



MARRIAGE

EXPERIENCE

RECONNECT AND REDISCOVER GOD'S GOOD
DESIGN FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

CORNERSTONE CHURCH

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MEET STEVE JONES

MA, LMHC, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Steve is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and the Executive Director of Ministries at Cornerstone Church in Ames, IA, focusing on care and counseling. Steve holds dual Master's degrees in Theological Studies and Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Liberty University. He is trained in Gottman Method Couples Therapy and uses approaches like CBT, Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, and family systems. Steve works with individuals and couples on issues including anxiety, depression, grief, trauma, relational conflict, and marital challenges. He helps couples build communication skills, heal relational hurts, and find renewed hope. Steve is married to Paula and has four sons, four daughters-in-law, and thirteen grandchildren.



THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

GENESIS 2:18 – 24

“I WILL MAKE A HELPER CORRESPONDING TO HIM”

- Does not mean a servant or maid.
- **“Helper”** (Hebrew: *Ezer*) means best friend, partner, companion, or ally.
- In Psalm 46:1 God is referred to as our Helper.

“God is our refuge and strength; an ever-present Helper in times of trouble.”

TIM KELLER

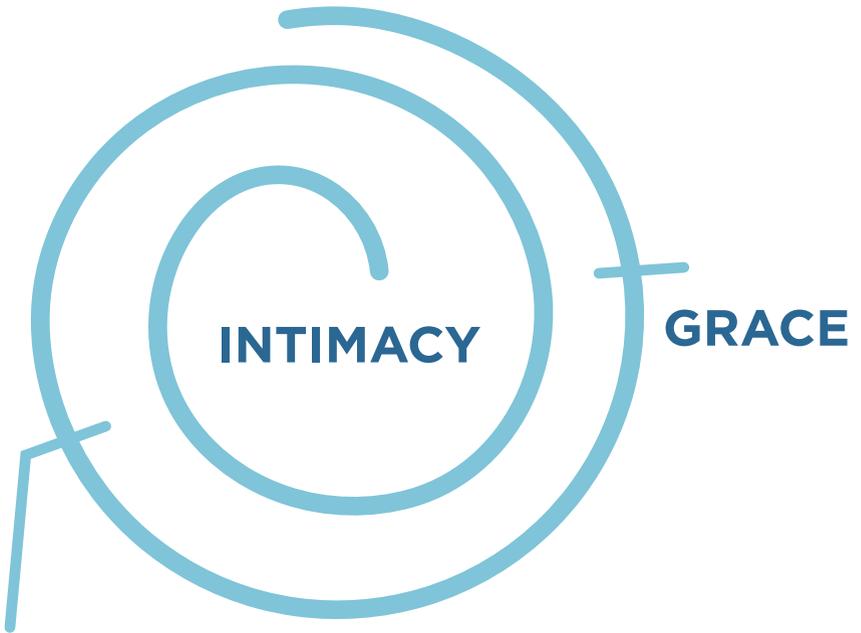
THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

“In response to being alone, God created what the text calls an “ezer,” a word that means a “helper-companion,” a friend. When the man sees the woman, he responds in poetry. “At last!” he says. “This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh!” Some have proposed that he is saying, “Meeting you fills a void in me.” And so we see that, in the beginning, God gave the man a companion to be his spouse.”

A THEOLOGY OF GOD IN RELATIONSHIP WITH US

COVENANT flows into **GRACE**, which flows
into **EMPOWERMENT** and leads to **INTIMACY**.

