

And the Two Shall Become One

RAY SLADE

Many people have heard that before. It's often said in speeches at weddings, alluding to the idea that before marriage we see ourselves as individuals but now we are united, we need to live as one.

The saying actually comes from the Bible and it was meant to mean that when two people marry, they become one... in flesh, meaning they become monogamous. They will no longer share their bodies with any other person but remain faithful to each other.

It never meant that we lose our sense of self, our individuality, our own way of being, our personal values, beliefs, principles, likes, dislikes, and everything else about us that makes us who we are.

Quite the contrary, God made each person unique and never intended that we should take on the characteristics or any other aspects of another person. He wants us to be who we are.

But I like the Beach... you like the Bush

Clearly, when two people choose to marry, there are many things that need to be considered in order for us to live harmoniously together. Changing who we are is not one of them.

You may like the walls green, I may like them white. Choosing a color somewhere in between, may make for a reasonable compromise, but it won't change who I am.

A Deeper Matter

Some couples say...

"We are so good for each other because we're so different"

Others say...

"We are so good for each other because we're so similar"

Which is correct?

The crucial element of "two becoming one" is that the two people must be complete in and of themselves. This is often greatly misunderstood. It's the difference between being Complementary and Completed. What is the difference?

Complementary or Completed. Which is it?

Complementary means that we complement or supply what the other may not have. It means I might be good at something and you may be good at something else. The two skills are complementary. For example...

- You're good at photography
- I'm good at advertising and promotion

- You've got a good head for figures and accounting
- I'm good at bringing in the money

- You're great at maintaining connections with friends and bringing them home

- I'm good at entertaining
- I'm good at remembering dates
- You're good at following through
- You're great at seeing the big picture
- I'm good at the small details
- You're good at technical things
- I'm good at decorating

Couples that recognize their complimentary skills and abilities and can allow each other to use their gifting can be very happy together.

Being Complete

Being complete is a very different thing. It refers to my being complete as an individual and you also being complete in yourself. What does it mean to be complete?

It means ...

- Being able to connect emotionally
- Able to be vulnerable and share my feelings
- Have an appropriate sense of power and assertiveness
- Able to Say NO and YES and know when to say which
- Have initiative and drive
- Be real, but not perfect
- Have at least a minimal amount of organization
- Think for oneself and express one's opinion
- Be able to learn and grow
- Able to take risks
- Recognise and use one's talents
- To be responsible for oneself

- To be able to follow through
- Be free and not controlled by external or internal factors
- Able to accept imperfections in myself, others and life in general, and have grace and forgiveness
- Be able to grieve

Being complete, really means I have grown up

King Solomon said, "When I was a child, I thought, felt and acted as a child". It could be said about all of us at that time, our interests were quite selfish. But more than that, we lacked the ability to think and act as an adult. If our parents had not acted on our behalf, we would have found ourselves in a lot of trouble and our life probably would have come to an early end.

But through trial and error, learning and experience, we gradually learnt to take responsibility for ourselves and eventually became fully functioning, independent adults.

This means we are no longer dependent on another person to meet our needs, think for us, tell us what to do, act for us, protect us, and all of the other things that keep us a child.

The process of becoming complete is never complete. It's an ongoing task. However, by the time I'm ready to join my life to another person in marriage, I need to have made significant inroads on the task.

Sadly, many people do not satisfactorily make that transition and become a completed person. Moving into marriage incomplete, can place an onerous burden on the partner. It's onerous because it's hard enough meeting our own needs, let alone trying to meet the needs of another.

It really is like being a parent or living two lives – that of our own and someone else’s as well.

Being completely complete

Very few people could claim to be complete in all of the areas listed above. While we may have dealt with most areas, there may be one or two in which we are still weak or lacking experience or strength. This is reasonable. We don’t live in a perfect world.

When looking at yourself, or your partner, don’t be too quick to judge. It would be easy to see areas either we or they are still struggling with and then wipe ourselves or others off completely.

Make room for grace and tolerance, while encouraging one another to take a brave look at the areas we might need to do more journeying on.

Further Reading on this

Relationship that work, and those that don’t, H. Norman Wright