

# GROWING IN FAMILY TOGETHER (GIFT)

Letter for Husband and Wife



## THIRD LETTER TO THE FAMILY- THE STARTING POINT

by Pastor Thomas and Ma'am Pamela Teh

*Dear Family,*

In my last 2 letters I selected some important ways to resolve family conflicts. Several of you have attempted to put them into practice because you love your spouse and treasure your marriage. Your commitment to your marriage and the person you love makes us glad and thankful that the Lord has put this desire in your heart. However, there are others who may still be wondering why your marital conflicts are not getting resolved in the way that you expect.

Please allow me to explain it this way. Mothers, you have baked many cakes for your family. I am sure you do not throw in all the ingredients randomly. You are careful to follow a certain order, of which ingredient comes before the next. If the order is wrong, the cake would not turn out as successful and you would end up making a cake that is too heavy or not as flavorful.

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Rebuilding  
marriage

Christ-likeness



Fathers, you have organized many conferences or seminars. You would need to determine the goals, choose a good date, ensure the speakers are available and secure a venue before you send out the invitations. It is necessary then to follow a logical order that will make your work more effective and efficient. God shows us the importance of order in the 1st chapter of the Bible. When everything was in place to welcome the presence of His most precious creation, only then did God create man and woman. It's clear from these examples that there are some things we must do first before we can have success.

Experiences have showed us that there are important matters we must practice daily so that they become part of our character. God has been very gracious to us because He made the truly important things in life very simple and within our grasp.

Can we recall the first few years of our marriage? The relationship was so beautiful and we cherished each moment we had with one another. We spoke on the phone for hours. As the years passed, the beauty of the relationship faded and we didn't look forward to spending as much time together. How long now do we spend communicating with each other? Why has this happened?

It is our goal to bring back these precious moments. There are 4 important things we have to put in place first before we can start rebuilding our marriage. I will bring up two points today and the other two in my next letter:

### **Point 1: DESIRE A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

Seek God because we love Him and not because we want Him to bless us and make us prosperous. Understand that God may use challenges, trials, difficulties and sacrifices to mold us. We will know if our motives for wanting to draw close to Him are right when difficulties and challenges take place in our lives. Despite unpleasant circumstances, we should feel the assurance and peace of God. Our faith and love for Him should increase with each passing day. Eventually, our value system should mirror the teachings of His word. Once we are able to infuse God's teachings into our hearts, we will not only be talking about Him to others, but will also be in a position to "show" Him through the way we live. Our ministry for the cause of Christ will then become far more effective and powerful. Ask ourselves honestly, are we doing what we are teaching others to do? This brings to mind, a Bible story which I have grown to love. It is the story of Solomon.

Solomon was not only a wise man, but the wisest man. God made it clear that he was not just the wisest man during his lifetime, but that no other man would equal him in wisdom in the history of mankind (1 Kings 3:12). What a great title Solomon had. His title was even more special because it was bestowed on him by God. However, in his later years, the wisest man's heart turned against God (1 Kings 11:4, 6, 9). He was doing things that he told his people not to do. So, if sin can topple even the wisest of men, we have to be very careful in the way we live.



If we want to do well in life, we have to look to Christ. He taught us one word that makes all the difference. The word is "NOT". The wise man is someone, who after learning Christ's teachings, practices them in his own life. The foolish man, on the other hand, is one who after learning Christ's teaching, does "NOT" practice them. The word "NOT" separates a wise and a foolish man (Matt 7:24-27). Christ seized opportunities to act on what he had taught.

I had often wondered why Jesus had to spend three years on earth before He died on the cross. He could have just appeared and died on the cross without having to go through all the sorrow and pain. Jesus showed us the importance of living out what He taught people, despite the grief and agony He had to go through. He opened up the power behind living in accordance with the teachings in God's Word. Let us do what we tell others to do.

## Point 2: FORGIVE OR ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

We have to correct our perception and see our spouses and children through the eyes of love. Whenever they cause hurt, meet them at their level to understand their struggle and help them instead of getting upset and angry. Christ knew that sins caused people to react badly. He asked His Father to forgive those who put Him on the cross. If we are not able to forgive our spouses for past hurts and be willing to start afresh, it will be difficult to rebuild our marriage.

“How many times must I forgive my spouse and children?”, you ask. You may not like the reply. Jesus’ answer to Peter when he asked this question was-“70 x 7 times”. This means at least 490 times (Matt. 18:21-22). This is like saying, “indefinitely”. But why do we need to forgive so many times? This is because:

- a. God places great importance on relationships
- b. God knows that we offend people more than we can possibly imagine but would still like to be forgiven
- c. God wants us to share the grace we receive from Him by forgiving others over and over again

Our unwillingness to forgive will cause bitterness to fester in us, which in turn distorts our thinking and perception. When we have bitterness, we become suspicious of our spouses and think the worst of them. We may even attach bad motives to kind words or thoughtful gestures. As such, we have seen the lack of forgiveness in marriages result in the following:

- a. Dampens our desire to put our marriages right
- b. Discourages us when we attempt to rebuild our marriages
- c. Disallows us to see the good in our spouse and children
- d. Depresses us by constantly bringing out our ugly side
- e. Damages our relationship beyond reconciliation

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If we want to rebuild our marriage, we have to forgive our spouse again and again and again ...

### SUMMARY:

Husband-Do not lead your family by demanding and controlling your wife because you are called to be the head of the family. Lead by your humility and love for your wife and children. A true leader sacrifices and gives the most.

Wife-God has given you many abilities, often times more than your husband. This is because of your special role in his life. You are his helpmeet. It is a privilege. Carry it out well.

HELPING EACH OTHER: Share more with a few families (audio or video call) on these areas:

- a. There are so many good qualities that can be found in Christ and that we can learn from. However, He pointed out just ONE character quality that He wanted us to adopt (to learn from Him). Why do you think this trait is so important for Him to single out? Discuss. (This Godly character trait is mentioned in Matt. 11).
- b. For the next 30 days, I will practice not getting angry or frustrated with my spouse. Instead, I will choose to forgive my spouse when he or she does wrong and will ask for forgiveness if I did wrong. Count the days and at the end of every 10 days, share with your group the progress you have made.

*Humbly in Christ,  
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