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### **Your License Has Expired**

By Mark Gorman

A few days ago I received an e-mail from a company, informing me that, if I wanted to continue using their software on my computer, I would have to pay more money, because my "license had expired".

Now, isn't that strange? I thought I had bought the software, and apparently, I must have only "rented" it!

Yes, I know, that's a bad attitude for me to have. And, if you know me at all, you know that I'm definitely a capitalist, and a big fan of free enterprise.

So, it's not that I begrudge the software company the cost of another one-year license. Actually, it isn't that much money. I think it was something like \$20.

So, why am I making a big deal about it?

Because it took so much time to stop what I was doing, click the link in their e-mail, which took me to their website, which asked for my credit card number, which I had to find, and then to enter it in the online form, yada yada yada. And, 15 minutes later, I'm good to go for another year.

Admittedly, I'm probably making too much of a "deal" about the license renewal. But it got me thinking about other types of licenses.

As I see it, there are two basic types of licenses. One type is a license which authorizes you to have access to, or use of something. You could be licensed to use computer software, or even to use a lake or stream, if you have a fishing license.

The second type of license is more of a certification. It confirms that you have passed a test, which proves that you are capable of performing some function, which requires a certain skill-set, or knowledge of particular information or safety guidelines. This could be a license to drive, a license to preach, or to fly a plane, or to practice medicine.

And, I understand that, if a person, or company, invests the time and money in the development of computer software, and if there is a valid need for ongoing research and development of that computer program, then it makes sense that those who benefit from the software improvements and upgrades, should pay for those benefits, as they continue to use the software. This is most easily exemplified with virus protection software, since there is a definite need for constant updates and continued improvement of the program, to protect our computers.

Similarly, the renewal fee for a fishing or hunting license, is justified by the fish and game management, land and water management, conservation, etc.

As for the second type of license, I certainly agree that there should definitely be an expiration to those licenses, to drive a car, or to fly a plane, etc. There should be a re-certification for those who wish to continue to drive on our highways, or to fly in our air-space. And without a doubt, there should be some testing to re-certify those who practice medicine, dentistry.

But now, let me ask you, which of these two categories best describes a marriage license?

And be very careful as you answer that question.

Do you think the marriage license authorizes the use of, or access to something, or someone?

Or, do you think it certifies you as someone who is qualified to perform some function, which requires a certain skill-set, or knowledge of particular information or safety guidelines?

Funny, right?

Unfortunately, there are some (usually males) who do consider the marriage license as their authorization to have access to, or use of another person. And, thankfully, that Neanderthal way of thinking seems to diminish more and more, as the light of truth reveals the errors of that flawed paradigm.

And, who among us would dare make the claim that their marriage license fits the second category – as proof of their knowledge and skill with marriage?

In fact, when you think about it, in some ways, it would be so much better for everyone involved, if we had to take courses on marriage, and study some of the basics of conflict resolution and an overview of the different personality temperaments, before we were

allowed to enter into a relationship with another person, hopefully, for life. How much better chance for success would each marriage have, if we were required to pass a “driving” test for marriage, to prove that we know how to get along with someone else, and to resolve disagreements, and keep the love alive in our marriage?

But, instead, we are constantly reminded, on the news, and with each and every “tabloid gossip” magazine and television program, that marriage licenses are given to AMATEURS.

In fact, in our culture, people are no longer embarrassed to have a child outside of marriage. Remember, when Jesus was born, great scandal surrounded His birth, primarily because his mother was not yet married. Now, people proudly proclaim that they are not only having a child without being married, but that, often, they have no idea who the father is.

In the same way, the once revered sanctity of marriage is now lampooned by those who treat it with the same casual attitude we have when ordering a burger and fries at a drive-thru fast food restaurant. Have you seen the “Drive Thru Wedding Chapel” in Vegas? I saw something about it on a news program recently.

And well known entertainers, who have somehow been given the name, “Celebrities”, have further cheapened marriage by going to a “Wedding Chapel” in the middle of the night, obviously drunk, and probably high on drugs as well, and some irresponsible person has actually agreed to officiate at the “marriage” of these two drunk people, who are doing this on a whim, often as a prank. And then, within a few days or even hours, they get the whole thing annulled, to legally say that, basically, it “never happened”.

