

I See!

Agreement for A Focused Relationship (Flip This House- Part 2)

In this series called, *Flip This House*, I desire to:

- **Convince** you that you can have a great marriage, family and future relationships. God is not done with you!
- **Challenge** you to do whatever it takes to make your family and marriage or preparation for future relationship to be better than ever before.

I believe that where ever you are in life- engaged, newly wed, married, divorced, or widowed, these messages are for you. I also believe that you will be pleasantly pleased with the direction that God will take you and yours over the next five weeks.

“I Do!”- February 25th

“I See!”- March 4th

“I Can!”- March 11th

“I Will!”- March 18

“I Have!”- March 25

Here are **six priorities** that I would like you to commit to for the next five weeks:

1. To come and listen to each of these **five sermons**.
2. Be involved in at least one of our **Life Groups** throughout the week or **equipping classes**.
3. Involve your **children** in youth, AWANA's, equipping classes and children's church.
4. Commit to a **family night** with a family meeting to give direction and input.
5. **Date** your mate! Once a week you will spend time together...in a healthy way!
6. **Pray** with your family in the morning or evening.

You need to know that you can do this! **It's impossible to keep striving for something for which you no longer you believe you can attain or want to achieve.** You have to know today that God rewards faith. The more you acknowledge **The God/Life Equation**, (that your **faith equals God's rewards that desire eventually follows**), you can act your way into a feeling but seldom feel your way into an action!

When passion runs out of a marriage, determination and commitment will soon be lost. Negative emotions like "Detached, Unmotivated and Uninvolved" start to take their toll on your relationship —quickly moving you away from the success you want in your marriage and family.

- **Detachment causes problems.** It leaves problems unsolved and therefore a cause for worry. Worry is the natural enemy of passion, it is being obsessed with the negative.
- **Question:** Just how passionately can you pursue your relationships, family and marriage when you are stressed out, burned out and running on empty most of the time?

If you intend to climb to the top of this part of the mountain of marriage and family—or get

anywhere near it—you must persist with passion until you reach your destination... or destiny.

You can have the greatest **goals** ever conceived... together with the best laid **plans** ever created... together with your entire family willing to help you climb to the summit. **BUT, if you give up too early—or give in to life's inevitable set-backs and circumstances—your dream family will never move beyond your last effort.**

If you and I are going to “Flip this House” we have got to learn how to take **ACTION** in the **face of fear, uncertainty and doubt**... this passion and persistence for success in your marriage, family and relationships will help you pass up where so many have left off.

Do You Have The Guts To Make a Family and Marriage? We call that persistence...

- The American Heritage Dictionary defines Persistence as...
 1. Refusing to give up or let go; persevering obstinately.
 2. Insistently repetitive or continuous.
 3. Existing or remaining in the same state for an indefinitely long time; enduring.
 4. Continuance of an effect after the cause is removed.

You MUST persist. The important thing to be persistent is to remain committed to the Biblical values before you set your own. If you lose touch with this reality, or what you need to do differently to attain them, the going will get rough.

You may need to put these values in writing, making them your goals for living and try to establish plans where you can SEE them... FEEL them... BELIEVE in them... and establish a strong personal bond between what you WANT, and what you are going to DO to make them real.

There are real lasting, loving and worthwhile RESULTS you can have in your marriage... and then there is everything else. If you become committed to **producing key RESULTS** in your marriage, you will become successful at accomplishing what few people ever achieve. **Don't and you Won't!**

- **I believe this message today will give you a better sense of purpose, mission and direction— helping you live what you truly value most.**
- **Help you join forces with your spouse and family—** by helping you develop a team-concept and establish lasting leadership skills that you can pass down for generations.
- **I want you to know that God can move in “impossible” situations—** we can do this by not focusing on all the disappointing problems but on the doable solutions that will give you better opportunities for happiness, unity, agreement and purpose.
- **This message is to help you move quicker to the place you want to be—**by uniting and agreeing upon healthy Biblical values, making them your dreams and passion so your expectations will be fully met rather than full of failure.
- **I hope today that we can target on a few key goals and turn them into solid plans—**by creating realistic milestones, objectives and deadlines.
- **I'll try to help you establish top priorities for each day —**by giving more of your time and energy on what is most important, rewarding and healthy... rather than to continue to allow distractions and chaos to rule and dictate your day.
- **Learn to recognize when something is wrong and respond appropriately —**by learning to simplify the problem, reducing the differences and eliminate the unhealthy reactions that often contribute to extending the problem.

