

# The Intimate Marriage Conference

## Integrity Church

Dr. James C. Meyer

Friday, March 3, 2023, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 4, 2023, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

## **Session 1:**

# **The Biblical Design of Intimacy with God and Marriage**

# God's Intimacy Toward Us:

1. We are God's special creation: Gen. 1:27 "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."
2. We are the object of God's greatest sacrifice: Rom. 5:6-10 "Christ died for the ungodly... while we were still sinners, Christ died for us... For if when we were enemies..."
3. We are part of God's family: 1 John 3:1 "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"

# God's Intimacy Toward Us:

4. We are gifted from God with amazing life: John 10:10 "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

5. We are deeply impacted in our souls by our relationship with God: Matt. 11:28-30 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."



# God's Intimacy Toward Us:

6. We are able to experience the actual presence of God: Acts 3:19 "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

7. We are graciously corrected by God for our benefit: Rev. 3:19-20 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. (NKJV)

# God's Intimate Presence:

Psalm 23:4-5 “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup runs over.” (NKJV)

# God's Intimate Presence:

- “for You are with me” (Barnes) I shall not go alone (Spurgen) sweetness, security
- Matt. 28:20 “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (NKJV)
- “What we long for is to become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Christ.” (p. 20) *Intimacy with the Almighty*, Charles Swindoll
- “Nothing can satisfy our crucial longings except the kind of relationship that only God offers.” (p. 81) *Inside Out*, Larry Crabb

# God's Intimate Presence:

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies” (Strong's) adversary, affliction, distress, oppressor (Barnes) in spite of, they cannot prevent...

## Questions:

1. How does our intimacy with Christ impact our intimacy in marriage?
2. How do we give “enemies” power to negatively impact intimacy in our marriage?

# Intimate Soul Companionship with God:

1. A companion is someone who is with us.
2. The soul speaks of our spiritual nature.
3. The Christian needs to realize that God is our soul companion.
4. God is with us in a deep spiritual way.
5. For the Christian there is no moment of the day, no difficulty we face, and no problem we endure that God is not present in.
6. This is intimacy!
7. Intimacy with God changes how we feel, what we think, and how we respond. It is an essential part of the Christian journey.

# Intimate Soul Companionship with God in Marriage:

1. God is with us in our marriage. When we love, when we argue, when we move apart, when we move together, when we struggle, when we thrive...
2. Our souls unite us in the spiritual nature of marriage. We need to understand how to biblically nurture our souls in marriage to bring deeper intimacy with God and with each other.

# **Intimate Soul Companionship with God in Marriage:**

3. We need to realize that God is our soul companion, and our spouse is our earthly companion. Much disappointment, demand, destruction, and delusion can impact our marriages when we get these mixed up. When we understand the important eternal aspects of God being our soul companion and the important temporal aspects of our spouse being our earthly companion, we realize how beautiful the eternal and temporal can be when they are working together as God designed them.

4. God being with us in a deep spiritual way impacts the depth of our marriage. When we allow our intimacy with God to deepen us it opens our marriage to deeper insight, deeper love, and deeper trust, and then we can fully trust God and entrust ourselves to each other.

# **Intimate Soul Companionship with God in Marriage:**

5. As Christians, there is no moment in our marriage, no difficulty in our marriage, no problem in our marriage that God is not present in. As a couple we must turn to God together by believing that He is truly a part of every aspect of our marriage. This will radically change our marital prayer lives.

6. This is marital intimacy, that we are so connected to God that He connects us together in marriage.

7. This kind of intimacy with God and intimacy in marriage changes how we feel in our marriage, what we think about in our marriage, how we respond to each other in our marriage, and what motivates us in our marriage. This kind of intimacy is an essential part of God's plan in the journey we take together.



# Seven Question for Small Group Interaction:

## **Biblical Design of Intimacy with God and Marriage**

- Read the seven questions and pick the question that impacts you the most.
- Share the question you picked with your group and give a few sentences about how you are impacted by the question.
- Discuss a couple of the questions as a group.

