**FIVE CONFESSIONS OF A NEWLY-MARRIED WIFE**

1. **Priorities shift.**

When I was single I generally had one person to think about. The person who I couldn’t get away from and who I spent every second with. Me. I asked myself questions on a regular basis. Where did I want to go in the world? What did I want to do as a career? What did I want to do with my time? Who should I meet up with?

As a wife, my individual ideas and plans came alongside the thoughts and views of my husband. We have both sacrificed different areas of our lives in order to work together at our marriage. Living sacrificially is part of the Christian life. It became more evident and real when I became married.

1. **Netflix, Facebook and Twitter compete for our affections.**

Before I got married, I found myself getting distracted by electronic devices rather than tucking into the bible or spending time in prayer. But now there are *two* of us who choose to fill up time glued to technology! Although it’s not wrong to enjoy social media or a good TV series, it can serve as an unwanted competitor of our time and priorities.

As a husband and wife team, we are both accountable to each other and we are getting better at saying ‘no’ to technology in favor of having quiet, undisturbed time with God. It’s an ongoing battle where it’s easy to get engrossed in a Twitter or Facebook newsfeed than spend time in conversation together. We must turn off the gadgets in order to spend time as a couple and with the Lord. Like Jesus who would go somewhere by Himself to pray and leave the busy crowds, we also need time alone with God away from the busyness of life.

1. **There is someone else to notice my ugly sin other than me.**

Before I was married, a minister said to me that his marriage made him realise how sinful he really was. How true that is for me. It’s easy to spot the speck of wood in our brother’s eye, but not the plank in our own. We are called to take the plank out of our own eye first.

I have become more aware of my big plank of sin since being married. A begrudging attitude, disrespectful tone of voice, the occasional bout of idleness… Not exactly a pretty picture to paint (or print). You don’t need to be married in order for God to convict you of sin. But I have found that God has used my husband to highlight some of my unwanted behaviour that I probably would not have been aware of in myself otherwise.

1. **Lust doesn’t end when you tie the knot**

It pains me to share this but I think it’s really important. There is temptation at every corner to let the mind and/or eyes wander towards someone you find attractive. When you tie the knot this sadly doesn’t always stop the lustful thoughts from creeping in. The ring on your finger does not protect you like a shield of fidelity.

For me, I became aware of this temptation a few months into married life. I felt ashamed when temptation came knocking and I answered the call of wrong-thinking. I knew that Jesus saw lust on the same par as adultery (Matthew 5:28). Yikes. How could I press on from this? In God’s loving way, He filled me with a deeper longing for Him and His Word. He led me to pray and to be open with my husband about my struggles so I could experience that support and accountability. The more my mind is on Jesus, the less it has time to fill up with wrong thinking.

1. **It’s OK to not be the perfect wife**

I wrestle with this one on a semi-regular basis. It seems that other wives and single women that I know in real life or perhaps I’ve read about online have it all together. They seem to bake the perfect cakes. They raise four or more perfectly behaved children. They look glamourous in every photo. Even their house and pets are captured to perfection by the camera. Scrolling through Instagram, trailing through Facebook albums of my friends and reading the words of talented bloggers, I can leave my screen feeling fairly deflated.

There is a quote that says: ‘Don't compare your behind-the-scenes with everyone else's highlight reel.’ In the digital age, we are surrounded by carefully constructed words and beautifully edited images which are chosen to reflect what the person behind the screen wants you to see. What would we say if we saw their behind-the-scenes? What if we could see what God sees - matters of the heart?

It’s OK to not be the perfect wife because there is no such thing. We are all made perfect through Jesus and we are far from perfect without Him. God looks deeper than the behind-the-scenes; He looks to the very depths of the heart. He works His purposes out in our lives and our hearts whether we are single or married. As it is written, ‘“The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”’ (1 Samuel 16:7).

**Final thoughts…**

As a relatively rookie wife, I may not have the wisdom gained from many, many years of marriage. But as Paul said to Timothy (1 Timothy 4:12): ‘don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.’ Maybe these five confessions from my own marriage may provide gentle, honest counsel for the newlyweds to come.