

The Journey – Part Six – Exalt

by Lloyd Biddle

Let Us Exalt His Name Together

"Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together."

- Psalm 34:3

On Christmas of 1987, God birthed in Tom and Bonnie Lentz a desire to help people. Tom, an artist, created a sign that simply said, "Jesus". With a desire to exalt Christ and experience the true meaning of Christmas, they hung the sign on the front porch of their downtown apartment in Bloomington, IL. From this simple act of lifting up the name of Jesus, homeless and hurting people with a variety of needs began knocking on their door looking for help. From their living room, they ministered to broken people who needed help putting their lives back together. Their home grew into a coffeehouse where the main drink being served was the gospel of Jesus Christ. In October of 2000, the Jesus Coffeehouse moved to a building of its own and was established as a missionary outreach. To this day, Tom and Bonnie Lentz lift up the name of Jesus and God uses them to build His kingdom.

Think about the power of a married couple with this life goal in mind: "Let us exalt His name together." In this phrase, there are two key concepts: 1) exalting God and 2) togetherness. First, let's consider what exaltation is all about. To exalt God is to lift up His name, to make known His name among the peoples. Here are several ways I have seen couples exalt the Lord together:

- Sing and/or play music in their local church choir or worship team
- Serve as co-greeters to people entering the sanctuary on Sunday mornings
- Teach children's bible classes together
- Pray together each day
- Lead the married couples' ministry at their church
- Run businesses together that are founded on Christian principles, in recognition of the fact that their professional life is a vital part of their service to Christ
- Volunteer in community organizations aimed at helping needy

- people
- Love their neighbors and engage them socially in a manner that draws them to Christ

In whatever work the couple participates, the goal is to glorify the name of Jesus Christ in the process.

The second concept I want to explore is togetherness or Christian fellowship. The fellowship I am talking about here transcends simple friendship or partnership because it is rooted in Christ, and the Spirit of Christ empowers the relationship. When Christians are in fellowship they "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27).

Let me share an example of fellowship from my own marriage. Debbie and I have different spiritual gifts and natural abilities. For instance, she is a gifted administrator and a talented singer. I am gifted in teaching and preaching the Word of God. And in part, because of our differing gifts and abilities, we have different ministries. Debbie has a vibrant music ministry both as a soloist and as a member of various ensembles. God has granted me a preaching ministry that has allowed me to minister the Word to folks in Missouri, Illinois, and Wisconsin and as far away as the Bahamas. On occasion, our ministry giftings and callings take us away from one another. For instance, a few months back, I was preaching at a church in Wisconsin, while Debbie was attending a women's conference in Atlanta. We have found that even though we are sometimes away from one another doing the work God has called us to do, His Spirit still works in us both to make us productive servants of the Lord. Yet, something dynamic happens when we are able to serve the Lord together in the same place. We experience both the power and joy of Christian fellowship. God seems to accomplish more when we minister together for His glory than we could ever accomplish on our own, for "two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labor" (Ecclesiastes 4:9). As an example of this, Debbie and I publish this newsletter together. We try to pair up her talent as a writer, sense of style and skill in computer graphics with my love to explain the scriptures. The end product is much better than it would be if either of us tried to publish it by ourselves.

I want to encourage you to be intentional about your service to God as a couple because it is a tremendous way to honor the Lord Jesus and provide a great example for other couples seeking to serve the Lord and strengthen their marriages through spiritual fellowship. The fact that Debbie and I have always been active in the churches we have been

members of since we married in 1989 has been like cement for our marriage. We are more than just marriage partners; we are partners in the gospel. Even if we have days when we don't like each other that much (and those days are few and far between), we can always agree that we love and serve the Lord. We are united in our goal to serve Him and we are committed to serving Him together at the same local church and together outside the church. I believe that if we will concentrate on lifting up Christ together, He will lift up and sustain our marriage in the process. In fact, that is our testimony.