

Back **AGAIN** to  
the Garden

Marriage as God Intended



# Back to the Garden

**AGAIN**

Marriage as God Intended

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# Back to the Garden

## Intro

Think of the best dreams you have for marriage

– it can be much better

Think of the worst fears you have about marriage

– it can be much worse

*How safe is your marriage? The answer may surprise you. The biggest threat to any marriage isn't infidelity or miscommunication. The greatest enemy is ordinary. Ordinary marriages lose hope. Ordinary marriages lack vision. Ordinary marriages give in to compromise. Ordinary is the belief that this is as good as it will ever get. And when we begin to settle for ordinary, it's easy to move from "I do" to "I'm done."*

*Justin and Trisha Davis, "Beyond Ordinary: When a Good Marriage Just Isn't Good Enough"*

## **Why should you work on your marriage?**

1. A good marriage can always get better
2. A good marriage is one of the best gifts you can give your children
3. A good marriage will significantly expand the impact of your ministry
4. A good marriage will help you know Christ in a deeper way
5. A good marriage will protect you from temptation and failure
6. A good marriage will transform you and heal you

## How do you work on your marriage?

Let God lead you further in his redemptive arc

Creation --- Fall --- Redemption --- Restoration

## What will it take?

1. Honesty
2. Courage
3. Sacrifice
4. Perseverance
5. Faith, Hope, and Love

## What can be the result?

*"This is my beloved, and this is my friend."*

*Song of Songs 5:16*

## Stop and dream

1. How would you like to personally grow as a husband or wife in the next 12 months?
2. In what areas would you like to go from the "ordinary" to the "extraordinary" in your marriage in the next 12 months?

Prepare your heart in prayer, committing yourself to follow God as he leads you in the redemptive arc.

Now let's begin – with creation

What is the nature of man  
and woman?

Know who you are!

Nature determines function

*“So God created **man in his own image,**  
in the image of God he created him; **male**  
**and female** he created them.”*

*Gen 1:27*

## **Mankind**

### **Breathed into him the breath of life – Gen 2:7**

A living being – 2:7

In God's image- 1:27

Ruling over the earth – 1:28

Blessed by God – 1:28

Fruitful – 1:28

Very good – 1:31

### **What does the image of God mean**

#### **– Gen 1:24**

Relational – “let us”, “our image” – 1:26

Creative – “so God made...” – 1:7

Speaking – “Let there be...” “And it was so.” – 1:9

Seeing – “And God saw that it was good...” 1:12

Blessing – “God blessed them and said...” 1:22

## Male

### Adam - "from the earth"

Tend and protect - 2:15

Speak words of identity and life – 2:19-20

Loving engagement

## Female

### Eve – "Mother of all the living" – 3:20

Nurture and nourish

Be a "suitable helper" – 2:18

*"Suitable" – means "opposite", "against", "before"*

*"Helper" – 21 times in OT – 16 of these refer to God"*

Vulnerable nurture

### Genes

**XY** – determines gender in offspring

### Hormones

#### Testosterone

Competitive, action oriented, assertive, problem solving, conquest, focused, driven

#### Vasopressin

Sexual persistence, aggressive response to danger, creates a desire to stay with his mate and drives him to protect his territory and his offspring

### Brain

Separate sides

Systemized

Focused

Logical

High ability to control emotion

Project oriented

### Body

Designed to vulnerably enter and give life

### Genes

**XX** – double dose of femininity

### Hormones

#### Estrogen

Has a calming effect and aids memory. Makes a woman superior in tasks requiring rapid, skillful, fine movements, as well as everything requiring verbal fluency and articulation

#### Oxytocin

Creates a desire to tend and befriend, to experience warmth and nurture

#### Serotonin

Calming effect, creates desire for conversation and bonding

#### Progesterone

Causes a woman to feel parental and nurturing, giving her an overall feeling of well-being and contentment

### Brain

Twice as many connections

Empathetic

Multitasking

Intuitive

Low ability to control emotion

Relationally oriented

### Body

Designed to openly welcome and nurture life

*"A woman uses her intelligence to find reasons to support her intuition."*

*G.K. Chesterton*

The more truly masculine and feminine we are the more attracted we will be to our mate, and the more desirable we will be to them.

Helper – not demeaning – of the 21 times it appears; 16 times it refers to God, twice to Eve, twice to "no help", and once to the helpers of the king of Babylon.

## What is the purpose of marriage?

### **To solve the problem of being "alone"**

- "It is not good for man to be alone"  
Gen 2:18
- Alone – "separated", "apart"

### **Adam's reaction to God's creation**

- "This is now bone of my bone  
flesh of my flesh..." Gen 2:23  
Bone – substance, self  
Flesh – body
- When someone wanted to say we are close, he would say, "Behold, we are your bone and flesh". Gen 29:14, Judges 9:2, 2 Sam 5:1
- I'm with you, body and soul. You complete me.
- "At last!" Adam exclaimed. "She is part of my own flesh and bone! NLT

## What is the outcome of marriage?

### “One Flesh” - Gen 2:23-24

Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh

#### Five kinds of “one”

1. One house – roommates  
You share a home
2. One family – parents  
You share the children
3. One co-op – partners  
You share whatever you have in common
4. One person – merger  
One becomes lost in the identity  
of the other
5. One flesh – marriage  
All that is in each of you belongs to  
both of you

One flesh is not ...

- Mirrored hard drives – I don't have to know everything to be connected
- Siamese twins – I don't have to be present to be present
- Synchronized swimming – we don't have to look the same to be one

“One flesh” is not a loss, but a gain.

