

Hearts of Love

Tom & Debbie Tillman "to touch the world for Jesus Christ"

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A Wife of Valor...

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bless you!*

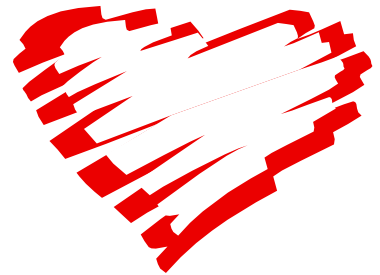
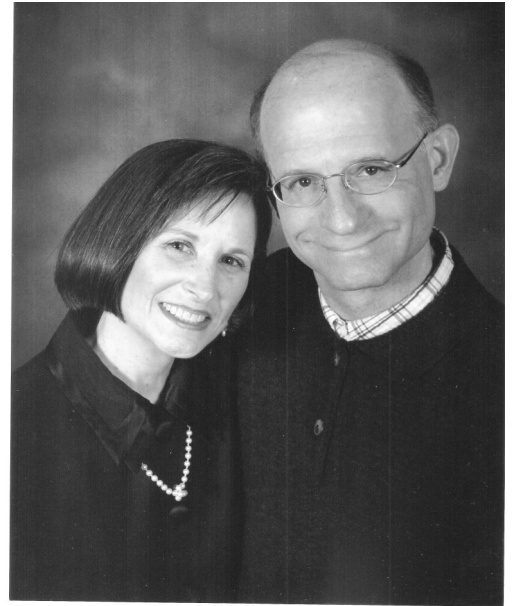
Tom & Debbie

A virtuous woman, who can find? Her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her, so he will have no lack of gain. Prov 31 The Hebrew word Solomon used, translated 'virtuous,' is *chayil*. It means: army, valiant, valor, strength, power, strong, mighty... Solomon is saying, 'How blessed is the man who finds this kind of wife. Not only is she more valuable than rubies, she is his ally, more valuable than a strong, mighty and valiant army! Chayil comes from the root *chuwil*. Part of that word's meaning is 'to dance, to whirl.' (an interesting coincidence... The ring tone I have on my phone for Debbie is called, *twirl away*.)

Solomon goes on to say, 'The heart of her husband safely trusts her, so he will have no lack of gain.' What does he mean by 'trusting' her? Is it that she won't empty out the bank accounts and run off with the accountant? It's far deeper than that, as evidenced by his using that word, *chayil*. It means that he recognizes her true value as his most important and powerful ally. They are allies together. He trusts her to be fully competent in all her areas of responsibility, influence and authority. And, by the way, the husband who doesn't recognize and acknowledge these in his wife... is a fool.

We see God's creation of man in Genesis. In Chapter one, God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Notice that God didn't tell Adam to subdue the Earth and have dominion over it... He told them. He didn't only make Adam in His image... He



*He has committed to
us the word of
Reconciliation.
Therefore, we are
Ambassadors for Christ.*

2 Corinthians 5:19,20

made them in His image... He created and intended them as a single unit... Adam was not fit to rule the Earth until the unit was completed.

Just as God is Tripartite, 3 in 1... He created each of them in His image as tripartite... a soul in a body of spirit, in a body of flesh... but He also created them as a tripartite unit... Adam and Eve with God as center.

Marriage was not an afterthought with God... it was not designed by man or by government... it was the center and cornerstone of His creation. As a matter of fact, God didn't pronounce it good, after He created Adam, until after He completed the work by creating Eve. Only then did He call it good... He actually said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone.' Then, after creating Eve, He called it good and told them to subdue and have dominion over the Earth. Then they were fully capable. Before God created Eve, all God told Adam to do was tend the garden and name the animals... big woop! Most of us could've done that, though we might not have come up with as many clever names for animals as Adam did, like *platypus* or *pink fairy armadillo*, but once Eve was there to complete the team, they were ready to go out to subdue and have dominion over the whole Earth. Oh... and God also told

Adam to not eat of that one tree in the center of the Garden... I guess that part we probably wouldn't have done any better than Adam...

God created them as a team, as a single unit capable of ruling over all the Earth... but the whole deal got cut short when Eve sinned and Adam followed... their spirits died and they were no longer tripartite... they were only bipartite... two parts... a soul lining inside a body of flesh... their spirits had died and their marriage unit was no longer tripartite... just the two of them... without their spirits, they no longer had God as the center of their marriage... they were now just two sinful humans locked in a sinful marriage... blaming each other for their fate... probably constantly fighting and bickering... 'Why did you listen to that snake and eat that fruit... can't you do anything right!!!' Yeh, well where were you mister macho... out finding some more animals to name? Why didn't you make it more clear what God said about not eating of that tree? I didn't know you meant that very tree... why didn't you put a fence around it... *idiot!* Little wonder Cain turned out to be such a delinquent! So then, why is it that Eve isn't the one held responsible? Why is it only Adam's sin passed on to the whole human race?

