

A GOD OF ORDER

I grew up in a Christian home, where we started out in the Methodist Church and later in my teenage years moved to the Hatfield Church (which became River of Life) in Vanderbijlpark. There was an amazing youth group with such a passion for praise, worship and fellowship. As the Church grew many of the youth moved away and the closeness disappeared.

By the age of twenty-one, I had finished studying and started working as an Assistant Supervisor at the local public swimming pool and this is where I met my husband. I was teaching swimming, and he was a professional canoe triathlete wanting to learn another discipline. He and a group of canoe triathletes came for swimming technique lessons. I was head over heels from the at first sight, but he did not make it easy for me. A week after, asking me out he left for a two week visit to his parents and switched off his phone. Later he told me he wanted to see how I would react. Apparently, I passed the test. Long story short we got married 2 years later.

Growing up with a single mother, I never got to see the model for marriage and therefore no point of reference for me. I stepped into marriage as a quite independent person with a very Afrikaans husband. Culturally we were vastly different, this was a recipe for some surprises. I was extremely grateful that his wonderful person had chosen me, that at any hint of disagreement I would already apologise no matter where the fault was.

I believe marriage is a state in which imperfect people often hurt one another; forgiveness can allow God's redemptive power to transform that marriage. I remember one of our biggest challenges was time. He was always on time for everything, and I was always finishing something to rush off to the next. I remember after teaching swimming in the evenings and closing the pool at the place I was hiring from, I would often be a few minutes later than he would expect and this would upset him greatly. This went on for years, deep down I was feeling resentment and anger. At boiling point, I began to rebel, feeling very caged in.

Life became so busy, with my husband working and training and I would work and then teach swimming, that we barely had time for our children. But this could only carry on for so long. By this time, I was already starting to feel tired and the load got heavy. I know God already then heard the cry in my heart. Not realising the toll this busy life was taking on my children who were still small and yearned to spend time

with us. Later, when God had intervened, I learned my daughter prayed that I would stay home with her.

Thankfully, Covid happened (although when it happened, I felt the walls come tumbling down for me) and our “normal” lives were thrown upside-down. A whole sequence of events followed. For the first 5 weeks we all (my husband, I and my two children) stayed home. I continued to work from home and started homeschooling my children. This was challenging and frustrating for me as I was so used to my routine of getting up going to work, returning home and teaching swimming. It is all I had known for twenty odd years. As the weeks past my employer started putting on the pressure for me to return to the office and this is where the humbling process first started.

I held on tightly to my security of a salary as I felt it was my responsibility to bring in money for the home and family. During the first few months of Lock-down, God was already working in our lives. He had laid on our hearts to move to the Western Cape. This meant selling our house, every worldly security we held on to God wanted us to let go of. My husband encouraged me to leave my job, but I really did not want to. I finally resigned, a bit grudgingly, but God has work so much in my heart to heal and make me whole again. About a year after lock down had started, I was able through Jesus to focus on what was important to God and no longer myself. It is still a daily process of humbling myself before God, but it is no longer grudgingly. I became submissive to my husband, not out of duty but out of respect.

The sale of our house took a lifetime for me. I thought it would sell within 3 months, but once again God had other plans. God knows far better, than we could even imagine, what he has planned for us. Our house sold after more than a year. We had to move to my sister’s weekend house as our new house was not yet built and would not be for another year, although we did not foresee this. We ended up staying there for about 8 months. This was again change but God drew us closer and closer to him. I learnt to rest and listen and wait on God. But our journey to the Cape was not over. The children and I then moved to my parents-in-law in Bloemfontein for another 6 months while my husband continued to work in Vanderbijlpark which was about 4 hours drive. It is incredibly humbling to live with people under their goodwill and not having your own home. This was also the first time we had been separated in our then 21 years of marriage. He would come to Bloem on weekends with the traveling becoming a financial strain and the distance and emotional strain. We continued to lay it before God and trust Him and in May 2023 we gave up all security and my husband resigned to move to the Western Cape. Our entire move, from the sale to places to stay and finally to our new house has taught us to trust God with everything. It has taught me to trust my husband as the leader of our family.

We took the big leap of faith and moved down to the Cape to camp for what was supposed to be a 2 month holiday while the builder built and finished the shell of our house. It became 4 months through a very raining winter season. I remember waking up one night and praying "God please calm the storm". I was sure our tent was going to blow away. Another night I was awoken to the stirring in my heart to read Job and what a blessing this book was for me. How through loss and illness Job continued to praise God. Wow.

Then the Character building started, or should I say the builder who God used to build my character. After 4 months in the caravan park with many tears (the builder still not showing signs of completing our house) we moved to our property to live in our caravan just under the floor of the house. It was supposed to be for 2 weeks and ended up being another 4 months. Patience, faith and humility is something I thought I had lots of. God, through his Word and the situations we had to go through, has taught me these three things. Every time my human nature pops out God quickly corrects me to keep me on the correct path.

Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not see." To have faith as Abraham did: Hebrews 11:19 "Abraham reckoned" – to believe God was able to raise Isaac up again." He never tried to negotiate or simply refuse to do as God had told him. All because he reckoned.

Proverbs 3: 5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

Ephesians 5:22 – 25 "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,"

Colossians 3:18-19 " Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them."

Corinthians 11:3 "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."