So, how does all of this apply to you and me?

Well, I’m trying to show the extremes, in order to help us realize that, in every case, marriage licenses are given to AMATEURS.

And I’m NOT saying that as a criticism, but rather, as a sort of encouragement.

Because I find it amazing that people are embarrassed at the thought of admitting that they need “help” in navigating the unfamiliar “waters” of marriage.

But, after all, you didn’t have to take a course on marriage, or pass a test, before you got your marriage license.

And, thankfully, many churches now have a structured series of courses on marriage relationships, which are “required” for anyone who wishes to be married by their pastor, in that church. And I applaud them for this much-needed “education” to prepare people for marriage.

But even if you’ve taken all those courses before your wedding, you’re absolutely

CRAZY if you think that you know enough to successfully build a lifetime together with another person, without some glitches and hiccups along the way.

So, why should any of us be embarrassed to admit that we need “help” with our marriage relationship?

Gina and I never try to hide the fact that we receive marriage counseling. And that’s not a bad thing, or something to be embarrassed about. But rather, we are admitting to the fact that our marriage license does not even resemble a license to practice medicine, or a license to drive, because it does NOT document the fact that we have taken several years of courses of study on this subject, followed by a litany of tests, all of which certify that we are FULLY QUALIFIED to enter marriage without ANY ASSISTANCE.

Gina and I are proud that we were amateurs in every respect when we were married. Although we had read books, and had sat with my dad, as our pastor, as he counseled us, prior to the wedding, we still knew that we were “rank amateurs” at this. And yes, we were particularly proud to be amateurs in regard to the sexual relationship as well.

In reality, it’s a perpetual learning experience. Gina and I have been married for 27 years, and we still learn more about each other all the time. And, we still experience those “Aha” moments, when we realize something about ourselves, or each other, which we hadn’t yet learned, in the past 27 years.

How boring it would be, if we ever came to a point at which we literally know everything about each other! Thank God, it’s still an adventure – a learning experience. It keeps things interesting.

But, the worst person to be married to, is that person who really does think that they know all there is to know about marriage, and that they don’t need to improve AT ALL.

So, if you want to PROVE that you are NOT the worst person to be married to, then you can prove it by admitting to yourself, and especially to your spouse, that you don’t know it all, and that you want to learn more.

You know, Gina and I are hosting the Valentine’s Marriage Getaway in Nashville, at the Nashville Airport Embassy Suites Hotel in just a few weeks. It starts Friday, February 15, the day after Valentine’s Day. Actually, it starts that evening, and continues from Friday evening, through Saturday and Saturday evening, and Sunday morning, ending at noon on Sunday, February 17.

And the people who attend these Marriage Seminars are people like you and me, who admit that they don’t know everything about marriage. But they also say another VERY important thing after that, which is, “I’m willing to learn”. By attending the Marriage Getaway, they are not just admitting that they don’t “know it all”, but more importantly, they are saying, I want to be a better person – a better husband or a better wife, and I’m willing to listen – to be teachable – to let someone else tell me what they have learned,

which will hopefully help me to be a better spouse, resulting in a better marriage relationship, which will eventually affect your entire family.

Well, I can promise you that, at the Valentine's Marriage Getaway, Gina and I will NOT act as if we know it all and you don't. We fully understand that we are still in "process", and that none of us is a "finished product" yet.

So, I hope you'll join us for the 2008 Valentine's Marriage Getaway. It's only a few weeks away, but you can still register to join us for this great time!

And I know that some marriage seminars seem to be a drudgery, very tedious, and clinical. But hey, have you met me? Do you know me? I'm Mark Gorman!

And guess what? The very first couple who registered for this year's Marriage Conference is a couple who is known to many of you. It's Boudreaux and Clotilde!

So, if Boudreaux is gonna be there, ma friend, you know we're gonna "pass a good time"!

We will have a lot of fun – laugh a lot – and learn a lot.

Don't miss it!

Here's how to register:

Call 615-591-5900

Online - go to <http://markgorman.com/ValentinesMarriageGetaway2008.htm>

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