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts  
Something different is created, not just  
half of each (colors blending)

Deeply satisfying and enriching

How do you become “one”?

– Gen 2:24

**1. Leave**

- Your family
- Your previous relationships
- Sinful bondage
- False images of self (lies)
- Pain from the past (wounds)

**2. Cleave**

- In spite of fear
- In spite of insecurity
- In spite of doubt
- In spite of self centeredness

What is the experience of marriage?

Gen 2:25

**Naked**

- No self protection
- No hiding
- No withholding
- No fear

When do I experience that?

When don't I?

**Unashamed**

- No guilt
- No condemnation
- No sense of failure
- No shame

When do I experience that?

When don't I?

## Reflection with your spouse

1. When Adam saw Eve, he announced, "You complete me - body and soul!" In what way do you experience that your spouse completes you, both body and soul? What are some of the areas you are particularly thankful for?
2. Tell your spouse some specific ways you experience the fact that you are "not alone", since God gave you the gift of marriage. Why is that so good for you?
3. God's plan for you is to be "one flesh". Which kind of "one" are you currently? How do you experience that?
4. In what ways do you feel you are comfortably "naked (nothing protected or hidden) and unashamed" with each other. In what ways are you not yet there?
5. Pray together and commit yourselves to follow God in his "redemptive arch" for your marriage this week.



# Facing the Fall

*"All of our problems stem from our failure to reflect the image of God. Because of Adam and Eve's fall into sin in the Garden of Eden, we have not developed the "likeness" of God in the vital areas of our person, and we are not functioning as we were created to function. Thus, we are in pain."*

*Dr. Henry Cloud – "Changes That Heal"*

*"To get to the heart of marriage, we must deal with the heart of sin."*

*Dave Harvey - "When Sinners Say „I Do“"*

## Our sin pushes us apart

### 1. Obedience failure – 3:6

They chose the appearance of good over obedience to God

What seems best will often be very destructive

### 2. Role failure – 3:6

Man – silent and disengaged

Woman – unsubmitive and deceived

### 3. Emotional failure - They began to be controlled by destructive emotions. – 3:10

Fear

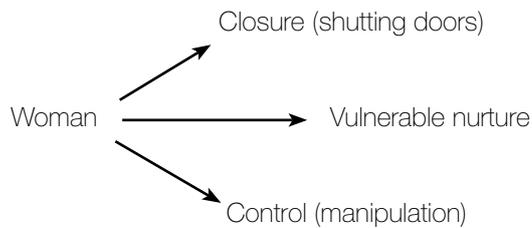
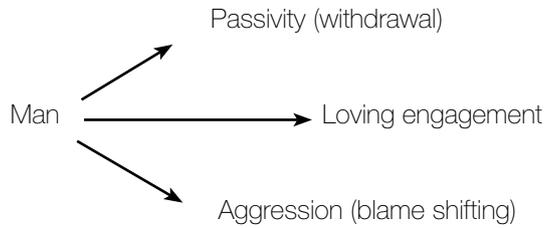
Shame

Distorts my behavior

4. Response failure – 3:7-12

Man – passivity, aggression

Woman – closure, control



*“The world is like a drunken peasant; if one helps him into the saddle on one side, he will fall off on the other side.”*

*Martin Luther*

This sinful pattern resulted in...

## The curse

### Eve

*“I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”*

Gen 3:16

*“Pains”* – means toilsome pain

*“He will rule...”* - same word as Gen 1:16

“the Sun to rule the day...”

(not the same word as 1:25 – “let them rule over the fish...”)

Means to dominate or have authority over  
“*Your desire will be ...*” – same word as  
Gen 4:7 – “sin desires to have you...” to  
control you (this word found only three  
times in OT)

**Woman** – you will experience pain in relationships  
and domination by man – you will desire control.

Because of the curse, she has a huge need for  
**safety and security.**

### **Adam**

*“Cursed is the ground because of you; through  
painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.  
It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you  
will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your  
brow you will eat your food until you return to the  
ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you  
are and to dust you will return.”*

Gen 3:17-19

*“In toil...”* - same word as Gen 3:16 –pain

*“Sweat of your brow”* – Nostrils (23 times) anger  
(205 times)

*“return to the ground...”* – “adamah”  
(play on words – like Adam)

*“from dust to dust”* – a symbol of futility

**Man** – you will painfully strive against thorns and  
thistles – you will feel frustrated and impotent.

Because of the curse, he has a huge need for  
**success and significance.**

## **Banishment from the garden**

After the curse, there is no way back into the garden.

You cannot just “work on your relationship” and expect to solve the problems. This is like sewing fig leaves to deal with your nakedness.

## **A ray of hope**

*“...he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” – 3:15*

*“The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.” – 3:21*

## Redemption in Christ

*“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.”*

*Gal 3:13-14*

*“But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.” Gal 3:22*

## **Presuppositions**

1. What God created us to be and experience in marriage is very good
2. Because of the fall and the curse this blessing is unobtainable
3. Only through Christ's redemption can we return to the garden
4. We need the help of the Holy Spirit to do this
5. There is no true and lasting change without repentance and faith

### **Without Christ...**

1. Woman will never be safe enough or secure enough. Because of that she will move from vulnerable nurture to closure or control.
2. Man will never be successful or significant enough. Because of that he will move from loving engagement to withdrawal or aggression.
3. What your partner provides will never be enough to meet these needs. You will be constantly disappointed.
4. Because of shame and self protection, true intimacy and "one flesh" will be unobtainable.

