

WARFARE
FOR YOUR
MARRIAGE

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RICHARD ING



WHITAKER
HOUSE

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WARFARE FOR YOUR MARRIAGE:
Identifying the Battle for Your Heart, Home, and Family

Richard Ing
Light of the World Missions
P.O. Box 37451
Honolulu, Hawaii 96837
www.lightoftheworldmissions.com
pastorrichard.ing2@gmail.com

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my dear wife, Beatrice, and my four beautiful children, Susan, Richard Jr., Robert, and Ryan, who were given to me by wonderful Lord Jesus Christ. They have blessed me richly and brought much meaning to my life. We have spent countless precious times together, as we still do. As the saying goes, “Good players make good coaches.” My wife and children have done the same for me as a husband and father.



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PREFACE

In ancient Rome, a man could not be a senator or hold any other public office until he was married and had at least one child. Otherwise, he was considered unfit to lead or provide wise counsel. But marriage is no longer a sign of leadership potential or wisdom. Today, depending on the study you prefer, the divorce rate for first marriages in the U.S. is somewhere between 40 and 50 percent. For many years, it was said that the divorce rate among evangelical Christians was even higher, some putting it at 54 percent or more. This would suggest that Christians know just as little about marriage as non-Christians, and that Christian wisdom regarding marriage is sadly lacking. This statistic has been challenged, however, especially concerning the ways in which various studies have defined “evangelical Christians.” Subsequent studies have found that the divorce rate is much lower among people who regularly put their

religious faith into practice—those who regularly attend church services, read their Bibles, or pray, either privately or with others. Studies that defined Christians by such activities found that the divorce rates among “serious” Christians was in the range of 35 to 38 percent.¹ Even accepting these lower figures, the fact that more than one in three Christian marriages is doomed to fail highlights a serious problem.

Marriage is such a daunting experience that many avoid it entirely by choosing instead to cohabit, or “shack up.” In 2012, around 40 percent of all babies born in America were born out of wedlock.² In other words, nearly half of our citizens choose fornication or adultery over marriage. The Bible says that illegitimacy brings a curse on the family that continues for ten generations. (See Deuteronomy 23:2.) If this is true, America is in deep trouble with God.

This is not a book on Christian psychology and counseling but rather a direct counterattack on the kingdom of darkness and the lusts of the flesh. My purpose is to cut to the chase by identifying the true source of most conflicts in marriage and to explore how our attitudes toward marriage can carry over into almost all our other relationships. I will expose the evil spirits that Satan uses to attack and destroy marriages and explain how you can be delivered from them.

1. See, for example, Bradley R. E. Wright, *Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites...and Other Lies You've Been Told* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2010), 133; and W. Bradford Wilcox and Elizabeth Williamson, “The Cultural Contradictions of Mainline Family Ideology and Practice,” *American Religions and the Family*, edited by Don S. Browning and David A. Clairmont (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 50.

2. <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/360990/latest-statistics-out-wedlock-births-roger-clegg> (accessed November 12, 2014).



INTRODUCTION

I did not become a born-again Christian until just before my forty-sixth birthday. By that time, I had been married for nineteen years and had four children. As a “big sinner,” I had made many mistakes and suffered through many frustrations—most of which were of my own doing—for the first ten years of my marriage. An ambitious attorney, I strove for fame and fortune while neglecting my wife and children, even though I thought that I was doing them a favor. Bars and golf courses were my playground, and for years, I had alcohol in my bloodstream twenty-four hours a day. I will not dwell on or glorify my sins, except to tell you that I was no model husband and father and that my marriage was in shambles. This book is not based on a marriage that was picture-perfect from the outset. It took years for me to wake up and make the decision to build a marriage that would last “until death do us part.”

I am now in the winter of my years, having recently celebrated my seventy-seventh birthday. My understanding and wisdom about life, marriage, and God are far deeper than when I started on my faith journey, thanks be to God. My goal for this book is to share the understanding and wisdom I have gained along the way, both from personal experience and from counseling Christians and non-Christians alike. It is not about philosophy or keys to a happy marriage; it is about the truth.

