



REAL WOMEN!

“That they all may be one”

R. E. A. L.
Women!
R. elevant
E. ncouraging
A. live
L. ionhearted

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⁴ One of the most painful issues a parent must deal with is watching and listening to their children misunderstand, fight and bicker among themselves. I believe it must be the same with our Heavenly Father. Hearing His children criticize, complain, and put down each other for their differences must be difficult for Him to bear. Reading *John 17:20-23* brings home this point. *Neither for these alone do I pray [it is not for their sake only that I make this request], but also for all those who will ever come to believe in (trust in, cling to, rely on) Me through their word and teaching,²¹ That they all may be one, [just] as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe and be convinced that You have sent Me.²² I have given to them the glory and honor which You have given Me, that they may be one [even] as We are one:*

23 I in them and You in Me, in order that they may become one and perfectly united, that the world may know and [definitely] recognize that You sent Me and that You have loved them [even] as You have loved Me.

He not only reveals His desire for His children to walk in unity, but He also, expresses the ultimate purpose in wanting us to do so. *So that the world may believe and be convinced*

that You have sent Me and again in verse 23, *“that the world may know and [definitely] recognize that You sent Me and that You have loved them [even] as You have loved Me.”* In other words, how we walk together as believers either strengthens His influence, or weakens it. How we talk about those from other churches, other “groups”, or even other people of our own church, adds value to our influence or drains it from its potency. A raised eyebrow, a disdainful tone of voice or a simple careless comment takes away from the honor and glory of the Lord in the eyes and ears of those listening. I think believers can get lax in this area, not comprehending that they are fighting against the very prayer Jesus prayed!

One of the privileges of being a part of Impart Ministry is the opportunity to travel around and meet a kaleidoscope of Christian believers. Each group we meet has a unique distinctive which adds to our understanding that God loves diversity! Our Heavenly Father seems to enjoy variety, because His children come with such vast array of perspectives. We find the simple act of celebrating communion is administered in many different ways. In some churches communion is passed out to the congregation with each of the elements coming together at the same time. Each individual prays

and partakes when he chooses (after a corporate time of instruction). In other settings, the sacraments are held in the front and the congregation comes forward to select their own cup and bread. At this point, some are instructed to partake as they make their selection, while in others they take them back to their seats where they are held until everyone is ready to partake corporately. Another variation has to do with the bread being passed out first, partaken of and then the cup is passed and partaken. Some use a whole loaf, some unleavened matzos, some use crackers, some drink wine, others grape juice. Is this unity? Yes. Because the goal isn't the “how”, but it is the fact that we are all acknowledging and submitting to the commandment found in 1 Corinthians 11:24-25 “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.” If in one small aspect of our Christian walk there is so much variance, how can Jesus prayer ever get answered?

I believe that it must start with each of us as believers choosing to walk in unity with the Head, Jesus Christ and choosing to honor all the members of His Body. It sounds



Different, but the same!

(Continued from page 1)

simple. Submission to His ways and His will is the key ingredient to walking in unity with the Head. However, I don't always find it easy to do. My flesh rises up and says No. My carnal mind decides to make up its own mind about loving or caring for a brother or sister. "They don't act or look like me, so they must be wrong." The natural response is to make a moral judgment about those differences, with my ways coming out right, with theirs naturally being "wrong". Natural children do not always act or look alike, but they still come from the same mother and father. As children of our Heavenly Father, let us take time to see where our brother and sisters resemble Him and ourselves, not emphasizing the differences. His blood was shed for them as well as for me. The same price needed to be paid for them as for me. This is where we begin to find unity, at the foot of the Cross, a place of humility. Paul instructed the Philippians to "*stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gos-*

pel. Phil 1:27.

He is the only one who can bring unity and diversity into the right balance. As we join with Jesus in His prayer that we become one, His name will be glorified. It will cease to be about who is right and who is wrong but it will become more about how we can honor His prayer. We must learn to trust the Father to parent His children as He sees fit. Submitting to the Head also means that we will trust Him with the rest of the Body. Those we don't understand, we will pray for the Father's will to be done in their lives. We will ask Him to bring about the changes He feels they need and release them into His hands, in faith. Spend more time praying for those that bother you (in their worship approach, major message or doctrinal stands etc) will effect much more change.

