



Restored

Sarah Deif Abdelshaheed
Dec 2025

Agenda



Session 1

Created as 'The Holy Institution'



Session 2

The Fall: Internal and External Threats



Session 3

The Journey: Conflict Resolution



Session 4

Recommitting




The Holy Institution

Session 1

Session 1


1. What is the Holy Institution?
2. What was the design for marriage?
3. What was the purpose?







What is the Holy Institution?

The Holy Institution - Genesis

“And the LORD God said, **“*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.*”** Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to  Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. ²⁰ So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

²¹ **And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.**

²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.²³ And Adam said:

“This *is* now bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called  Woman,
Because she was taken out of  Man.”

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.


²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

What do we
get from this
passage?

1. Marriage was ordained by God



- God formed humanity in His image, both male and female, and united them into one flesh.
- Marriage wasn't something that WE created. It is was created by the creator.
- Marriage is holy because the designer is holy.

The Holy Institution - Genesis

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2. Helper

- Where else do we see that word used?

עֶזֶר / ezer —Hebrew for "helper"

2 Kings 14:26

For the LORD saw *that* the affliction of Israel *was* very bitter; and whether bond or free, there was no **helper** for Israel.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

1 Chronicles 12:1

The Growth of David's Army

Now these *were* the men who came to David at Ziklag while he was still a fugitive from Saul the son of Kish; and they *were* among the mighty men, **helpers** in the war,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

1 Chronicles 12:18

Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the captains, *and he said*: "We are yours, O David; We *are* on your side, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, And peace to your **helpers**! For your God helps you." So David received them, and made them captains of the troop.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Job 29:12

Because I delivered the poor who cried out, The fatherless and *the one who* had no **helper**.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Job 30:13

They break up my path, They promote my calamity; They have no **helper**.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

2. Helper

- Where else do we see that word used?

עֶזֶר / **ezer**
—*Hebrew for "helper"*

- What does that word mean?
 - Military connotation, military reinforcements
 - Often refers to God as Israel's powerful helper in time of battle
 - Derived from “to rescue”
 - Drops everything to rescue

2. Helper

- Where else do we see that word used?

John 14:16

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another **Helper**, that He may abide with you forever—

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

John 14:26

But the **Helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

John 15:26

The Coming Rejection

“But when the **Helper** comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

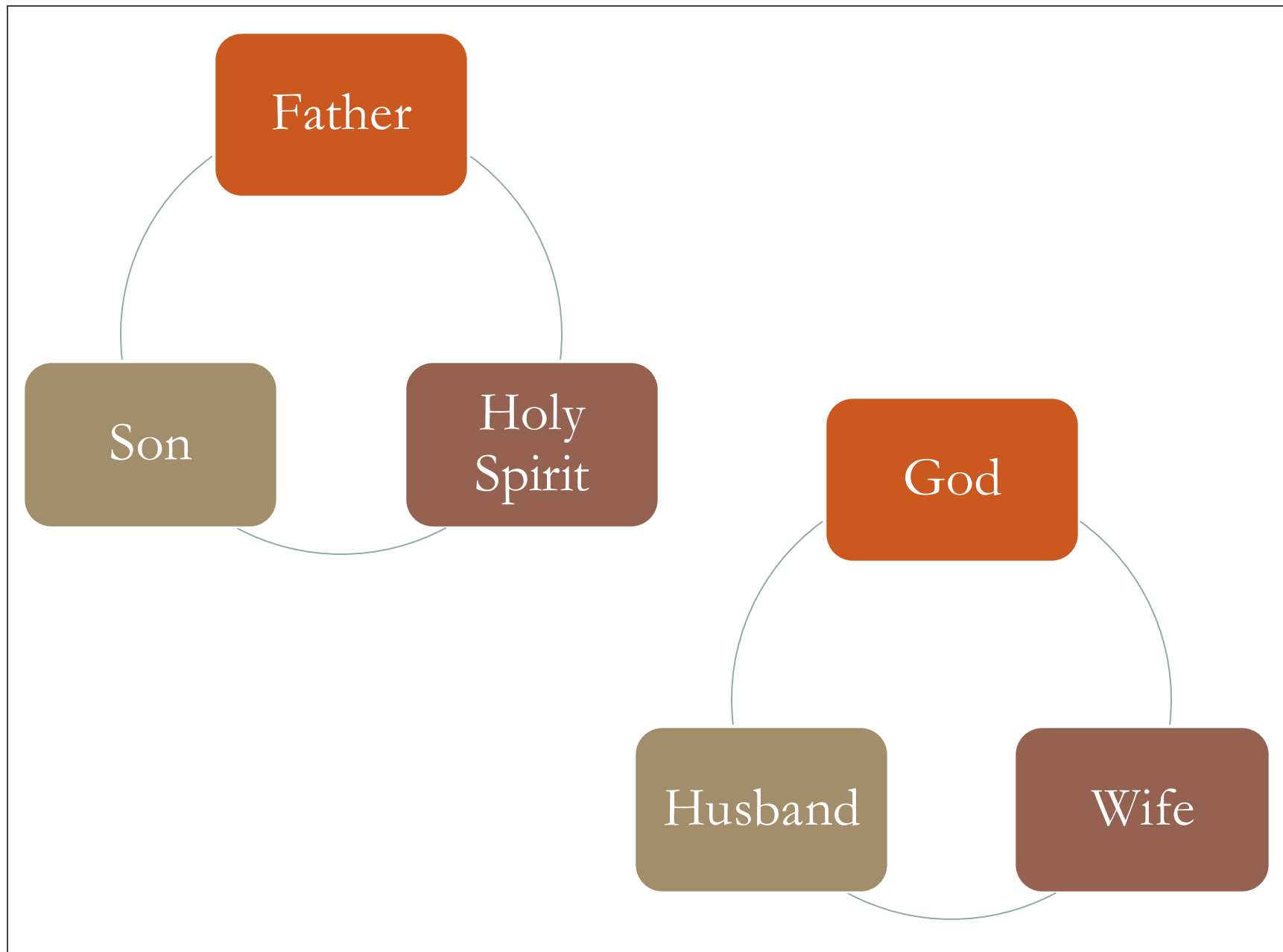
[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

John 16:7

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the **Helper** will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

The Design



The Design

Where else do we see that word used?

Ephesians 5:22

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is **head** of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.”

κεφαλή

kephalē / head

Matthew 21:42

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief **cornerstone**. This was the LORD’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes’?

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Mark 12:10

Have you not even read this Scripture: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief **cornerstone**.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Luke 20:17

Then He looked at them and said, “What then is this that is written: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief **cornerstone**’?

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Acts 4:11

This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief **cornerstone**.’

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

2. Head

- Where else do we see that word used?

κεφαλή

kephalē / head

What does this word mean?

- Head, chief, supreme
- Head of the corner; cornerstone
- Christ refers to Himself as the chief cornerstone



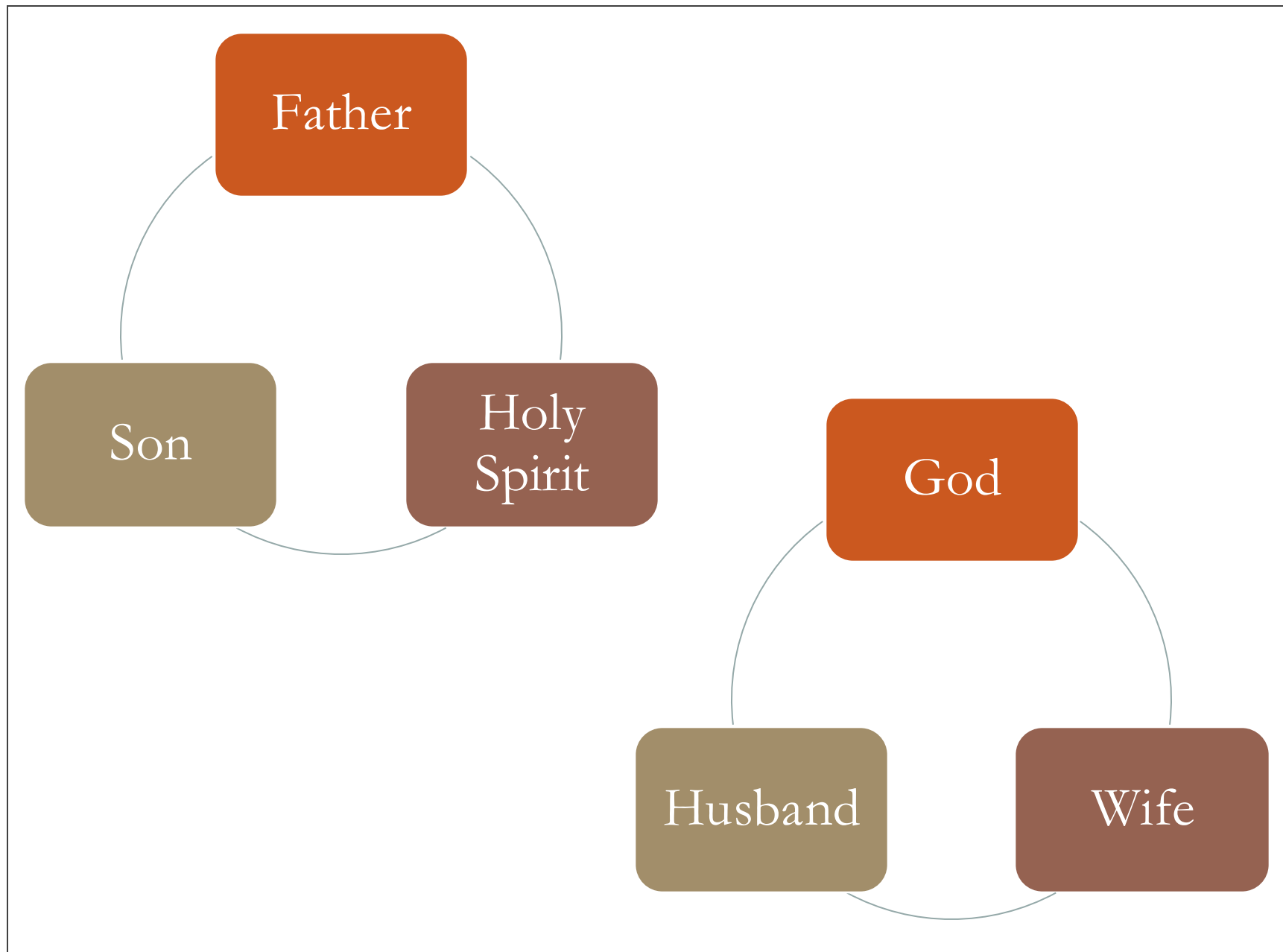
What is a cornerstone?

- First stone LAID DOWN
- Sets alignment
- Reference point for stability, direction, and orientation
- Holds the structure together
- **Weight-bearer**

Husbands, love
your wives, even as
Christ also loved
the church, and
gave himself for it.