Many years ago, a group of six married couples in the church I first attended, where I also served as an elder, were having private sessions that featured videotaped testimonies by famous Christian marriage counselors. These couples were so excited at the wisdom shared in the video presentations that they invited our church elders to attend one of their “marriage encounters,” hoping that this might grow to become a wider church program. After we viewed what they considered to be the best of the presentations, they asked us, one by one, to share our opinions. Each of the elders praised the tapes and felt that they were an effective way of illustrating how to make marriage a wonderful, lasting relationship.

When my turn came, I praised the values and insights of the presentations but also told them that I was troubled that the people featured on the videos never spoke of the roles of the Holy Spirit and God in marriage. They never talked about the importance of a husband and wife praying and worshipping God together. The tapes were more in the mode of the popular book *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* by Dr. John Gray. The faces of the couples in the room showed displeasure at my remarks. In fact, they invited all the church elders but me to their future sessions.

A few months later, those six married couples expressed a desire to be “remarried,” or to participate in a vow renewal service, at an expensive hotel with a dinner reception to follow. Again, they invited all the elders of the church—all except me. Some of them apparently thought I was “too spiritual.” I am sorry to say that, within two years, four of those six couples were divorced; within five years, the other two couples followed suit.

Over the last twenty or so years, I have presided over the marriage ceremonies of many couples. I always insist that an engaged couple attend three marriage counseling sessions with me prior to the wedding. To this day, to my knowledge, none of the couples I have counseled and married have gotten divorced.

The high rate of divorce among Christian couples is an embarrassment to the kingdom of God. I fear that some unbelievers see the high divorce rate and conclude that Christianity is phony or, at the very least, hypocritical.

How am I qualified to teach on the subject of marriage? After all, I am not a professional marriage counselor, nor have I had any formal training on the subject. I can speak only from experience and by revelation from God. So, what are my qualifications to speak about marriage?

My main qualification is my own marriage and family. I have never been divorced. I have been married since 1964 to the first real girlfriend I ever had. We have four children, three of whom are also married. We have seven grandchildren. We have never been separated during marriage, and we have worked together in the same office for almost forty years. Together, we have operated a private law practice, a real estate brokerage, a travel agency, a collection agency, and a bimonthly newspaper; and, for the last twenty-five years, we have labored together in my ministry work. We have traveled to many countries—equaling about eighty trips to various countries around the world—and, in many cases, it was just the two of us. We have played golf together for more than thirty years and are together twenty-four hours a day most of the time. We enjoy each other and are best friends.

It was not always that way.

The first ten years of our marriage were tumultuous, filled with fights, arguments, alcohol abuse, silent treatment, sleeping on the couch, and misery. Practicing law was stressful to me, and striving to be a financial success was driving me away from my family. I neglected them while spending long hours at the office, participating in frequent activities to support various candidates in the political arena, and taking

numerous business trips to foreign countries. We were heading for divorce like a speeding car without brakes approaching a cliff.

As a young lawyer, I was hell-bent on becoming a multimillionaire before the age of forty. Being an attorney was like living in a pressure cooker. I did a fair amount of trial work and was so aggressive that I became a full partner in my law firm within four years of graduating law school. I brought in so many clients and made so much money for the firm that the other partners could not deny my success.

A couple of years later, I became the sole practitioner in my law practice, because I made more money that way. I didn't have to pay for the hideously high overhead of an office with heavy oak doors and a penthouse view. By lowering my office rent and expenses, I could take home most of the money I earned. To attract even more clients, I joined many clubs and neighborhood associations, did charitable work, and managed the campaigns for several politicians, including a congressional candidate. I learned to live on four hours of sleep every night.

Financial success followed. I drove around town in a Lincoln Continental Mark IV wearing dark sunglasses. I planned to build a lavish house in the most expensive area of the Hawaiian island where we lived. I often worked until nine at night and then received phone calls from clients who wanted to talk shop with me over late dinner and drinks. They knew where to find me. After dinner came the customary bar-hopping before I stumbled home around two in the morning—or later. I told myself I was doing all of this for my family. In reality, I was on my way to divorce—and to hell.

The big blow-up with my wife inevitably came, and we began to discuss divorce. I suddenly realized that we were at the edge. It was when the realization sank in that I could lose my kids that I sobered up. I loved my children dearly, even though I didn't spend much time with them. What resulted was an agreement with my wife that I would never work past six in the evening, and never on weekends, unless it was absolutely necessary. I kept that agreement for more than forty years.

