

Peter Tan-Chi**CHOOSING TO FORGIVE**

Ruth Manimtim-Floresca

Peter Tan-Chi, the Founder and Senior Pastor of Christ Commission Fellowship (CCF), is also a former businessman. His businesses, which are now being managed by his son, enable him to serve in CCF as a self-supporting full-time minister. He also sits as a member on various boards including those of the Far Eastern Broadcasting Corporation (FEBC), and the International Graduate School of Leadership (IGSL).

“The Bible has always been my guide from my youth up ‘til this day,” Peter said with conviction, as he recalled God’s faithfulness and leading in his life. “For example, when I married Deonna, we followed the Biblical principle of honoring our parents.”

Peter met his beautiful, blonde-haired and blue-eyed wife, Deonna, in 1972 when she was on tour in the Philippines with a Christian singing group called The Crossroads. “The confirmation to marry her first came from God’s Word, but It was also important that we asked and received the blessings of our parents before we were married.” To make this happen, Peter booked a flight from Manila to Florida by himself in order to introduce himself to Deonna’s parents for the first time and ask her father for approval.

Happily married for almost thirty five years now and actively serving the Lord with his wife, Peter has always resolved that God’s principles will be the guidepost of his life and his marriage. The couple counsels others to apply the same formula for a successful marriage. “We show them what the Bible has to say about marriage, forgiveness, and reconciliation, and we’ve seen many couples reconciled and their families restored because they obeyed God’s Word.”

Peter’s commitment to follow the Lord, however, has not exempted him from personal trials. “Only God’s grace and His Word guided me trough these tests of character and faith.”

A Lesson in Forgiveness

One of his first major trials happened in the 1970's when his father's company was sequestered by Marcos cronies during Martial Law. Back then, Peter's father owned the largest textile mills in the Philippines as well as a polyester and chemical plant. When the family company was sequestered, Peter, who was Vice President at the time, was fired. "At the time, we couldn't fight. Of course I was not happy and I could have become bitter, but I remembered the passage in Romans 8:28: 'God causes everything to work together for good to those who love Him.' And I knew I had to make a choice ... to be bitter and angry or to trust God. I made a decision to just trust God."

Eventually, God, in his faithfulness, opened new doors and Peter was able to start a successful housing business.

Later, he was presented with a real test in forgiveness when, after martial law, the person who took over his father's company became ill. A mutual friend asked Peter to share the gospel of God's love and forgiveness with him.

"My initial reaction was reluctance. The person who asked me also told me, 'You are probably the only one he will listen to.' In my mind, I was thinking, 'Why should I go and share the gospel with him after what he did to our family?' But again, the Bible became my guide. It tells us to forgive others as God has forgiven all of our sins in Christ Jesus. So, I decided to truly forgive this man from my heart, and I went to his house to share with him how he could receive eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. I stayed with him and led him in prayer to trust in Jesus. He thanked me afterwards and soon after that he passed away."

His most heartbreaking trial

Losing a family business and having to forgive the person who took it all away was difficult enough, but that test paled in comparison with what happened over a decade ago. "It was probably the most painful experience of my life.

"One Friday night after teaching Bible study in a friend's house in Makati, my wife and I returned home around 11 PM. When we arrived, we saw policemen outside

our house and we realized that our house had been robbed. Then, to our shock, we learned that the robbers had tied up our children and raped one of my daughters.”

This incident led Peter to the Lord in desperation. Losing a family business was nothing compared to this. God had allowed something terrible to happen to one of his own children. Heartbroken for his daughter’s sake, and wrestling with questions that only God could answer, Peter clung to God in faith and was reassured by His word. He decided that he would choose to believe in God’s goodness and His plan for his family and for his daughter.

“God helped us to survive that ordeal. This showed me that God loves us and He promised to cause all things to work together for good to those who love Him. We surrendered our heartache, pain and our daughter to the Lord. By the grace of God, my daughter is now happily married, a mother of three sons and actively serving the Lord. Also, as others observed how we trusted in God and His Word in this trial and experienced His grace, they were encouraged to trust in God and His Word in their own trials. It made me more effective in teaching others that God’s Word is indeed true.”

Life lessons

“When the Lord took away my business, He gave me something better. When my family went through a painful trial, we learned to trust Him more.”

Without a doubt, life is made up of many choices and when it comes to choosing paths, “Ask yourself how you can be most effective. The ‘where’ and the ‘what place’ are minor details. The major one is really the direction of your life. It may not be easy to forget the bad things that happen to us, but they need not keep us from moving on. I could have gone through life angry and bitter, but the Bible says forgive and move on by faith, and so I did. When we make this choice, instead of becoming *bitter* because of our trials, we become *better* by God’s grace.”