

When 'Til Death Do You Part' Becomes a Touching Reality

The marriage vow says "Until death do you part." Sadly, many married couples never make it that far. So when I heard this tribute by Karl Strader to his wife of 60 years, Joyce, at her memorial service last Friday, it brought tears to my eyes.

Karl and Joyce Strader were well known for many years in both the Assemblies of God and also in the charismatic movement. They have been completely retired for more than a decade, and you don't hear much about them. But they were my pastors when I was a teen, and they probably had more impact on my life during that stage than anyone else other than my own family. In fact, we were so close over the years that some people thought I was related to the Straders.

When I was in high school, they invited the teenagers to their home for an "afterglow" after church services and talked to us about dating and marriage. When my wife, Joy, and I got engaged in 1972, we were in Joyce Strader's class. She gave us a book on marriage and had a little reception in Sunday school when we were married 42 years ago tomorrow. She used to write notes to me when I was at the University of Florida. She was an intercessor before that term was popular. I knew she prayed for me.

When *Charisma* appeared on the scene several years later, Joyce wrote an article in the first issue on "the chambered nautilus." Karl was on the cover of *Charisma* twice in the early days.

I asked permission to reproduce this eulogy that Karl wrote about his beloved Joyce. He was too emotional to read it, so someone else did. I think it will touch you and let you know that marriages can be strong and healthy until "death do you

part.” Then, if you want to read her eulogy and what her oldest son, Stephen, and her other family members wrote, click [here](#).

Tribute to Joyce Arlene Wead Strader

by Her Husband, Karl Strader

Joyce Arlene is a true queen. She was and still is royalty! When we were married, I told her that I loved her, dearly, but that I loved Jesus, even more. She told me, essentially, the same thing.

She’s the most attractive and finest lady I’ve ever met. I am so thankful to God He’s let me take good care of her for more than 60 years. The last three or four years have been some of the most special years of our lives. I’ve been right at her side through all of our 40 years here in one church in Lakeland, but also in Indiana, in Florida at Southeastern University; from Tallahassee to Key West in Youth Work; in conferences, camp meetings, and missions trips all over the world. She’s had her own radio broadcast and has helped me in all kinds of special productions, especially for Christmas and Easter, and has taught public school in Lakeland for many years.

When she finally went to the hospital after avoiding it for more than 80 years, except to have our four children, her nurses told me privately that they’d never taken care of such a lovely person, (she always gave them that “big smile of hers”), more than any other patient they’d ever ministered to!

Our four children, all of them, including Dan with his phone calls, and when she visited him, and our grandchildren, all of them, and even the two great-grandchildren when they came to see her, have been right with her to help her with all her needs throughout their whole lives. We have a loving, wonderful family, along with their spouses who love their mother, grandmother and great-grandmother dearly. Our extended

family members, many of whom are here today, have a remarkable relationship with Joyce as well. Also, here today are many of her choice friends that, through the years, she has personally ministered to, including many of our fairly new friends we have made at the Estates, the Villa, and the Manor, which is now our home in Lakeland, and has been for the last 10 years. We have grown to love all of you that have changed your schedules around so you could honor her here this morning. Thank you for showing kindness honoring both Joyce and me and our family members. We love you so much.

Now what about me! I'm hurting ... like crazy. I need prayers like anyone else that's lost someone so very dear. I had no idea that it would be this severe! But in talking with the Lord about it the Tuesday night after Joyce went to heaven, Monday noon, during the middle of a nap, He wants me to spend the time, whatever it is, that I spent in being married, for God; that is, I believe God wants me to revive a prison ministry, to work with my son, Stephen, on an outreach to our local ministers in this area, and to develop a worldwide radio, TV and website ministry in English, Russian and Spanish ... until God calls me home, in addition to the six services a week I have going on right now at the Estates, at Auburndale Life, and at Ignited. Plus, I want to give a minimum of at least 10 percent of my time to God in prayer, and I want to study the Scriptures and the articles of great Christian leaders on how to "Rule and Reign with Jesus" throughout eternity. But I still want to be "available"—as much as you really need me—for my precious family and friends!

When we helped to build the Estates back in 1985, I never planned to retire there. I thought we were building it for people who "missed the rapture." Well, Jesus delayed His coming in order that more folks could be "saved." So, I figured God wanted us to be there to be "salt" and "light." That's where I plan to live for the next 35 years, or until God comes for me sooner!

Thank you for offering up a prayer for me. I really need you.

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