

Love is a Choice / Peaceful Words

Tita: Sienna could not believe how she was feeling. It was her wedding anniversary. She had only been married for a few years and had always thought that today she would be so happy...but the truth is she was actually angry!

Carol: Welcome to *Women of Hope*, I'm Carol. It's so good to be with you again...isn't it Tammy?

Tammy: It is – I love the times we have together.

Carol: I wonder why Sienna was feeling angry on her wedding anniversary? We'd better listen to more of the story and find out... It's good to have you back with us again Tita...

Tita: Thank you.

"How can this be?" Sienna thought sadly, "I still remember how excited I was on our wedding day. I couldn't *wait* to be with Tony all the time. I thought he was the man of my dreams. But today I'm so angry...this has not been a dream...it feels more like a nightmare! I'm not sure I love him, I don't think I even *like* him anymore."

Sienna had always been a person who knew what she wanted. She also knew *exactly* how she liked things to be done.

The first year of marriage she was happy. Everything was new and exciting and they enjoyed being together. But then she began wondering..."Why does Tony leave his dirty shoes right by the entrance door? How many times do I need to tell him that this is not the right place to leave them?"

She'd tripped on those stupid shoes so many times! But he was so stubborn. He just didn't seem to care and kept leaving his shoes there...it was so annoying!

Sometimes it was not only the shoes...but he would leave his hat on the kitchen table! "Why do you leave this stupid hat here? Haven't I told you not to do this? I'm tired of telling you what to do!" she'd shout angrily.

"Then *stop* telling me what to do," Tony would shout back and so the argument would begin.

Throughout the years Sienna had found that there were quite a lot of things about Tony that she didn't like. He could *never* be on time and she hated being late. He would come home from work and not speak to her. She wanted to talk to him about her day. She tried but he didn't seem interested. He would just go off and do whatever he wanted. He hardly ever helped with all the jobs she had to do. And the few times he *did* decide to cook something, he left a mess everywhere, and she had to clean it all up.

Before they were married, he was more fun. They would go and visit friends...go for walks together...and from time to time he would bring her some flowers. But now that seemed to be a long time ago. Now they just argued all the time.

He even ignored all her good advice... "What is wrong with you Tony?" she'd shout, "can't you see that if you change, we won't have these arguments? But you don't seem to listen, you keep doing things that annoy me!"

Tammy: My...Sienna was very unhappy wasn't she? ...I wonder if you might be feeling like she did?

Carol: Maybe *you* started off excited like Sienna...you loved that man and could not wait to be with him for the rest of your life. But now, as time goes by, you feel angry and frustrated. You're

not able to see the good things in that person any more. All you seem to be able to do is focus on his mistakes?

Tita: When we fall in love with someone we see them as almost perfect. But when we begin to live with them we realize that they're not perfect. What Sienna was feeling was quite normal...their love for each other was changing from romantic love to real, mature love. This change needs to happen in all relationships. We need to *learn* to love our partner or spouse.

You may have *chosen* your spouse or perhaps in your culture your marriage was arranged. The truth is that in both cases we don't really know the person fully until we start living with them. So we have to learn to love our partner.

Love is not just that nice feeling we have at the beginning of our relationship. That soon ends and has to become *real* love.

Tammy: So Tita, what do you mean by 'real' love? I think I know, but can you tell us how *you* see it?

Tita: Sure. Real love is not just a feeling, it's a decision...a choice that we have to make. Every day we need to choose to continue to love that person and accept them for who they are. Let's talk about this some more after this lovely song.

Carol: This is *Women of Hope* and Tita is here with us again today as we're talking about the problems that Sienna seemed to be having with Tony.

Tita: Sienna was upset with lots of things about Tony...the way he left his shoes lying about...and his hat on the table. And he never helped with any jobs in the house. She thought that she was doing the right thing by telling him continually to change and do things *her* way. She really thought that if only he would listen to her everything would be all right. But the truth is that she had not accepted Tony as the person that he was. In real life we have to 'learn to love' our spouse. Sienna had been so busy trying to change Tony that she had not stopped to look at herself.

Carol: Yes...you might see the faults in your *husband* – but guess what? He's going to see faults in you too!

Tammy: That's right Carol. We often can't see our own faults...but...we all have them don't we!