Starting where we can start also means that we can choose to walk in unity with those we worship with, those you see every week. Learning to love them, honor them and speak well of them is a good

place to begin. Guarding your heart and your tongue when you get home from church or a meeting, covering a leaders mistake with grace and mercy, expecting the good in others will go a long way to ward promoting unity. It will help keep division and harmful criticism from taking root. This area, as in all other areas dealing with love involves a choice. A choice to love your brothers and sisters will foster unity, which is a good thing. Let us not forget to live our lives in such a manner that Jesus' prayer will be answered.

Let us join in prayer with Jesus. *21 That they all may be one, [just] as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe and be convinced that You have sent Me.*

Written by:

Martha Rodman

Statement of Faith:

We are becoming Relevant, Encouragers who are Alive to God and His Spirit, even to the point of Being Lion-Hearted!

The time of refreshing is here, don't miss it!

Sisters, Please take time to enjoy the Spring time—as your soul is refreshed, you will be a better daughter, mother, employee and believer. God sends the spring to remind us of His Hope, Love and Future.



Psalm 39:7 *“And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You.* Enjoy the journey as you wait for Him to reveal Himself to you, to bring solutions to any problems, or just grow in your friendship with your Savior.

Check out Impart Ministries Web site.

You can now download teaching and preaching messages at

www.impart.org

All the back issues of Real Women are available as well. You can print specific articles to share as well.



Leadership Encouragement

Article background:

The article below was written by Cheryl Musser. The church she belongs to has gone through some major battles over the past few years. This has resulted in some casualties. As the church administrator, she, along with the pastors and elders are presented with the facts of church life that are not very pleasant. Here are some very honest and challenging emotions and feelings that we all go through when someone leaves a church due to hurt feelings, disagreements or perhaps a growing coolness to the things of the Lord. Cheryl read via Facebook how a former church family had found this wonderful new church, a very painful way to discover that they had, in fact, left their former church home.

The cry of those left behind..



This morning, as I checked my Facebook newsfeed, I was struck by an overwhelming sadness. What a sinking feeling it is to have confirmed that you have lost another family to “somewhere else”. Over the years, we have seen it many times. People you loved, prayed for, cried with, worshipped with, attended their weddings or family funerals, rocked their babies, played volleyball with, and shared your heart with have slowly evaporated. They show up less and less, until members that have covenanted to be church members disappear without a goodbye. That leaves the rest of us in mourning. Was there something we could have done, some need we could have met, if you had but shared it? Was it something we did? Why have you left us, your church family, without so much as a goodbye, no explanation? Yes, I know that God sometimes calls us to make a church move for the growth of our family, but wouldn't that same God want you to go to your old church family for their blessing and a release from membership? Wouldn't He

want you to say goodbye? Oh, it's easier this way, you say as you just slowly slip away. Easier for who? For you. What about the rest of us, left feeling hurt, betrayed, confused and abandoned? Have we not invested enough of our hearts in your life to deserve a decent goodbye?

We see you at Walmart, and in politeness make pleasant conversation. Yet, inside, our heart cries out, “What have we done, why have you abandoned us?” Leaving a church is not like leaving a social club, it is leaving your family that has loved and cared for you. It's like serving divorce papers without a chance for reconciliation, while one party has no clue there is a problem or an unmet need. Oh, dear Lord, how it hurts those left behind, like an unhealed wound that is poked again when we remember you are no longer sitting in your usual spot, or sharing your warm smile with us.

In a society rampant with divorce, people are divorcing their churches and skipping off to greener pastures. If God is really calling you to change churches, He will lead you to do it the RIGHT way, with due respect to those who have pastored you, and the people who have loved you all these years. How it must grieve God's heart to see His children wounding their own family members by their actions. If you have ever left a church without going through the proper goodbyes, search your heart and ask God if there is a way to make that right with those you left behind. Please give us closure, a letter, a visit, a phone call, an explanation, an apology, or even a return? Leave your gift at the altar and make things right with your brothers and sisters.

Most days, I don't even think about all those who have left, but today the overwhelming sense of loss came crashing down. To those of us left behind, may God bring healing to the wounds buried deep in our hearts. May He continue to enable us to love without fear of losing,

and trust in His faithfulness to bring our church to fulfill its purposes in Him.