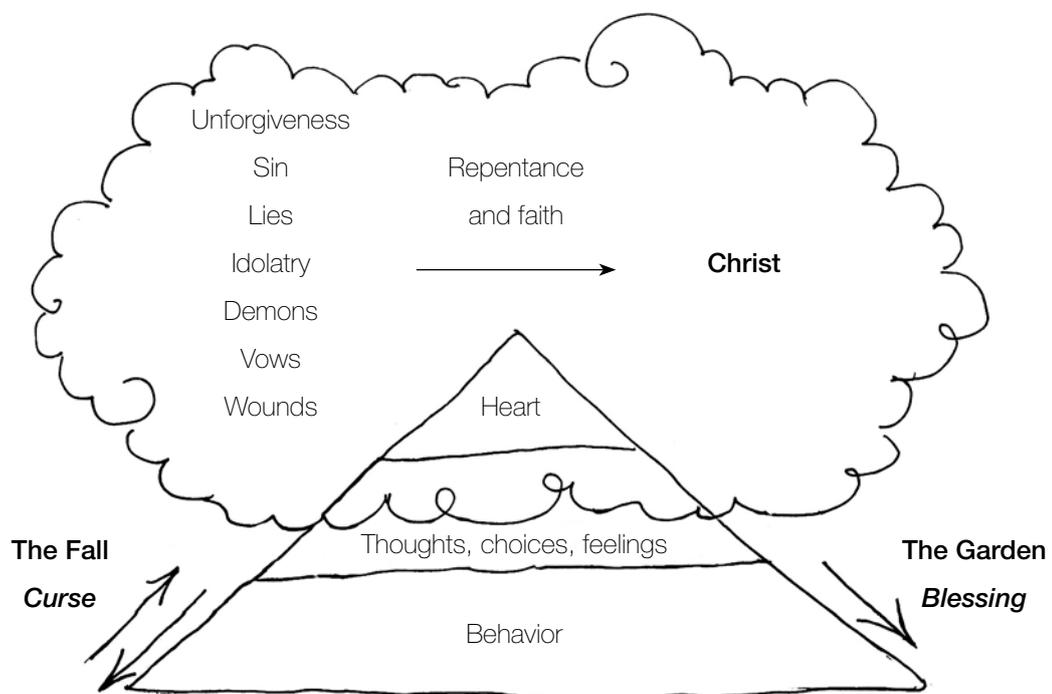
### **Let's review – to return to the garden I need to...**

1. Live out the image of God in true masculinity (loving engagement) and femininity (vulnerable nurture)
2. Live "naked" - without hiding or self protection
3. Live "unashamed" – not distorted by guilt and shame
4. Live in a "one flesh" union with my mate
5. Live out my God-given role as a loving head (man) and a suitable helpmate (woman)
6. Daily experience the joy of not being "alone"

### **What is the path from the fall to the garden?**

1. Our behavior shows us when we are living out the curse. However, we can't just change by adjusting our behavior. This would be trying to obtain righteousness by keeping the law. The purpose of the law is not to justify, but to make us conscious of sin. (Rom 3:19-20)
2. When you see behavior that reflects the fall, ask the Holy Spirit to take you deeper to the soul (thoughts, choices, feelings) and heart (spiritual) issues that are behind it. These will probably be hidden at first, but the Holy Spirit can reveal them to you.

3. Ask God to show you where you are depending on self (fig leaves, blame shifting, hiding, idolatry) rather than on Christ. Ask him to show you the true sin that is behind your behavior, or the lies that are energizing your responses.
4. This process is best done out loud, in prayer with your spouse. They will often have perspectives and insights you would not get on your own. The Holy Spirit will communicate specific things to you through them.
5. When the Holy Spirit has made it clear what the root causes of your behavior are, respond to him in repentance and faith. This will always involve a turning from self sufficiency to dependence and trust in Christ.
6. Now you can put on new behavior that reflects who you are in Christ and how you were made to live in the garden. Commit yourself to this new way of living in prayer and ask God for help and empowerment.



