

Intimacy in Marriage

“...just about everyone inwardly longs for a thrilling love relationship involving oneness, a deep intimacy with another person, joy and optimism, spice and excitement, and that wonderful, euphoric, almost indescribable sensation known as “being in love.””

John Trent “Restoring Romance to Your Marriage”

We were **created by love and for love.**

- God established marriage in the Garden of Eden, a place of pleasures and delights.
- It is the only way we will be completely fulfilled. We were created to be intimate with God first and then with our spouse.
- **Matthew 22:38-39** speak about loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and then loving your neighbor as you love yourself.
- **Intimacy is an inner closeness and depth of relationship, a complete mutual awareness and unhindered access of interpersonal issues, information, and interests.**
- God is relational. He desires to have a personal intimate relationship with each of us.
- Marriage is the second greatest intimate relationship next to God. Your children will also experience intimacy from your relationship with Father and each other.

We lost the power of Relationships

- After Adam and Eve sinned, they lost the power and depth of their relationships with God and each other.
- In Genesis 3, God found them hiding from Him and they hid from each other with fig leaves. *Their relationship fell apart and fear of rejection increased.*
- America is caught up in seeing how many ways we can pursue happiness without getting it.
- People are miserable and hurting. We are trying everything else rather than finding fulfillment in relationships.
- We will not be fulfilled in this earth until we share all of ourselves with God and others.

Read the following scriptures and let the Lord show you the power that comes when you and your spouse focus on intimacy with God and each other. **Genesis 2:21-25 1 Cor. 11:11 John 17:21**

4 Essentials of Intimacy

1) Value – *Your marriage relationship must be more important than your closest blood kin.*

Gen. 2:24 We must say by our words and actions that “you are the most important thing in my life.” (more than job, other people, etc.).

- God showed He valued us so much He sent his Son, Jesus to die for our sin. **John 3:16.**
- What God has joined together let not man separate. **Matthew 19:6** Our spiritual union in marriage is now greater than with our blood relatives.
- What are you willing to give up to show your spouse their value?
- **You will never open your heart to anyone until you feel valued.**
- **Value** is important because **rejection is our greatest fear!**

2) Energy – A man is to “cleave” to his wife. **Mark 10:7** Cleave means to pursue with all your energy. It is a passionate word. God wants us to work on our relationship!

- Many people believe if you marry the right person you won’t have to work on the relationship. No! It’s not just chemistry!

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- It's easy to get lazy. It's important to continue to invest in your relationship with Jesus and with your spouse. Do not take each other for granted!
- Intimacy requires both people investing in the relationship. If you don't put effort into the relationship, you will soon drift away from each other.
- A relationship can be passionate when you work on it or the thermometer will go down if you don't **invest your time and energy** into the marriage.
- The couples married the longest are the happiest, not the honeymoon couples!
- **Energy** is important because **apathy is its greatest enemy!**

3) **Sacrifice** - *Oneness requires total sacrifice for the sake of the marriage.* **1 Cor. 7:3-4 Message**

When you get married, you have given the rights to your body away.

- American marriages are often viewed as a contract – no-fault divorce! It is the only contract the courts help you break!
- You enter into a contract to protect **your rights**.
- *A covenant is what you enter into to give up your rights.*
- Prenuptial agreements only set you up for problems. They won't work for selfish people.
- For a marriage to work both must lay down their lives to become one!
- It requires a total sacrifice like Jesus did for us. He held nothing back. God desires that we hold nothing back from Him or from our spouse.
- You may need to give up what you value for the benefit of the relationship (things, friends, time, money, preferences, etc.)
- We must be "naked" before each other, which means completely transparent with no fear of one another.

4) **Trust** – is something that is earned. It takes time to develop.

- *Your spouse needs to feel you are a safe place to open their heart and share any thought.* If not, we will be guarded with each other and cover ourselves with fig leaves.
- Valuing and respecting each other allows trust to be built.
- Anger, clamor, bitterness, etc. hinders you sharing everything you desire with your spouse.
- *The greatest scar from our past is rejection.* The fear of rejection often stops us from opening our heart up to another person. We fear you will reject me too.
- **Romans 8:39** tells us nothing we do can ever cause God to reject us.
- If your spouse fears you leaving, there cannot be intimacy. If a spouse is fearful of your response to their honesty by opening their heart, the fear will stop true love.
- *Never use the "D word - divorce."* *It is caustic to a marriage because it destroys trust.*
- **Trust** is important because **intimacy is the greatest threat to the enemy!**

Employ the above 4 essentials to each level of intimacy listed below.