EPHESIANS 5:25

The Design

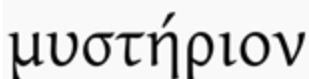


The Design

*“So God created
man in
His own image; in
the image of God He
created him; male and
female He created
them.”*

Genesis 1:27

2. Marriage is a reflection of the Holy Trinity

- A communion of 3 persons in one essence
- A partnership of love
- Divine participation
- Marriage is also a holy mystery ()

“Marriage is the first blessing God gave to man, ordained for the procreation of mankind and the building of the Church.” – St. Basil

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”


John 13:34-35



“For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” **This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**”

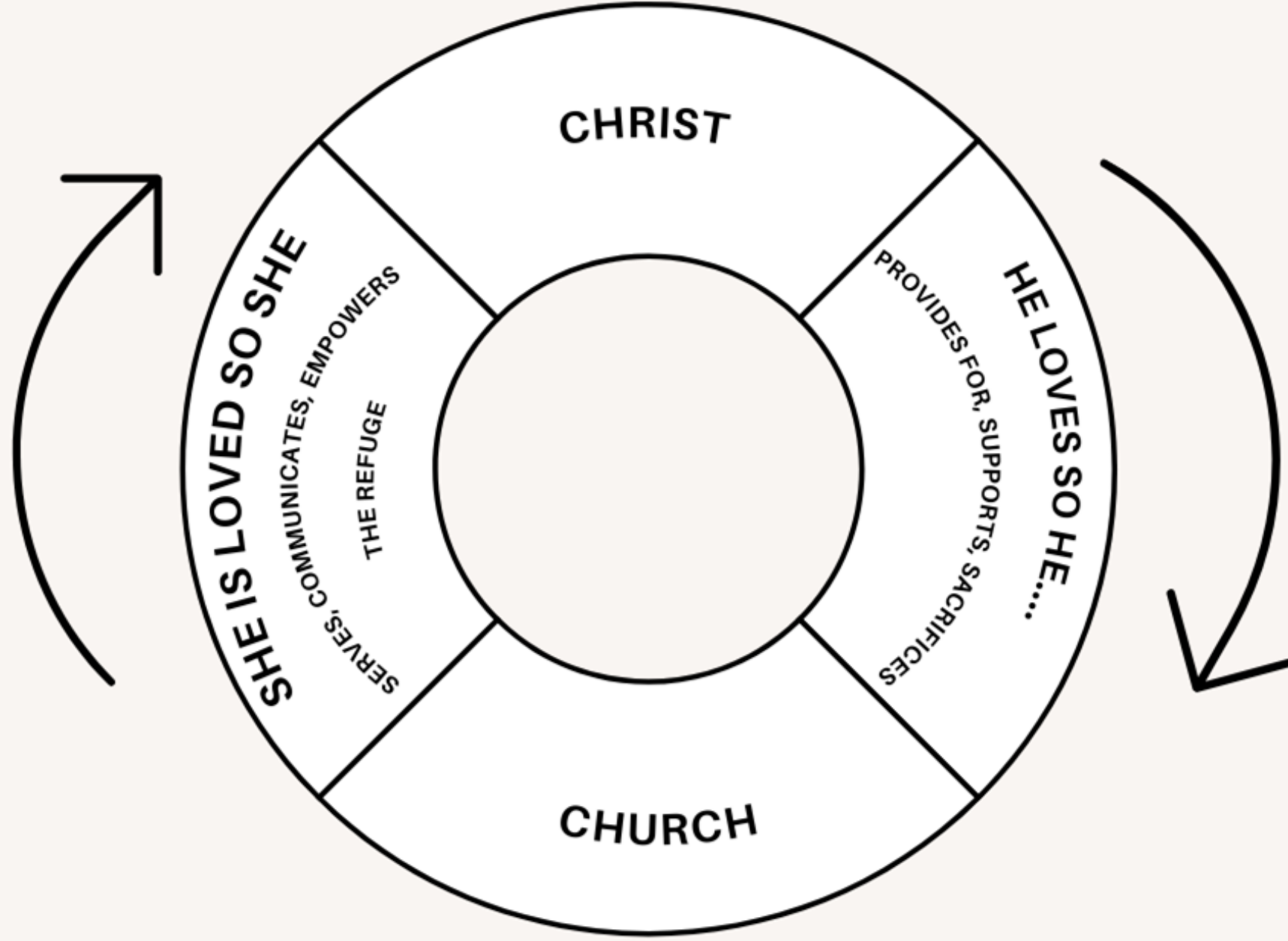
Ephesians 5:32

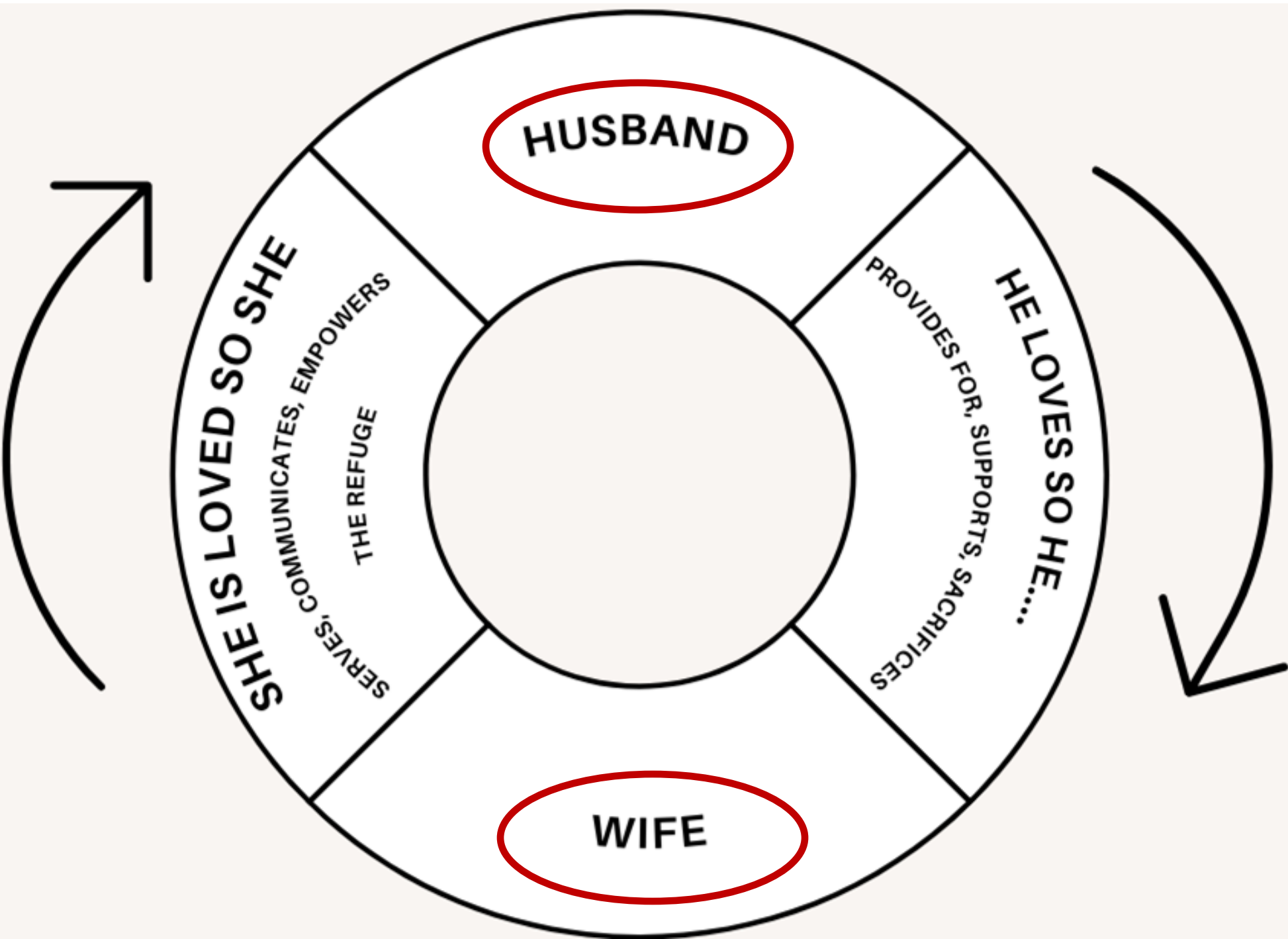




“The love of husband and wife is the force that welds society together... and by their marriage they teach the whole world the mystery of Christ and the Church.”

St. John Chrysostom






That's a lot of pressure...



But your shreds are worth more...



**“And they were both naked, the
man and his wife, and were
not ashamed.”**

Genesis 2:25


Naked and Unashamed

- The Design for marriage is that there is one person with whom you are naked and unashamed, flaws and all:
 - Fully known
 - Fully accepted
 - Fully loved

◦ *Just like you are with Him...*

“A person becomes in the sight of God what he truly desires to be.” St. Macarius


“God measures the soul by its intention, not by its achievement.” St. Isaac the Syrian



“I would rather be what God chose to make me than the most glorious creature I could think of; for to have been thought about, born in God’s thought, and then made by God is the dearest, grandest and most precious thing in all thinking.”



George MacDonald

The Holy Institution - Genesis

“And the LORD God said, “*It is* not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to  Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. ²⁰ So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

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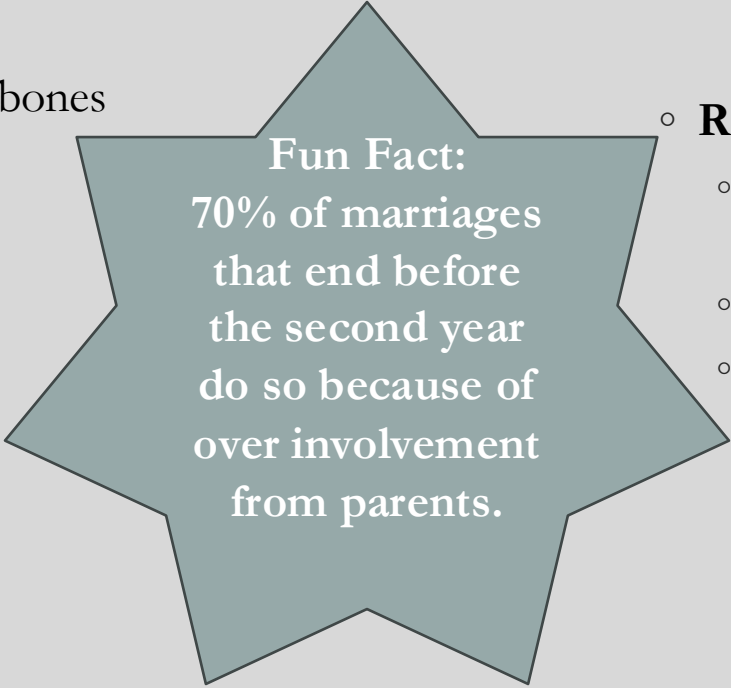
²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

3. Marriage is a gift

“Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, **and He brought her to the man.**

And Adam said:

“This *is* now bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh...”



Fun Fact:
70% of marriages
that end before
the second year
do so because of
over involvement
from parents.

