

The Mystery of Romance

God's Plan for Intimacy in Marriage

Genesis 2:18-25

INTRODUCTION

For too many couples, marriage often feels like this.

February 12, 2006

A man named Frank in Seattle, Washington. He was twenty-four years old and had been married for only a year, but he was extremely distraught about his marriage. "It makes me feel like we are never going to make it. It just keeps getting worse. We fight 24/7, and we hit each other - and we have a baby. I can't go on like this, and I don't know what else to do."

After nineteen years of marriage, a woman named Martha said, "I think I really tried to work on our marriage in the early years, but it seemed as if everything I suggested he interpreted as nagging. Nothing seemed to work, so I began to shut down. We've had some times of growth and increased intimacy, but mostly it has centered on what *he* wanted and doesn't involve my needs or desires. That continued pattern has left me not really caring what his needs are at this point. I am now waiting - probably unfairly - for him to put some energy into our marriage."

T.S. For too many these story illustrate the lack of intimacy in their own marriages.

THE MYSTERY OF ROMANCE IS THAT IN ORDER TO HAVE A FULFILLING MARRIAGE WE MUST LEARN TO CHASE THE INTIMACY OF EDEN

WHAT IS MARRIAGE?

For the world, Marriage is a binding legal and social contract between one man and one woman.

For followers of the forgiver, Marriage is an institution created by God for our benefit.

Read Gen. 2:18-25

18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

Only after man and woman are created is creation announced to be "very" good.

WHAT IS INTIMACY?

The word intimacy comes from a Latin word that means "innermost."

We all crave it, but most of us will never have it. Many people know that something is missing from their lives but usually can't quite put their fingers on what it is they're lacking. That's why so many people feel lonely, or empty, or unfulfilled although they appear to have every reason to feel just the opposite.

It is this elusive prize.

It is a sense of oneness and completeness found no where else on earth.

23 The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Humans are born with an irresistible need for it.

With the exception of those He gifted for singleness (1 Corinthians 7:7), God intended from the beginning that we develop intimacy with another person to the point that the two will become ONE (Genesis 2).

- **one in heart (emotional intimacy)**

"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

- Designed by God as a counter part, a right fit for the aloneness.

- **one in Him (spiritual intimacy)**

Gen 2:19

19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them;

Gen 2:21-22

21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made

a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

- Designed by a God in an intimate relationship with his creation.
- An active sharing of the spiritual relationship with God.
- **one in flesh (sexual intimacy)**

24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

All three areas of intimacy are vital components of Marriage intimacy. A woman may place more emphasis on Emotional intimacy and a man may place more on sexual intimacy, but all three are vital components of marriage intimacy

Ill: C.S. Lewis once remarked that the reason why we look for fulfillment outside our own marriage is because we have not allowed God to show us the depths of joy and happiness that He can provide in our existing relationship. When we allow ourselves to experience God's plan for marriage, we soon find ourselves in a state of satisfaction and contentment that makes us wonder why anyone would ever consider such a stray thought.

Appl: If your life seems empty or unfulfilled, it may well be because you don't feel the intimacy with your spouse God designed you to have. If you experience feelings of loneliness or occasionally find yourself longing for a relationship very different from the one you now have, it's almost a sure thing that intimacy hasn't reached its intended level.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUR NEED FOR INTIMACY IS NOT MET?

We will withdraw.

If you see any of the following danger signals, you may be withdrawing:

- acting distracted with your spouse
- maintained a distant relationship from your spouse
- spending more time than usual at work or in other activities
- avoids spending time together
- the children seem to be a higher priority than your spouse

Will Not Feel Free or want to Respond Sexually

Look Elsewhere to Have your Needs Met

Strengthen Your Relationship by Cultivating Intimacy

Ill: Marriages may be made in heaven, but many of the details have to be worked out here on earth.

Five Tips on Getting better connected:

Show an Understanding Heart.

Are you judgmental? You probably quickly answered no to this question. But think about it. Do you, either by your words or your attitude, sometimes make your spouse feel ashamed, silly or demeaned their feelings? Pray daily. And remember to thank God for your spouse.

- Meet lunch, and ask each other about your dreams, desires.
- Cheering each other on.
- Tune into your spouse as soon as you get home or get up. Start the day connected..

Give attention and affection.

Attention to the smallest details shows you are thinking of your spouse. Go out of the way to make each other feel special.

Build rapport don't just report.

Share what you are thinking and feeling. Don't just report on the day.

Resist the urge to "solve it" - whatever "it" is. Acknowledge each other's feelings; even if you don't agree with each other, your acknowledgment of the emotions assures that you aren't dismissing them by overlooking them and rushing to suggest a solution.

Recognize her strong emotions as exclamation marks. Statements of how important things the issues or circumstance is.

Resolve conflict.

In Ephesians 4:31-32, Paul tells us to "get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior. Indeed, be kind to each other, tender hearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."

You cannot connect emotionally if you are living with, or stirring up, resentment, bitterness, grudges, or anger. These emotions are toxic to a relationship. In the spiritual realm, the enemy uses these emotions as doorways to usher in every kind of disorder in a marriage.

Invest in the Marriage

Let your spouse know how special they are to by investing in a retreat a conference and weekend away devoted to just each other.

SUMMARY

For followers of the forgiver, Marriage is an institution created by God for our benefit and fulfillment.

We discovery that fulfillment through intimacy with our spouses.

Since we have been created this way, let us chase the oneness for which we were created.

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EDEN

CHALLENGE

Dew glistened on the leaves of hundreds of plants. Birds lifted their new found songs in the air all around him. A lion roared, a gazelle pranced, a dog frolicked. Would the beauties of the world around him ever cease to amaze him?

His night on the ground had left his side stiff and sore, an unusual experience.

He bent and picked up two small cats, so much smaller and weaker than the long haired beauty that cared for them, attended to their needs. He was fascinated by this miracle of life.

Everything fascinated him.

Yet there was the emptiness that still crept into his being. He would have to speak to father about that. Sometimes he just didn't feel right deep inside.

The dog returned to his feet. Such a unique animal. It delighted in his presence just the way that he delighted in his father's presence. The dog was such a great companion. Such a close friend. The dog accompanied him everyday when he tended the duties assigned by his father.

But sometimes he would just look at the dog and long for something more. The dog was a great gift.

But the dog was not what he longed for.

What was it that tugged at the core of his inner self? What was it that plagued his thoughts?

His musings were so deep he did not hear his father approach.

"Adam! I have something for you. Something I have made just for you."

The man turned, his eyes fell on something he had never seen before. Something so different, so beautiful, something so like him yet unlike him.

His spirit swelled within him. The gentle thumping in his chest became noticeably louder. He looked at his father and said,

"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman, for she was taken out of man."

This is the reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife. They will become one flesh.

They will chase the oneness they were created for.