COVENANT



INTIMACY

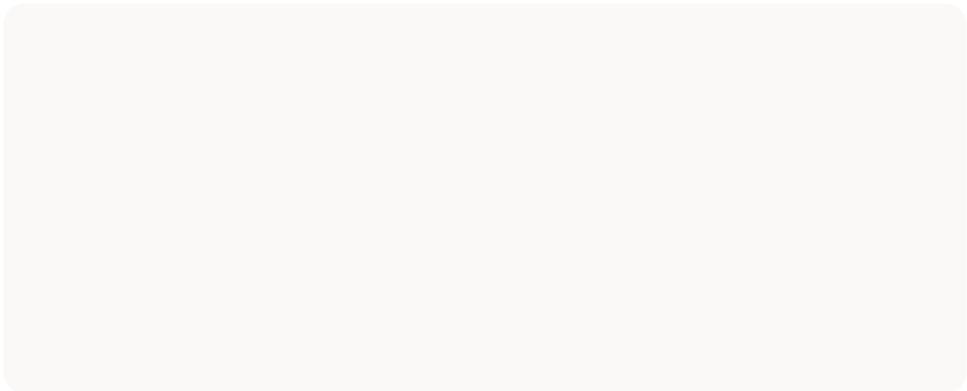
GRACE

EMPOWERMENT

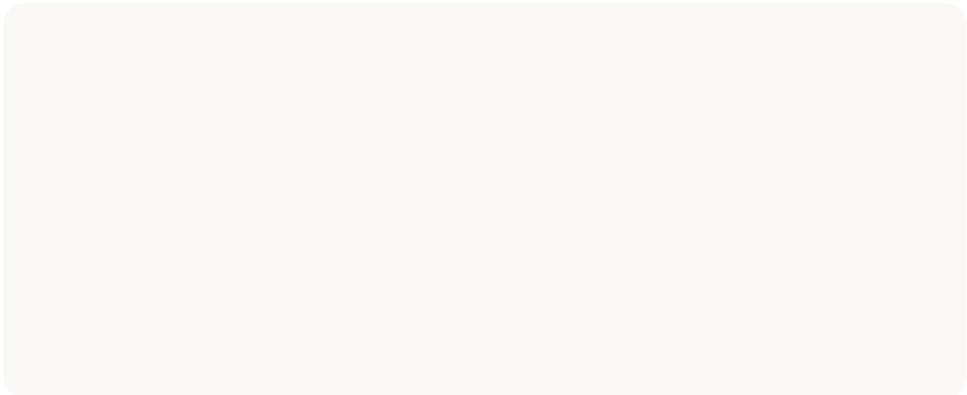
COVENANT: TO LOVE AND BE LOVED
GENESIS 17:7



GRACE: TO FORGIVE AND BE FORGIVEN
EPHESIANS 2:6-7



EMPOWERMENT: TO SERVE AND BE SERVED
EPHESIANS 5:21-25, MARK 10:42-43, PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4



S.H.A.P.E (WARREN)

The goal is to know your spouse's SHAPE. Notice these intrinsic qualities about who they are, not just what they do. Make sure to affirm these qualities to them.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

***Romans 12:6-8** "According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If **prophecy**, use it according to the proportion of one's faith; if service, use it in **service**; if teaching, in **teaching**; if **exhorting**, in exhortation; **giving**, with generosity; **leading**, with*

HEART



ABILITIES



PERSONALITY

PERSONALITY TYPE	STRENGTHS
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CHARGER