- Not despite you but FOR you
- God created Adam with a need and provided Eve to fulfill his need, and vice versa.
- **Receive** the gift joyfully
 - Adam received Eve enthusiastically because He trusted God (rather than Eve).
 - Ex: Christmas Gifts
 - “Leave and Cleave”
 - You are only “one” with your spouse
 - Cleave is a reflection of covenant



The Purpose

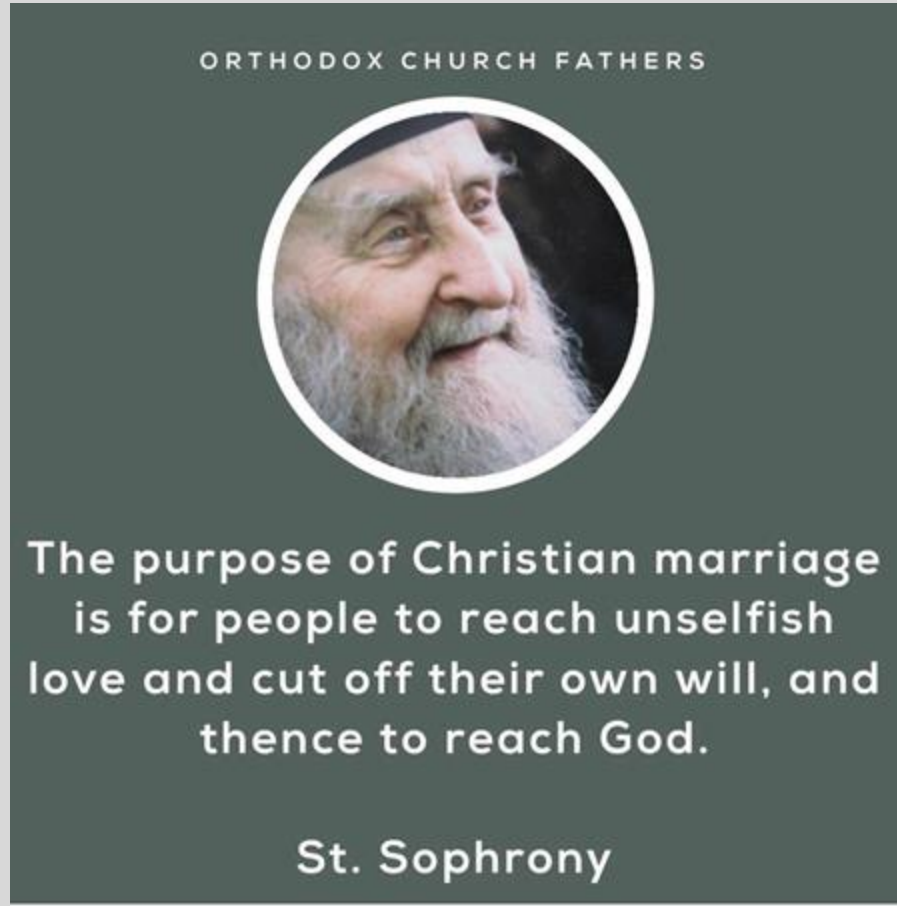
- What is the purpose of marriage?
- Why are we doing this?


“Marriage is a mystery of love, the image of God’s presence, and a path to salvation for those who live it rightly.”

St. John Chrysostom



Marriage as a Path to Salvation



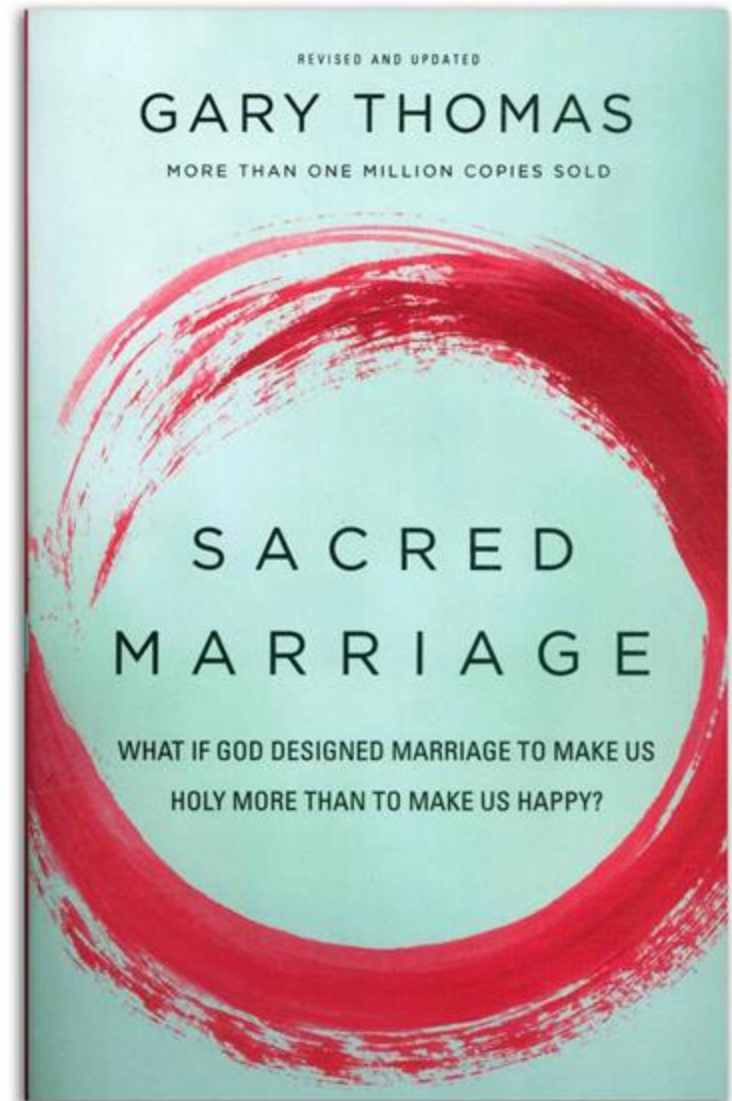


**“A marriage which does not constantly
crucify its own selfishness and self-
sufficiency, which does not ‘die to itself’ that
it may point beyond itself, is not a Christian
marriage.”**

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

“If you want to be free to
serve Jesus, stay single.
But if you want to
become more like Jesus,
get married.”

Gary Thomas



Philippians 2: 5-11

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ **who, being in the form of God**, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but **made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant**, *and* coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Kenosis – Model of Christ

Empty Yourself

- Of no reputation
- Of selfish desires
- Of self-focus

Marriage reveals things about YOURSELF.

- It helps you confront things that are a barrier to modelling Christ
- It is an arena to identify the areas that require *kenosis*.
- The greater the difficulty, the greater the opportunity.

ΚΕΝΩΩ

STRONG'S NUMBER: g2758

Dictionary Definition


g2758. ΚΕΝΩΩ *kenoō*; from **2756**; to make empty, i.e. (figuratively) to abase, neutralize, falsify: — make (of none effect, of no reputation, void), be in vain.

AV (5) - make void 2, make of none effect 1, make of no reputation 1, be in vain 1;

1. to empty, make empty
 - A. of Christ, he laid aside equality with or the form of God
2. to make void
 - A. deprive of force, render vain, useless, of no effect
3. to make void
 - A. cause a thing to be seen to be empty, hollow, false

[Search for g2758](#)

[Lookup ΚΕΝΩΩ](#)



“Much of the dissatisfaction we experience in marriage comes from expecting too much from it. Though marriage is an amazing institution that reflects God’s creative genius, when we want to get the largest portion of our life’s fulfillment from our relationship with our spouse, that’s asking too much. God didn’t design marriage to compete with Himself but to point us to Himself.”

Gary Thomas



But what about love?

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13:34-35



What did He ask of us?

Luke 6:32-36

“But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ And if you lend *to those* from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.”

To Love...not to “fall in love”

- Active vs Passive
- A decision vs a state of being
- Matthew 22:36-39 tell us that the greatest commandments are to love Him AND then love others.
 - Love Him BY loving others.
 - Ex: Children
- It is easy to love Him, but loving others is not based on what they have EARNED. It is based on who He is and who WE are called to be.
- But this is why marriage is a path to salvation...it teaches us to love like He loves.

What does that love look like?


"Do not waste time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this... we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him." – C.S. Lewis

"The beginning of love is to let those we love be perfectly themselves... and not to twist them to fit our own image. Otherwise we love only the reflection of ourselves we find in them." – Thomas Merton

Marriage as a Covenant, not a Contract

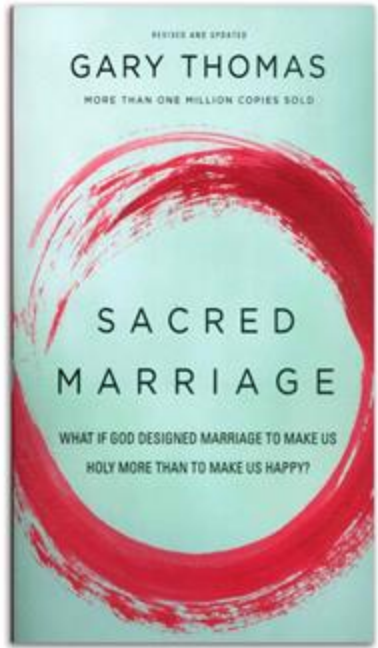
“...the LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth... she is your companion and your wife by covenant.” Malachi 2:14

Contract	Covenant
Legal agreement based on mutual benefit	Sacred binding vow made TO God
Rooted in law, obligation, and protection of individual rights	Rooted in grace, sacrificial love, and selflessness which models Christ
Ended if one party breaks terms	Intended to be lifelong
Conditional	Unconditional
Focused on individual needs	Focused on holiness
Source of strength is human effort	Source of strength is the Holy Spirit
Spouse is a partner	Spouse is a gift



"Real love is a choice, not a feeling. It is a determined commitment to seek the well-being of another, to act in ways that nurture and affirm, even when we do not feel like it."

– Henri Nouwen



Summary

1. Marriage was ordained by God
2. Marriage is a reflection of the Holy Trinity
3. Marriage models the relationship between Christ and the Church
4. Marriage is a gift BECAUSE
5. Marriage is a path to salvation
6. Marriage is a covenant, love is a decision

Questions



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Session 2

The Fall: Internal and External Threats



Session 3

The Journey: Conflict Resolution



Session 4

Recommitting



The Fall

Session 2

Session 2

1. Invisible Threats
2. Internal Threats
3. External Threats





The Invisible Threat

Genesis 3

“Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” **2** And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; **3** but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ” **4** Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. **5** For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” **6** **So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.**

What happened?

- Adam and Eve chose their own desires over God’s desire for their lives.

Genesis 3

⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and **made themselves coverings.** ⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and **Adam and his wife hid** themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where *are* you?” ¹⁰ So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and **I was afraid** because I was naked; and I hid myself.” ¹¹ And He said, “Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?” ¹² Then the man said, “**The woman whom You gave** to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ And the LORD God said to the woman, “What *is* this you have done?” The woman said, “**The serpent deceived me,** and I ate.”

What happened?

- When Satan was able to convince them to choose selfishness over selflessness, they became more isolated from each other and from God.
- They experienced shame (verse 7)
- They experienced guilt (verse 8)
- They experienced fear (verse 10)
- They experienced blame (verses 12-13)

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.” Ephesians 6:12

- There is constant spiritual warfare on our marriages, particularly as our marriages draw us closer to Him.
- Spiritual warfare often takes the form of:
 - Distorting God’s existence within our marriage by changing the purpose of marriages.
 - Destroying God’s influence on our marriages by sowing selfishness.
 - Disrupting the unity within our marriages by sowing division, misunderstanding or suspicion.
 - Distorting communication by sowing misunderstanding, offense and hurt.

The Invisible Threat

“Humans tend to regard marriage as the reward for a successful emotional experience.”

“Teach them a generous conflict. Each of the two spouses can be taught to think they are the better and nobler of the two.”

“Let their supposed unselfishness lead to doing what is least agreeable to the other — and then let them feel all the more self-righteous for doing it.”

- Screwtape Letters

*If Satan can keep
husbands and wives
divided, they won't be able
to participate together
as soldiers in the battle.*



**A MARRIAGE BUILT ON
SURRENDER TO CHRIST
BECOMES A BATTLEFIELD THE
ENEMY CAN'T CONQUER.**

Battling The Invisible Threat


We're taking back what the enemy stole!

- Choose Him and His design for your marriage
- Choose to love your spouse throughout
- Lean into HIS plan for you rather than your plan for you
 - Check yourself
 - What is this 'supposed' to look like?
- Choose kenosis for the purpose of theosis (becoming like God by being filled with divine grace and becoming united to God by grace).

“Where there is true prayer and humility, the demons cannot enter.”

- St. Macarius

SPIRITUAL WARFARE
in Marriage




“Nothing makes us so strong against the attacks of demons as prayer with our spouse.”

St. John Chrysostom



THERE IS A REAL *Battle*
HAPPENING OVER YOUR
Home AND *Marriage*
ARE YOU FIGHTING THE
RIGHT ENEMY WITH
THE RIGHT WEAPONS?





