

GROWING IN FAMILY TOGETHER (GIFT)

Letter for Husband and Wife



FOURTH LETTER TO THE FAMILY- THE STARTING POINT PART 2

by Pastor Thomas and Ma'am Pamela Teh

Dear Family,

A week ago we discussed the following:

Point 1: DESIRING A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Point 2: FORGIVING OR ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS

These are two difficult things to do because we are seemingly surrendering our individual freedom and submitting to God's will as well as admitting our failings to our spouse. This is why we need to learn from Christ, who being equal to God (Philippians 2:6), took upon the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man (Philippians 2:7) to die on the cross for us. We can do this only when we learn the lesson of meekness (humility) from Christ (Matthew 11:29).

I'd like to introduce a third point, which will reveal if we truly desire to learn humility. Not many people are mature and strong enough to admit "I am the one who needs to change first." Those who walk close to God will understand the richness of humility and the strength to live it out.

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marriage

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Point 3: BEING THE FIRST TO CHANGE

“Am I supposed to change first? Why should I? My spouse is the problem. I am not the one doing all these wrong things. It is my spouse’s fault and I have been wronged. My spouse should be the one changing. I am ok. In fact, there is no need for me to change”. These are the arguments that will run through our minds if we are asked to change our ways or worse still, be the first to change. In any misunderstanding, it is not unusual to point the finger at the other person and say, “You are wrong. You are at fault.” If I am the first to change, it is like acknowledging I am at fault. The world has taught us this. What is our reply if someone asked us, “Was it because of Jesus’ guilt and His wrongdoing that put him on the cross or was it His love for us?”

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Men: You are the head of the house. Do not lead just by telling others the right ways and right things to do, but lead them by your examples of humility and love for your family. Be like Christ, more than Solomon.

Point 4: DISCERN BETWEEN “TRUTHS” AND “LIES”

The word, “fake news” has become very common in the past three years. We are cautioned not to be deceived by them. In order not to be taken in by lies, we have to know the difference between “truths” and “lies”. “Truths” can be illusive. Show a white piece of paper to a group of 3 year old children and tell them it is “black”. Do this about 10 times daily and over a duration of 10 days. After the 10th day, get someone to ask these children the color when they are shown a white piece of paper. You’ve guessed right. They will say it is “black” because that is what they were taught. You would not want to do this to your children because you know they would be learning something wrong. A ‘lie’ that is said often enough, long enough and loud enough, will become our truth.

We have heard of many untruths that are spreading around the world and in many households. Below are examples of what happened to two loving couples after several years of marriage:

Couple 1:

Wife- I am the only one trying to make our marriage work. I have tried for 2-3 years and nothing is happening. My husband does not care about the family anymore and is more interested in helping others, even over the weekends. He comes home late almost every day and goes out on weekends. Every time I ask him why he goes out so often, he tells me he has lots to do in his office or his friends need his help. I cannot rebuild my relationship with my husband alone. I am so tired of trying. Is this a truth or a lie?

TRUTH - After speaking to the husband, we found out that he truly wants the marriage to work as much as his wife. There are times he tried to make his wife happy but his attempts come out wrong because he does not know the right thing to do. They do not seem to understand each other’s needs. As a result, the arguments increased and became more intense. He feels that he is not welcome and not respected in his own home. To avoid more conflicts with his wife, he decided to spend more time away from her. He would stay out late after work and spend most weekends out of the house. His excuses are often “I am busy at work or my friends need my help”, in order not to hurt her more.

Couple 2:

Husband-I am so upset with my wife because she would frequently ask to use my handphone. She has her own handphone. There is no reason for her to use my handphone. Being involved in the church counselling ministry, I need my handphone with me to make and receive calls as my church members may need to contact me urgently. My wife is so unreasonable and her actions are damaging my counselling ministry. This has led to frequent arguments. Is it true or false that his wife is unreasonable?

TRUTH: It was about 1-2 months later that the husband admitted the real reasons why he showed displeasure when his wife used his handphone. He was afraid that his wife would find out that he was counselling some ladies in the church. He felt that his wife might misunderstand some text conversations he had with them or discover that there was a woman whom he texted more frequently than others. He also admitted to watching pornography on occasion and did not want his wife to accidentally discover that when she used his phone.

When you are rebuilding your marriages, you will face conflicting thoughts which will discourage you, even to the point of giving up. Some possible thoughts you may find floating in your minds are:

1. I've made so much sacrifices but nothing much has changed.
2. My spouse says he/she will change but it lasted only 2 days.
3. See, it happened again, why should I be wasting my time trying to help my spouse?
4. My spouse just says things that sound good, but I do not believe he/she will do them. We will believe these statements if we are unable to distinguish between the lies and truths. Differentiating them can be difficult because:

1. Lies are interwoven with some elements of truth, making them hard to detect
2. Lies can sound logical and believable
3. Lies are designed to bring back our past experiences thereby casting doubt on our attempts to put right the situation
4. Lies feed our desires, hopes and dreams but the intent is to render us useless for God

We believe lies not because we have to, but because we want to.

The best way to detect if certain thoughts are truths is to check them against God's teachings from the Scripture. So make it our desire to build Scripture into our lives.

HELPING EACH OTHER: Share with a few families (audio or video call):

- a. Ask your spouse what 3 areas in your life you need to change to make your marriage better. Then ask your spouse to give you some positive examples to help you make these changes.
- b. In addition to your daily family prayer time, have a daily prayer time with only your spouse. This is the time when you pray for one another, especially for strength and wisdom to change these 3 areas.
- c. Name two possible lies (from husband & wife) that could or are damaging your relationship.

Husband / Wife: Even when Satan puts 1,000 reasons in your mind to give up on your marriage, you will find ONE reason to hold on to it. Then you know that you truly love one another. With love you will be able to forgive and rebuild your marriage because love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8, Proverbs 10:12).

Although we are not physically there with you, please know that we are keeping all of you in our prayers.



*Humbly in Christ,
Pastor Thomas & Ma'am Pamela Teh*