

Two For One- Part 4

Ephesians 5:21-33

Update on Building Campaign: Fourth And Goal- We often base our choices on **immediate gratification**, what **pleases or eases us at the moment**. Without a more **visionary framework** to make choices, the **present moment** is our only **reference point**. But **choices based on the present moment** often affect us **negatively** in the **future**, sometimes **catastrophically**. We need to **move our reference point of making choices** to a **distant future**, **away** from the **present moment** and **project toward** our **Ultimate Potential!**

If all my actions affect my future potential, the future should determine what my actions should be. If we all agree that our future potential is based upon making correct decisions now for later, then our decisions today must be made to climb higher than ever before.

Mountain climbers have learned that when you pursue rewarding mountains to their summit, each accomplishment along the way becomes a foundational block for **further and greater ascents**. **So, when you ask which is the better path to take on this day, consider what you intend to gain from the alternative. To decide what you should do today, you must know where you want to go tomorrow, and where you would like to arrive three years from tomorrow.**

Next Sunday, December 2, 2007 will be the end of our three year **Generations: Fulfilling the Vision** building campaign. It has been a wonderful ride. As of now, **\$678,884.74** has been brought in. Three years ago we set a lofty goal of **\$830,591**. Of that amount received, many who fulfilled their pledge also gave an additional **\$54,060** of that \$678,884.74. Let me say something else, of that \$678,884.74, **\$197,385** was given by those who had never pledged. This was highly unusual but exciting as well. That leaves a remainder of **\$151,706.26** left to reach our pledge.

Here's what we are going to do, we are going to take the time next week to take up a miracle offering. It is a time where we encourage you to give in faith, abundant faith. I'm not sure if **152 people could give \$1000** or **102 give \$1500**, or **50 give \$3035?** Whatever the combination, it has great potential to where we are going.

To become mighty people of God, we must see the extraordinary that God has put within each one of us that will help us pursue the paths that lead us farther toward our potential...the potential of our faith in action! See, **the achievement of any act of faith most often lies in the path of resistance...I gain the most where my challenge is the greatest**. **If you chose an unchallenging summit to climb, you will not rise far to reach it. We are responding to the challenge of this summit to climb, not because it is harder, but because we have the most to gain there!** I'm asking you to give out of faith, to give in a big way, to reach toward the summit.

Main focus of this series: This series is a formulation of key teachings and understandings from the book of Ephesians. It is the textbook for Christian living, affective church growth and unity. It is also a manual for harmony in the home and an

affective lifestyle in our work place in the world. Ephesians draws many lines, it is clear and very defined. Why many Christians fail to live fully in the shadow of the cross is because they have never ventured into the truths documented in Paul's writings to the Ephesians. In an effort to decipher each statement of Paul in Ephesians we believe we will learn how to successfully operate in the three positions of the believer: to **sit** (Ephesians 1-3), to **walk** (Ephesians 4-6:9) and to **stand** (Ephesians 6:10-24) . The first half of Ephesians (chapters 1-3) tells us what a Christian is and the last three chapters define how to live that out in harmony with other believer's and separately from non-believer's.

The importance of this message today: The last few messages I have shared what it means to be "filled" with the Spirit of God and how that turns you into a true worshiper of God. It also causes you to interact with others in a deeper way. This is something totally distant to those believer's found in Ephesus. We also talked about how this Spirit Filled life would affect our expression toward our spouse, the wife expression toward her husband represented the churches response to Christ and the husbands expression toward his wife represented Christ's response to the church.

Starbucks Phenomenon

An interesting article in Psychology Today it talks about the rapid growth of Starbucks and, among other things, attributes that contribute to the "*Starbucks experience*" — rather than the coffee.

Excerpts from the article:

- **Intentionality.** "At Starbucks, nothing is accidental. Everything the customer interacts with, from the obsessively monitored store environment down to the white paper cups, is the product of deliberation and psychological research. **The coffeehouse as we know it is a calculated creation...**"
- **Community.** "**Starbucks filled America's need for a public gathering spot... a 'third place' with home and work being place one and two.** This became Starbucks' community rallying cry: It wasn't a coffee company, but **a place for bringing people together through the social glue of coffee.**"

Here's the reason for giving this article any attention at all, if we can believe that the phenomenon known as Starbucks was a *calculated creation*, why do we have such a hard time realizing that this phenomenon called marriage can develop without intentional calculation and direction?