Over time, our marriage steadily improved. Mind you, I was not yet going to church. For the next ten years, we learned a lot about marriage and each other. But the biggest turn of events came when I was almost forty-six years old: God came back into my life. More accurately, I came back to God, since He had never left me. Reflecting now, I can identify many evidences and circumstances that clearly point to the constant presence of God in my life. I just didn't recognize them at the time.

Currently in our fifty-first year of marriage, my wife and I are as happy as can be. Our marriage has not been all roses, because God gives us chastening, trials, problems, and tests in order to perfect us in Christ. But it is a powerful, strong, and enduring marriage, full of excitement and wonder.

This book covers most of what I present to couples at my premarital counseling sessions. It also draws from a series of lectures about marriage that I taught in my church. The response to those messages was positive, with many requests that I write a book. Thus, I offer this work in sincerity and with a desire to help other married couples to not only stay married but also have a great relationship with their spouses. This work is also for their children who will be profoundly influenced by the health of their parents' marriage.

I



“YOU ARE GODS”

There are more than five hundred Bible verses on the subject of marriage. Marriage was created by God in the garden of Eden, for the first husband, Adam, and the first wife, Eve. When Adam and Eve sinned, they not only destroyed their relationship with God, they also rejected God’s principles on marriage and the rightful relationship between husband and wife.

In Scripture, God is portrayed as a Father searching for a bride for His Son, Jesus. He desires a church—or bride—without wrinkle, spot, blemish, or any such thing. She is to be holy in His sight, made clean as a virgin. For God, the search is like looking for a needle in a haystack. Nevertheless, He will find a beautiful bride one day, made perfect in the image of His Son, Jesus. (See Romans 8:29; Revelation 19:7–9; 21:2, 9; 22:17.)

Marriage is a battleground—a clash of principles between God’s kingdom of light and Satan’s kingdom of darkness. In order to shape His bride, God seeks to reverse the poisonous effects of what Adam and Eve did in the garden and to reestablish His eternal principles of life. At the same time, Satan fights to maintain his evil principles so that he can attain his goal of destroying the church and all Christians and ruling the world. (See Revelation 13:7; Daniel 7:21, 25.)

In order to shape His bride, God seeks to reverse the poisonous effects of what Adam and Eve did in the garden and to reestablish His eternal principles of life.

There is not only a law of sin in the members of our body (see Romans 7:23); there is a poison deep within our unconscious minds and DNA that compels us to respond to people and circumstances in the ways that we do. It turns us into predictable, self-righteous, robotic beasts.

The law of sin receives its impetus from something deep within our psyche. Almost the entire history of mankind has revolved around humans “playing God.” Indeed, the foundation of many religions is the belief that man is god, as we will discuss in further detail later on. It started with Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve wanted to be as God. (See Genesis 2:15–3:24.) They disobeyed God’s command not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. As soon as they ate of the forbidden fruit, their spirits’ light went out, and they saw their nakedness, or flesh, for the first time. From that moment on, their flesh took control over their minds and hearts, demanding their attention and even their worship. Adam and Eve began to identify with their flesh and soon became obsessed with it. The first thing they did was sew garments of fig leaves to protect the flesh and hide from God, for Flesh and Self had become their gods.

Perhaps they thought, *This must be what God really looks like! We made it! We’re gods!* When God drove them out of the garden of Eden,

they probably thought that He was merely jealous or fearful. This deception has been passed down to you and me—and to everyone else in this world. We still think and act as gods, whether we realize it or not.

Jesus knew it. He said to the Pharisees, *“Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, ‘You are gods’? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)...”* (John 10:34–35). In this passage, Jesus was referring to Psalm 82:5–6: *“They do not know, nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are unstable. I said, ‘You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.’”*

Some Bible teachers claim that this statement means that Christians are already running around as little gods. This is not true. God was saying, in effect, “I created all of you to be My children, the children of the Most High, but you act as if you are gods equal to or higher than Me.” If they were actual gods, why would they be walking in darkness? And why would the foundations of the earth be out of course? They were not gods; they only *thought* they were.

