

She Left Me For Another Man

Serendipity means to find something unexpected when we are looking for something else. Perhaps we put on a coat and find money in the pocket from the previous year. For me, it was finding a letter I had written to my wife, Nancy, years ago but had never given to her.

I was going through some files a month after our 54th wedding anniversary when I found it. I had written the letter decades earlier after counseling a couple determined to divorce. After they left my office I considered what it would be like to divorce Nancy and wrote her the following letter:

“DIVORCE! The very word strikes terror to my heart, sends shudders of fear down my spine far worse than even the word cancer.

“I cannot conceive of another man holding you in a loving embrace, touching your lips growing soft, tender and sweet with loving passion. Or think of someone else putting his hand on the places sacred to our marriage.

“It is utterly horrible to imagine him sitting at the breakfast table with our children, listening to them tell of what they are going to do that day with their childish enthusiasm. Missing the looks on their faces, shining with the drowsy delight of awaking to another day filled with the mercies of God.

“The sight of another having the wonder of watching you prepare for bedtime. Or the sight and sound of your daily wonder—preparing a meal, talking to the children, watching television and talking on the phone all at the same time.

“If I never told you I loved you enough, did enough to prove

it, gave enough of myself to you, then please forgive me. Sometimes I became engrossed in what I was doing, failed to pay attention to you, and I regret every selfish moment of my life with you.

"I am frightened at the prospect of being single, of not knowing how to take care of myself after you have done it with such total caring for so long. I'm not sure I can make that adjustment, and I know I won't be able to make wise decisions without your advice and counsel.

"The thought of dating is anathema to me. It seems so vulgar somehow and a violation of my very nature to attempt to find someone else to love. No! There is no place to go to find again what I had that is now so precious and priceless. There will never be a replacement for you—never. You are the original; all others would simply be an attempt to have a copy."

Divorce is treated as casually in some Christian circles as a decision on dinner in a restaurant. It's as if God's Word never said He hated divorce.

Today, people think successful marriages like mine and Nancy's are unusual, but it's just the normal course of life lived following God's divine leading. We never intended to stand out, nor did we think of ourselves as unusual—just obedient.

Who today wants to wait to earn the results of righteous living in marriage? From rising divorce statistics even among Christians, it appears only the few. Will you be the new man in Christ who is centered on the will of God for family and for life?

This January, Nancy and I did not celebrate 55 years of marriage. We did not walk onto a plane holding hands while I embarrassed her by telling the flight attendants, "We're on our honeymoon." We did not go to her choice of a restaurant for our anniversary, nor did we shop for gifts for each other.

On Dec. 7, 2000, Nancy left me for another Man, the One for whom she always held her “first love”—the Lord Jesus Christ.

She left me with the memories of the best 54 years a man could ever have wished for this side of heaven. In some ways, the last years of our lives were serendipity, something we didn't know we were creating when we made our decisions years earlier. My prayer for you is that you will experience a serendipity—that the decisions you make today will one day give you the good life, the God life, such as I have enjoyed.

The late Edwin Louis Cole was an author, speaker and the founder and president of the Christian Men's Network.