The Internal Threat

“Where do wars and fights
come from among you? Do *they*
not *come* from your *desires for*
pleasure that war in your
members?”

James 4:1



The Internal Threats

Selfishness

- We are easily deceived into believing that our own thoughts, judgments, or choices are right.
 - Selfishness is rarely loud
- We underestimate our own selfishness.
- We see the faults in others before we see them in ourselves.

Your spouse is the second most selfish person in your relationship.

Examples

1. Keeping Score
 - apologies?
 - chores?
 - sacrifice?
 - initiates conversations or dates?
 - Ex: school pick-up, solo parenting
 2. Prioritizing comfort over the relationship
 - Refusing to discuss hard topics to avoid discomfort
 - Spending free time alone instead of investing in the relationship
 - Putting hobbies ahead of emotional connection,
 - Clinging to routine rather than being generous with flexibility
 3. Coming home with nothing left to give
 - Baptizing time away
 - Excuses neglect
1. Wanting to win

The Internal Threats

“Pride is the beginning of all sin.”

- St. Augustine

In marriage, pride is the beginning of
disunity

Pride

- We often have a perception of who we are, which makes it difficult to reconcile our flaws with who we think we are.
- We often disguise pride as virtue

“The man who has seen himself is greater than the man who has seen angels.” - St. Isaac the Syrian

**Pride makes excuses, humility
makes adjustments.**

Examples

1. Never asking forgiveness from God for how you made your spouse feel
2. Needing to be right
 - but calling it ‘needing to be heard’
3. Refusing to apologize or own your faults
4. Defensiveness
5. Refusing growth, help, or suggestions

The Internal Threats

Comparison

- Comparison is the death of contentment and gratitude
- Comparison is the pathway to either pride or resentment
- Comparison skews purpose

“For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” - 2

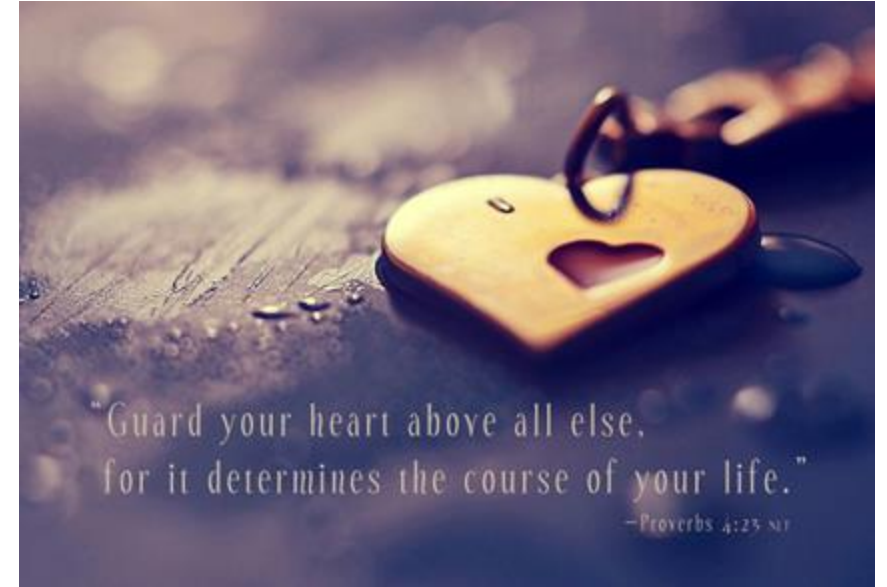
Corinthians 10:12

Examples

1. Comparing your spouse or lifestyle to others
 - Ex: JB and DB
 - 1 Cor 7:7 “Each one receives his own gift from God.”
2. Comparing families
3. Comparing seasons
4. Comparing yourself to your spouse
5. Comparing your children
6. Comparing spirituality
 - “But by the grace of God, I am what I am.” - 1 Cor 15:10
 - Sacred pathways

“Take care to guard your heart against the smallest irritations; through them the demons enter.”

St. Anthony



Genesis 11:5-9

⁵But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. ⁶And the LORD said, “Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. ⁷Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” ⁸So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. ⁹Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.



Acts 2

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵ And there were dwelling in **Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.** ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. ⁷

...Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.



Babel to Pentecost

At Babel, humanity was united in pride and it resulted in
CONFUSION.

At Pentecost, humanity was united in the Spirit and it resulted in
CLARITY.

In Babel, one language was used for selfishness and led to confusion.

In Pentecost, many languages were used for the glory of God, which
led to communion.

“When a husband and wife are united in marriage without Christ, they are but two yoked animals pulling in different directions; but when they are united in Christ, they move together toward the same goal — the Kingdom of God.”

St. John Chrysostom



Every Thought Captive

Battling The Internal Threat

“...bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience
of Christ,”
- 2 Corinthians 10:5

- This is learned behaviour!
 - Philippians 4:11-13: “Not that I speak in regard to need, **for I have learned** in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things **I have learned** both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”
- Fight back with the truth!
 - To fight back with the truth, you have to know the truth.
 - Bounce and replace

Battling the Internal Threat

God Centred Purpose

- Return to a God-centered purpose
- Return to your perspective of marriage as a path to salvation
- “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.” — *Psalms 127:1*
- **“Let everything you do be done for God’s sake... and the household will become a church.”** — *St. John Chrysostom*

Shared Language

- Babel’s downfall was the loss of a common language.
- Couples likewise drift when the language we speak is no longer in sync, spiritually, emotionally, or practically.
- Build a shared vocabulary
- **“The union of man and woman is sanctified when their tongues speak the same faith.”**
- *St. Clement of Alexandria*

Seek Humility and Selflessness

- Pride created Babel’s confusion.
- Conflicts lose momentum when both hearts soften before God and each other.
- Get right with God before you get right with your spouse. Speak to HIS/HER Father.
- **Where there is humility, there is harmony; where there is pride, there is strife** - *St. Basil*



The External Threats

The External Threats

Competing Priorities

Kids

Work

In-Laws

Finances

Service

Household responsibilities

Constant connectivity

All of these compete and sometimes crowd out marital connection

But...

“Husband and wife: let everything be secondary to your care for each other.”

- *St. John Chrysostom*

Your marriage is a ministry, not an accessory.
You love God BY loving your spouse.

Kids were never meant to stand in the way of your marriage. But your marriage was meant to stand in the way of your kids.

The External Threats

Competing Loyalties

Family of origin
Professional Identity
Validation
Affirmation/Attention
Emotional Connections
Selfishness

But...

- What are boundaries?
 - Loving limits that enable stewardship of what you have been given charge over
 - A reflection of who or what is important to us
 - Not meant to keep others out, but rather to prioritize what He has asked us to do.
 - Modelled by Christ - Matthew 15, Mark 3
 - “Leave and Cleave”

The External Threats

Competing Influences


- Competing influences are subtle; they quietly shape the marriage through expectations and narratives that compete with God's design.
- Things like
 - Social Media
 - Education System
 - Popular culture

all shape what we consider normal, what marriage should look like, and our image of our identity within the marriage.

But...

We have to learn to resist and discern these influences.

- Build a filter not a bubble. Think, don't absorb.
 - "Test all things; hold fast what is good."
- *1 Thessalonians 5:21*
- Quit comparing
 - "The devil paints another's life as beautiful so that you despise your own."
- *St. Paisios*
- Replace scrolling.
- Fight back with the truth!
- Establish a family identity - Ex: Abdelshaheeds



“Marriage is a little church...
but only if nothing worldly
enters to pollute it.”

St. John Chrysostom



Summary

1. Invisible Threat - Marriage as a battleground
2. Internal Threat - Take every thought into captivity
3. External Threat - Boundaries as stewardship

Questions



Restored

Sarah Deif Abdelshaheed
Dec 2025

Agenda



Session 1

Created as 'The Holy Institution'



Session 2

The Fall: Internal and External Threats



Session 3

The Journey: Conflict Resolution



Session 4

Recommitting



The Journey

Session 3

Session 3

1. Why do we fight?
2. Types of Conflict
3. Conflict Styles
4. Fighting Wrong
5. Fighting Right



Remember...

Marriage is a path to salvation because it teaches us self-sacrifice and denial of the self so that our relationship then points to Him.

What parts of marriage magnify this?

Communication and Conflict

Not an 'if' but 'WHEN'

HER: I bet he is thinking of another woman.

HIM: I wonder how long it takes a giraffe to throw up.



We live in a weird generation

“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

Romans 12:18



Why do we fight?

Why do we fight?

- Conflict is connection
 - It is a reflection of who we are and what we want
 - It is a reflection of who our partners are and what they want.
 - It is how we learn each other and learn what our priorities are, needs, aspirations, etc.
 - St. Peter & Christ
 - St. Paul & Barnabas
 - St. Paul & St. Peter
 - Conflict can be a BID FOR CONNECTION



- Is conflict bad prognostically?
 - A study by John and Julie Gottman indicated that newlywed couples who displayed higher conflict in the first few years of marriage had stronger and happier relationships compared to many of the low-conflict counterparts. Why?
 - Partners felt secure enough to bring up issues
 - Low-conflict was associated with the suppression of needs out of fear (fear of fights, abandonment, insecurity, etc.)
 - Low-conflict marriages ended up being more fragile.

Don't be afraid of conflict!



There are 3 ways to respond to a bid for connection:

1. Turn Toward
2. Turn Away
3. Turn Against

How did Christ respond to bids for connection?

1. St. Peter (washing of the feet) – John 13: 6-9
2. Judas (Betrayal) – Matthew 26: 20-25

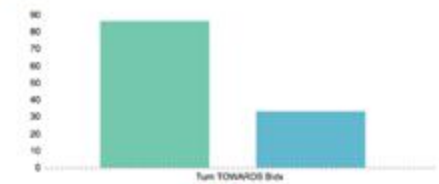
What is another way to describe turning TOWARD?

Conflict as a Bid for Connection

02 EXAMPLES OF "BIDS"

WHAT WE SAY	WHAT WE MEAN
— How do I look?	+ Can you reassure me?
— I had an awful day at the office.	+ Will you help me unwind?
— I went to Walgreen's today.	+ Could we chat for awhile?

03 RESEARCH SHOWS



Dr. John Gottman, world renowned couples therapist and marital stability researcher found there was one practice that the still-married couples did very well and the divorced couples did poorly; couples who stayed married turned towards a bid an average of 86% of the time, while the divorced couples had only averaged 33%.

“But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.”

Matthew 5:39

Why do we fight?

- **Conflict is connection**

- Conflict is the road to understanding
- Often it is the right thing to do but we need to mirror Him in our conflict, rather than default to our selfish desires to be 'right' or to 'win'.

- What does mirroring Him look like?

- Humility, Self-Denial, Love, Truth

- The ultimate goal of conflict is to create something better.

- Example: St. Peter & Christ

- Conflict and peace are not mutually exclusive.

- Conflict is often the path to peace if we can do it like He modeled for us.



“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”

Ephesians 4:29



GOTTMAN'S FOUR HORSEMEN OF RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN

CRITICISM

- Attacking a partner's character
- Critiquing the person rather than the behavior
- Exaggerated complaints, e.g. "you're always..." or "you never..."

CONTEMPT

- Disrespect
- Mockery/sarcasm
- Insulting
- Eye-rolling/scoffing

DEFENSIVENESS

- Looking for excuses
- Failing to accept responsibility
- Failing to admit fault
- Trying to reverse blame

STONEWALLING

- Withdrawing from interaction
- Ignoring partner
- Shutting down
- Evading conversation by starting other activities

Don't be afraid of anger

"Be angry and do not sin." Ephesians 4:26

But be cautious of how that anger manifests.