We may not admit it or even be aware of it, but we instinctively and compulsively act like gods. Like the law of sin, a god complex controls our minds and actions.

Jesus was chiding the Pharisees for becoming angry at His claim to be the Son of God. *“The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God’”* (John 10:33). “After all,” Jesus is pointing out, “you accept the saying that you are gods yourselves, and yet you reject My claim.”

The Lord knew that, subconsciously or unconsciously, human beings believe they are gods. We may not admit it or even be aware of it, but we instinctively and compulsively act like gods. Like the law of sin, a god complex controls our minds and actions.

Craving Worship

Deep down, we crave worship. We believe that we deserve to be worshipped, admired, and loved. We even create religions that embrace this idea. Hindus believe that all people are gods; they just don't know it. Their story goes like this:

Once upon a time, we were all gods in a spiritual, heavenly realm. But gods are absolute. There is no up or down, fast or slow, hot or cold, good or bad in the realm of absolutes. Win-lose games are not possible. So, we gods decided to create a world based on relativity and on the flesh, so that we would be able to play games. We would forget that we were gods and would become mere humans. The object of the game would be to realize once more that we are actually gods. If we fail to realize that we are gods in this lifetime, we die and are reborn, again and again, until we attain enlightenment as to our true identity as gods. Sometimes, a "god" could be reborn as another life form, such as an animal. The game would finally end for those who had attained the realization that they were actually gods. At that point, they would return to a state of perpetual godliness in the absolute realm where gods exist.

Hinduism is known as a religion of a trillion gods, because there are trillions of life forms on earth. One can be born a cockroach in the next life. That's one of the reasons why Hindus refuse to step on bugs or eat animals—they could be some of their ancestors.

An actual Hindu mantra says, "Worship the god in you, who is you." If you chant this mantra every day, as often as you can, it will permeate the very core of your being and cause you to realize your godhood. At least, that is their belief.

This mantra is already built into our genes—yours and mine. Take care of number one—you! You are the big Uno, the big kahuna. That's what we are taught.

Buddhists believe that we are already Buddhas—enlightened ones and gods—and that, as in Hinduism, we have to be reborn, again and

again, on the wheel of life and death, until we discover that we are Buddhas, or gods. Meditating and chanting are supposed to help in this transition, along with reaching an understanding that suffering comes from human desires. Chanting “ohm, ohm, ohm” is supposed to create a vibration within you that unites with the universal vibration and brings you in line with your godhood, or “Buddha nature”—your true state as a god.

They believe that there are many avatars, or ascended masters, and many Buddhas who are now gods. When they return to their original state as gods, people can pray to and worship them. They are alleged to assist others in their life’s journey and help them attain nirvana. There is a Buddha for travelers, a Buddha for businessmen, a Buddha for the sick, a Buddha for mothers, and so forth. In Japan, there is a temple featuring statues of five hundred Buddhas. They ran out of space for any more.

The Roman Catholic Church adopted a similar belief by canonizing many individuals who were deemed worthy to become “saints,” that they might be prayed to, revered, and even worshipped. There is a saint for carpenters, a saint for travelers, a saint for mothers, and so on. There are more than ten thousand Roman Catholic saints, as well as many others that are revered by the Eastern Orthodox Church. The Lutheran church and the Anglican Communion acknowledge pre-Reformation saints, even today. Although they don’t call them “gods,” people honor and revere them. They create statues of them, call upon them, sing songs to them, and place flowers and other items of worship on altars dedicated to these “saint-gods.” These saints are often represented by carvings of wood and stone, yet their worshippers deny that they are idols.

Roman Catholics claim that they do not worship the Virgin Mary, but if you visit a Catholic cathedral and locate its statue of the Virgin Mary, you will likely find its feet plastered with red lipstick.

Some religions, such as Shintoism, appoint or designate certain living humans as gods on earth (called *Jizo*). The emperor of Japan,

for instance, is viewed as a living deity. There are Jizos appointed in every area of the world where there are Shintoists. They are considered demigods.

The emperors of ancient civilizations in Rome, China, Japan, and other nations have long declared themselves living gods worthy of receiving worship and obedience. The pharaohs of ancient Egypt proclaimed themselves living gods and demanded huge statues in their likenesses that their subjects were required to worship and provide with offerings, under penalty of death.

