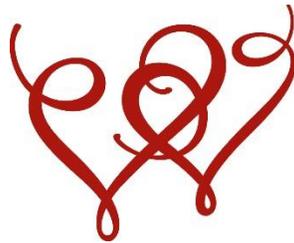




*The
Heart of
Marriage*

Hope For Tomorrow

Roger Taylor



The Heart of Marriage ~

Hope For Tomorrow

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Study Questions Written by Rodney & Cheri West

Cover Design by David Ingram, Creative Press Publishing

Edited by Carol Bandi ~ Spokane, Washington

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Published by Places In The Father’s Heart, Inc. ~ Bayfield, CO

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When two hearts are open, love can get in.

Forward

It is with great pleasure and honor that I pen this forward for *The Heart of Marriage*, for you see I have lived its message. It is a rare thing in this day that a married couple can live together in joy and bliss and minister together twenty four hours a day and seven days a week and successfully do the art of marriage. Rog, my beloved, and I are one such fortunate couple. Readers, let me assure you that it has not always been that way, but we can say we are nearly forty-six years into this process. Our vows are more important to us today than the day we spoke them. There have been times and seasons when those vows were broken significantly with each other, but by Father's love and grace, we have overcome many mountains and valleys of trials and disappointments. Today we stand before you as examples of what God can do when two hearts are open and willing to change.

Last Valentine's Day Rog gave me a special gift. It is a necklace with two open hearts on it. I like to say when two hearts are open Father's love can get in and when our hearts are open to each other, that same love can spill out all over each other. Contained in these pages, Rog has poured out his heart and talked open and candidly about the mountains and the valleys we have cross together so far. Some were his mountains and valleys; some were mine. Together they have become 'ours'.

I pray now that you may be blessed as I have been blessed to read the following pages. Some are filled with stories of pain and disappointment and some filled with joy and laughter. May both bring you into the fullness of Father's unconditional love for you not only in your marriage but in every relationship you have. It is with honor and blessing that I recommend to you *The Heart of Marriage* and I can say with absolute certainty that *there is hope for tomorrow*. We are living proof!

Resting in the Father's Embrace,

Gerri

Introduction

With this writing, my sole intent is to be a blessing to Christian marriages. I do not claim this to be complete by any standard. This is simply my humble attempt to share personal experience, wisdom and insight that Gerri and I have gained over many years. I pray it will help bring new life to many marriages.

Our usual expectations going into marriage are those of happiness, peace and excitement for the future; and romance is in the air. Then life happens. Difficulties arise and we are generally not prepared for the surprises. We wonder what happened. What went wrong? This becomes a reality check or wake up call to the pressures of life in the marriage relationship. Many times these initial troubling events can set the stage for disappointment and discouragement. Often we discover how fragile our feelings of love are for our new spouse and how quickly our excitement regarding our future can disappear. What happened to the honeymoon? Is romance still possible?

It would be very helpful to marriages if we could begin to understand that there are many things in our lives that act like filters. These filters hinder us in many ways, but primarily in our ability to have healthy relationships. Our filters are made up of our woundedness and our sin. They interfere with our ability to see and hear correctly, to perceive, discern and reason correctly. If we want our lives to change for the better we must ask the Holy Spirit to reveal our filters so we can resolve these issues and be free.

I pray you will find some answers contained within these pages that will re-energize your hope and strengthen your faith that your Heavenly Father is still on His throne and you are His child, precious in His sight. I encourage you to boldly and prayerfully consider the following pages and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart that which is appropriate for you or someone in your world at this time.

Blessings,

Roger

Preface

Foundations

One of the most important issues in life is secure foundations. Any place in our life that we have a weak foundation presents an opportunity for fear, anxiety and stress to take hold and cause unending trauma! This can become a demonic stronghold in a person's life, therefore when one weak foundation is strengthened the demonic stronghold simply moves to another area that may or may not be weak and causes a new focus and new fear to form! This is one of Satan's tactics to keep us distracted, frustrated, resentful and in extreme cases bitter and unforgiving, therefore hindering our ability to accomplish our purpose and destiny as a victorious child of the Most High God.

Since this book is about marriage, would you think that a solid foundation would be essential for a successful, lasting love relationship? If so, what is that foundation made of? Well, left to our own decisions, our foundations are usually weak. The divorce rate is dramatic evidence for us all that what we have been doing isn't working well! The divorce rate in the church is equal to that of the world! However, the divorce rate doesn't tell the whole story. It only reveals those who have the determination to get out of what they considered a bad situation! How many more marriages are unhappy and unhealthy, but for reasons of their own the spouses refuse to divorce! Yet these marriages remain unhappy, fearful, resentful, bitter, lonely, depressed and vulnerable to sexual sin! Is all this really what God intends for the marriage relationship? I think not!

So, when we come together in our marriage relationship and establish our one flesh union, what do we contribute to this potentially powerful new entity? Do we bring strength or weakness? The answer is yes to both! We bring the totality of who we are...the good and the bad...the Godly and the ungodly! We bring things we may be ignorant of like generational curses for example. We bring family traditions and not all are Godly traditions. We bring our woundedness and our trauma, our fears, anger and shame, our low self-esteem and self-hatred, our resentments, rebellion and depression, our lust and most of all we bring our love hunger! Our love hunger is the monster within us that creates the atmosphere for demonic activity! Sadly, many of us try to manage these ungodly issues and just get used to the situation. This approach only prolongs the misery and is self-defeating. All the while Father has provided all the revelation and healing necessary to defeat all the ungodly issues, we bring to the table of our marriage relationship. Religion will not defeat our strongholds! But relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit will deliver a powerful, life-changing and destructive blow to all our ungodly issues! Therefore, if we will present ourselves before God's throne of grace and make Him Lord of our lives and allow Him to speak to our negative issues, we will be changed and we will be transformed into the powerful, supernatural child of the Most High God that He created us to be!

In our personal, intimate relationship with Father our love hunger will be satisfied, and that monster will be powerfully defeated leaving behind the person we should be with the ability to establish the Godly, powerful, loving marriage relationship that Father intended in the beginning!

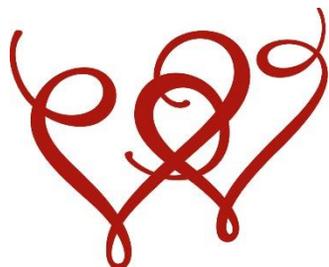


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Chapter 1

The Heart of Marriage ~

Hope for Tomorrow

Marriage can be a dilemma! I'm sure you see the struggles all around you. We obviously have major problems with the marriage relationship. We all experience it to some degree in our lifetime, usually beginning with our parents' marriage. This one typically has great impact upon us and can deeply influence our own marriage relationship in both positive and negative ways. We also can be impacted by the relationships of extended family and friends, and believe it or not, through TV and movies that we watch.

On September 29, 2008, Gerri and I celebrated our 45th wedding anniversary. We have firsthand experience with marriage, both positive and negative. We have been in ministry since 1982 and have consistently encountered troubled marriages among Christians. It is obvious that being a Christian does not isolate or insulate us from relationship difficulties. Statistics from Focus on the Family indicate that 54% of Christian marriages are failing today.

I do not believe it is Father's desire that our marriages fail or simply survive. As Christians we are supposed to be victorious in this human experience, but how far have we missed it? The divorce rate in the Body of Christ is on par with the world. We have God and they don't. What's wrong with this picture?

I believe the divorce rate among Christians is only the tip of the iceberg as evidence that our marriages are in trouble. How many unhappy marriages harbor hidden problems? How many spouses have quietly given up on happiness and dreams? How many struggle daily with complacency, disappointment, depression, fear, anger, shame, offense or bitterness? How many wrestle with pornography and/or adultery, with adulterous thoughts and desires? How many are sick and tired of being sick and tired? How many of us cry within ourselves, 'can't anyone help me? Life has to be better than this.'

In our self-centeredness, pride and woundedness, love can get lost in the fray and we begin to focus on our spouse's faults. That focus will bring further separation and even destruction. All this is evidence of our inability to have successful relationships. When trouble starts in a marriage, wedding vows are quickly forgotten. Promises and commitments made seem to vanish in the chaos and confusion of confrontation and disappointment. It seems we only mean what we say if things go well, but when the honeymoon is over, all bets are off. It is every man for himself. Instead of being lovers, we become adversaries, each defending our own position. For most of us these struggles come as a surprise that we are typically unprepared for, arising from things in ourselves and our spouses that both we and they were many times unaware of.

Let me share some examples of our personal surprises.

Gerri's surprises about Roger ~

- Roger's rejection of her.
- Roger's anger.
 - When we were dating, Gerri says I treated her very well. She did not know I had an anger problem.
- Roger's jealousy of our children.
- Roger's poor parenting.
- Roger's adultery, disloyalty, and betrayal.

Gerri's surprises about herself came after she got saved.

Roger's surprises about Gerri ~

- Gerri's weight problem.
- Gerri's attempts at domination in the relationship.

Roger's surprises about himself ~

- Did not realize I had an anger problem.
- Fear problem
- Self-hatred problem
- Lust problem
- Love hunger problem
 - A love hunger problem that caused me to be jealous and resentful of my own children. In my mind they stole the attention and affection I so desperately needed from my wife.
- Failure to understand intimacy
 - I did not know how to contribute to a relationship. I certainly did not know how to be emotionally intimate.
- Vows and judgments (attitudes of heart)
 - I was unaware of the many vows and judgments I'd made in my life that would adversely affect my marriage relationship.

For example, I was full of vows and judgments about my parental home. For me, home was a place of shame, fear, anger and pain. I believed that if happiness was to be found in life, it had to be 'out there somewhere'; anywhere but home. I did not know that I brought that into my marriage, but as soon as Gerri and I established our own home, those unresolved issues began to surface. Gerri could not figure out why I always wanted to be gone or away from our new home. For her, this was more personal rejection; she felt I did not want to be with her. However, the truth was whenever I was at home with her, my unresolved issues of

woundedness, love hunger and the lie that I lived by that 'home only represented an opportunity for more shame, fear, anger, and pain' would surface. These spiritual dynamics were powerful opposition to finding peace and rest and enjoying my new home, wife and family. I was always stressed at home, and the least little thing would set me off. I would explode in anger. Thus Gerri and the children learned to walk on egg shells. Don't make Dad mad! They did not know the reason for the volcano in me. They didn't know that I lived in constant fear. They didn't know the power of my shame, self-hatred and hopelessness, and neither did I. My life circumstances kept me constantly on the edge of depression. Sadly, our children were grown and gone from home before Gerri and I began to discover these root issues and how to deal with them. So I would ask, do you have unresolved issues about home?

Another example of my many vows and judgments was my judgment of women. This was rooted in my unhealthy relationship with my mother. I judged all women based on my mother, and vowed 'no woman would ever treat me the way my mother had treated me.' Gerri never acted like my mother while we were dating. It was only after we were married that the similarities began to surface. Naturally, all my woundedness, pain and unresolved issues with my mother began to surface and were directed at Gerri. The honeymoon was over.

I vividly remember our first major, traumatic encounter. It was shortly after our first child was born. Our daughter, Lisa, was just a few weeks old. Gerri and I were arguing one evening in the living room. She crossed the room holding Lisa in one arm and approached the chair where I was sitting. She was angry and yelling at me, shaking her finger in my face and telling me what I was and was not going to do; at least that was the way I took it. In a flash, I slapped her face. She staggered backward across the living room, hit the front door and slid down to the floor on her behind and was out cold. I had knocked her out! She was still holding Lisa who was now crying. I took Lisa and put her on the couch; then went back to Gerri who was starting to come around, but she couldn't talk. Her jaw wouldn't work. It seems that when

I slapped her she had her mouth open and the blow did something to her jaw. Fear took over in me. Shame took over. Self-hatred exploded in me. All this was the result of my unresolved issues with my mother. Talk about unexpected surprises!

I also distinctly remember an experience in first grade when I was six years old. My teacher's name was Mrs. Spaulding. She was always nicely dressed, well kept, and slender. I think maybe I even had a crush on her! I do distinctly remember looking at her one day as she taught the class, crying out within myself 'why can't my mother look like that?' This is a dramatic example of love hunger at work in a six year old boy. I was already judgmental and critical of my mother and the way she looked.

Another major area for me was the fact that I distinctly disliked women who were overweight. Again, I had judged my mother. When we married, I did not know Gerri had a weight problem, so when she put on weight I became very upset. I was my typical self-centered self, having no compassion for her, no understanding of her problem. I thought it was simply a choice on her part. I was only concerned about how *I* felt. That is the story in the flesh. Now let me share with you what the Holy Spirit has revealed through the years.

Gerri's weight problem began for her in the womb. Her mother, who did not want to be pregnant at the time, was obsessed with her looks and with not gaining weight during her pregnancy. In depriving herself, she deprived Gerri in the womb. When Gerri was born she was extremely malnourished and almost died. She had to be fed intravenously to save her life. The power of deprivation was established in Gerri in the womb by her mother's self-centered choices. Then, as a three year old, Gerri's mother began taking her to doctor after doctor, even spiritualists, trying anything and everything to fix Gerri's weight problem, which she really didn't have at the time. The message to Gerri was, 'you're unacceptable. You have to change.' Her mother strictly controlled her diet, constantly reinforcing Gerri's sense of deprivation. This is rejection at work, and when added to the lack of expressed love and affection, the message is driven home to the child: 'you are defective, you are unacceptable.'

When Gerri and I dated, she was a swimmer. She loved water ballet. She was trim and muscular. Her olive skin was deeply tanned and her bright blue eyes flashed with excitement. For me she was a picture of perfection. In my terms, she was 'just drop-dead gorgeous!' So, after her weight problem surfaced, my reaction was a surprise to her. It was as if she married her mother. My message to her was clear, 'this is unacceptable. You have to change.' The pain of rejection from her mother was unresolved and it surfaced. I added to it with my own rejection of her. Tension grew between us.

Each of us was unaware of the deep pain of rejection in the other. She was reliving the pain from her mother, now coming from her husband, just as I was reliving the pain from my mother, now coming from my wife. We obviously had no true understanding of the situation. We only had our emotions to go on. Would you say that our marriage was in trouble? How many times do similar situations happen in our marriages? How many are truly prepared to cope with the issues? So, you see, if either the husband or the wife has unresolved issues with parents, the marriage will struggle. In that struggle the ability to love, honor and respect will be restricted and intimacy will greatly suffer.

When we found out Gerri was pregnant with our first child, Lisa, I think I was ok with the idea. I don't remember any negative reaction to the news. The problem didn't surface until after she was born. Remember, these are heart issues, not necessarily thinking issues. The jealousy or resentment I unknowingly had toward children surfaced. I rejected my own child and became angrier at Gerri for what I perceived was her abandonment of me. We grew more distant and antagonistic to each other. The nightmare of my parental home was coming back again. All the old emotions that I had buried resurfaced. I can remember the day I said to myself, "ok, if this is how it is going to be, then I will look somewhere else for happiness." That day, adultery was consciously born in my heart.

What happens in a marriage when at least one spouse knows nothing about relating to the other properly? Trouble is waiting in the wings but, in fact, this is where most marriage

relationships begin. Love hunger leads to self-centeredness, and that usually means ‘What can I get from you that will meet my needs?’ instead of, ‘What can I do for you that will help meet your needs?’ These people will be continually disappointed because no matter what their spouse does, no matter how much he or she gives and tries to meet needs, it will never be enough until the unresolved issues are dealt with in the self-centered one. This was our story. I was focused on receiving, not giving. We had to learn the hard way about giving to each other in the relationship. Through the first few years, Gerri was hurt and disappointed because I seldom remembered her birthday or our wedding anniversary. I couldn’t understand why she made such a big deal out of it! When it came to intimacy, the only thing I knew was sex. Intimacy was not a word in my vocabulary. I knew nothing about loving my spouse to life. That wouldn’t occur until after I met Jesus, and it truly didn’t become a successful venture between us until we met Father.

Now allow me to say a bit more about vows and judgments. First of all, they usually go hand in hand. As a child I was wounded by the lack of expressed love and affection from my mother. I became judgmental and critical of her for that. In other words, I blamed her for the way she treated me. Scripture warns us not to be judgmental and critical (Matthew 7:1f). This became my sin in the relationship. To go along with my sin of judging, I made a vow (a determination of heart) against women. That vow would become a wall in my life in every relationship I would have with a woman. The basic principle I want you to see here is that when someone hurts us we can judge them, be critical of them and, if severe enough, we can make a vow (a determination of our heart) that will be binding on us until we repent for our sin, forgive the person who hurt us and renounce the vow we have made. We must change the determination we have made in order to open our heart to intimate relationship. As you have seen, unresolved vows and judgments can be a great hindrance to our ability to have intimate relationships with God, our spouse and others.

Marriage can indeed be a dilemma, but it can also be a vehicle God can use to help mature us. Learning to master relationship principles in marriage can bring us huge dividends, for this earthly relationship can mirror our personal relationship with our Heavenly Father.

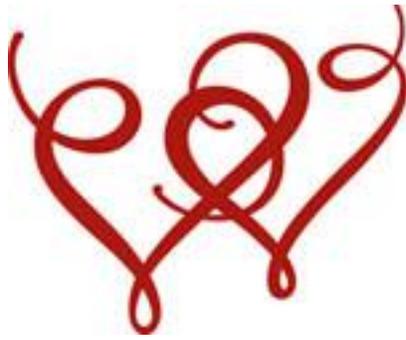
At the end of each chapter, you will find a set of questions. These questions are not meant to condemn or shame you, but are placed to aid you in discovering the Father's desire for your marriage. Please answer each question thoroughly-your responses will be useful tools the Father uses to open your heart to His love.

THE HEART OF MARRIAGE

Questions

Chapter 1

1. In the Introduction, Roger wrote: "...there are many things in our lives that act like filters." What are some "filters" in your life?
2. What three words would you use to describe your parents' marriage?
3. What "surprises" have you discovered about yourself in this relationship?
4. In your own words, define the term "love hunger".
5. Based on your definition, what is a "love hunger" that is operating in your life? How have you attempted to satisfy this hunger?
6. Using Roger's example of "vows" and "judgments" on page 7, are there similar unresolved vows and judgments in your life? If so, what are they?



Chapter 2

Love Hunger ~ The Unseen Force

Love hunger can be a major, destructive issue in the marriage relationship. In our experience, it is usually unidentified and therefore a continued source of difficulty as both spouses struggle to satisfy their need for love and affection. The internal pressure to fill the void where true love has never been can produce a lifetime of searching for satisfaction only to be repeatedly disappointed with less than enough. Only the Truth will set us free and fully satisfy, therefore I offer the following.

We believe that mankind was created by Love (Father God) for the purpose of love and intimate relationship: unconditional love and intimate relationship between God and man and man and his family and his neighbors. Father intended we should begin to receive His unconditional, expressed love through our parents. His love flowing to us through our parents would enable us to know Father on a more intimate basis where our love needs would be met continually throughout our lifetime here on earth. This would be wonderful preparation for eternity. However, Adam and Eve's spiritual rebellion against God brought sin into the equation. They became spiritual orphans. Spiritual orphans are people who rebel against authority figures in their lives, and this usually begins with their parents. This legacy continues today.

To the degree we are not loved to life as God intended, to that same degree we can rebel against life, God, our parents, and other authority figures. Love hunger usually results in spiritual rebellion and love hunger demands satisfaction. It can become a vicious cycle.

From the moment of conception our parents become essential in our personal growth and development. Since we were created by Love for love, it is essential that our parents love us to life so that we embrace life. It is also essential that they express unconditional love so we learn what love truly is as God intended. We must learn what true, intimate relationship is

and should be so that our heritage of unconditional love is passed on to the next generation. But our parents cannot give us what they do not have. To the degree that our parents were unable to provide the love, care and intimacy God intended, to that degree we are not able to embrace life as we should and we are love hungry. We see life through a glass darkly. We do not know love and acceptance as we should. We do not know the essence of intimate relationship as we should. We struggle in life even as Christians, always looking for what's missing, always striving, always experiencing a counterfeit to the life, love and intimacy that God intended for us to know.

One morning Father said to me, "Son, life is love and love is life." I knew immediately this was a profound statement. Love is the fuel we were designed to run on, however, we typically look in all the wrong places to find the love that will bring us life. We persistently try to substitute many things to fill the void that only true love can fill. True love can only be found in Father God or in someone who has been intimate with Him. Love is life. The reward for finding God's unconditional, expressed love for us is LIFE; life as Father intended, which is usually much bigger than we have previously known.

Consider when you are born again and you meet Jesus and He points you to His Father for an intimate encounter. **Jesus is the way, but Father is the destination.** John 14:6. What if we don't go or don't know to go to Him? Obviously the personal, intimate relationship is not established. Father is out there somewhere and we know about Him, but we have not experienced Him personally or intimately, and our love hunger continues.

Our basic love needs are these:

- Unconditional, expressed love
- Affection/Affirmation
- Safety/Security
- Purpose for life

To the degree our parents were unable to meet these basic needs and to the degree they were unable to lead us to our Heavenly Father to receive His unconditional, expressed love, to that degree we are dysfunctional and love hungry. To that same degree we do not know how to love unconditionally or have relationships intimately. We are too busy trying to fill the empty space with what is missing. Love hunger demands satisfaction. We repeat this to stress its importance. Love hunger is a driving force within us whether identified or not.

Love hunger can result because of an unwanted pregnancy, regardless of the reason, justified or not. Love hunger can result because of adoption. Love hunger can result because of an absent parent. The reason for the absence does not matter. The result in the

child is love hunger. Love hunger can result if a parent does not express love by hugging, holding, touching, being affectionate, giving tender looks and tender tones of voice, encouraging and being involved in the child's life. Even if the parent is present in the home, the absence of any of the above will result in love hunger. If both parents must work, being left with babysitters or in daycare can result in love hunger. We can be loved by someone other than our parents and be blessed by that love relationship, but it will not bring healing to our issues of love hunger with our parents. Can you see that love hunger is a result of abandonment issues, whether real or perceived?