As we already know, most couples have not been adequately prepared for marriage. **The basis of most battles in a marriage is the ignorance of healthy attitudes and actions coupled with an unwillingness to patiently work on the relationship for a better one, they lack the "social glue" for "community."** **Our society has trained us well, we want great marriages and we want them now.** Far too many couples enter marriage with unrealistic expectations of easy and sustained happiness. Of course, no marriage can develop without understanding that sacrifice and commitments that are necessary for maintaining a good marriage. Look at the latest stats, from Life Innovations, Inc., November 09, 2007

- Of the 2.3 million marriages in 2006, about half (53%) take place in a religious setting.
- The average cost of a wedding is \$27,500.
- Married households are barely above 50%. Of the U.S. 111 million households, 52% are now made up of married couples with and without children.
- 25th Wedding Anniversary becoming more rare. There is less than a 50% chance that couples currently married will reach their 25th anniversary.
- Divorce Rate continues about 50%. While the average divorce rate is 50%, it is 40% for first marriage, 60% for second marriages and 73% for third marriages.
- The seven year itch continues. Couples separate on the average seven years after marriage and divorce after eight.
- Over 90% of people get married once. But those marrying are waiting until they are older and they are less likely to remarry following a divorce.
- Rate of Cohabitation Escalates. Over 6 million couples now cohabit, a dramatic increase from only 500,000 cohabiting couples in 1970.

Obviously something needs to change and be developed. Here in our own church we need to make a commitment to the covenant of marriage. We need to set the pace in our community and live the “answers” not just teach them.

Back To Worship

Where do we start? That's what I want to do today. Much of what we learn about worship a few weeks ago and marriage in the last three weeks have come to a blended connection and conclusion with marriage and worship. I want to spend our time on this message developing the concept of the similarities of worship with God and the community and intimacy in relationships through the social glue of communication. Here is a statement that I have been using in my messages over the last few weeks:

Our greatest need is to continually pursue God's presence through praise and worship and God's purpose through His Word.

Today I want to take that step a farther and create the theme of this message:

Our greatest need is to communicate in such an affective way that it builds intimate relationships with God and our family as well as others.

Almost every married couple expects to be intimate. However, many couples are disappointed to find that intimacy does not automatically occur when they marry. A deep and satisfying marriage and relationship is one that has cultivated intimacy. On the other hand, unhealthy beliefs are the underlying flaws that perpetuated unhappy marriages and relationships, hoping to develop intimacy but consistent in bringing ruin.

What is intimacy?

Intimacy is defined as...

An inner closeness and depth of relationship; complete mutual awareness and unhindered access of interpersonal issues, information and interests.

Our definition of intimacy can actually be simplified as meaning **"to be close and grow**

deeper." An intimate marriage is a relationship of emotional and spiritual closeness that goes much deeper than the average friendship or family bond. This intimacy is expressed through physical affection, sexual contact, verbal exchange, and various other ways.

Three Major Deceptions Concerning Intimacy

1. Marriage Will Automatically Become Intimate

Marriage counselor Ed Wheat makes a great distinction between *infatuation* and *genuine* falling in love. "Infatuation has been defined as an emotional and fleshly response to false impressions or mere externals of another that have been overvalued or lusted after. By contrast, genuine falling in love is a spiritual, mental, emotional and physical response to the actual character and total being of another who embodies attributes long sought and admired."

The first deception concerning intimacy is that Marriage Will Automatically Be Intimate. A lot of people get married believing that things will be great once they get on the other side of marriage. The concept is that if they marry the right person; if they marry their "*soul mate*" all the emotion will naturally be there and the chemistry will keep things going. But that's not reality. The reality is even if you marry the best possible person you can find, your marriage will still require hard work and attention given to skills that will lead and nurture your relationship.

Some naively think that *getting* married will lead to a life of unending happiness. But, as one family Therapist wrote, "Marriage is not supposed to make you happy. It is supposed to make you married" (Frank Pittman, *Grow Up! How taking Responsibility Can Make You a Happy Adult*). But happiness can be existent, according to a research done by the University of Virginia researchers say that the No. 1 factor in women's marital happiness is the "emotional engagement" of their husbands. Guys, we can do this! A husbands' commitment to and support of the union is more important than money and the division of household chores. This study was drawn from the 5,000-couple National Survey of Families and Households.

The Biblical marriage should be an encouraging and exciting relationship, but when you expect it, or the other person involved in it to meet your deep seeded need for personal happiness, you are putting unrealistic pressure on it and them. When another person is expected to make *you* happy, it is an unhealthy burden and is most of the time asking for more than any one person can deliver. The reality is that good marriages do have happy and memorable moments –but they also have times of difficulty and sadness.

