

Call to Obedience #381
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org

A Wedding Charge To Brett and Vanessa

By Pastor Reimar A. C. Schultze

(Adapted for the CTO reader)

We are glad to have this wedding of a couple who are in earnest to be all God wants them to be and to have all God wants them to have. Indeed this is the way it should be. If we profess Jesus in church and not on face book and elsewhere, we are all show and no go.

Now for **this** holy convocation, let me take you back to the day when marriage was first invented! At some precise moment in eternity, God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit decided that Jesus needed a wife. In an outburst of exuberant enthusiasm they said in unison, filling the whole cosmos: *Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness* (Genesis 1:26 NKJV). The only purpose of this universe is for God to get a bride for His Son. So God put man on the earth. He would test him. At the end of time He will take those men and women who lived holy lives and join them to His Son in the last and grandest of all weddings ever. This universe will be destroyed, the ungodly will be cast into eternal darkness and God will create a new heaven and earth in which righteousness dwells.

So the idea of marriage was born in heaven, but the first wedding took place on earth. It was between a man and a woman, not a man and a man, nor a woman and a woman. There were three persons present at the first wedding: Adam, Eve and God. Every wedding is a threesome and not a twosome. God officiated and His words became the standard, sacramental words for every wedding following: ***a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave [be joined] to his wife, and they shall be one flesh*** (Gen. 2:24). Scholars tell us that “one flesh” here means one person. This is a mysterious union fused together by God, as Jesus also said, *what God has joined together, let not man separate* (Mark 10:9). From the very beginning God made no exit from marriage but by death. You need to know that every time you break up a marriage, you break up a threesome. You not only break up with your spouse, but you also break up with God, because He created the threesome. A Rabbi once said: whenever a man leaves his first wife, even the altar weeps.

Going on from here, every marriage is to be a prototype of the love relationship between Christ and His church. Paul spelled out the operating principles of this relationship: ***Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the***

church, and gave Himself for her (Eph. 5:25). How does Christ love the church? Unconditionally: as is! So, Brett, love your wife *as is*, not as you want her to be or think she ought to be. Always *as is*. *As is*, whether her hair is a mess or beautiful. *As is*, when she is moody; *as is*, even when she is late. If you keep this up you will be like Jesus to her and she will be transformed to be more like Him also. Paul says to **wives**: *Submit to your husbands ... in everything* (Eph. 5:22-24). In everything? Yes! As a church is to submit to the authority of Christ in everything so should the woman do to her husband. That means, Vanessa, you need to respect and honor Brett. Of course, if Brett loves as Christ loves, he will never do anything without bringing your needs and desires into it. He will give himself to you as Christ did to the church.

Now I've given you the theology needed for perspective. I gave you two rules for a happy marriage, one for each of you. But we also need some practical down-to-earth advice. Let me give you a little of my accumulated wisdom from more than 50 years of marriage.

1. Learn to enjoy the difference. What attracts men and women, one to the other, is difference. In fact, we believe the difference between the genders is so great that we call them the *opposite* sex. But we are almost totally unaware of how big this difference really is until we live under the same roof with the other half of the one flesh person. We suddenly remember that God has placed our sex chromosomes into every single cell of our bodies from the hair down to the soles of our feet! As "one flesh" we now begin to come under the whole weight of this difference. After a few days of marriage most of us become convinced that we're not just of a different gender, but that we are altogether two different species, regardless of the scientists' objections. Overwhelmed with the differences, we cry out to God saying: "Oh Lord, I wanted difference, but this is super-difference, help me with it." Men and women think differently, they feel differently, they have different needs and aspirations. So we either learn to accommodate and enjoy the difference or we allow it to be a constant source of irritation, griping and hurtful remarks the rest of our marriage. Brett and Vanessa, don't dream about changing some of the chromosomes of the other party. It will not happen. God made each one this way *purposefully* to complete the other. Believe it or not, once you learn to enjoy each other *as is*, you become the best representatives of what Christ and the church are all about. Brett, let Vanessa be all woman and you will have the best. Vanessa, let Brett be all man and you will be most satisfied.

2. Give yourselves to truth. Never tell a lie. Never exaggerate or understate. Do not jest, do not joke, do not talk foolishly (Eph. 5:4). All these things have untruth in them and only hinder the development of deep and strong relationships. Untruth is destructive. Jesus said: I AM THE TRUTH (John 14:6). Everything good comes out of truth. If there is any untruth in physics, chemistry or mathematics these sciences will collapse. Stay with truth. Say what you mean

and mean what you say. It avoids many misunderstandings. It builds credibility. It honors God. As you give yourselves entirely to truth, the Holy Spirit will reveal to you precious treasures and He will begin to direct your path.

3. Discipline yourself. Jesus was a conqueror because He was disciplined. He was disciplined in His focus in doing nothing but the will of God. He was disciplined enough not to let family pressures or social pressures drive Him off His course. Only the disciplined are conquerors. Discipline itself is not our salvation, but wherever it is absent you also have the absence of obedience. Jesus said that the way to life is narrow. Discipline your body. The apostle Paul said that your *body is the temple of the Holy Spirit* (1 Cor. 6:19). That means don't treat it as a trash can. Your body is also the major means of your transportation. Don't overeat. Don't overtax your organs. If you do, someday they will take revenge on you. Exercise enough to prevent sluggishness. Be disciplined in your finances. Never spend more than you have. Things do not bring happiness. You don't need what others have. Early in our marriage, we already had four children and we needed a mattress. I found one for \$20 at the Goodwill store. I paid cash and tied it to the roof of my car. I looked like a fool but I was wise. As a young couple you can have a better time on a \$20 mattress that is paid for, than on a \$2,000 mattress you bought on credit.

4. Don't compromise. Find out what you are here for and stick with it. When others get sidetracked, stick with it. Be patient. Don't run away from difficulties. Overcome them! If you keep transplanting a tree it will never bear fruit.

5. Develop life-supporting habits. Here are three: a) Keep the Sabbath day holy. Sabbath-keeping is a hub from which the spokes of everything in your life moves out. You are not for sale to any company that wants to buy out your Sunday. You will not become a slave or puppet to anyone. Don't say, "I have to work on Sunday," rather say, "I have to be in the house of God on Sundays to look eternity in the eye." b) Commit yourselves to one night each week to be with your spouse and family. Don't skip. Keep bonding with each another; keep refreshing your relationships; keep having fun together. c) Pray together regularly. If you just do these three things, you will build a happy relationship one with another that will last you a life time.

6. Be humble. Be a servant. The Bible says, *God resists the proud, but gives grace to **the humble*** (Jam. 4:6). Everything God has in store for you, you will receive if you are humble. Water always flows downhill, to the bottom. Don't try to be somebody. Try to be nobody so that God can be everything in your life.

Well, I've given you enough. Let me end with a few one-liners:

Be generous in your giving to the church and the poor.

Be tough on yourself but gracious towards others.

Never idolize anybody, but mark those who walk with God, take them for your examples.

Now let's get on with the wedding.

Call to Obedience #381
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org