

Contact: Encourage Publishing (812)987-6148

Email: [info@encouragebooks.com](mailto:info@encouragebooks.com)

Website: [www.encouragepublishing.com](http://www.encouragepublishing.com)

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# THE MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE

Weekly Conversation Starters to  
Build the Relationship You Desire

By Ryan and Jenny Brown

*It's simple, practical, biblical, and doable. It's as down-to-earth as a weekly date...nothing complicated about it. You can't walk through these pages without emerging into a more enviable marriage. Whether you're newly-weds or young-at-hearts, say, 'I do' to The Marriage Experience."*

--Robert J. Morgan, best-selling Christian author, speaker, Bible teacher, pastor

**The Marriage Experience** is fifty-two weeks of guided prompts with a short, biblically-based reading each week, designed to help couples have intentional, affirming, strengthening conversations with each other. Excerpt and table of contents provided.

*For marriages in all seasons*

**PART ONE//FOUNDATION** covers twelve simple building blocks to any relationship.

**PART TWO//FRUIT** connects marriage to the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and also talks about an important intimate connection for most married couples: sex!

**PART THREE//FRIENDSHIP** explores relating to your partner as your best friend, and of protecting that friendship above all other human relationships.

**PART FOUR//FUTURE** looks at twelve simple practices that will lead to long-term growth in your marriage.

Designed to be an easy way to stay connected with each other, even in the busiest years of life, **The Marriage Experience can be repeated year after year.** The prompts and readings will easily apply to each new season of life.

*"...I am so excited to have something written from both perspectives, of husband and wife. To be able to take in both viewpoints and then be able to focus on my marriage and apply the teachings is a gift. Well done!"*

Rachel Van Kluyve, author and podcast host of *She Made Herself a Home*

*Foreword by Brad and Marilyn Rhoads, co-founders of Grace Marriage*

*"Your time together, guided by this book, will be a Gospel-centered experience of the mind, body, and soul that will strengthen and draw you closer together, and closer to God. Deepening your own marriage experience is a lifetime journey, well worth your continued effort. Let's start the conversation."*



**Non-fiction**

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4 images

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812.987.6148

1116 Creekview Circle,  
New Albany, IN 47150-2028

Fax: 812.945.3359

[info@encouragebooks.com](mailto:info@encouragebooks.com)

[www.encouragepublishing.com](http://www.encouragepublishing.com)

## About the Authors



**Ryan and Jenny Brown** are the founders of [The Marriage Experience](https://www.themarriageexperience.com) online community (the-marriage-experience.com), an online resource designed to encourage couples in any stage of marriage and provide resources to help them along the way.

Ryan and Jenny have a love for marriage and a longing to give married couples a space to connect on a deeper level in their relationship. They created *The Marriage Experience* as a Biblical approach to creating a strong, Gospel-centered marriage, the result of ongoing prayer, Biblical study, and research, along with their years mentoring newly engaged and married couples.

*The Marriage Experience* project's ultimate mission is to help couples illuminate Jesus Christ to the world, in keeping with Ephesians 5:32.

**Ryan** is Executive Pastor of Gatherings at Graceland Church in New Albany, Indiana, where he has served since 2013. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in business management from Indiana University Kelley School of Business, Bloomington, Indiana, and his Master of Arts in Church Ministry from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. Ryan's experience spans the spectrum of ministry through his pastoral service with youth, small group, discipleship, preaching, evangelism, outreach, worship, and administration, yet he would say his heart and calling are to lead and shepherd the local church. Ryan cheers for the Indiana Hoosiers, the Indianapolis Colts, and the St. Louis Cardinals. He collects sneakers, loves to read, and enjoys coaching his son's soccer team.

**Jenny** is director of *The Marriage Experience* ministry, the result of her passion for encouraging and supporting women and strengthening marriages. She is also the creator of *Simple Life, Pastor's Wife*, an inspiring online platform and faith community of women encouraging each other to live a Christ-centered life beautifully, simply, and inexpensively. Jenny is a frequent podcast host and interviewer. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Telecommunications from Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, and her Master of Arts in Education from Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tennessee. She taught for nine years before becoming a "stay-at-home-momprenuer." Jenny serves alongside Ryan at Graceland Church as she manages her online platforms and their marriage ministry, as well as the marriage support ministry through their church. She is very comfortable with a power tool in her hand and always has a building project in mind.