When a person enters into a marriage whose personal happiness is their main goal, it will not take long before being disappointed. The key determining factor for *true* happiness in a marriage is a by-product of united decisions and priorities that support the health and balance of that relationship. Any time personal happiness, (another word that could be used here, "*selfishness*"), becomes our main focus, marriage and it's pleasure will become elusive and distant. A wise

counselor said, “There are two kinds of people in the world, the givers and the takers. A marriage between two givers can be a beautiful thing. Friction is the order of the day, however, for a giver and a taker. But two takers can claw each other to pieces within a period of six weeks. In short, selfishness will devastate a marriage every time.”

2. God Will Fix You or Get You!

Unhappiness in a marriage is not a means for emergency counseling. But when one obsesses over their discontent and unhappiness it can lead to dissatisfaction, compromise and depression. True happiness is not derived from the response of another's desired behavior, that is “*control*.” True happiness is derived from the mutual nurturing and service to each other. Too many “Christians” believe that if I become discontented or you don't make me happy in our marriage, then God will fix you or He will GET YOU!

Beyond a shadow of a doubt, you will need the Spirit of the Lord to assist you in your marriage. But the Spirit will hardly ever work in a miraculous way, He will only lead you into all truth. He will constantly respond in Biblical quotes and standards. He will not manipulate a person's will, He will challenge yours. He will not break the person you are married too, just because you are unhappy, He will cause you to become broken, to weep not for your suffering but for their soul.

When husbands and wives choose to *behave* biblically, in the best interest of each other, they often discover that the feelings of lost *love* appear through their *intentional* choices and behavior. It is a huge mistake to either wait for a *feeling*, or to depend on *feelings*, for cultivating a healthy and satisfying marriage. A satisfying and lasting relationship is rooted in the mutual care and loving expression for each other motivated by a deep love for Jesus Christ, (something that Paul told the Ephesians, it is the outflow of a “Spirit Filled” believer.)

Marriage can never meet your need until we are mutually in agreement that Jesus Christ must be the center of our marriage, that is marriage because marriage is a God instituted, biblical concept, that is what it is supposed to be. Pastor Jimmy Evans put it best this way:

“The first thing you need to understand for your marriage to work is this simple truth: no human being can meet your deepest needs—only God can. Even the most spiritual person on earth is very mortal and therefore, quite limited. When you put too much hope in a person, you are always headed for disappointment and sometimes even for disaster.” (from: Marriage on the Rock, Jimmy Evans).

Read this additional statement:

“The fundamental reason marriages fail is because couples lack a vital relationship with Jesus Christ. The prerequisite to loving your spouse with God's agape love is maintaining a vibrant, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Many people know about God, have joined the Church, been baptized, but really overlook knowing God personally. Others have

become Christians and have a personal relationship with God through Christ, yet lack a vibrant, daily relationship with Him.”(From: “2 Becoming One, God designed marriage, He can make it work” Don & Sally Meridith).

In marriage, there is only one place where the word *my* can be used —

I am responsible for growing my relationship with God and spending time in the Word — daily. It's my responsibility — no one else's.

This one single responsibility makes a difference between a marriage that thrives and a marriage that dies. It's *MY* choice.

3. Sex Will Automatically Produce Intimacy

The second major deception concerning intimacy is that sex produces intimacy. Try to understand it from this point of view, if sex produced intimacy then wouldn't prostitutes and other sexually active people would be the most fulfilled people in the whole world? Even though sex is a wonderful expression of intimacy, the act of sex doesn't constitute intimacy.

Infatuation is a common mistake in our search for true love. We can often confuse the purpose or interpretation of real intimacy when infatuation is the driver of our connection. This leads to a challenging and false perception and eventually a huge problem. The difficulty with this deception is that when things get difficult in a marriage or the “infatuation” wears down, many people believe that they must have married the wrong person and that their marriage was a mistake. Intimacy is not as automatic in a marriage as infatuation can be, but it can become the foundation of a lasting marriage when the right things are implemented.

Intimacy requires the deepest levels of personal exposure and vulnerability, it can only occur successfully and develop over long periods of interaction, trials and in life experiences. These are some of the building moments that couples today want to avoid.

Four essential elements that must be present for intimacy.

1. Sharing: An attitude of openness and surrender

Intimacy is impossible unless sharing occurs on the deepest levels. More important than anything else is the sharing of our hearts through open and honest communication. In addition, we must also have meaningful time together regularly, as well as share experiences, friends, etc.

An intimate life is a shared life. Lack of intimacy develops in an atmosphere of separateness and selfishness. On the other hand, intimacy occurs when we surrender our individual selves to the common good of our marriage. This is the way we fall in love, and it's one of the secrets to staying in love.