Some of the attributes or characteristics of people who feel unloved or people with love hunger can be:

- Frustration
- Anger
- Rebellion
- Resentment
- Bitterness
- Issues of self-hatred, self-criticism and self-condemnation
- Self-centeredness
- Fear
- Insecurity
- Control
- Loneliness
- Striving
- Worry and anxiousness
- Giving/receiving sex for love
- Driven by a need to be needed
- Having no good sense of home
- Experiencing difficulty in being intimate with God and others
- Practicing withdrawal to prevent rejection
- Having a tendency toward isolation
- Constantly struggling with counterfeit affections
- Having a distorted view of God, self and others
- Feeling like there is something wrong with themselves
- Performance orientation

- Having no peace, no rest
- Having difficulty believing God loves them just like they are
- Having difficulty hearing God's voice
- Struggling with unbelief
- Not sure God will be there for them
- Struggling with trust and faith
- Hopeless and suicidal
- Having a tendency toward depression/burnout
- Spiritual rebellion
- Living with doubt and discouragement that their love needs will ever be met
- Always looking to the wrong source to get their love needs met

The severity of these and other characteristics vary in strength and intensity from person to person, but they are common to the problem of love hunger. Love hunger can leave a person with an angry edge to life. Those in closest relationship to the love hungry person are usually victims of the angry edge.

We all have belonged to the love hunger club at sometime in our lives to some degree. If we are parents, then our children and grandchildren also belong to the same club. Only a personal, intimate encounter with our Heavenly Father's unconditional love can change this. Head knowledge about Father's love will not change us. We must have and we must experience His expressed love for us personally and intimately. When we do, our love needs will be met, our love hunger satisfied and our lives will forever change.

Matthew 11:28-30... "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and over-burdened, and I will cause you to rest. (I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls) 29... Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. 30... For My yoke is wholesome (useful, good - not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be born."

I Corinthians 13:4-8... "Love endures long and is patient and kind: love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. 5... it is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it (it pays no attention to a suffered wrong). 6... it does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. 7... Love bears up under anything

and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything (without weakening). 8...Love never fails (never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end).

These scriptures can seem like impossible mountains to those who feel unloved, but as Father begins to meet our love needs we will begin to live and be immersed in them. If we will make Father our destination and cry out to Him and pursue Him, He will run to us and receive us just as we are, not like we or others think we should be. James 4:8. In His embrace, our love hunger will be satisfied. We will then begin our transformation into a son/daughter of God who walks in expressed love, feels affirmed, legitimate, safe, and secure and has purpose for life. **His love is a free gift, not a reward for service.**

We cannot obey the Great Commandment to love one another if we do not love ourselves. By survey, 80% of us do not like what we see in the mirror. To the degree we dislike ourselves we are in spiritual rebellion to God, dishonoring what He has created; and to that same degree we cannot love others. In marriage we expect our spouse to meet our love need, but they can't fill the void where Father's love belongs. In our expectation, we set them up for failure in our eyes and we set ourselves up for disappointment. When our spouse does not meet our expectation for love, often the honeymoon is over. Even if our spouse were perfect, they would have a difficult time getting past the emotional walls of protection we have built. The walls we build to protect ourselves from being hurt again also hinder us from receiving love that is trying to get in. In order to remove the walls we must be healed from the woundedness, abandonment and rejection that caused us to build the walls in the first place.

Love hunger will be satisfied and our lives changed when we, in our healing process, invite Father to come and bring His unconditional love and acceptance to us. He is the only One Who can satisfy our love hunger completely.

The need to be needed, or love hunger, can drive us to become performance oriented. We can become workaholics, churchaholics, volunteeraholics, and so on. The result is giving only to get. We begin to walk in slavery instead of sonship. We become driven, have no peace, no rest, no satisfaction, no fulfillment, no reward that satisfies. We can't pray enough, study enough, give enough, or fast enough to satisfy our need. We may strive for position and power believing when we get there we will be satisfied. Not so. Love hunger remains.

In my opinion, one of the greatest contributions to darkness in our lives, one of the greatest hindrances to our relationship with our Heavenly Father, one of the greatest barriers to intimacy, one of the greatest barriers to living a successful Christian life is love hunger.

When our love needs are not fully met our love for God and man has a hook on it. We have a need to be needed and we establish relationships based on the idea of what can you do for me that will make me feel better about myself and about my life? We treat Father the same way. I love you Lord. Don't You see this need I have (the hook)? Father created mankind for relationship; relationship based on love, not needs. If our love needs are not met then our perspective on love and relationship is perverted from Father's design. Love, or giving with a hook, is an attempt at manipulation or control to get our love needs met at someone else's expense. Dr. Ed Cole said, "Love is giving to meet someone else's need at your own expense. Lust, or the hook, is giving to get your need met at someone else's expense."

Love hunger can hinder our ability to experience joy because joy is the result of love, not service. The joy of the Lord is our strength. We have heard it said we must die to self. 2 Cor. 5:15 Amp. *"And He (Jesus) died for all so that all those who live might live no longer to and for themselves, but to and for Him Who died and was raised again for their sake."* We now know that one of the major stumbling blocks to dying to self is love hunger. Conversely, when we begin to experience Father's unconditional love for us and our love hunger begins to be satisfied, it becomes much easier to get ourselves and our needs out of the way. Our relationship with Him becomes more important than anything we can do for Him. Intimacy with Father becomes our focus and number one priority, thus we die to ourselves. **It is the 'being' a son/daughter of the Most High God that really counts, not the 'doing' or performing.** Dying doesn't happen because we 'do' it, 'work' at it, or 'strive' for it. Successfully dying to anything is a result of experiencing Father's unconditional, expressed love for us. In my opinion, love hunger can be the root of all evil.

As we walk in love hunger, we can believe we are unlovable and unlikable. If I don't like me, you won't like me either. Love hunger can result in our being independent and disengaged in relationships and the opposite can also be true. We can be codependent and enmeshed. As the independent, disengaged spiritual orphan, we are trying to protect ourselves from being rejected any further, but driven to get our love hunger satisfied. As the co-dependent, enmeshed one, we are trying to get our love hunger satisfied by over stepping healthy boundaries and pressing ourselves into other people's lives, eventually causing them to reject us. In both cases, love hunger goes unsatisfied and in either case we generally hurt the other people involved, usually our spouse and our immediate family.

Please review the following chart:

Love needs..... Unmet can lead to.....Counterfeit affections

Unconditional, expressed love	Passion
Affection/Attention	Position
Safety/Security	Possessions
Purpose for living	Power

To briefly explain the chart above:

If we did not receive adequate **expressed love** from our parents, we can turn to **passion** expressed in its many forms in our attempt to satisfy our need. It cannot satisfy. It only temporarily satisfies or masks the pain but shortly more is needed. Love hunger can lead to promiscuity and fornication or giving sex to get what we think is love. It can also lead to adultery, pornography, homosexuality and more.

If we did not receive adequate **affection and attention** we can strive for **position** in life with our spouse, family, with friends, at school, at work, at church, etc. Sometimes we can see this in very young children. In any case, this, like all counterfeit affections, is at best a temporary fix and will not satisfy. Striving will continue.

If our need for **safety and security** was not met by our parents, then we can attempt to secure **possessions** to meet the need. Have you ever seen anyone caught in this trap? They are always buying more, needing something different, and never satisfied with what they have. Obviously the need will not be satisfied and more possessions will always be required. Out of control spending is often the result of love hunger for safety and security.

If our first three love needs were not met, then we might struggle with a **purpose for living**, and that may lead us to exert **power** over other people, including our spouse. Control and manipulation can be powerful, ungodly habit structures that must be broken. This is a major trap because it will usually lead us into one or more of the other counterfeit affections. Also we may struggle with being dissatisfied with ourselves, our job, life circumstances, even spouse and family; always looking out there somewhere for the answers to our struggle; always moving, changing jobs, restless, frustrated, angry, depressed and stressed. This is the search for purpose in life.

Remember, **love hunger must be satisfied**. These hidden, often unidentified, basic needs of life are powerful and will drive us unmercifully for satisfaction. If you find yourself or

someone you love in this context, please take our advice and seek qualified prayer ministry for resolution. It will change your life and free you to walk more intimately in all relationships.

Also, please remember that your healing is a **process**. Very often the Lord will deal with our problems layer by layer, many times returning to the same issue over and over until all is dealt with and liberty and freedom are achieved. There is no 'quick fix' method. It should be understood that all prayer ministry must be Holy Spirit led or the outcome could be much less than desired.

CONCLUSION

Andrew Murray writes in The True Vine the following: *"The love of the Father to the Son is not a sentiment - it is a divine life, an infinite energy, an irresistible power. It carried Christ through life and death and the grave. The Father loved Him, dwelt in Him, and did all for Him. So the love of Christ to us too is an infinite living power that will work in us all He delights to give us. The feebleness of our Christian life is that we do not take time to believe that His divine love does really delight in us and will possess and work all in us.*

How then do we secure this Love? Again Murray writes, *"Turn away from the visible if you would see and possess the invisible. Take more time with Jesus, gazing on Him as the heavenly Vine, living in the love of the Father, who wants you to live in His love. Turn away from yourself and your efforts and your faith, if you would have the heart filled with Him and the certainty of His love. Abiding means going out from everything else to occupy one place and stay there. Come away from all else, set your heart on Father and His love, and that love will waken your faith and strengthen it. Occupy yourself with the Love, worship it, wait for it. You may be sure it will reach out to you, and by its power take you up into itself as your abode and your home."*

We were created by Love for love. As we are healed of our issues of love hunger and we experience Father's unconditional love, we can be assured that we will be able to effectively receive and give away His love to the next person we meet and our world will be changed by this Love one life at a time.

IN CLOSING we share this prayer of blessing over you. May your spirit receive it now. *We bless you with knowing profoundly that God is love. We bless you with being known as a person who is loved by the Lord and who loves the Lord. We bless you with knowing deep in your spirit that your Father's favor is upon you; He likes you; He enjoys you; He takes pleasure in who you are today, regardless of what you are doing or have done. We bless you with*

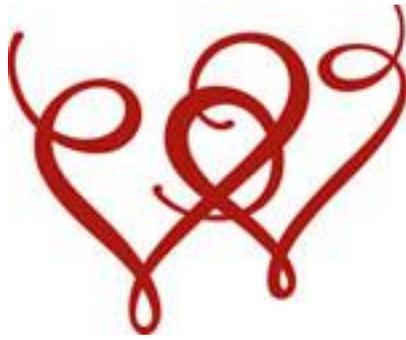
*profoundly knowing that He finds pleasure in you. We bless you with being secure in your Father's love, having the peace of Jesus in your relationship with your Father. We bless you with receiving the communication of His love to you in a thousand ways. We bless you with creative and unique reminders of your Father's love for you. We bless you with recalling countless times that your Father has been with you, has loved you, has taken care of you, has blessed you. You can do nothing to make Him love you more and nothing to make Him love you less. We bless you with release to love and be loved, to enjoy life and enjoy your Father and be enjoyed by Him. Now abide faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love. In Jesus' name, Amen. ***

** Adapted from Blessing Your Spirit by Sylvia Gunter and Arthur Burk
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Questions

Chapter 2

1. Fill in the blanks: “Love hunger usually results in _____ and love hunger _____.”
2. In your own words explain the statement on page 11: “Life is love and love is life.”
3. List the four basic love needs:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
4. Identify at least three attributes or characteristics associated with love hunger (pages 12, 13) that adversely affect your life today.
5. What are some walls that you have built to protect yourself from being hurt?
6. Briefly describe an incident in which you have turned to a counterfeit affection.



Chapter 3

A Message for Husbands

- If a man thinks the purpose of a husband is to rule over his wife, the relationship is in trouble and so is he. 1 Peter 3:7 from The Message says: *“Be good husbands to your wives. Honor them, delight in them. As women they lack some of your advantages. But in the new life of God’s grace, you’re equals. Treat your wives, then, as equals so your prayers don’t run aground.”*
- If a woman thinks the purpose of a wife is to be a submissive doormat, subject to the abuse and whims of the husband, the relationship is in trouble also.
- If either spouse believes it is his or her privilege to manipulate, control and/or dominate the other, the relationship is in trouble.
- 1 Peter 3:12 Amp says, *“The face of the Lord is against those who practice evil (to oppose them, to frustrate and defeat them).* I believe this applies to all husbands or wives who attempt to dominate and control the spouse they are required to love, honor and respect.

Some husbands seem to think that when a Christian woman becomes a wife she loses her right to be treated with love, honor and respect. In fact, fellas, the truth is just the opposite. Whether she knows it or not, she is a daughter of the Most High God and she deserves to be treated as such. You would be wise not to anger her Heavenly Father. Some men seem to

think that when a woman marries she forfeits her ability to think, reason, or make decisions; and her obligation is to submit to you. This attitude is demeaning to women and exposes the pride and arrogance of some men. The truth is, wives can do strange things like pray and get answers, be intimate with God, prophesy, move in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, teach and minister, receive and give wisdom and Godly counsel and more. The truth is, wives do many things in life better than husbands because God created them that way. Marriage should create partners that both receive from God and both contribute to the health and maturity of the relationship. Besides, what man in his right mind would pass up the obvious treasure available through his wife? After all, before marriage we each should have an intimate relationship with God that we bring into our marriage; and it should be honored, valued and respected.

Father sent Jesus to set captives free, not create more captives through marriage. Before and after our wedding vows we are God's children and He values each of us accordingly. Life would go much better for us if we would remember that.

Husbands, do you want a loving, committed partner in your wife, or do you want an adversary? Husbands who act like the boss create a family problem because wives and children will eventually resent being bossed. They will grow to resent the way you treat them, and may grow to resent you. Also, an authoritarian approach to leadership typically stifles initiative, creativity, cooperation, commitment and satisfaction, not to mention romance and expressed love and affection. Some family members will withdraw and leave you. Others will withdraw internally and stay. Either way, the boss loses. To be fully truthful, everyone loses. Jesus said if we want to lead we must do so as a loving servant. That was His example, wasn't it? Didn't people follow Him willingly? He gave Himself freely for all of us and He commanded husbands to do the same for their wives. Listen up, fellas. Women will gladly follow and support and honor and respect a kind, loving leader because that is in their

spiritual DNA, but they will in some way rebel against domination and control. You can count on it.

Husbands, if you get your legitimacy and self-worth from being the boss in your marriage, you do not understand who you are in God or your responsibility to conduct yourself as a man of God. This also indicates your lack of intimate relationship with Father God Himself. It is a personal, intimate, loving relationship with Father that will satisfy your legitimacy issues. His love flowing into you will deal a severe blow to self-centeredness, and will dramatically increase your ability to have successful, loving relationships.

Husbands, if you find that you have not loved your wife to life, if you find that honor and respect for her are not what they should be, it is time to rise to your honored position as a son of the Most High God. You are to be a gift of love and service to your wife and children. Being "THE BOSS" isn't it and being a passive couch potato isn't the answer either. Properly representing Father's loving and compassionate heart to your wife and children will bring you closer to Father Himself and closer to your family. Being a Godly leader and example will cause your loved ones to follow you lovingly and willingly.

Do you know God's plan and purpose for your life, your destiny? Do you know your redemptive giftings? They are from your Father and they are important to the fulfillment of your destiny. What are your wife's redemptive giftings? Her gifts are part of what she brings to your marriage for your benefit and the benefit of your family. Her gifts are a part of your destiny. Do you encourage her in her gifts, or have you missed the treasure that Father has placed in her? That treasure can be yours.

Questions

Chapter 3

1. What do you believe your purpose is? What do you believe your spouses' purpose is? How would your spouse answer these two questions?
2. Describe the "partnership" that you and your spouse are in.
3. How does your answer to Question #2 compare with Roger's statement: "Marriage should create **partners** that both receive from God and both contribute to the health and maturity of the relationship"?
4. Here is your first homework assignment: on page 22, Roger wrote to the men: "You are to be a gift of love and service to your wife and children."

Men, how can you express that "gift of love and service to your wife and children" this week?
Ladies, how can you encourage your husband this week in the expression of his gift to you and your family?



Chapter 4

A Message to Wives

Ladies, I want to encourage and bless you to rise to your rightful place of honor as a Daughter of the Most High God. You have a destiny in God. You have redemptive giftings that Father expects you to discover and use for His glory and your benefit. You have talent and abilities that are also gifts from your Father that He expects you to develop and use as a blessing wherever you go. All these things are designed to complement your husband's giftings, talents and abilities in your marriage. Together you make a wonderful package of treasure to bring to your world. Above all this, the greatest gift you have to offer your husband, your family and your world is your own personal, intimate experiential relationship with Father God. That is the greatest treasure any person can have. The love of Father, Himself, flowing out through you can change your world. Experiencing Father's love empowers us to live life to its fullest and to love far beyond our expectation according to Father's plan and purpose.

I realize you face a lot of hindrance from religion and from misinterpretation of Scripture and from tradition. I know the messages you receive many times would lead you to believe falsehoods and lies about yourself and your role as a wife, but I want to say to you, "It's enough!" It is time the Body of Christ realized that you ladies were created to be a partner to a man, a necessary and equally important part of life itself. You are to be your husband's helpmate – not less than, but an addition to, him. You are to support him as he leads. No

entity can have two heads and successfully reach its destiny. However, this submission means to 'partner with him'; support him with your giftings, talents and abilities; support him with your wisdom, knowledge and insight; and especially support him with the love you receive from Father God. Ladies, remember the scripture in Ephesians 5:22 that instructs you to submit to your own husband also says that you should do it as unto the Lord. Remember that – 'as unto the Lord.' Another perspective of the word submission is to 'get under and push up.' To me, that means to pray for, encourage, strengthen and support in every way you can. This submission does not mean that you must obey any ungodly instruction or direction from him. You must always honor God first before your husband.

Ladies, going back to Ephesians 5 and verse 25, the Word gives husbands their instructions for the marriage relationship. They are to love. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. Love empowers life. Love empowers faith. Love empowers intimacy. Love empowers the one flesh union. Husbands who think they are to be the boss and exercise authority over their wives have missed the Spirit of God. Being the boss is divisive; and if manipulation, domination, or control is used by the boss it is not only divisive, but demonic. Those are satan's tactics, not God's.

Ladies, you are no less valuable to God than your husbands. You are no less important in the marriage relationship than your husband. Your Heavenly Father has not abandoned you to second class citizenship; nor has He abandoned you to abuse or victimization. You are honored by God as His daughter. Rise up to your rightful place. Be careful that you do not cross the line and move into pride and rebellion to your husband. That will certainly defeat you. Instead, lovingly contribute your treasure and support to your own husband. In doing so, you may be able to lead him into intimacy with Father. A praying wife who has an intimate relationship with Father God is a powerful force in the family, a true gift and treasure from God to her husband and children.

I bless you ladies to discover the truth of who you are and who God created you to be. I pray that everything that has been hidden from you now be revealed. I pray that any bondage that has been inflicted upon you by religion and/or tradition be broken now in Jesus' name. He came to set the captive (victim) free and you are free in Him. Ladies, your Godly position in the marriage relationship is an honored position. I encourage you to step into that place. Draw healthy boundaries between you and anyone who would demean you to being less than anyone else. Get close to your Heavenly Father and stay there no matter what your circumstances, and let Him empower you to new life and a new love experience in Jesus' name.

Questions

Chapter 4

1. What is your first response to Roger's statement on page 24: **"You have a destiny in God"**?

2. On page 25, Roger defines the term "submission"; does his definition differ with yours? If so, how?

3. Five words are used as one definition of "submission": "Get under and push up." Use five words to summarize how submission was defined in your parent's marriage: "_____."

4. Write three areas in your marriage or life that need to be "empowered" by love:
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

5. Homework Assignment #2: Review your answers to question #4 above. In prayer this week, ask the Father to reveal His love and empowerment in those areas during the following week.



Chapter 5

Love, Honor and Respect

These three concepts are foundational to all meaningful relationships, especially the marriage relationship, yet we are continually confronted with married couples who do not know how to live in love, honor and respect for each other. It seems as though these critical subjects were left out of their educational process. If love, honor and respect for each other are not our focus, then what is? A few years back Father gave us a phrase, 'life is love and love is life'. Receiving this phrase from Father began a journey of wonder and anticipation. We believed from the beginning that this was a powerful statement with life-changing potential. We also knew it was much bigger than we could initially comprehend, and that has proven to be true. The following is from my journal and lends further revelation to this phrase:

LIFE IS LOVE

The value of life is found in love.

The power to live is found in love.

The reward of life is found in love.

Success in life is found in love.

LOVE IS LIFE

Love empowers life

Love empowers relationship.

Love makes intimacy possible.

Love creates an atmosphere for success.

Love empowers faith and trust.

Above, I mentioned “focus,” and this is critical to successful relationships. In a majority of situations we find troubled men and women focused on what they are not getting in their marriage relationship: either what their spouse *is* doing that they want them to stop doing, or what their spouse *is not* doing that they want them to do. In other words, the focus has become negative; and frustration, anger, fear, disappointment and depression are constant companions. This causes division and separation, bringing little life to either spouse. This is the evidence of love hunger at work in a marriage. Unless focus changes from negative to positive, and a commitment to pursue healing is agreed to by both spouses, the marriage has a dim future.

Because of Jesus we have a choice: the usual self-centered, competitive marriage relationship; or an extravagant relationship focused on love, honor and respect, preferring one another in the Lord. It is a simple choice: selfishness or servanthood. Servanthood will cost you everything and, at the same time, reward you with more than you have ever dreamed of. The road to reconciliation requires a toll. There is a price to pay to rid ourselves of our baggage and walk in the unbelievable blessings of life that are available to all of us. Father has a plan for marriages, and at the foundation of that plan are love, honor and respect.

Questions

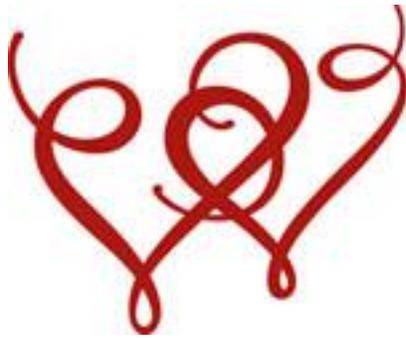
Chapter 5

1. Using your own words, define the following terms:
 - a. Love-
 - b. Honor-
 - c. Respect-

2. Is the “focus” of your marriage relationship positive or negative? Use the space below to give an example from your marriage of your answer.

3. Complete the following statement: “**To prefer one another**” means to

4. How can you “prefer one another” utilizing these three concepts:
 - a. Love-
 - b. Honor-
 - c. Respect-



Chapter 6

Partnership or Dictatorship

If you are married, do you feel like you are free to contribute to your family's plans, hopes and dreams for the future? Is your opinion encouraged and respected? In other words, is your marriage a dynamic, interactive partnership? If so, you are truly blessed.

