



家新伴你行

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Be of One Mind

Last week as I dashed through the shopping mall with my weekly shopping list, I was overwhelmed by the eye catching, huge, dazzling, elaborate Christmas decoration that hung high up in the ceiling of the Atrium. Vibrant Christmas colors of gold, red and green flooded the mall. In the midst of my daily busyness I hardly realized that Christmas is only 6 weeks away.

An odd mixture of excitement and dread emerged as I walked past the shop windows. The increasing commercialization of the Christmas season with the enticing advertisements from the retailing giants, as well as smaller shops, evoked in me a crave for the material objects displayed. Simultaneously the fear and dread of the stress that past Christmas seasons have brought, cast a dark shadow over me.....from parents and in-laws misunderstanding and hurt feelings to conflicts; tight finance; kids' demands ; Church involvements ; holiday plans ... the mental drain and, physical stress had taken their toll on me.

Determined to put to rest any smouldering ashes left over from last year's disagreements, I set my mind to make this Christmas joyful, low stress and enjoyable in focusing our celebration on the magnificent gift of Jesus, our Saviour, who led a life of service and ultimate sacrifice, demonstrating His love to mankind.

Apostle Paul exhorted us in 2 Cor 13:11 "Be of one mind, and live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you." To make this verse come alive in marriage, I must start with a unity mindset. This means that as a married couple, my husband and I are to recognize that we are on the same Team, working together peacefully with a "**one mind**" goal.

That night after dinner and after the kids had retired to bed, I sat with my husband on a comfortable sofa and graciously told him that I recognize that we are from diverse backgrounds with differing opinions, but I earnestly hope to make this Christmas a "conflict free" experience. I proposed to my husband the notions of "Team work", "One mindedness", and "Unity". They all sounded very rational and intellectual, but how are we to achieve them? We talked and talked, and finally uncovered that at the heart of all disagreements and conflicts, lay a common cause: differing and unclear expectations. It is important and essential to make each other's expectations clear by communicating them, and clarifying them. Do not leave expectations unspoken, which will lead to dissatisfaction, breeding conflicts and leading to a disconnect in marriage.

Ask each other questions such as:

- Which Parties/Gatherings we need to hold, which we need to attend and which ones we can skip?
- How much money you prefer to spend on Christmas gifts on our parents, kids, and friends?
- How do we divide our shopping responsibilities?
- What is the budget for our Christmas holidays spending?
- How do we instill our Christian faith in our children at Christmas?
- What traditions have been meaningful to you and you want to do again this year?
- What are the ways our family can bless others?
- What can we do to brighten the Christmas season with the less fortunate people?

If we both want to arrive at a “one minded” or united decision, we must act with love and a willingness to compromise. Realize that your spouse has good intention, even though at times he or she will fail to be the person you want. See the best in your spouse.

Through communication express your expectations clearly, as well as understanding your spouse’s expectations. Be open hearted, delight in the fruit and blessings that the act in “oneness” could bring…….this may be the best gift you can give to your spouse or receive from your spouse this Christmas!

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity” Psalm 133:1 (RSV)

~ by Brooke