- **Prioritize your time to have healthy and happy affect** —by recognizing and appropriately dealing with three detours that allure your life away from the important : **Distractions, Unhealthy Boundaries and Deadly Passions.**
- **Eliminate procrastination**—by taking bold action to triumph over **thoughts** that have held you captive through **actions** that has been driven by those thoughts, and **words** that that have been spoken that haunt your relationship, family or marriage with uncertainty and doubt.
- **Turning your emotional reactions into passionate and powerful actions** —by focusing on the real need and acting accordingly with the potential you have as a believer and the power of our God.
- **Learn happiness, satisfaction and joy in your relationships, family and marriage** —by incorporating simple, healthy Biblical core values by shaping them into everyday goals that will guide you in every action you take.

How to overcome barriers in your Marriage and Family

1. You have to take risks.

I remember three things that builds relationship:

1. Time
2. Communication
3. Shared Experiences

But you want more than a relationship, a mutual, safe environment, you really want intimacy, and that has to have risk.

- If you are going to overcome barriers you will have to take the risk of being rejected
- If you are going to overcome barriers you will have to take the risk of possibly starting an argument
- If you are going to overcome barriers you will have to take the risk of being wrong, hurt, frustrated and mistaken.

A good question here is, “How bad do you want intimacy with your spouse or family?” Let's just say that you take a step of faith in this area and it doesn't go the way you would hope, you have the *power* to overcome whatever the results are. Right now, your key focus does not need to be on a perfect performance but on a consistent attempt at one. It's important to realize that your attempt at accomplishing a harmonious family and marriage may take a while but you are willing to take the risk. You are not afraid of change and you will not be denied of the opportunity of a better life.

2. Refuse to dwell on failure.

This is so huge. You can burn a lot of “*resolving*” energy dwelling on unfavorable things that could happen or dwelling on past failure. When you focus on “worst case” scenarios, you rob yourself of the energy that could be the momentum used for successful action. The result is that you are left with little energy to actually resolve the problem. What's more, this unresolved problem disconnects you from resolving additional problem areas which will continue to compound the problem. Basically, your

dwelling on a particular failure now, rather than the solution, will rob you of time and energy that a successful future will need.

- When you are dwelling on the failure you cannot dwell on the solution.
 - Most of the time, dwelling on a failure is nothing less than not be finished being mad!
- When you are dwelling on the failure, you are holding on to the past, losing your future.
- When you are dwelling on the failure, you are being held hostage in your own mind, and you are holding the gun in your own hand.
- When you are dwelling on the failure, you are agreeing with a hopeless future and allowing yourself to be imprisoned hour by hour, minute by minute. Like cancer invading the body, worry invading your mind is the single biggest killer of hopes and dreams.

Many couples will go out from this message and attempt one simple conversation to address an important issue in their marriage and it turns into the same train wreck that it always had in the past. So they throw up their hands and say:

- “See, this is hopeless. I told you that this would not work.” And you storm out of the room like you have some many times in the past. Hurt and withdrawn you go to your separate corners and eventually pretend it never happened. You never open up again about it because all you can see is the failure. What you need to see is, “Well, that didn't work!”
- Always and Never become words that limit anyone to dig out of their past.
- Dwelling on the failures wastes time, steals energy and prevents you from accomplishing what you really want, a loving, safe relationship.
- All of the time that you dwell on the past will not change it or fix it, you can only deal with the now and attempt to establish a future.
- Dwelling on the past can be an obsession, a habit and a stronghold.
- Negative reviewing never contributes to positive action.
- Identify exactly what failure you review the most and turn it into a positive action to resolve the conflict.
- **Take care of IT, before it takes over YOU.**

3. **Never play the victim.**

When we carelessly mistreat each other we often go into “shut-out” mode, eventually separating ourselves from them mentally, emotionally, and physically. It can get to the point that we don't want any contact in any way with your spouse. They avoid conversation, avoid being touched. It is difficult to respond to anyone who continually hurts them. We get our feelings hurt. Dr. Henry Brandt, psychologist once said, “Let's call hurt feelings what they really are- *angry*.”

“A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit.”

Proverbs 15:13

- Have you ever tried to put your arm around your wife when you have just hurt her? How did that work for you?
- Have you ever let your husband know how disappointed you were in several

areas and wonder why he didn't comment about the meal?

"The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit."

Proverbs 15:4

Everyone has situations that can be offensive, but when you accept the role of "*being wronged*", you accept a redirection of the momentum and energy that could be spent on restoration and better intimacy.

We have a tendency to follow some natural patterns when we've been offended.

- **Mentally**, we are more alert to the flaws of the offender.
- **Emotionally** we feel alienated.
- **Physically**, we avoid that person.
- **Spiritually**, we close out the person.