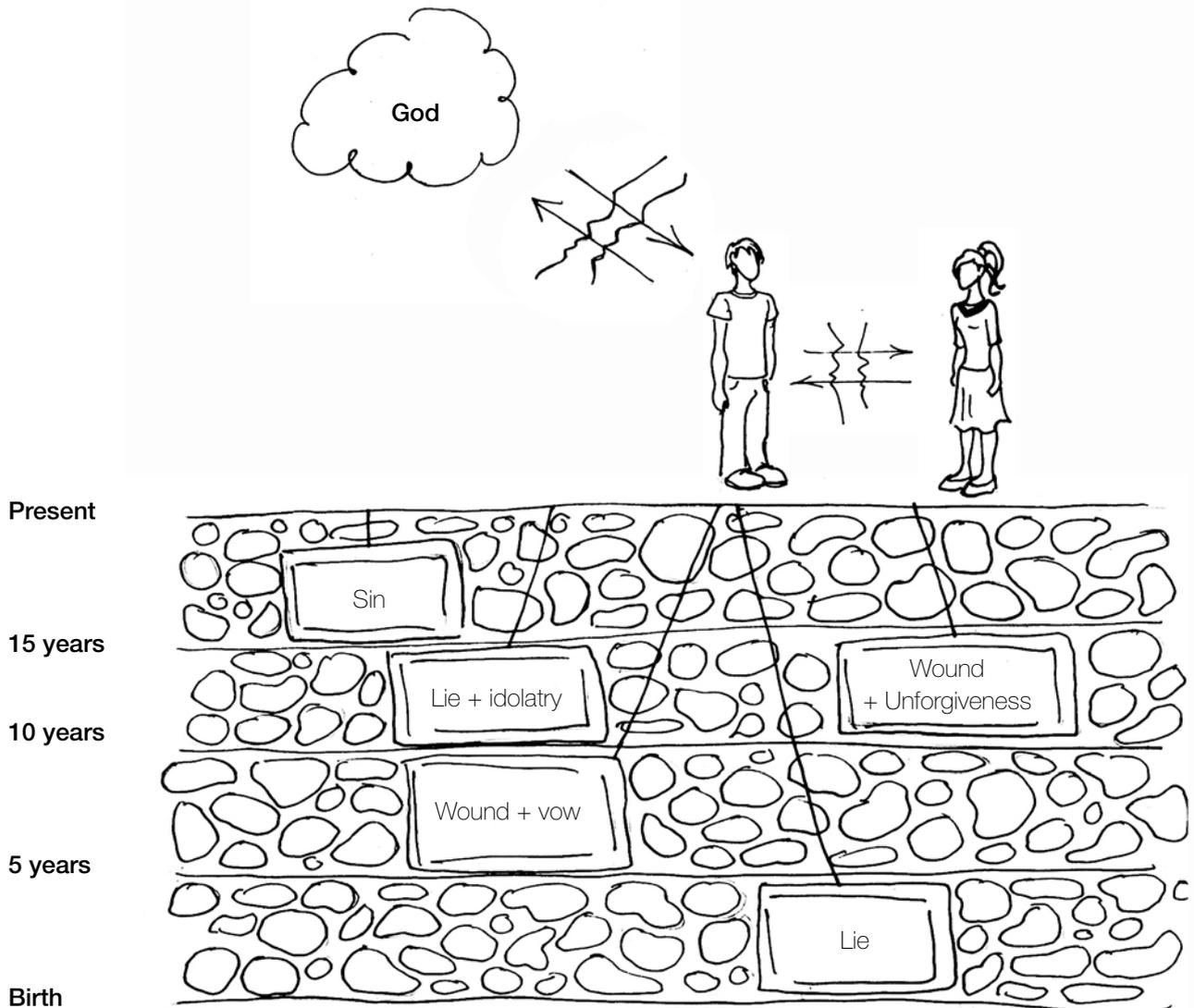
### What about the past?

*"Many married couples struggle year after year with recurring issues which never seem to be resolved.*

*The truth is, these issues usually have little to do with the present situation. They are rooted in unresolved historical memories. Healing of the original wound is the only solution."*

*Dr. Edward Smith, "Genuine Recovery"*

**Here is what that looks like in marriage:**



## How do you “leave and cleave”?

1. Ask God to show you through his Holy Spirit if your current behavior has roots in unresolved issues from your past. In prayer, ask him to take you back to the events or experiences that relate to your current problem.
2. In prayer, ask him to reveal to you any information about the following heart issues related to this event. Unforgiveness, sin, lies, idolatry, demonization, vows, wounds.  
(U Slid WW)
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ into this memory. What do you need to know about the nature of your Father (revealed in Christ) or the sufficiency of Christ's work for you on the cross? How does he see you and your situation? How does he want to reveal and incarnate truth to you in a way that renders the lie powerless?
4. Out loud and in prayer move forward in repentance and faith. Forgive those who have wronged you, confess your sin, renounce the lies, turn from idolatry, resist the devil, cancel your vows, and ask Christ to heal your wounds. Turn to him in faith for forgiveness, cleansing, protection, help, healing and renewal.
5. In faith commit yourself to living out of your identity in Christ and sufficiency in him in relationship to your spouse.

Our tendency will be to learn to live with chronic marriage problems by management, or try to solve them superficially through manual correction. True and lasting change comes through transformation.

*"To whom can I speak and give warning? Who will listen to me? Their ears are closed so they cannot hear. The word of the LORD is offensive to them; they find no pleasure in it... They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace."*

*Jer 6:10, 14*

Remember the problem of Adam and Eve when they encountered the fall. Two emotions will keep you from coming to God for true healing and transformation.

#### 1. Fear

- That I will try this and it won't work
- That I will find out something is really wrong with me
- That God won't communicate with me
- That God doesn't really love me
- That we will get lost and not know what to do next
- That Christ won't be enough
- That I will experience condemnation
- That I am not mature enough spiritually
- That you will try to make me be like you – change my basic nature
- That I will get really hurt
- That you will misuse what you discover

## 2. Shame

- That you will see things that will cause you to reject me
- That you will be disappointed in me
- That I will be laughed at or ridiculed
- That it is all my fault
- That it is actually much worse than I think
- That I am responsible and can't do anything about it
- That I don't have what it takes
- That I am really not a man (or woman)
- That there is something basically wrong with me and soon everyone will know it.

*Humans have created incremental change because we don't like the pain of transformational change. You don't need incremental change in your marriage; you need transformational change. You don't need an improved version of the old you; you need a brand-new version. You don't need a slight improvement in your marriage; you need a complete transformation. The great news is that God offers to transform you.*

*The bad news is that it will come at a price – a very high price: your complete selves. But your life on the other side of confession and repentance and pain and surrender and forgiveness will be the life you've been pretending to have all of the years you've tried to change a little at a time.*

*Justin and Trisha Davis, "Beyond Ordinary  
When a Good Marriage Just Isn't Good Enough"*

*"God whispers to us in our pleasure, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."*

