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Taken from Sharon's book:
Becoming the Woman of His Dreams

We Choose Us

The Blessings of Unity in Marriage

I Steve and I were married on a beautiful day, August 16, 1980. From the time we said, "I do," we began the incredible journey of two becoming one. Steve and I were both in college at the time. He was just about to enter his fourth and final year of dental school, and I was finishing up my last semester of a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene. We entered marriage without a penny to our name and towering school loans, but with an account full of hopes and dreams and love.

All during Steve's senior year, we had one prevailing thought...where will we set up practice and most likely live the rest of our lives? We began the daunting task of seeking God's direction, visiting various cities, and touring existing doctor's offices. I say the word "we" because we had decided that our lives would be a weaving together of a million "we's." It was not Steve's practice...it was our practice. It was not Steve's job...it was our job. It was not Steve's debt...it was our debt. It was not Steve's dream...it was our dream.

After nine months, we felt God calling us to Charlotte, North Carolina. To us, it was a "calling," because there would be no line drawn between work and ministry. The two were melded together. Steve's work would be his ministry. He was going to be working with an older dentist in a growing part of town. Because I had previously worked in four dental practices, I was going to serve as Steve's assistant, hygienist, office manager, receptionist, insurance clerk, and janitor. We were so excited to begin this new chapter of life!

So we packed our meager belongings and moved to an apartment complex about the size of my hometown. The rent was half-price for three months, which would give us a little time to get our feet on the ground. One week before Steve was to begin, the doctor called Steve into his office. "Steve," he said, "I have decided that neither one of our spouses can ever work in the office in any

capacity." Steve sat there for a moment and then replied, "Then neither can I." They shook hands and Steve walked out the door.

He chose us.

Steve, a young twenty-five year-old recent graduate with mountains of debt, walked away from a seemingly good working situation, because for him, it was "our" practice -- not his practice. Because we had already established that our marriage would be built by the weaving of a million sharings, he was able to do this. Through the years, that has been our guiding principle...we choose us. Whether it is work, play, in-laws, or ministry related issues, if there is any opportunity that surfaces in our lives that would threaten our unity as a couple, that would seek to divide or separate...we choose us.

Was it hard for Steve to walk away that cool fall day? Yes and no. Yes, because he had no idea what God had in store. No, because he knew that God would not have him place his job over his marriage. He knew that the ultimate purpose for our lives was not a job but a life of two becoming one.

Three months after Steve walked out of the door, God opened another one that was exceedingly, abundantly more that we could have ever asked or dreamt. (Remember that our rent was half-price for three months. God was not surprised and in total control.) As soon as Steve hammered the last nail on the shingle announcing the opening of our practice, the phone began to ring. Years later, Steve's practice is one of the best in Charlotte. He is an amazing man!

I don't want you to get the impression that Steve and I do everything together. That is not the case. I helped him start the practice, but I don't work there now. He doesn't knit and I don't play golf. But when it comes to any issue that deems to separate ...we choose us. When it comes to "choosing sides" in issue with family or friends...we choose us. When it comes to dreams that might interfere with what God has called us to be as a couple...we choose us. And you know what? For thirty-three years, God has looked at our marriage and said, "Well done my good and faithful servants."

Joshua said, "Choose this day whom you will serve" (24:15). Like Joshua, we have said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And we will do it together."