

Our Throw-Away Society

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Contact lenses: use them one day and then throw them away. Cameras: take a roll of film and throw them away. “Disposable” has become the cry of the age. Things aren’t built to last, and they are manufactured so cheaply that replacing items is often less expensive than repairing them.

How much effort will be put into something which isn’t made to last? How much attention will be placed upon the quality of the materials used? How hard will someone work to maintain an item that can too easily be replaced?

Just how confused has our society become on what is permanent and what is disposable?

Compare, for example, an airliner and marriage. Because airplanes undergo extreme physical stresses, and because they carry such precious cargo, airliners are built to survive almost anything. The airframes are designed to withstand many times the normal forces exerted upon an aircraft in flight. Many systems have triple-redundancy (two back-ups or spares). The basic objective is to keep the airplane flying at all costs.

Marriage, on the other hand, has fallen victim to the “throw-away” mentality. Consider the following quote from Raquel Welch after splitting with her most recent live-in: *“I was hungry to do something new. I was window-shopping for a challenge ... With men, it’s like trying every color in the jellybean jar to see what’s going to taste good.”*

How much effort are people going to put into a relationship that they consider to be as disposable as jellybeans? There is little *craftsmanship* in marriage anymore; no pride, no painstaking work, no sacrifice.

The current state of marriage reminds me of the difference between modern buildings and the ancient castles and cathedrals of Europe. Built during a time of no power tools, electricity, pre-fabricated materials or steel, these buildings are adorned with intricate architectural detail. At a glance, one can tell that those structures were built to last, and those who built them took great pride in their work. But modern buildings are built on speed and cost with no expectation of surviving for centuries.

Our society says you can throw away marriages, even babies, without consequence. That is a lie. People are not disposable. May our marriages show the world the wisdom of God and the joys of life-long commitment.