



# THE LOVE LETTER

King's Kids Unlimited, Inc.

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## Getting Acquainted with the McCoy's!

**-Tell us a little about yourselves.** *We both turned sixty, and are enjoying our freedom, Sue from teaching and Rick from 33 years with the Fish and Wildlife Service. We are blessed with two sons, Jim and Mark, a daughter-in-law Faith, and two grandchildren, Aidan and Ainsley. We celebrated our 38th anniversary in 2008. Sue accepted Jesus as her Savior as a young girl and Rick through Campus Crusade for Christ in his senior year at Ohio State University. We both grew up in Kettering, Ohio, but have lived the past 34 years in State College, Pennsylvania.*

**-How did you become involved in ministry and what have you done since then?** *We started teaching a 3rd grade Sunday school class at a United Methodist church in 1979, and shortly after that we were inspired by Willie Gorge, an international children's minister in Tulsa, OK, to make our teaching more fun and exciting through puppets, games, skits, interviews, object lessons, and telling stories. By the end of the year our Sunday school class had doubled in number and the kids did not want to miss a lesson! We were children's pastors for two churches. We also took the message of Jesus Christ to the streets through backyard programs and in the parks around State College. In 1982 we founded King's Kids Unlimited and became a non-profit corporation in 1988. (Stay tuned next quarter for the rest of the story)*

## How are You Treating the Gift God has Placed in Your Life?

### The World's Focus

The world focuses on "Love" the month of February. They focus on showing love through tangible gifts and cards. While it is positive to express your love to your spouse, children, and other special friends in material ways, God, who is Love, desires that we demonstrate our love in a deeper way. Our daily **attitudes, words, and actions** communicate our love or lack of it much more than an outward gift. The way we interact with our husband, wife, or children truly lets them know whether or not they are a special treasure to us. How are you treating the gift God has given you? Does your spouse feel valued, respected, and loved?

### The World's Focus

Ephesians 5:22-33 and 1 Peter 3:1-9 give us sound advice on how to live together as husband and wife. Both Paul and Peter want us to recog-

nize that our words and actions should reflect the One, who lives within us, Jesus Christ. We are each "in the process" of being transformed into the image of Christ from one level of glory to the next. (2 Cor. 3:18)

Since we have not arrived yet, there are many opportunities for us to respond to each other out of our flesh and not out of the Spirit of Christ. But God desires that we continue to grow in the ways we handle the precious gift of our spouse.

Many of us go into marriage with unrealistic expectations. We may expect our spouse to meet all our love needs when only God can really do that. Because there are no perfect people, it is futile to think that you made a mistake in marrying your partner and that someone else would be better.

This only hinders a relationship from growing. Another unrealistic

expectation is that there will never be any hurtful things that will happen after marriage. Our immaturity, insensitivity, and habits from the past, which come from our sin nature and flesh, will eventually bring pain to our spouse. When you decide to risk loving someone, you are open and vulnerable to being hurt. These unrealistic expectations will only bring disappointment and discouragement. God desires that we walk in love with our spouse and give them the gift of forgiveness that you may not feel they deserve.

### United in Spirit

1 Peter 3:8 in the Amplified version says, "Finally, all (of you) should be of one and the same mind (united in spirit), sympathizing (with one another), loving (each the other) as brethren (of one household), compassionate and courteous - tender-hearted and humble-minded." Be-



sides bringing unity to the body of Christ, this verse has many ideas that can also be applied to produce strong, healthy, and loving marriages. Let's look at each part of this verse from the perspective of a marriage, and see which parts you might need to work on in your marriage.

"Being of one and the same mind" is one of the most challenging aspects that every marriage faces. We each come to the marriage with different experiences, beliefs and habits that may be very different than our spouse. It is a fact that men and women are different. Men speak male and women speak female. That fact alone can cause each to view and approach life's situations from different perspectives. Misunderstanding often comes through miscommunication. It is one way the devil divides husbands and wives.

"One and the same mind" in the Greek is "*homophron*" which means to be similarly minded. This word implies here, whether the whole body of Christ or two people in marriage, that we should think the same, feel the same, and view things in life the same in light of the Word. If our thoughts and actions line up with "what would Jesus do," we will walk in more harmony with our spouse.