## **Seven Questions:**

1. How are we seeing God as our companion in our marriage?
2. How does God want to spiritually unite our souls in marriage?
3. When do we get the eternal soul companionship with God mixed up with the temporal earthly companionship of marriage and how does that impact intimacy with God and intimacy in our marriage?
4. How should God be with our marriages in a deep spiritual way and how does this build trust and entrusting in marriage?
5. When we believe that God is in every aspect of our marriage, how should that impact our marital prayer life?
6. What causes our marital connection to become true marital intimacy?
7. What changes in our marital motivations, emotions, thinking, and responses when we have intimacy with God?

# **Session 2:**

# **The Biblical Design of Intimacy in Marriage**

Gen. 2:18-25 “And the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him...’ Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, He made into a woman, and brought her to the man. 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.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife: and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” (NKJV)

# **Seven Keys in the Design of Marital Intimacy**

# Seven Keys in the Design of Marital Intimacy

1. Togetherness: “It is not good that man should be alone.”  
(Brown-Driver-Brigs) by oneself, separation, apart from  
Key #1 We need each other.

Question: What are the signs that a couple are isolating themselves from each other in marriage?

1. Christian divorce. Staying together but living separate lives.
2. Loss of enjoyment in being together.
3. Hanging on to past hurts and not forgiving.
4. Continually experiencing loneliness.

# Seven Keys in the Design of Marital Intimacy

1. Togetherness: “It is not good that man should be alone.”  
(Brown-Driver-Brigs) by oneself, separation, apart from

Key #1 We need each other.

Question: What are the signs that a couple are not isolating themselves...?

1. They stay together through the good, the bad, and the unexpected.
2. They enjoy being together.
3. They forgive and let go of past disappointments and failures.
4. They continually experience togetherness.

# Seven Keys in the Design of Marital Intimacy

2. Complementary-ness: “helper comparable to him” (Gill) “one to help... in all the affairs of life”

Key #2 We are called to continually help each other.

Question: What are some evidences that a couple is helping each other?

1. The couple asks each other for help.
2. The couple accepts each other's help.
3. The couple appreciates each other's help.
4. The couple anticipates when help is needed.
5. The couple accomplishes much when helping each other.



# Seven Keys in the Design of Marital Intimacy

3. Connectedness: “Bone of my bones.” (Benson) “was a piece of himself, and was to be his companion”

Key #3 We are designed to be interconnected.

Question: What does intimate companionship in marriage look like?

1. Unity
2. Diversity
3. Security

# Seven Keys in the Design of Marital Intimacy

4. Protectiveness: “Shall leave” (Poole) “highest affection, even above what they owe to their parents”

Key #4 We should avoid outside interference to our marriage.

Question: When should a couple set boundaries to protect their marriage?

1. When there is not enough time and energy being given to the marriage.
2. When someone or something is impacting the importance of the marriage.
3. When there is interference to the God given intimacy of the marriage.
4. When priorities for the marriage are being challenged.

# Seven Keys in the Design of Marital Intimacy

5. Faithfulness: “Be joined” (Strong’s) abide fast, cleave fast together, cling or adhere, stick

Key #5 We need to make sure that we stay committed to our marriage.

Question: What demonstrates faithfulness and commitment in marriage?

1. An unwavering love.
2. An unyielding to temptation.
3. An unwillingness to separate.
4. An understanding of partnership.

# Seven Keys in the Design of Marital Intimacy

6. Oneness: “one flesh” (v. 23 “flesh of my flesh”) (Clarke)  
“each being equally interested in all things that concern the marriage state.”

Key #6 We have intimate union in our marriage.

Question: What are the signs of healthy intimacy in marriage?