Wants a Responsibility
Wants a Challenge
Wants to Achieve

Decisive
Independent
Leader
Practical
Risk Taker

OUTGOING

Wants Approval
Wants Social Time
Wants to Have Fun

Stimulating
Enthusiastic
Outgoing
Personable
Communicative

RESPONSIBLE

Wants Quiet/Alone Time
Wants Admiration
Wants Efficiency

Thorough
Persistent
Orderly
Serious
Industrious

EASY-GOING

Wants Appreciation
Wants to Take a Nap
Wants Peace

Supportive
Quiet
Dependable
Reliable
Patient

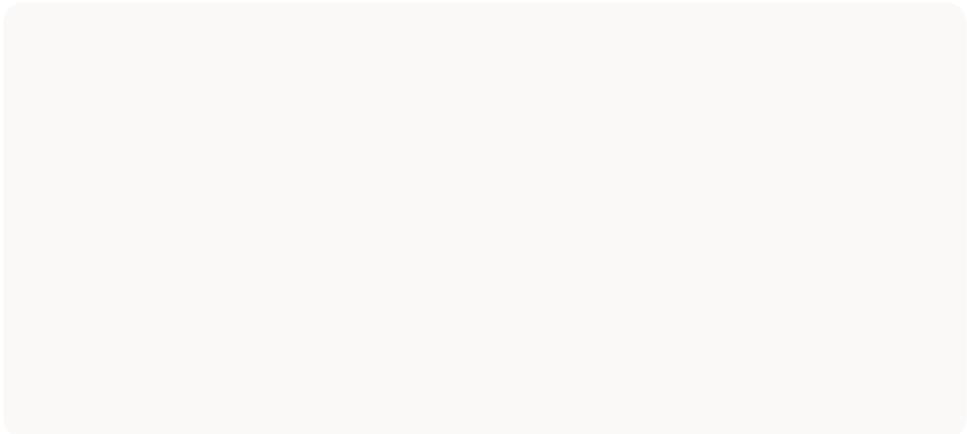
EXPERIENCE



INTIMACY: TO KNOW AND BE KNOWN **PSALM 139**

Assess your relationship using these 4 questions:

- Is there **Covenant Love or Conditional Love?**
- Is there **Grace or Legalism?**
- Is there **Empowering or Power Seeking?**
- Is there **Intimacy or Emotional Distance?**



**THE SOUND
RELATIONSHIP
HOUSE (GOTTMAN)**

CREATE SHARED MEANING

MAKE LIFE DREAMS COME TRUE

MANAGE CONFLICT

Accept Your Partner's Influence
Dialogue About Problems
Practice Self-Soothing

THE POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE

TURN TOWARDS INSTEAD OF AWAY

SHARE FONDNESS AND ADMIRATION

BUILD LOVE MAPS

Know One Another's World

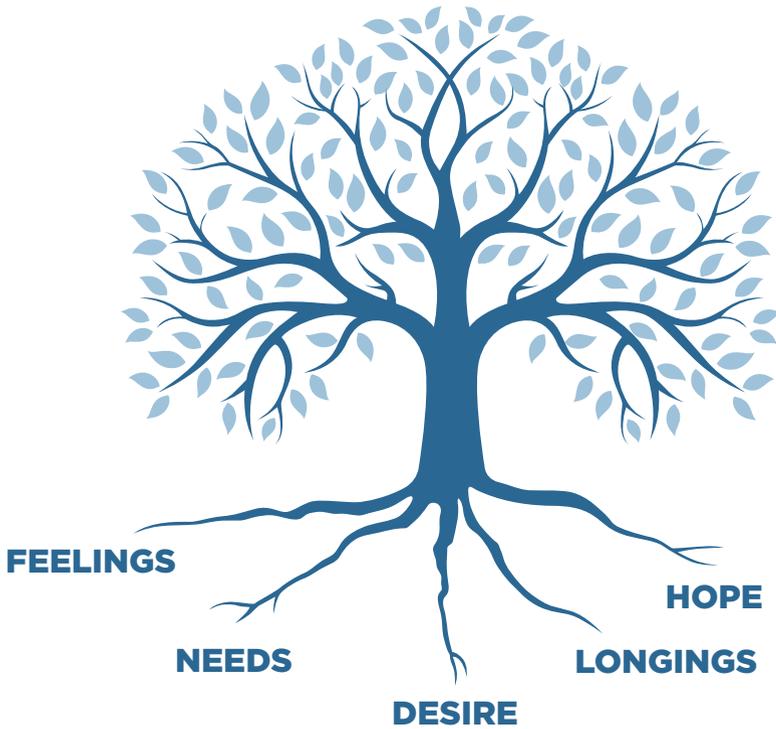
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BUILD LOVE MAPS



The Spiritual Root System: A Guide to Full Living (Dodd)