In His love,
Cheryl

Some thoughts generated from the above article:

1. This happens in every church.
2. Each of us has a responsibility to walk in love, no matter what.
3. To make a decision to leave a church family must not be taken lightly.
4. There is a right way, a mature, grown up way to do it.
5. Making the decision to do it the “right” way, still doesn't make it easy, but it does make it easier.
6. Our actions do effect those around us.
7. There is grace to do it “right”.
8. After sharing their thoughts, leaders must be careful to release those who want to be released.
9. Whether people do it right or not, we must walk in forgiveness towards them, they are still our brother or sister.
10. A church home for someone, is not necessarily the right place for everyone and that is ok.



Building Together Across Generations Anniversary Special



This is a special article. It is dedicated to my husband. On May 25th, we will celebrate our 35th wedding anniversary. In meditating on Building Together Across Generations, I realized that good solid marriages build bridges to the next generation. When Darryl and I met in 1972 in a rickety house in the central area of Seattle, I did not dream that he was the answer to my heart cry! As most young girls, I would think about being married and wonder about my future Prince Charming. However, as a realistic, practically bent young woman, I knew he would not be perfect, nor would he whisk me away to a fantasy castle to live the life of a princess. (This was not my desire anyway!)

I only had two main ingredients in my prayer requests for my future husband. Well three actually. That he be taller than I and not very hairy, and that He would have a heart after God and His ways. Keeping a short list made it easy for the Lord to answer! I think many fairy tales have girls looking for “tall, dark and handsome.” I got two out of the three: tall and handsome.

Darryl is a man of integrity and strength of character. Of all the available young men in our church at the time, I respected his commitment to God and to His people. When God told me that Darryl was going to be my husband, I immediately felt safe and cared for. We had not dated or “flirted”, or even hinted at a possible long term relationship at that time. In fact we weren’t even living in the same state. He was simply Darryl, God’s servant. It took much courage for me to confide in our associate pastor, Sis. Woodward, what I thought God had said to me. I thought she would say, “That’s not God”. But instead, she said, “I can really see how that would work!”. I know there are single gals reading this article, and I would encourage you to involve trusted leaders to speak into your lives as you are waiting on a mate. It is difficult, once you have given your heart to someone to really hear what your elders may say, so begin early to dialogue with them about the kind of husband and father you are looking for.

A few months later, Darryl, after meeting with the Pastor and Sis. Woodward, invited me for our first date. He asked me to marry him on that date and we were married two weeks later!. What an adventure it has been, especially two weeks after our wedding I became pregnant with our first daughter. God has been so faithful to us. We certainly haven’t had a “perfect” marriage, nor did I desire a perfect man (because then I would have had to be perfect as well). It has taken much prayer, adjustments and commitment to our covenant to walk through the changes God has brought for both of us, but it has been good. Darryl is my best friend, he is my “handsome honey” and I am so grateful for this marvelous, amazing gift of God to me. At times I marvel that God would have chosen me to be his wife. We have had to ‘sacrifice’ at times and live an “out of the norm” life, but it has always been worth it because we are Team Rodman and we can do whatever He puts before us. Both of us agree that we are stronger as a couple than we would ever have been as individuals. We need each other and are not afraid to admit it to one another.

Every couple creates their own “couple dance”. I am so thankful Darryl’s leading has made it easy to follow as he follows our Lord. We have stepped on each others toes at times, but we find His rhythm and start again. I think we have made some beautiful music together. I am glad I am married to this man, he truly is my beloved. Proverbs says that he who finds a wife finds a good thing, but I would say, “God who gives Darryl to Martha was definitely a good thing”, and as our family motto states, “The Best is Yet to Come!”.

Major Points we have learned:(some quickly, others not so quickly, some we are still perfecting :)

- * God joined us, so God can keep us as we submit to Him.
- *It is not what I want, it is not what Darryl wants, but what God wants that keeps us both happy.
- *We were called to be a team. Each team member has different functions, but both are needed.
- *Each team has a purpose that is bigger than each individual.
- *Each individual on the team is important to the results of the team.
- *As each individual honors his/her teammate, the team works well.
- *Every team has an off day, and so does every team member

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Encouraging

Enthusiastic

Enduring

Examples

Eager

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