On the other hand, if you do not see your marriage as a partnership, what is it? Do you feel left out because your opinion is not requested, valued or accepted. Do you feel overburdened because your spouse is there physically but not emotionally and/or spiritually, and contributes very little to the responsibilities of family life? Or do you feel like you live in a dictatorship: your spouse acts like "THE BOSS" and expects you to submit and follow?

When a spouse uses command and control, dishonor and disrespect, anger, fear, intimidation, silence, manipulation, or emotional, sexual or physical abuse in any way, that person brings separation and division to the marriage relationship and family unit. This demeaning, devaluing and destructive behavior is not God. It is born of the flesh and, in many cases, religious bigotry. This is the *opposite* of God's plan and purpose for the marriage relationship. It is totally unacceptable, and you who are victims of this treatment must seek outside help to force a change in your circumstances.

I will say again, life is all about love. If we experience the proper kind of expressed love that God intends, we will then experience the best kind of life available to us. Jesus told the

disciples that the world will know who you are because you love one another. What is love? I encourage you to read 1 Corinthians 13. Also take a look at Matthew Chapters 5, 6, and 7 where Jesus gave much instruction about priorities in life, relationships and personal conduct. Love is the central theme of the Christian life. John 15:12 from The Message says: *"This is My command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love."* We must all mature the love gift contained in us. It is a life-long journey. So how do you measure up? How do your spouse and children think you measure up? Are you brave enough to ask? Then, if necessary, are you willing to repent and change?

People who try or need to control others usually do so out of fear and insecurity. They can also be angry and use their anger to gain and maintain control of others. Obviously, this is not a basis for healthy relationships. The controller in the marriage relationship frequently dominates emotionally and/or physically, but usually does not lead spiritually. This is especially true with men. Whenever there are law and rules and leadership without expressed love in the family, the end result is most often rebellion toward the abusive party and to authority in general.

Husbands, Ephesians 5:25 The Amplified version says, *"Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her."* Jesus said He came to serve, not to be served. When His disciples argued over which of them would be the greatest or the leader, Jesus said to them, *"If you want to be the greatest or the leader, then be the servant of all."* I know that went against the grain of their natural thinking and probably confused them at the time, however, I believe Jesus was telling them to follow His example. Essentially, He said to them, "Your authority comes from loving and serving, not from domination and control or being the boss." Husbands, I believe this is His message to you also. This is the Godly way of leadership. Walk ye in it! Sacrifice yourself for your wife and children and they will follow and support you. However, the moment you become a dictatorial leader and dishonor and disrespect your wife and children, you bring separation and division to your family. The

romance will die and rebellion to your leadership will grow. You will then reap what you have sown. Galatians 6:7.

Are you one who feels like everything would be OK in your marriage if only your spouse would change? If so, you are deceived and your marriage needs outside, unbiased help if there is to be lasting change. Commitment and promises to change are good but incomplete, because change is not change until things have changed. When someone commits to change, but refuses help to make the changes, they have just raised a warning flag. Their denial that they need help to change reveals their need to control and raises great doubt that there will truly be any lasting change. That is why I say that promises and commitment to change are only words. Too many spouses have been repeatedly disappointed by broken promises and forgotten commitments, and the misery continues.

There are also times when a marriage reaches the breaking point. One spouse desires to get outside help but the other spouse refuses that help and denies that there is a problem. This behavior is self-centered and unacceptable. The spouse who wants help must go and get help and begin work on his or her own issues. They also must lovingly increase pressure on the uncooperative spouse even to the breaking point, if necessary. As our mentor, Al Ellis of Leaders That Last Ministries would say, "Love enough to press the situation to a crisis."

Withdrawing, remaining quiet, giving up and becoming complacent, continuing to do the same things over and over again will not bring the desired change. Fighting and arguing will not bring the desired change. Healing prayer and Godly intervention are much better choices.

We have repeatedly heard the question, "Why do I have to change if my spouse refuses to change?" This is a self-defeating attitude. It also may indicate that this person struggles with personal change or transformation. This is a common fear or concern because of our need for safety and security. Change can represent a threat to this basic need, especially if it was lacking in childhood. Even when children were severely abused, they may still resist change as adults. The fear is so overwhelming these people choose to remain in the abusive

environment rather than risk change to the unknown. This is tragic because God never intended that anyone be abandoned to abuse. The reality is that our need for safety and security should be met in love from our parents and eventually from Father Himself. Our view of life can marvelously change when our need for love and affection is met.

Now that Gerri and I have both met our Heavenly Father and have truly experienced His unconditional love for us, our marriage relationship has become a wonderful partnership. We each feel safe in Daddy's arms. Our sense of legitimacy and our personal value has been satisfied in Him. We are no longer in competition, trying to get our own needs met at the other's expense. Our competition is now comprised of serving each other and racing to see who gets to do it first! What an unbelievable transformation Father's love has made possible.

If I have described you here, if you recognized that you need to be the boss, be in control, manipulate or dominate in your marriage relationship, I pray you will have the courage and conviction necessary to confess your sin against love and repent to your spouse and family. Then I pray that you and your spouse will seek qualified, unbiased outside help in prayer ministry to heal your woundedness and receive freedom from the need to dominate and control others.

Questions

Chapter 6

1. Answer Roger's question on page 31: **"If you do not see your marriage as a partnership, what is it?"**

2. On page 31, Roger lists some behaviors as the "opposite" of God's plan and purpose for the marriage. What are some behaviors that are God's plan and purpose for your marriage?

3. Please read I Corinthians 13 and list five attributes of love:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

4. Of the five attributes listed above, which one is the most dominant in your marriage? Which is the least dominant?

5. List three differences between a "controller" (pages 31 and 32) and a "leader".
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.



Chapter 7

Healthy Boundaries vs. Victimization

“Finally, all of you should be of one mind, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds. Don’t repay evil for evil. Don’t retaliate when people say unkind things about you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God wants you to do, and He will bless you for it. For the Scriptures say, “If you want a happy life and good days, keep your tongue from speaking evil, and keep your lips from telling lies. Turn away from evil and do good. Work hard at living in peace with others. The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and His ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns His face against those who do evil.” I Peter 3:8-12 NLV

Years ago we heard John and Paula Sandford from Elijah House Ministries say that God will lead us to a marriage partner with whom we are designed to grind. At first I didn’t get the concept because my drive was to avoid conflict or grinding at all cost. Later, I began to see that my spouse can be a God-given blessing to cause some of my hidden issues to surface so they can be healed. Sadly, in most cases, when our spouse says or does something that causes these issues to surface we experience the conflict, but seldom the healing, of the unresolved issues at hand. Consequently, the process is repeated over and over again. Many times this results in withdrawal or hardening in our relationship. These unresolved issues hinder our ability to have intimacy. These can be the very issues that destroy marriages.

Even more importantly, these can be the issues that hinder our ability to have a true, intimate relationship with God. As Christians, having a personal encounter with Father God and His love for us can break the back of our self-centeredness and empower our ability to love one another and put others first. In other words, we become the loving servant of others that Father wants us to be instead of engaging in our typical self-serving lifestyle. This truth is especially valuable for husbands who like to remind their wives that the word of God says, *“Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands.”* Perhaps wives should lovingly remind their husbands that Jesus said, *“If you want to be a leader then be servant of all.”* Jesus also said, *“The leaders of the Gentiles lord their position over their people, but it shall not be so among you.”* See Matthew 20:25-28. Leadership does not mean lordship even in the marriage relationship. Many husbands need to awaken to this truth, step down off their throne of authority and learn to love their wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her, as scripture instructs husbands to do (Ephesians 5:25). In my mind, any leader who turns to domination and control as a leadership style will only encourage rebellion in their subordinates. Love, honor and respect will build intimate relationship while domination, manipulation and control will separate and divide. Fellows, would you dare risk asking your wife if she feels loved, honored and respected by you? Or does she feel like a victim, a nobody? And for you wives, if your husband should come to you and ask the above question, do you have the courage to answer him honestly from your heart? This is the kind of intimate conversation that can open the door to freedom and a wonderful marriage relationship. It may seem risky at first, but walking by faith is *always* risky.

Many of you who are victimized by a predator, whether that is a spouse, a pastor or a boss, also struggle with your personal value, your self-worth, and your legitimacy in who you are. This is a good indication that love hunger is present. This means that in your life you have not received adequate amounts of expressed love that would establish your self-worth as a person. Please try and understand that our Heavenly Father designed love to be the basis

for all relationship. He is the supreme, available source of unconditional love that can change one person or the entire human population. Whoever will come can receive. It is our choice to be empowered by love, or be empowered by our own substitutes. Just looking around in your own world should give you a pretty clear picture of the results of choosing our own substitutes as a basis for relationship with God and man. Those who have ears to hear can choose to change, if they so desire. A life of love and acceptance is available to all who are thirsty. Sadly, many of us must hit bottom or be sick and tired of being sick and tired before we are ready to listen; but if that is what it takes, praise the Lord. So if you are frustrated, hopeless, sad and mad, depressed again and ready to give up, praise the Lord. It is time to break old habits and come out of the closet with your problems. Practice James 5:16 and pursue your heavenly Father with your whole heart. He is waiting for you, ready to help you deal with those things in your life that hinder your God-given ability to love and be loved.

To the spouse who feels controlled or dominated by their mate, let me say this is not God's intent for the marriage relationship. This can be tradition, religion, and/or self-centeredness at work. Your heavenly Father never intended marriage to produce a demeaning or devaluing environment for either spouse. On the contrary, I believe God's intent has always been for a man and a woman to come together and work hard at love, honor and respect for each other. Let me also say that if you are being or have been victimized by your spouse, rebellion to your circumstance will only compound your problem. By rebellion I mean an angry, judgmental and critical spirit toward your spouse. Whether you outwardly show your rebellion or not makes no difference. This is an attitude of heart that can increase strife and separation in the relationship. If you have developed a rebellious attitude in your situation, let me encourage you to get with a prayer partner and repent, asking God's forgiveness. Then ask your spouse to forgive you for your sin of rebellion against him or her. You must also forgive your spouse for their sin against you. This may require you going to your prayer partner and your heavenly Father and asking for their help, encouragement, and strength to be

able to forgive. Begin the process of forgiving yourself. It **will** be a process. As you heal, your legitimacy and value of who you truly are as a son or daughter of the Most High God will begin to increase and your forgiveness of self will grow. If you have children and you have allowed the predator to abuse them, it will be necessary to go to them and ask them to forgive you. They have been abused also. Each situation will dictate its own resolution. James 5:16

Let me suggest that setting healthy boundaries is a much better option for a victimized, abused spouse. Saying 'no' to abuse, to dishonor and disrespect, to domination, manipulation and control is *not* rebellion. Setting healthy boundaries must not be born out of pride and rebellion, but out of your realization that you are a child of the Most High God who intends you to be treated with love, honor and respect. You must also realize that you cannot expect to receive what you are not first willing to give. If you have developed an attitude like, 'I'll change if and when you change,' your future is dim. It is important that you go to a prayer partner and repent for your sin against love and ask Father's forgiveness. Then ask the Holy Spirit to lead you regarding the time and place to confront the predator. As mentioned earlier, the predator must be pressed to the point of crisis if there is to be any hope of change. Please realize that if people are the victims of physical, sexual or severe emotional abuse, they must have professional intervention including law enforcement if necessary. They should never attempt confrontation on their own. If you have been threatened or severely abused by your mate, get out now and get help. Do not continue to live in fear. This is part of setting healthy boundaries. This is part of saying 'no' to abuse. Predators and victims alike must have a change in attitude about themselves if there is to be complete resolution in the relationship. They *both* must be convinced that their actions are unacceptable. Unless the victims' woundedness is healed, their strongholds broken and their sin repented of, they may continue to draw predators to themselves. The same is true of predators. Until their issues are dealt with, they may continue to draw victims to themselves.

What do you do if you discover you have been a predator? Repent immediately to your spouse and family. Ask them to forgive you. Then you, like the victim, must learn to forgive yourself. This is extremely important because guilt and shame will hinder your transformation. Then in prayer with your spouse or prayer partner, go to your heavenly Father and repent for misrepresenting His love to your family and anyone else in your world that you have mistreated. Ask Him to help you change. Ask Him to lead you to Godly counsel that can help you deal with your love hunger issues. You and your spouse must commit yourself to change. You must love enough to break the status quo. Whether you are a predator or a victim, you need healing. Because of your wounding and other unresolved issues, you are not at complete liberty to have intimate relationship with anyone. You are not fully able to receive love or to freely give love. The obstacles must be removed with the help of a prayer minister or counselor. Father's love has the power to encourage, to heal and to transform the worst of us into the type of lovers Jesus instructed us to be. We are to be kind and generous servants of each other focused on giving love, honor and respect to our mates and then to each person we meet as a lifestyle, not just on Sundays. You are the key ingredient to bring change to your world.

The experience of life and love that God created for the marriage relationship is much, much greater than most of us have experienced, yet it remains available to us all. This is another reason why setting healthy boundaries is so important. Could it be difficult for people to recognize love, honor and respect if they seldom or never received it? You bet. This is true for predator and victim alike. That is why outside help is often needed. New life is available to all who are willing to pursue it. Expressed love is essential to life. God planned it that way, but we are not all free to receive love. Because of our woundedness, many of us have closed our hearts to love and intimacy. Remember, I am talking about Christians and the marriage relationship. If we cannot first receive love, then what capacity would we have to give love? Both predators and victims demonstrate by their actions that love hunger is an issue. Love

hunger has a tendency to blind us to our own sin against love and also blind us to other people's need for love. That includes our spouse and our children.

So you see, simply divorcing from a bad situation and moving on without changing will leave the spiritual dynamics in place that caused the unhealthy situation in the first place. Use wisdom in setting and enforcing healthy boundaries. Outside, unbiased help can play an essential role. Unbiased help is the key here. If your best friend is co-dependent with you, he or she may not be able to give good advice. Please consider assistance from pastors, mentors, prayer ministers, counselors and spiritual parents when establishing and enforcing healthy boundaries. There is also a wealth of published information available. The word of God says, "Where no wise guidance is, the people fall, but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." Proverbs 11:13-15. Godly, professional counsel can help willing predators and victims find and experience a life of true love, affection and acceptance that is available in Father God.



Chapter 8

Simple Choices

In the basket of blessing that God has given to mankind we find our gift of a free will. Since God is good all the time, I believe all His gifts are good. What we do with them will determine whether the outcome is good or not so good. Sometimes it is a simple choice on our part. Adam gives us evidence of our freedom to choose and the consequence of wrong choices. In other chapters, I have discussed reasons for making wrong choices. Adam had no reasons except simple choice. He lived in a sinless world, in a perfect environment, with a perfect parent. All his needs were met physically, emotionally and spiritually, but he had the freedom to choose.

Even though we have not been born into a sinless world, into a perfect environment or into a perfect family, it is still our responsibility to make the right choices. There is no excuse for sin. There may be reasons why we sin, but there are no excuses.

Where we have missed it, Father has provided the wonderful blood of Jesus to wash away that sin if we make the simple righteous choice necessary. If we choose not to participate in Father's provision, that is our privilege. However, in that case we automatically choose the consequence to our sin and there is always a negative consequence to sin apart from the blood of Jesus. Remember, I am writing to the Body of Christ about our marriage relationships. Our sin is rampant, as evidenced by our trail of broken families.

Many of our struggles in our marriage relationships are simply the results of wrong choices. I believe one way to tell the difference between a wrong choice and a spiritual bondage or stronghold in our lives is that making a choice is a thinking process. We consider, then choose or decide what to do. In situations where you realize you didn't think about it, or consider it, you just reacted and you realize after the fact that it was wrong; then I would suggest there is probably a negative spiritual dynamic in your life. Any unresolved sin on your part or any unresolved sin against you can empower wrong actions. These issues almost always have a negative impact on our ability to have healthy and Godly relationships. Obviously, these are not hard and fast rules, but simply guidelines. Some exceptions are immediately obvious, such as suicide and divorce. Most people who commit suicide plan it. What about divorce? Wouldn't you say that most people think about it before they do it? It should be obvious that suicidal people have unresolved emotional pain, woundedness and sin issues. That is also true in most divorce situations.

Obviously then, there are consequences to the privilege of our free will. We can think what we want, believe what we want, and do what we want, but there are always consequences. If we think, believe and do wrong things it can bring destruction to our lives. Have you noticed that no man is an island? When wrong choices bring destruction to a person's life it almost always adversely affects other people. God, in His wisdom and purpose, created us for relationship. It is through Godly relationship that we can grow in knowledge and wisdom. It is through committed relationships that we can speak into each other's lives and help reveal problem areas that can then be brought to the Lord for resolution. We need each other's strengths, giftings and perceptions in the Lord to help us get free of baggage that keeps us from having true, loving and intimate relationships with each other and with God. There is nothing more important to human life than this. It's a simple choice.

Questions

Chapter 8

1. In your own words, differentiate between a “reason” and an “excuse”.
2. Briefly describe one struggle you have faced in your marriage that was the result of a wrong choice.
3. **“We need each other’s strengths, giftings and perceptions in the Lord to help us get free of baggage that keeps us from having true, loving and intimate relationships with each other and with God.”** (page 44) Based on this statement, give an example from your life when you were set free from some “baggage”.



Chapter 9

Finding the Right Mate ~ Becoming the Right Mate

When I was approaching the age of marriage I remember hearing from many different sources the importance of 'finding the right mate.' So I guess I basically accepted the idea, although I really didn't pursue it. From my early teens I was a womanizer and a woman hater at the same time. Talk about confusion and frustration.

I assume that the concept of 'finding the right mate' is commonplace in our society. As I pondered this I began to wonder what happens when the honeymoon is over and relational difficulties begin. How many of us begin to think we made a mistake and didn't 'find the right mate'? Does this thought then sometimes lead to "if you would only change we would be alright"? Can this approach lead to the blame game? Could this encourage our self-centeredness? Do you see how divisive this can be? Satan loves these situations because it is an open door for him to work at further separation and destruction of the relationship.

The truth is, we all bring baggage into our marriage that interferes with our ability to grow in love, honor, respect and intimacy. As the title of the chapter indicates, I believe that our focus for marriage should not just be 'finding the right mate' but also, and perhaps more importantly, we should 'become the right mate for someone to find.' It is never too late to become the right mate no matter how long you have been married. The issues that hinder you in relationship with your spouse also hinder you in your relationship with God. Can you see that it is in your own best interest to deal with your stuff and progressively become freer to have deeper, more intimate relationships with God and others? If we would deal with some of our major wounding issues, our lives and our priorities in life could change for the better. Our quality of life could improve dramatically. Many of us in the Body of Christ are disappointed in or even angry at God because of adverse conditions in our lives. It is rather silly to blame God

for our life's difficulties when He is the one Who has made the only provision available for our complete healing. Because of Him you can be completely free of your baggage. Rather than blaming others for your disappointments in life, it would be helpful if you would look in the mirror and take responsibility for your contribution to your difficult circumstances and pursue your own healing.

Obviously, the ideal situation is that spouses enter into the healing process together. You can help each other see and remember as you progress. You can become each other's help, support, encourager and true confidant as your issues are revealed and healed. If you learn and experience together you will be much stronger for it. The revelation of your wounds and issues can help each spouse better understand what has caused some of the difficulties between you. Certain elements of your baggage can draw adverse attitudes and/or actions out of your mate. If you are a normal human being, your baggage includes negative spiritual issues at work in you all the time. They do not have to be identified or verbalized. They adversely affect you and the people around you without thinking on your part. A good example of this is the victim and predator spirits discussed in the previous chapter. As long as these two spirits remain unacknowledged and uncontrolled, they will continually be drawn to each other producing negative results.

Everyone unknowingly contributes to his own difficulty. This is typical in the marriage relationship. Both parties contribute to the struggles. Each partner needs to repent and ask for forgiveness as well as to forgive the other. Both parties must pursue a more intimate relationship with God. They each must pursue their own healing and bring their freedom home to their family. Finding the right mate can be as simple as learning to be the right mate first.

Questions

Chapter 9

- 1.** Which do you think is more important: Finding the right mate or becoming the right mate?
Explain your answer.

- 2.** Identify some baggage that you brought into your marriage relationship:

3. **“The issues that hinder you in relationship with your spouse also hinder you in your relationship with God.”** Do you agree or disagree with Roger’s statement? Why?



Chapter 10

The Blame Game

Typically when people hurt us we assume the problem resulted from a thinking process on their part. Therefore we might blame them without considering their motivation. This can make extending grace most difficult. Just as our response to being hurt is seldom a planned response, the people who hurt us seldom plan to inflict pain. These events are often unintentional. In any given situation our unresolved issues of abandonment and rejection, woundedness, strongholds, vows, judgments, lies we live by and so on can surface, and we can say and do things to hurt others without thinking. Can you relate? Some of you have noticed in hurtful situations that your thinking runs wild. You cannot control it. You keep replaying it over and over again. He said, she said, they said. You renounce and reject the thoughts and refocus on something else. Five seconds later you are right back in the uncontrolled thought arena. These are your unresolved issues on the surface. I am not in any way trying to remove responsibility for hurting others, but I believe understanding our inner workings will not only help us understand ourselves so we can change, but also help us extend grace to others and perhaps help them change. The Body of Christ desperately needs revelation and instruction to identify and bring to resolution issues of woundedness. Christian marriages and families are unmistakably in trouble. More preaching will not solve these problems. If that were the case, these problems would have been solved long ago. Love is the answer and our relationship and experience with Father God is the ultimate, supreme source of that love and acceptance which brings healing to our love hunger issues. Jesus said the most important thing a person can do is love God, and in many scriptures Jesus pointed us to His Father. We must develop relationship with our Father. He was Jesus' source of love and affection; likewise, Father is to be our ultimate source of love and affection. In order to love, we must be loved. For some of us, learning to live loved is a huge challenge. If we do not know love, how do we then give love? Intimately experiencing Father's love will satisfy our love hunger and better equip us to love in our world. The greatest thing we can do for Father

is love Him. Growing in love relationship with Him will empower us to love the people in our world more appropriately.

The more we understand the spiritual dynamics of those things that empower us to hurt other people, the greater our ability will become to walk in grace rather than simply blame and criticize the offender.