CS Lewis

## Reflection with your spouse

1. Think through the discussions you have had so far with your spouse. What is one area you would like to change? This should be an area that takes you back to the original design. It should be an area that is causing frustration to your spouse, and if you changed it would bring great blessing to them. Write this down.
2. Share it with your spouse. Get their input and feedback and agree together that this is a key area to change. There should be only one issue for each of you.
3. Start with one of you and work "up the mountain". Think out loud together about how the behavior manifests itself. Then talk about what you know about the thoughts, feelings and choices that are behind it. Be transparent and honest as you talk about yourself and as you give feedback to your partner. Do this in a loving and sensitive way.
4. Now ask God to show you through his Holy Spirit what is hidden in the "cloud". What else is true about what is going on in your soul (mind, will and emotions) and heart (spiritually).
5. Ask if this is a current problem or just an "echo" of another unresolved issue from the past. If so, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal that memory or experience.
6. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if there are any of the following issues associated with this problem: Unforgiveness, sin, lies, idolatry, demonization, vows, or wounds (U Slid WW)
7. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ into this particular issue. What is his perspective, his work, his character, his truth, his sufficiency etc.
8. Respond in repentance and faith to what he has shown you. Do this specifically and out loud. In prayer and to your partner commit yourself to new behavior that is in keeping with who God has made you and how he wants you to live in marriage. Ask God to empower you and acknowledge your need for him.
9. Repeat this with the other person.



## Communication and Conflict

*The assumption was that if I had a healthy marriage, then it would be free from conflict. That isn't true at all. A healthy marriage isn't void of conflict; it is void of unresolved conflict.*

*Unresolved or avoided conflict becomes a cancer that eats away intimacy, trust, passion, and sexual attractiveness. When there is unresolved conflict in your marriage and you are ignoring it, blowing it off, or minimizing it, your spouse doesn't see you when they look at you; they see the conflict or the problem you are avoiding.*

*Justin and Trisha Davis , "Beyond Ordinary:  
When a Good Marriage Just Isn't Good Enough"*

*Four phases of a highly effective team  
– Form, storm, norm, perform*

Bruce Tuckman's model of group development

## Keys to good communication and conflict resolution

### 1. Put on the right clothes

*"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."*

*Col 3:12*

### 2. Tell the truth in Love

*"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ..."*

*Eph 4:15*

*"Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another."*

*Eph 4:25*

### 3. Guard against the two poisons of anger

#### – sin and sun

*"Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil."*

*Eph 4:26-27*

### 4. Resolve it right away

*"So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."*

*Matt 5:23-24*

### 5. Assume best intentions

*"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you."*

*Matt 7:1-2*

## **6. Start with the log, then deal with the speck**

*"Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."*

*Matt 7:3-5*

## **7. Halt reckless words**

*"Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."*

*Proverbs 12:18*

*"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*

*Eph 4:29*

## **8. Ask for, and receive forgiveness**

*"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."*

*Col 3:13-14*

Understand the difference between male and female communication styles

Men –

Women –

## Reflection with your spouse

1. Go back through the 8 keys listed below and evaluate how you are doing in your marriage. Give each one a number on a scale of 1-5 (one being worst, five being best). Do this first alone, then compare your thoughts.
2. What are your most common areas of conflict?
3. What are your most common areas of miscommunication?
4. Out of the eight areas above, which ones would be most important for you to work on?
5. How could you improve your ability to navigate the male/female differences in communication?



## Lead and Love, Submit and Respect

*"How a husband and wife build their marriage day-by-day and year-by-year is fundamentally shaped by their theology. It governs how you think, what you say, and how you act. Your theology governs your entire life. And it determines how you live in your marriage."*

*Dave Harvey, When Sinners Say "I Do"*

Eph 5:21 – Theme verse

Submit – military term – “get in line”

Hupotasso

Hupo – under

Tasso – to arrange

Every relationship has a third member  
– not a line but a triangle

This gives

Depth and content

Reference points

## Men have two basic responsibilities in marriage – 5:22-33

**1. Lead** – vs 23 – Be the head, the head must lead and take responsibility

Leading is not ...

Leading is ...

What if ...?

**2. Love** – vs 25-33

What does love mean?

**Sacrifice** – vs 25-27

Vs 27 – the result is a radiant wife.

This is a man's report card.

**Care** – vs 28-31

Vs 28 – the result is that you are loving yourself – you will reap the results

If your wife does not feel led and loved, she is right. Assume that her evaluation is correct, and take responsibility for changing yourself.

Women have two basic responsibilities in marriage  
– 5:22, 24, 33

**1. Submit** – 22, 24

Submission is not ...

Submission is...

What if...

Submission, in its simplest form is trust in God who is completely trustworthy  
Am I prepared to trust God to lead my husband to lead me.

**2. Respect** – vs 33

Respect is not ...

Respect is ....

What if...

If your husband does not feel submitted to and respected, he is right. Assume that his evaluation is correct, and take responsibility for changing yourself.

Love and Respect are like oxygen  
– what would happen if it were taken out of the room?

What if the other person doesn't hold up his position?

## Reflection with your spouse

### Women

1. Women, share with your husband examples of when you feel his leadership. What do you appreciate about the way that he leads? How does it make you feel?
2. Are there times that you feel he steps out of his leadership role and you are left without a covering or “head”? Share those with him.
3. Are there suggestions you have or feedback you can share that would make him a more effective leader? In a supportive way, pass those on to him.
4. Women, share with your husband examples of when you experience his love. What do you most appreciate about the way that he loves you? How does it make you feel?
5. Are there times when you don't experience his love and wish you did? Gently share those with him.
6. Are there tips or suggestions you have that would help him love you better? Be specific as you share, without being demanding or critical.

