

# The Facts of Life

by Carl McMurray

Quite a while ago two separate studies of marriages among Christians came to my desk. They were not new studies. The first one ran from 1957 to 1977, while the second went from 1962 to 1981. They were revealing, however, in their simplicity. Both were 20 year records of marriage. Both tracked 76 homes over this period. Part of the results follow.

Of 76 marriages, where Christians married non-Christians; in church A, 57 Christians left the faith, 25 of the couples divorced, and 22 souls remained faithful. In church B, 61 Christians left the faith, 23 couples divorced and at the end of 20 years only 15 souls of the 152 (76 couples) remained faithful.

Does this say that every Christian who marries a non-Christian will find themselves in divorce and stray from the Lord? Obviously not. These very figures indicate that in church A 66% did not divorce and 30% remained faithful. In church B 70% did not divorce and 20% remained faithful to the Lord. Plainly, it is possible to buck the odds, luck up and resist all the worldly influences that come from living two decades with one who is not interested in spiritual things. But, is this the best we can do? Shall we take the chance in losing our own soul because we won't stop and take time to make wise decisions?

The same study tracked the marriages of Christian to Christian for 20 years. Were they perfect? Not quite. But notice the difference. Out of 64 marriages in church A, after twenty years, only 5 left the Lord, 2 had divorced, and 59 souls were still faithful. In church B, out of 28 marriages tracked, 4 had gone astray, 4 couples had divorced, and 24 remained faithful.

Compare the results after twenty years, after the first hot passion begins to cool, after children, after bills and making a life, after decades of prayer (or lack of it), tears and laughter. Compare a 30% faithful rate to 92% in church A. Compare a 20% faithful rate to 86% in church B. Surely it is too plain to miss. If we will choose one for life who shares our standards and our goals, who wants to go eternally in the same direction we're going, we will increase the chances of happiness and stability in this life three and four fold. When we ignore the plain conflict between spirituality and worldliness, we are taking some serious chances with our own soul, not to mention the souls of children that may come to the marriage. Is it possible to convert a mate after the wedding? Surely. In the 244 marriages tracked, there are numbers that indicate there must have been a few conversions...very few.

If marriage is on your horizon, set the standards early on for the choice you'll make. Don't wait till "love" blinds you and makes you believe "anything" is possible. Facts just don't bear that out. Parents, if you love your children and want the best for them, talk to them. Even when they say, "I know, I know," keep talking. It's that important. Help them choose good friends, because that is usually who one ends up marrying. May God bless our homes and homes-to-be that are dedicated to Him.