4 Levels of Intimacy

A. Mental Intimacy - the ability to share your thoughts openly and honestly with each other.

1. Value – I value your thoughts, opinions, and input. They matter to me. **You cannot be intimate if you do not respect the other person's thoughts.**
2. Energy – I will work hard to listen and to understand what you are saying. Often men hear what you are saying, but it does not impact their hearts.

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3. Sacrifice – I will sacrifice my need to be right and judgmental. I will yield with a good attitude. **The objective is for us to be one.**
4. Trust – I will create a consistent caring atmosphere where you can share any thought safely. I am not going to reject you. I am your safe place.

B. Emotional Intimacy – the ability to openly and safely express our emotions in an atmosphere of sensitivity and emotional support.

1. Value- I care about how you feel even if I don't have those emotions. **You cannot have intimacy if you put each other down for their feelings – right or wrong.**
2. Energy – I am going to work hard to be sensitive and meet your emotional needs. **Men need to be honored and praised or appreciated. Women need security and love.**
 - The way to have a secure wife is to create an atmosphere that is loving, caring, conversational, transparent, and fun.
 - **Your actions towards her tell her if she is a priority in your life.**
 - She needs to know that you need her to meet your own comfort and well-being.
 - A wife will feel loved when she knows that her husband receives comfort from their spirit-to-spirit relationship.
3. Sacrifice – **I will keep meeting your needs before my needs are met.** I won't withdraw from you. I will try to understand how you are feeling.
4. Trust – I will build an atmosphere where you can share any feeling and be valued and supported. There will be no sarcasm or hateful attitude. We can be “naked and unashamed,” not judging each other.

C. Spiritual Intimacy – a sense of unity and agreement about the common purpose of our lives

1. Value – I value the call God has on your life, our marriage, and the dreams in your heart. Intimacy in marriage happens when you say, “I'm here to make your dreams come true.” Value each other's dreams.
2. Energy - I commit to work to fulfill God's call on your life. I will nourish and bring you to your full potential as much as I can.
3. Sacrifice – I let go of the desire to only promote myself or worry about myself. I haven't succeeded until **we** have succeeded.
4. Trust – I will create an atmosphere where you can share your dreams and know that they'll come true as much as it depends on me. I'm with you about the dreams of your heart.

D. Physical Intimacy – It is feeling as though your partner's body is your place of pleasure and delight. You give yourself to fulfill the needs of your spouse.

- You can have sex but not have intimacy.
 - **If you have mental, emotional, and spiritual intimacy, then sex will be intimate.**
 - Sex cannot be a replacement for intimacy.
 - Sex is the thermometer of your marriage. It reflects the overall health of your marriage; it is not the thermostat.
1. Value – I care about your physical needs. For men, sex is #1-3 in importance. For women it may be #13!
 2. Energy – Men need to know their wife is available to meet their physical needs with a good attitude. Women need more non-sexual affection. (hugs and non-sexual touches)

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3. Sacrifice – **1 Cor. 7:4** – I gave up my right to my body when I got married. Women have physical needs sexually, but they also want their husband's body to be available to serve them. (ex. –Helping around the house, Giving your wife a break to do what she wants to do, Helping or playing with the children, Cooking a meal. Washing the dishes.)
4. Trust – I will create an atmosphere where you feel valued and special. I am fully committed to you.

I ntimacy
N ecessitates
V alue
E nergy
S acrifice, and
T rust

If you are not intimate with God and your spouse, your marriage is in danger! It becomes easier for Satan to tempt you into more sin.