### Men

1. Men, share with your wife examples of when you feel respected by her. What do you appreciate about the way that she communicates respect to you? How does it make you feel?
2. Are there times that you don't feel respect, or experience disrespect from her. Share those gently, without anger or condemnation.
3. Are there suggestions you have or feedback you can share that would make her more effective at communicating respect and honor to you? In a supportive way, pass those on to her.
4. Men, share with your wife examples of when you experience her willing submission. What do you most appreciate about the way that she submits to you? How does it make you feel?
5. Are there times when you don't experience her submission? How does this impact you?
6. Are there tips or suggestions you have that would help her submit to you in a more effective way? Be specific as you share, without being demanding or critical.



## Traveling the Redemptive Arc

Remember the redemptive arc? Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration. Let's try to travel down it with some of the specific issues that you are dealing with.



## Passion and Romance

Why should you fight to keep  
passion burning in your marriage?

### **Song of Songs 8:6-7**

*Place me like a seal over your heart,*

*like a seal on your arm;*

*for love is as strong as death,*

*its jealousy unyielding as the grave.*

*It burns like blazing fire,*

*like a mighty flame.*

*<sup>7</sup> Many waters cannot quench love;*

*rivers cannot sweep it away.*

*If one were to give*

*all the wealth of one's house for love,*

*it would be utterly scorned.*

Passionate love gives you ...

So what is the level of your passion right now?

When your passion is strong you ...

(Song of Songs, Chapter 1)

- Fantasize about the other person – 1:2
- Experience delight and pleasure in their presence – 1:3
- Spontaneously brag about them – 1:3
- Can't wait to be with them – alone – 1:4

When your passion is strong others ...

- Experience vicarious delight and joy  
– they love to watch – 1:4

Passionate love doesn't occur by accident. Like any fire, there are things that fan and fuel it, and other influences that starve and extinguish it. Every fire needs tending. There is much that you can do to influence the conditions that keep passionate love burning hot in your relationship.

In every marriage there are:

Passion dousers

Passion drivers

## Passion douser #1 – A woman's insecurity about her body

### **Why?**

It doesn't match the ideal – 1:5

You haven't taken care of it like you would like to – 1:6

You don't know if he will really like it or not – or if you should hold back and cover up – 1:7

How does this impact passion?

**Remember** – you are the most beautiful of women to your man – 1:8, 6:8-9

### **What helps?**

1. Jewelry, perfume and clothes – 1:10-14
2. His compliments about her beauty – 1:15
3. Her confidence in her femininity – 2:1
4. Her giving herself freely, because her eyes are on him – 1:16, 2:3-6

Passion douser #2 – When she hides, and he disappears

**She hides – 2:14-15**

**5:2-5**

Why?

How does this affect him?

What should he do?

**He disappears – 5:6-8**

Why?

How does this affect her?

What should she do?

When she hides, a man's tendency is to use power to get back to her, when he disappears a woman's tendency is to punish to try and get him back. Neither of these will renew your intimacy and passion.

## Passion driver #1 – His words

Passionate men are verbally generous

How do they use their words?

1. To creatively and lavishly compliment their wife  
– 4:1-5
2. To tell her romantic stories – 4:6-8
3. To describe their emotions – 4:9-12

## Passion driver #2 – Her admiration

Passionate women voice their admiration

How do they express their admiration to their man?

1. By telling him what is attractive to them about him – 1:16
2. By voicing what they admire about his work  
– 1:16-17, 3:6-10
3. By letting him know how he impacts them  
– 2:3-6
4. By bragging about him to others – 3:11, 5:10-13

## Passion driver #3 – His initiative

Passionate men, remember this about your initiative

1. She longs for it – 1:4, 2:4
2. The amount of effort you put in means a lot to her – 2:8-9
3. You should not be tentative or half hearted – 2:8- 13
4. If your first try doesn't work, initiate again – 2:14-15

In Song of Solomon, she responds to his initiative by coming close and inviting him in – 2:16-17

## Passion driver #4 – Her responsiveness

Passionate women, remember this about your responsiveness

1. He longs for it – 4:12-5:1
2. Visual generosity touches him deeply – 6:13-7:9
3. A passionate woman is not afraid of his desire – and wants him to enjoy her fully – 7:8-11
4. A passionate woman does not just wait for her man, she initiates, suggests, pursues, and speaks. 7:11-8:12

## Summary

### **Passion dousers**

1. A woman's insecurity about her body
2. When he disappears and she hides

### **Passion drivers**

1. His words
2. Her admiration
3. His initiative
4. Her responsiveness

### **Reflection with your spouse**

1. What struck you the most about this session on passion and romance?
2. Think back to times when your passion was high and talk about what fanned the flame for you
3. Each of you choose one of the passion drivers to practice during the next 24 hours



# Sex and Intimacy

## A theology of sexuality

1. Sex is “communion” – the physical expression of a soul and spirit reality – Gen 2:24, Eph 5:31-32
2. My sexuality and sexual desire were created by God and are good when expressed correctly (Gen 1:27-28). There should be no shame in sex between married partners. Gen 2:25
3. Good sex creates bonds that hold a married couple together in spite of pressures that try to tear them apart. Matt 19:4-6

*“Sadly enough, most affairs start because of lack of affection (for the wife) and lack of sex (for the husband). She doesn’t get enough affection, so she shuts him off sexually. He doesn’t get enough sex, so the last thing he feels like being is affectionate.”*

*Willard F. Harley, PhD “His Needs, Her Needs”*

4. The Hebrew word for sex is “Yada” – “to know, deeply and intimately” – Gen 4:1

How does that compare with the words we use?

## How can you improve your sex life?

For key investments: **Commitment**  
**Communication**  
**Cleansing**  
**Creativity**

### 1. Commitment

Often one or more of the marriage partners is not satisfied or fulfilled sexually in the relationship.