#### Understanding

Couples must work hard to understand each other. We must want to understand and see things the same way. Sharing the same vision and goals for your life will certainly help you walk together. Having one mind with your spouse takes focus and concentration. It does not happen by accident, but it takes a quality decision and action on your part. Ask yourself: What are you doing to become one mind with your spouse? Do you pray and worship together? Read the Bible? Do you talk at length with each other? Do you devote time to each other free from the phone, TV, and demands of children?

"Sympathizing (with one another)" is also a challenge for mar-

ried couples. Trying to understand each other can lead to times of frustration, which is when we need compassion to flow. Compassion in the Greek is "*sumpathos*" which means to share feelings and emotions. It refers to someone sharing another's experience and being a partner who then understands what he or she is going through. Our English word, sympathy, comes from this word. Peter is encouraging us to be empathetic, kind, considerate, caring and full of mercy with our spouse.

We need to reach out and try to understand our husband or wife rather than judging and getting upset when we don't understand them. If your spouse is struggling in an area, it's not the time to preach or judge them. We need to get rid of fleshly pride and attempt to understand them by putting ourselves in their place. Learning to ask the Holy Spirit to help you stay calm and let empathy flow from your heart rather than aggravation is a key to releasing God's compassion. Would your spouse say that you are able to show kindness and compassion toward them? Does your spouse feel they can open their heart and be honest with you or are

they concerned and dread facing your critical or judgmental attitude for their shortcomings? What changes do you need to make in your words and actions to help you develop a closeness and friendship with your spouse?

#### Love as Brethren

The words "love as brethren" are from the Greek word *philadelphia*. *Philos* means friendship and conveys the idea of affection and love for someone who is dear. *Adelphia* or *adelphos* are the Greek words for sister or brother, respectively. When we put the two parts together, it means to love as a sister or love as a brother. We need to see our spouse as a sister or brother in Christ. It is the most eternal part of our relationship. We will be a brother or sister to each other in heaven. Peter's words to "love as brethren" should cause us to speak graciously and with dignity to our mate out of respect for their position in Christ. God desires that we also become more self-controlled and calm in the way we relate to our spouse.

When misunderstanding occurs, we often raise our voice and speak in a tone of voice that is not kind. Our words may be angry and ones that we later regret. Responding too quickly out of our emotions may allow the devil to blow a situation out of proportion in our minds and separate us further from our husband or wife. We are often better off to walk away from a situation, get our emotions under control, and pray before we respond. Are you able to love your husband or wife as "brethren," like a brother or sister at church? Would you speak with that tone of voice to another person at church? Would you ever allow yourself to fly off the handle and indulge in an outburst of anger with brothers or sisters at church as you do with your spouse? If you have treated your spouse with less respect than others in the body of Christ, isn't it time to repent before God and ask your spouse's forgiveness?

Peter also says to be "compassionate and courteous - ten-





derhearted and humble-minded.” (Amp.) In the King James Version it says, “Be pitiful and courteous.” The Greek word for pitiful is *eusplagnochnos*. There are two parts to this word that are rather unusual. “Eu” means well or good. It describes a positive emotional response to something that has been done. One of the best uses of “eu” in the Bible is in Matthew 3:17 when Jesus was baptized. God spoke saying, “This is My Son in whom I am well pleased.” The words “well pleased” come from the Greek word, *eudokeo*. What Father God said is “I am supremely pleased even more than you could possibly imagine.”

Do you come across with a being pleased “even more than you can possibly imagine” attitude toward your spouse? There is surely room for all of us to grow as we see our spouse through Father God’s eyes.

The second part of the Greek word for pitiful is “*splagnochnos*” which means bowels or intestines. Paul uses this word in 2 Corinthians 6:12 to describe his “*deeply felt affection*”<sup>1</sup> for the believers at Corinth and for Jesus Christ in Philippians 1:8. This word gives us a picture of a person having “*deeply felt feelings for someone else.*”<sup>1</sup> Throughout the Gospels the same word is used to describe Jesus being “moved with compassion.” Compassion flowed out of Him to meet the needs of people by feeding them, raising the dead, healing the sick and more. (Matt.14:14, Matt.15:32, Luke 7:13-15)

Though rather graphic, biologically when the bowels move, they produce action. When the human spirit is deeply touched, it should also cause movement or a release of divine power to reach out and meet the need of another person. 1 John 3:17 in the KJV says, “But whoso hath this world’s goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his *bowels of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” Be careful not to harden your heart and shut off the force of God’s compas-

sion that is in you! Father God desires that we have His compassion, an inward feeling of delight and a deep desire that moves us to do something for someone else, especially our spouse. If you deeply love your spouse, you will put action to your emotions. You will not sit idly by and watch them struggle, but you will be motivated to help. Compassion always causes action.

