

I Take Thee to be My...Baby-maker!

Having been married for over thirty-nine years (not bragging here, just stating a fact), I sometimes look back on our married journey, and what we have done together, and thank God for his faithfulness. He sure looked after us the past four decades! It's never been boring, I'll say that much!

Among our adventures as a couple, I view the procreation and rearing of three children to be paramount among the things God entrusted (and helped) us with. And to me, it's the *whole point* of marrying in the first place. Yup, I'm not kidding here. Having kids is the very *heart and soul* of the marriage covenant, number one on the list. Let me take it one step further. If you marry and *don't* have kids, you're not living up to that covenant.

Disagree? Okay, what do you think that tingly feeling in the area just south of your navel is for? Sure, Marilyn ("babe" that she was when we met—and I have the pics to prove it!) put the fire under my kettle, but we didn't marry just so we could have fun (as much as it seemed to me to be the case at the time ☺). At one point, we made the conscious decision, "We need to start having children." Therefore, three years after we said "I do," *we did*.

If God created the procreation thing, doesn't it follow that he *wants* us to *procreate*? "Be fruitful and multiply" is still in there. Not one (that's just half), not two (that just replaces you), but at least three, as your means and her health dictate. You can't rule out God here. God makes wombs fruitful—he also makes them barren.

"But what if my wife can't conceive? God knows we *want* to have kids!" Thinking back, I recall that one of our options would be adoption, in the event Marilyn (or I) proved infertile. Now, I'm not making this a hard-and-fast rule here, but how many times have you heard of a couple adopting, then the wife turns up pregnant? Could it be God's plan? Seeing that they were faithful to the mandate he set up with Adam and Eve, he "opened her womb" and granted a baby. Women used to look at it that way. Perhaps God wanted that adoptee to have a good, stable family in which to grow up before having a biologically created brother or sister.

Before you go dusting off all the "I know a couple..." arguments, I'm aware that some disagree with my viewpoint. That's okay. As a friend of mine used to say, "You're entitled to your own wrong opinion." But, my point is, there's more to marriage than a living arrangement, or to make sexual activities "legal."

That's why I unequivocally oppose "gay marriage." Think about it: what is the one thing heterosexual couples can normally do that homosexual couples can't? *Make babies*. That's why governments (or they used to, at least) give them tax breaks for kids and a home mortgage break (the home where said kids are raised)—*because* those couples are producing the next generation of citizens. A country's strength is in its children. No kids—no country.

While I'm on the subject, let's look at this "population bomb" idiocy. Some would have us believe that we are going to overpopulate the planet. Don't buy it—there's still plenty of room. If you'll pry your eyes away from the tree you're hugging, you might just see the forest. Is the

Earth's population growing? Sure. Will we make ourselves extinct by too much procreating? I doubt it.

The one thing these “gloom-and-doom” pseudo-prophets fail to take into account is that science and technology PROGRESS. They act as if *nothing* will take place on that front to change a thing. Yeah, as if. Just look back at the last century—heck, add in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century. We went from horse and buggies (thanks to the Industrial Revolution) to mechanized travel on land, on the sea, and in the air. We now have routine trips into space to go live in a manmade habitation orbiting the Earth! We've been to the moon; we send probes out into, and past, our solar system. Medicine has made more progress in fifty years than the previous five-hundred! We have forms of communication that people just sixty years ago would consider science fiction: cell phones (a means of reaching out to the world you can carry in your pocket!), Blackberries, the Internet, satellite radio and TV, iPods, PCs, Kindle Readers...the list goes on. Just think what will happen in the next sixty!

As I see it, here's the biggest problem we face on the procreation front. We've been whittling away at raising the infant mortality rate for centuries, and have pretty much succeeded. The one thing we *didn't* foresee was this: what with all those less-than-perfect babies—babies that would have died years ago—growing into adulthood, they're carrying the seeds of future birth defects *within their own DNA*. That's why I see genetic research to perfect damaged DNA as a big front in the infant mortality war. I'm not talking “designer babies,” I'm talking about weeding out gene damage to prevent birth defects. Think I'm crazy? Just look within your own family to see how many problems with conception and babies are starting to crop up, more and more frequently.

Which brings up another topic. The last time I went to the OB/GYN with Marilyn, I viewed one video after another on what seemed to be “The Baby Channel,” about infertile couples spending thousands trying to conceive. I'm talking TENS of thousands of dollars *a crack* at making a baby happen! I'm not telling any couple what to do, but maybe we need to get God's telegram (remember, he closes wombs, as well as opens them?) and just adopt. I'm spit balling here, since my “Fertile Myrtle” had no problem making viable, healthy babies, but there are TONS of babies out there, of all races, who need parents to rescue them from Child Services.

I'm also not saying that the only reason to marry is to have kids. In the process of raising our three, we always tried to make time for our own relationship. The kids never took center ring. Now, with all of them adults in their thirties, we're (as God wills) enjoying just being a couple again. We enjoy the adult relationship we now have with our kids and enjoy our grandkids as well.

Which brings up another side trip. What's up with grandparents rearranging their lives for their grandkids? When we had and reared our three, it was always under the proviso that they would grow up and leave to live their own lives. While eighteen was the goal, it wasn't a hard and fast rule. But we encouraged our kids to “grow up and move out.” We didn't even consider having a thirty-five-year-old, sitting on the sofa, single, unemployed, and watching soaps on the tube. We did little to nothing to encourage ANY of that behavior.

As to the subject of grandkids, now that we're living on the road full-time, we've had more than one grandparent ask us, "Don't you miss your grandkids?" Frankly, (and I don't speak for Marilyn here) no. We see them often enough to miss them, yes, but they're (as cute and adorable as they may be) not our kids. Moreover, even though we may be away from where they live, the miracle of modern travel allows *our* kids to come to see US. Heck, we're in a warm place in the winter!

Take a good look at people who don't choose to have kids. They have pets—sometimes multiple pets! Dogs seem to head the list (When did dogs become the new *kids*?) but cats come a close second. Plus, dogs seem to incur more medical bills than kids. Whatever happened to the family dog, a mutt you raised from a pup, loved, fed walked, and put down when they got too sick? Now folks incur medical bills that rival humans'! Why—because they've transferred their affections from kids to their animals? Perhaps.

I've lost track of how many RVers we've seen carting around a collection of animals. The one that takes the cake for me was the guy who actually had—in the confines of a forty-foot motor coach—four macaws, two parrots, a mourning dove, and a parakeet! Oh...my...*God*! I quickly grew tired of the six-thirty a. m. wakeup call, to the raucous screech of a macaw! We have no pets (our thirty-nine foot model barely contains just the two of us!), ever since my "beloved" tarantula died after eighteen years. Whenever someone asks if we have pets, I usually say, "No, we chose to have kids instead." In my view, it's a heck of a lot easier to go on vacation with kids than with pets (or to put them up in a kennel).

So, enjoy a wonderful, fulfilling sex life, but don't neglect the procreation imperative. Kids aren't ever easy to rear, and we all start out as amateurs (that's what parents and grandparents are for ☺), but the love and joy they bring into your lives far outweigh the "speed bumps" along the way.

"God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful, and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." – *Genesis 1:28 (NIV)*