
The Garden You Tend Together

A Wedding Homily for Anne Hamilton Taylor and William David Gorsline III
By the Rev. Canon George M. Maxwell, Jr.

I am told that Psalm 37 was on Anne Hamilton's bedside psalm calendar on the day the two of you enjoyed your first date and that it has become a symbol of how the two of you were meant for each other. It strikes me that it might also serve as a guide for how to be with each other for the rest of your lives.

Let's look at verses 3 through 6.

When the psalmist writes, *Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness*, he gives us an image as old as Eden and as fresh as this moment: the image of a garden.

I think this image offers a faithful frame for your life together — your marriage as a garden you tend side by side, day by day, season by season.

A garden is never an accident. It is an act of trust, hope, labor, and love. You plant seeds you cannot see. You water soil that seems unchanged. You place your hands in the earth trusting and believing that something will rise.

The psalmist knows this. To trust in the Lord and do good is to take up the tools of a gardener — to act with faith before you see results.

So marriage begins with trust. Not blind trust — but the trust of two people who freely and joyfully place their lives in each other's hands.

Trust is the soil of your shared garden. Without it, nothing grows. With it, everything becomes possible.

Then the psalm continues: *Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness*.

Cultivate. Faithfulness is not something you merely possess; it is something you practice. You water it with honesty. You protect it with gentleness. You fertilize it with forgiveness. You weed it regularly of grudges and misunderstandings.

The psalmist is calling not for a feeling, but for action.

Imagine a gardener checking the soil each morning. Some days the sun is warm and growth seems effortless. Other days the wind is harsh or the rain falls harder than the roots can bear. But the gardener returns because the garden is worth it.

Marriage asks the same of you: to return, to show up again and again—even when growth feels slow or hidden. Faithfulness is measured not in grand gestures, but in daily, humble returns to one another: in listening, speaking kindly, encouraging, apologizing, forgiving. Those small acts become the great canopy of a shared life.

William Wordsworth said it beautifully in Tintern Abbey:

*That best portion of a good [man's] life,
[His] little, nameless, unremembered acts
of kindness and of love.*

Then the psalm gives a promise: *Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.* In marriage, delight is a posture of trust -- trust that God is at work beneath the surface. And when you delight in the Lord, your desires are not only granted; they are shaped. They grow deeper, richer, more aligned with God's goodness.

Next the psalm says, *Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and He will act.*

A garden thrives when tended wholeheartedly. So does a marriage. To commit your way to the Lord is to place your joys and differences, your dreams and conflicts,

your hopes and disappointments into God's hands — trusting that God walks the path with you.

Finally, the psalm promises that God will bring forth your righteousness like light—steady, growing, brilliant. A marriage rooted in trust, faithfulness, commitment, and delight radiates that light: the light of patience, the light of understanding, the light of forgiveness, the light of tenderness.

So step into the garden God sets before you. Plant trust. Plant delight. Plant commitment. Plant faithfulness. Tend them with grace.

And in every season, may your love shine, like dawn, like noonday, like the light God promises.

Amen.