The WRONG manifestation of anger is:

- Contempt
- Criticism
- Defensiveness
- Stonewalling

The RIGHT manifestation of anger/conflict is:

- Curiosity
- The goal is mutual understanding
- Conflict can sharpen our ability to love



Types of Conflict

Types of Conflict

- **Solvable (31%)**

- A solution exists
- A logistical problem
- Example: one person is continuously frustrated at the other for constantly missing their phone calls. Individual puts their phone on loud and stops missing the calls.

- **Perpetual (69%)**

- Problems that tap into deeper differences between us:
 - Differences in temperaments
 - Differences in values
 - Differences in beliefs
 - Differences in priorities
- These differences will always be there





Types of Conflict

- In any relationship, conflict is inevitable. In choosing a partner, you are also choosing a set of perpetual conflicts.
- Often perpetual conflict can be tied to temperament differences, and so understanding yourself and your partner will go a long way to facilitate understanding and communication around perpetual conflicts.
- The goal is to use points of conflict as an opportunity to walk the path of salvation during **MARRIAGE**.
 - To practice selflessness
 - To practice esteeming others above ourselves

“Conflict is inevitable but combat is optional.”

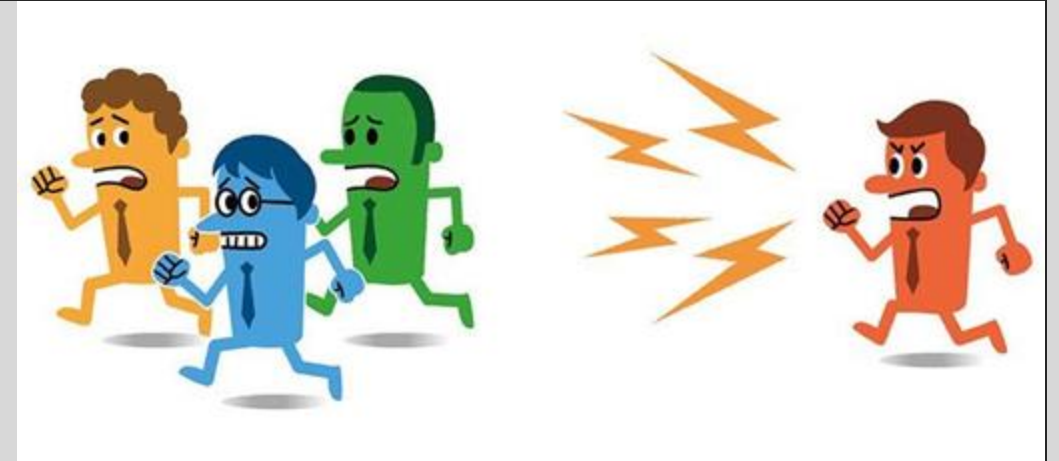
Max Lucado



Conflict Styles

1. Conflict Avoidant

- Shy away from active conflict
- Focus on what is working well rather than issues that threaten stability
- “If we don’t agree, why waste time talking about it.”
- In conflict, quickly become uncomfortable and flooded
- Much more division between the couple
- Can be seen articulating feelings but leave it at that!
- “Agree to disagree”
- **WATCH OUT FOR**
 - Emotional drift and distance
 - Too much focus on positivity that issue goes unaddressed



2. Validating

The 5 Types of Couples: **Validating Couple**

"I'd really like to consider getting a dog."

"I've been so sad since we lost our cat, I'm ready to welcome another pet into our home."

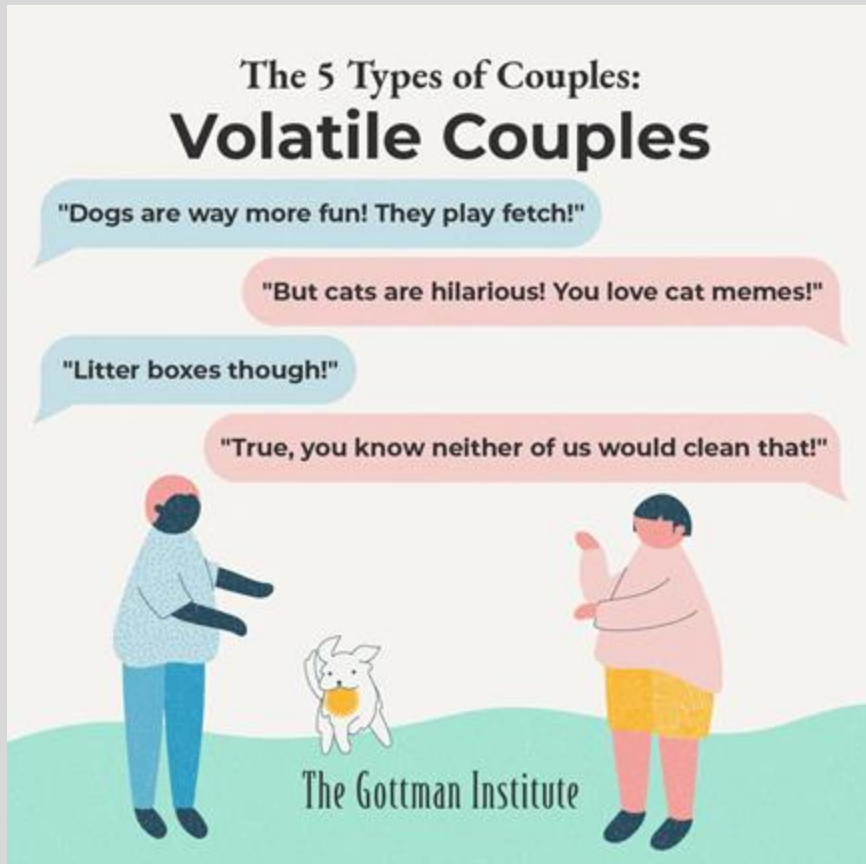
"It's been really hard for you. Let's see what pets are at the local shelter. Maybe we'll end up with a guinea pig!"



The Gottman Institute

- Couples that debate and accept each other's influence
- Try to persuade each other and work on compromise
- Problem solve and work to come up with a new way forward.
- Generally calmer in conflict but it isn't enough to 'agree to disagree'.
- Very rational
- Willing to concede to prevent escalation.
- WATCH OUT FOR
 - Rising negativity
 - Intense focus on solution, that connection and positivity gets lost

3. Volatile



- No problem expressing emotion
- Heated debate, high emotion, raised voices
- Can often incorporate a lot of positivity and humour
- Once a volatile couple uses humour and positivity, things can quickly spiral into negativity and aggression and then flooding.
- WATCH OUT FOR
 - Don't let humor become dark or sarcastic or critical
 - Avoid any hint of the 4 horsemen (contempt masked in humour)

Which style is best??

Conflict Styles: Mismatch

Avoidant-Validator

Lots of overlap in style

Fairly compatible in terms of feelings

Requires awareness of other style and history with conflict

Validator-Volatile

Validator feels overwhelmed and flooded by volatile's high emotion.

Volatile feels frustrated at not being able to get through to the validator and convey magnitude of emotion.

Validating and affirming emotion can bring the temperature of the conversation down, while focusing on solutions instead of emotion can help reassure the validator.

Volatile-Avoidant

Teasing is an attack to the avoidant while silence and retreating is a rejection to the volatile.

Often prompts the volatile to step up tone and volume to obtain a reaction which causes the avoidant to retreat even further.

Fighting Wrong



Escalation

turning point from a conversation
into a conflict



4 Horsemen Present

Contempt, Criticism, Defensiveness,
Stonewalling



No listening

No space for understanding;
resembles attack and defend.

Fighting Wrong



Flooding

Emotional hijacking of the nervous system that can lead to stonewalling

REPAIR ATTEMPTS

ACTIONS

- Smile
- Hug
- Eye contact
- Move to be next to instead of across from your spouse
- Kiss
- Holding hand
- Touching arms
- Touching feet

WORDS

I'M SORRY

- Can we start over?
- You're right about ...
- I don't like fighting with you. Let's just talk.
- Let me try again
- We are getting off track
- Can I take that back?
- I'm feeling blamed, can you rephrase that?
- Let's take a break
- I see what you're talking about
- This isn't your problem, it's our problem.
- I love you

No repair attempts

During the conflict







Negative Ratio

5:1 positive to negative rule

Conflict Resolution: Fight Right

Model Christ

Turn Toward	Listen for Emotion and Hurt	Confess Fault	Speak the truth in love	Reconciliation NOT Resolution
Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
<p>“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” Ephesians 4:29</p> 	<p>“...let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” James 1:19</p> 	<p>“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” James 4:6</p> 	<p>“A soft answer turns away wrath but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Proverbs 15:1</p> 	<p>“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us a ministry of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:18</p>

Fighting Right Step 1: Turn Toward

97% of the time, how a conflict begins is also how it ends.

This points to the IMPORTANCE of starting the conversation correctly!

- A harsh start feels like an attack and prompts defensiveness
- Opening up a conflict discussion has to invite curiosity and understanding rather than defensiveness.



“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”

Ephesians 4:29

TURNING TOWARDS

IS ABOUT THE **EVERYDAY EFFORTS** YOU MAKE IN A RELATIONSHIP TO REACH OUT TO YOUR PARTNER AND ACCEPT THEIR BIDS FOR EMOTIONAL CONNECTION.

- 1** Respond with your full attention when they ask you a question or point something out.
- 2** Show interest and excitement in their accomplishments.
- 3** Listen and respond to verbal or non-verbal requests to play, learn, or chat.

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Fighting Right Step 1: Turn Toward

Samaritan Woman: John 4

⁷ A woman of Samaria came to draw water. **Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.”** ⁸ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. ⁹ Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. ¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to her, **“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”**

¹¹ The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? ¹² Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?”

¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” ¹⁵ The woman said to Him, **“Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”**

Fighting Right Step 1: Turn Toward

- o Describe yourself and your feelings, rather than your partner.
- o Describe the problem without criticizing or blaming your partner for it.
- o State your needs and what your partner can do to help you feel better.
- o Using “I” statements deflects blame from your partner.
- o Avoid the use of “always” or “never”.
 - o Be sensitive to your partners reaction. Turn toward instead of away or against

Stop the Four Horsemen with their Antidotes

CRITICISM



Use Gentle
Start Up

CONTEMPT



Describe Your Own
Feelings and Needs
Don't Describe Your Partner

What is a Repair Attempt?

A big portion of turning toward and STAYING turned toward

- Turning the other cheek, hand outstretched
- A repair attempt is an olive branch, aimed at reminding the other person of shared objectives, mutual respect, and conflict as connection.



REPAIR ATTEMPTS



ACTIONS



- Smile
- Hug
- Eye contact
- Move to be next to instead of across from your spouse
- Kiss
- Holding hand
- Touching arms
- Touching feet

WORDS

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- Can I take that back?
- I'm feeling blamed, can you rephrase that?
- Let's take a break
- I see what you're talking about
- This isn't your problem, it's our problem.
- I love you

Fighting Right Step 2: Listen for Emotion and Hurt

“...let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.”

James 1:19

- You aren't listening for ways to refute the argument.
- You are listening to where your partner has been wounded and where your partner needs comfort.
- Just listen without bringing up your own perspective.
- Ask clarifying questions to understand better.
- Summarize what you heard
- Offer validation.
 - Validation does not mean you agree. It means you empathize.



Fighting Right Step 2: Listen for Emotion and Hurt

1 Kings 19: 1-12

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. ²Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.” ³And when he saw *that*, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which *belongs* to Judah, and left his servant there.

⁴But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a ^[a]broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, “It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I *am* no better than my fathers!”

⁵Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an ^[b]angel touched him, and said to him, “Arise *and* eat.” ⁶Then he looked, and there by his head *was* a cake baked on ^[c]coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. ⁷And the ^[d]angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, “Arise *and* eat, because the journey *is* too great for you.” ⁸So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

⁹And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and He said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁰So he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”

¹¹Then He said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake; ¹²and after the earthquake a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire; and after the fire ^[e]a still small voice.