TITUS 2:2-4 | EPHESIANS 5:28-29 | PHILIPPIANS 2:4

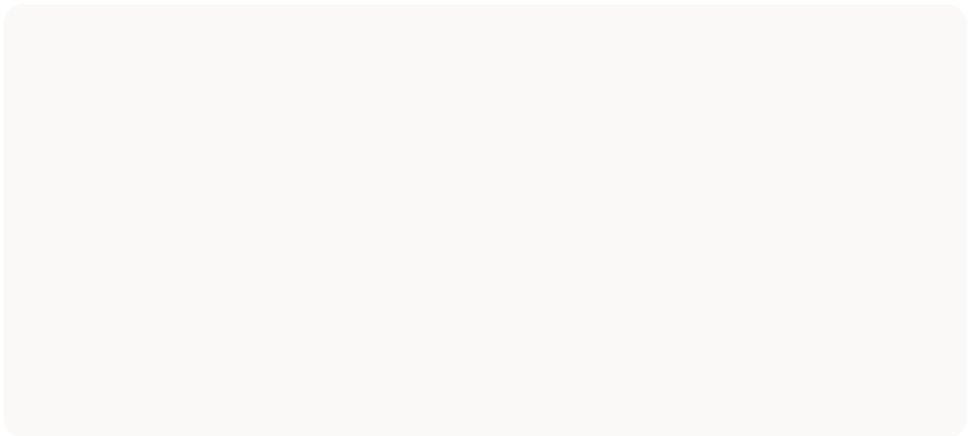
SHARE FONDNESS AND ADMIRATION



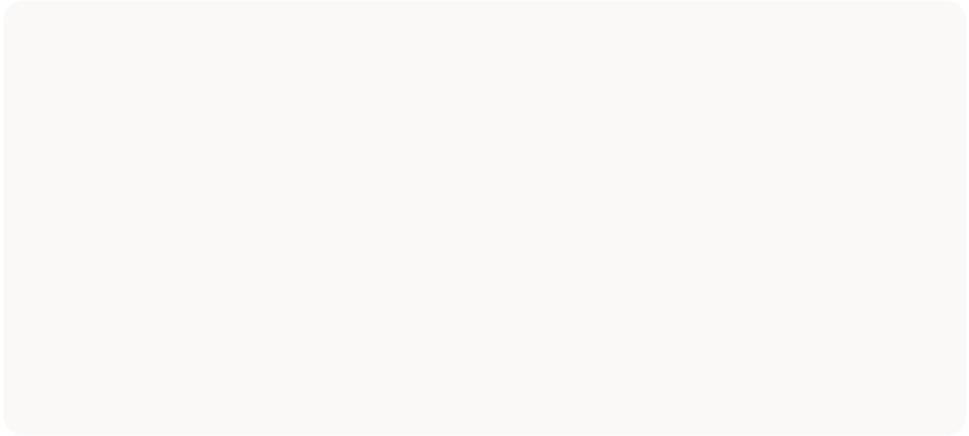
TURN TOWARDS INSTEAD OF AWAY



THE POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE



MANAGE CONFLICT



MAKE LIFE DREAMS COME TRUE



CREATE SHARED MEANING



NOTES

COMMUNICATION & CONFLICT

DAVE & MEG ROBBINS

“Listening is such an important part of the communication process.