2. Partnership: A relationship of mutual support and encouragement

Couples who are intimate don't compete with each other; they compliment

each other. An intimate couple's partnership begins with a strong and regular expression of commitment. Through good times and bad, they are helpmates who use their differences to fill in the gaps in their relationship and to promote the common good of the marriage.

Selfishness destroys oneness and intimacy. It is one of our greatest sins and it separates us from one another. The key to partnership is sacrifice. When a spouse puts his needs or desires aside in order to honor the needs or desires of his spouse, it will create an atmosphere of intimacy and trust. An intimate marriage is built by a team spirit.

3. Investment: An atmosphere of regular, positive exchange

When we are being fed and fulfilled by our spouses, we want to be with them. We bond with the source that meets our needs. Not only that, but the act of nourishing and cherishing each other bonds our spirits together. This is one of the reasons a child bonds in such a profound way to his or her parents. Whoever meets our needs will have our hearts. Also, wherever we invest the treasure of our lives is where our hearts will be.

It is important that we aggressively meet each other's needs on a daily basis. As we do this, we increase the intimate bond of our relationship. When we stop, we starve the soul of our marriages and we embitter our spouses.

4. Trust: An environment of safety and security

True intimacy requires sharing the depths of one's soul as well as giving of one's life daily. This is only possible in an atmosphere of safety and security. To the degree that we create an atmosphere of trust is to the same degree we can open our hearts to one another.

Trust is built through consistency, careful speech, kindness and humility. Trust is destroyed through arrogance, careless words, harshness and sin. When trust has been broken, it can only be rebuilt when the offender takes responsibility for his or her behavior and begins to consistently display a sincere heart.

Intimacy is available for every couple. Regardless of the mistakes or wounds of your past, or the condition of your marriage today, you can have lasting intimacy. However, it must be created by mutual effort and it must be maintained by diligently cultivating these four elements in your marriage: sharing, partnership, investment, and trust. Begin today to build intimacy in your relationship. As a couple, repent to one another for the areas where you have failed each other. Then, forgive one another for the past mistakes and commit to establish these four elements in your marriage every day for the rest of your lives. If you do, you will soon enjoy the most wonderful, deep and satisfying relationship on this earth. God bless you.

The Language of Intimacy

Intimacy has its own language. It isn't complicated. In fact, it's fairly easy to master.

One of the first things you must realize is that **the way you communicate with your spouse will either develop or destroy intimacy. The same with God.**

It's simple: bad words produce a bad relationship; good words produce a good relationship.

**"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit."
Proverbs 18:21**

Our words are not only extremely powerful—they are nuclear. Negative words have the power to go deeper and produce longer-term devastation, in short, a limited relationship, while loving words can produce healthy, positive results that can last a lifetime.

That's the way God designed it. He created our mouths—our words—for the purpose of loving Him and loving each other. We have a life-giving, love-giving force in our mouths. This is easily understood when we think about how we build an intimate relationship with God. **We worship and praise Him with our words. We read His Word, listen to His Word being preached, and His Spirit speaks to us in our hearts. We cannot have an intimate relationship with God without language. The same is true of your relationship with your spouse.**

We should all be aware, Satan is out to stop positive communication. He is counting on your ability to get offended and harbor a grudge. He does not have to dwell with you in constant warfare if He can establish in you defeating habits and lying principles. He is waging war against your relationship. **And in warfare, if the lines of communication can be severed, the battle can be won. If he can stop communication between you and God, or between you and your spouse, Satan can divide and conquer your home.**

Satan's common strategy is to either **prohibit** your words, **poison** your words, or both. **The absence of intimate words in marriage produces a relational wilderness where nothing will grow. Divorce may not occur, but neither will a happy, thriving relationship. And poisoned speech—negative, sarcastic or hateful words—will kill a relationship.**

There are no inconsequential or meaningless words. God has given us language to produce life. To have a great marriage, a large quantity of positive, quality words are needed.

Every relationship that is built is built upon communication. It's impossible to build a lasting relationship with a person that you cannot communicate with. Your **relationship can never rise** above the **quantity** and **quality** of the **communication** of that relationship. If the relationship is going to last and be intimate it's going to take a **lot of communication** and it takes the **right kind of communication.**

- **Using our mouths we build an intimate relationship with God called worship.**
- **Using our mouths we build an intimate relationship with our spouse, children or relationships is called Spirit-filled!**

Understand not only praise and worship but understanding our mouths is a key in

moving our relationship both with God and each other in a more intimate direction.