Here are a few of a victim's responses :

- Ignoring your spouse
- Not valuing each others opinions
- Nagging
- Raising your voice
- Swearing, using foul language
- Correcting in public
- Disrespect

When you focus on the actions you can take, rather than the negative situations of the past, the amount of energy spent could be the same, but with better results. It will take the same amount of energy to turn things around and possibly more pending on how long drawn out it is. When are you willing to make a healthy choice?

Road To Recovery

Just like the Bible says, "Love is the answer." In our society, love is thrown around like any other word. We love our dog, car, pizza and wife. We have lost it's meaning and to say it often becomes shallow and meaningless.

The New Testament has three main words that are translated "love." Each one of the words are unique and different. But before I go any farther I want you to understand what love does not mean:

- Love does not mean you have to accept the status quo.
- Love does not mean you have to accept all the blame.
- Love does not mean you have to settle for less.

I remember Carol and I going to our marriage counseling with the pastor who married us and all I can recall is him telling us to commit to one thing: "Fight fair"

- Do say things you can't take back
- Count before you speak
- Remember who you are talking to

Those were three of the things I remember we discussed about fighting fair. Many couple violate this very issue and began a road of destruction. We forget about how mesmerized we were with the one we are now at odds with. We forget how our heart raced, our thoughts had never been more consumed and our intentions so pure. This love was described by an anonymous poet:

*I climbed up the door
And shut the stairs;
I said my shoes and took off my prayers.
I shut off the bed and climbed into the light.
And all because-
She kissed me good night!*

This guy was able to capture the first kind of love- **EROS**

Eros- “Romantic love”, the kind of erotic love that are in movies, books and the beginnings of marriages. Eros love is not bad, if you read Song of Solomon you are reading about eros love. This love is a mixture of passion, physical attraction, acts of affection, and sexuality. If I talked too long on this word it would probably make you blush. It is a wonderful gift of God, intended for marriage and an important fact, it is not only an enjoyable part of marriage, it is a vital part of marriage.

One of the main questions asked in a counseling session is, “How can we put the spark back in our marriage?” You can reignite the flame, but there are reasons why it burns so low.

Philos- This is the Greek word for “**compassionate love**”. This is where we get part of the name of Philadelphia, “the city of brotherly love.” Once church bulletin wrote this after one of the weddings held at their church:

“Irving Jones and Jesse Brown were married on October 24. So ends a friendship that began in school days.”

This kind of love is a **Love for mankind (5363) (philanthropia from philos = friend or phileō = to have affection for + anthropos = man)** which describes God's **compassion, especially the eagerness to deliver someone from pain, trouble, or danger**. It involves more than mere emotion and always finds a way to express itself in some form of helpfulness.

Philanthropia is God's uninfluenced and unearned friendly disposition, affectionate concern for and interest in mankind:

- "haters of God", Romans 1:30
- "enemies", Romans 5:10
- "alienated and hostile in mind" Colossians 1:21 (note!). Amazing grace that loves and saves such wretches as we!

This is where we get our word **philanthropy**. It is the compassionate acts of man toward humanity. But God first showed us this through His love on by sending His son on the cross for us.

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”- Romans 5:6

We were all lost, without hope, "shipwrecked" one might say, helpless without God's philanthropia. But God stands ready to respond to anyone who would call out on Him.

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
Romans 5:8

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

John 3:16

The best marriages are those who not only fall in love but choose to continue a deep love for each others well being. It's the place you feel safe to share your secret thoughts, deepest feelings, and innermost desires.

- Marriage is best a friendship that catches fire rather than a wild fire that attempts to be friendly.

Agape- Love (26) (**agape**) is **"unconditional love"**, sacrificial love and a love that God is.

"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."
1John 4:8

"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him."

1John 4:16

Biblical **agape love** is:

- A love that you chose instead of
- A love that you chose to serve with humility
- The highest kind of love
- The noblest kind of devotion
- The love of the will (intentional, a conscious choice)
- This love is not motivated:
 - by superficial appearance
 - by emotional attraction
 - or by sentimental relationship.

Agape is **not** based on **pleasant emotions** or **good feelings** that might result from a **physical attraction** or a **familial bond**.

Agape chooses as an act of self-sacrifice to serve the recipient. From all of the descriptions of agape love, it is clear that true agape love is a sure mark of salvation.

- **Eros** is passionate
- **Phileo** is emotional
- **Agape** is voluntary

Loving Jesus This Way

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and

with all your mind.”
Matthew 22:37

The Key To Unlocking The Wonders of God

“And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

Ephesians 3:17b-19

- **Eros** makes marriage exciting.
- **Phileo** makes marriage meaningful.
- **Agape** makes a marriage secure and lasting.