Fighting Right Step 2: Listen for Emotion and Hurt

- Other examples:
 - Samaritan Woman – listened for the hurt of multiple husbands
 - Lazarus' death – listened for the hurt of Mary and Martha
 - Hear the hurt rather than the accusation.
 - Look for opportunities to comfort with the comfort we have received (first fruits of the Holy Spirit)
 - Opportunity for repair attempts



Repair attempts
are a secret weapon
of emotionally
intelligent couples.
—John Gottman, Ph.D.

The Gottman Institute

#7Principles

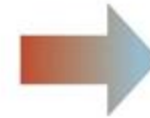
Fighting Right Step 3: Confess Your Part

**“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”
James 4:6**

- All issues are OUR issues
- In the vast majority of conflict, there is shared responsibility.
- An extension of a repair attempt is confessing your faults as it relates to the conflict.
- It also brings down the walls of defensiveness and opens up the conflict as a path to understanding.

Stop the Four Horsemen with their Antidotes

CRITICISM



Use Gentle
Start Up

DEFENSIVENESS



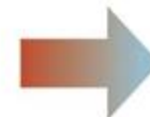
Take
Responsibility

CONTEMPT



Describe Your Own
Feelings and Needs
Don't Describe Your Partner

STONEWALLING



Do Physiological
Self-Soothing

**“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they
shall be called sons of God.”**

Matthew 5:9

Fighting Right Step 3: Confess Your Faults

Luke 5:3-7

⁴ When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”

⁵ But Simon answered and said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” ⁶ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. ⁷ So they signaled to *their* partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”

Fighting Right Step 4: Speaking the Truth in Love

“that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—”

Ephesians 4:14-15

- This is where you talk about your hurts and your needs, after you have established open communication and conflict as connection.
- This is where you use wisdom and discernment in your delivery.



Fighting Right Step 4: Speak the Truth in Love

John 4: 16-27

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”

¹⁷ The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.”

Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”

¹⁹ The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”

²¹ Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Fighting Right Step 5: Reconciliation not necessarily Resolution

“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us a ministry of reconciliation.”

2 Corinthians 5:18

- 69% of fights are perpetual and we address them through dialogue rather than solutions.
- Both partners experiences and points of view are valid. Reconciliation is more important than ‘who is right’.
- Conflict should be a path to the rainbow...a covenant, a promise, and stable ground.



Helpful Tips

Fight the Flooding

- Identify the signs of flooding
 - Gritted teeth, clenched jaw, flood of heat, face turns red, muscles tighten, eyes narrow, heartbeat races or pounds, mind is spinning
- Communicate it and that you need a break
- Get out of visual range
- Do something that takes your mind off the right
- Come back!

SYMPTOMS OF EMOTIONAL FLOODING

@theroberta



“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”

James 1: 19-20

Questions



Round 1
Going Deep

1. What elements of God's design for marriage surprised you the most?
2. What parts of the Genesis account of marriage resonated with you the most? Why do you think that is?
3. What is one thing you took away so far that you'd like to apply to our marriage?
4. What can I do to better make you feel like I am choosing to love you, despite difficulties we may experience? What makes you feel loved or respected?
5. What is something you wish I would ask you more often?
6. Is there anything I can take off your plate to lighten your load?

Date Night

Let's dig deep!



Round 2
Going Deeper

1. What part of our marriage is the most vulnerable to division and confusion?
2. What is the hardest topic for you to talk about with me?
Why?
3. In what parts of our marriage do you feel like we are speaking different languages? What can we do to implement a shared language?
4. What do you feel is competing with our marriage and crowding our connection?
5. Do you feel that there is anyone or anything that takes priority over you? What can I do to help address that?
6. What is one thing I can do to better manage conflict when it arises?

Date Night

Let's dig deep!



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Recommitting

Session 4



“Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸ Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,”

2 Corinthians 5:17-18

YOU ARE A NEW CREATION

Behold,
I make
all things
new.

Revelation 21:5



When you are in Christ...

- ✓ You live for Christ
- ✓ He transforms you
- ✓ He makes you a new person with a new mission, purpose and identity.

You are called to live out a new perspective in all aspects, including in your marriage

You have a new power in the Holy Spirit to live this new perspective

“OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY...”

In order to do this, we must...



LET GO OF THE
LIES THAT WE
BELIEVE



LISTEN TO THE
TRUTH

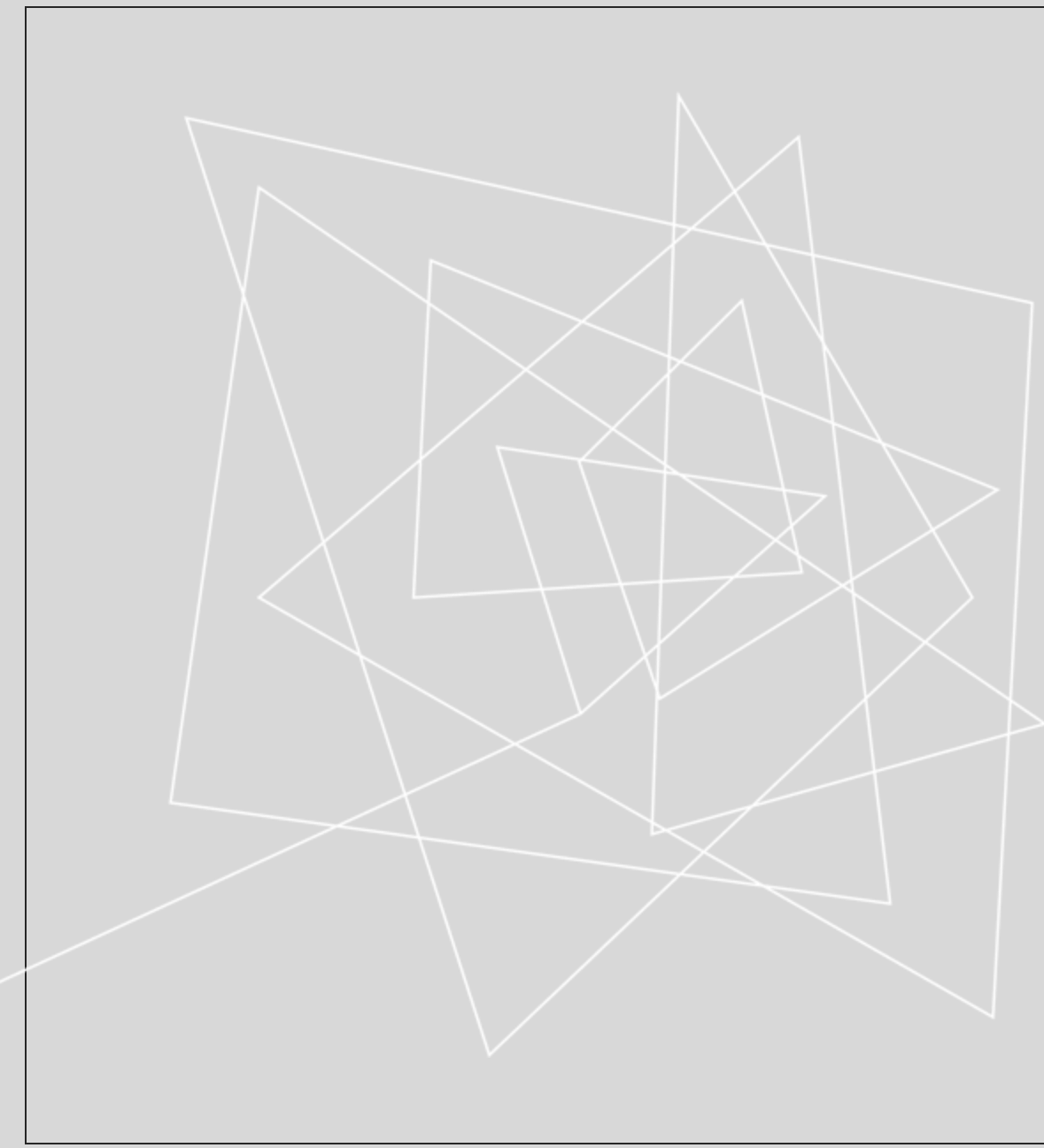


CHANGE THE
BELIEF SYSTEM,
NOT JUST THE
BEHAVIOUR.

SOME OF THE LIES WE ARE LED TO BELIEVE

- I married the wrong person
- It will never get better
- He/she doesn't care
- I am alone
- I can't do this anymore
- This is not what God wants for me
- I have done everything I can
- This isn't how it is supposed to be

SO HOW DO WE LET GO OF THESE LIES?



“BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL WALKS ABOUT LIKE A ROARING LION, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR. ⁹ RESIST HIM, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH, KNOWING THAT THE SAME SUFFERINGS ARE EXPERIENCED BY YOUR BROTHERHOOD IN THE WORLD. ¹⁰ BUT MAY THE GOD OF ALL GRACE, WHO CALLED US TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS, AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED A WHILE, PERFECT, ESTABLISH, STRENGTHEN, AND SETTLE YOU.
1 PETER 5:8-10

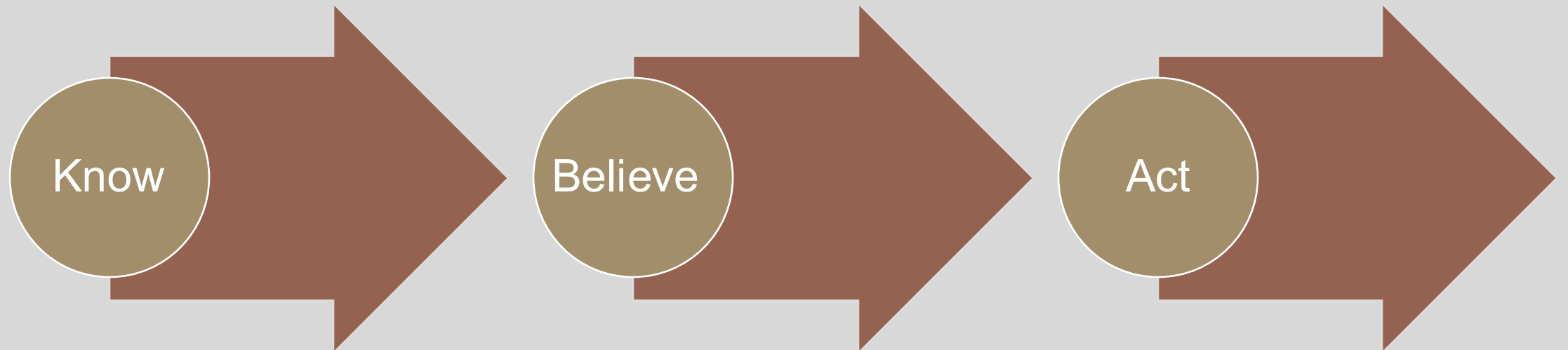
**“I AM THE WAY,
THE TRUTH AND
THE LIFE.”**