Tita: We sure do. Sienna needed to look at her own life. She went to visit a dear friend who had been married for more than 40 years. She told her friend about all the things that Tony did and how annoying they were. Her friend listened patiently. When Sienna was finished she said something that Sienna was not expecting. Instead of feeling sorry for Sienna that her husband was so annoying she told her to look at herself and see if there was anything she thought she should change.

Sienna's friend was very wise wasn't she? Can I tell you a secret? You can never change another person. The more you try the more stubborn they become. But the good news is that you can stop trying to change them and begin trying to change your *own* behaviour.

As Sienna and her friend talked together she began to realise that it was time to stop telling Tony what to do all the time. She needed to find things to say to Tony that were positive and encouraging. Instead of trying to tell him about *her* day, when he came home, she began to ask him how *his* day at work had been.

Sienna tried to be less demanding and more patient. She stopped telling Tony what to do. She began to change. She became a lot easier to live with, because she was not always angry and complaining.

It was amazing for Sienna to see that as she changed, Tony began to change too. He began putting his shoes away – he really didn't want her to trip over them. And he could see how important it was for Sienna not to be late. So he worked hard at trying to be on time.

But some things about who he was he could not change. He will always be a quieter person than Sienna. He will never be as tidy around the home, or as chatty as she is. Sienna has learned to accept that about Tony. Now she doesn't get upset if he doesn't want to talk as soon as he comes home. Their marriage is not perfect, they make mistakes and argue from time to time but they are learning to love each other. And the good news is that I can tell you...they are still married after 12 years!

Carol: That's good. And you're so right Tita – we really can't change the other person. And the more we try, and nag about the things they do, the worse it will become.

We have another guest today. Sally will be here with a proverb for us to think about. Thanks Tita.

Tammy: It's good to be with you on *Women of Hope*. Sally, thanks for coming back to share some proverbs with us today.

Sally: You're welcome. It's good to be here again.

Carol: You told us last time that someone said a proverb is a "short sentence of wisdom". You said that the book of Proverbs in the Bible is full of short sentences of wisdom. And you said that no matter what our situation in life...or our education...or our age or experience, these proverbs are written for each of us, so we can grow in wisdom and character, and in our relationship with the living God. Was that right?

Sally: You have a good memory Carol – that's *exactly* right!

Last night it was raining hard, and I woke up to hear the Drip, drip, drip ...of water right over my head. The roof was leaking and water was dripping into the roof cavity above me!

Did you know there's a Proverb in the Bible that talks about dripping water on a rainy day?

It's in the book of Proverbs Chapter 27, verse 15. "A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day." Think about that - "A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day."

When I listened to the drip, drip, dripping of water in my roof, I thought it would never end! I wonder if sometimes I sound like that?

Nag, nag, nag...criticising, criticising...always finding fault.

Or being just plain argumentative... on and on and on.

A leaky roof can be very dangerous can't it? Last night my husband climbed up into the roof with as many buckets as he could find to catch the water. He also marked the spots that were leaking with chalk, so that later he could climb back up and mend them. They were only little drips, but they could have led to dreadful damage if he didn't mend those leaks.

Have you ever thought about the damage your drip, drip, dripping can cause? Not just today, but in weeks, and even years to come? What are your nagging words doing to your husband? ...Are there children listening to your criticisms? ...Do your neighbours hear you quarrelling? ...I wonder what God thinks as he hears you and I speaking so thoughtlessly?

Do you know what God thinks of a wife who is always arguing? Proverbs 21:9 says it is "better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife."

Oh dear! I wonder if my husband has ever wished he could crawl into a corner of the roof!!

Let me share another Proverb with you – one that I love very much.

It's in chapter 25, verse 11. "Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances."

Isn't that a beautiful proverb?

"Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances." I've never seen a golden apple set in silver – but I imagine it would be very beautiful. Can you imagine a beautiful silver bowl, filled with perfectly fashioned apples, each made of the finest gold? Can you see them catch the sunlight as it dances over the surface of the fruit? Or perhaps the golden apples are tiny gold pearls set in an intricate silver brooch, each one so delicate, yet perfect in its detail?

How would you describe such a treasure? Could you put a value on it?

I wonder if my words are like that – are yours? What golden apples have you spoken today?