By the time I was 10 years old, I had grown to hate my mother. That hatred stayed with me until I was 58 years old. A counselor said to me at that time, "Roger, your mother did not have the ability to express love to you." Because of what I had learned about my own inability to express love to others and because of what this counselor was teaching me at that moment, the power of my hatred was broken. For the first time in my life compassion began to come to me for my mother. This had nothing to do with excusing her sin against me or explaining it away. It had to do with understanding her pain and woundedness. It broke the power of the blame game in me. The more I learned about my sin against my family, the more I could see that the very things I hated in my mother had become part of me and I was repeating those things with my wife and children. Do you see that the blame game can foster unforgiveness and bitterness? These two monsters bring with them the guarantee of hard times ahead in relationship with God and man. It is never too late to repent and never too late to learn. The more we come to understand, the easier it is to walk in love and grace for each other. It makes Father very happy. You truly can become that new creature in Christ Jesus. It is part of our inheritance and available to all.

Questions

Chapter 10

1. In your own words, write a brief definition of the phrase: “**Learning to live loved**”, found on page 51.
2. Roger says: “The greatest thing we can do for the Father is love Him.” Fill in the blank with a word or phrase that the church or others have taught you: “The greatest thing we can do for the Father is _____ Him.”
3. Describe a time in which you have played “the blame game”.

4. On page 51, Roger writes: "...the very things I hated in my mother had become part of me and I was repeating those things with my wife and children." Are there some "things" you hated in others that you see operating in your life? What are they?

Homework- This week's assignment is to daily review your answers to question #4-ask the Father to expose any "things" in your life that have you caught in the blame game-Ask Him to break the power of the blame game that has operated in your life.



Chapter 11

Hard Head, Hard Heart, Hard Times

Although this chapter applies to both men and women, our experience reveals that a vast majority of those who wear this crown are men. That is why 90% of our ministry has been to Christian women who are at varying stages of frustration and burnout in their marriage. They come alone for ministry because their husbands refuse outside help. Whether these men are prideful, fearful, angry, insecure, domineering and controlling, or simply as the title says, just hard-headed and hard-hearted, or all of the above, their actions abandon themselves and their wives and children to hard times. These men typically believe they do not have a problem. 'It's the wife. If she will just change, everything will be OK. I'm happy with me the way I am.' Most do not see how childish and self-centered that attitude is, and it does nothing toward resolving the issues. An unwillingness to look at yourself and see how you contribute to family difficulties reveals insecurity and lack of concern toward those you are supposed to love, honor and respect most in life. It also reveals that you are your number one priority and know little about serving or valuing others above yourself, which is what God has clearly called all of us to do.

Humility is one of our God-given keys to His Kingdom. Each person must use his own key; you cannot use someone else's key to unlock the door for you. This means *you* must change. *You* must be transformed into the image and very likeness of Christ (Ephesians 4). How ridiculous for any of us in the Body of Christ to stand up and say things like, "I don't need help; I don't need to change; I'm not the problem here." This person is literally saying, "I have arrived. I am just like Jesus. I am perfect." I am sorry to burst your bubble, but you are not even close. Pride, arrogance, or deception will never successfully substitute for humility, especially with God. You may fool yourself, but you seldom fool those around you and you never fool God. He knows us for whom we truly are.

Whether our hard head and hard heart are the result of unresolved sin against us, or are willful choices on our part, resolution is available to all of us. We each must make the effort to break out of old habits and patterns. We must reach out to trusted family members

and friends and ask for honest opinions about problem areas they may have seen or experienced in us. Then we must be willing to practice James 5:16, “*Confess your faults one to another, then pray for one another that you might be healed.*” Being obedient to this scripture will help break the pride and build humility. We must also be willing to seek qualified, unbiased, Godly counsel to help us deal with deeper issues of wounding and offense.

Remember 1 Samuel 15:23, “*Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as idolatry.*” Most of us who have a hard head and a hard heart are also participating in rebellion and stubbornness, which this scripture relates to witchcraft and idolatry. Is it not clear that this sin leads to hard times? Sin becomes a wall of separation between you and God and you and your loved ones, making loving them very difficult.

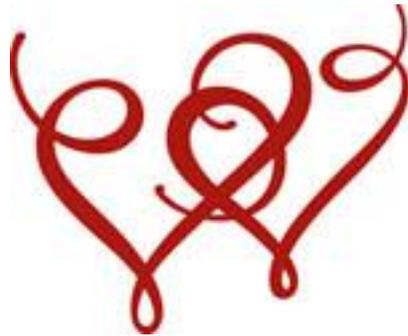
Repentance is necessary for the sin of being hard-headed and hard-hearted, for the sin of rebellion and stubbornness, for the sin against love for God and your fellow man, for the sin of misrepresenting God’s love to your family and friends and your world. You must forgive those who have hurt you, used you, abused, defiled and disappointed you. Then your Father in Heaven will forgive you and offer you new life. If you will pursue Father with your whole heart (James 4:8), His unconditional love will progressively come into you and melt away the hardness that has consumed and imprisoned you. Father’s love will triumph and you will truly experience new life beyond your wildest dreams.

Questions

Chapter 11

1. How do you define the term “humility”?
2. In three different translations, read James 5:16 and then re-write the verse using your own words.
3. Read your version of James 5:16-how will obedience to this break pride and build humility in you?
4. Is there someone you can practice James 5:16 with without the fear of condemnation? Who would that be?

5. **Congratulations!** If you have gotten this far in the study, you are willing to look at yourself. Using short phrases, what are some areas the Father's love is changing in your life or marriage?



Chapter 12

Sex, Money and Communication

The Sexual Issue

The top three problem areas in divorce situations are sex, money and communication. According to statistics it is expected that approximately 54% of all new Christian marriages will end in divorce. We are on par with the world in relationship failures. Could this be evidence of the lack of intimacy and lackluster quality in our relationship with God? I think so. If half of new marriages are expected to end in divorce, what percent of the remaining couples will be stressed, confused, disappointed, and striving in their life together? This is not a pretty picture, but it does not have to stay this way. If married couples would cry out to Father for help in removing all obstacles to their ability to love, honor and respect God and each other, and then commit to doing so; lives and marriages would wonderfully change.

I wonder what percent of parents adequately and righteously teach their children about sex. In all our years of ministry I cannot remember anyone who said they had wonderful and Godly sexual instruction from their parents. We have had a woman tell us that in her early teens her parents told her that sex was good and OK and anytime she wanted to start having sex she should just let them know and they would put her on the pill. They also told her that homosexuality and bestiality were OK, just different. So she tried it all; then later she got saved. Now there are mountains of bondage to deal with. Consider that our expectations about sex are built upon numerous realities, such as family tradition, religion, training and instruction, discussion among our peers and peer pressure. Added to this is our own experience both good and bad. If family tradition says that sex is something you never talk about and there is a stigma of shame attached to it, this can adversely impact open communication between you and your spouse. Godly sex is nothing to be ashamed of. Also if a spouse feels there is too little sex, love making or affection, this can be an issue of rejection between the two of them. Conversely if a spouse feels there is too much demand for sex, love making or affection; this can become an issue of victimization. Either situation typically brings separation, division and withdrawal. Demanding sex from your spouse breeds resentment and kills romance. Using scripture to justify your demands is manipulating, ungodly, and self-

defeating. Demanding only demonstrates self-centeredness and lack of concern for your spouse. This is not love in action.

If there has been sexual abuse, molestation or rape, there will be defensive walls up in the sexual area and typically a lack of freedom to love and be loved. Is your sexual relationship rooted in love, honor and respect for each other or is it rooted in self-centeredness? Do you have secret sexual sin that is defiling your marriage relationship and giving satan an open door to bring destruction to your household? The number of Christians who admit to being addicted to pornography is staggering. The destructive consequence to that sin is also staggering. Jesus said in Matthew 5:27-28 that if a man looks at a woman with evil desire for her he has committed adultery in his heart. This is true for men and women alike. Listen folks, secret sin has destructive power. Secret sin breeds fear and shame and can result in lying, deception and control to protect the secret. It can result in anger, rage and abuse; and hope for the future is destroyed. However, it is never too late to find Godly, unbiased counsel, pursue your healing, and become free to establish a new life in Father God rooted in love, honor and respect.

Sadly, some Christian marriage partners go further into degradation in their sexual relations believing that because they are married, anything goes. Self-gratification even in marriage comes with a price. When you defile yourself in sexual sin you defraud your marriage. You also open the door for satan to come in and bring torment and bondage. This is a sin of the flesh against love, honor and respect. Anything that is not rooted in love, honor and respect for your spouse brings destruction to the marriage relationship. It would seem obvious that as Christians we would want to do everything we could to keep doors closed to satan and open to our Heavenly Father so His love can flow freely into and through our marriage. Do you need to repent to God and your spouse and begin a new life today? It is worth the price.

What a subject! The word of God says that the love of money is the root of all evil. The parameters for money problems in the marriage relationship are extensive. There is a wealth of information on the subject and many Godly teachers and counselors available for anyone willing to reach out for help and instruction. Otherwise we are left to our own opinions and weaknesses to deal with our issues. In most cases, our self-help efforts lead to self-defeat.

Since our society lives on credit and fast food, we seem to have gotten the two confused. We not only don't want to wait for our food in a restaurant, we also don't want to wait for a house, a car, a new TV, or anything else. We want what we want and we want it now. I have been as guilty as everyone else, so I understand. For many of us, new things make us feel better – at least temporarily. When the feeling of the new is gone we get restless and start contemplating our next fix. This is love hunger at work. This is unresolved woundedness being acted out. If a person can simply change his mind and his spending habits, that is a wonderful victory. However, some of us have changed our minds dozens of times only to repeatedly fall back into struggles with self-condemnation, frustration, anger, disappointment and even depression over our inability to break bad spending habits. That is because the root of the problem goes deeper and requires much more intervention than simply changing our mind. Love hunger is insatiable. It cannot be satisfied. It **MUST** be healed.

In some cases, love hunger reveals itself in the financial arena not in over spending but in hoarding, stockpiling and/or living well below your financial means. The fear is obvious and reveals that a person's need for safety and security has been compromised. His ability to trust is nowhere to be found.

Let me again stress that the marriage relationship is supposed to be a partnership, including a financial partnership, with each person freely contributing their giftings, talents, anointing, wisdom, insight, revelation, education and life experience toward the success and fulfillment of the marriage. When that does not happen, if spouses compete with each other or

one spouse attempts to dominate the other, everyone loses. If one spouse feels threatened by the other, the quality of the marriage will be greatly diminished.

Who is supposed to handle the money? Whose money is it? Who pays the bills? If you think your answers are the only correct ones, you are probably in trouble. If one spouse says, "I earn the money, I'll decide how to spend it", that is sin against love. It is also dishonoring and disrespectful of the other spouse, not to mention self-centered and a despicable contribution to separation in the marriage. If both husband and wife contribute to the family treasury is it a situation of 'your money' and 'my money,' which is divisive; or is it 'our money' belonging equally to both? A good solution for us was for both of us to sit down and make decisions together. Gerri then wrote out the checks and I signed them. This created an atmosphere of shared responsibilities and helped us communicate with respect to money issues.

If one spouse has a track record of being irresponsible with finances what should the other spouse do? If you sit idly by and do nothing, or you scream and yell and stomp your feet and criticize, you lose. You must find help. Godly, unbiased, qualified help is available. Prayerfully and lovingly urge the irresponsible spouse to go with you for counsel and healing. If he or she refuses, you go and receive your healing, strength and encouragement, and take it home with you. If there is still no response, you must press the issue to a crisis, if necessary, with some form of intervention. The status quo of irresponsibility and refusing help must be broken if there is to be hope of new life in the marriage. Remember, stubbornness is like idolatry and idolatry is sin.

Some Christians seem to think money is evil. Where do we get that? Money is neither evil nor good. That only applies to people! Money is simply a tool to be used. People decide where, when and how to use it whether for good or evil. Scripture says the Lord has laid up the wealth of the wicked for the just or righteous; yet, we have heard stories of lottery winners trying to give a church or ministry a large sum of money but having their offer refused because

it came from what the organization called 'an evil source.' God has said He has stored up the money of wicked people to give to His children to further the Kingdom of God in the earth, but we call that money evil or dirty and refuse it! In our religious piety, we fight against the very provision of God to fulfill His plan in the earth. No matter where money comes from, we can use it to further the gospel and be a blessing to mankind in Jesus' name.

Is your security in money or in God? Is your security in things, possessions, or in relationship? Is your spouse and his/her happiness your priority or is it self? Are you in need of healing and freedom from your love hunger as evidenced by your weaknesses in the financial arena, or are you in denial? Are you willing to humble yourself and search out your contribution to your financial difficulties, or do you still believe that your spouse is solely responsible for your problems? The marriage relationship cannot become what it should be unless both parties humble themselves, prefer the other, pursue God and receive healing.

The Communication Issue

What about communication in the marriage relationship? This is another major problem area. What are some of the causes behind our communication problems? Issues of self-centeredness, stubbornness, fear, shame, insecurity, low self-esteem, woundedness, independence, a heart closed to intimacy and much more including but not limited to the content of this book cause filters that make communication difficult. A large part of communication problems in marriage relates to our inability or unwillingness to accurately listen when our mate talks. We should always remember God created us with two ears and one mouth. That should speak volumes to us!

Failure to communicate properly and effectively hurts both parties in the marriage. It leaves the door open for assumption, speculation, suspicion, fear, jealousy and false accusation. Using the 'silent treatment' can be a form of control and manipulation which is ungodly and opens the door for the enemy. If you do not share your innermost thoughts and feelings with your spouse, but you share with a friend and your spouse feels he/she is being

left out, it can open the door for rejection and jealousy. We personally overheard a ministry leader say to his wife, “you would rather be with your girlfriends than with me.” Her response shocked us when she said, “You’re right,” and walked away. Our woundedness can cause us to close our heart to intimacy and greatly hinder our ability to communicate on an intimate level. This is a major reason for separation and divorce. Without the power of loving intimacy we are at the mercy of our emotions of the moment, and in case you haven’t noticed, they are extremely fickle. That roller coaster ride can lead to destruction of the relationship. However, loving, honest communication can strengthen the bond between us so we are not so easily shaken in our commitment to one another. We had another ministry leader’s wife come to us and share her hurt and frustration regarding her husband. She said, “He won’t listen to me about anything. He is the head of the house and my opinion about our life is always rejected. He treats me like I have no brain, no relationship with God, no wisdom, no understanding. The romance is gone.” Can you see that she has been dishonored, disrespected, devalued and victimized as a wife? This husband does not treat her like a Daughter of the Most High God or draw from the treasure of her relationship with God or encourage her input on anything. In this case, religion has killed the relationship. Do we need to talk and express ourselves more freely and clearly? Do we need to really listen for a change and hear our spouse’s heart? Do we need to learn the true art of communication in our love, honor and respect for each other? Do we really want the blessings of God active in our marriage relationship? It is never too late because He is waiting for us.

In conclusion, you would think with our track record of marital difficulties and failures that common sense would tell us what we are doing and believing isn’t working and we must change. But many of us have tried to change and failed. We have given up and settled for what is instead of pursuing what could be or should be. Some of us are too blind, stubborn and self-centered to consider that we might be part of the problem; therefore, someone or something else is causing our difficulties. We do not have to wait until we get to Heaven to

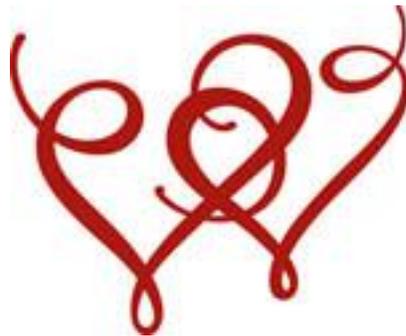
experience Heaven. Heaven on earth is available to each of us. Are you interested or are you too busy and burdened to be bothered? Perhaps it is time to reconsider Jesus' sacrifice. Father didn't send Him to die for us just so we could be saved. Our inheritance is much, much bigger than salvation itself. In Christ Jesus we become a new creature and total transformation is possible. Instead of remaining an earthly being with a worldly mind we have the privilege of becoming an earthly being with a Heavenly mind. We can live in the world but not be of the world. We can learn to live and walk in the Spirit and not the flesh. We can learn to live outside our normal, worldly box and become a Heavenly pipeline to our world. It takes love to make this transition; our Heavenly Father is love and His love is available to all. This is where dying to self becomes most important because it is our issue of self that desperately hinders our ability to develop an intimate relationship with Father, even in the areas of sex, money and communication!

Questions

Chapter 12

1. Who did you receive sexual instruction from? Was this instruction adequate and righteous?
2. What were/are your expectations about sex?
3. Is there an area in your finances where you have witnessed "love hunger" at work? Briefly describe it
4. Is your security in money or in God? Give an example as part of your answer.

5. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being “total failure to communicate” and 10 being “total openness in communication”, how would you rank the communication level in your marriage? How would your spouse rank it?
6. Is there an area where you “...have given up and settled for *what is* instead of pursuing *what could be* or *should be*”? Based on your study thus far, what are some steps you can take now to change that?



Chapter 13

Spiritual Rebellion

1 Samuel 15:23 says, “*For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as idolatry.*”

Some might ask what this has to do with the marriage relationship. If neither you nor your spouse has unresolved issues of rebellion, then this subject may not apply to you. However, it does apply to many of us in the Body of Christ, so if you would like to learn and make yourself available to others, read on. I also might caution against a quick decision here because many who have this problem are unaware of it, or have not identified it as rebellion. This is an important subject because rebellion can begin at conception or anytime thereafter. With that said, let's begin in the womb.

During a pregnancy, if either one or both parents reject the pregnancy for any reason, the unborn child begins the struggle with abandonment and rejection. This struggle could result in the child withdrawing from life, running and hiding from life, not wanting to be born, and even developing a death wish. The phrase 'being loved to life' is very appropriate here in regard to a child in the womb, although it applies to all of us while we live. Any kind of traumatic experience can adversely affect a child in the womb. I am sure you are aware that some children are born insecure and fearful, always needing attention, while others are angry and disengaged, not needing much attention and usually unhappy. Some are peaceful and easy to care for. In the natural we might say the above descriptions are nothing more than different personalities, but with revelation from the Holy Spirit we discover wounding events that shape personality.

Let me give an example of this kind of wounding and the healing necessary to resolve it. Many years ago when we first learned about the need for inner healing we prayed for a friend of ours and asked the Holy Spirit to take her back to the beginning of her rejection. As we waited to see what would happen, she leaned over on our couch and drew up in a fetal position. When we asked where she was, she replied, "It's dark in here, but warm and comfortable." Then in a few moments tears began to run down her cheeks. She then began to sob uncontrollably. We let her process for awhile then asked her, "What happened?" She said, "My dad came into the room and told my mother that he didn't want another brat." We

asked her to forgive her dad. She did. Then we asked Jesus to come and heal this little girl in her mother's womb and He did. He healed her of the pain of her rejection and re-wrote the ending of this story in her life. Obviously she had no idea that this wounding was present in her but God did and when we asked, He revealed and then healed her. Do you think this rejection from her father could in any way adversely impact her ability to relate appropriately with authority figures, especially men? What about her ability to receive love from or give love to her husband? Don't overlook the adverse impact her wounding could have on her ability to relate to Father God. It turns out that she was angry with Him. It is a very common occurrence that those of us having unresolved earthly father issues will in some way transfer or relate those struggles to our Heavenly Father. In these cases, we will have difficulty getting to know our Heavenly Father. In fact, many are afraid of Him and have no desire for a close relationship with Him.

Womb issues are real and common, and typically have a very damaging, negative impact on our ability to have loving, intimate relationships. Their resolution is essential to our quality of life.

Now let's expand this time line to include early childhood. Although love and affection should be expressed to a child as soon as the pregnancy is discovered, how the child is received from birth to about 6 years old is also crucial to the child's development. Since expressed love empowers life, this time frame is critical. Receiving quality amounts of love at this early age really sets the stage for a person's ability to give love to others. The converse is also true. When a child does not receive adequate amounts of expressed love, then love hunger becomes the major life issue. This typically produces people who are self-centered and performance oriented. They strive for self-esteem in what they do, rather than in who they are in Father God. They usually are incapable of intimacy, and many give sex in order to get what they hope is love. Affection and acceptance are major driving forces in the love hungry individual because love hunger demands satisfaction. We must realize that these issues need

healing. They do not go away. Remember, I am talking about Christians here. Getting born again does not usually bring healing to our woundedness. It opens the door and makes healing possible. Just look around. Christian love hunger is evident everywhere. Our frustration, anger, fear, discouragement, disappointment and depression are increasingly evident. Many have given up hope that there will ever be change. They are leaving the church in droves saying, "My Christian walk is only adding to my problems and adding to my 'to do' list." This problem is universal because the church has largely been ill-equipped to deal with the root issues of our problems. It is imperative that church leadership lead in this healing process through its own spiritual healing. If pastors and leadership will lead, many in the congregation will follow. Many ministries have been born with this exact vision to minister to church leadership. There ARE places of safety and privacy available, and we all need to take advantage of them.

Let me say here that love hunger is usually at the root of spiritual rebellion. It is our negative reaction to abandonment and rejection. Yes, we can willingly choose to rebel against authority as Adam did in the Garden. He did not have a love hunger problem. But so far, the people we have ministered to in this area have had love hunger woundedness that required healing.

Now let's identify other characteristics of spiritual rebellion. Have you ever known people who were unhappy with the family they were born into? How about unhappy with the time, the century, the place, or the culture they were born into? How about their height, weight and shape? What about color of hair, skin and eyes? What about social and financial status? How about wrong sex? I am sure you get the point. We can be, and many times are, unhappy and even resentful about certain aspects of our life. This is evidence that we believe God made mistakes with us. This is spiritual rebellion to God's ultimate choices and decisions. This is also evidence of love hunger: unresolved woundedness that has adversely affected our

self-esteem and legitimacy of who we are in God. These unresolved issues can become tormenting, with increasing anxiety and pressure for resolution.