Two Enormous Bondages That Keep Us From Healthy Love

1. Breaking The Bondage: The Bondage of Iniquities

“For I the Lord your God am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of the fathers to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me but showing mercy to thousands to those who love me and keep my commandments.”

Exodus 20:5

You might have a problem with this thinking that it sounds like we are stuck with the problem and punishment for what someone else did. You are right. There are things that run through families that are passed down from one generation to the next.

Things iniquities are evident in the physical realm like:

- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Alcoholism
- Adultery

These are also evident in the spiritual realm:

- Addictions
- Poverty
- Occultism
- Chronic Illnesses
- Untimely Death
- Suicide

It's possible that your family lineage did not serve God and lived a life as if they hated God. We all share in this, we all have ancestors who would not bow a knee to God nor serve Him as Lord. We already know that we come from Adam and Eve passing on that generational curse that demands that we confess our sins before God, repent of our ways as detestable to God and receive the power of God through our friend, the Holy Spirit and live this walk as God would have us.

These iniquities, or as the Bible calls them, curses, are hanging around our life looking for opportunity to disrupt what God has planned for us. Here's what a curse is:

Curse: A predisposition toward a sin

In the NIV it says that it's the sins of the father visited upon the children, but it is translated incorrectly. It is saying it is not the sin but the iniquity and the two are very different.

Iniquity: Is the inward bent or tendency toward a certain sin. Iniquity is the inward movement and the sin is the outward movement.

- Lust is the iniquity and adultery is the sin.
- Hate would be the iniquity and murder is the sin.

"Your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together says the Lord."
Isaiah 65:7

God is saying, "Let me tell you why all these crazy things are happening to you. Because your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers. It's not because of your sins only that you are suffering, but because of your iniquities as well."

There are things that are in resident in us that have passed down from generation to generation and these iniquities try to bust out of us in different ways.

"If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers...then I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, I will remember."
Leviticus 26:40

But we are living in a society that complements or excuses iniquities and mostly because they don't have the power to break them.

"Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers."
Nehemiah 9:2

- Nehemiah makes note that they stood for up to six hours confessing their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.

"We acknowledge oh Lord our wickedness and the iniquities of our fathers for we have sinned against you."
Jeremiah 14:20

It's possible that you may have no idea all the iniquities that your ancestors have accumulated down through the years. And these same iniquities will continue through you and on down to your kids and their kids until someone takes a stand and says, "This is where it stops." This is what I'm asking of you today to make a choice to stop the continuation of sins based upon iniquities pasted down from one generation to the next.

Breaking this stronghold is so important and here is how you do it. You take the time to confess this wickedness before God.

- **Openly confessing your sins and the iniquities of your fathers, asking Jesus Christ to empower you with the Holy Spirit to destroy the iniquities of your fathers in your life so that you can walk free.**

- **You appeal to God by faith that He would cover your sins with the blood of Jesus Christ and that He would identify and destroy these iniquities in your life.**

You will be able to see God go beyond you and heal your children and keep them from suffering the outward sins of inward iniquities. God will destroy that generational pattern and nail it to the cross where Jesus' blood covers it.

You might say, "Well I'm not sure about that. When Christ comes into my life He takes all that away. Really? I read that He forgives you. That is **salvation**. But it takes the power of the Holy Spirit to restore and renew your life. That is **sanctification**. A big word that we use to describe getting cleaned up. We are a bride waiting to meet the groom, but we have this time in our life to prepare for His coming. He is looking for a *spotless bride*. Why would he be looking for a spotless bride if He already cleaned us up? We are not cleaned up, we are forgiven and loved. But His complete work on the cross has hardly affected enough of those He calls His bride.

2. Breaking The Bondage: The Bondage of Unforgiveness

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold."
Ephesians 4:26-27

We actually have the opportunity to allow Satan to have access in our life and relationships through unresolved conflict that results in anger. Also, it is imperative that you resolve your conflict prior to the sun setting at night. The reason that you would hold on to unforgiveness over night is because you would rather hold on to your anger and expect the other person to respond to you in asking for forgiveness rather than you going ahead and trying to resolve the conflict.

"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled..."
Hebrews 12:12-15 (NKJV)

Because of constant unresolved conflict, no peace, strife and divisiveness, you can fall short of the grace of God, not receiving God's fullness for you. And because of that a root of bitterness can grow up in you that continues to cause trouble in your life and because of this, it's affect on others causes them to become disobedient and ungodly.

