

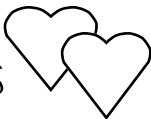
# Heart and Home Harmony

Aiming for hearts, homes, and lives in harmony with:  
God and His Church, and the rest of His creation through the Holy Spirit.

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## Two Love Stories



—Luke and Rachel Martin

Dad informed Dawn that a young man had approached him about his interest in her. “I told him it’s OK with me and I’ll find out what you think. Do you have any idea who it might be?”

“Mr. Rosenbarker?”

“Yes”

Her answer was quick and simple, “I don’t know him well enough. I won’t court someone I don’t know.”

Luke still wanted her. He would go to the strawberry patch where she was picking and help pick. One morning there were some flowers for her at the vegetable stand. She knew who put them there and complained to us about it.

“Do you do any visiting while picking strawberries?”

“Not really,” she replied.

“Maybe you should, so you can either say no, or find out if you want to learn to know him better.”

The next several months they did a lot of visiting as she thoroughly checked his character. Would she want to live with this man for as long as they both lived? Could she safely submit to him? Could she trust him to be her spiritual leader? Could she honor him as her head? Would he be willing to sacrifice to care for his family?

He patiently pursued her. He gave her all the space and time she needed. Her trust grew and finally she agreed to enter a courting relationship with him. They concentrated on learning to know each other’s character and soul,

leaving physical contact until marriage.

He convinced her by his love that he was the one on earth she wanted to give herself to for mutual fulfillment. Wedding plans were carefully discussed and made. As she was meticulously working on her white wedding dress one day, she found a spot of strawberry juice on it. We told her she could put more strawberry spots on and it’ll just look like she came out of the strawberry patch. Seriously though, of course, she wanted it spotless. She worked at it until she got rid of the stain.

As the big day approached and she was packing some of her things to take to her new house, the reality of the tremendous change she was making struck her. For a little she felt fearful. He told her they could postpone it until she was ready. As much as he was eagerly waiting for the day, he didn’t want to marry someone that was less than delighted to take him. But the fearful feeling passed and she also eagerly looked forward to the day.

On March 27, 2004 she became Dawn Rosenbarker instead of Dawn Martin. As Mrs. Luke Rosenbarker, his things are hers and her things are his. She dwells with him and they are now happily learning to know each other better.

That story and my second story have many similarities. This is the most beautiful story of the most romantic,

faithful, trustworthy, and glorious Lover. And **you** are the one He is pursuing. Did you know that Christ, the Son of God loves you? He is awaiting your answer.

If your answer is quick and simple, "I don't know Him," I challenge you to learn to know Him. Check Him out as much as you wish. You will find that you can trust Him. He is patient. He has given you space. The choice is yours. He has given you time but you do not know how long. If you refuse Him, there may be no more chances and you will wish you had learned to know Him. If you become part of His bride, you will dwell with Him, learning to know Him better. You will live happily ever after!

In the wedding service, before Luke married Luke and Dawn, he compared these two love stories. In the Bible, the church is called the bride. (Revelation 21:2&9) Also, he compared some marriage customs with Scripture. Rev. 2:17&3:12 tells us God will give His people a new name.

**Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed [are] they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. Revelation 19:7-9**

In Ephesians 5, the relationship of Christ and the church is symbolically likened to a marriage relationship.

**Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of**

**the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so [let] the wives [be] to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife [see] that she reverence [her] husband. Ephesians 5:22-33**

### The Physical Bride

This is the pattern for a happy marriage. The husband leads, loves, provides for, and cherishes her. The wife submits to and reverences him and both are fulfilled.

### Heart and Home Harmony

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Luke and I are now in this special relationship for 33 years. We wouldn't think of entertaining anyone else in this way. As the years roll by, our love and delight in each other only grow deeper. We serve each other to make the other happy. This desire is so strong that even an inkling that the other might not be fulfilled or happy with us is very distressing. The romance is alive. I have what I want. That tells you what kind of man he is. He praises me to others. That makes me feel so good. We know each other better and better in different ways. We have been blessed with 11 children, all loving and caring for one another.

We are locked in—and love it. What a blessing that is, because the power we each hold to affect the other, for blessing or curse, is tremendous. This is a great mystery.

### **The Spiritual Bride**

From this Scripture we get a picture of Christ as head and savior, the one who loves, sanctifies, cleanses, nourishes, and cherishes the church.