JOHN 14:6

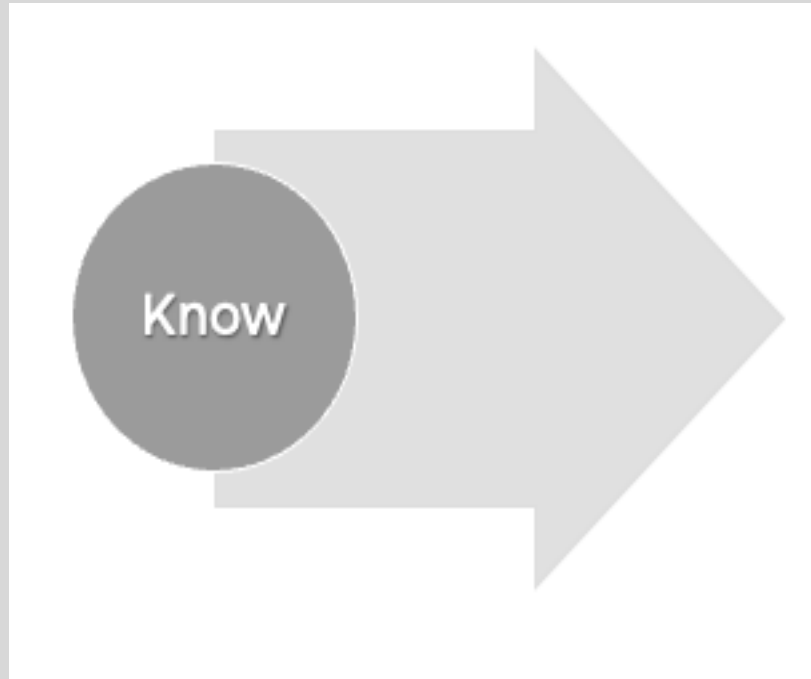
**“AND YOU SHALL
KNOW THE TRUTH,
AND THE TRUTH
SHALL MAKE YOU
FREE.”**

JOHN 8:32

THE TRUTH



THE TRUTH

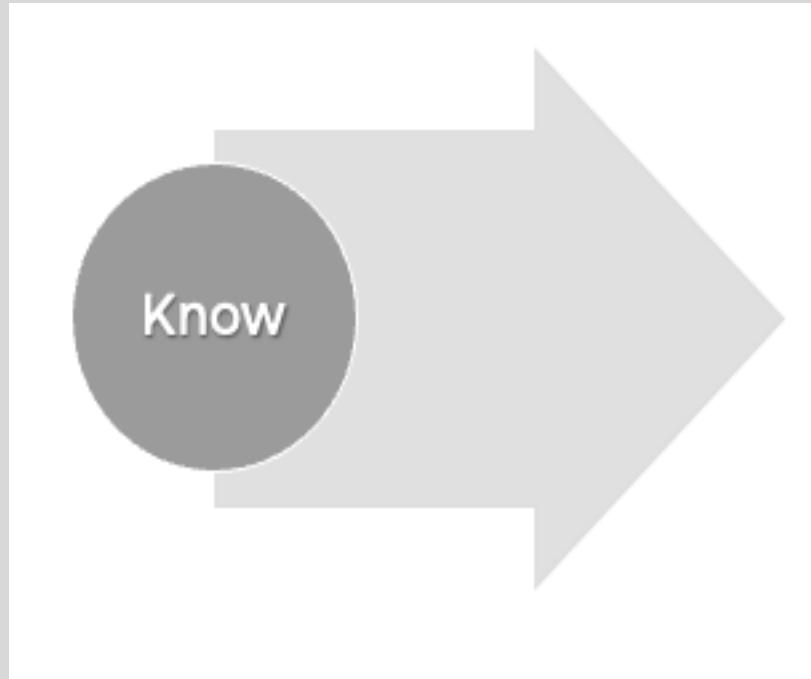


Know the Word.

Know the World.

So that you **KNOW** what to do in
the world.

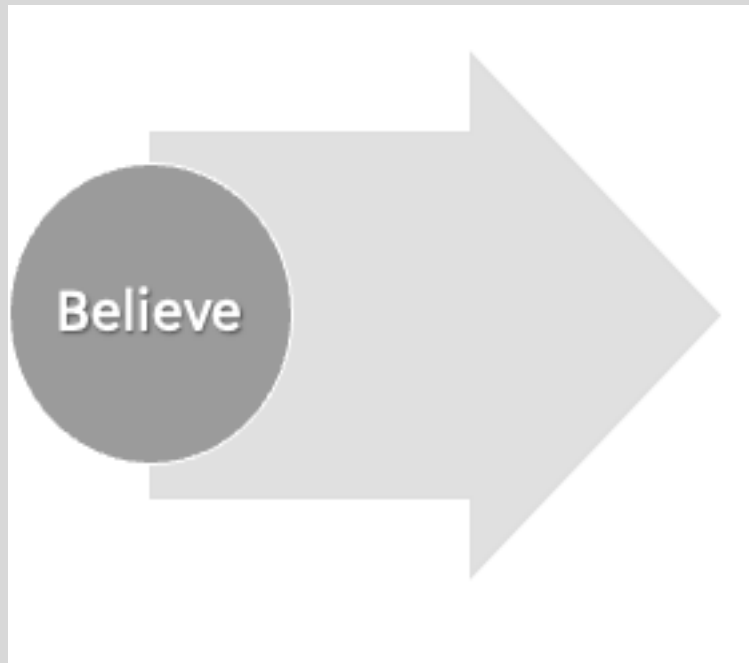
THE TRUTH



- Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.”
- Ephesians 5:20 “giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another...”
- 1 Corinthians 10:24 “Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being.”
- Matthew 19:6 “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’...So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

“OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY...”

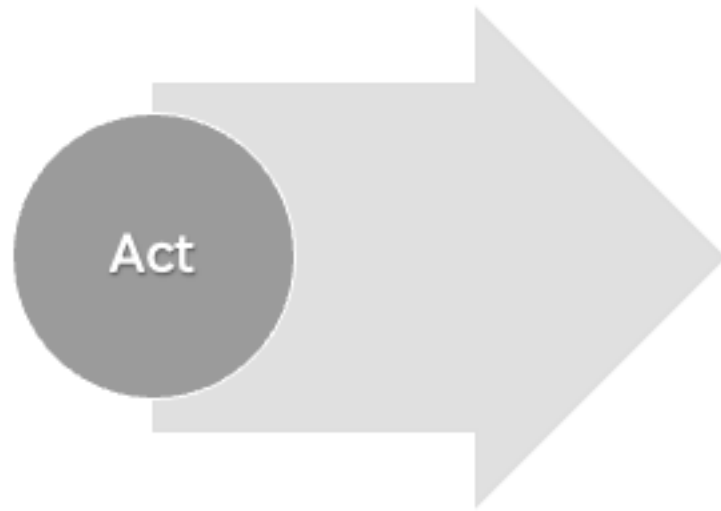
THE TRUTH



- Romans 8:28 – Do you believe that God can renew and restore anything? Do you believe that your marriage is outside of His control?
- Ephesians 5:20 – Do you believe you are loved? Do you believe that God is pursuing you? Do you believe in His purpose over yours?
- 1 Corinthians 10:24 – Do you believe that your marriage is a path to salvation through the emptying of yourself?
- Matthew 19:6 – Do you believe in the Sacrament and the Mystery of what He has ordained and joined?

THE TRUTH

“...behold, all things have become new.”



But where does the strength come from?

- God **empowers** us with the Holy Spirit
 - John 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things,”
 - Galatians 5:16 -18 “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”



The Lord went before them...
(Exodus 13:21) MEV



The LORD went ahead of them.
He guided them during the day with a pillar of cloud, and He provided light at night with a pillar of fire.

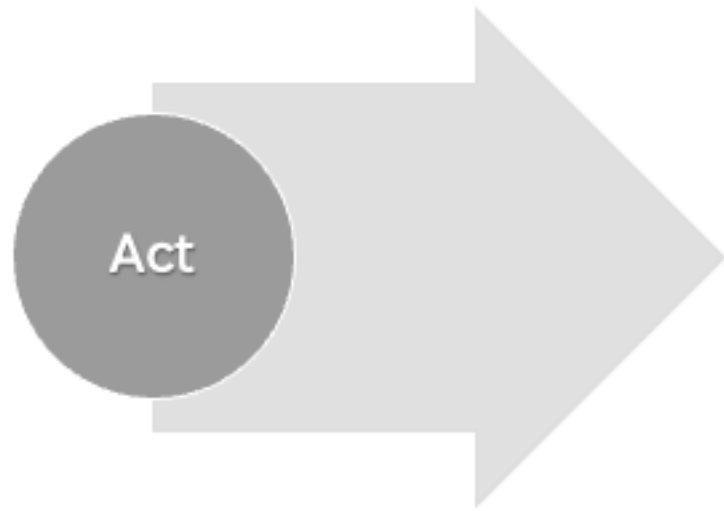
Exodus 13:21
THEWORDFORTHEDAY

“AND
THE LORD, HE /S THE
ONE WHO GOES
BEFORE YOU. HE
WILL BE WITH YOU,
HE WILL NOT LEAVE
YOU NOR FORSAKE
YOU; DO NOT FEAR
NOR BE DISMAYED.”

DEUTERONOMY
31:8

THE TRUTH

“...behold, all things have become new.”



But where does the strength come from?

- God asks us to love our spouses in ways that don't come naturally. But he makes he supernatural possible in us.
- When we depend on the Holy Spirit, we will receive the mystery to help us love your spouses purposefully, meaningfully, and spiritually.
- We will receive the ability to love above and beyond the realm of possible.
- What does that look like?

“...behold, all things have become new.”

ACT

Communication

Ephesians 4:29

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”

Help me speak with the mouth of Christ

Resilience

1 Peter 3:9

“not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.”

Help me love with the heart of Christ, rather than a heart like mine that waits for others to earn love.

“...behold, all things have become new.”

ACT

Patience

Ephesians 4:26

“Be angry and do not sin.”

*Help me to receive my spouse
joyfully and to see them as His child.*

Forgiveness

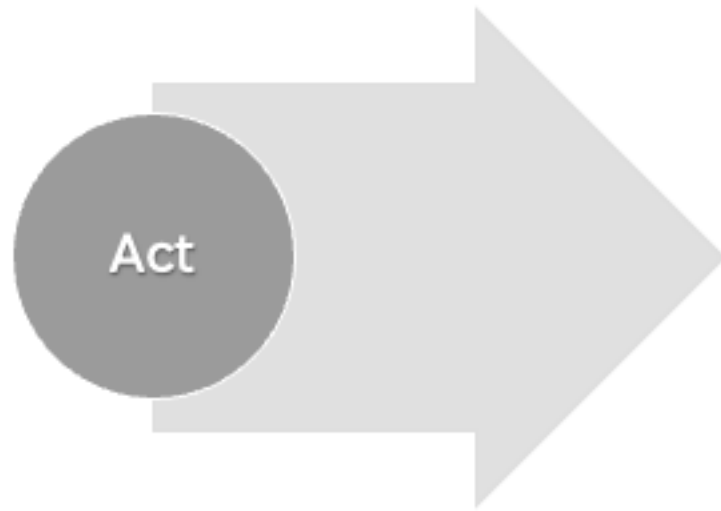
Colossians 3:13

“bearing with one another, and
forgiving one another, if anyone has a
complaint against another; even as
Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.”

