

GROWING IN FAMILY TOGETHER (GIFT)

Letter for Husband and Wife



NINTH LETTER TO THE FAMILY- ANSWERS FROM SCRIPTURES

by Pastor Thomas and Ma'am Pamela Teh

Dear Family,

The answers we have been waiting for:

Question 1. With today's pressures, the husband and wife should share equal authority in the family.

Answer: FALSE

Explanation: God uses the relationship of the husband and wife to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:22-33). Christ leads the church and the church subjects herself to Him. The church is under the protection and authority of Christ and is called to be obedient to Christ's teachings. The husband leads as the head of the family and the wife is called to assist him as his helpmeet. Christ loves the church and laid down His life for her. Likewise the husband is to be willing to sacrifice for his wife. As Christ purifies the church, the husband is to take the responsibility to lead his wife and children to sanctification.

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God has warned us about the folly of serving two masters (Matthew 6:24). When children sense that equal authority exists within the family, it will give rise to frustration, quarrels, side-taking, despising one and loving the other or even dishonoring both parents. Often they grow up rejecting the father's leadership.

Question 2. As the head of the house, the husband only needs to seek God in making decisions.

Answer: FALSE

Explanation: Our wife is a helpmeet. We would be making a mistake to define "help" to just the physical aspects: taking care of the children, cooking, washing, cleaning the home etc. It goes beyond that. A woman has a special sensitivity to discern situations and oftentimes even the character of a person. She can feel moral impurity by watching a person's eyes, see his worldliness from his appearance and attitude, sense his prideful spirit through his behavior and detect insincerity through his words. She may not know much about business ideas and developments but she can often discern the sincerity and moral standing of her husband's business associates.

Pilate's wife correctly discerned the innocence of Jesus because of a dream that disturbed her greatly. She called her husband not to deliver Jesus over to judgment because he was a just man (Matthew 27:19). God has given you a wife who can caution you in 4 areas - mental, emotional, volitional and spiritual. Draw out God's counsel through your oneness of spirit with her, instead of dismissing her views as uninformed opinions. Through the covenant of marriage, the two have become one. The joining of your qualities serves to protect, guide and steer the family towards better decisions.

Question 3. Looking at sensual and pornographic materials damage the marriage relationship.

Answer: TRUE

Explanation: Our delight when looking at such materials signals lust and covetousness that still dwell within us. Matthew 5:28 clearly tells us that when we look at another woman with lust, adultery has taken place in our heart. It carries the same destruction into the marriage relationship. Job 31:1 points out the wisdom of Job on this matter when he made a covenant with his eyes. He would not see things that would tempt him to sin. May we be encouraged to be like Job.

Question 4. Asking for forgiveness restores the marriage relationship?

Answer: FALSE

Explanation: It will not restore the marriage. When we ask for forgiveness and are able to forgive, it allows us to start the reconciliation process. It puts us on the right path. Secondly, it prepares us to forget the past hurts. Thirdly, it encourages us to work on the restoration of the marriage. Therefore, we have to show love to our wife and respect (through submission) to our husband. With this changed attitude and desire to live out God's teachings, we will help one another restore the marriage in time. This task may be challenging especially if we had deeply offended our spouse or had been deeply offended (Proverbs 18:19), but this is an opportunity to grow our faith, to work on our own life and humble ourselves before God.

Question 5. A person who despises or dislikes his or her spouse will have a problem loving God.

Answer: TRUE

Explanation: The definition of a hypocrite is a person who pretends to have certain beliefs, attitudes or feelings when they really do not. This brings us to the lesson in 1 John 4:20. When we really love God, we show it by first loving the people close to us. Let us love our family especially our spouse. Then we can sincerely say we love God. God uses our home to show us, our true selves—the areas we can improve to be living testimonies for Him.



Home is a safe training and testing ground for all of us in the family.

Question 6. My spouse does not know I am bitter against him or her because I can hide my bitterness well.

Answer: FALSE

Explanation: You may think you can hide your bitterness well and the other person would not know, but haven't we felt that something was not right when our colleagues, friends, or spouse were more quiet than usual? Nothing was overtly expressed or shown, but we could "feel" the pain, worry or concern that the person was struggling with. Bitterness is formed by layers of deep-rooted frustration, hurt and grief created by our inability to forgive the other person. It is impossible to hide our bitterness for long because of the size of this "monster" we have nurtured in our heart. And this "beast" will show itself through tell-tale signs in our daily lives. It can appear in our physical interactions with others, emotional expression and countenance. The cost of bitterness is ultimately anxiety, depression and ill health.

Question 7. Forgiving a person also frees that person from the consequences of his or her actions.

Answer: FALSE

Explanation: Forgiveness and pardon are different. If the person who forgives also holds the right to mete out consequences, he will be in a position to pardon the person from those consequences. However, this does not happen all the time because he might think that may not be the best course of action. This can be seen when David committed adultery with Bathsheba and killed her husband, Uriah. God forgave David, but did not pardon his sin. The result was the killing of David's child by Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:1-19).

