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Self-investment for Life

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**Self-investment for Life**

Dr. Richard C. Raines, 1941 Religious Emphasis Week speaker, discusses marriage happiness in an excerpt from his pamphlet of the same title

An ideal wife brings to a thoughtful and appreciative husband a loyalty, a spur to ambition, and a self confidence, a critical judgment and an intuitive insight which cannot be matched in any friendship which he is likely to form with a man.

Marriage, of course, is never a guarantee of happiness. As elsewhere in life, we cannot demand happiness, for it is not a bequest but a conquest. Marriage is one of the most important steps in the fulfillment of the possibilities of an individual's life, both biologically and psychologically. It may be defined as two imperfect individuals joining forces in the battle for happiness.

Marriage tends to succeed through the observance and fulfillment of the same laws that make friendship fruitful.

The first of these laws is integrity of life. Unless one is a personality, has a unity of conviction, a steadiness of purpose, dependability of will, so that he can throw his life in this direction or that-unless there is this inner unity, he cannot offer anything to another in friendship.

Secondly, friendship depends upon breadth of interest and outlook. A life may be so narrow as to have only the most meager areas of communion with others. The more interests and purposes and insights and experiences one can share with his friend, the more fruitful the relationship is likely to be.

The third law of friendship is depth and growth of life. Two individuals, however far apart they may be, if they start each of them walking toward God, the closer they get to God, the closer they get to each other.

The fourth law of friendship is mutual self-revelation and answering trust. One must go over the line, one must go out and invest himself, and have faith that others will evince answering trust and will in turn invest themselves, expecting trust in return. These laws joyously and spontaneously obeyed in the marriage relationship tend to make marriage happy because they are fulfilling the law of self-investment.

People misspeak when they say they fall in love. We do not fall in love. We fall into mud puddles and snowbanks, but we do not fall into anything worthwhile. If we ever get into love, it is because we climb-climb above selfishness, above fear, above jealousy, above disloyalty, above greed, above the desires to possess and rule another, climb up into the clear atmosphere of complete self-investment.

Love is a pointing of the will, a launching forth of one's life permanently and loyally in complete concern for the happiness, the well-being, the growth and the joy of another. Love seeks nothing for itself but the opportunity to serve, to be useful to its objective. That is why marriage is one of the sources of the most profound satisfaction and happiness, because it offers one of the best opportunities for self-investment.

The assets which assist one in the battle for happiness in marriage are those which one thinks of naturally when he starts out to select a roommate or a companion for a camping trip—strength, courage, dependability, intelligence, unselfishness, neatness, a sense of humor, a broad and deep intellectual life, definite convictions, tolerance, kindliness of judgment, stability of temperament.

Marriage is, when one includes in the meaning of that word the arrival and training of children, probably life's greatest opportunity for achieving happiness, because it is life's greatest opportunity for self-investment.