

HELP FROM HEAVEN

By Carol Gordon

Our Father cares more than most people know about our homes and families. Jesus said in John 13:34-35, *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (NKJV)*. When He said this, He did not mean just putting on a smiley face at church and being polite to others there. Or to be nice to the people at work but it was all right to be ugly at home. He meant for us to use the love He places in our hearts and love from deep within. The place we begin is where we live. That is right, the folks at our house should be the first recipients of this supernatural love.

Of course it is much easier to love the brothers and sisters in China and other places where the Church is under fire. The true test is to use this help from heaven to love those who sometimes (often?) drive us up the wall!

Every family is founded on a marriage, and every marriage is under fire from the enemy of our souls. He does not want the world to see God's love working. The world needs to see husbands and wives living out the recipe for marriage in Ephesians 5:21 to 33. Here the Word instructs us to mutually submit to, or honor, one another. It also instructs husbands to love and give their lives for their wives and for wives to honor and respect their husbands. The greatest need for a woman is to be secure in her husband's love. The greatest need for a man is for his wife to admire him. This is often the opposite of how spouses naturally treat one another. Some husbands think that if he married her she is supposed to know he loves her. And some wives think that their job is to correct and change their husbands.

The Lord helps men and women conduct their marriages in a manner different from the world's way, because the world's way is not working. Marriages are breaking up at an alarming rate, in the church as much as the world. In fact, there are more divorces among church people now than in the world, because the unbelievers are just not bothering to get married at all!

The Lord created marriage before the Fall, and He still knows how the design works. When we are born again, through the Holy Spirit's work in our lives, we can live in the peace of Eden again in our homes. We CAN, if we will apply the Word and really work at it. It does not come easy, because the enemy is trying his best to destroy us all. Jesus said in John 10:10, ***The thief cometh not but for to steal, kill and destroy, but I am come that they may have life and have it more abundantly.*** (KJV) The thief comes, but because I AM is here, we do not have to let him destroy our marriage and family. We can have the abundant life, filled with the Lord's joy.

Although our traditional weddings invoke His name, quite often couples today do not comprehend that God really wants to be a part of their marriage. He has a plan for their lives and wants to help them be fulfilled in all its facets. We can be friends, sweethearts, lovers, and partners. He will help us be effective parents to our children. When we let Him lead and guide, we will make the choices that take us in that direction.

Too many couples start out their married life saturated with the world's view of what marriage should be. These days more people than not do not even know what God has to say about it, or even if He cares. Their ideas have been influenced by movies, television, and MTV, and worst of all by the divorces of their parents. They spent their teen age years experimenting with relationships, matching up and breaking up, practicing for divorce. The idea of "commitment" strikes terror in their minds, because they have no role models for a happy, fulfilled marriage.

Selfishness has been so bred into our culture that the idea of being a blessing to someone else is simply foreign. Joe chooses Jane with the expectation that she will "meet all my needs", only to find out that Jane expects the same from him. Then one or the other is so disappointed at the unfulfilled expectations that they leave to find someone else to "meet all those needs". Our expectations no longer include any sacrificial giving or living.

We are in this ongoing war because the enemy hates everything that Father loves and wants to destroy it. And Father loves families. He wants a relationship with each of us and for us to have healthy relationships with each other at every level. Father wants children to be cherished and

raised to know His love for them. He wants them to have confidence that He has a plan and purpose for them. He desires that they know who they are as His beloved children, precious in His sight, and that their parents and siblings love them and are cheering for them as well. So our enemy tries to mess up every part of every relationship we have from the time we are infants.

I was healed in my late forties of wounds received before I was born. In a small prayer group one day, a friend heard in the Spirit words of fear that had been spoken over me when I was still in the womb. She said that it seemed as though I curled up and was afraid of life. And I had lived that way, denying fear and yet resistant to accepting and enjoying life. We continued to pray that day until I saw Jesus received me from my mother at birth and hold me, and nurture me, sit me on His lap as I grew. Then He helped me learn to walk and to run. When I saw that, it was as though chains had broken off my life. Within a few weeks, I even made a "Snow Angel" after a snowfall. I began to smile and laugh more, and my sense of humor grew up. Now I can rejoice in the Lord and in life easily.

We discovered that many people are still bound up from things that have been said about them, or to them, or from things that have happened to them in childhood. A close friend has been freed of hurts that came into her life when she was put in foster care as a three year old during her mother's extended illness. Many people have a wounded "child's heart" that is bound up or stopped growing at a certain age. We have seen many people set free from this through prayer.