Let's take woundedness a step further. Do you see that much of the woundedness we experience is relational? For some of us, the pain of relationships has caused us to close our heart to intimacy in an attempt to avoid further pain and disappointment. This determination on our part almost guarantees that our love needs will not be met and love hunger will remain a driving, negative force in our lives. It is only through intimacy with God and man that our love needs can be satisfied and we can find peace and rest. If our heart is closed to intimacy, how does that affect our marriage or our relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit or family, friends and neighbors? Without intimacy our relationships are typically soulish and circumstantially sensitive, in other words, easily offended. Without intimacy we usually give to, help and serve others with a hook. The hook is what we want in return for our giving, helping, and serving. That is our love hunger at work. Is it time to reverse this self-imposed curse? Can you see that closing our heart to intimacy is a sin against love? Father is waiting to hear your confession of sin and your repentance in order to forgive you. Receive His forgiveness and make the determination to open your heart to intimacy. Yes, we must be willing to risk being hurt again, but that is part of life. You cannot have the best of life if you are always trying to avoid the pain of life. I know this to be true from personal experience.

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, wounding can cause people to turn away from life, run from life, hide from life, or rebel against life. We could say these people spiritually and emotionally crawl into a shell. Obviously, like everything else, there are varying degrees of this situation but let me describe some potential results. These people are here, but not here. They may continually be ignored as if they don't exist. They may seldom be asked to participate with others or, asked their opinion, or rarely taken seriously in conversation. They may make appointments and the other party may not show up to honor the appointments. They may be repeatedly passed over for promotion or acknowledgement. They may get in a

prayer line for prayer and get left out. They are there, but it seems like they cannot be seen. These symptoms reveal what we call a mantle of invisibility. It is amazing how the Body of Christ is so ignorant and/or passive about the spiritual dynamics of life. Our spiritual life is not reserved for Heaven. It is active now, here on earth, and affects us every moment; it is who we are. We affect each other spiritually as well as emotionally and physically; so if we are spiritually hiding behind a veil we will be isolated and hindered in our ability to intimately connect with God and other people. This malady, like so many others, desperately impedes our ability to attain our inheritance and destiny, not to mention the frustration, discouragement and pain of rejection involved. The continual loneliness, even in a crowd, and the potential for anger and shame are very real. Is it time to repent for hiding? Is it time to come out and embrace the life God has provided? Come out of the darkness into the light where love and acceptance live. It is in the light that you will find the true rewards of life in Father's unconditional love for you.

Now let's talk about rebellion as a result of loss. Stop and think how many different ways a person can suffer loss. Whether it is the loss of a loved one, the loss of property, the loss of finances in job, career, retirement, inheritance, and so on, that loss, no matter what our age, can lead to our being angry with and in rebellion toward God. In other words, we are blaming God for our loss. He could have prevented our loss if He wanted to, but He obviously didn't want to, so...He can't be trusted. He is against me. His promises are no good, etc. Even children can be angry and blame God for their loss: the death of a parent or sibling or another loved one, their parents' divorce, or many other reasons. Often we do not remember our judgments, our anger, our rebellion toward God but it may reveal itself in our struggle to be intimate with Him. We have also seen evidence of this when we pray for someone's healing and nothing happens. Many times the Holy Spirit reveals that the person's anger, resentment or bitterness toward God regarding the loss has never been resolved. Once there is repentance, the door for healing opens. Prayerful consideration is necessary here. Often we

forget our offense with God, but He hasn't; and He is loving and faithful to help us revisit the loss so we can get free of the bondage, receive healing, and move into deeper relationship with Him and others in our world. We all must come to a place in our life where we truly believe that God is love and He is good all the time no matter what our circumstances might say to the contrary. Our human ability to correctly judge what is right or wrong, good or bad are very limited in comparison to His. To exalt ourselves to a position of judging God is foolish, ridiculous, prideful and need I mention sinful? This is another piece of detrimental baggage we desperately need to be free of so we can truly experience love from Father and then freely give that love to our spouse, children, family, and friends.

Do you see how these things can adversely impact the marriage relationship? These unresolved issues greatly restrict a person's ability to have intimate love relationships with anyone, including Father Himself. This is especially sad because it is intimacy with Father that will bring the complete satisfaction of our love hunger and the healing of our woundedness. He is man's ultimate source of love and acceptance. If you find yourself here in this discussion of spiritual rebellion, are you ready to repent? Are you ready for healing and transformation? I surely hope so.

One definition of insanity is "to keep doing the same things over and over again but expecting a different result each time." Is it time for you or someone you know to break out of the same old patterns and find new life? Abundant life and love are available to all in Father Himself. Why not reach out for help today. The Kingdom of God is at hand.

Dyslexia

Let me close this chapter with one more important aspect of spiritual rebellion. Are you aware of the many ways dyslexia can afflict people? Are you or your spouse dyslexic? It is important that you know because this condition can bring frustration, anger, stress, fear, and discouragement to the marriage relationship. People who suffer with it can have personal

struggles with insecurity, low self-esteem, shame, fear, anger, discouragement, depression, and more. Many times they will be judged and criticized for these and other symptoms, but the real source of the problem is usually unknown or undiagnosed. It is astounding how many marriages are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

We have generally related dyslexia to those people (usually children) who see and write their letters backwards. They are typically diagnosed as having a learning disability. Learning to read and write can be challenging. Because of internal confusion, they may struggle with other subjects that require organization and/or tracking to a conclusion. Dyslexia can also disrupt a person's ability to relate to time, space and volume. It can create difficulty in estimating how long it will take to accomplish any given task. For example, when do I have to leave *here* to get *there* on time? Time management can be a very difficult part of life for dyslexics and those around them. With regard to space, dyslexics can have difficulty estimating volume. For example, how much spaghetti do I fix for dinner tonight? How much furniture do I put in this room? At the time they may feel comfortable with their decision, but their track record reveals that they consistently over- or underestimate the need. Dyslexia can also adversely affect coordination, and make attempts at certain sports very frustrating if not embarrassing. It can interfere with people's ability to tell left from right and to discern north, east, south and west. It can also cause difficulty in their ability to track or stay on task to complete a project. They can be easily distracted, flitting from one thing to another and not completing what they started out to do. Dyslexics can also struggle with speech and thought inversions. They can seem confused, disoriented or disorganized at times but are usually gifted, creative and good with their hands. For many dyslexics, peace and rest are strangers, while stress is a constant companion. Many have been called insulting and demeaning names; and for some, these names have become truth to them. They believe the lie that they are stupid or dummies or will never amount to anything. Do you see how all these variables can lead to stress, anxiety and division in the marriage relationship? Without understanding

and revelation as to the truth of what is happening, there is only blame instead of compassion, or criticism instead of prayer. Sadly, many spouses are rejected and even abused because of their dyslexia. Because it is a spiritual problem, the world cannot fix it. Drugs and programs will not bring resolution to the root of the problem. Although many adult dyslexics we have known have learned to creatively compensate for their symptoms, many others are tragically relegated to a career that is below their God given ability and purpose.

As I shared at the beginning of this chapter, spiritual rebellion can begin in the womb or early childhood. Because of severe abandonment and rejection, or severe traumatic events that produce fear or terror, the child can 'run from life' or spiritually hide from life, not wanting to be born. Many times this is evidenced in very long periods of labor in the birth process. This turning away and not embracing life can be the source of confusion that manifests later. In some cases we have also discovered a death wish that began in the womb. Often the human spirit literally turns away from life and hides, as it were, behind a veil. In the marriage relationship, if the human spirit is hiding or withdrawn, true intimacy becomes virtually impossible. All this can have dire consequences in the quality and quantity of life of dyslexics and their families.

True freedom and healing can only begin when dyslexics honestly forgive those who have sinned against them. Then they must go to the Lord and repent of their sin of rebellion against the gift of life and love that Father has given them. The next step is to embrace life and love and ask Father to reorient and realign their spirit, soul and body so that they are correctly united as Father originally designed. They must call their spirit out of hiding with the blessing and assurance of new life in God.

As a child of God, life, love and healing are your inheritance. Father is available to all who will pursue Him. He is love. He is good all the time. If you have discovered yourself or your spouse or a family member in this section, rest assured that while the world says there

may be little hope for the dyslexic; that is most certainly a lie. God WILL make a way where there seems to be no way. Pursue Him and He'll pursue you.

Dyslexia Testimony

A few years ago we shared this revelation on Dyslexia with some friends of ours who are grandparents. At that time, their granddaughter was nine years old and Dyslexic. Shortly after hearing this teaching, they had the opportunity to pray for her. When Grandpa prayed the child said, "Grandpa, where did you get all that power?" Grandpa asked her, "What do you mean?" She said, "When you put your hands on my head, I felt like I was spinning round and round inside!" He told her, "That's God's power and He's blessing you."

Two days later the parents of this child got a call from the girl's school teacher who asked, "What has happened to Julie?" (not her real name.) "She has dramatically improved." The same day her dance teacher called with a similar report of great improvement in Julie. Obviously everyone is thrilled and so grateful to Father for this little girl's healing and progress. There is hope for tomorrow!

Questions

CHAPTER 13

1. What are some ways that wounds can adversely impact one's ability to relate to Father God?
2. How can unresolved earthly father issues transfer to our relationship with our Heavenly Father? Have you seen any evidence of issue transference in your relationship with your Heavenly Father? If "yes", please give a brief description.
3. Roger writes: "**You cannot have the best of life if you are always trying to avoid the pain of life.**" Do you agree or disagree? Explain why.
4. On page 71, Roger says: "**...it is intimacy with the Father that will bring the complete satisfaction of our love hunger and the healing of our woundedness.**" Write down any additional wounds the Holy Spirit has revealed to you and ask your Father to begin the healing process.



Chapter 14

Identity Crisis

In the chapter on spiritual rebellion I briefly shared about people who are unhappy with something about themselves or their lives. I want to take that a little further here, because I feel like we should recognize that being at peace with ourselves is a key ingredient to peace in our relationships.

Some of you will remember many years ago fads in the female population when hair coloring, wigs, false eyelashes, fake fingernails, padded bras and even breast implants were the 'thing'. At that time, the guys in my circle would joke about seeing a pretty woman but wondered what she really looked like without all the fake stuff. Now I realize that's external identity from someone else's point of view, but does that not impact our internal point of view of ourselves? If our motive is trying to hide, disguise or change the way God created us, that is rebellion and the sin of rebellion opens the door for satan to work in our lives. Is that really what we want? Remember, motive of heart is the issue. Is living this life pretending to be something we are not the answer to peace within ourselves? Is it possible to fulfill our God given destiny if we are trying to be someone other than the person God created us to be? Could an identity crisis be evident here?

Through the years we have come to know men who are unhappy that they were born in this generation because they want to be a cowboy or a knight or something else. They are dissatisfied with being trapped in this modern time and longing for other days. They feel like they don't fit; they don't belong here and now. Can you see the identity crisis in these men? They may believe the lie that 'this is just the way I am. God made me this way but He messed up because I was born at the wrong time in history.' Can you see the confusion here, and the stress and unhappiness that go with it? Typically because of their pain and woundedness, these men are running from the lives God has given them. Will they ever find peace with themselves and God? I am talking about Christian men here. They could move to Texas and go to work on a cattle ranch riding a horse everyday, but they will not find what they are looking for. Peace can never be found in rebellion. Could this bring stress to the marriage, family and career?

Because of abandonment, rejection and abusive circumstances some of us are unhappy with God because of the family we were born into. Many in this situation do not even realize they are angry at God. Rebellion toward our family can lead us to run from family. We

may move away and even change our name trying to become someone else, trying to belong somewhere else. Obviously there are abusive family situations where the victim must leave and develop a new life; however, if we leave with a rebellious heart toward God and our family we will take the problems with us. In fact, because of our unresolved sin of rebellion, we can actually draw more of the same treatment we received from our family and wonder why we cannot get free of those circumstances. Repentance, forgiveness and healing are required here or our marriage and family will suffer the consequence.

What if a person feels like they were born the wrong sex? I guess we could say this would be an extreme identity crisis. It would seem that God really messed up. The power of this lie can bring dramatic, ungodly results. The rebellion, the stress, the confusion, the depression, and the anger can all build over time and create havoc. Yes, I am saying that Christians can have this problem. Christians can have most any problem that anyone else has. When we become born again we bring our baggage with us. It doesn't just disappear at salvation. What would cause a person to want to be the opposite sex? Many things can be involved here, and I don't pretend to know them all, but here are a few. A generational curse is possible. Demonic involvement, either by a person's own participation in the occult or by adult occultic oppression on a child, may be the problem. Sin always opens the door to oppression, confusion, and stress, especially for Christians. Generally, love hunger is an obvious factor in the gender dilemma. But I want to share with you how strong, affectionate love for someone else can perpetuate this crisis. We know a very attractive lady. She comes from a loving home with very loving parents; seemingly an ideal family situation. You would expect that there would be no major problems in her life. You would be wrong. She was especially close to her father. He loved sports, so as she grew, she wanted to be the 'son' in sports that her father didn't have. Out of her deep love for him she took on the sports life instead of the feminine life. She began to resent being a girl. She didn't want breasts and when they began to develop she hated it. Her hatred for her body grew. Then in high school,

she began to experience physical problems. Freak and unusual accidents or injuries began to sideline her sports activities. In fact, these incidents continually sidelined her life, period. These problems persist today and she continues to have debilitating problems and freak accidents. At the same time, her resentment over being female has caused her to be jealous of her younger sister who has the feminine qualities that this lady thinks she lacks. Is the stress and confusion obvious? the identity crisis? the rebellion toward God? Do you see that she has cursed her own body? Her hatred of her God given female body became a death wish, if you will, toward herself and opened the door for satan to get at her. But just as important, this set the spiritual dynamics in place for her body to respond to her self-inflicted curse and begin self-destructing. She is always in some kind of physical pain. She has difficulty sleeping. She has become a night person and her husband is a morning person. Do you see the potential for marriage problems here? All this pain and suffering comes out of a deep desire to please her loving earthly father and her sinful response to the gender God made her.

I once heard Dr. Myles Munroe say that the richest ground in the world is your local cemetery because buried there is an untold wealth of wisdom, creativity, talent and ideas that were never revealed for the good of mankind. For one reason or another, this God given wealth was stolen or lost. I have also heard of surveys taken through the years of the American work force that continuously revealed a large majority of American workers to be unhappy with their job, career or profession. What is it like having to get up everyday and report to a job you dislike? Could that dilemma contribute to stress and unhappiness, and adversely affect relationships? What gifts from God are buried in you that are yet to be discovered or released? Do you see how an identity crisis in a person's life can contribute to a life that falls far short of God's plan for that person? Apathy, discouragement and hopelessness can essentially prevent our discovery of the gifts, talents, wisdom and destiny that God has for us. If you are one of these people who are unhappy with your present job,

career, or profession, why not seek change? Why not pursue your relationship with your Heavenly Father and surrender your life to Him, asking Him to lead you to your destiny? James 4:8 says, *“If you will pursue Him, He will pursue you.”* Isn’t that an exciting prospect? Don’t give up! Give in! Substitute His will for yours, His plan for yours. Replace your religion with relationship. Experiencing Father’s love for yourself will energize you, bring you new life, empower you to discover and attain your destiny, and greatly resolve your identity crisis. He is the treasure we are looking for. All of mankind’s substitutes have not worked. Material wealth and religion will not satisfy. Only a personal, intimate relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit will accomplish that for us.

Consider what you might call a mild form of identity crisis. I will call it the mask we wear to impress others or to hide what we perceive are our imperfections. As a Christian the most common reference I have heard about our mask is the one we wear to church. Some might say, “We’re just putting our best foot forward.” That could be true in some cases; however, for some of us, our mask is evidence of the internal strife we have over who we really are. I believe the greatest negative impact this charade has is on our children. They see their parents at home without their mask; then they see them at church or other places with their masks. Do you see any possibility for confusion or resentment here in the children? In reality, our mask only works some of the time on some people. The rest perceive the spiritual reality sooner or later. In any case, our masks are typically full of holes and they leak! The truth will be known eventually! Putting on and taking off a mask is deception and is satan’s playground. Honesty and integrity are Godly attributes, so which do you want impacting your life and your family? It is your choice. There are Godly solutions for all our imperfections if we will admit we have them and need help in resolving them. Finding healing for our internal conflict will dramatically reduce pressure and stress levels in each of us and in our personal relationships, and relieve the pressure of hiding. If we let fear and/or pride control us, satan wins. We lose.

If we surrender our fear and/or pride to Father and ask for His help, we can be released into a new life experience without the need for a mask.

Do you realize that some people hate their name? In a recent prayer ministry session, a young man in his mid twenties was telling me about his life. As a college graduate with a good job he was still struggling for direction. He was unsettled and confused about his purpose and destiny. The Holy Spirit said to me, "Ask him how he feels about his name." So I did. His reply surprised me when he said, "I hate my name." He related it back to abandonment and rejection issues from his parents; so I realized that these issues in childhood can lead to an identity crisis. The hatred of his name was a symptom that the Holy Spirit used to lead us to his root issues. Our name is how we are known. To hate or deny our name brings confusion as to our identity which can spread and adversely affect direction and purpose for our lives, as well as create stress and pressure. I began to better understand why he struggled so in his relationships, especially with the opposite sex. He had had several girl friends and some of the relationships had gotten serious, but they always fell apart. He wanted a wife and children, but he wrestled with commitment. I believe his identity crisis played a big role in this struggle. Repentance, forgiveness, and healing of his abandonment and rejection issues are essential to his freedom. Then receiving Father's love will seal his legitimacy as a son of the Most High God, and the doors of his destiny can open before him.

God gives everyone talents and abilities. They come built in as part of our spiritual DNA. Yes, we need education and experience to develop these gifts but they usually have a direct connection to our purpose and destiny. The key factor here in reaching our full potential in life is a determined, committed, personal, intimate relationship with Father God. What if our talent or ability is suppressed? Do you suppose that could lead to frustration and stress? Do you suppose it could lead to relational problems? Could this frustrate full disclosure of whom we are and where we are going in life? The answer is yes. Through the years I have heard Christians say, "I have no special talent or ability." I believe this is deception or denial talking.

Uncovering and expressing our God given talents and abilities will further our personal impact on our world and allow God to move through us to touch the lives of other people. This will greatly contribute to our ability to live in peace, rest and personal satisfaction. This is potentially another wonderful contribution to our marriage relationship.

A person with an identity crisis can be more vulnerable to unbelief, misbelief and religion than those who have been loved to life and are secure in their self-worth. Satan's lies and deceptions are more easily imparted when a person wrestles with fear, insecurity and low self-esteem. This can cause such people to gravitate to religion rather than relationship. They will typically struggle in relationships, but religion can sometimes offer a place of safety. The rules and black and white beliefs of religion can offer a sense of security and false legitimacy to these insecure people, and their religion becomes a substitute for a personal relationship with God. Thus, God hates religion.

Another major contributor to a person's identity crisis can be the debilitating issue of shame. Like most other issues, shame can be a generational curse, or instilled by parents, or by one's own sin. Many times it is all three. The presence of shame in a person's life is usually an indication of victimization, and where there is a victim there will most certainly be a predator to reinforce the shame.

Shame separates people and makes us vulnerable to offense. The robe of shame hides the hurt. Shame hides behind performance and can be rooted in abandonment. No matter what the source of our shame, the blood of Jesus has made it possible for every person to be healed. Have you identified shame as an issue in your life? Do you yet realize how it can adversely impact a person's ability to have intimate, meaningful relationships, including the marriage relationship?

Let me ask you, are you now or have you ever been involved in keeping family secrets? Are you or were you required to keep something secret that you knew was wrong? Were you required to protect someone in the family at all costs? In this dysfunctional situation, family

loyalty is placed above everything else. Keep the secret, don't tell, live a lie, keep your mask in place, look perfect, don't show emotions, maintain a good family image at the cost of dealing with heart issues. The tragedy of this situation is that it requires the person involved to keep others at a distance so the truth is not discovered. This lack of transparency is a barrier to intimacy.

Personal, intimate relationship with God is our only source of abundant life. Without that intimate connection life can, at best, rise to the level of mediocrity. God's plan for each of us is usually much bigger than we can imagine. Jesus is our example of an earthly life lived as a child of the Most High God. Are you there yet? What would marriages be like if both spouses were committed to total surrender to God and His plan for their lives? Living in the Spirit with Him and living in the world but not being of the world, with both spouses focused on becoming the person God wants them to be instead of focusing on how their spouse needs to change in order to make their life better, will result in great strides toward their destiny.

Now let me end this discussion on shame with a recent testimony. A friend called recently requesting a time of ministry for an issue she felt the Lord was showing her that needed healing. During that ministry time, she shared three instances in her childhood where she felt very embarrassed and she wanted to pray for healing of those events. We felt there was more involved than what she revealed and suggested more 'digging' in the Spirit. She agreed and we talked on, and as we talked more surfaced, such as not being able to look people in the eye. I said that is evidence of shame. We need to ask Father to reveal the source of shame. I explained that this could be generational and, if so, we need to know what generation back on which side of the family; what was the sin and who committed the sin. She said, "I usually don't get anything when I ask those questions." We prayed for her to hear and blessed her personal spirit to hear the Holy Spirit reveal the information. We all agreed; then we prayed asking Father for the revelation we needed to bring healing to this shame issue. Very quickly she said, "It is the 13th generation back on my mother's side of the family and then

she revealed the man's name that the Holy Spirit had given her. At the same time the Holy Spirit was showing Gerri the grievous sin that this man committed that opened the demonic door to his family and future generations. He was a rapist of young girls. His sin opened the door for sexual perversion, victimization and shame to become a generational curse upon this family line. Our friend was shocked by the revelation but she saw the pattern of all three issues in her family. We led her in prayer to first forgive this ancestor, then to renounce and reject this grievous sin; then we went to the courts of Heaven and asked Father for His righteous judgment in this case, that by the blood of Jesus she be freed from this curse. We acknowledged satan's right up to that moment to enforce the generational curse on our friend, but as of that moment, with Father's blessing, the power of that curse was broken and no longer an open door for the enemy. We commanded satan to go in Jesus' name and never return. Our friend thought the problem she needed to pray about was an issue of embarrassing events, but Father wanted to show her something much bigger. Aren't we glad He did and she did and we did and she is now free along with her future generations? This is the result of our friend's commitment to her Heavenly Father. She pursues Him and He responds, and He pursues her and she responds. The blessings are extensive.