#### Being “Humble-Minded”

Lastly, “humble-minded in the Amplified is “be courteous” in the King James Version. The Greek word, “*tapeinophron*” means to be humble-minded or lowly-minded, which goes beyond just being courteous or polite. At times our flesh may rise up and be tempted to quit being merciful and choose to be judgmental towards our spouse. We must resist the tendency to act high, mighty, or condescending. We need to come down to a level where we can be understanding and allow a flow of compassion to help our spouse rather than being our spouse’s judge. Begin now to ask the Lord to help you truly feel compassion for what your spouse is going through and release good things from your spirit to build up your spouse. Can you think of ways that you can be a blessing to your spouse and speak words of encouragement? Where are you esteeming and treating your spouse as more important than yourself?

The desire in your heart may be to bless your husband or wife, but often we do not know how to do that. Take time to share this article with your mate. Think about which part of 1 Peter 3:8 your spouse is already doing and show appreciation for his or her efforts. Then ask them which part of the verse your spouse would like you to work on a little more. Hopefully your spouse will share the positive part you are doing as well as the area you can improve on. Then consider praying together and asking the Lord to help each of you become more like Jesus. (Gal. 4:19) Make a quality decision to continue to grow

up in Christ, letting Him work in your heart each day.

#### Love Affects

At the beginning of this article, we mentioned that your wife or husband is really a precious gift or treasure from God. How you treat your spouse will be affected by how you feel about yourself. The more you are able to receive Father God’s love for yourself, the more love you will have to give your spouse. As you come to know and experience the value, worth, respect, and love Father God has for you personally, it will affect your heart and attitudes. You will find yourself treating your spouse better because you feel good about you!

#### Questions to Ponder

The following is a list of questions you might want to ask yourself every few days and let the Lord show you how you are doing at walking in His ways with your mate:

1. Are we becoming more like minded? Do we have the same goals or vision and are we making progress towards those goals?
2. Am I making an effort to understand my spouse? Am I able to put myself in my spouse’s place and be merciful to what he or she is going through or to their weaknesses rather than being critical?
3. Am I showing my spouse the same love that I show a brother or sister in Christ by respecting him or her and speaking to my spouse in a kind, pleasant tone of voice?
4. Do I share my positive emotions with my spouse letting them know when they have done something that has greatly pleased me? Am I moved in my spirit and emotions to reach out and meet a need of my spouse rather than let them struggle?
5. Has my flesh tried to rise up today to stop me from being merciful and feeling that my spouse needs to grow up and change? Or am I being humble-minded and able to come down to a level where I focus on understanding my spouse and releasing compassion?

# **A Confession & A Blessing From Our Hearts to Yours:**

## **A DAILY CONFESSION FOR YOUR SPOUSE:**

I am gentle, compassionate, tender-hearted and humble-minded towards my spouse. I speak to my spouse with respect and honor my spouse as a part of the body of Christ. I am an understanding and compassionate spouse. My mate feels no judgment or rejection from me. I am filled with compassion and let that force of compassion flow from my heart to my spouse. I am the strongest source of blessing and encouragement in my spouses' life. I deliberately think of ways I can be a blessing to him/her and speak words of blessing that my spouse needs from me. We are ever ready to believe the best of each other. We invest in our relationship daily. Our love for each other never fails, never comes to an end. We are on our way to being happier than any time in our marriage.

## **A FATHER'S BLESSING FOR YOUR MARRIAGE**

I bless you with a marriage that is full of love, joy, happiness, peace, and a prosperity that goes beyond just finances into every area of your life together. I bless your marriage with intimacy and transparency that draws you closer together and closer to Abba. Your marriage will be filled with a passion for each other that grows stronger and sweeter with each passing year. As you, the husband, step into spiritual leadership and becomes head over your home following Christ's example, there will be divine order and Shalom peace with your wife and children. Your wife will come under your mission and there will be a harmony and oneness in your relationship. As you, the wife, honor and respect your husband, he will shower you with his love and affection. I bless you with long life and good success in everything to which you set your hand to do. Your days together shall be heaven on earth.



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