The main purpose of any military offensive operation is to defeat, destroy, or neutralize an enemy force. Any army must therefore emphasize the necessity to quickly seize this initiative through overcoming the enemies defense by destroying his **command, control, and communications system**

We Must Understand The Potential of Our Mouths

"From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied. The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

Proverbs 18:20-21

God Understands This: We have the power to bring life out of our mouths. You have the ability with God through praise and worship and prayer and with other people, in your marriage, family and where you work, you have the ability to produce life every single time you speak. This is what God knows and what God wants to help you in developing a more intimate relationship and lasting bond.

*"We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is **never** at fault in what he **says**, he is a **perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.**"*

James 3:2

Bill Glass

Bill Glass was number 80, an all-pro defensive end for the Cleveland Browns. After a successful career playing football he founded an organization to primarily minister to prison inmates. He stands and affectively communicates to crowded prison auditoriums all over America. He was power on the field and he is powerful in the messages he brings.

Often in his presentations he asks, "How many of your parents told you that this is where you'd wind up someday?" He has posed this question hundreds, perhaps thousands of times, and the response has always been the same. Almost every man or woman in his audiences have raised their hand. These inmates did not disappoint their parents, they lived up to their standard. They were told what they would do and they did it.

I've mentioned this before but I have to say it again, when opportunity comes I look at it and say to myself, "If I don't someone else will." And I think, "Why not me?" But when I look at my family I say to myself, "If I don't, no one else can." And I think, "It has to be me!" If God is going to get my praise, it's got to be me who gives it to Him. If my family is going to be influenced and led, it's got to be me who gives it to them.

We have the power to bring life out of our mouths. You have the ability with God through praise and worship, with other people, your family and in your marriage to produce life every single time you speak. Every time a word comes out of your mouth.

It's interesting what C.S. Lewis wrote in his classic book Mere Christianity,

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right

and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on: you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is He up to?

The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of- throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage; but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself. (C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943, pg. 174)

God Understands The Potential of Our Mouths

God already knows and wants you to develop and produce a greater relationship and intimacy with Him. That's why worship is important, our tongue is the means of that relationship.

- Acts 2- When the Holy Spirit fell on those praying in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, isn't it interesting that one of the great things that happened that day was that they talked differently.
- Jesus said,

“And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues...”

Mark 16:17

- I find it interesting that those who openly deal with demonic activity are mostly those who speak in tongues. Why is that? It empowers you to overcome the evil one.

There is an absolute change that takes place with our tongue when we come to know God and want to develop a closer relationship, a more intimate relationship with Him. **God is highly interested in you surrendering your mouth to Him so He can use it to produce life.**

Satan Understands The Potential of Our Mouths

Satan knows how powerful you can be with your mouth and he wants to take ownership of your tongue and mouth so he can use it to produce death. He wants to use you to scare other people. He wants you to discourage, to manipulate, to withhold opportunities of teaching and instruction. He wants to use your mouth to create an **atmosphere of discouragement, bitterness and strife**. Satan is gratified when he can use you to speak wrong and sinful things to wound one another for life.

“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”

Proverbs 18:21

How Do We Respond to God?

If we are going to build a healthy relationship with God, what does that look like? Many of us have never been in a healthy relationship and a product of a dysfunctional family. How are we to speak to God?

Like any relationship, **it is important that we have the right words to speak that would build a relationship, not ruin it.**

Example: One couple that was very close to Carol and I, who had great potential eventually fell apart in divorce. Years afterward the husband was asked what went on between them, he began to describe a scene where his wife's words set a deep rooted wound that eventually ended their relationship. He was sitting in his house one day when his wife and mother-in-law came into the house and he overheard their conversation, and he heard his wife say, "He's only good for his paycheck." I don't believe they ever discussed that statement between the two of them. But it sank deep in his heart and he said that he started pulling away from her emotionally to the point that he started entertaining other relationships and eventually found one. But his bitterness toward her was never resolved to this day. He is angry and bitter and I'm sure she has no idea that her little sentence was the root of a painful end.

When we are wanting to build a relationship, it is important that the words that come out of our mouth are the words that build up and not tear down. They are words that give life and not death. Your words will destroy a relationship and they will build a relationship. I would say that the majority of relationships could begin to excel at a faster rate if the tongue could be corrected. There are so many things we can say, but they need to be the right things. Here are four that will help build a relationship with God and others over the long run of your life.

If our greatest need is to communicate in such an affective way that it builds intimate relationships with God and our family as well as others, then...

1. We Will Speak The Language of **COMMITMENT.**

Look at God's Commitment to Us

"...God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"

Hebrews 13:5

You cannot be intimate in a relationship with one foot in the relationship and one foot out of it making threats that you are one step away from walking away.

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear..."