Ryan and Jenny were married in 2004 and have two children.

### Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/themarriageexperience/>

<https://www.instagram.com/simplelifepastorswife/>

### Podcast samples:

[Valentines Day Special: Dating your spouse](#)

[Graceland Moments Podcast](#)

## Notable Reviews:

*"A great marriage is a warm friendship, clad in a coat of love, trimmed with a scarf of romance. But how do we get there? Through The Marriage Experience. It's simple, practical, biblical, and doable. It's as down-to-earth as a weekly date, and as simple as reading, asking, listening, and loving. Nothing complicated about it. You can't walk through these pages without emerging into a more enviable marriage. Whether you're newly-weds or young-at-hearts, say, 'I do' to The Marriage Experience."*

**--Robert J. Morgan, best-selling author, speaker, Bible teacher, pastor**

*"After years of working with churches of virtually every denomination, after having the opportunity to serve thousands of couples through our combined roles as attorney, author, marriage pastor, counselor, and as co-founders of Grace Marriage, we know two things that are paramount in a relationship: regular and ongoing communication, and consistent, deep, emotional and spiritual intimacy. Ryan and Jenny Brown understand this connection, and in The Marriage Experience have provided a great pathway for couples to communicate and draw closer to one another. We are so thankful to call them friends and have had the privilege of watching them model these two vital elements in their own marriage. God has shown them how to stay connected and grow together. Their marriage ministry flows from this experience, and now, we are blessed by the way they share those insights and personal stories in this book."*

**--Brad and Marilyn Rhoads, Co-founders of Grace Marriage and featured experts on Focus on the Family**

*"The Marriage Experience by Ryan and Jenny Brown is a powerful yet user-friendly tool that can heal and strengthen any marriage. In it, Ryan and Jenny do a phenomenal job of guiding conversations for couples that address biblical topics with wisdom and practical advice — allowing couples to dig deep and grow in their marriage together in a safe and helpful way. If someone is wanting to transform their marriage from one of the world into a relationship that mimics Christ and his bride - the church - then look no further than "The Marriage Experience."*

**--Quinn Kelly, licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Creator of sanctificationandspitup.com blog and podcast**

*"This book perfectly sheds light on the beauty marriage unveils with commitment and trust in the Lord. With so many marriages failing around us, this book is exactly what we need. The Browns have perfectly laid out an easy way to connect with our spouse and take the intentional time to build a lasting marriage. I am so excited to have something written from both perspectives, of husband and wife. To be able to take in both viewpoints and then be able to focus on my marriage and apply the teachings is a gift. Well done!"*

**Rachel Van Kluyve, author and podcast host of She Made Herself a Home**

*"The Marriage Experience is an absolute game-changer! Whether you are happy, hurt, or ready to hang it up. . . a much-needed framework for engaging and productive conversations that can heal and encourage every marriage."*

**Alisha Illian, author of Chasing Perfect, Founder of Women [re]Purposed**

## Editorial and Marketing Notes:

“The Marriage Experience” is a non-fiction book written in the Christian world view that gives couples an easy way to have important conversations, each one designed to help them build a strong, healthy, intimate, fulfilling relationship with each other.

Each week is designed with busy lives in mind, and written in such a way that couples can go as deep as they want, or keep it light. The overall book is designed so that it can be repeated year after year. As couples grow and life changes, so will their responses. What may be an easy subject one year may reveal a disconnect or struggle in years ahead.

Those who wish to connect further can join the online Marriage Experience community, a place where couples can find resources, recommendations, humor, find links to interesting and relevant podcasts, and connect with other couples seeking to put their marriage first.

The Marriage Experience also has a robust and growing presence through social media, and will continually add fresh and relevant material, balanced with a light touch of encouragement.