1. Healthy sexually.
2. Healthy emotionally.
3. Healthy mentally.
4. Healthy relationally.
5. Healthy spiritually.

# Seven Keys in the Design of Marital Intimacy

7. Openness: “naked...and were not ashamed.” (Keil & Delitzsch)  
“Shame entered first with sin, which destroyed the normal relations...”

Key #7 We should experience the richness of godly vulnerability in our marriage.

Question: When will a marriage grow in openness?

1. When it addresses the issues of sin in the marriage.
2. When it addresses the issues of shame in the marriage.
3. When it addresses the issues of salvation in the marriage.
4. When it addresses the issues of sanctification in the marriage.

# Seven Keys:

Key #1 We need each other.

Key #2 We are called to continually help each other.

Key #3 We are designed to be interconnected.

Key #4 We should avoid outside interference in our marriage.

Key #5 We need to make sure that we stay committed to our marriage.

Key #6 We have intimate union in our marriage.

Key #7 We should experience the richness of godly vulnerability in our marriage.

# Seven Questions for Small Group Interaction: **The Biblical Design of Intimacy in Marriage**

- Read the seven questions and pick the question that impacts you the most.
- Share the question you picked with your group and give a few sentences about how you are impacted by the question.
- Discuss a couple of the questions as a group.

1. When do we isolate in our marriage and how does isolation in our marriage hinder the intimacy God intends for us to have with each other?
2. How does helping each other in marriage enhance our intimacy? How receptive are we in receiving each other's help?
3. When we are building intimacy in our marriage how does that intimacy create unity and security between us?
4. What boundaries do we need in our marriage to protect marital intimacy?
5. How does faithfulness and commitment in our marriage build trust and intimacy?
6. What is biblical oneness in our marriage and what does biblical oneness do in our marriage to contribute to a healthy intimate relationship?
7. How is our marriage growing in intimate openness and how does this kind of vulnerability in our marriage reduce shame?



# The Intimate Marriage Conference

## Integrity Church

Dr. James C. Meyer

Saturday, March 4, 2023, 8:50 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

# Session 3:

## **Building Trust in Marriage**

# **A Culture of Pornography and Divorce that Destroys Trust: Matt. 5:27-32**

- Matt. 5:27-32 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.
- Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.” (NKJV)

# Pornography Destroys Marital Intimacy:

- “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart”
- “looks at” (Thayer) “to turn the thoughts or direct the mind to”
- “to lust for” (Word Studies) “passionate desires” (Thayer) “covet... seek things forbidden”
- “adultery... in his heart” (Barnes) “the commandment (‘You shall not commit adultery.’) did not regard the external act merely, but the secrets of the heart.”

# Pornography Destroys Marital Intimacy:

- “When surveyed, 53 percent of men who attended Promise Keepers said they viewed pornography that week. More than 45 percent of Christians admit that pornography is a major problem in their home. An anonymous survey conducted recently by Pastors.com reported that 54 percent of pastors admitted viewing porn within the last year. In an online newsletter, 34 percent of female readers of Today’s Christian Woman admitted to intentionally accessing Internet porn...”
- *Pornography and Virtual Infidelity* by Paul Coughlin, Focus on the Family
- [www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/pornography-and-virtual-infidelity/](http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/pornography-and-virtual-infidelity/)

# Getting Help for Pornography:

1. The importance of confession. James 5:16
2. The commitment to purity. 1 Cor. 6:19-20
3. The process of accountability. Gal. 6:1-2
4. The attitude of forgiveness. Eph. 4:32
5. The desire for reconciliation. Matt. 5:24
6. The rebuilding of trust. Prov. 3:5-6, 31:10-11
7. The power of grace and truth. John 1:14, 16

# Divorce Destroys Marital Intimacy:

- “whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.”
- “divorces” (Word Studies) “let go... dismiss... implies the release of an existing bond.” (Merriam-Webster) “to legally dissolve one’s marriage... separate”
- “sexual immorality” (Word Studies) “porneía (the root of the English terms "pornography, pornographic" which is derived from pernaō, "to sell off") – properly, a selling off (surrendering) of sexual purity; promiscuity of any type.”