*Yet it's often one of the most neglected parts.
If you aren't listening, you aren't communicating.
If you aren't communicating, you aren't connecting.
And if you aren't connecting, you are on your way to isolation.”*

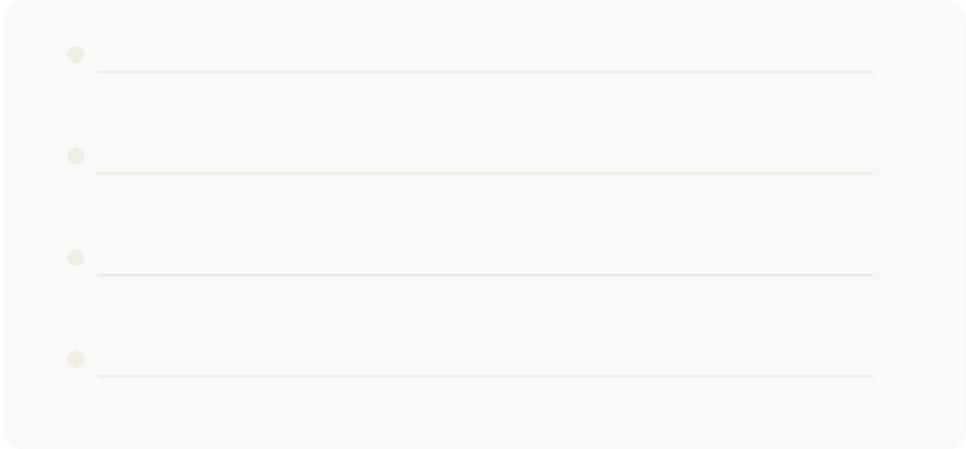
JAMES 1:19

*“My dear brothers and sisters, understand this:
Everyone should be **QUICK TO LISTEN, SLOW TO SPEAK** and **SLOW TO BECOME ANGRY.**”*

LISTENING & VALIDATING

The goal is to have discussions where you both feel understood by each other.

ACTIVE LISTENING



• _____

• _____

• _____

• _____

RULES FOR THE SPEAKER

- No blaming, criticizing, or contempt
- No “you” statements (*You ALWAYS, NEVER, etc.*)
- Use “I” statements.
- Talk about your feelings.
- State a positive need using a *Gentle Startup*.

RULES FOR THE LISTENER

- Postpone your own agenda.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Ask questions for clarification.
- Don’t be critical, judgmental, or defensive.
- Don’t minimize or correct what they are feeling or saying.
- Summarize, validate, and express empathy for what you are hearing so they know you understand.

PRACTICE

Pick a relatively low intensity topic or a happy topic. Read back through the Speaker/Listener rules and take turns practicing both listening and validating.



EPHESIANS 4:29

“No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear.”

THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

Marriages cannot survive the Four Horsemen!



1. CRITICISM

2. CONTEMPT



3. DEFENSIVENESS



4. STONEWALLING



WHAT TO SAY WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY

“I’m really upset. I’m angry.”

“We need to talk about this.”

“I need you to understand how your words/actions really hurt me.”

“I need you to understand why I am so frustrated right now.”

HOW TO MANAGE CONFLICT

- 1. SELF-AWARENESS OF THE FOUR HORSEMEN**
- 2. CALL A TIME-OUT**
- 3. REPENT OF PRIDE AND SELF-CENTEREDNESS (JAMES 4:1-4)**
- 4. RETURN WITH A GOSPEL APOLOGY**
- 5. LISTEN AND VALIDATE**

RITUALS OF CONNECTION

COUPLE'S ACTIVITY

In a typical week, how often do you intentionally connect through meaningful conversation, with phones down and distractions aside? Consider this in terms of time spent together or frequency: a few hours, daily, or a few days a week.

DR. SUE JOHNSON

“Romantic love is all about attachment and emotional bonding.

It is all about our wired-in need to have someone to depend on, a loved one who can offer reliable emotional connection and comfort.”

