

Hearts of Love

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

A free monthly publication of Hearts of Love Ministries.

Volume 26, Issue 04 © April, 2018

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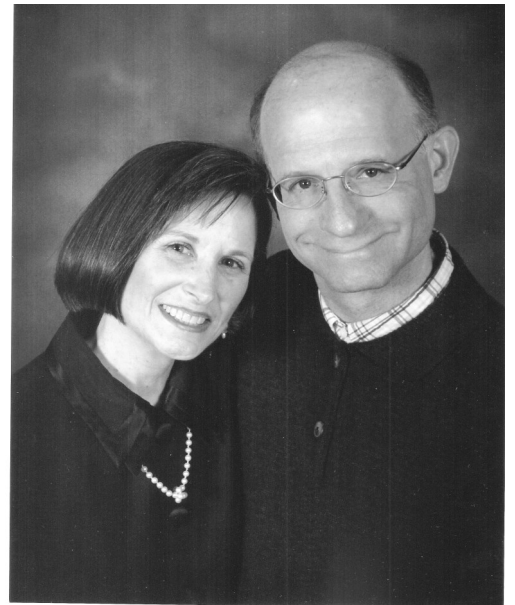
***May God richly
bless you!***

Tom & Debbie

Quick to Speak Slow to Listen Slower Still to Think

Doesn't that just say it all! James wrote, 'Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.' How often do we care for very little, except the next thing out of our mouths or the next thing out of our cell phone, TV or radio? We talk incessantly for fear of silence, we're constantly on Facebook or we leave the TV and radio on all day long just to fill the day with noise.

Why do we do that? Some speak constantly in order to convince themselves and others of their brilliance or to convince themselves, and others, that they are not as ignorant as they believe others believe them to be. For some, the reason is deeper and darker. If we were quiet and listening we would, more than we might want, hear the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit as He illuminates the sin in our lives; the quieter we are, the 'smaller' the sin He is able to reveal. When I say 'smaller sin' I mean those areas of sin that seem smaller *to us*, since it is we who are committing them, but they rarely seem so small when they are someone else's sin. An area of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives is to bring us to the conviction of sin... not condemnation... but the conviction of the reality that it is sin and it separates us from fellowship with God... whether the sin seems large or small... not because God leaves us, but rather, because, like Adam and Eve, when we sin our first impulse is to leave and hide from God, yet He always comes to us



*He has committed to
us the word of
Reconciliation.*

*Therefore, we are
Ambassadors for Christ.*

2 Corinthians 5:19,20

and stays with us by His Holy Spirit. That is Whom we seek to quiet by all the noise. The difficulty is that as we 'drown out' the voice of the Holy Spirit, we are then prey to the much louder voices of condemnation from evil spirits, whom we tend to believe, since we are not hearing the Holy Spirit's truth. We then hear and believe the lies they speak... lies that we are guilty, ugly, unloved by God, condemned and beyond redemption... *our sins are too great for God's love, forgiveness and acceptance... we are a special case, too special even for God...* pride is at the heart of that kind of thinking... and who better to share and spread pride than Lucifer's minions! That is why God tells us to humble ourselves before His mighty hand, that He may exalt us at the proper time... to humble ourselves, to listen to the Holy Spirit and to believe what He says. 1Pet 5:6

There are other voices we seek to silence by entertainment, talk and noise... the voice of God as He speaks to us through His other children... our brothers and sisters in Christ. God will often use someone else in causing us to acknowledge sin or error, but He seeks to use those whose hearts are right before Him, whose motive is love for us as they try to correct with gentleness, seeking only our best... God's will.

That is not to say that every time another believer points out something in our lives that it is coming from God. As a matter of fact, that voice can also come from a heart of pride... *"Let me tell you how to be a better Christian... like me!" or "Let me tell you the things wrong in your life, never mind that I recognize them because I am hiding them in my own life as well."*

Tragically, the voice we often choose to hear the least, or the

one we seek to *incorrectly correct* is our spouse. How many of us constantly try to correct, to change, to remake our spouse in our own image, or at least into the image of what we foolishly believe to be the perfect husband/wife, while we deceive ourselves that our only motivation is to see them come 'closer to God'... like me! After all, I am the 'spiritual leader,' he/she needs my help... my constant griping/harping/nagging/picking/correcting is really just shining the light of the Holy Spirit on areas that need a little help.

Happy, happy home!!

The problem lies in that God never called us to change others... any others... He calls us only to follow Him... to listen to Him... to hear Him and to be a doer of what He says. In so doing, we allow Him to change us in every way.

Perhaps we nag and pick because we are unwilling to change the things about ourselves which, God has revealed, need to be changed.

You see, He is the example of the true spiritual leader in the home... He doesn't pick and gripe at us, His 'spouse'; He gently loves and leads, ever patient and kind, never keeping account of wrong suffered, always believing and seeing the best in us... His love is never failing. 1Cor 13

If that isn't our attitude toward our spouse, we should not imagine ourselves as a spiritual leader, whether at home, at work, in the family or at Church.

Usually when we seek to correct others, it is because we see in their sin, our own sin which we are unwilling to leave because of pride and self-righteousness. Jesus said of the Pharisees, 'For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they

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themselves will not move them with one of their fingers, but all their works they do to be seen by men.' Matt 23:4,5 Also, 'If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, (especially our spouse) and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' 1 John 1:6-9

Husbands, it begins with us and the greater responsibility is on us... just like our relationship begins with The Lord Jesus Christ... He first loved us, giving Himself completely for us, always loving and forgiving us no matter what we do. If we will recognize that He is the only true picture of 'husbandry' we have, the one we are **required** to follow, we can be good and faithful stewards of the most important gifts He has given us... our eternal souls, our wives, children and grandchildren.

I know we do want to be like Him. Wives, the Lord Jesus Christ is also your only true example of 'wifery'... His willing submission to the headship of God the Father in all things is your example which you are required to follow. I know you do want to be like Him.

Now, I hear the complaints from both sides of the marriage... you don't know what she's like when no one else is around... you don't know who he really is in the home... how can I be required to love and honor her... how can I be required to submit to someone like him!

I know my rights!!

You wouldn't believe how often we hear both of those! Everyone seems to think that marriage is 50/50, a two way street, a give and take, an equal partnership...

I know my rights!!

A perfect marriage is two slaves of Christ, choosing to love each other unconditionally, claiming no rights or privileges at all. A 100-100 partnership on a one way street, setting our hearts and minds on the things above, not on the things of the Earth.

Marriage, as well as our every other relationship in life, has been directed by God... He commands us to **love** at all times! Love is patient, kind, long suffering (puts up with all things), is never envious or rude... love NEVER fails! 1Cor 13

If we are truly servants and slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as His friend, brother and child, we have no rights but to obey Him... to please Him.

As we root out the sin in our lives, the pride, self-righteousness and need to control, then we can more and more, grow to be someone others will follow and listen to.

Paul said, 'Follow me as I follow Christ.' When we truly follow the Lord Jesus Christ, we too say, even without words, 'Follow me as I follow the Lord Jesus Christ.'

That is the message others will follow and hear... even without words. That is the *leader* a spouse will follow, that children will follow, that friends and coworkers will follow... one whose heart is humble, who seeks the will of God in his/her own life.

Happy Happy Home!

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

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