I John 4:18

Our Response Toward Others

Truly **our greatest fear of life is the fear of abandonment and rejection.** It's what I fear the most. If I am going to open my heart to you to develop an intimate relationship, it means I have got to open my heart of hearts. Now if I do that are you going to stay in the relationship or are you going to leave me.

It is so sad that many people have never been able to become intimate on a deeper level because of past woundedness or unhealthy training. Somewhere in a very vulnerable moment in their relationship a dishonoring, relationship threatening event occurred that caused the couple to decide if they are going to

call it quits or they were going to get gut level and open up their heart. **Are you going to leave or are you going to love me? See, my greatest fear is that I open up to you and show you my deepest secrets and then you leave me.**

If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.

I Peter 4:11

God takes all the fear out of our relationship between Himself and us so we can build intimacy and deeper praise.

Job's Commitment To God

Job experienced a horrible experience in life, **losing everything he owned** and had, all his **children**, all his **livestock**, all his **wealth** and his **health** was being attacked **near to death** and all he survived with was a mean and bitter wife and some heartless friends. He spoke these words while sitting around with them:

“Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face. Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless man would dare come before him!”

Job 13

Job had no fear because he knew God was committed to him and he was committed to God. Job had both feet planted in his commitment toward God. He was convinced, “Even if it kills me I am committed to this relationship.”

The real language of worship with God and deep relationship with others is always, “I’m committed to this relationship. I’m here to stay. You are stuck with me. I’m not going anywhere. I’m committed to this relationship.” And it creates a safe environment for me to open up and to work out the difficulties of our lives.

Regardless of the specific words spoken between lovers, people who are establishing intimacy always speak the language of commitment. **That means communicating in healthy ways dispels fear.**

God stresses this point

“Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.”

I John 4:17-18

Perfect intimacy is fear-free—totally.

When fear resides in a relationship it is equally delinquent of perfect love or intimacy in the marriage. What we fear is the fear of rejection. Our greatest need is the need for love. And “Perfect love casts out fear.” A committed love bleaches out the stains that fear deposit and allows love and intimacy to be fluent and nurturing.

The way you communicate will establish one of three things:

- 1. Commitment**
- 2. Passive commitment**
- 3. No commitment**

For example, when the word “**divorce**” is used during an argument, **it creates fear and shows a lack of commitment to the relationship.**

In the Bible, God gives us an example to follow when communicating commitment to our spouses.

“For He Himself has said; I will never leave you nor forsake you. So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my Helper, I will not fear. What can man do to me?’”

Hebrews 13: 5-6

God will never abandon you. He desires intimacy with you, so He assures you that He loves you and He’s committed to you. No matter what problems arise, or how you feel, or what you do...God always will be there for you. Can you see how His language of commitment establishes relationship while totally dispelling fear?

That same language of commitment must be present in your marriage—in the good times and in the bad.

- In studying conflict in marriage, **John Gottman** at the **University of Washington** found that a **couple’s conversation never rises above the level of the first three minutes. The first three minutes of any conversation dictates the rest of the conversation.**

Four Deadly Sins Of Failed Intimacy

Psychologist and relationship guru Dr. John Gottman says he can predict the fate of your relationship in minutes. Gottman was featured in the best-selling book "Blink," which is about rapid cognition -- the kind of thinking that happens in the blink of an eye.

Most couples dream of living happily ever after, but the cold, hard reality is that about 50 percent of all marriages end in divorce. Gottman says that within minutes of meeting a couple, he can predict with 90 percent accuracy if they will end up getting divorced. Dr. John Gottman said,

"They are always communicating respect or affection or disrespect and distance,"

Many couples are physiologically monitored at the Gottmans' Love Lab. Dr. John Gottman said that every eyebrow and every pout has a meaning.

"We realize a lot of conflicts are not solvable, you know, the perpetual problems. (They) also have a different attitude about the quality of intimacy and friendship in a relationship. That has to be built, and we know how to do it," Dr. John Gottman said.

The Gottmans claim there are **four things that pop up again and again in**

every marriage that eventually fails. They call them the **"four horsemen of the apocalypse."** Dr. Julie Gottman said:

- **Criticism:** "They might say, 'You never take out the garbage,' or 'You always drive carelessly,' as if that person has a character flaw about laziness or carelessness."
- **Contempt:** "You're making yourself superior and your partner inferior with a little bit of disgust."
- **Defensiveness:** "When you are hearing contempt, so you counterattack, or you say, 'I do, too, take out the garbage.' What do you mean?."
- **Stonewalling:** "Conveys the fact they are a stone wall and they don't care what their partner is thinking or saying."