Things That Destroy Intimacy

- Lack of trust
- Lack of Respect and Love
- Selfishness – "What about me!"
- Finding fault – focus on what is wrong with your spouse – negative expectations
- Manipulation and Control – silent treatment, denial of yourself to your spouse (sex), threats, use the "D" word (divorce), bribes, comparison to others, religiousness, fear, shame, devaluing, nagging
- Criticism
- Sarcasm
- *Keeping secrets – dishonesty, lying*
- **Not feeling secure in the relationship**

Helpful steps to intimacy

- A woman invites the man into a relationship with her and offers her beauty.
- A man offers his strength as a man to lead, protect, and provide.
- *The husband needs to allow the wife to share without responding strongly* (duck and dodge)
He needs to value and respect her input.
- The wife has a better feel where the relationship is and conditions in the family – a man needs the feedback from his wife!
- ***Need to pray face to face regularly!!!***
 - sit facing each other and look into their eyes (keep your eyes open!) and say words of:
 - Repentance – ask forgiveness for any unloving, disrespectful, or hurtful things you have said or done towards your spouse since the last time you prayed.
 - Thanksgiving – while looking at your spouse's eyes thank the Father for several qualities in your spouse that you appreciate and admire.
 - Blessing – while looking into their eyes speak several blessings over your spouse
- Find a regular time every day to pray together. Families that pray together stay together!

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- Take time every day to communicate on more than a surface, factual, topical level. Get in touch with the feelings and emotions of your spouse.
- Ask each other questions that will help you listen and understand your spouse. (*See handout*)
- **Be Best Friends!** Friendship is the foundation of the relationship. Save the sexual part of the relationship until after you are married. You first need to develop an emotional, social, and spiritual relationship. If all a man wants is sex, then he is emotionally lazy and won't be able to relate properly with his wife.

Prayer for your spouse: "Lord, I'm frustrated about (something about my spouse), but I could be wrong, so please change me. If it's her, convict her and change her too!"

Six anointed words to say for your marriage – cultivate these in your marriage

1. "I love you."
2. "I hear you."
3. "I am sorry."
4. "I was wrong."
5. "Please forgive me for _____."
6. "By God's grace, I won't do this to hurt you again."

Have the B-E-S-T Marriage Possible!

John Trent uses this acronym to represent four positive elements to transform any marriage.

Blessing

- Speaking a blessing over your marriage can help carry you through difficult situations and bring peace to a troubled relationship.
- You can bless each other through your words, your practical behavior that shows kindness, by expressing appreciation and thankfulness, and praying for your spouse.

Edifying

- Build each other up through positive expressions that enlarge self-worth.
- A man edifies his wife by praising and encouraging her, and a woman edifies her husband by her loving responses to him.
- A wife's sense of her own beauty depends greatly on what her husband thinks of her. She needs to be cherished in public.
- In Ephesians 5 the wife is to "respect" her husband which in the Greek can also mean to admire, be in awe of, defer to, revere, adore, esteem, praise and deeply love him!

Sharing

- Sharing touches all areas of life – time, activities, interest, innermost thoughts, spiritual walk
- Demands giving of yourself, listening, developing awareness of times for deepening the love
- Involves becoming one in spirit, soul, and body

Touching

- Tender non-sexual touches tell us that we are cared for.
- Touches can calm our fears, sooth our pains, bring us comfort, and create emotional security

- Snuggling, cuddling, sleeping close to each other, and touching meet many emotional needs

Intimacy in the Song of Solomon

Restoring intimacy in a marriage requires that same deep desire to draw close and open your heart to give and receive love from your spouse. We ought to relate to our spouse as our **beloved** through time alone with them. It is a process of becoming one. In his book "*Eight Steps to Intimacy*," John Trent uses **Song of Solomon** to give us a biblical blueprint for understanding if we are really intimately in love.