Will you ask God today to take your drip, drip, dripping and give you instead the wisdom to know how to offer 'apples of gold in settings of silver'? Then your beautiful words will be appreciated by those around you.

Carol: Thanks Sally. We look forward to you coming back with another Proverb soon.

Sally: Yes – so do I...goodbye for now.

Tammy: Here on *Women of Hope* today we've been talking about a quarrelsome wife – one who nags and wants to change those around her. Can you think of a good word to describe someone who is opposite to that?

I can – what about the word – 'peacemaker'. It even *sounds* nice doesn't it! Jesus was sitting with his followers one day and he was talking to them about the way they should live. We can read about this in God's word, the Bible. Listen for the word, 'peacemakers' near the end...

(Matthew 5: v1-9 NLT)

'One day as Jesus saw the crowds gathering, he went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them.

"God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him,
for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

God blesses those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

God blesses those who are humble,
for they will inherit the whole earth.

God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice,
for they will be satisfied.

God blesses those who are merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

God blesses those whose hearts are pure,
for they will see God.

God blesses those who are peacemakers,
for they will be called the children of God.'

Carol: Thanks Tammy. Isn't it great to know that God blesses us when we try to live as he wants us to – being humble...merciful...having pure hearts...and being peacemakers.

Tammy: We have a letter we'd like to read to you today from one of our listeners. She has learned something from *Women of Hope* that has helped her in her life. She is 25 years old and has struggled with many feelings of anger. Will you read it to us Carol...

Carol: Sure... She says:

'I like your "Women of Hope" program. Lately I have heard a program about anger. I don't know about others, but it seems that everything makes me angry. I don't want to be an angry person, but many times I find myself in that situation. I want to forgive the others and to be a good example for them. In this program, I learned that it is necessary to let the Holy Spirit guide us so we do not hurt others.'

We're so glad that what you heard on *Women of Hope* has helped you. And you're right, when we ask Jesus to control our life he *does* send his Holy Spirit to help us. We talked about that not long ago. Jesus promised that when he left the earth, he would send his Holy Spirit to help us and guide us. So if you're struggling with anger, or you find yourself quarrelling with others a lot, maybe you can ask Jesus to help you. When we pray to him he hears us and answers our prayers.

Tammy: We have our friend Mornette here today too...what a lot of people we've had here today! She's going to tell us some more about praying to God. Thanks, Mornette.

Mornette: Jhoti and Tina were good friends, but Jhoti was feeling embarrassed. She had been with some of her school friends, and had gossiped about Tina, and told them something that was meant to be a secret. When she met Tina after school the next day, she felt guilty and awkward, and didn't know what to say to her friend. 'What's wrong?' asked Tina, 'is there something the matter?' Then Jhoti told her what she'd done, and said how sorry she was for forgetting it was a secret. Tina was hurt, but she forgave Jhoti. They hugged each other, and then they could talk like old friends again.

It's like that when we pray, isn't it? If we come to God with wrong things in our lives, it's hard to pray. We need to confess - to tell God what we've done. Confession means that we agree with God that it was wrong, and say that we're really sorry, and that we don't want to do that wrong thing again. And you know what? The Bible says, 'If we confess our sins, God will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive our sins and make us clean again.' (1 John 1:9)

Confession is an important part of prayer, because it keeps things clear and open between us and God. We don't want to feel too ashamed to come to God in prayer.

***(Based on Prayer, Talking with God – "Confession" page 14 Stonecroft Ministries, 2006)
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Carol: Tita talked today about Sienna who was a very quarrelsome wife. Do you think it would be a good thing for Sienna to pray and ask God to forgive her for being quarrelsome? ...Yes I think it would be good. When we realise that our behaviour has been selfish, it's good to ask God to forgive us. And then we can ask the Holy Spirit to guide us and help us to live in a way that will help and encourage those around us.

Tammy: And do you remember what Sally said about a quarrelsome wife? Yes she said a quarrelsome wife is like a dripping tap. And God's word says in Proverbs – it's better to live on a corner of the roof that in the house with a quarrelsome wife! So my friend, let's take notice of our words ...and ask God to help us make them 'like apples of gold in settings of silver' ...beautiful, peaceful words.

Carol: Goodbye and God bless you.