Even today, there are wayward doctrines within the body of Christ suggesting that all Christians are “little gods.”

Aspiring to Godlikeness in All the Wrong Ways

In traditional Christianity, humans were never gods, even though Adam was created perfect in wisdom and all his ways, and he communed with God before he was cast out of the garden of Eden.

Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, “Thus says the Lord GOD; ‘You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.’” (Ezekiel 28:12–15)

I believe that the above passage refers to Adam before the fall. He wanted to be as God, and yet his efforts to become Godlike resulted in “iniquity being found in him.”

Desiring to be a god goes to the very substance of who we are, what we do, and what we have. This core belief automatically affects the way

we think and behave, because *gods are always right, and they never lose*. In their own perception, most people believe they have rarely been wrong their entire lives. A famous disc jockey in Hawaii used to say, "It is not true that I was never wrong. I once thought I was wrong, but I was mistaken."

Almost everything we do is an attempt to prove ourselves right and to win. We do not say things in order to be wrong; we say them in order to be right. We defend ourselves and say things that make us look righteous, intelligent, and correct. We dress ourselves so that people will accept, admire, and even worship us, unless we cannot afford it. Some people spend thousands of dollars on a dress or suit they'll wear only once for some gala event, to be right in the eyes of others. Even if we say, "Don't look at me; I'm ugly," most of us are really thinking, *Look at me; I'm good-looking, smart, and worthy of your admiration*, or, at the very least, *I may not be good-looking, but I have money, power, and personality*. After all, gods deserve to be admired, worshipped, and adored.

Gods are winners all the time. Our schools teach it. It's called high self-esteem. We give kids a gold medal or a trophy just for entering the race. Never mind coming in first; you're already a winner. It's marvelous for self-esteem, although the Bible says to esteem others as better than you. (See Philippians 2:3.) We produce self-centered people, rebellious, proud, defiant, and disrespectful to authority, just like father Adam and mother Eve. (See 2 Peter 2:9–22.)

Emperors and kings aren't the only ones to make claims to divinity. We do it, too! We may cover it up, but almost everything we do in life is dedicated to being seen as right and victorious.

Emperors and kings aren't the only ones to make claims to divinity. We do it, too! We may cover it up, but almost everything we do in life is dedicated to being seen as right and victorious. "Almost everything" means 99.99 percent of what we do.

Even when we lower our heads and mumble, “I guess I was wrong,” it’s often to make ourselves look right. *Look at how humble I am. I’m so humble that I’m almost like God!*

Always a Winner

In every dispute, argument, fight, battle, and war, people are rarely ever wrong in their own eyes. That’s why we have so many divisions in the church, with so many cults and denominations. At last count, there were over thirty-four thousand denominations and independent Christian organizations in the world. Everyone clings to his or her “right” doctrines and thinks that his or her group is the only one that holds to the truth. Cult members declare that they are the only people who will go to heaven, and they deny their membership access to any contrary opinions or doctrines from the outside, claiming that any contrary belief is of the devil. In other words, “Don’t let anyone tell you that we are wrong. We are never wrong; we are always right. No use talking to us, because it has been determined for all eternity that we are right. If you persist in telling me that I am wrong, I will walk out, because you’re of the devil. God told us this.”

People will do anything to be right. They will lie, steal, commit adultery, swear, and covet their neighbor’s wife and possessions. They will bear false witness and even resort to murder to be right. We’ve been killing one another since Cain killed Abel, and the Bible says it’s going to be even worse at the end of the age.

But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is

reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. (Jude 10–16)

Our prisons are filled with self-righteous murderers and criminals—little gods running around. We even kill ourselves to be right. “See? I told you I would kill myself. No one would believe me.”

How great it feels to be right and to win. Stick it to the other person; ram it to him or her. Prove that you’re a god deserving of admiration and worship. You’re a winner! You deserve worship! I saw a grown-up father slap his six-year-old son for laughing and jumping around in glee when he beat his father at a game of checkers. Gods never lose.

We have a systemic problem, because everyone else thinks he is a god, too. Everyone else thinks he has to be right and win all the time, just like you and I do. That’s how most fights, wars, disputes, disagreements, arguments, and divorces start. No one wants to admit to having been wrong. Nobody wants to lose. No way. Even in marriage, your spouse is just waiting for opportunities to prove that he or she is a god.