He is jealous of her. He gave His life, enduring the cross, taking away her sin and shame, all for the joy of winning her and making her happy and joyful, and giving her all the riches of His glory.

The bride is subject to Christ for He has made her glorious and holy, without blemish. She knows that He is true and faithful, the one that fulfills and completely satisfies. He is so delightful that everything else takes second place to knowing and serving Him. She will forsake everything, endure anything, and even give her life to be with Him. See Romans 8:35-39. This is a great mystery.

### **Other Lovers**

Within every person is a drive to fulfill his or her desires. This is the drive behind all religion. In some sense of the word, everyone is religious. Everyone is looking to something for fulfillment. Whatever is most important to you, who or what you love and honor the most, is whom you serve, and is your god. If it is not the Creator then it is something He created. (Romans 1:25) There is nothing created that can be a spiritual “husband” to you, a passionate lover that will fulfill you. There is nothing created (even you) that can know you as well as the One who created you does.

We are naturally self-serving and our adversary offers things, promising to fill us. But it does not last or is inadequate to fill us. This leads us into bondage. Many of these things become addictive in various ways. Either we need more or we keep looking for something else. Serving self makes us a slave to the cruelest of taskmasters, leading to all kinds of self-abuse. Somehow or other, all the false gods demand your submission. Their power to curse grips like iron bands.

There are various things we do to try to get out of this dilemma of unfulfilled desires. We can keep on trying to find the pleasure that satisfies. We can deny that sin has wounded us. We can try to solve our problems by trying to kill our desires. This does not work, and we are left with inner feelings of guilt because we intuitively know we are not doing what is right, what we were made for. We may try to deny our guilt, try to punish ourselves, do good works in an effort to undo or cover up the bad we've done, or try to convince ourselves that we are happy.

To solve his problems, man has invented and subjected himself to countless churches, religions, duties,

disciplines, creeds, and philosophies that employ various combinations of these tactics. For example, Buddhism is based on the assumption that numbing our desires will control evil. Many religions require some kind of penance or self-punishment. Yogi teaches you to tell yourself repeatedly, “Healthy am I. Happy am I. Holy am I.”

Most of these inventions have some truth in them. Some of what they command is right. While most religions have some truth, only Christ is truth. **Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:6.** So, our only successful alternative is to choose Christ. **Delight yourself also in Jehovah, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Psalms 37:4**

Believe Him and trust the power of Truth to break the bands of wickedness. The more you know and honor Truth, the more you will be aligned with what is peace and light.

### **The Bride—In Name Only**

Jesus said, **Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matthew 7:20-23)**

According to this, Christ does not know many that use His name. They think they are part of the bride, and will dwell with Him in heaven. But obviously they do not know Him. They

have employed their inventions but it has not stopped or covered their works of iniquity. They may religiously follow their rules, disciplines, and duties but it does not completely stop the lusting, coveting, hatred, wrath, strife, fighting, and envying.

Learn to know Christ. In serving Him, you will do many good works, but they will seem more like a joyous privilege than a sacrificial duty.

### **The Diseased Part**

Some Christians are allured into affairs with other lovers. Carnal pleasures may become more important than Christ. They may submit to schisms that demand submission to them and their rules, some of which contradict God’s rules. They may cause or justify and go along with divisions, cutting other members off, competing and trying to control others. Their inventions “sustain” them as they fall from grace into bondage. (Galatians 5) Their religion may seem right because much of their discipline is His will.

I Corinthians 12 likens the church to a body. **But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body as it has pleased Him. 1 Cor. 12:18. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you. 1 Cor. 12:21.** He made the body for His purpose and pleasure. He wants every part working in peace and unity, caring for, loving, and submitting to one another, all submitting to the Head. Because He loves His bride, He has to remove any fatally diseased part before it spreads.

He cannot put up with spiritual adultery. Who do you love the most? If fleeting pleasures of sin or a man-made religion have captivated you, or you have feared and followed the crowd, turn to Him, ask Him to forgive you, and He will cleanse and sanctify you.

He is able to care for you and you will never need to be ashamed of your Lord. And He is not ashamed of His graceful and spotless bride.

### **The Pure and Glorious Bride**

**You shall have no other gods before Me....For I Jehovah your God am a jealous God, Exodus 20:3&5.** You belong to Him. He wants your passionate love and adoration, your faithful, total submission. He does not demand it but commands it. He commands it because He loves you. He knows you will not be happy serving yourself, or any church, or religion, or duty, or any other idol. He wants you to serve because you love Him. This is the deepest source of pleasure and satisfaction that we humans can experience. Your pleasure in Him shows His glory. His pleasure in you shows your glory.