Here are the common complaints:

- a. Little or no desire on the part of my spouse
- b. Sex is not often enough for me
- c. It meets my partners needs but not mine
- d. I feel untouched and unfulfilled
- e. My spouse wants something from me but I don't have anything to give
- f. My partner wants too much sex or too often
- g. I'm not comfortable with the things my partner is asking me to do

What should you do?

*"The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." 1 Cor 7:3-5*

**Change begins with you. Change begins with one key decision.**

“Out of obedience to God and love for my spouse I make it my goal to fully meet their sexual needs. I want them to experience sexual satisfaction and sexual fulfillment with me.”

Why?

1. It is my responsibility before God
2. My body belongs to my mate
3. If I don't meet their needs, I leave them vulnerable to Satan's temptation

How does this commitment express itself practically?

What about things I am not comfortable with?

**2. Communication**

In order to “yada” (express love to you physically) your partner needs to “know”. And often they won't know until you tell them.

Why is it often difficult to talk to your spouse about your sexual desires or frustrations?

Look at the nature of sexual communication between Solomon and his beloved

1. Honest and vulnerable – 1:2
2. Detailed and specific – 6:2-3, 7:6-9
3. Tactful and sensitive – 6:2-3, 7:6-9
4. Heart and hands – both feeling and doing – 7:10-11
5. Extended – they take lots of time, and don't mind covering the same ground again.

## What do I need to “know” about my spouse to fulfill them sexually?

### Male

#### What arouses a man?

- Sight
- An invitation
- Desire

#### What blocks his desire?

- Her lack of focus or desire
- Feelings of impotence
- Stress and overwork

#### How does a man like to be touched

- Polarity – genitals “+” body “-”
- Start with genitals and genital area
- Move out to rest of body, returning to maintain arousal
- Pace your touch to keep him highly engaged without going over the top
- Remember that he doesn’t need as much time as you do.
- Give him feedback about your enjoyment
- Don’t leave him without bringing him to climax

#### What gives a man the greatest pleasure?

- Your pleasure
- His climax

#### How does a man’s response change day to day?

- Not much

### Female

#### What arouses a woman?

- Emotional connection and care
- Loving touch
- Gentle pursuit

#### What blocks her desire?

- Unresolved conflict
- Feeling unloved or unheard
- Distractions (sights, smells, sounds, lack of safety or privacy)

#### How does a woman like to be touched

- Polarity – “genitals” –“ body “+”
- Start with the back, shoulders, face, hair
- Loving kisses
- Don’t forget feet, legs, inner places on thigh, back of knee,  
etc.
- Only after she is feeling touched and connected do you move to the breasts
- Leave the genital area for the very end
- Take as much time as you need

#### What gives a woman the greatest pleasure?

- Emotional connection
- Feeling adored and treasured

#### How does a woman’s response change day to day?

- Huge differences based on hormones, emotions, environment, events of the day, how she is feeling about herself, etc.
- What is great one day may be totally wrong the next day.

## Male

### How does a man's body respond to sex?

- Increase in Vasopressin – wants to defend and protect her
- Increase in Oxytocin – sensitivity, bonding, "tend and befriend"
- Deep relaxation and release (Prolactin makes them want to go to sleep)

### What happens if the man does not get sexual release?

- Physical pressure builds up. He becomes more and more sensitive to sexual stimuli and may experience restlessness and frustration.
- 72 hour cycle

## Female

### How does a woman's body respond to sex?

- Increase in Oxytocin – sensitivity, bonding, feelings of intimacy
- Release in endorphins (the body's natural pain relievers)
- Increase in Serotonin – calming effect, feeling of well being

### What happens if the woman does not get sexual release?

- She does not experience physical pressure, but may begin to feel emotionally untouched. Sometimes she begins to turn off her sexuality.

### Common sexual misconnects

## Man

- Goes too fast
- Needs sex to relieve stress
- Needs sex in order to connect with his emotions
- Touches her sexual organs too soon
- Touch is too heavy
- Can't speak because of his physical response
- Wants to enjoy his wife visually

## Woman

- Goes too slow
- Needs to relieve stress in order to want sex
- Needs to connect with her emotions in order to want sex
- Touches his sexual organs too late
- Touch is too light
- Needs words in order to respond physically
- Feels self conscious or used when he looks at her.

These are general characteristics, but each man and woman is unique. What is most important is that you honestly and openly communicate so that your partner knows how to best meet your particular needs.

### 3. Cleansing

Sex is a window into the soul.

1. Unresolved sin or wounding from the past will affect your current sexual connection.
2. Unresolved problems and hurts in your relationship will show up in your sexual connection.
3. Your personal insecurities will come to the surface in your sexual connection
4. Your shame will hinder your sexual connection
5. Your self-centeredness and selfishness will come to the surface in your sexual connection
6. Chronic stress and unhealthy living can hinder your sexual connection.

Sexual difficulties are an opportunity to grow!

If... you take the time and energy to uncover and cleanse the things that are blocking you.

Examples:

#### 4. Creativity

Your sex life is so important that it deserves some of the best of your energy and creativity.

Be creative with ...