Always, **there will be conflict in marriage.** But **the way it's handled establishes either commitment or a lack of commitment.** When words are used like,

- "I love and trust you. I know we're going to work this out. But right now I'm upset and need to talk."
- Research tells us that **marriage offers on the outset a better life than any other way of living.** An editorial from **HealthDay News** stated:

Marriage offers real benefits to a person's mental and physical health, research has found. Some examples:

- Better general health than non-married people, and fewer illnesses.
- Lower incidence of alcoholism.
- Lower rate of suicide.
- Fewer average time spent in hospitals than non-married people, and faster rates of recovery.
- Stronger immune system.
- Less risk of depression, and reduced stress and anxiety

Beginning a conversation by speaking the language of commitment disarms fear and allows both of you to share your heart of hearts. The result will be a greater level of intimacy.

If our greatest need is to communicate in such an affective way that it builds intimate relationships with God and our family as well as others, then

1. **We Will Speak The Language of Commitment.**
2. **We will speak the language of **AGREEMENT**.**

"Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?"
Amos 3:3

There is no way you both can go in the same direction if you do not agree. Here's an example:

Example: Sometimes when Carol and I are driving around and we are

going to eat or driving home, I like to take a road just short of the one I was supposed to take. I hear a muffle because that is not the agreed path to take. But, I'm the driver, I get to chart out the destiny. But not for long. Eventually we will agree which is the best route to take.

If you are in an essential disagreement with God you cannot have an intimate relationship with Him. The purpose of dating is to find out that the person you are with has an agreeable temperament with yours, not that they are great in bed. Are you in essential agreement with the core values of life? When it comes to God, family and life, do you agree with each other? You cannot walk together unless you agree to do so.

You cannot have a vision for your future if you cannot agree in the present!

"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend."

James 2:23

Abraham agreed with God and he became God's friend. All of God's friends agree with Him. God is the greater party in our relationship. It's not imperative that God agree with us, it's imperative that we agree with God. You can't be God's friend arguing with God. Jesus says,

"If ye love me, keep my commandments."

John 14:15

The proof of our love for God is our agreement with God, our affirming the commandments of God and what God has to say.

When you picture an intimate couple, what do you see? You don't picture a couple bickering and arguing do you? Instead you imagine two people lovingly interacting, holding hands, kissing, being close together.

Fighting and intimacy just don't mix. Amos 3:3 says, "Can two walk together unless they are agreed?" The answer is no. Apart from your relationship with the Lord, the journey of marriage is the longest and most intimate journey in life.

A husband and wife must discuss issues in marriage such as money, children, sex, in-laws, communication, religion, work, responsibilities around the house, and roles in marriage. Proactively communicating and coming into agreement about these issues dramatically reduces conflict and increases the level of intimacy in marriage.

If our greatest need is to communicate in such an affective way that it builds intimate relationships with God and our family as well as others, then

- 1. We Will Speak The Language of COMMITMENT.**
- 2. We Will Speak The Language of AGREEMENT.**
- 3. We Will Speak The Language of PRAISE.**

Our Response Toward God

Praise is positive speech. You cannot be intimate with a negative, critical

person. Only a person that is positive is a person we can open our hearts to.

“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name.”

Hebrews 13:15

It takes effort to be positive. It's so much easier to be critical and negative with our words and mouth. I have come to believe that to speak in a positive “Praise” mode will take far more effort, a sacrificial effort before it is a habit. But once you have positioned yourself, established and managing the patterns of speech that comes out of your mouth, you will realize that there are many people who live on that dimension.

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”

Psalm 100:4

Entering into God's courts is walking into His heart. He is saying here that the way to get to God's heart is to come in with thanksgiving and praise. You cannot become intimate in God's presence without being thankful and without being positive in your approach toward him. Satan wants to turn our tongue into a negative grumbling machine because he knows that with it you cannot build relationships. Satan feels like his job is done when you cannot use your tongue in a positive way. He knows this will defeat you and will bring other people down as well. God simply will not allow a negative attitude to pry into His heart. His gates will continue to stay shut, He will not open up when you are negative.

God is not manipulated by a fragile sense of well being, but he knows what true love is. He is not threatened by mistreatment because He is insecure and emotionally imbalanced. God hates pride and is resistant to pride and pride resists to being authentic. Love casts out “all” fear. People have pride because they have to hide behind an image that either causes a person to feel rejected before they can get close or it causes a person to become embraced for the purpose of expanding the platform of that pride.

This third sound of intimacy is praise and positive speech.

“...You are holy, O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel.”

Psalm 22:3

You can't enter into the intimate presence of God without a heart of praise. We can't be intimate with our spouses unless we praise them and are thankful for them.

