in-faith>

You can select the one with Chuck from a whole series.