**Christian Divorce: To be separate in the marriage and to sell off marital intimacy but remain married.**

- Prov. 5:15-19 “Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well.
- Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets?
- Let them be only your own, and not for strangers with you.
- Let your fountain be blessed,
- and rejoice with the wife of your youth.
- *As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times;*
- And always be enraptured with her love.” (NKJV)

## **Seven Evidences of Christian Divorce:**

1. The marriage is drinking from other “cisterns” – sexually, emotionally, relationally, etc.
2. The marriage is being “dispersed abroad” – lack of self-control, poor use of time and energy toward the marriage, missing opportunities for intimacy, etc.
3. “Strangers” are getting in the way of marital intimacy – the television or internet, business, meaningless priorities, etc.
4. There is a lack of “blessing” in the marriage – spiritual blessings, intimacy blessings, refreshment blessings, etc.

## **Seven Evidences of Christian Divorce:**

5. There is a lack of “rejoicing” in the marriage – lack of joy in the history of the marriage, lack of joy in the moment of the marriage, lack of joy in the future of the marriage, etc.
6. The marriage is not “satisfying” each partner’s needs – sexually, emotionally, relationally, etc.
7. The marriage has lost its “enrapturing” qualities – of love, of passion, of intimacy, etc.

# **A Culture of Pornography and Divorce that Destroys Trust: Matt. 5:27-32**

## **Questions:**

1. How might the culture of pornography impact marital trust and marital intimacy?
2. How might the culture of divorce impact marital trust and marital intimacy?

# What circumstances may warrant separation?

1. Abuse – particularly when the welfare of the spouse, children or others is in danger.
2. Circumstances outside our control – military service, health, aging issues, a spouse deciding to leave when the other spouse wants them to stay, etc.
3. Tough love – unrepentant marital affair, drug addiction, alcoholic problems, etc.

# The Spiritual Battle and Trust and Intimacy in Marriage:

Eph. 6:10-13, 18 “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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*. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand... praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.” (NKJV)

# **The Spiritual Battle and Trust and Intimacy in Marriage:**

1. What do I think Satan would like to accomplish in my marriage?
2. What do I think God would like to accomplish in my marriage?
3. What will it look like to continue to “fight the good fight” in my marriage?
4. What kind of prayer life will I need in order to sustain trust and intimacy in my marriage? (and) What kind of prayer life will we, as a couple, need in order to sustain trust and intimacy in our marriage?

# The Intimate Marital Prayer Life and the Spiritual Battle:

1. Help us Lord, to realize what is at stake in our marriage.
2. Help us Lord to see the attack of the enemy in our marriage and help us to be willing to go to battle against Satan. Eph. 6:11-13, 16
3. Help us Lord to overcome the attack of the enemy by finding our strength in You. Eph. 6:10
4. Help us Lord to put on truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, and the Word of God in our marriage. Eph. 6:14-17



# The Intimate Marital Prayer Life and the Spiritual Battle:

5. Help us Lord to identify what may be getting in the way of us fighting for biblical intimacy in our marriage. 1 Peter 2:11

6. Help us Lord to put off (Eph. 4:22 “put off... the old man”) those things that are getting in the way of us interacting with each other in a healthy way.

7. Help us Lord to keep putting on (Eph. 4:24 “put on the new man”) the “armor” and the “new man” in our interactions with each other that we might see victory against the enemy in our marriage. We give you all the glory in Jesus name.

