

## THE STORY OF MUHIMBO THOMAS AND HIS WIFE GRACE MUHIMBO

*Grace:*

I regretted the day I got married. My husband and I seemed very incompatible. But we were seven years in marriage with three kids, the youngest being one year. Verbal and physical violence characterized our relationship. For me it was an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Whatever wrong Tom did to me, I paid him in the same currency. Whenever he verbally insulted me, I insulted him back. In the seven years of our marriage we had physically fought over thirty times and many times, I had sought refuge with my family. Tom had several times threatened to marry one of his former girlfriends and divorce me. "Over my dead body," I told him, and got ready to fight to my last fist.

After one of our fiercest fights, I went to seek help from a counselor, Aloysius, who is also a regular speaker on the FM radio station about marriage and family. Aloysius invited me to a Marriage in Christ program. I asked my husband to come with me but he vehemently refused. I attended two weekends of Marriage in Christ alone, and that was a turning point in my life. I realized there was not even an inch of Christ in our marriage. We were fighting fiercely—but Christ did not fight. I went on to attend a Challenge Weekend of Christians in Commerce, where I was also challenged to live as Christ. I prayed for the spirit of Christ to make me as submissive and docile as Christ himself. The Spirit came, and made a whole world of difference in our marriage.

*Tom:*

I came home ready for a confrontation—but Grace was very peaceful. I knew what I was doing was very provocative. I wanted Grace to know that I commanded the whole of authority in the home, so I made several unilateral decisions. One day I fired a housemaid and the next day I brought in a new one without involving Grace, but Grace did not say a thing. Grace's behavior and response to my behaviors started challenging me. She remained calm and good despite my provocations. I knew something special had happened to Grace. I started feeling guilty for my behavior towards her.

*Grace:*

From the Marriage in Christ program, I had learnt to seek the face of Christ. We were not wedded in the Church, but I knew Jesus still loved me and wanted me to be peaceful. Whenever I felt abused and provoked, I consciously refused indulgence in my emotions, but chose to seek Christ. I had fought the Goliath way long enough to no avail, and so I had chosen to fight the Jesus way, the battle of surrender and submission. I learnt to sit at the feet of Jesus and pray. I learnt to stop struggling and relax in Christ who struggled for me. I learnt to replace revenge with forgiveness. I would go to Jesus and say, "Lord, I have come to your feet to forgive Tom and relax." I drew a lot of peace from staying with Jesus.

*Tom:*

A battle-free marriage was a very good experience, and I knew Grace was responsible for this peace. It would be total peace if I made a contribution like Grace was making. I kind of learnt that Grace was making a big sacrifice for the peace in our marriage. I resolved to make a contribution for a peaceful coexistence with Grace.

At a Marriage in Christ program, to which I agreed to go with Grace, the preacher said that a happy marriage does not come about automatically. He said it takes commitment and sacrifice. I decided to sacrifice my pleasure and company outside home. I started staying home with Grace longer than before. I started seeking Grace's mind for whatever I wanted to do. Grace became happy; our home became a nice place to live in.

On one hand I lost some friends and some social activities I liked—but on the other hand, I regained my wife and home. The loss of some friends and some social activities were the sacrifices I had to make for the stability of our marriage and family.

*Grace:*

I was dumbfounded when Tom suggested that we solemnize our marriage. He'd always refused a wedding with several excuses. "We shall wed without money," he now said to me.

On January 10th, 2020, we wedded in church. The Marriage in Christ program resurrected our dead marriage.