Cultural interest in the topic of marriage relationships is strong within books and podcasts, for both secular and faith-based audiences. The structure of this book could also place it in the ever popular devotional genre. Spiritual growth, connection, and relationships are strong topics in ECPA’s May 2022 best-seller’s list, covering eight of the top twenty titles, including four specific to our closest relationships. These eight include titles from a roster of top-selling authors such as Gary Chapman, Jennie Allen, Ashley and Dino Petrone, and Lysa Terkeurst.

The audience for this particular title trends toward Millennials and older, though men and women of all ages and cultures will benefit from the message.

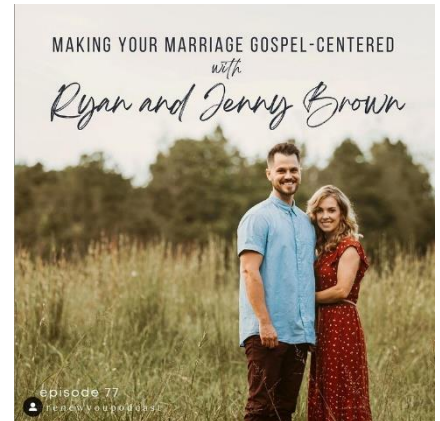
### Marketing efforts include:

1. Initial market analysis, pre-launch promotion, website and media kit launch, initial review campaign
2. Book signings and media interviews, podcast interviews
3. Social media and both online and in-person launch campaigns
4. Ongoing presence online, speaking engagements, and marriage workshops and retreats
5. Targeted seasonal ad and award campaigns as opportunities arise

For hi-res photos, to receive an ARC, or to schedule an interview contact Encourage Publishing.

This book is available through Ingram for bookstores to order, through Amazon in both print and ebook formats, and through the publisher at <https://www.encouragepublishing.com/shop>. Churches, non-profit organizations, and resellers may contact the publisher directly for bulk discounts, promotional material, or to connect with the authors.

**Encourage Publishing** is a full-service publisher offering both traditional and hybrid publishing models to our authors.





WEEK 1

CONNECTION

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

*Take time to prepare your mind, your heart, and your space.  
Be open to change; listen well and anticipate a positive experience.*

START THE CONVERSATION

- What encouraged you this past week?
- What discouraged you this past week?
- What one thing can I do to help you in the week ahead?
- What are your prayer needs for the week ahead?

5-MINUTE READ-ALoud

*Jenny:*

“I just don’t feel connected to my spouse right now.” Have you ever spoken or thought those words? If so, you are in good company. (I can say that because I am part of that company!) Connection is not going to happen accidentally. It requires effort. Connection takes energy and time, both of which are limited resources. Also, the ways in which we connect as a couple change over time, causing many couples to find themselves in a disconnected rut if they don’t learn how to readjust, to “change with the tide.” Ryan and I are certainly no exception. Just in the first fifteen years of our marriage, we had two children, lived in three cities, earned four degrees, and held seven jobs. It has been full, to say the least. Quite a few times over the years, we have found ourselves *disconnected*, and had to

reconnect by communicating with each other better and reprioritizing our relationship.

Connection is more than communication. Connection is more than sharing schedules and space together. Connection can and should happen on a spiritual, physical, and intellectual level. God has given us our spouse to love, respect, and enjoy! Without connection, we miss out on the fulfilling marriage he has in store for us.

Connection is more than communication.

**Spiritually**—God has called us into a relationship with him, first and foremost. When you and your spouse have a strong connection with the Lord and understand his love for you, then it will overflow into a spiritually connected relationship with each other. First John 4:19 says, “We love because he first loved us.” You can connect spiritually by praying together, sharing your spiritual struggles or questions, or listening to and discussing a sermon or Bible study together.

**Physically**—God designed the act of sex as a *gift* for us within the confines of our marriage, but physical connection does not start, or end, with sex. Daily hugs, kisses, and being physically near to your spouse will communicate to them that you desire to be connected. Don’t forget the small stuff! If your physical connection is lacking, it could be from unspoken needs or unrealistic expectations.

**Intellectually**—No one has ever accused me of being an intellectual (just being honest here), but Ryan and I have still found ways to connect through discussion of big ideas. Whether I ask him a theological question or we are reading a book together, having deep discussion has greatly increased our intellectual connection with each other.