- 1) **A Strong Physical Attraction** – She desires that he kiss her multiple times! (**Song: 1:2**) A strong physical desire (with constraint until the wedding night!) is part of a healthy courtship. The lack of sexual desire in the marriage is a good indicator of major problems and can lead to other problems.
- 2) **A Purified Character** – Her passion is based upon his character, not his strength, his money, or his cologne. His dignity, manners, morals, and inner integrity promote her passion. (**v. 1:2-3**)
3. **Respected by Others** – The wife is not the only one who sees his value. Others recognize and appreciate his character and confirm what the wife is seeing. (**v. 1:3**)
- 4) **A Biblical Balance in Roles** – The husband must take the lead and they work together. (**v. 1:4**) He becomes a servant leader who serves those he leads. As a leader, he respects her feelings, emotions, desires, opinions, and convictions.
- 5) **An Increasing Security in the Relationship** – Our outward actions towards our spouse builds the security and reinforces our love for each other. In verses **1:5-6** she is insecure about herself and his love for her. She is more possessive in verse **2:6**. After the marriage she is more secure in their love (**v. 6:3**) Then in verse **7:10** she can fully rest in his love for her, knowing his desire is for her alone.
- 6) **Give Praise** – Solomon uses several statements of praise and word pictures to reinforce her beauty and encourage her character and potential. He praises her seven times, the number of perfection!
- 7) **A Focus on the Loved Ones** – In verses **1:13-14** she compares her lover to a fragrance around her neck that is a constant reminder of his love. We need to keep our spouse on our minds throughout the day and let them know in various ways that we are thinking about them, especially when we are not in their presence. Cards, letters, phone calls, and flowers unexpectedly all speak to the other person that they have importance, value and a place in your heart.
- 8) **A Spiritual Oneness** – In verses **1:15-16** "beams of cedar and rafters of cypress" speak of woods that were strong, beautiful, expensive, and used primarily to build tabernacles. Two people in marriage must be equally yoked walking together spiritually with the same faith, or when the storms of life come, they will not have the strength in the marriage to stand.

Walking in all eight of these steps will help you build a biblically sound relationship with intimacy, love, and strength to endure all the tests and trials of life. Begin today to build intimacy with your heavenly Father and with your spouse.

To reach the deep love that we desire with our spouse or our heavenly Father comes from a relationship founded on a blood covenant where there is complete transparency. Intimacy comes from this safe environment of open meaningful conversations and draws the two together into a deeper and deeper love for each other. We must keep the desire for oneness stirred up inside us, not allow anything to distract us, and not allow anything to remain hidden. We also must keep our eyes focused on our true identity as His beloved son or daughter.

Worksheet Handout for Intimacy in Marriage

Intimacy in marriage is not automatic, but it takes effort and a willingness to be open, honest, and transparent in every area of our life. You can ask me anything and I will not withhold or hide anything from you. Secrets and lies are the enemies of intimacy. Your level of honesty will be the level of intimacy in your marriage. “*Into-me-see*” is a good way to remember that intimacy requires that we keep the roof off and the walls down in every area of our life. Intimacy also requires us to value our spouse, sacrifice our needs for the relationship, invest time and energy into making the marriage better, and protect the trust we have between each other.

Use the questions and activities below to increase your level of intimacy and enjoyment of being closer mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically! Use these ideas and others to become one and carry you through all the wonderful years you will have together!

1. Each of you separately make a list of 5 ways or things that your spouse could do that would create a safe place where you can share openly anything that is on your heart. Come together and compare your lists. Discuss how you are going to work towards meeting the items on your spouse’s list.
2. Talk about what you feel God’s calling and plan is for your life right now, both you personally and as a married couple. What is your vision for your marriage? Are there any things on your heart that you would like to do for others like mission trips, helping the poor, aid to the homeless, sharing in the prisons, etc. You might want to write them down and every so often get the list out and look at it together. Dream big dreams together!
3. Practice non-sexual touching and find out what your spouse feels comfortable with and what may be uncomfortable before you are married. Save the sensual touching until after the wedding! Look for opportunities during the times you are together to non-sexually touch each other like: 1) hold hand when you walk together, 2) put your arm around his or her waist or shoulder as you walk, 3) put your arm around her shoulder when you sit next to each other, 4) stand behind her as you watch a sunset and put your arms around her waist, 5) hug each other each time you greet or say goodbye.
4. Sit close to and facing each other and look into each other’s eyes for three minutes. Use facial expressions and other body language to express what you are feeling. After the three minutes, talk about how that made you feel.
5. While looking into your spouse’s eyes and holding their hands, express three things that you appreciate about them. Use emotion and feeling words to convey why you appreciate them so much.
6. Sit close to each other holding hands or snuggling under his arm and take ten rhythmic breaths together. At the same time each of you will breathe in through your nose filling you lungs completely by distending you abdomen, hold the air in your lungs several seconds, and then exhale through your mouth together. When you are finished, talk about how that made you feel. (After you’re married, you can synchronize your hearts by lying in bed either front-to-front or front-to-back and breathe rhythmically together!)