"Secrets of Married Happiness"

[19 November 1961]
[Atlanta, Ga.]

Every well-thinking American is deeply concerned about the decadent state into which the American family is falling. For some time now both religious and secular thinkers have sought to find the cause and cure of this disintegration that is gradually mortifying the American family.

Marriage has lost something of its spiritual creative meaning, and in many cases has become little more than a monotonous endurance contest between two people. So many marriages have set out for the city of utopia, only to end up in the city of Reno. So many young people have entered marriage with great hopes and challenging dreams, only to find their hopes blasted and dreams shattered.

We do not have to look far to see the tragic consequences of this breakdown in the modern family. It means that hundred and thousands of young people are forced to be brought up in broken homes. The possible psychological difficulties arising from such broken homes are almost incalculable.

This breakdown in the modern family also means the possible loss of our national security. Family life is still the basic unit of life in the life of the nation, and on healthy family life depends the moral and spiritual life of the nation.

1 Happy marriage requires that both husband and wife shall have some real understanding of the nature of marriage.
   a Many young people go into marriage expecting too much.
   b Happy marriage is not something that you find.
   c Marriage is a state of adjustment.

2. Married happiness requires that husband and wife shall have some understanding of the nature of man and the nature of a woman.

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2 King's announced Sunday morning sermon topic was "Secrets of Married Happiness," which was "to carry a special message to all people seeking a closer family circle and Christian fellowship with our fellowmen" (Ebenezer Baptist Church, Press release, "Martin Luther King Jr at Ebenezer Sunday," 18 November 1961).
3 From the 1920s through the 1950s, spouses seeking to end their marriages flocked to Reno, Nevada, due to the state's liberal divorce statutes.