# Interactions that Build and Rebuild Trust in the Marriage:

- Prov. 3:5-6, 31:10-11 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths...
- Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely *trusts* her.” (NKJV)

# Interactions that Build and Rebuild Trust in the Marriage:

1. “trust in the LORD” Intimate marital interactions need to start with dependence upon Christ. John 15:4-5
2. “with all your heart” Intimate marital interactions involve deep and emotional vulnerability together toward God. Matt. 22:37-38
3. “lean not” Intimate marital interactions include a warning about trusting the wrong things. Jer. 17:5
4. “on your own understanding” Intimate marital interactions need to embrace relying upon God whose thoughts are infinite and eternal. Is. 55:8

# Interactions that Build and Rebuild Trust in the Marriage:

5. “In all your ways” Intimate marital interactions cannot afford to focus on self. Col. 3:17, 23
6. “acknowledge Him” Intimate marital interactions require prayer. Eph. 6:18
7. “He shall direct your paths” Intimate marital interactions hold on to the promises of God. 1 John 2:25
8. “virtuous wife” Intimate marital interactions that grow the building of biblical character. Rom. 5:4

# Interactions that Build and Rebuild Trust in the Marriage:

9. “worth” Intimate marital interactions are about those things that are of eternal value. 2 Cor. 4:16-18

10. “the heart of her husband” Intimate marital interactions deep and emotional affection toward each other. John 13:34

11. “safely trusts” Intimate marital interactions include trusting God and entrusting ourselves to each other. John 17:20-21

## Questions:

1. What are the indicators that a couple is trusting God in their marriage?
2. What kind of deep emotional vulnerability toward God and toward each other does a couple need?
3. What are the things that destroy trust and intimacy in a marriage?
4. What is the evidence that a couple is acknowledging God and seeing God guide their marriage?
5. How should the purpose and vision of trusting God and entrusting ourselves to each other in marriage practically impact marital intimacy?

# Seven Questions for Small Group Interaction:

## **The Biblical Design of Intimacy in Marriage**

- Read the seven questions and pick the question that impacts you the most.
- Share the question you picked with your group and give a few sentences about how you are impacted by the question.
- Discuss a couple of the questions as a group.

1. What dangers from the culture of pornography should we be protecting our marriage against?
2. How concerned should we be about Christian divorce in our marriage and what steps should we take to continue to build trust and intimacy in our marriage?
3. What do we think Satan is trying to accomplish in our marriage and what do we think God is able to accomplish instead?
4. What kind of prayer life will we each need to sustain trust and intimacy in our marriage? (and) What kind of prayer life will we, as a couple, need to sustain trust and intimacy in our marriage?
5. What are the indicators that we are trusting God in our marriage?
6. What kind of deep emotional vulnerability toward God and toward each other do we need and how do we go about developing this kind of vulnerability in our marriage?
7. What kinds of purpose and vision do we have for our marriage and how would having a goal of trusting God and entrusting ourselves to each other in marriage practically impact our marital intimacy?



## **Session 4**

# **Marital Communication and Ineffective Interactions**

- Col. 4:6 “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”
- Eph. 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.” (NKJV)
- “grace” charis (Word Study) inclined favorable toward, leaning toward
- (Thayer) that which affords joy, delight
- Jn. 1:14, 16, 17 “Word became flesh... full of *grace* and truth... And of His fullness we have all received, and *grace* for *grace*. For the law was given through Moses, but *grace* and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

# Questions:

- What hinders grace in our communication?
- What empowers grace in our communication?
- What steps do we need to take in our relationship with our spouse to have communication that is seasoned with grace?
- How do you know you are imparting grace when you communicate with your spouse?

# **Evaluating Communication in our Marriages:**

## **Developed by Dr. James Meyer**

Evaluate how well you communicate grace in each of the various issues and topics below. When you think you communicate grace with your spouse extremely well give yourself a 10 to a declining scale of 1 for when you communicate grace with your spouse extremely poorly.

