

Salt and Marriage

In the Bible, salt is connected to the covenantal sacrifices (Leviticus 2:13). Adding salt to sacrifices meant that the sacrifices, in themselves, were unsavory. Salt, as the season of *grace* (cf. Colossians 4:6) – the unmerited favor of God – makes the sacrifices pleasing and acceptable; i.e., “savory” to God.

Through and by God’s redemptive grace given to the undeserving sinner, God requires the redeemed to present themselves to Him as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2). Salt for the life of the believer is the preservative power of fidelity and purpose of heart to be true to covenant. In this requirement to be faithful, we are kept faithful by the power of God (I Peter 1:5).

Marriage is a covenant under God between a man and a woman (Malachi 2:14). The salt of God’s grace is a necessary and indispensable ingredient in the “ups and downs” of covenant life between the fallible husband and the fallible wife.

I would like to use some of the natural purposes of salt to illustrate how salt in the marriage life savors it for God’s glory.

Before toothpaste entered history, people cleansed their teeth and their mouth by gargling a solution consisting of salt and baking soda. What comes out of our mouth must be, as the Scripture commands, “grace seasoned with salt.” We salt our marriages by speaking words of edification and encouragement (Ephesians 4:29).

Salt was, and still is, a valuable medicinal agent. Salt heals wounds. When two fallible people are put in close quarters, friction is bound to arise. We can either use that friction to sharpen and improve our characters – as iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend (Proverbs 27:17) – or slowly destroy each other through wounds that are allowed to fester. The salt of God’s grace in Christ – a bruised reed He will not break (Isaiah 42:3) – heals the many wounds encountered in covenant marriage.

Salt was, and still is, used as a preservative. Beef jerky is meat preserved through the agency of salt. A marriage can be a glimpse of heaven *only if it is preserved by the salt of God’s grace*. Without the grace of God, marriage is putrid.

Any cook knows that the quickest way to extinguish a grease fire is to pour salt on it. Salt puts out fires. The fire of anger can reduce a marriage to smoldering ashes unless the salt of God’s grace extinguishes it – be angry and sin not, do not let the sun go down on your wrath (Ephesians 4:26).

Salt melts ice. Resentment and bitterness can generate a very cold marriage: a defilement that spreads like cancer infecting everyone involved, especially the children (Hebrews 12:15). ***Resentment and***

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bitterness blinds a person imprisoned by it to see only what is wrong in another person. Let the salting grace of forgiveness cover a multitude of sins (Proverbs 10:12, Ephesians 4:31-32).

Salt flavors. We all know that a few pinches of salt can do to a meal. It turns a bland dish into a delight to the taste buds. So too with God's grace in marriage; it can turn an insipid relationship into a pleasure that is the next best thing to heaven.

Cum grano salis (with a grain of salt) ... We need to be less serious and more jovial about life. God commands us to rejoice in Him because of His marvelous salvation. Take time to enjoy life; do not let issues burden you to a point where you imprison yourself in pity and gloom. Life is too short to waste it over worrying about non-essentials (or making the edge the center). Take life with "a grain of salt."

There is much wisdom in the lessons of salt; not only should the "grace of salt" savor the marriage of two fallible people, it should govern their lives before they enter into this most sacred union. How? Marriage is both a breaking away and a joining together. It is a breaking away in terms of two fallible people leaving their respective and yet very fallible families. It is in joining that two people are making a new family, a family that will also be very fallible and in much need of the grace of salt. The breaking away is not discontinuous, however. In God's wisdom, the breaking maintains covenantal continuity with both families involved. This is why, in terms of Biblical wisdom, a father "gives" his daughter in marriage. When a father is presented with a potential suitor for his daughter, he endeavors to seek the Lord concerning God's will in the matter. After performing "due diligence" (i.e., confirming the godly character, respect for authority, humility under God, truthfulness, honesty, integrity, diligence, and fiscal responsibility of a potential suitor), the father "gives" his daughter in terms of "giving his blessings" to the start of a new family. This blessing is not an empty formality (mere words); it is a transference of God's covenantal blessings to a new couple and a new family. The suitor of a father's daughter will eventually become the husband of his daughter and, at the same time, also become blessedly joined to the covenantal inheritance due his daughter and her children (both physical, in terms of the transference of wealth, and spiritual, in terms of the commencement of a life-long counsel of salt wisdom) ... *a righteous man leaves an inheritance to his children's children* (Proverbs 13:22). It is in this way that the continuity of God's covenantal blessing passes from generation to generation. By following God's salting order, this blessing will not only be maintained, it will be increased thirty-, sixty-, or one hundred-fold. A godly marriage blessed by parents insures generational blessings far into the distant future (past the lifetimes of parents and their children) for the sake of the advancement of Christ's kingdom. The salt wisdom of two people considering marriage will certainly guard this long-term kingdom blessing in their hearts

When the transference of the father's blessing is not sought for or despised (an evidence of foolishness, not wisdom), then the Holy Spirit of God is deeply grieved. The consequences will not be blessing for God will turn the salt of blessing (beneficial if it is only a "pinch" thereof) into the "salt of fire" (the outpouring of too much salt, combined with ice, will cause serious burns on the skin). This burning will inflame a life both short and long-term (this "salt of fire" principle is illustrated in Mark 9:43-50). Too

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much salt is also very bad for your heart (it generates a hardened heart both physically and spiritually). Too much salt combined with an icy heart of stone does not constitute a blessing from God. Recall also that during the Third Punic War (149-146 BC), the Romans under their general Scipio destroyed the city of Carthage. *In a final gesture of contempt and carnage, the Roman army spread salt over the ruins.*

It is the joy of a father's heart to invoke God's bountiful and rich blessings to his daughter and her suitor on the day of their marriage. When a father gives his daughter in marriage, he is invoking the blessing of God Almighty on the commencement of a new family. It is in this grace of giving that the weight of glory drips, like anointing oil, from the eternal wellsprings of the Godhead into the earthen vessels that constitute the start of a new family, "May the triune God, the One in Three and the Three in One, freely bless you so that you may be endued with power in order that you might become prosperous, wholesome, and faithful in your innermost being, in your mind, in your emotions, in your body, and in everything that is yours and in everything that you touch."

"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it" (Proverbs 10:22).

If you are planning to be married or if you are married, get alone with your partner, take out the salt shaker, and apply the lessons contained therein.