

Lessons from my Pastor

Written by Timothy Houston
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This month my pastor, Vernell Thomas and First Lady Loretta Thomas will celebrate 47 years of leadership at Greater Saint Paul Church of God in Christ. This noteworthy distinction puts them in a class by themselves. During my 10 years at this south Minneapolis church, I have come to know them as a loving couple that is a model for marriages everywhere. They have imparted in my life in ways that cannot be expressed in words. Here are 4 valuable lessons that I have learned from watching and listening to them.

1. Give God your best. Every day in your work and personal life, you are required to give your best effort. Without God as your standard, you will never give beyond your comfort zone. I see in my Pastor and First Lady the example that your best effort is your only option. If the church is likened to a field, then they leave it all on the field. They also epitomize the spirit of excellence.
2. Commitment matter. Whether in church or in marriage, you must be committed. The completion of a college degree, purchase of a home, or the raising of a family, all require commitment. My pastor and his wife have demonstrated this in over 55 years of marriage. From 5 AM prayer, to Tuesdays and Thursday night services, they have displayed unwavering dedication. They have demonstrated a standard of commitment before me that I am now able to share with others.
3. Relationship matters. Young couples today are making the mistake of seeking their best friend outside of their marriage. They may be forsaking oneness for the pursuit of friendship. Each husband should make sure he makes his wife his best friend or else when everyone else goes home, he will go home with a woman he hardly knows. In the case of Pastor and First Lady Thomas, they are truly one. When you see one of them, you see the others. I have observed their closeness and have I seen how they enjoy each other's company. They are truly each other's best friend.
4. Love covers a multitude of faults. Even when the people in our lives are not perfect, loves makes up the difference. Love covers the shortcomings of others. Love helps, heals, and forgives. It is the standard that a marriage must be built on and a community must live by. When we love our neighbors as ourselves, we can wish them no ill or do them no harm. Greater Saint Paul is a loving church that is committed to sharing this love with others.

These are only a few of the many great life lessons I have learned from my Pastor and First Lady. They are two of the greatest church and community leaders that I have ever met. They

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have imparted greatness in my life. I am a better man, father, friend, and community leader because of the positive impact they have had in my life. As they celebrate their 47th anniversary, I celebrate with them.

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