**Communication when you are confronting...**

**Communication when your spouse is confronting...**

**Communication when you are upset or frustrated**

**Communication when your spouse is upset/frustrated**

**Communication when you are angry**

**Communication when your spouse is angry**

**Communication when there is a significant problem**

**Communication when things are going well**

**Communication when you are expressing love...**

**Communication when your spouse is expressing love**

**Communication when you feel misinterpreted**

**Communication when (spouse) feels misinterpreted**

**Communication when you are under a lot of stress**

**Communication when your spouse is under stress**

**Communication concerning your marital roles**

**Communication concerning your differences**

**Communication concerning sex**

**Communication concerning children or family**

**Communication concerning finances**

**Communication concerning spiritual issues**

**Communication concerning plans: work, future, etc.**

**Communication concerning past failures:**

**Communication concerning expectations**

**Communication concerning each other's personality**

**Communication concerning each other's joys**

**Communication concerning each other's successes**

**Communication concerning each other's weaknesses**

**Communication concerning each other's strengths**

## **Exercise: (10 minutes)**

- Fill out the Evaluating Communication in our Marriage
- Note areas you personally would like to work on in your communicating grace with your spouse. Discuss those areas together.



# **So, what happens to marital intimacy when the interactions in a marriage turn toxic?**

1. Toxic Communication
2. Toxic personality differences, confrontation, and conflict.
3. Toxic expectations
4. Toxic sin issues not being dealt with.
5. Toxic bitterness and lack of forgiveness.
6. Toxic betrayal and abandonment
7. Toxic responses to stressors – financial, sexual, family, work, etc.

## **How do these problems and interactions impact intimacy in marriage?**

1. Communication problems can keep the couple from going deeper in their relationship.
2. Personality problems can create frustration, confrontation problems can create self-centered interactions, and conflict can become intense.
3. Expectation problems can bring serious disappointment.
4. Sin problems can separate the couple.
5. Forgiveness problems can cause anger and bitterness to grow.
6. Betrayal and abandonment problems can undermine trust in the marriage.
7. Stressor problems can result in financial, sexual, family, work, etc. disfunction.

## **Helpful Questions a Couple can Ask Who are Struggling with Marital Interactions:**

1. What concerns us most about the problems we are facing in our marriage?
2. What kind of fruitless solutions have we tried and how have those solutions hindered our relationship?
3. How might we be sinning against each other?
4. What is “my” part in the unhealthy interaction?
5. What changes do “I” need to make in my interactions with my spouse?
6. What keeps me from being willing to make those changes?
7. What kind of help do we need for our marriage?

# Ineffective Marital Communication:

Gal. 5:19-21

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like...” (NKJV)

# **Contrasting the Works of the Flesh with the Fruit of the Spirit:**

- Communicating with love rather than withdrawing.
- Communicating with joy rather than bitterness.
- Communicating with peace rather than divisiveness.
- Communicating with patience rather than frustration.
- Communicating with kindness rather than judgment.
- Communicating with goodness rather retaliation.
- Communicating with faithfulness rather than stubbornness.
- Communicating with gentleness rather than forcefulness.
- Communicating with self-control rather than explosiveness.

# Five Steps to Change Marital Communication:

1. Observing communications of the flesh in our marriage.
2. Exposing the communications of the flesh in our marriage.
3. Contrasting the communications of the flesh to the fruit and communications of the Spirit in our marriage.
4. Considering how the fruit of the Spirit would change the communications of the flesh in our marriage.
5. Applying the fruit of the Spirit in our marital communications.

# **Observing and Exposing the Words of the Flesh:**

1. What do I think happens when I speak with words of the flesh to my spouse?
2. What do I feel when I speak with words of the flesh to my spouse?
3. What am I thinking when I speak with words of the flesh to my spouse?
4. What does my body language say when I speak with words of the flesh?
5. What are my motivations when I speak with words of the flesh to my spouse?
6. What patterns do I see developing between me and my spouse when I speak with words of the flesh?
7. What would God want to change when I speak with words of the flesh?