In closing, let me say that whenever there is an identity crisis, no matter what form it takes, I believe the root cause is usually the lack of expressed love or love hunger. When we do not receive adequate amounts of expressed love from our parents, the message received is "something is wrong with me; I am deficient somehow." This environment usually leads to low self-esteem and even self-hatred. Our identity crisis can build from there and hinder our future. It can greatly affect our ability to have meaningful and lasting relationships. It can also hamper our ability to hear and obey God. Should God bless us with a spouse and children, our lack of self-worth can greatly hinder our ability to love our family to life and lead them to a fruitful, powerful life in God. If you realize you have an identity crisis, no matter what form it comes in, Father God has the solution. It is called LOVE. Love legitimizes. It brings value and

self-worth and establishes you as a child of God with purpose and destiny. There is a condition to receiving God's love for your healing. He requires that you give a gift of love by forgiving those who did not adequately express love to you and establish your self-worth. Recognize that they could not give you what they did not have. You must be willing to give them a gift of love they may not deserve so that Father can give you a gift of love you may not deserve. Your forgiveness opens the door for your healing. Identification of your own sin, repentance, and asking Father's forgiveness is essential. You must fight for personal transformation. Then you will begin receiving Father's healing of your woundedness, abandonment and rejection, and the filling of your love deficit that will totally transform your life. Every child of God has the capability to become a true lover of God and man, and become a giver of love and life to their world.

Questions

CHAPTER 14

1. At the beginning of the chapter we read: **"...being at peace with ourselves is a key ingredient to peace in our relationships."** Are there areas in your life where you are not at peace? Briefly describe.

2. Several words or phrases are used in this chapter as indicators of an identity crisis-circle the words/phrases that you have encountered in your life.
 - a. Attempts to hide, disguise or change the way God created you
 - b. Feeling like you don't fit or belong
 - c. Running from the life God has given you
 - d. Confusion, stress and unhappiness
 - e. Unhappiness with your family of origin
 - f. Unresolved anger toward God
 - g. Gender confusion
 - h. Unhappiness with your job, career or profession

- i. Apathy, discouragement or hopelessness
- j. Wearing a mask to impress others or hide your perceived imperfections
- k. Being controlled by fear and/or pride
- l. Hating or denying your name
- m. Vulnerability to unbelief, mischief or religion
- n. Fear, insecurity or low self-esteem
- o. Shame, performance, or abandonment
- p. Keeping family secrets

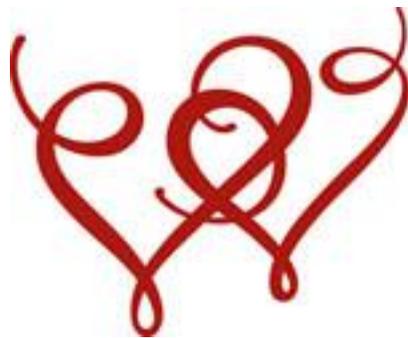
3. Using your own words, write a brief description of the phrase: **“Love legitimizes.”**

HOMEWORK-Has the Holy Spirit brought to your mind someone you need to forgive? On page 84, Roger writes: **“He requires that you give a gift of love by forgiving those who did not adequately express love to you and establish your self-worth.”**

Write a prayer of forgiveness, including the following in your prayer:

- a. The person’s name
- b. Their offense against you
- c. How it made you feel
- d. Your forgiveness of the offense
- e. Your release of the offense (letting go of their offense against you)

Close this homework assignment by asking Father God to reveal to you your true identity as a son or daughter of the Most High God.



Chapter 15

Generational Curses

Are there struggles in your marriage relationship that you do not have answers for? Have you ever thought, “Why does this keep happening?” If so, you are not alone. I realize there can be many answers to this question. One of them may be generational curses, as it was for Gerri and I.

We’d had a vague knowledge of generational curses for many years. We have prayed in general to supposedly cover all the bases and broken all generational curses off of us.

Nothing changed. It was not until 2006 when Father miraculously brought Arthur Burk of Plumblin Ministries into our lives that we began to learn more specifically about dealing with them.

Let me share by way of personal testimony how a generational curse can adversely impact the marriage relationship. Gerri and I married in 1963 while I was on active duty in the U. S. Air Force. During the first 19 years of our marriage I did well in my career. I was honored and promoted well above my peers. I believe I was successful in my efforts. That all changed in June of 1982 when Father told me to quit my job and step out into full time ministry. We did not hesitate because He made His will for us very clear. We were excited. The difference was when we took this step of faith, we then had no income, no savings, no insurance, and no home; but we were eager to serve Him. We did not realize it but we were entering the school of the Holy Spirit and the class was 'Trust and Faith 101.' The first 24 years of our ministry were totally the opposite of my secular career. Recognition, honor and promotion for our efforts were essentially non-existent. As a husband, father and provider, I desperately battled a sense of failure because of the lack of finances to provide adequately for my family. Could this produce stress in the marriage and family? Of course! Our question was, "What happened? What's wrong?" Is this condition our fault or part of God's plan; did the devil do it, or what? We know today that the problem was partly our fault, it was partly God's plan, and the devil was in the mix because of a generational curse from my mother's side of the family that we were unaware of. I must admit during those years I was mad at God. I held Him totally responsible for our circumstances.

When Arthur Burk entered our lives we shared with him the difference between my secular career and our ministry career, and he began to teach us more specifically how to discover and deal with generational curses. First he explained that we should ask Father:

- how many generations back did the curse enter my generation
- who committed the sin that opened the door

- what was the sin

He also said, "Ask Father if there was a priest or minister involved," and then He revealed why. Generations ago a priest was totally supported by the government. If that priest was defrocked for any reason he lost all financial support as well as his reputation. He would also be isolated from the community because anyone who helped him would risk excommunication from the church. That was a lot to consider, but we were hopeful for answers.

As we prayed specifically about this matter, Father said, "In the 18th generation back on your mother's side of the family, there was a minister who, because of his fear of poverty, refused to tithe or give offerings. Because of his sin and hypocrisy he opened the door for his finances to be cursed as well as those of the generations that followed. According to scripture in Malachi, he was a thief, and that allowed the thief (satan) to operate in subsequent generations, especially in ministers of the Gospel. Thus the spirit of poverty was evident in the family line and mammon became their god. It is interesting to note that the Holy Spirit revealed here that the only time this curse surfaced in the generations was when someone surrendered to full time ministry. That explains why it did not affect us until we answered God's call. Previous to that, I was unaffected by this curse and well promoted and financed in my career. Today we are seeing evidence that this curse has been broken and we are walking in great freedom as a result.

So how many packages can a generational curse come in? In how many different ways could our ancestors have sinned? Sin opens the door for satan to get in, and he will remain there until discovered and forcibly removed. How do I know if there is a generational curse at work in my life? Ask your Heavenly Father for revelation. Ask the 'who, what, how, when' questions listed above to get the specific information you need to address the curse. It is also important to note that there can be a generational curse on time, a name, a career, on finances, relationships and also in the sexual area, resulting in violence, sickness and disease and more.

Remember, the subject here is generational curses, so this is not just about you as an individual. This is about your future generations. If you find yourself or your family here, freedom is available, and we bless you in that freedom of discovery. Once again, we direct you to qualified counselors, prayer ministers or your pastor who can help you in your journey to freedom. You will also find additional information on generational curses from www.plumblineministries.com.

Questions

CHAPTER 15

1. Are you willing to consider the possibility that there may be a generational curse at work in your family line? If yes, what are you prepared to do about it?
2. Based on question #1, part B, could your decision have an impact on your children and your children's children? If so, how?
3. Are you willing to trust the Holy Spirit to speak all truth to you as Jesus said He would? Make a list here of what you feel He is speaking to you.



Chapter 16

The Lies We Live By

We must discuss another subject here that is also typically found in wounded, love hungry people: the lies we live by. It too can be a very powerful, destructive issue in the marriage relationship. Even though this is a common problem, it is seldom identified as such, and thus there seems to be no resolution at hand. It usually takes someone else to help us see these lies because we believe them to be true. The punch line to this issue is: the lies we live by have the power to become self-fulfilling prophecy. I will try to explain; and hopefully, you will see how this adversely affects the marriage relationship.

When Gerri and I married, I thought I was normal. After 45 years of marriage and 32 years of walking with the Lord, the revelation I have received about myself has been staggering. I came into our marriage relationship with the following baggage. Obviously this is not a complete list! There were deep, unresolved issues of:

- Shame
- Fear
- Insecurity
- Low self-esteem
- Self-hatred
- Anger
- Lust
- Very limited moral boundaries
- Self-centeredness
- Desperate love hunger
- No purpose or direction for my life
- Being a woman hater
- Being judgmental, critical, and jealous
- Not knowing love
- A guard on my heart against women because I believed the lie that women would always try to dominate, control and abuse me as my mother had done. In other words, I was loaded for bear (women) and any threat, real or perceived, from a woman was met violently and with vengeance.

Do you see anything in the above list that might be a hindrance to developing a marriage relationship rooted in love, honor and respect? Is it any wonder that our honeymoon was over quickly?

Now let's look at some lies I lived by. Self-hatred was a major issue in me. Every time something went wrong or I made a mistake of any kind, whether real or perceived, my response was always the same. I called myself a stupid dirt bag. I believed I was always at fault no matter what the circumstances. I believed the lie that I was worthless, always a screw up. At the same time, I had tremendous, internal strife and conflict because I blamed everyone else around me for my problems. This is evidence of a common problem of opposites at work in a person's life that produce confusion, chaos and terrible stress. Although I was desperate for love and affection, the spiritual dynamic working in me was 'don't get too close to me. I am a scumbag. I don't like me and you won't like me either.' In other words, I had built a wall around my heart that would not let love in; neither could love get out. It should be pretty clear by now that I was not a people person. In fact, I did not like people at all. Gerri, on the other hand, has always been a people person and because of her outgoing, charismatic personality, new people were constantly coming into our lives. The problems began when they met me and encountered my walls of self-protection. You see, I was an isolationist. I had zero ability for emotional intimacy. Whereas Gerri needed people, I avoided them! In fact, if anyone tried to press into me too far, I would begin to repel their advances to establish relationship. Obviously, I was already a disconnected person, and if necessary, I could reinforce the lies I believed about people and myself and drive them away by becoming rude and/or angry. It usually worked! Most would disappear off my radar screen and I would feel safe again. However, at the same time, I lived the desperate contradiction of always being lonely. Gerri would draw people into our lives for relationship, but I would drive them away. Do you think this might cause difficulty in our marriage? The lies that I lived by about myself and other people, I believed to be true. Therefore, for me at that time, although they were lies within me, they carried the power of truth. I disliked people because I believed the lie that all people would hurt me, disappoint me, or mistreat me, so I wanted people to leave me alone; and I would act in whatever way necessary to accomplish that goal. Now I am not talking about a

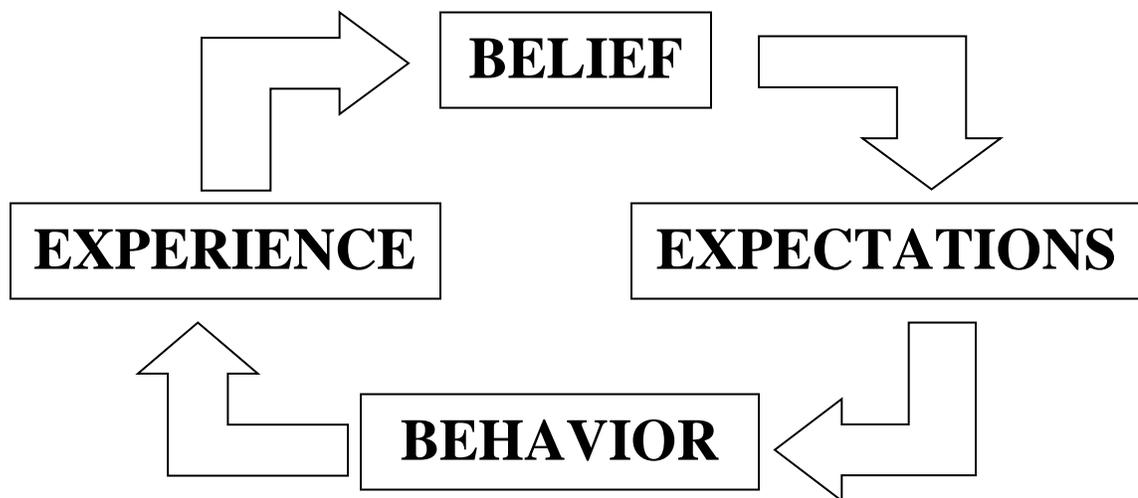
thinking process here. I did not think about or plan to offend people. It was an automatic response to the lie. Can you see the spiritual dynamic at work here? Consider Proverbs 23:7, *'whatsoever a man thinks (believes) in his heart, so is he.'* We live by what we believe; good or bad, right or wrong, truth or lie. We invest ourselves in our own opinions or beliefs, and then we must live with the consequences. Sadly, the people closest to us also live with the consequences. Based on what I have shared so far about myself, what would you say were my chances of experiencing a true, intimate relationship with anyone? If you say slim to none, you're right! I didn't have the ability or capacity for intimacy. "I" was my focus and finding life without pain my passion. To me, people represented pain. I had zero compassion for other people's needs or problems.

Have you noticed in my sharing here the opposites that were at work in me? I was a determined isolationist, but also very lonely. I was a woman hater, but I was consumed with lust and adultery. I was ruled by fear but could be violent and aggressive. I am sure you get the point. We find this pattern to be common in people we minister to. This situation creates confusion and torment within them. It adds pressure and stress to their life and adversely affects close, personal relationships, especially the marriage relationship. Can you imagine the negative impact these issues have on our children? The evidence is all around us. Love hunger is rampant in the earth today. Each generation passes it on to the next generation, and it grows. The thought just crossed my mind...is it possible that the lies we live by make us more vulnerable to new lies presented to us? This is an interesting idea.

Consider the following. If a spouse believes that the opposite sex will

- Never listen to me
- Always try to boss me around
- Always take advantage of me
- Always be abusive
- Always reject me,

this spouse has already put up walls in preparation for the expected treatment. This is confrontation waiting to happen. In fact, I believe these lies have the emotional/spiritual power to cause this person to act in such a way that will bring on the expected treatment. Also, anytime the opposite sex in any way touches one of these buttons, the power of the lie is cocked and ready to fire back! Without thinking, each occurrence reinforces the power of the lie. Consider the following chart:



We are what we believe. Proverbs 23:7, *“As a man believes in his heart, so is he.”* It is not our minds that control our lives, but our hearts, the core of our being. From our beliefs grow our expectations. From our expectations flows our behavior. From our behavior come our experiences. Our experiences shape our beliefs, and so the cycle continues and grows.

Why do we act the way we do? For some it may be because the elevator does not go all the way to the top, if you know what I mean. In those cases, isn't it easier to extend grace

when you recognize a handicap? I believe life would be much greater for most of us if we recognize that most of the people who enter into a marriage relationship have handicaps. I do not want to excuse unacceptable behavior, but I want to try and bring some kind of understanding to our conflicts. Unresolved issues of abandonment and rejection are spiritual and emotional handicaps. Unresolved issues of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse are also spiritual/emotional handicaps. Personal discovery in these areas has the potential to offer dramatic change and transformation for the individual and his marriage.

We need to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any lies that we are currently living by. Those closest to us may also help us see these lies and their impact on our marriage relationship. Discovery, repentance and healing of the woundedness that birthed the lies in the first place are essential to our freedom and the health of all our personal relationships, including our relationship with God.

Questions

Chapter 16

1. Is there, or has there been, a lie in your life that became a self-fulfilling prophecy? What was the lie?

2. On page 93, Roger writes: “**We live by what we believe; good or bad, right or wrong, truth or lie.**” Write something that you believe or have believed about yourself that would fit the following categories:
 - a. Good-
 - b. Bad-
 - c. Right-
 - d. Wrong-
 - e. Truth-
 - f. Lie-

3. For every lie, there is a corresponding truth. Write four lies that you believe or have believed about yourself, then write the corresponding truth under each lie.
 - a. Lie-

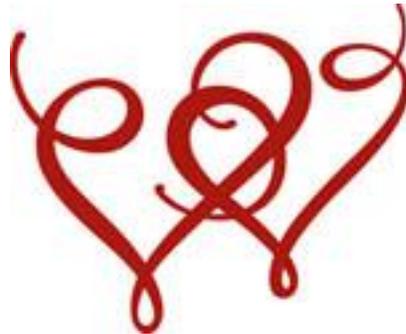
Truth-
 - b. Lie-

Truth-
 - c. Lie-

Truth-

d. Lie-

Truth-



Chapter 17

The Absent Spouse/Parent

We are aware of some Christians who have wonderful reputations in their community as being loving, caring, giving people; but their spouse and children at home do not share that opinion. It seems as though they are two different people. Many times the spouse and children feel victimized. They feel unimportant, abandoned and rejected, and they are resentful that people outside the family are given a priority of time, attention and affection that should belong to them. This is especially true of ministers and pastors and their families. There can be many reasons for this kind of behavior; here are a few.

Typically, there are unresolved issues of offense and wounding from our childhood experience with home. This usually involves our parents and because of our wounding we make a determination of heart (a vow) about the situation, even about being a parent

ourselves. That attitude will bind us to act according to the determination we have made until we repent and ask for forgiveness. Usually along with this vow, spoken or unspoken, we will find that we have been judgmental and critical of our circumstances and the people involved. Matthew 7:1 and following warns us about being judgmental and the consequence this sin brings. If our life experience has brought us offense and wounding and if we have become judgmental and critical toward people, places or things; that sin is binding to us and will come upon us repeatedly until we repent and those issues are resolved. Remember Galatians 6:7 says, "*Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.*" Imagine this at work in your marriage relationship as part of the surprise that surfaces after you say, 'I do.' Gerri and I did not discuss details about our relationship with our parents or homes before we got married. At the time we did not know we should. We would have thought, what has that got to do with us anyway? This is our new life and that is the old life. We had no idea how we were dragging the old part of our life into the new part and the dramatic negative impact it would have on our future. When the old stuff began to surface, it brought division and separation. The old, unresolved issues of offense surfaced and brought more offense. Our unhealed wounding produced more wounding. Our old life was reproducing itself in our new life with similar results. What we were certain we were leaving behind we actually brought with us, and the victimization continued. Since we were not Christians at that time, we did not know there were answers to our problems, and since we were self-centered, we thought the other person was obviously at fault. If our spouse would only change, things would be ok. Sadly most Christians we minister to today have these same ideas. Their focus is their spouse and the spouse's faults and 'if they would only change.'

Performance orientation is another reason people can struggle with relationships at home and yet seem to be successful outside the home. This is usually related to love hunger. Love hunger can leave a person striving for self-worth, personal value and legitimacy. We typically become POs looking for self-worth in what we do rather than in who we are in God.

POs frequently struggle with personal issues of self-condemnation, frustration, anger, fear, depression and more. They can get angry with God when things do not go well. POs are usually hard workers, dependable and aggressive, having a tendency to become slaves for God rather than children of God, which gives them a bent towards burnout. Remember this: love hunger demands satisfaction and IT IS RELENTLESS. It should not be a surprise to see POs as workaholics; always going, always doing, always giving, but always with a hook on it. The hook is the love and acceptance that POs need in return for their service. This is a terrible perversion of the life God intended for us to experience. POs will typically be out there somewhere in their world striving for happiness, acceptance and love. A pat on the back, a promotion, or simply a compliment in any form will fuel the fire in a PO to give more of himself and try harder, but it never satisfies. The reward is only temporary and never enough. He cannot see home as part of the solution because home is the reason he has a love hunger problem in the first place. The solution, then, has to be out there somewhere. Thus, the spouse and children suffer abandonment and rejection issues along with jealousy and resentment toward those who are getting the PO's attention. Some family members even get angry with God in this situation, especially if the PO is in ministry. Another thing that typically happens is that the spouse and children who are left at home are given strict rules for conduct and behavior by the PO. Since expressed love is usually very limited, those rules *without* expressed love usually promote rebellion in the love hungry spouse and children. It is also typical to see co-dependency form between the spouse and children as the spouse tries to fill the role of both parents. This co-dependency often produces irresponsibility in the children. Thus, love hungry PO's reproduce ongoing tragedy in their own spouses and children for the next generation.

In summary, if you find yourself in this discussion, please note that the revelation of an issue is an open door to resolution and freedom, but it is only the beginning. Offense and woundedness must be forgiven and healed. Vows and judgments must be repented of and

broken. Whenever possible, we must go to those we have sinned against and repent and attempt to love and restore healthy relationship.

Remember, love hunger will not go away on its own. It will not be satisfied with anything except true, expressed love, and our heavenly Father is the ultimate source of unconditional love available to us. To pursue Him is to pursue love in its purest form. James 4:8 Amplified says, *“Come close to God and He will come close to you.”* That is an awesome promise for all who have ears to hear. If you recognize that you are love hungry, if you recognize you are a PO looking for your self-worth in what you do, I urge you to repent and run to your heavenly Father for healing and freedom and the ultimate love experience available to all mankind.

Questions

Chapter 17

1. Have you seen any evidence of your “**old life**” reproducing itself in your “**new life**”? If so, give a brief example.
2. On page 99, Roger writes: “**We typically become POs (Performance Oriented) looking for self-worth in what we do rather than in who we are in God.**” Give a brief description of this using an experience from your life.
3. Do you consider yourself to be an absent spouse or parent? Explain your answer.



Chapter 18

Stress

I'm sure everyone can relate to the adverse effects stress can have on our relationships. Today we are in a loving mode but then some event takes place that unleashes a torrent of negative emotion and almost instantly we turn from lover to adversary. What happened? Circumstances and events that produce stress may vary from person to person, but sooner or later we must face our own stressful circumstances. Have you noticed that one person's stress seldom remains with that one person? Yes, stress can and does adversely affect the marriage relationship. This is a part of life that should be expected yet we are seldom prepared for it.

There is temporary stress from circumstances that are resolved quickly with little or no residual affect. Then there is long term stress that never seems to go away. There is stress caused by external forces that you cannot control like the economy going down hill, higher gas prices, home values dropping to the point that you owe more than your house is now worth,

losing your job because of cut backs, no health insurance, storm damage that your insurance will not pay, and the list goes on.

