

## For better—but can get worse

“For better or for worse.” How long should couples keep those promises? Honeymoons ought to last at least a year and marriages a lifetime. Yet some couples sow separation seeds at their wedding receptions. The newlyweds disagree. Say words that hurt. Faster than they can echo through the church steeple, wedding vows get tested.

Do some couples never hear the “worse” part? My wife receives plenty of “worse” from her husband. How she keeps patiently dealing with it amazes me. We’ve never been the kind to throw pots and pans, verbs or adjectives. We do, though, at times use strategies developed in the Polar regions. We don’t recommend those methods any more than we advise skillet-tossing. Norma and I are gradually becoming more temperate and open. But for more than six decades, Norma acts consistently. It doesn’t matter the extent of gross my behavior, or the iciness of my communications. Whenever it’s time to eat, she puts a great meal on the table. She always does the laundry, too. In case you wonder, I know that those tasks should be mine as much as hers. By doing those things (and much more) day in and day out, Norma demonstrates that she remembers the vows that minister Claude Guild asked us to recite in 1955—“For better or for worse . . .” Something profound and wonderful results in all this. The fact that she has cheerfully and lovingly handled the “worse” parts all of these years makes the better part even better. I pray that God will make me more worthy of her.

**“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ,” Ephesians 4:32.**

Bob Blair