

# *The North Fulton Marriage Newsletter*

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## **Looks are Deceiving**

My family and I live in a new subdivision in northern Cherokee County. Our house sits up on a ridge, and out our front door you can see what is known as Pine Log Mountain, near Waleska, Georgia, about 12 miles away in the distance. It is a beautiful view. Closer to our house, roughly a half-mile away, on the other side of the primary railroad track that runs through the county, is another long ridge line covered with native trees—oaks, tulip poplars, elms, hickories and a few loblolly pines. It is also a beautiful view, and during the summer months you can see zero evidence of human habitation along that ridge line. But every time I look at that ridge, my heart sinks a little due to my knowledge of what lies beneath the cover of those beautiful native Georgia trees. A couple of years ago I became curious about what was over there, so I made a short driving trip one day to explore. What I found was one of the poorest areas of Cherokee County. I saw two very unclean toddlers playing on the front porch of one of the houses. It was near Christmas time, and my instinct was telling me to drive to the store, buy some toys, and give them a care package of some sort. I didn't but I probably should have.

How can something that beautiful on the outside be so sad underneath? Looks are deceiving. As I was mowing the grass the other night and watching the sun set over that same ridge it occurred to me that the ridge is just the way some marriages appear, beautiful on the outside but sad underneath. This is a harsh reality. How many times have you heard this: "Oh, Mr. and Mrs. Smith just have the perfect marriage." Not so, as we all know everyone has problems. My wife often gets annoyed with folks who say the following: "Oh, you must just have the perfect marriage, you are married to a marriage counselor!" Of course, ours isn't perfect either. The point here is that if your expectation is that your marriage should look just like Mr. and Mrs. Smith's down the street, then you are probably never going to be satisfied. Cut yourself some slack, no person or marriage is perfect. This also hammers home my core belief that marriages that succeed do so because both parties work very hard at caring for each other and managing conflict on a daily basis. It is no picnic, that is reality.

Speaking of reality, have you ever watched "The Bachelor" or "The Bachelorette"? My wife and I were watching The Bachelorette the other night (this year's Bachelorette is from Georgia by the way), and it once again occurred to me that this show is an absolute joke. The participants spend weeks on end getting to know one other on a long series of high profile, romantic dates by the beach, on a yacht, and this week at Dodger Stadium. But how someone looks as a partner in a contrived romantic setting can be deceiving. If they really wanted to make this a "reality" show, then they should have the contestants spend a few weeks getting to know each other while working at their jobs, taking care of a home, and chasing a couple of toddlers around. That is reality, and if they still like each other after a few weeks of no time for themselves or each other, then they might be a good match. But, who knows, looks are deceiving.

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