**GOD AND MARRIAGE**

My wife Paula and I met at Lincoln Christian University back in 1963. She was a freshman and I was an upperclassman. We dated seven times her first year there, but I thought we weren’t “hitting it off.” Seven dates and she never let me kiss her.

I guess I must have had a reputation for being a kind of Don Juan at LCU. I didn’t think I was one, but others got that idea of me. She was the first girl I’d ever dated that I didn’t kiss, perhaps in my life. Instead, we became good friends. She dated other guys---even “went steady” with one—and I dated other girls. We wrote each other in the summer—letters sent by mail, since there was no internet, no email, and phone calls were costly. I remember that summer I called her only once because I was sick and lonely and wanted someone to talk with.

When she came back to school in the early fall, I was leaving campus with another girl, and I saw Paula getting out of a car and carrying big bags into her dorm. I thought to myself, “Why am I with Julie when I could be with Paula?” So I took Julie to get an ice cream cone and returned her to the other women’s dorm. Then I went across campus to see if I could talk with Paula. We did meet and talk. We set up a time to get together later that week. We sat together in chapel some of the time. We met at prayer meetings sometimes, but it was kind of hit-and-miss at first. Then I really became interested in her. After all, we had never kissed, and I began to think we were good together. We had become best friends. I decided not even to try to kiss her. We probably dated thirty times that semester. I took her to the best restaurant in town; we ordered filet mignon dinners (at that time, $3.50) with salad and baked potato over and over. The place was named Guzzardo’s Italian Villa. The food was incredible. They had a salad dressing that was home-made; a sweet and sour red. We both loved their salads.

On about our 30th date, we double-dated with friends. We went to a smorgasbord and drive-in movie. We ate all we wanted and then entered the drive-in. The two in the front seat were really making out. We were watching the show and watching them. We took turns rubbing each other’s backs. Then after I had rubbed hers, she turned around and kissed me. It was like I was caught in a tornado of emotions! I’d never felt that before when I kissed anyone. I thought I was in love.

That evening we drove up to Ottawa IL where my parents lived. They were already in bed, so we sat on the couch and prayed together. I told her I was in love with her. But I said, “Don’t say anything. Tell me in the morning.”

We went to our separate beds. In the morning she kissed me awake. It was the best “waking up” I’d ever had. She told me she loved me. I went to the dining room with her and introduced her to my parents.

All this happened 50 years ago, but it is as though it happened yesterday. We are even more in love now, after 48 years of marriage. Today she is gone to Dallas with our daughter and grand-daughter, and I really miss her.

What is the basis of our marriage? God. *He is the basis of all true unity*. He himself is unified. Moses said, “Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.” This is the “John 3:16” of the Hebrew Bible. It is interesting that the word “one” means unity. It’s the same word used for Adam and Eve being one. Or for nations intermarrying. Hebrew has another word for “one alone.” Without God, our marriage would never have lasted. We had some very hard times early in the marriage, but God brought us though them all. He held our marriage together. We have two children who serve God along with their spouses; they have given us seven grandchildren. Our family is bound together by God. God is the basis of all unity.