There is one more specific external stress I'd like to mention and that is the stress applied by our culture. We have heard a lot about the problem of peer pressure our children are under. Is that not true for adults also? Just consider: we are the most prosperous, wealthy nation on earth. Our standard of living is higher than most, our wages higher, our houses bigger, we have more and better cars, we have more toys and luxuries than most everyone else in the world. That is our reputation as a nation. We have all heard the discussions about keeping up with the Jones', and laughed or scoffed depending upon our point of view, but I submit to you that there is often an inherent pressure and expectation on our lifestyle and relationships because of all this. One thing our economy depends on is our people spending money to buy those things we think we should have. If we don't have the money, no problem, just charge it. I'll pay for it later. I have recently noticed TV commercials with sales people telling the listener, "You deserve a new car" or "you have a right to a new home." In other words, as Americans, we have a right to expect the things we want because we deserve it. Sadly, many of us believe it. If that is not pressure to have what we want when we want it; if that is not bait for irresponsible debt, what is it? Our nation from the top down is deeply in debt. Our culture lives on credit. What happens then when something goes wrong financially, either personally or nationally? The bills are still there and they demand payment. Never mind that you are laid off or hurt or sick and cannot work. Your circumstances do not matter to your lenders. They want payment and if you do not pay you are in trouble. Americans live in this pressure cooker, don't we? Fear, anxiety and stress are becoming a way of life here. Where is the enjoyment from our prosperity and our luxuries? How badly do our marriages suffer from this cultural stress? As evidenced by our Christian divorce rate, we suffer tremendously at the hands of stress.

There are also *internal* stresses that we usually can do something about. Let's stop for a moment and think about some of the negative personality traits that cause marital problems. What would they be? Things like irresponsibility, fear, shame, anger, jealousy, control, manipulation, greed, self-centeredness, self-hatred, addictions, and perversions. Plug in your own answers. These all bring stress to the marriage. They all have a common source and that source is love hunger. Our Heavenly Father has made it possible for us to successfully deal with our own internal sources of stress. Obviously we must be willing to pursue our own healing so these issues no longer have power in our lives. If we do that, it will improve our ability to successfully deal with the external stresses that will surely come. Also, as our internal sources of stress are diminished, our time spent in love mode with others will dramatically increase.

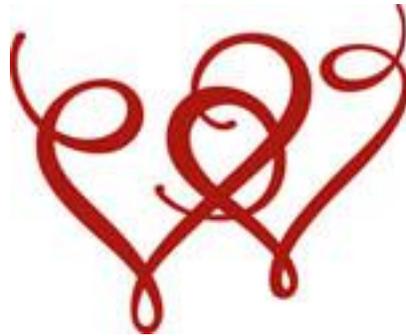
Internal stress is a fact of life. We must recognize this truth and grow up past the blame game. If we want Heaven in our marriage tomorrow we must approach Heaven today and each of us deal with our own unresolved issues. It is best if couples work together in this process because, as issues surface in one spouse, the other shares in the revelation; and as healing comes they can both share the blessing. However, if a spouse refuses change, refuses outside help, refuses to admit any responsibility for contribution to family problems, then holding him or her responsible is appropriate and necessary. It is sad that so many Christians with personality problems believe the lie that this is just the way they are. Of course, to the person who believes that lie, or any other lie for that matter, the lie becomes the truth and carries the power of truth in that person's life. If you want change in your marriage, but your spouse is one I just described above who refuses outside help, you must draw some healthy boundaries for yourself and seek help on your own. Do not let your spouse deny you God's blessing of new life. Your own healing and personal transformation will bring wonderful change to your world and how you perceive and live life.

Please remember this: if you are born again then you are a child of the Most High God, and all rights and privileges belonging to that state of being are yours. Receive it, honor it and defend it, and do not let anyone steal it from you.

Questions

Chapter 18

1. In chapter 18, Roger gives examples of external and internal stress. Looking at your own life, list three examples of external stress that you are experiencing:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. What are three internal stresses that have impacted your marriage or family?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. Briefly write your reaction to this statement by Roger: **“If you are born again, then you are a child of the Most High God, and all rights and privileges belonging to that state of being are yours.”**



Chapter 19

Idolatry in Marriage

Perhaps we should begin this chapter by considering what idolatry is. The first definition that comes to mind is: “loving people, places or things more than loving God.” Webster’s Dictionary says, “the worship of a physical object as a god; an immoderate attachment or devotion to something.”

This, like many other issues, usually requires Holy Spirit revelation before we recognize we have been walking in it. We must be bold enough to consider the possibility that it applies to us. Are we willing to ask Father for revelation? If so, we need to ask, am I now, or have I ever been angry at God for anything? If yes, has that issue been identified and prayed through? If not resolved it will only surface again at some point. Our being angry at God about anything or anyone can be a clue to our idolatry.

Years ago we ministered to a lady who was struggling in her relationship with the Lord. As we probed her situation we discovered that her mother had died when this lady was five years old. As we prayed and asked the Holy Spirit to take her back to her mother's death to bring healing to that little girl for her loss, something else was revealed to her. She was angry at God for taking her mother. She had never forgiven Him nor had she ever repented for blaming Him. She had no conscious memory of her anger toward Him until the Holy Spirit revealed it to her. This issue was a cloud between God and her until that day when she repented. You might say a five year old does not know any better, and you would be right. Nonetheless, the consequence was evident in her life. Adults should know better, shouldn't they? But we don't seem to. We minister to adults on a regular basis who are angry at God about something. Consider: if a Christian is angry at God it creates distance between them. Correct? Do you see how that distance from God, which is distance from love, could adversely affect the marriage relationship?

Think about it for a moment. What can we place on a pedestal that could become more important to us than our relationship or our commitment to God? How about the loss of a spouse, children, parents or friends? How about the loss of security such as your job or career, or the retirement you were depending on? What about the loss of your home to storms, floods, or financial collapse? How about your health? You may have serious health issues, and you have prayed and others have prayed for you, but nothing changes. How about your finances? No matter what you do, you never seem to have enough. Someone you love is suffering and you pray and you enlist others to pray, but nothing changes. God called you to full time ministry and you obeyed, but it has been one struggle and one disappointment after another.

Consider the marriage relationship in the context above. Could there be any pressure or stress on the relationship in any of these circumstances? Obviously, the answer is yes, but the worst part about all of it is our separation from God. Our ability to experience life to its

fullest and best is dependent on our ability to grow in intimacy with God. Knowing Father, Son and Holy Spirit on an intimate basis is life itself. Allowing anyone or anything or any circumstance to come between us and God is self-defeating and destructive. I know from personal experience!

In 1982 when God told me to quit my secular job and step out into full time ministry, He made it very clear to both Gerri and I. We obeyed Him and went where He told us to go. We were excited and our expectations were high. It turned out to be a place of hell because there were no finances. I got angry at God because of our circumstances. We obeyed and look what we got! That was the first year. Then He moved us to Colorado. Again, circumstances were difficult. There were just enough finances to eat and keep a roof over our heads, and the roof changed several times! There was also constant rejection from the Christian community, and again, I was angry at God. In 1986 Gerri contracted pancreatitis and almost died. I prayed for her and nothing happened. We had no insurance and no money. I was VERY angry at God! In 1993 I almost died from a bleeding ulcer I did not know I had. Paramedics, ambulance, emergency room, ICU, hospital stay and still no insurance and no money. With both Gerri's illness and mine, I felt abandoned. I was angry again. In January 1994 Gerri and I both experienced terrible burnout and we ran from Colorado to Alabama for five months of recuperation. In 1999 the stress was so great I quit the ministry and went to work in construction. I was angry again! In 2000 I repented and went back to ministry. In 2002 Gerri and I both went into clinical depression at the same time. I was angry at our lack and the constant stress of our circumstances. In January 2004 Gerri and I both met Father for the first time. It was such a dramatic, life changing encounter for both of us; we thought surely we must have gone to Heaven. My self-hatred was gone. We both experienced a dramatic improvement in our self-worth and legitimacy. We experienced love with Father like nothing we'd ever known before. Our transformation was beyond belief, beyond any hope or expectation. Our lives couldn't be better, or could they?

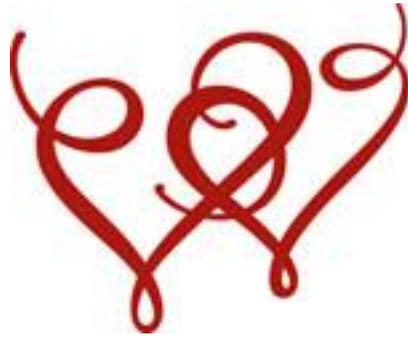
In September 2004 we had been married 41 years and in full time ministry for 22 years. We had never failed to pay our bills on time. We had no black marks against our credit, ever! We had obeyed the Lord to the best of our ability (except when I was mad). But in November of 2004 we had to file personal bankruptcy. We were absolutely devastated. Once again we had believed that Father would certainly provide for us. He did not (at least not the way we expected). The shame was overwhelming, and to add to our shame the Body of Christ persecuted us unmercifully. We did not realize at that time that Father was working mightily in our circumstances for our good and His glory. Then in October 2005 Father told us to pack up and move to South Carolina. We arrived in early December. Again, our circumstances did not meet our expectations, but this time there was no anger! Love was our strength. In the fall of 2006, I was praying one day and I asked Father if He would tell me some day when He thought I was ready why we had to go through the bankruptcy. He answered me immediately (I guess He thought I was ready). He said, "Son, we needed to deal with two problems in your life; first, your pride in your reputation and secondly, your anger toward Me." Wow! What wonderful revelation! I could immediately see the gift of love in the bankruptcy from my Heavenly Father. At once I prayed and repented. I gave Father my reputation and our circumstances. We have never known such peace in our lives. If any idolatry remains in our lives, we are not aware of it at this time. We trust Father to expose anything in us that is a problem for Him. Hallelujah!

Have you found yourself or someone you care about here? If so, Father is waiting to help you correct the situation, lift the burden from you and remove the interference between you and Him. Let me encourage you. Love is much better than offense. Getting your priorities right by making sure that no one, no thing, and no circumstance in your life is in any way more important to you than your relationship with God is essential to your quality of life. Only you can deal with these issues. I hope you will choose righteously.

Questions

Chapter 19

1. Using your own words, define the term “idolatry”.
2. Based on Roger and Gerri’s story, do you see any idols in your life? If so, what are they?
3. Roger wrote about seeing “...the gift of love...” in his bankruptcy; what is a “gift of love” that you now see in your life?



Chapter 20

Role Reversal

I have already written about the husband's role and method of leadership in the family as well as the wife's role. I believe it is equally important to discuss here some potential ramifications if the roles are reversed in the family.

First of all, the wife 'wearing the pants' so to speak is out of God's established order and should immediately give us a clue that this could lead to negative consequences. Now don't get offended, ladies. On second thought, if this chapter does cause some offense or you feel a bit threatened, this could be a good thing if you will allow it to be. A love gift from Father does not always come packaged in pretty paper and ribbon! He has wonderful ways of exposing things in our lives that hinder our ability to have intimate relationship with Him and others and also hinder our ability to reach our full potential and destiny. Sometimes He will offend the mind to get to the heart.

If leadership in the marriage is out of Godly order it can open the door to confusion, stress, and resentment. Even if the wife wants or needs to be in charge, she usually resents her husband for not being man enough to lead. The same is true with the husband. He may be very passive and insecure, and the more his wife takes leadership and decision making responsibilities off of him, the more comfortable he gets; yet he may also resent his wife for being in charge. Resentment in the marriage relationship separates and divides. It can kill any hope for true intimacy and peace at home.

If the wife is in charge because she needs to be in charge, it is usually rooted in fear. This fear can be a result of severe abandonment and rejection issues that compromise a person's ability to trust others because her sense of being safe and secure is inadequate. This problem can also be caused by abuse (especially by a male) or traumatic events such as rape, fire, flood, severe accidents and so on. In any case, healing will normally be required before this person can completely release control and trust again.

Do not forget the spiritual dynamics in play here. The need for control is an open demonstration of the need for healing. This person falls into what we call the 'predator' category, and predators are generally drawn to people in the 'victim' category. The predator is typically aggressive and the victim passive. As I have mentioned in a previous chapter, many times predators are predators because they were first victims. Their victimization resulted in resentment, bitterness, anger and a determination of heart that they will never be dominated, controlled or victimized again. (See the chapter titled, Healthy Boundaries/vs. Victimization.)

We have a former client who has been married and divorced five times. When she recently came to us for prayer ministry one of her first questions was, "Why do I keep drawing this same kind of man to myself?" She was repeatedly victimized in each marriage. As a victim she continually drew predators to herself. This is the spiritual dynamic at work. As the Lord revealed the roots of this client's victimization she was able to receive healing and begin to walk out of a life of fear and shame. She is now becoming a new person. That new person is developing self-worth and self-confidence. She is now able to set and maintain healthy boundaries as never before. She is now discovering true, intimate and unconditional love in relationship with her Heavenly Father that she has never known before. Her future looks much brighter than her past, praise the Lord!

Some women may be leading the family out of necessity. If the husband refuses to take responsibility, the wife may have to, but this can lead to the wife losing respect for her husband. What kind of negative impact can that have on love and intimacy? Some might call this husband lazy and irresponsible. Instead, I would look for low self-esteem, fear, insecurity, shame and victimization in this man and encourage him to reach out for healing and new life. The other question here concerns the wife. Is she co-dependent with her husband? Does she continue to rescue and enable him to remain like he is? Is she over protective of him? Is she part of the problem rather than part of the solution?

In some situations when the wife realizes that her husband should lead the family, she makes a determination that she is going to force him to his rightful place of leadership, so she begins to manipulate, control, demand, criticize, scream and yell and stomp her feet, all to no

avail. These are not God's ways. These tactics will only increase separation and give satan an open door to work in the relationship.

Another common area of role reversal is in the spiritual arena. I believe it is commonly known that wives are frequently more motivated toward spiritual life than their husbands. Wives typically have a closer walk with God and are usually quicker to develop intimate relationships than their husbands. More often than not it is the wife who desires to reach out for counsel to find help and bring resolution to marital struggles. In the history of our ministry, 90% of our clients have been women. Very few husbands are willing to humble themselves, admit their faults and ask for help. Ladies, as Father loves on you just turn around and give that love away to the next person you meet. Don't let your husband's lack of interest deter you from your destiny in God. Guard your heart and be careful not to flaunt your spiritual leadership over your husband, and don't demean him in any way. Make room for God to work in him and raise him up to his rightful place of leadership in your family. Encourage him with love, honor and respect. By all means, forgive him for his sin, his weakness and his failures just as you want to be forgiven for yours. If hubby refuses to go with you, seek Godly and unbiased counsel for yourself and the healing of your own woundedness.. Father's gift of love and life is available to all who will pursue Him.

Now you may be a couple who says, "We live in role reversal and we are comfortable and happy." That is certainly your privilege and in one way I am happy for you, yet in another way I am sad. What you have in your marriage may be good and comfortable and you don't want to rock the boat, but many times good is the greatest enemy of best. I have doubts that you can experience God's best in life if you become satisfied with what you determine to be good. Can you fulfill your God given destiny by being comfortable and accepting less than your full potential in God? The decision is yours.

For wives carrying responsibility that God never intended you to carry, please consider another down side to your situation. The added worry and stress, along with the common maladies of frustration, anger, fear, discouragement and depression, can eventually lead to sickness and disease. These emotional and spiritual pressures can compromise the immune system and deplete the body of essential nutrients resulting in chronic and even life threatening illness. It has also been scientifically proven that toxic emotions can kill brain cells. If this fits you or someone you know it would be good to pray into the situation and ask Father for revelation and instruction.

Parents, consider your children and the potential adverse effects a role reversal can have on them and their future relationships. Parents establish a pattern of marriage for their

children. Children can grow up and mimic the pattern and experience similar consequences; or they can rebel against it and, suffer adverse marital problems because of their woundedness and/or vows and judgments against their parents' pattern. Obviously, there are some children who grow up in adverse circumstances who do pretty well in marriage despite their need for healing. In my opinion, we all need continuing revelation and healing. This translates to growth and maturity and movement toward our destiny in God.

So, to those of you who find yourself in a role reversal situation and you want to correct it, let me urge you to first press into your Heavenly Father. Your commitment to Him and His involvement will be essential to your resolution. Secondly, discuss the situation with your spouse, and thirdly, ask Father to lead you to qualified, unbiased Christian counsel or prayer ministry to help you deal with your woundedness and assist you in transitioning to your rightful role in your marriage relationship. Our life experience can wonderfully change when undue pressure, stress and anxiety are removed and our sense of peace and rest increase.

Questions

Chapter 20

1. Complete this statement: “Leadership in my marriage could be described as _____.” If you are unmarried, complete this statement: “Leadership in my parent’s marriage could be described as _____.”
2. How does your description above compare with God’s order for marital leadership?
3. What is the motivation behind the person who is leading in your marriage?



Chapter 21

Jealousy

Jealousy began in me when I was just a little guy. My Dad was overseas during World War II when I was born. He was killed there, so I never knew him. My Mom was living with her parents at the time, so my Grandpa became Daddy to me. I bonded to my Grandma because she rocked me and loved on me. Jealousy set in when the second grandchild was born and seemed to take my place in Grandma's arms and her rocking chair. I had no conscious memory of that so I was surprised when the Holy Spirit took me back to Grandma's living room and I saw myself standing in the middle of the room with my hands on my hips looking at Grandma rocking grandchild number two. When we asked Jesus to come and heal that little boy of the rejection and jealousy, He did.

Jealously would continue to be a problem all through my life until my healing began when I was in my fifties. I was introverted, isolated and lonely. My heart was closed to intimacy. I have never had many friends. When I did have a rare friend, if another person came into the picture, I was threatened and jealous. The same was true with the few girl friends I had before I married, and when my children came along. I felt like they took my place of love and affection with my wife. This was even true of our family pets. I could never get

enough attention or affection to satisfy the love hunger in me. This made me a prime candidate for adultery. I desperately needed healing and a true encounter with unconditional, expressed love. I would find that love much later in life in my personal encounter with Father God.

Have you ever been or are you currently jealous? What prompts jealousy? How widespread is it? What are the consequences of being jealous? What is it a symptom of? Are we jealous of someone else's looks, money, position, fame, talent, ability, or success; of someone else's husband or wife, ministry, anointing or walk with God? We really can be jealous of just about anything we feel we are missing. Where will jealousy lead us? Obviously, it can be destructive in our attitude toward our own life and happiness and, therefore, negatively affect those closest to us.

Does a person simply choose to be jealous? Possibly, but I would like to explore jealousy as a symptom of a deeper problem. We typically can't heal or cast out our symptoms. If our focus is dealing with a symptom, our relief, if any, will be minor and short lived because the root cause of the symptom remains. Also we should consider that jealousy and covetousness are first cousins. If we have one, we typically have the other. Was this not satan's sin against God? Wasn't satan jealous of God and covetous of His throne? So anytime we enter into jealousy and covetousness, satan is right there to enable us to go further into that sin and suffer the consequences. Jealousy will only add fuel to the fire of our existing disappointment.

. Another perspective on the spirit of jealousy comes from Arthur Burk's teaching that *other people* can be jealous of *you*. We had never considered this, but it has proven to be true in our lives and ministry. As I have previously mentioned, there is no limit to what people can be jealous of. Arthur shared that if a spirit of jealousy is at work in a person's life, there are typically two major indicators: continual health problems and/or financial difficulties. Could that stress a marriage? Also consider that jealous spouses are revealing their disappointment

or dissatisfaction with something in their own life circumstances. Could that produce stress in the marriage? Since receiving Arthur's teaching, we have had the privilege of praying with several people and seeing very positive results in their lives with respect to defeating the spirit of jealousy. We led them to forgive and bless those who were jealous of them. We laid hands on the person being victimized by the spirit of jealousy and prayed blessing and honor over him as a child of the Most High God, then spoke to the jealousy and broke its power.

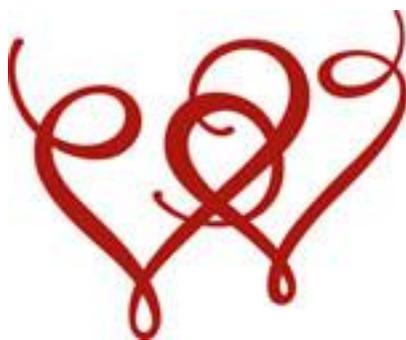
True, lasting freedom can come when revelation that jealousy is or has been a problem in our life is given, and we turn to God asking Him to reveal the root of the problem in us. Our repentance and desire for healing and freedom open the door for Father to heal the source of our jealousy. In my case, abandonment and rejection, fear and shame were major destructive root issues. Love hunger was the dominate force in my life, so jealousy and covetousness came easily with the package. Low self-esteem and self-hatred produced tremendous insecurity. I had no knowledge of my legitimacy in Father God, and did not know how to love. I only knew how to lust or covet. I had a guard on my heart to prevent further rejection and pain, hindering any love trying to get in. Gerri's love for me was wonderful acceptance, but it did little to resolve the deeper issues of my love hunger. When I met Jesus at 33 years of age, it was my first experience with Love that truly touched my heart and love hunger issues; however, it was not until I met Father at 61 years of age that I found true legitimacy as a person. His love flowing into me dealt a death blow to my insecurity, low self-esteem and self-hatred. I felt totally loved and accepted and valued as a person. Jealousy and covetousness are no longer an issue in my life. I am at peace with who I am and who I am becoming as I press into my personal, intimate relationship with my Heavenly Father.

If you find yourself here and would like more in depth teaching on the spirit of jealousy, we recommend the CD series by Arthur Burk entitled "Spiritual Warfare," which can be ordered at www.plumblineministries.com.

Questions

Chapter 21

1. Have you ever struggled with jealousy? If so, briefly describe this situation.
2. If you answered “yes” to question #1, what was the root cause of your jealousy?
3. Briefly describe how this looks/would look in your life or marriage:
 - a. Totally loved
 - b. Accepted
 - c. Valued as a person



Chapter 22

Redemptive Giftings

Would you agree that our individual redemptive gifts from Father are a good thing? I hope you can answer 'yes' to the question. Do you know what your own redemptive gifts are? your spouse's? Do you know how your giftings fit into Father's plan and purpose for your life? It is amazing, but many Christians know little or nothing about this subject. They seem to think that redemptive gifts are only for leadership or 'special people.' How tragic that is.