There can be times when forgiveness is exercised, but no pardon is given because the person does not have the authority to remove the consequences of the actions. You may have seen news reports of innocent victims hurt by irresponsible persons. In the interviews, the families of the victims sometimes say they forgive the perpetrators, but the court would still rule in favor of a jail sentence as a form of punishment. Therefore, the families can forgive, but are not in a position to pardon the person from the consequences of his actions.

Question 8. The main cause of marital failure is incompatibility between the husband and wife.

Answer: FALSE

Explanation: The main cause of marital failure is SIN, which comes from these 3 sources:

The world: It presents many things to titillate our eyes, mouths, ears and hands. These things, some of which are sinful, addictive or tempting, offer luxury, pleasure, leisure and satisfaction to our human needs and desires. Interacting constantly with these elements may provoke a longing to experiment with them or to have them permanently in our life. They can cause us to spend less time with our spouse or neglect our responsibilities in the home.



Satan: He is the master of deception (2 Corinthians 11:14-15, John 8:44). He will add and mix half-truths and morally unacceptable preferences with lies to deceive Christians. The line separating such lies and God's truths is extremely fine, making it extremely difficult to detect. The other danger we have to be alert to is that when lies are spoken long enough, often enough and loud enough, they become our truths. This will cause us to rationalize and justify our wrongs.

Our worldly desire: 1 John 2:16 warns us against sins that fall into 3 categories:

1. the lust of the flesh
 2. the lust of the eyes
 3. the pride of life
- If we are to protect ourselves from worldly desires, we need to remove lust and pride from our lives. Worldly temptations and Satan's deceptions are beyond our control, but we can take charge of our lust and pride.

Question 9. We should help and encourage anyone who has a broken marriage to rebuild it.

Answer: FALSE

Explanation: We should help and encourage married couples to rebuild their marriages but we are to exercise great caution while doing so. We have to understand that:

a. An illegal marriage, like an incestuous one (marriage within the family) should not be rebuilt. Leviticus 18:1-18 explains in detail that a sexual relationship between two members of the same family is sinful.

b. A marriage ended by the husband (because of her immorality) cannot be restored if the wife remarries another (Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Jeremiah 3:1).

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Question 10. Unless both husband and wife work to put a marriage back together, it is not possible to restore it.

Answer: FALSE

Explanation: Marriage, which is a covenant, signifies the great importance of the union of two (Ecc. 5:4-5). The covenant relationship between the husband and wife (when each fulfills his or her God-given role and responsibilities) is a reflection of the perfect union of Christ and the church. When either partner purposes to restore the marriage relationship based on Godly teachings and principles, he/she has God on his/her side (Romans 8:31).

It is God's desire to have the couple restore their marriage because they then become a testimony for Him and at the same time, exemplify the Christ-Church relationship. It may be harder if only one spouse wants to rebuild the marriage, but it is not impossible. We know of resisting husbands/wives relenting because their spouses, through the demonstration of God's love and forgiveness, had touched and changed them.

Question 11. The basic needs of a husband and a wife are really the same since God gave us the same human nature.

Answer: FALSE



Explanation: Some needs are similar. For example, we are happy to be with people who are kind to us and we keep a distance from those who are argumentative and prone to complaining. We like going to nice events like the birth of a child and would rather avoid going to settle a family quarrel. Looking closer, we know that because of differing responsibilities and gender, there has to be different gender needs as well. These differences are meant to complement rather than compete with each another. The husband is to learn his wife's special needs and limitations and relate to her according to this knowledge. The wife is to understand that her husband has needs and limitations too. When the wife realizes this, she will be motivated to be an effective helpmeet to him (Genesis 2:18).

Question 12. God places “challenges” into our marriage.

Answer: TRUE

Explanation: When man sinned, God found it necessary to put challenges in the family. In Genesis 3:16-17, God clearly indicated that 4 things would take place:

1. The wife will experience pain during childbirth. No other creation suffers birth pains except humans.
2. She will have a desire to control the husband. She will be wrestling with her God-given role of a helpmeet and the sin-given inclination to rule her husband. Submission to her husband will no longer be a joy but a struggle.
3. The husband’s role as the head of the house will be fraught with challenges. There will be struggles to demand and exert control over his wife.
4. The husband has to work hard to feed the family. Sin has complicated his role as the head of the house. His challenges will be within the family and also outside the family.

It seems that God has forsaken man because of sin. In reality, He has just put these challenges into our lives to help us overcome sin.

The story behind each challenge reminds us that we have a Creator who is in control and that we need Him to overcome the challenges we are facing daily.

We like to leave you with this verse. It has encouraged us to stay close to God, and to build our marriage around intimacy with God.

“

I am the vine, you are the branches: He who abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing.”
(John 15:5)