## **Gal. 5:19-21 Fleshly Communication in Marriage**

1. adultery – Communication that rejects
2. fornication – Communication that abandons
3. uncleanness – Communication that is impure
4. lewdness – Communication that is unrestrained
5. idolatry – Communication that removes God
6. sorcery – Communication that lets Satan's in
7. hatred – Communication that hurts
8. contentions – Communication that pushes buttons
9. jealousies – Communication that is contentious
10. outbursts of wrath – Communication that explodes
11. selfish ambitions – Communication that puts others down
12. dissensions – Communication that disunifies
13. heresies – Communication that uses hurtful opinions
14. envy – Communication that wishes ill
15. murders – Communication that destroys
16. drunkenness – Communication that loses control
17. revelries – Communication that lets the flesh loose
18. and the like – Communication that displeases God



## **Exercise:**

- Roleplay a specific communication of the flesh you use in your martial interactions.
- STOP!
- Identify to your spouse what the communication of the flesh you were using.
- Discuss how these fleshly interactions impact your marriage.

So instead of communicating with (words of the flesh) ... what would it be like to communicate with (words of the Spirit)...?

## **Session 5**

# **Marital Communication that Builds Intimacy:**

# **Marital Communication that Builds Intimacy:**

## **The Fruit of the Spirit:**

Gal. 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (NKJV)

# Marital Communication that Builds Intimacy:

- The Fruit of Love: Galatians 5:22, John 21:15-17, John 21:3, Matthew 4:19, Revelation 2:4, Romans 5:5 agape (Word-studies) preference (Thayer) affection
- Communication that shows affection and preference for our spouse.
- The Fruit of Joy: Galatians 5:22, 1 John 1:4, Psalm 16:11, Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 51:12, John 17:13-14 chara (Strong's) gladness, cheerfulness, calm delight
- Communication that delights in our spouse.

# Marital Communication that Builds Intimacy:

- The Fruit of Peace: Galatians 5:22, Colossians 1:19-22, John 14:27, John 16:33, Romans 12:18, Hebrews 12:14, Romans 14:19, Ephesians 4:3, Psalm 4:8, Philippians 4:6-7 (Vine) “harmonious relationships... sense of rest”
- Communication that is concerned about harmony in our marriage relationship.
- The Fruit of Longsuffering/Patience: Galatians 5:22, Hebrews 6:10-12 (Thayer) endurance, perseverance, forbearance
- Communication that hangs in there even when it is very difficult in our marriage.

# Marital Communication that Builds Intimacy:

- The Fruit of Kindness: Galatians 5:22, Titus 3:4-6 (Word-studies) “usable... for what is really needed”
- Communication that is meaningful and useful to our spouse.
- The Fruit of Goodness: Galatians 5:22, Psalm 16:2, Psalm 107:8-9,
- 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (Wuest) quality of moral worth
- Communication that refuses to compromise moral character in our marriage.

# Marital Communication that Builds Intimacy:

- The Fruit of Faithfulness: Galatians 5:22, Psalm 34:3, Acts 11:24, Matthew 25:23 (Thayer) “the character of one who can be relied on”
- Communication that is continually trustworthy and reliable in our marriage.
- The Fruit of Gentleness: Galatians 5:23, Psalm 18:35, Gal. 6:1-2 (Strong’s) meekness, mildness, humility
- Communication that demonstrates humility toward God and our spouse.



# Marital Communication that Builds Intimacy:

- The Fruit of Self-control: Gal. 5:23, Acts 24:25, 1 Cor. 3:13-15 (Wuest) mastery over desires (Robertson) “holding control”
- Communication that resists the temptation of losing control against our spouse.

## **The Fruit of the Spirit and Communication:**

- Love: Communication that shows affection and preference for our spouse.
- Joy: Communication that delights in our spouse.
- Peace: Communication that is concerned about harmony in our marriage relationship.
- Longsuffering/Patience: Communication that hangs in there even when it is very difficult in our marriage.
- Kindness: Communication that is meaningful and useful to our spouse.
- Goodness: Communication that refuses to compromise moral character in our marriage.
- Faithfulness: Communication that is continually trustworthy and reliable in our marriage.
- Gentleness: Communication that demonstrates humility toward God and our spouse.
- Self-control: Communication that resists the temptation of losing control against our spouse.