THE 5 RITUALS OF CONNECTION

1. DAILY CONNECT TIME



2. THE WEEKLY STATE OF THE UNION



3. THE WEEKLY DATE



DR. SUE JOHNSON

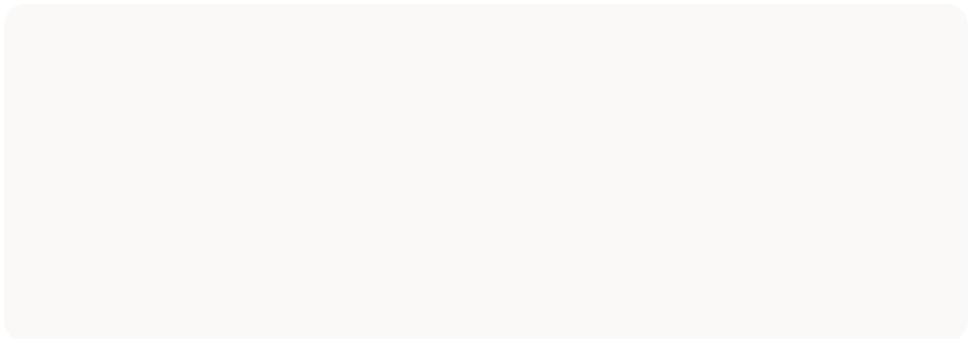
“When we are close to or hold our partners,

we are flooded with the ‘cuddle hormones’ oxytocin and vasopressin. These hormones seem to turn on reward centers in the brain, flooding us with calm and happiness chemicals like dopamine, and turning off stress hormones like cortisol.”

4. NON-SEXUAL PHYSICAL AFFECTION



5. SEX



GOTTMAN

“Sex divorced from intimacy

can widen the chasm between two people.”

6 PRINCIPLES ABOUT SEX

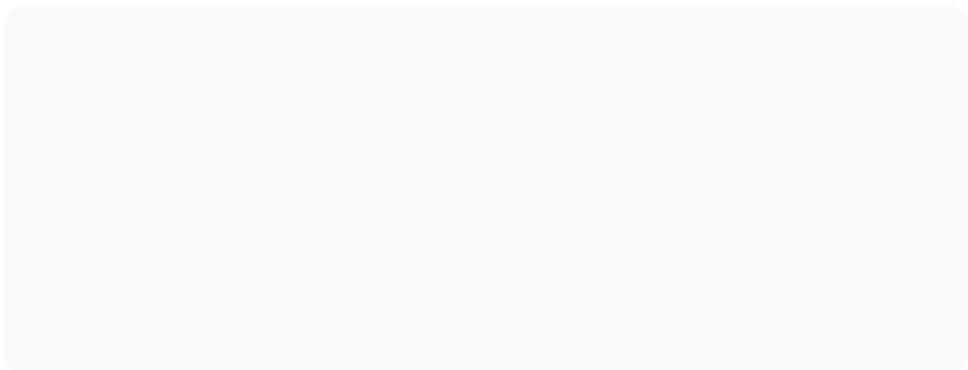
1. SEX SHOULD BE PERSONAL



2. SEX SHOULD BE PLEASURABLE



3. SEX SHOULD BE PURE



4. SEX SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED



5. SEX SHOULD BE PRESSURE-FREE



6. SEX SHOULD PUT THE OTHER FIRST



**SUPPORT AS
YOU GROW
TOGETHER**

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

There are a lot of resources out there and sometimes it's hard to know where to start. While this list certainly isn't exhaustive, our hope is that it provides a great starting point!

THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

by Tim Keller

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF MAKING A MARRIAGE WORK

by John Gottman

INTENDED FOR PLEASURE: 4TH EDITION

by Ed & Gaye Wheat

MARRIAGE

by Paul David Tripp

THE GIFT OF SEX

by Clifford & Joyce Penner

BIG RESULTS FOR CRAZY BUSY COUPLES

by Becky & Roger Tirabassi

Additional Resources



COUNSELING RESOURCES

If you feel you could use additional support,
we want you to know you're not alone.



CORNERSTONE
COUNSELING CENTER



OTHER RECOMMENDED COUNSELING PRACTICES

NEW LIFE COUNSELING

Ankeny, West Des Moines, Pleasant Hill

FAMILY LEGACY COUNSELING

Johnston

CITYREACH FAMILY THERAPY

Des Moines

KINGDOM COUNSELING

West Des Moines