God didn't tell Eve not to eat of that tree. He told it to Adam before He created Eve. Adam is the one who heard God say it... Adam is the one who should have been keeping careful watch... guarding Eve... Adam is the one who should have been careful to teach Eve what God had said... so they both sinned, both got booted from the Garden of Eden and both had to then deal with a cursed Earth. He had to work hard and sweat to live and feed his family, she had to put up with the pain of child-bearing and they both had to put up with their own and each other's sin natures... him trying to control her and everything else, with her resisting and pushing back against his control as she schemed and coerced to control him and everything around her.

Remember... theirs and every family dynamic for 6,000 years has been the result of disobedience, sin and rebellion. It was only after Jesus' finished work on the Cross, only after we could place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, that a man and woman, a husband and wife could be recreated... made as new creations in Jesus Christ... only then could we once again be made in the full image and likeness of God... tripartite once again with brand new spirits which are 'one' with His Holy Spirit, and now a marriage can be tripartite as it was in the beginning before they sinned... a husband and wife with God at the center.

I began thinking about this the other day... Debbie and I were out on our first after-dinner walk of the year. Not sure what led to it, but I said, 'Who knows where I'd be if not for you!', meaning actually, who knows if I'd even be alive!, and I mean that! But then she said, the same was true for her. What if I'd married that other girl? What if she'd married that other guy? Neither of them were believers... we'd probably both be divorced with two sets of who knows what kinds of kids and grandkids...

God had a specific plan for each of our lives and that plan included His using both of us in each other's lives to form each of us, more and more, into the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ and to form our marriage into a living picture of God's love toward, and relationship with, us as individuals and as a single

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marriage unit.

We've both done things and made choices which would have destroyed most marriages but God, in His grace and mercy, chose to use those things to draw us evermore closely to Himself and to reveal Himself in and through us individually and as a team. We were both on a trajectory that would have gradually, slowly drawn us ever further away from truly coming to know God intimately... especially if we had married those other people. But God, in His wisdom, put something inside each of us... we were drawn to each other... (opposites attract). I asked her to marry me three days after our first date... she said yes... that's either nuts or God... sometimes we've wondered which... but not anymore. (I would have proposed on our first date, but I didn't want to seem too forward.)

God yoked us together... then, as He drew one of us toward Himself in one way, the other was pulled along... then as He drew the other toward Himself in another way... the other was also drawn along as well. He has drawn each us to Himself in unique ways and then used the one to teach the other and so we'd both be drawn closer to Him and to each other. He has chosen to use two flawed, imperfect people to compliment, complete and perfect each other in ways not possible apart... and that was only because as we recognized His grace, mercy and patience in each of our lives,

we have been able to gradually learn to love each other with grace, mercy and patience.

Picture a triangle... at the bottom two corners are Debbie and me... at the top corner is God. We began far apart from each other and far apart from God... but as we gradually drew closer to God at the top, the space between us grew closer as well. God's plan is that eventually, there will be no distance between either of us and God, and consequently also no distance between either of us to each other... a single tripartite unit like Adam and Eve in the beginning. There is nothing that a single tripartite unit like that cannot accomplish, nothing that it cannot withstand or overcome.

We know several couples in their eighties and nineties who have learned these things far better than we. They've learned to love God more and to love each other more. They've learned that there have always been others who are more handsome or pretty on the outside, but that true beauty grows only on the inside where God is at work accomplishing His perfect will in their lives as He prepares them for the unimaginably grand and unique eternal ministry He has prepared for them after they leave their 90+ year old bodies and enter into the eternal bodies He has prepared for them... bodies like the glorious one Jesus Christ Himself lives within.

There are probably thousands who listen to us weekly on the radio and many hundreds more who read these monthly newsletters. I often 'jokingly' tell Debbie, 'Everyone wants to be you.' (because she gets to be married to me) or, 'Everyone wants to be me.' (much more likely)... but the reality is... if I wasn't me, or we weren't us... I really would wish I had what we have... in Christ and in each other.

... A wife of valor, who can find? Her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her, so he will have no lack of gain.

I've learned to trust her... I don't need to control her in anyway... God is more than capable of doing so. As I trust God in her, God is more able to teach me through her, to more fully mold me into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ.

I've learned to try to always encourage her and point her toward God, and to allow her to point me toward God. My strength is in grasping eternal reality... Earth, Heaven and Hell... eternal reward and loss of reward. Her strength is in being able to trust God now, on Earth while we are locked in time. She trusts Him more easily for the here and now... I trust Him more easily regarding prophetic reality and eternity. Together, we help each other trust Him more fully now and for all time and eternity. Isn't marriage great!

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The Harvest is Great, but the laborers are few. Matt 9:38

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