To illustrate, suppose you were bedridden and someone visited you. You thanked him and he said, "Don't thank me. It was my duty." How would you feel? You would feel more glorified if he said, "It was my pleasure."

The reciprocal pleasure and glory of love is shown when I do you a favor and you show sincere appreciation and gratefulness. You made my day, just by letting me know that I made your day.

He does not want you to squash your desires. In fact, He wants you to desire enough that you are willing to ask, seek, and knock. (Matthew 7:8) Frequently He sought to know folk's wishes. **What do you desire that I should do for you? Mark 10:36.** He promises to fulfill the desires of your heart but some of the desires of your flesh and mind may have to wait. He knows what is best for you. Life with Him isn't easy. But in all the adventure, He wants you to find happiness and

fulfillment in Him. ...**He offering to us richly all things to enjoy, 1 Tim. 6:17**

If you serve Christ instead of serving self, His Spirit will help you in the daily battle to mortify evil deeds. Henceforth there is no need to punish yourself. If you do sin, his mercy is free. You cannot earn His love and favor. He has paid for your redemption and freedom. You don't need to try to convince yourself of anything or pretend anything. You know that when He washes away each spot, you have nothing to be ashamed of.

**Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. James 1:27**

God knows everything, but He needs to know you and you need to know Him in a special, intimate relationship. The fruit of His Spirit will become evident to all. (See Galatians 5:22-23) If they see the joy and delight of your sacred romance, they will be drawn to Him. The family of God will grow if you show His love. If you want to show Him, you must KNOW Him.

The power of love to bless is a great mystery.

*Read the authorized, unabridged version of this love story, the Bible, to learn more of Him. Spend time with Him, talking to Him and listening to His voice. <sup>a</sup>*

Sin = a moment of pleasure = years of tears for many.

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Repentance = a moment of pain = healing and ages of blessings for many.

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Repentance to Christ = a faith that works by LOVE.

# Give a Lift

— Rachel Martin

Have you ever needed a lift? We all have. And I, like most of us, want to give others a lift when they are down. But I have had to wonder at times whether I hurt them more than I helped. So I asked God to teach me how to be a blessing to others. He has been answering that prayer. I'll try to share some of the insights.

To help, we first have to understand the situation. However, we often understand little about the complexities of another person's situation and feelings. But God knows and He is the perfect helper and healer. So, the most important thing we can do for anyone is encourage him or her to look to God.

Also, we know that our own flesh, our tendency to sin, is the main thing that gets us down. And our sin radiates outward, knocking others down. Our only remedy for sin is to repent, turn to God and let Him wash us clean and lift us above our sin.

Therefore, to stop knocking others down, we need to repent every time we see a sin in ourselves. To lift those in sin, the most loving, beneficial thing we can do is to instruct them to repent and to show them the way to righteousness.

However, here we run into a problem because we don't like to be told we are wrong. Our human tendency is to want to be "up there." Any correction or suggestion to repent tells us that we are not "there." This is especially a problem for those whose confidence and self-esteem is low. To them, correction feels like a put-down and they may think that is your intention. Even if they know you want to help

and even if they know they need help, it may still **feel** like a put-down. It may anger them if someone "reaches to pull them up," because it reminds them where they are. They may try to put their benefactor down in an attempt to appear higher. They hate themselves for where they are and often put themselves down.

If we do not admit where we actually are, it is called pride. **Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18**

Humility is seeing ourselves as we actually are and seeing God as He actually is. Repentance is a turning around. It is going from trying to "get up there" on our own to facing God and admitting to reality. **Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. James 4:10.** So, though our flesh recoils at the thought of admitting what we really are, repentance is a wonderful thing to embrace.

**From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand** Matthew 4:17. Jesus first message is, "repent." Then He says why, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." If we enter, we can have victory and rise above our problems! **Then Jesus said to the Jews who believed on Him, If you continue in My Word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John 8:31-32 Therefore if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. John 8:36.**

**The story of Job** has much to teach

us, whether we are in need of a lift or want to lift another. **There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job. And that man was perfect and upright, and one who feared God and turned aside from evil. Job 1:1**

Job was very blessed but Satan came and God allowed him to smite Job. He lost all his children, possessions, and his health. While in intense pain and suffering, three friends came to comfort him. With many words, they told him he must be guilty of sin to be so afflicted. Job told them they are miserable comforters. He continued to trust Jehovah God. After many more words were exchanged, God spoke to Job, showing him his ignorance, and challenging him.