Defiled- miaino {me-ah'-ee-no} to dye with another color, to stain or to defile, pollute, sully, contaminate, soil

"...lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears."
Hebrews 12:16-17 (NKJV)

Fornicator- pornos {por'-nos} this is where we get our word pornography. This is a man who prostitutes his body to another's lust for hire or basically a male prostitute or a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator.

Paul is saying that pornography, unlawful sexual intercourse actually comes down to one night when you were unaware of your unforgiveness, unable to forgive or refusal to do so and that resentment took root and grew into bitterness causing much trouble and caused others to become defiled in it. This unforgiveness could have taken place years ago. It planted a seed, but sometime it doesn't take root right away. It can grow later on in life and become a huge root of bitterness.

Profane- bebelos {beb'-ay-los} The word *profane* here refers to one who, by word or conduct, treats religion with contempt, or has no reverence for that which is sacred. This may be shown by words; by the manner; by a sneer; by neglect of religion; or by openly renouncing the privileges which might be connected with our salvation. The allusion here is to one who should openly cast off all the hopes of religion for indulgence in temporary pleasure, as Esau gave up his birthright for a trifling gratification. Barnes' Notes on the New Testament

Esau is an example to us about what happens when we become angry and eventually embittered...we risk the losing all the things we have worked for, our eternal blessings. Even though we beg and plead with God for it, we will lose it.

"Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully."

II John 1:8

Without the help of this scripture I would have never connected the dots. I would have never seen the core relationship between unforgiveness and sexual immorality or misconduct. But there are some here today that are dealing with sexual temptations and challenges that come from a root of bitterness, either yours or someone else's because unforgiveness defiles many!

This iniquity and the root of bitterness that you may be harboring inside your own heart has consequences. God can release you from that iniquity if you will come to Him and allow Him to take it out of your hand. But you have to be willing to let go of the unforgiveness.

Matthew 18- Parable of the unmerciful steward

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?""

Matthew 18:21

Three Characters:

- A king who forgives a debt of one of his servants of something equivalent to \$52,000,000.
- This guy goes out and finds someone who owes him something like \$44. He demands the money immediately and the man cannot pay it so he throws him in jail.
- The king hears about this and is furious.

"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed."

Matthew 18:32-34

"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

Matthew 18:35

Question: Who is it that turns you over to the torturers? God the Father- not the devil

Question: Why would God turn a person over to demon spirits?

- God will only act toward you in loving ways.
- God will never violate you or act outside of His character toward you.
- God's desire for you is that you would be in close relationship with Him. He wants it more than you ever could.
- There is nothing more opposite and distant from God than unforgiveness.
- This act of God giving you over to torturers is not as bad as what unforgiveness will do to you.

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death."

Proverbs 14:12

When you choose by your will to harbor unforgiveness, you are positioning yourself to be given over to tormentors and eventually death if you do not change your direction. God's desire is to get you out of that position.

Here's a definition of unforgiveness: Unforgiveness is drinking a poison hoping that it kills somebody else.

Forgiveness sets you free. It frees you first and then frees those around you. You stop the process of defining those around you and through you lineage.

By forgiving, you are not saying it is alright what has happened to you. All you are saying is that you are willing to lay that down for your own benefit and those around you.

Exercise: I would like for you to write down, somewhere in your mind or paper 3 obstacles that you will have to overcome to achieve a better relationship with your wife or family. By saying this you will realize that I did not say what are 3 things you have to do that your wife has been nagging about or your husband is disappointed in you. But let's get to the core of things. What are 3 things you need to overcome to achieve a better relationship with your wife or family?

1. Make more time for them?
2. Change your attitude toward them?
3. Desire to be with them?
4. Put things on the calendar to remind you?
5. Get more accountable for the actions you need to take?
6. Forgive so you can move on?
7. Respond differently after a long day's work?
8. Connect emotionally and speak with vision from your heart?

9. Break the habit of being selfish?

10. Stop dwelling on the problem and start focusing on the solution?

In the remaining four weeks I want you to climb to the summit of your marriage. I want you to flip your house! What are three things...probably simple things, that you have to overcome that would help you achieve a better relationship with your spouse and family?

My 3 Biggest Obstacles:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Success in marriage, family or relationships are not measured by your best **INTENTIONS**—but actually by what really happens, in other words, by **RESULTS**. It's not fully our intention to have super high expectations for each other, but it is somehow understood that there is a certain mark that we are somehow expected to reach, even if it is not defined or understood. Our idea of marriage has come with it an elevated “guarantee of performance”, resulting in constant questioning, misunderstandings and search for a solution. When it all breaks down, our differences in a relationship, family or a marriage simply has to do with the *values* we consider the most important.