Your husband will not open his heart to you unless he knows you believe in him. And by the way, praise isn't something you do when you feel like it or when your spouse has performed to a certain level. Praise is something you do regardless of the circumstances. Remember Paul and Silas praising God while in jail. They didn't have anything to sing about. But as they began to praise God, good things started happening!

Praise your husband...now. Remember why you married him. Remember the

wonderful things you loved about him when you were dating. Begin praising him for those things again. It may seem like a discipline at first and you may even have to take the first step. But keep in mind praise will have a tremendous, positive affect.

As you praise your husband and he discovers you believe in him, he will begin to open his heart to you. The atmosphere and temperature of your relationship will change dramatically. And just like God is drawn toward those who praise Him, your spouse will also be drawn to you.

Our Response Toward Others

I'm made in the image of God. I'm not going to let you into my heart or allow you to have free reign inside me if you are going to have negative thoughts and a negative attitude toward me. I cannot entertain you if you are hostile toward me. I'll never open up my heart if you will never be thankful for my opening up.

You cannot get close to me if you do not think highly of me. Some call it respect, others call it honor but it is that you think highly of me and that causes me to become more personal and genuine.

If our greatest need is to communicate in such an affective way that it builds intimate relationships with God and our family as well as others, then

- 1. We Will Speak The Language of COMMITMENT.**
- 2. We Will Speak The Language of AGREEMENT.**
- 3. We Will Speak The Language of PRAISE.**
- 4. We will speak the language of HONESTY.**

It is a flow of communication going back and forth. It's not the sound of silence. It's the sound of language, words exchanged.

Our Response Toward God

***"Pray without ceasing."
I Thessalonians 5:17***

My experience with prayer, worship and praise, in my time before God, is that it always leaves me energized, focused, passionate, positive, alert, sensitive, renewed.

Speaking In Tongues

Speaking in tongues is the most intimate language that you can have between you and God. It goes beyond our natural mind and goes from Spirit to Spirit.

"In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us."

I Corinthians 2:11b-12

"For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I

will also sing with my mind.”
I Corinthians 14:14-15

When I pray in tongues I pray with my Spirit Paul says. Spirit to Spirit. It is a heavenly language which is not limited by our minds which can give us a deep base of intimacy with God.

“I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.”
I Corinthians 14:18

When you are speaking in a tongue, you are speaking in a language that the devil cannot interpret or intercept. The Spirit is speaking through you and connecting your heart to God. The thing that know about speaking in tongues is that after it I feel closer to God. I feel more peaceful and an anointing and the presence of God. There is something about praying in tongues, by our selves, mostly in our prayer closet, in the car or anywhere you might be, but it is just acknowledging God's presence and establishing an on going conversation with God.

The fourth sound of intimacy is open and honest communication. **You cannot be intimate with a person who is silent. Intimacy requires a lot of words. The Bible is thick because God loves to talk! He's always communicating and feeding our spirits through positive words.**

And God doesn't keep any secrets. Amos 3:7 says “Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.”

Women typically are more communicative than men. So, wives listen up. You need to understand that **men are emotionally modest. Most men cannot open up and communicate as easily as women. Just like women are physically modest and they need a protected atmosphere for sex, men need to have a protected, confidential atmosphere to communicate in an open way.** That means he has to know you are not going to share what he tells you or shame him for it.

Our Response Toward Others

Relationship and more than that, intimacy in a relationship is a dialog that goes back and forth between two people. It's not talking two or three minutes a day. It's not talking every other week if you want to or not. It is a constant honest flow of communication that goes back and forth.

“We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.”

II Corinthians 6:11-13

Paul was honest in his relationship to the Corinthians. He laid it out there in three ways:

- 1. Speaking freely**
- 2. Opening up his heart to them**

3. Did not withhold affection

He did not withdraw his care for them. Many times a person talks about their loneliness because of the absence or lack of time with them rather than the desire for a deeper and more honest relationship. My relationship toward others is an honest and open conversation, a gut level honesty that allows you to know the truth about each other. **A critical list of what I don't like about you is not honesty, it's suicide for a relationship. See, the honesty is not how you disappoint me but how I need you. You are not being honest when you are being critical, you are protecting yourself from having to be vulnerable and open with the potential of being rejected and hurt.**

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”
James 5:16

You are not being honest when you are being critical, you are protecting yourself from having to be vulnerable and open with the potential of being rejected and hurt.

So, if we are going to speak the language of relationship and intimacy we are going to speak the language of...

1. Commitment
2. Agreement
3. Praise and open speech
4. Honesty