From this it is easy to see that the enemy is very cruel and deceptive as he sows seeds of destruction into our souls. Some of these hurts sit dormant until we become spouses or parents and then he uses them to trap us into patterns of pain. Every time we choose to resent, criticize, or be offended, these seeds gain a foothold. Little seeds sprout little weeds that produce big weeds which bear more seed and so on. Each time there is a hurt we do not resolve by forgiveness and repentance it gives the enemy more ground to occupy in our souls. Eventually, bitterness puts down deep roots which poison relationships that were meant to be a blessing.

One of God's great delights is the joining of a husband and wife in a covenant of marriage. He says in Malachi that He is always a witness of our covenant. (2:14). His design is that they will

be one, in spirit, soul, and body, in that order. Where the drawing of the spirit is primary, through having submitted one's life and future to our loving Father, He will bring the right partner across our path. Then we learn to communicate and learn each other thoughts, desires and feelings. Lastly, He brings us together physically in marriage, as a consummation of His love through us. He desires healthy, godly offspring from this union.

Consequently, the enemy does all he can to see that people do everything in the opposite of the design. He makes his appeal that the outward be the criteria for the choice of a partner, the attraction of the body is everything. How easy it was for him to do this after the Fall. There was no longer a close connection with God, so the flesh reigned supreme. The idolatrous religions that grew up encouraged the worship of the body, and the sexual act was demoted to a lustful, destructive coupling rather than a fulfilling, intimate blessing of covenant.

We see this in our culture today, with sexual images presented as mere physical pleasure, having nothing to do with lifelong commitment to one person. Our young are not even aware that they are spending their innocence for nothing that is lasting. They have seen thousands of images of lust and sexual promotion for every one picture they have seen of loyalty, honor, and fidelity in marriage. Some have never seen a portrait of a true, faithful, lifelong union that is centered on honoring the Lord.

Children are brought into the world without proper preparation to care for them. Children need two parents, both father and mother, and a stable, safe home. They need provision and protection and encouragement. They need to be loved by both parents in different ways. Young children need the nurture only a mother's heart can provide. They need the encouragement and challenge a father gives as they grow up and encounter the world outside the home. To do without either, because of desertion, or career demands, or focus on mere entertainment is to damage the child.

We have help from heaven when we resolve to turn our own life around. We can commit to living the Lord's way. We can start by loving and honoring our spouse, by treating them as we would like to be treated. We can let the Lord change our heart from one of judgment and

criticism to one who sees things to appreciate and commend in our partner. We can find again all the dear characteristics we saw in them in the beginning. We can ask the Lord to show us how to truly love our spouse.

We can learn to hear each others' hearts and honor another's perspective. This is true not only with spouses, but with children, parents and siblings. The more we listen and love, lay aside criticism and offense, the more of the Lord's love will be seen.

On this road, we will have to make a stop at the signpost that says, "***Honor your father and your mother***". (Deut. 5:16). It is essential that we clear all our heart issues toward our parents. If we do not, we will repeat all the things we judged them for doing. No matter what they did, or failed to do, we can choose to forgive them and repent of all our judgments and offenses. We can't revise the past, but we can let the Lord heal our hearts and start afresh.

Sometimes there are other things in our family's history that we will need to forgive. Things done to us, or not done for us, by other family members, or patterns of divorce, alcohol, drugs, theft, deceptions, and so on that we find ourselves repeating. We can take this to the cross as well and let the Lord free us and our children from continuing in sin patterns.

Even when people have come to the Lord and been born again, many are unaware that His forgiveness and cleansing is thorough enough to heal them from past hurts. He can heal deep wounds of the heart, abandonment, betrayals, loss of innocence, and fear of more rejection. He heals hurts from ugly words, threats, violence and all kinds of abuse. No heart is so broken that He cannot heal it and set that one on a path of hope.

Let us dig deeper in the Word of God, to find the answers to all our challenges to heal broken relationships. The beginning point is to let the Lord show us our own heart. Healing of relationships does not start with getting someone else to change. It starts in our own hearts, with a willingness to forgive and let go of hurts. When we obey the Lord's admonition to forgive, and choose to do so to honor Him, He will see to the healing of our hearts. He will change us from the inside out, so that the old hurt feelings fade. We may still remember, but there will be no

pain. Then He can use us to say to someone who is hurting, "I have been where you are, and this is what the Lord did for me! I had help from Heaven!"

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