1. Your normal environment - get a lock, add candles, add music, add fragrance, flowers, start earlier, leave more time, create beauty.
2. A new environment - other times, other places in your house, a get away, other locations (7:10-8:3)
3. Ways of giving your partner pleasure - oil, massage, positions, exploration (6:2-3) use of hands (7:7-8), eyes (6:11), mouth and tongue (4:16-5:1, 2:3)
4. The speed and length of sex - gourmet, full meal, quickie
5. The way you use words to touch or arouse your lover (8:14)
6. The way you express your sexuality throughout the day (a kiss, a touch, text message, notes, a look, a signal, a phone call, a gift)
7. The way you risk, make mistakes, laugh, and don't take it all too seriously

## Reflection with your spouse

1. The first step toward improving your sex life is commitment. Remember I Cor 6:3-5? Are you prepared to make this commitment (see page 38) to your spouse? Discuss this together.
2. If so, say out loud to your partner, "Out of obedience to God and love for you, (insert their name), I make it my goal to fully meet your sexual needs. I want you to experience sexual satisfaction and sexual fulfillment with me."
3. Communication. Now you need to talk together about what this means. To "know" your partner, you need to know and understand their sexual desires and needs. Use the overview on pages 38-39 as a base. One of you should start. Highlight the things that describe you, and then add additional explanation. Be as open and vulnerable as possible. For the one who is listening, make it your goal to understand as well as give safety and support to your spouse. Ask questions and give them plenty of time. Then change places and communicate as much as you can about your sexual desires and needs.
4. Cleansing. Now stop and pray, asking the Lord if there is anything that needs to be cleansed in the area of sex and intimacy. Listen closely to the voice of the Spirit. He may show you unresolved hurt or bitterness, anger or forgiveness, or uncleansed areas of sin that are keeping this area from being free and clean. If the Spirit brings something up, do whatever is necessary to bring cleansing. This may involve confession, prayer, asking for and giving forgiveness, or bringing something hidden out into the light. It may not be easy, but anything that is not clean will not be functioning with the full potential that God intended.
5. Creativity. Has your physical relationship become stale and boring? Begin by telling your partner what times of sexual connection in the past have been particularly exciting or meaningful to you. What heated up your passion? What did you especially enjoy? Now think about the future. Are there things you'd like to repeat, or other things you would enjoy trying? Are there any fantasies you would like to share with them, or perhaps even make a reality? Listen to the other person without judgment. File away the things you learn as a resource for better meeting their sexual needs in the future (or even right away!).
6. If you finish all of the above and would like something additional to spark your creativity, choose a couple of the sealed inspiration sheets that have been prepared for you. If one of them works for you, try it out. If not, go back and choose another. In the future, you can make up your own. If something doesn't work out like you intended, laugh together. Remember the freedom and creative passion that freely flowed between Solomon and his beloved.



## Tending the Garden

*"Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom."*

*Song of Solomon 2:15*

You have to live out your marriage relationship in the midst of many other demands and pressures. How can you protect the garden so that it stays healthy in spite of rodents and weather?

1. Ministry
2. In laws
3. Finances
4. Weariness
5. Children
6. House and home
7. Cross cultural marriages

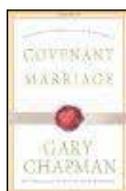


## Reflection with your spouse

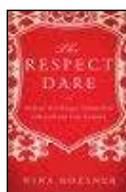
1. What was the most significant thought for you from this teaching? Why?
2. Are there any "Foxes" you need to give attention to, pressures or demands that are unnecessarily borrowing off the health of your marriage?
3. Are there any patterns or habits you need to change so that you can keep the garden green (keep water flowing from Lebanon)?
4. Think forward 12 months about how you want your marriage and family to be functioning. How can you work backward from that future vision and "reverse engineer" so that you can map a path that will take you to that reality?



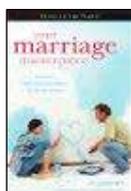
## Book list



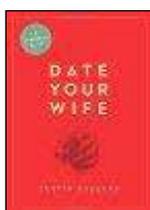
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*Gary Chapman*



The Respect Dare: 40 Days to a  
Deeper Connection with God and  
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*Nina Roesner*



Your Marriage Masterpiece: God's  
Amazing Design for Your Life Together  
(Focus on the Family Books)  
*Al Janssen*



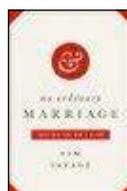
Date Your Wife  
*Justin Buzzard*



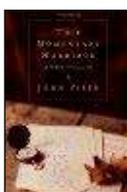
The Good Girl's Guide to Great Sex:  
(And You Thought Bad Girls Have All  
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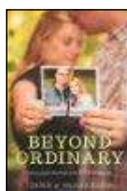
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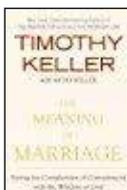
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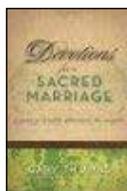
Beyond Ordinary: When a Good  
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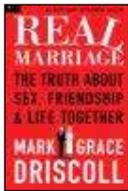
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Wisdom of God  
*Timothy Keller, Kathy Keller*



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Intimacy with Your Spouse  
*Ed Young, Lisa Young*



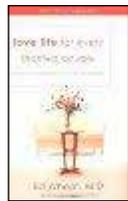
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Year of Weekly Devotions for Couples  
*Gary Thomas*



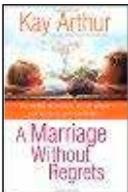
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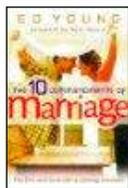
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*Kay Arthur*



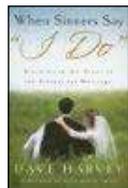
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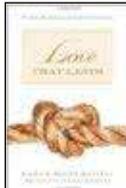
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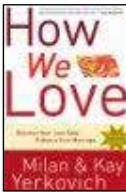
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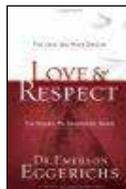
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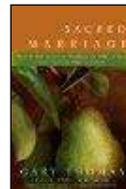
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