

SIX STEPS TO A BROKEN HOME

~ *Bill Hall*

A home is seldom destroyed overnight. Its destruction is usually the result of certain fatal steps taken over a lengthy period of time. In these days, when so many homes are crumbling, we would do well to examine our own marital relationships, to see if we have begun to travel the road to inevitable breakup. The following steps lead that road:

1. *Selfishness.* This may be the number one enemy of a happy home life. Neither is willing to give up what he or she wants to do so that wholesome activities may be enjoyed together. Each is seeking his own satisfaction in material realms, in sexual activities, or in time spent with relatives, with little concern for the partner's satisfaction in these matters. The long road is begun.

2. *Intolerance.* Faults in one's partner begin to show up that somehow had been hidden during the courtship period. Or, if the faults were evident, they became far more irritating in a day-to-day, living together, relationship. Gradually those faults are magnified. Nagging begins. Each decides that he has made a terrible mistake in his marriage. Disillusionment sets in.

3. *Resignation.* Both parties become resigned to their situation. "We've made our bed; we will just have to lie in it," they think. Neither will consider personal guilt. No further effort is made to build a happy home. Communication virtually ceases. Love begins to wane and in many cases gives way to bitterness.

4. *End Of Sexual Relations.* The communication barrier soon affects the sexual relationship and the couple find themselves no longer enjoying and fulfilling this God-given purpose in marriage. They have allowed their marriage to deteriorate into a mere house-keeping relationship. Such people may be easy prey for the next step.

5. *Adultery.* Temptation can arise so unexpectedly and many a person whose physical needs are not being met at home may yield to the temptation. Rationalization comes in such cases: the person feels he has never gotten a "fair shake" at home: he deserves this new found attention; this is true love (?)' he is sure someone understands him for the first time. How deceptive this is! Considerable time has passed since our couple took those steps toward a broken home but now their journey is completed. The foundation of a stable home has been demolished - trust. Only one step remains.

6. *Separation.* The thing that has obviously destroyed this home is sin but not just the sin of adultery. For selfishness, intolerance, lack of love, bitterness, and failure to satisfy physical needs (whenever possible) all constitute sin. God not only teaches us to love one another (John 13:34; Colossians 3:18-21; Ephesians 5:21-33; 1Peter 3:8-9). When we ignore these great bedrock principles of conduct we sin.

Consider your own marriage. If repentance is needed, repent. "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:4-6).