Job is humbled. He answers God, admitting that God knows all, but he had spoken things he did not understand. Then he says, **I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye has seen You. Therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes. And it happened after Jehovah had spoken these words to Job, Jehovah said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against you and your two friends. For you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has. And now take to yourselves seven young bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering. And My servant Job will pray for you. Surely I will lift up his face so as not to do with you according to your foolishness, in that you have not spoken of Me what is right, like My servant Job. And... (Job's three friends) ...went and did as Jehovah commanded them. Jehovah also accepted the face of Job. And Jehovah turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends. Also**

**Jehovah added to Job all that had been his, to double. Job 42:5-10**

Though Job was perfect, he was afflicted and accused. God needed to teach him more and humble him. He saw God and repented. God accepted Job but was angry with his three friends. Job prayed for his accusers and was doubly blessed in the end.

We need to experience and understand these things or we too might be miserable comforters.

**God is love.** His Son is the perfect example to study. How did He help people, beside His ultimate sacrifice for sin? He went around helping, healing, teaching, and telling stories. Study them and the entire Bible.

Jesus did not approach everyone the same. To the repentant He said, **“Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.” (John 8:3-11)**

To the religious hypocrites He said, **“Woe unto you...hypocrites...”** But in order to help them He didn't stop with that; He then told them what they were doing wrong. (Matthew 23 & Luke 11)

When the Jews were accusing Paul, the governor said, **It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction before he being accused may have the accusers face to face, and have had freedom to answer for himself concerning the accusation. Acts 25:16. For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not to signify the charges against him. Acts 25:27** It is destructive to accuse or criticize someone without hearing them or telling them what they did wrong.

False accusation is a cruel put-down. To do so is to team up with Satan, the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10). When Jesus ac-

cused the hypocrites, I'm sure that what He said was true, not just something He imagined or took from gossip. Unless you are as sure, first ask (not tell) the supposed offender how it is.

If you tell him how it is, or wish to challenge his view, you had better be ready to present some clear evidence as to why. If you don't have clear evidence, but are still sure he needs help, be patient. If he does need help, you'll likely get another chance. The accuser and the accused should keep in mind that often others see our faults before we do. Also, actions speak louder than words. And often unknowingly we imagine others are guilty of that which we ourselves are guilty of.

Reproof, rebuke, and correction are meant to be up building, but may not be, if they are not given with love, respect, and humility. They must be given while relaxed. You cannot change others. The best you can do is make them think. They may disagree but later decide you are right. Or they may agree and, after thinking about it, decide you are wrong. If the person repents or changes what he was doing wrong, you helped his downward course to curve upward.

If someone indicates that they do not want your help, it is usually best to not force your help on them. They may feel the reason you are helping them is to be one up on them or to control them by obligating them, whether or not that is your motive. (Check your heart.) If your help seems to make them feel lower and they don't want to be there, be cautious about helping beyond their immediate needs. You help more, if you can help them to help themselves.

If you physically lift someone, especially if they are wounded, you need to be careful, knowledgeable, and patient. The same is true if a person needs help emotionally or in other ar-

eas. Be sensitive and longsuffering. If you are too rough, they may not know you are trying to help.

The more you understand what one is going through the better you can be a help to them. The more you listen to them—I mean, really listen to understand—the more you will understand. Many times that in itself is a big help. There may be nothing more you can do but the fact that you cared enough to listen and pray is helping them to carry the load.

We want to give a lift, but never, ever help lift people unto a pedestal. That is dangerous for you and them, also those you influence. And never put yourself on a pedestal. From there you cannot reach those who are down.

Our learning experiences can be extremely painful at the time but they are steps to higher honor. Keep learning, study the Bible, be humble, and repent if you have done wrong or spoken things you did not understand. Then when God has lifted you, you are in the right position to lift another.

Jesus said, **As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; therefore be zealous and repent. Revelation 3:19**

**Even the young shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but those who wait on Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:30-31<sup>a</sup>**

Dear Readers,

For gardeners it's weed pulling season. How is it in our garden of life? What are we sowing? Have we weeded our corner? We are in it together and we need each other. Do you have any good seeds or other help to pass along? We'd love to hear from you. Have a fulfilling summer.

Love, the Martin's