## Exercise:

- Pick a “fruit of the “Spirit” that would help you move toward biblical marital intimacy.
- Continue the role play but now communicate with that “fruit of the Spirit.”
- Discuss the difference between the interaction of the flesh and the “fruit of the Spirit.”

# Application for our Marital Communications:

1. In considering the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23), what “fruit of the Spirit” for each of us might help us communicate with each other in a healthier way?
2. So instead of speaking to you with words of... I would want to speak to you with words of... (Both spouses need to apply this.)
3. This may be difficult for us to continue to communicate with each other in the “fruit of the Spirit” so we need to make the commitment to...
4. We also may need help. What kind of help will we need to be able to continue to communicate with each other with words of the “fruit of the Spirit?”
5. How will we need to pray with each other about applying the “fruit of the Spirit” in our communications with each other.

# **Developing Biblical Goals for Marriage**

# **Developing Biblical Goals for Intimacy in Marriage and for Addressing Interaction Problems:**

Matt. 22:37-38 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind... You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (NKJV)

1. Starting by focusing on what it means to love God in our marriage
2. Continuing by focusing on what it means to love each other in our marriage.
3. Developing a biblical purpose and vision for our marriage.
4. Identifying problematic interactions in our marriage that get in the way of accomplishing our purpose and vision for our marriage.
5. Building toward biblical unity and consensus in our marriage.
6. Considering what this would look like in our marriage?
7. Applying this to our marriage.

## **Example Goal for a Couple Struggling with Bitterness toward Each Other:**

1. For our marriage we will start by focusing on what it means to love God in our marriage, and we will be thankful for His forgiveness to us.
2. We will continue by focusing on how loving God should impact how we love and forgive each other despite the times we fail each other.
3. We have developed a purpose in our marriage to love God, to love each other, and to forgive each other no matter what, and we have a vision for our marriage that God will heal us from the bitterness we have had toward each other.
4. We have identified bitterness and a lack of forgiveness in our marriage as a significant problem that gets in the way of our purpose and vision.
5. We have agreed to this goal in order to bring unity in our marriage.
6. We will consider what forgiveness looks like when we end up in damaging conflict.
7. We will then apply the biblical concept of forgiveness toward each other by each of us owning our part in the damaging conflict and each of us verbalizing what steps we can take toward forgiveness and reconciliation.

# Three Things God Wants for Our Marriages:

- 1. God wants us to have a great marriage.
- 2. God wants us to have healthy interactions in our marriage.
- 3. God wants us to have biblical intimacy in our marriage.



# What Destroys Healthy Marital Goals?

1. Focusing on the other person
2. Fixing symptoms
3. Foolish thinking
4. Frustrating responses
5. False promises
6. Fearful ultimatums
7. Furious retaliations

## Questions:

1. What would be accomplished in our relationship if we lived out a clear biblical goal in our marriage?
2. What marital goals does God want for our marriage?
3. What might make it difficult for us to continue to interact with each other in a biblically healthy way?
4. What kind of help will we need to be able to continue to build marital intimacy in our marriage?
5. How will we need to pray about changing our marital interactions with each other?
6. What steps are we willing to take in order to move toward having biblical intimacy in our marriage?
7. Are we willing to make a commitment before God about having marital goals that would please Him?

## **Exercise: Work on a marital goal:**

- Each of you express one or two goals that would reflect what God would want for your marriage.
- For now, narrow it down to one goal you can both agree upon.
- Discuss what steps would need to be taken to move towards this goal.
- If you feel ready, make a commitment to God and each other to start working on this goal.
- Pray for each other.
- (There may not be enough time to accomplish this right now so you may want to agree to continue to work on this when you go home.)

# Closing Thoughts and Prayer

# The Intimate Marriage Conference

## Integrity Church

Dr. James C. Meyer

Friday, March 3, 2023, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 4, 2023, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.