

Wings

*"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles."
Isaiah 40:31*



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When a Marriage Crumbles

A marriage should be the ultimate demonstration of what love can accomplish in the lives of two people. So when a marriage fails, the ripple effects can be devastating.

"For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence,' says the Lord of hosts. 'Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously'" (Mal. 2:16).

If God hates something, it's usually for good reason. His original creation was "very good" (Gen. 1:31), with nothing to hate, but the failures of humanity in the ages since have provided several aberrations for God to hate. Divorce is one of them.

God designed marriage to be the primary source of companionship among human beings. We can have good friends, but we can never have someone with whom our lives are so intimately interwoven as they are with our spouse.

But like all human relationships, marriages are comprised of imperfect people, and many marriages become infected with anger and conflict. Some marriages become so strained that they fall apart, and the two partners who once could not bear to be away from one another, can no longer stand to be around each other.

When a marriage crumbles, there is more at stake than just two individuals deciding to go their separate ways. The destruction of the relationship sends a number of powerful messages to other elements of society.

First, there is an impact—unintentionally—on the children directly affected by the divorce. Research in recent decades has shown that divorce inflicts a number of psychological and emotional scars on the children who must live through it. Even when a couple waits until the kids are grown to divorce, the effects on their adult children and grandchildren can be damaging.

When a couple divorces, there is also an effect on a wider social circle—friends, extended family, church, etc. Their split forces an awkward and disruptive realignment of relationships that neither partner anticipated. More significantly, it reinforces a growing skepticism of the permanence of friendship. After several experiences like this, people learn to hold one another at arm's length. After all, friends, like marriages, come and go; we can't get too close.

Finally, the destruction of a marriage casts further doubt on the wisdom of the institution itself. Marriage has been the foundation of human society for thousands of years; no other alternative has come close to supplanting it. But when a society experiences the collapse of marriage on a scale measured in the millions, it's no wonder that some are now arguing that the institution itself is outdated and should be replaced or even eliminated altogether. It obviously isn't working. And every new divorce strengthens the hands of those who seek to destroy it.

So when God says that He hates divorce, He has good reason. Divorce "covers one's garments with violence"; that is, it tears yet another hole in the fabric that binds society together. As the number of divorces increases, the fabric will become so tattered that eventually it will give way completely, and society will collapse into anarchy.

That's why building strong marriages should be near the top of our priority list, both personally and collectively. There is a lot riding on the outcome.

— David King