*Help me to see through the eyes of
Christ.*

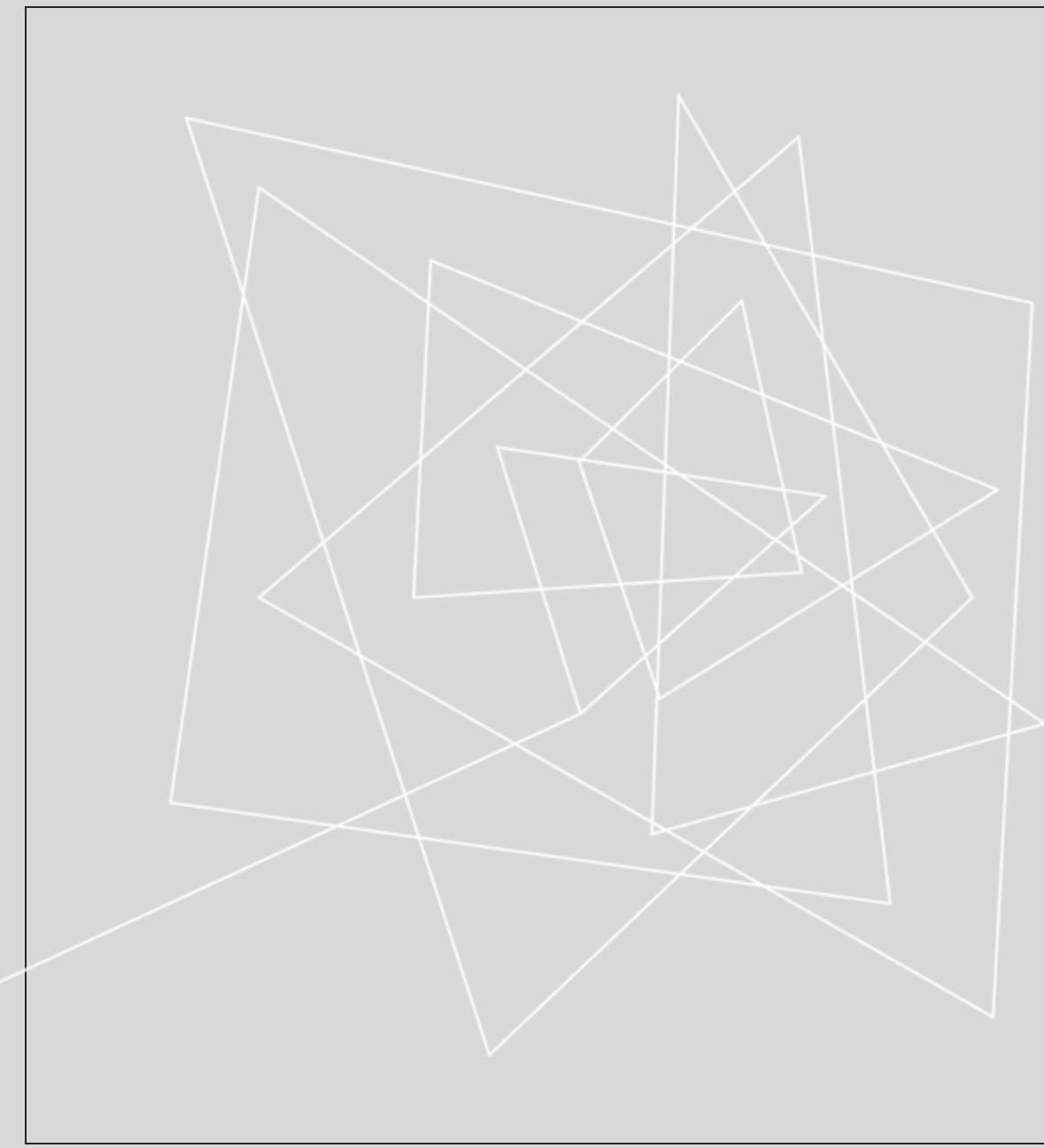
THE TRUTH

“...behold, all things have become new.”



But where does the strength come from?

- He has given us spiritual disciplines that help us to become more aware of the work of the Holy Spirit in us and in our lives.
- 1 Timothy 4:7-8 “exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, *having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*”
- Prayer
- Fasting - We do without so we can do with God
- Gratitude
- Simplicity

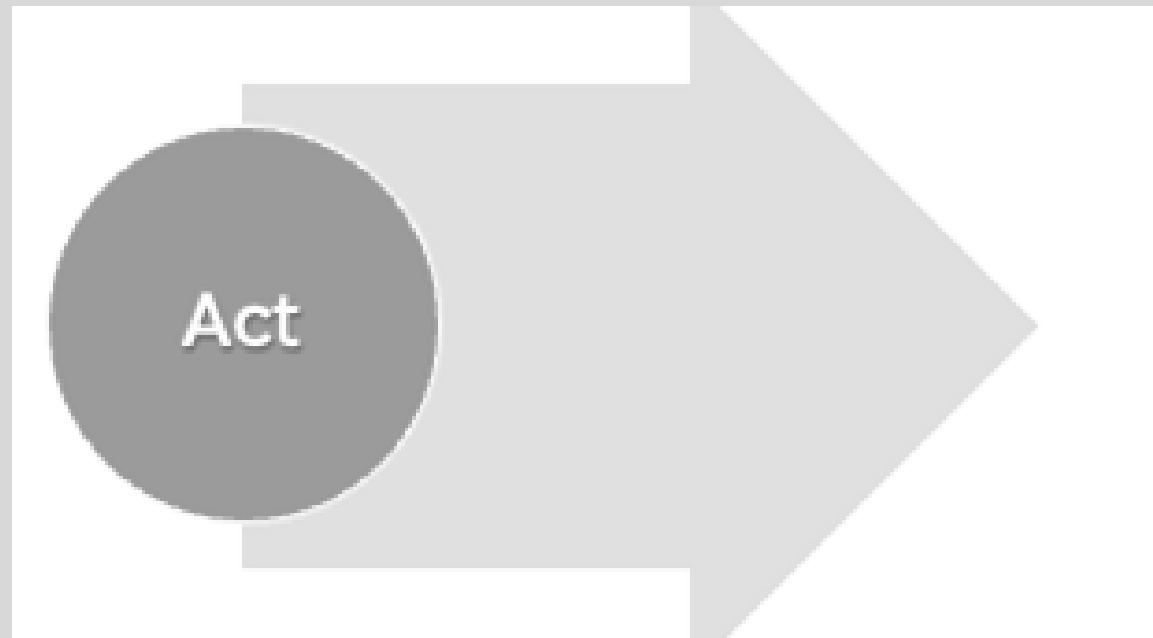


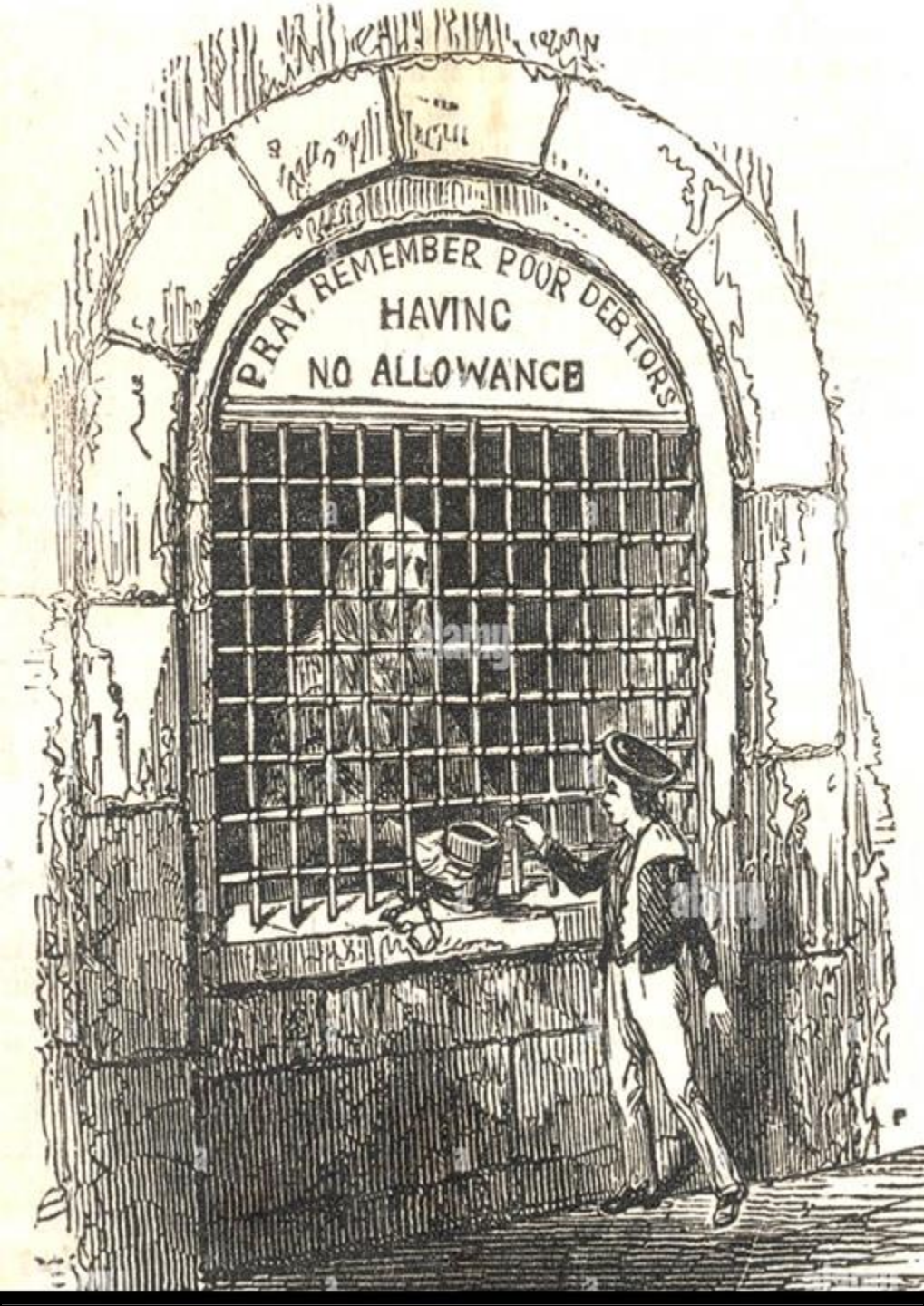
“BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL WALKS ABOUT LIKE A ROARING LION, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR. ⁹ RESIST HIM, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH, KNOWING THAT THE SAME SUFFERINGS ARE EXPERIENCED BY YOUR BROTHERHOOD IN THE WORLD. ¹⁰ BUT MAY THE GOD OF ALL GRACE, WHO CALLED US TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS, AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED A WHILE, PERFECT, ESTABLISH, STRENGTHEN, AND SETTLE YOU.”

1 PETER 5:8-10

THE TRUTH

So what are we going to do differently?





Debtor's Prison

- Prison for those who owed a large sum of money that hasn't been repaid.
- Irony is that debtor's had no way of working to repay what is owed.
- Were perpetually imprisoned UNLESS
- A rich person came to pay their debts

If Christ saved us from debtor's prison, don't sentence your spouse to a life in debtor's prison.

What are we going to do differently?

Recommit

- To fighting for our marriages
- To reclaiming the design
- To getting rid of the lies
- To believing the Truth
- To pursuing marriage as a path to salvation
- To loving God by loving your spouse

Believe

- In the power of the Holy Spirit
- In the gift of marriage
- In the Word
- In His promises
- In your spouse
- In marriage to make you holy, more than happy.

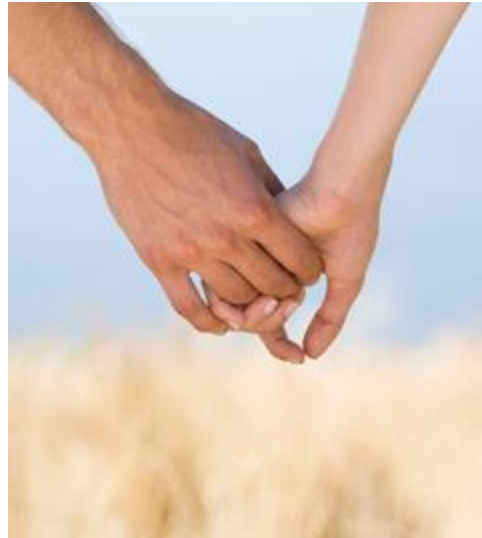
Put on Christ

- The eyes of Christ
- The heart of Christ
- The words of Christ
- The hands and feet of Christ
- Theosis through Kenosis

Don't do it alongside Him, do it FOR Him



Boundaries



Intimacy



Finances



Communication

Questions