

## Looking Back – December 2025

LWCC Marriage Ministries Email for December 2025

Our latest Email comes with our greetings for this Christmas / New Year season. We trust the last few days have been a time of connection with family and friends, and that in the midst of the rush and bustle, you have had time to meditate a little, and even gain some fresh perspective on The reason for the Season. I came across the following quote from Wynand Jacobs of FamilyLifeNZ which did just that for me a few days ago - "*Christmas is the remembrance of the ultimate act of relational repair. When the distance between humanity and God was too great for us to bridge, God didn't wait for us to fix it. He made the first move. He sent His Son, Jesus, to bridge the gap and restore the relationship*". How awesome is that!!!!

Our topic for this month, 'Looking Back': a time of reflecting back on how we have been as a couple through 2025.

They say you shouldn't live in the past, and that's probably true. But learning from the past – that's a different story. In fact, taking time to reflect on the year gone by – whether it's a calendar year, or another year of marriage – is a great way to learn more about yourself, your spouse, and your relationship. So why not cosy up together, have a read, then chat together through the questions that follow; maybe even grab a piece of paper to jot down some notes. Consider them from both an individual and couple perspective. We believe they'll help you gain some valuable insight, and along the way we'll provide some context for what we can learn.

What were your biggest challenges/struggles this past year?

When we're in the midst of a challenging time, it's hard to overlook its existence. But once we've made it through, those struggles seem to get smaller and smaller in our rear view mirror. On one hand, not dwelling on them is part of being resilient. On the other, it's important to give ourselves credit for overcoming and accomplishing hard things. Let's also not cover over the reality that you might still be struggling or grappling with the challenging season – acknowledge that. Not all obstacles have an end date and therefore get tied up in a nice neat bow, but you can still reflect on what you've learned so far and the progress you've made, and maybe ask each other, is there something we've missed, is there something else we could try? Am I being all I can be for you in this season?

In what areas did you thrive? What do you consider your successes?

Interestingly, some of your biggest success may have been overcoming the challenges you talked about in the previous question. It's worth celebrating! Looking back, we can see the role that our struggles play in helping us grow, and this can give us a new perspective as we take on tough endeavours in the future. There might also be areas where you simply kicked butt, full stop, period. Call them out for what they were! Achievements, successes, maybe even milestones. Too often, they come, they go, and due to the hurly burly of life, we move on. Stop a moment. Appreciate the memory and celebrate. Sometimes the issue is simply having trouble seeing your own strengths. So pause a moment, list the strengths you see in each other, and *Tell Each Other What You See*. And while we're at it, why not pause and consider where you thrived as a couple. Use these strengths to propel you as you head into a new year together.

What were your favourite memories?

Taking time to reminisce about the best moments and memories from the year not only is a fun way to connect, it also puts things into perspective and gives you an opportunity to feel gratitude. Were there some tough times? Sure. Were there also some really great times? Absolutely. If you're having trouble remembering all that happened over the last 12 months, why not take out your phone and scroll through your photos!!!

What did you appreciate about each other?

We all have our own ways of showing appreciation, but sometimes, there's just no substitute for hearing it verbalized. We often see ourselves differently than others see us – even our spouse – so you might be surprised by the ways they saw you being a great spouse! We're also more likely to keep doing things that we know our partner appreciates, so let each other know! Believe me, it's a win-win. In fact, why not think of three things you either really appreciated seeing in each other, or situations where they really stepped up during the year, and share those with each other. Then, if you're really brave, share how that exchange made you feel!!!

What do you want to leave behind as you start a new year? What do you want to bring with you?

Here's an opportunity to put intention behind a fresh start. Maybe you want to leave behind the odd bad habit or attitude, deal to some guilt or resentment, or even a toxic friend or two. Perhaps you want to bring with you a new appreciation of gratitude, a slower pace, weekly date nights. Why not create some accountability, have a good chat and come up with some things to make it real, versus just an abstract idea in your head. Consider talking about steps you'll need to take, and how you can help each other follow through on these intentions.

They say that hindsight is 20/20, and while we may not always see things as they were with 100% accuracy, there's definitely something to be gained from reflecting on the past. And it's much more powerful when done together. Without reflection, we have no gauge for how we've grown, what we've learned, or what we did right. By looking back, you can gain some good perspective, and you can also recalibrate yourselves to take some fresh steps moving forward – together.

We trust this generates some great moments as you bring 2025 to a close and look forward to the fresh prospects of a new year.

Blessings again, from your Marriage Ministries Team; Stan & Ronnie, John & Karen.

(Adapted from an Article by Prepare/Enrich)