They say that Rome was not built in a day. Well, an unhappy marriage is not made in a day, either. It is usually a long and drawn-out war, not just a single battle or an occasional skirmish. Red wins today, but black is waiting for tomorrow, for the next spin of the wheel. That’s what happens when two gods marry.

No one wants to admit to having been wrong.

Nobody wants to lose. No way. Even in marriage, your spouse is just waiting for opportunities to prove that he or she is a god.

Marriage is often a war of attrition between two gods. Which god is going to outlast the other? Who is going to win the final battle and prevail over the other? Stay tuned to see the results of the never-ending drama—not on the television but in front of it. Back and forth they go in an endless war which nobody wins until somebody dies.

Expert Fighters All

We're all battle-proven warriors when it comes to winning in the wars of life. Ever since we could walk and talk, we've been at it. Couples who have been married for just a few years are experts at being right. They've had a lot of practice. Here are some weapons of marital warfare: give the silent treatment, swear, get angry, yell, slap, punch, shoot, mumble under your breath, curse, burn rubber, stay out all night, get drunk, sleep on the couch, burn dinner, spit in his or her food, quit your job, slam the door, refuse to cook, withhold sex, rip his favorite shirt, scratch her beloved car, take a lover, blame him or her for your failures, talk behind his or her back, gossip, complain to your friends, argue, call him a bastard, call her a witch, shove her, scratch his face, kick him in the groin, spit in his or her face, don't show up, come late, withhold love, nag, nag, nag—ad nauseam. You name it—it's been done.

We say that we want to be happy and to make our spouse happy. But we lie. The truth is, happiness is being right! We'll do anything to be right and win every argument. After all, we're gods, and gods are never wrong! We will even divorce the other person to be right. I'm a god, so I never lose.

Wrong.

An Endless War

A couple divorces. The wife wins custody of the kids, and the husband gets visitation rights and has to pay child support. The wife is gleeful. She thinks she won. But the war isn't over yet. It's only round one. Cue the football cheer—"Fight! Fight! Fight!" The ex-husband isn't through yet. He refuses to pay child support, or he pays only a part of

it, or he is always late for work and gets fired, or he quits his job, so he doesn't have to pay alimony or child support. The ex-wife files a petition for noncompliance or contempt of court. As a last resort, she refuses to let Dad see the kids or even runs off with them.

Another version: Dad comes late to pick up the kids, making Mom late for her appointments; or, he brings the kids home late and never calls. Mom keeps telling the kids what a jerk their father is. Mom moves to another state so that Dad can no longer see the kids. Mom remarries and convinces her new husband to adopt the kids. Dad kidnaps the kids and disappears. On and on it goes.

As an attorney, I've handled many legal divorces, and I've never heard a wife or a husband admit to being wrong. Each and every one played the right-wrong game, “talked trash” about the other, and did everything in his or her power to teach the kids to hate their father or mother. After the divorce, the skirmishes go on and on. Some want an attorney who can cuss and yell in court to make their spouse look bad. I've been fired by wives who complained that I wasn't harsh enough.

Every argument, fight, dispute, battle, and war is between two or more parties trying to be right and to win.

When one of the spouses passes away, the surviving ex-spouse will often continue to blame the deceased for everything that was wrong in their marriage and life. Many marriages are all battlefield, no bliss.

Summary

Ever since Adam and Eve first sinned in the garden in their attempt to be like God, mankind has had a god complex. It's in our DNA. *Gods are always right, and they never lose.* Almost everything we do is calculated to make us seem in the right. God even revealed this to us—“*You are gods*” (John 10:34)—perhaps speaking tongue in cheek. We seek power and riches so that people will admire and worship us as worthy.

The problem is, every other person in the world is also trying to be a god. Every argument, fight, dispute, battle, and war is between two or more parties trying to be right and to win. God tells us to bless those that curse us and to love those that hate us (see Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28), but to the flesh, this command is ridiculous.

We spend so much time trying to be right. Happiness, to us, is winning and being right. This leads to much conflict and resentment in our relationships, especially marriage. But who cares? So long as I'm right, I'm happy! You don't have to kiss my feet; my hand will do.