How you connect with your spouse may change from season to season in your marriage. The important part is that you are *intentional* about it; communicate to your spouse that you *want* to connect, and then do it! Show them your desire for closeness with a text, being physically near them, asking them questions, and listening to them. Little acts of kindness go a long way (think “note on the mirror” or making them coffee). Show gratitude for their presence in your life; disconnect from

electronics to prioritize personal time above anything else vying for your attention. Spend time together reminiscing, worshiping, seeking to understand each other’s perspective, discussing deep thoughts, or doing an activity.

DIG DEEPER

Talk about it:

- We talked about the importance of spiritual, physical, and intellectual connection with your spouse. In which of these areas do you feel your connection is lacking in this season of your marriage?

Do it:

- How can you show your spouse today or tomorrow (or both) that your desire for closeness is a priority in your marriage?
- Choose one way to connect with your spouse this week. Make a note somewhere or set an alarm to remind you to connect in the way you have chosen.

PRAY FOR AND WITH EACH OTHER

WEEK 2

UNITY

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

*Take time to prepare your mind, your heart, and your space.  
Be open to change; listen well and anticipate a positive experience.*

START THE CONVERSATION

- What encouraged you this past week?
- What discouraged you this past week?
- What one thing can I do to help you in the week ahead?
- What are your prayer needs for the week ahead?

5-MINUTE READ-ALoud

*Ryan:*

Throughout the first two chapters of the Bible, we see that God creates many things, and it is good. Shortly after we read that God created Adam, Genesis 2:18 has the first mention of something that is “not good.” God said that Adam needed a helper, and he created Eve from Adam. As we get to the end of the chapter, we see that Adam and Eve become one flesh as husband and wife—talk about being united together!

Often we will read this passage and misremember its foundational truth about marriage: the importance of *unity* in marital relationships.

On our wedding day, Jenny and I lit a unity candle, but at the time, I don’t think we truly understood the significance of that part of the ceremony. In Matthew 19, Jesus spoke on the subject of marriage and divorce,

and he quoted the passage from Genesis 2 on how a husband and wife are united as one flesh. He then went on to say in verse 6 that what God has joined together, “let not man separate.”

How unified is your marriage?

The apostle Paul covered many subjects in the letters he wrote in the New Testament. Of all the topics he addressed, I would suggest that a call for unity is one of the most consistent. From I Corinthians to the book of Ephesians, he described unity in the church as vital in order for the church to accomplish the mission of making disciples among the nations.

The same is true for our marriages. Your ability to root out division in your marriage, and your insistence on unity within your marriage, will allow God to work in your marriage to grow your relationship to its fullest potential. It is not only in the church where God moves the mission, but also within the home.

**Your ability to root out division in your marriage, and your insistence on unity within your marriage, will allow God to work in your marriage to grow your relationship to its fullest potential.**

Again, I ask, how unified is your marriage?

DIG DEEPER

Talk about it:

- In what areas in your marriage do you need unity? List five areas where unity is essential in any marriage relationship, then share your lists with each other.
- Together, choose two areas where you can grow in unity in *your* relationship.

PRAY FOR AND WITH EACH OTHER

Notable pull quotes:

- If you have a difficult time asking for forgiveness from your spouse, it may be because you did not see that model growing up.
- It’s not up to your discretion to respect your husband only if he has earned it.
- If you do not have healthy community with your spouse, then you will seek to fill this void with others—and this will lead down a devastating path.
- Your love for each other reflects God himself to an empty and confused world.
- Our kindness to our spouse is not contingent on their kindness to us.
- Accept each other’s changes: you are both better together because of the hurdles you have overcome, and the life you have lived hand in hand.
- Showing compassion to your spouse is a privilege, not an obligation.
- Your spouse comes before all other earthly relationships.
- The stresses we endure as a couple don’t create our problems, but they do reveal them.
- Your wife doesn’t want your prayers to be perfect; she just wants to pray with you.
- The impact you have on your family through your marriage will far surpass your life on earth.

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