

One way to know What you don't know

By D. A. Sharpe

Marriage is the most significant human relationship it has been my opportunity to experience! Though it was my privilege to be born into and was raised in a one-marriage family, I had not realized how much that opportunity would do to provide for and to shape the quality of life that it has been my blessing to have. My growing up in a loving, caring and Christian family had included my assumption that some day I, too, would be a husband to my own wife, and to have a family and children. It just was that as I entered my young twenties, such status was not on the near horizon of my thinking.

Having met Suzanne in New Orleans, Louisiana the week prior to my 23rd birthday, all about my near-future expectations changed. When you meet 'the one' for your life, you are suddenly drawn into a whole new world of sensing what's important and what is of interest to do. God's providence opens your eyes and beckons you into things you may not even realize you are adopting. The story of our meeting and our very unusual first date are encapsulated in a separate story in this series, entitled "Meet Me in Saint Louis."

The purpose of this story is to affirm the great success and benefit for me in the marriage to Suzanne Margaret Boggess, a Georgia-born, Mississippi-raised gal whose first post-college employment had her in New Orleans, where she would meet me, this Texas-born guy who needed very much to become a loving, life-giving husband to Suzanne, but who did realize it at first. My first post-college employment had me expecting to begin in Dallas, Texas, the city of my high school graduation, and of where social connections existed. Three days prior to beginning work, they told me to report to New Orleans! Two weeks later, Suzanne and I met, and 105 days later we were married.

All in God's blessing of us, we began our married life together making decisions on what we did, and how we lived, to be based on what God's word taught us in Scriptures, and through fellow Christians whose lives began to

cross the paths of our lives. We invested ourselves into the life and fellowship of the Canal Street Presbyterian Church, where we were married.

As we grew spiritually, we learned more and more about seeking the prompting of God in giving us answers about decisions to make. We reduced our trying initially to figure out the best way first, before asking God's direction. He, after all, is the only one who really knows it all. We put boots on our belief that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior.

We started seeking to discern which people could we be confident to hear what they were saying, and to place trust in those promptings. One fun instance of that occurred deep into our married life. In fact, it happened the year of our 50th anniversary as a married couple. It began on our first-time-ever trip to Israel. Our pastors and friends from some other churches and ministries led about a three-week trip, which Suzanne and I considered our 50th anniversary present to ourselves!

One aside here has to do with my confession that the record of keeping up with my wedding ring was an embarrassing story. My ring kept getting lost somehow, and we'd need to buy or acquire another ring. When we began the trip to Israel, my wedding band at that time was the fifth one!

At one delightful place in Israel we visited, we went to a jewelry shop, where the people on duty actually were the artisans who designed and made much of what they sold. Our attention was caught by a beautiful wedding band for a man. It was broad, and had Hebrew wording on it. The jeweler who made it told us the words were from the Book of Ruth in the Bible, "Where ever thou goest, I will go." These are the words of Ruth, quoted in the Bible's Book of Ruth, committing herself to follow her widowed mother-in-law back to Israel. We thought the words had a double meaning for us, so that the ring would keep up with ME! This would be my sixth and LAST wedding band. And, that it is today!

By the way, five or six of us on that tour of Israel purchased wedding rings, and repeat marriages took place for us in one mutual ceremony. That was fun and meaningful.

There was one thing that was not quite complete. We did feel that the word of the artisan was truthful and accurate. We did believe him. However, we did

not have access to verifying that those really were the words. The rush of our travel schedule did not result in my taking time to get a translation from a third party while still there.

Back in the United States, the time came a couple of months later when my election as an alternate delegate from Texas to the National Republican Party Convention in 2012 gave occasion for us to go to Tampa, Florida.

One afternoon, while seated in the Convention, a young lady sat next to me. As we became acquainted, I learned she was a native Israeli citizen, currently serving on the staff of the Israel Consulate in the United States. She was present as an observer of our political process. It was my delight to tell her how much we appreciated and enjoyed her homeland on our first trip there earlier that year. Then I told her of the ring and wedding ceremonies we had, but did not mention the lost rings, nor the wording engraved on my ring. When I took it off to show it to her, she immediately read out loud the words on it, "Where ever thou goest, I will go." She said, those are the words of Ruth in the Bible!

The whole point of this part of our story is that God's providence will create ways to confirm things that we've heard and believed, but have not had the third party, authoritative confirmation that was heard from this young lady. Praise God! All doubt was removed!

After all, that is what God has for us, as we live as believers and place our faith in Him. The benefit is His removing doubt in our lives. There is nothing to fear, in His good providence.

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