I know you must be wondering why I am including this subject here. If it is a good and positive thing, then what does it have to do with troubled marriages? Believe it or not, this good gift from Father can cause problems in many marriages. When we are unhealed, our woundedness is a major interference in our spiritual growth and maturity, and causes all kinds of confusion as to our true identity, personality and redemptive giftings. Pressing into Father and asking Him for healing is essential to fulfilling our purpose and destiny. Along the way you may discover that some of the conflict you and your spouse have had is because of your redemptive gifts from Father.

Again, let me use Gerri and myself as an example. One of my strong redemptive giftings is that of prophet. I have tendencies to be legalistic, black and white, judgmental, and

to struggle with relationships. Gerri is just the opposite. She is mercy gifted, much more into people and relationships. She is more spiritually sensitive, more compassionate and forgiving than I am. We usually pull on the rope in opposite directions, and in years past it caused a good bit of stress in our relationship. That is because we were ignorant about our own individual redemptive gifts and the fact that they are God given. However, after meeting Father, we find we are no longer competitive but are becoming complements to each other. Love is our priority, and honor and respect for each other is our passion. We bless each other to prosper and be effective in our redemptive giftings to honor Father, Son and Holy Spirit in whatever way they lead. We continue to grow in our understanding of each other's giftings and we bless and encourage each other as helpmates. As Father continues to reveal more about our individual giftings we understand more about each other, and that enables us to release each other. Competition to go in different directions, frustration, and stress between us continue to diminish. In their place are peace, rest and confidence in our love relationship and our future together.

For those of you who may not be familiar with all seven redemptive gifts, I am including a brief description here of each one from Arthur Burk's teaching.

PROPHET – Moody. Articulate. Passionate. Generous. Intense. Keen sense of justice and righteousness. Loves the underdog. Ideologically driven. Creative. Judgmental. Extreme. The redemptive gift of Prophet is very different from the gift of prophesying. While prophets understand the future through revelation, those with the redemptive gift of Prophet understand the future through the use of Biblical principles.

SERVANT – Diligent. No enemies. Joyous. Helpful. Alert. Hospitable. High spiritual authority. Low self-image. Impeccably honest. Team player. Prone to the victim spirit. God gives the redemptive gift of Service the highest level of spiritual authority because they can be trusted to use it for the Kingdom instead of for themselves. However, until the Servant sees himself as God sees him, that gift of spiritual authority remains underutilized.

TEACHER – Needs to validate truth. Processes slowly. Deep family loyalty. Sees the big picture. Sense of humor. High authority over predator spirit. Intimacy is a major birthright of the Teacher. When the teacher focuses on doctrine rather than on Father, the church loses.

EXHORTER – People person. Obsessive-compulsive. Verbally expressive. High energy. In motion. Loves change. Dramatic. Melodramatic. Superb teacher. Natural leader. Fun. Late. Real late.

While the Exhorter is the most spontaneously relational of all the gifts, his real strength is revealing the nature of God. The Exhorter has an unparalleled ability to see God in Scripture and to cause us to see our world differently because we have a bigger perspective of God.

GIVER – Private. Intuitive. Insightful. Cautious. Chameleon. Good listener. Very independent. Impulsive. Stable. Contradictory. Frugal. Unpredictable. Multifaceted. Devoid of shame. Family focused.

The gift of Giving has the amazing ability to adapt to almost any situation without being changed at all. While they seem to fit in well, they typically retain all their core values rather than embrace the values of the community around them.

RULER – Busy. Real busy. Thinks big. On time. Reliable. Leader. Fearless. Not easily swayed. Visionary. Team builder. Multitasks easily. Reads people well.

The Ruler has the highest ability to get maximum effectiveness out of a poor labor pool. God has graced them with a combination of love and wisdom that enables the mature Ruler to accomplish extraordinary things with a team that appears to be highly inadequate.

MERCY – Intuitive. Intuitive. Intuitive. Safe. Sensitive. Loves beauty. Defines the ambiance. No enemies. Works hard. Hugely compliant. Stubborn in the *niciest* sort of way. The gift of Mercy is dramatically different than the previous six gifts. The Mercy hears God with his/her heart while the others tend to hear God with their mind. God uses the gift of Mercy to bring the spiritual climate into right alignment through the blessing of presence.

I hope you will prayerfully pursue Father and ask Him to reveal you and your spouse's redemptive giftings as well as your purpose and destiny in life. This revelation can tremendously improve your life and your marriage.

If you desire more in depth information and teaching regarding redemptive giftings we recommend you contact www.plumblineministries.com for Arthur's teaching on this subject.

Questions

Chapter 22

1. After reading through the list of Redemptive Gifts, what are your redemptive gifts?
2. What are your spouse's redemptive gifts?
3. Briefly describe an incident in which you and your spouses' gifts worked in harmony.
4. Briefly describe an incident in which you and your spouses' gifts conflicted.



Chapter 23

The One Flesh Union

In Genesis 2:24 the Word of God says, *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall become united and cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh.”*

This truth is repeated in Matthew 19:5 and Ephesians 5:31 regarding the marriage relationship. However, the Apostle Paul refers to the one flesh union again in 1 Corinthians 6:16 in context with a sinful sexual relationship. He says, *“Or do you not know and realize that when a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? The two, it is written, shall become one flesh.”*

I do not think that most of us grasp the importance of this concept. I cannot say I fully understand it but it seems obvious that the one flesh union spoken of in these scriptures involves more than a physical, sexual union. Since we have been created a trinity as in spirit, soul and body, and since the marriage relationship should be the most intimate human relationship we have, it seems easy to understand that our one flesh union connects two people, spirit, soul and body. But what about 1 Corinthians 6:16? Paul says that sexual relations with a prostitute also establish a one flesh union. The physical connection is obvious. Although love is not typically involved in relationship with a prostitute, there is obviously a soul tie or one flesh union established. In fact, I will go one step further and say I believe there is a spiritual connection established with each person we become sexually intimate with. The

dynamic of the one flesh union works whether in or out of the marriage covenant. Our Heavenly Father designed sexual intimacy to be exciting, rewarding and joyful, but sin brings its perversion to what Father intended. If we have had more than one sexual partner in our lifetime, then we have established one flesh unions with each of those partners. Whether in fornication, adultery, or multiple marriages, you are spiritually connected to those people. I believe this is a spiritually and emotionally divisive situation to your current or future marriage relationship and must be prayerfully corrected.

If you are thinking that because your previous sexual relationships happened before you were born again, that those one flesh unions are not an issue, think again. Your sin may be forgiven but the consequence (the one flesh unions) remains intact. You may have divorce papers from a previous marriage, but they do not deal with the spiritual issue.

Remember your wedding vows? If you have been married more than once, were your vows made before God? If so, what have you done about breaking those vows you made? Most people never consider doing anything. The marriage failed for whatever reason and resulted in divorce. We think it's over. Is it? I don't think so. It might be helpful to get out your concordance and look at the scriptures having to do with making vows. There are warnings against making and breaking vows, especially those made before God.

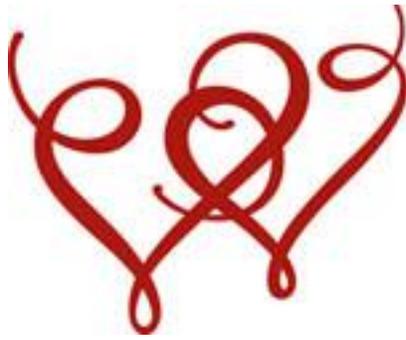
I don't share these things to promote an atmosphere of guilt, fear or anxiety, but to bring revelation that carries the potential of freedom for the captive. If you are among the fortunate ones that have established a single one flesh union by your marriage relationship, you are truly blessed. However, please don't shrug off this information because it does not apply to you. It surely applies to someone in your world and you could be a catalyst for their freedom.

If you have discovered yourself in this chapter, I encourage you to seek unbiased, seasoned counsel from prayer ministers or your pastor to help you break the bondages that have occurred as a result of these strongholds.

Questions

Chapter 23

1. Define the term “one flesh union”.
2. One definition of the word “vow” is “A solemn promise, pledge or personal commitment.” How does this definition apply to your wedding vows?
3. In your own words, describe what you believe to be the “spiritual issue” of one flesh unions.



Chapter 24

Demons in the Details

Does it take a rocket scientist to figure out that if you or your spouse has a problem involving demons that it will contribute to the difficulties in your marriage relationship?

Obviously not, however, in most affected marriages, the couple is usually unaware that demons are a part of their struggles. This is not your cue to say, ‘the devil made me do it!’

It is appropriate and valid for each of us in the Body of Christ to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal whether or not we have a demonic problem. We cannot get rid of it if we don’t know it exists. This was our experience. As Spirit filled Christians we were still stressed in our marriage relationship. We were completely ignorant about demons and the possibility that this might be a part of our struggle.

When God called me to full time ministry we moved to a Christian retreat in North Alabama where He connected us with a local pastor and his church that would have a significant impact on our lives and ministry. One of God’s surprises awaiting us there was Joe Medina. Soon after our arrival, Joe and his wife invited Gerri and me for supper and fellowship. During our evening together Joe asked me to share my testimony. When I finished he asked if I would consider praying about something. I said, ‘yes.’ He then suggested I ask the Lord if there might be any demonic presence left over from my past. I prayed but didn’t get

a verbal response. That was on Thursday evening. However, the following Sunday morning at church the answer came in unexpected ways.

When we arrived at church, we were surprised to learn that Joe was preaching the morning service. His message was titled, "This is Your Day of Liberty." As he began to teach about deliverance my right leg began to twitch, then to jump or bounce off the hardwood floor, making a loud noise. Gerri put her hand on my leg and looked at me with that 'will you stop it' look, but I wasn't doing it! I didn't know what was going on. I was embarrassed for causing the distraction, but couldn't help myself. When Joe ended his message and gave an altar call for those who felt they might need deliverance, I was first in line! After the service we went to a private room for ministry. Joe said, "Roger, I believe the Holy Spirit has shown me three demonic spirits that must come out. They are anger, fear and lust." My entire body was now jumping and I said, "Let's go for it. I can't stand this any longer." Joe looked me in the eye and spoke to a spirit of anger and in Jesus name commanded it to come out. Wow! The physical response in me was staggering. An elder standing behind me had to hold me in the chair while Joe continued to command the demon to leave. It did. We continued the process until all three were gone. Praise God!

The next morning we got another surprise. Our son had gone to school and Gerri and I were talking about the blessings of my deliverance when suddenly Gerri could not speak. Her teeth were clenched shut. She looked at me with panic in her eyes and she was grunting and gesturing for me to help her. At first I began to panic. What do I do? How do I find Joe Medina? Then came my profound prayer, "Lord, help!" We were alone. There was no one else to help! Then I began to realize I had to do for Gerri what Joe did for me. I looked Gerri in her eyes and bound the demon in Jesus name and commanded it to stop. To my surprise, it did and Gerri's jaw was loosed so she could speak. Wow again! As we calmed down a bit we began to talk about the situation. We decided we couldn't wait for help, so we would go for it. But what spirit was it? Where did it come from? It identified itself as a spirit of Mormonism.

We then realized that although Gerri had never been involved herself, the relatives on her mother's side of the family had all been Mormons. This spirit was generational. Once identified, we again decided to go for her deliverance! Gerri renounced that generational spirit and I commanded it to go in Jesus name. Although there were strong manifestations and it took a few minutes of intense fight, the demon eventually departed.

These two episodes were the beginning of our exposure to and our training in the ministry of deliverance. Over time the Holy Spirit continued to reveal other demonic presences that we quickly dealt with. We were truly grateful to the Lord for our freedom.

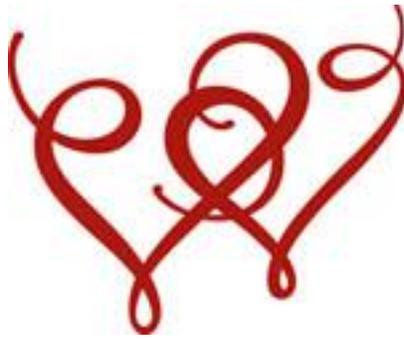
Demonic presence in our lives can be the result of generational sin or personal sin or sin committed against us. In any case, that demonic presence will influence our thinking, feelings, and actions contrary to what our nature should be as Christians. Since intimate, loving relationship is God's number one plan for humanity, what would satan's number one plan for humanity be if not to interfere with or destroy our ability to have intimate, loving relationship?

I realize this subject will be threatening for some, and some may reject it altogether because they believe the lie that demons cannot inhabit Christians. That's ok. They are privileged to believe what they wish, however, I hope some will be bold enough to ask the Holy Spirit for revelation for themselves. It doesn't hurt to ask, does it? Remember, deliverance is a part of our inheritance as a child of God.

Questions

Chapter 24

1. How have you reacted to this chapter?
2. Are you bold enough to ask the Holy Spirit for revelation?
3. Could removing satan's influence from your life bring the change you are looking for?
4. Could your deliverance result in a positive impact on all your relationships?



Chapter 25

Divorce

Divorce is a subject that causes great controversy in the church. It seems the more religious we are the more divorce becomes a dirty word. I agree that divorce should be our very last option in our attempt to bring resolution to marital problems, but in some cases it can be the only option. For years I simply stood on Malachi 2:16, which says, “*God hates divorce.*” I thought that should be obvious because divorce destroys families and relationships. That settles it. No divorce. I then came across Jeremiah 3:8, which says God divorced Israel because of her harlotries and unfaithfulness to Him. What? If God hates divorce, how could He then divorce Israel? This seeming contradiction in Scripture unsettled me for a time. I have since come to realize my misapplication of truth from God’s word. I took one statement of truth and used it as the whole truth when, in fact, it was only part of the total picture. I said earlier that divorce destroys families and relationships. That isn’t true either. *People* destroy families and relationships. Divorce is only the evidence of the destruction. My dogmatic, religious approach to divorce never being an option demonstrated that the law I had made regarding divorce was more important than people. Because my personal experience with expressed love was so limited, I gravitated to law and legalism. Today I believe this is not God’s heart. I believe He is a lover of people first. His instruction to us is for our blessing, not our cursing. Love is His first priority. I don’t believe He ever intended His instruction to be

used against us or for us to abuse one another with misapplication of it. Also, please consider that divorce is only a legality. Signing divorce papers may legally separate a couple physically in the world, but in no way deals with the one flesh union that has been established. This is a spiritual issue that must be dealt with as such. Woundedness from the relationship must be healed in order to be emotionally and spiritually free from the bond of the marriage.

Some of us perform to win a spouse, but once we are married, the performance wanes and the real person comes out of hiding. Oh the surprises we face! Because of this some relationships deteriorate to divorce. Once divorced, the process begins all over again and we believe that somehow things will be different next time. However, if you do not deal with your own issues you will continue to attract the same kind of person to yourself. Just remember, everyone has baggage that they bring into the marriage relationship. Denial won't fix it, hiding or running won't fix it, and blaming your spouse and/or God won't fix it either.

I realize that some people only see physical or sexual abuse as worthy of intervention, but I disagree. Emotional abuse can be just as devastating as a beating with a baseball bat. Any form of abuse must be challenged if there is to be change. If separation and/or divorce become necessary, so be it. In cases that are truly vile and/or life threatening, separation should be immediate.

Although God hates divorce, He divorced Israel for her unfaithfulness to Him. The Apostle Paul said, *'divorce is permissible when a spouse is unfaithful.'* In our marriage, Gerri had Biblical grounds for divorce because of my adultery; however, she asked the Lord what He wanted her to do in her own situation. He said to her, "You can have My permissive will or you can have My perfect will. In My permissive will you can leave Roger, take your children and start over, and I will be with you. My perfect will, will be much more difficult, but the reward will be much greater than you can imagine." Obviously, she chose His perfect will and again submitted her life to serve Him. Now, 32 years later, God's word spoken to Gerri has come to pass. The road has been difficult, but the reward for both of us has been far greater than we

had hoped or imagined. You see, if Scripture had been applied religiously or legalistically, we would have divorced and gone our separate ways; but because she conferred with her Lord, she received revelation regarding His will in her difficult situation. Please note: God will never contradict His word, but He has no problem contradicting our interpretation or our legalistic and religious applications of His word.

Many of you have been repeatedly disappointed because your spouse has promised to change, yet no change comes. Some of you have been hurt because your spouse blames you for all your marital problems, accepting no responsibility for the problems, perhaps even refusing your suggestions that you both get counseling or prayer ministry. Remember this: actual and permanent change usually requires God's intervention and healing because many of our issues are deeply rooted in spiritual and emotional wounding. If you are one whose spouse refuses to accept any responsibility for your marital problems or who refuses to consider change, or refuses outside help, please know that passivity on your part will not help resolve the situation. You must seek Godly counsel and deal with your own issues, get your healing, find your freedom and, press your spouse for change.

For those of you who have been through divorce, the next question is, have you been healed? Are you still struggling with guilt and shame, anger, resentment, bitterness or fear? Please don't continue to live there. It is totally unnecessary and nonproductive. Your healing and freedom are as close and available as your Heavenly Father. Today is a great day to repent for your sin in your divorce situation, forgive all sin against you, and dump all the excess baggage that hinders you in current relationships. Your future will be much brighter and relationships much sweeter. Today really can be the first day of the rest of your life. We know many couples who have divorced and later realized their mistakes. They have matured in the Lord and chosen to re-marry with Father and His love as the foundation of their new union.

Questions

Chapter 25

1. On page 132, Roger writes: **“People destroy families and relationships. Divorce is only the evidence of the destruction.”** How does this statement differ from the common view of divorce?
2. **“...if you do not deal with your own issues you will continue to attract the same kind of person to yourself.”** (page 133) Based on this statement, what kind of people are you attracting to yourself?
3. Have you ever been in a situation where you could choose between God’s permissive will and His perfect will? Which did you choose, and why?



Chapter 26

Father's Love

Since this writing addresses our most intimate, human relationship, our marriage, I feel it is essential that we consider the ultimate of all relationships: each person's own personal relationship with Father God. When we realize that our purpose for being is relationship, and when we see by experience that relationship is one of our great weaknesses, we could reason that there is more of life available to us than we have experienced. The one experience in life that is truly rewarding, truly lasting, truly empowering, and truly life giving is love. But, whose love, what kind of love, whose interpretation of love? Some might even ask the question, what is love? If you ask different people to define love, how many different answers will you get? Ask Father God His definition of love and compare that to yours. Are they similar? You see, we humans love based on our life experience and our individual opinion of what love is. We are not love. We have been divinely given the capacity to love. On the other hand, Father God *is* love. (1 John 4:8) He doesn't just love; He is the true and ultimate source of love itself. If we hope to be able to love relative to our God given potential, would it not seem reasonable that we must connect with the ultimate source of love available to us?

I realize many Christians believe that because they are born again they have a relationship with Father God. Being born again brings us into His family; however, I do not believe that qualifies as a relationship. Being born again opens the door and makes

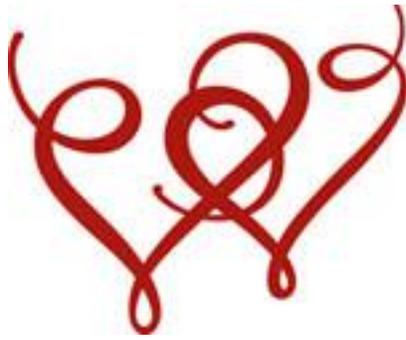
relationship possible, but establishing a relationship takes time and effort. It takes work and commitment. It requires pursuit. James 4:8 says, *“If you will pursue Him, He will pursue you.”* Isn't that awesome? Jesus consistently pointed us to Father for relationship. Shouldn't He (Jesus) know best? Father loves each of us unconditionally and desires a personal, intimate relationship with all. This is more than a concept; it is an experience. Accepting the fact that Father loves us because He created us in His image and wants relationship with us is a start, not the finish. Father's love is an experience to be had that will change us in body, soul and spirit. The more intimately we get to know Him, the more we will love as He does. The more we get to know Him, the more of our personal junk He will surface and confront so we can repent and be healed. This process is His gift of love to us, setting us free to receive His love and turn around and give it away to our world. Experiencing Father's love on a personal basis is the ultimate gift. His love empowers us to live life beyond what most of us could ask or think. Jesus' example of human existence was based on His intimate relationship with our Father. He said we would do even greater things than He did because He was going to the Father. The potential transformation for marriages is beyond description for those couples who would agree to follow Jesus' instructions and pursue Father God to develop the ultimate of all relationships.

If you wish more information on the message of Father's love, I encourage you to go to our website (www.placesinthefathersheart.org) and download our free eBook entitled [*Father's Love*](#). May Father richly bless you in your pursuit of Him as He completely transforms your views of life and marriage.

Questions

Chapter 26

1. If “...**our purpose for being is relationship**...” what has been the “purpose” of your life?
2. Based on your own life experiences, how have you defined love? How does your definition compare with Father’s definition?
3. How would you describe your present-day relationship with Father God?
4. How could pursuing relationship with Father affect your current marital relationship?



Closing

I pray that the investment of time you have made in reading this work will reward you with great dividends, and the fruit produced will be a tremendous blessing for you and your family.

Please remember, this work is not about excuses for sin or bad behavior, but an attempt to reveal potential reasons for some of the troubles in our marriages.

There is obviously pain in marriage relationships all around us. Sadly, much of that is unproductive pain. By that I mean that our pain surfaces and we do what we can to get through it, get past it, get over it or stuff it; anything to make it go away so we can feel better as soon as possible. It is unproductive because we have done nothing to prevent it from happening again, which it will. A much healthier process would be to make the pain productive by asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the source of the pain (this is not the time to see your spouse's face), and show you what healing is necessary so you don't have to keep repeating the experience.

Remember this: love hunger is an insatiable force within us. It will not be satisfied by anything but true, unconditional love from Father and others. Our woundedness must be healed. It will not go away over time.

Do you know someone who lives with a spouse who is angry, fearful, discouraged, depressed, lustful or adulterous, irresponsible, self-centered, abusive, jealous or insecure, or physically present but emotionally absent? Are you aware of a marriage that is stressed or

unhappy, withdrawn and/or separating? If so, I would ask you to prayerfully consider recommending this work to them. It could bring revelation and encouragement. If you are struggling and do not seem to find your answer within these pages, please don't give up. Ask Father to lead you to someone who can help you discover the source of your struggle. With Father's blessing, marriages can be saved and hope for the future restored.

There is hope for tomorrow!

To Him be all the Glory,

Roger



When two hearts are open, Father's love can get in and when our hearts are open to each other, that same love can spill out all over one another.