

GOD'S REVIVALIST

January / February 2015

and Bible Adversate



PROTECTING

Marriage



about this issue

PROTECTING MARRIAGE

To have a marriage that sings requires a Spirit-created ability to serve, to take yourself out of the center, to put the needs of others ahead of your own.... It is impossible for us to make major headway against self-centeredness and move into a stance of service without some kind of supernatural help. —Tim and Kathy Keller (The Meaning of Marriage)

Our culture is warring against marriage and Christian couples are not exempt from the pressures. Statistics indicate that they are just as likely to divorce as the general population (about 50%), while some claim that the Christian divorce rate is even higher. However, secular research doesn't differentiate between nominal Christians who rarely attend church and those who are committed and active in their faith. Those in the latter category are much less likely to divorce.

Marital difficulties for Christian couples do not normally arise from the culture, but from personal relationships of husband and wife to each other and to God. Hopefully the articles in this issue, along with ongoing, related articles throughout 2015, will be helpful in protecting marriages. In addition to the various resource lists in this issue, there is an expanded version online at www.godsrevivalist.com/bonus. —KF

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STAFF

- Ken Farmer, *managing editor*
- Kevin Moser, *art director, assistant editor*
- Shane Muir, *assistant graphic designer*
- Larry Smith, *editor*

the president's page



Average Americans do not look to the Master Designer for their understanding of marriage. They see marriage as a social convention that can be changed to fit the demands of the prevailing cultural norms.

THE STATE OF MARRIAGE

by Michael R. Avery, President

Marriage was God's idea! He is the Master Designer of this sacred, lifelong union between a man and a woman. Its origins rest, not in creation, not in the natural or the social sciences, and certainly not in us, but in the very being of God Himself. We can only understand this relationship of sacred oneness as we understand the relationship of the persons of the Godhead to each other. Marriage and the resultant family it creates is a "divine pedagogy" to teach us what it means to be made in the image of God and how to experience true communion and intimacy as we live with someone and for someone.

Unfortunately, average Americans do not look to the Master Designer for their understanding of marriage. They see marriage as nothing more than a social convention that can be changed to fit the demands of the prevailing cultural norms. This view of marriage can be both confusing and overwhelming. It is confusing because the present culture sends out contradictory and varying messages about marriage through books, magazines, movies, and music. It can be overwhelming because those messages cause people to ask of marriage what God never designed it to give—perfect happiness, conflict-free living, and idolatrous obsession with sex.

When a culture ceases to view marriage as God designed it, it will be marked by the distortions and perversions of that culture. For today's American culture, that means marriage is nothing more than a civil arrangement for the highly individualistic purposes of any two parties—male or female. This distorted view of marriage explains why most Americans have grown comfortable with divorce as a natural, maybe unavoidable, part of life. It explains why cohabitation is growing in popularity as an acceptable living arrangement and why same-sex marriage not only will be tolerated, but also ultimately will be embraced as normal.

What is the state of marriage in America? Surveys reveal the following statistics:

- 4 out of 5 adults in America have been married at least once (78%).
- 1 out of 3 have been divorced at least once (33%).
- Couples who are active in their faith are much less likely to divorce. Catholic couples are 31% less likely to divorce; Protestant couples are 35% less likely to divorce; and Jewish couples are 97% less likely.
- Nominal Christians who do not actively engage their faith are 20% more likely to divorce than the general population.
- The more religious a couple, the less likely they are to divorce; and the more secular a couple, the more likely they are to divorce.
- 53% of highly happy couples agree with the statement that "God is at the center of our marriage."
- The normal lifestyle for American young couples is to live together for a period of time in an informal trial marriage. However, these relationships frequently do not last.
- There were 646,464 same-sex-couple households in the United States in 2010, according to the Census Bureau.
- There was an 80.4% growth of same-sex couple households in the U.S. between 2000 and 2010, according to the Census Bureau.
- 25.3% of same-sex-couple households in the United States in 2012 had children living in them, according to the Census Bureau. ■



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God's Revivalist keeps me informed about campus news and the worldwide outreach of the school. Articles concerning doctrine and inspiration are always appreciated. God's blessings continue!

MR. AND MRS. FLOYD COOPER
Plover, WI

Thank you for the Revivalist! There are so many good sermons and articles in each issue. We love to read about the young people and their calling from God. Keep up the good work and God bless you all.

CAROLYN AND GENE SOWDER
Eubank, KY

I remember when I worked in the office and made address changes for Revivalist renewals. That was in 1946 to May 1948 when I was in the Christian Workers class (and Ten Weeks class before that). I am now 90 years old and living in senior

housing. I still drive and care for myself and am able to go to church most of the time. May God bless all of the workers who keep the doors of GBS open.

FRANCES CARPENTER
Yukon, OK

I look forward to each issue of the Revivalist with anticipation. It is surely one of the best Christian magazines. The articles are an inspiration.

DELLA M. STRAIGHT
Jay, NY

I am an 85-year-old widow who looks forward to each issue. Usually I sit down and read it immediately when it comes. I profit much from the pertinent truths that are addressed as we are on the threshold of Christ's return.

MARGARET R. SMITH
Hobe Sound, FL





Be Prepared

by Richard Miles

I have decided that I want to save money and time, so I will choose to do the following:

- ★ Have surgery performed by someone who never trained to be a surgeon although he thinks that he could help people by cutting on them!
- ★ Fly in a plane piloted by someone who thinks flying would be so much fun although he never had any flight training!
- ★ Get married with no preparation because I think that marriage would be an enjoyable experience!

Many of you will agree that the first two choices above are really dumb choices! However, I contend that getting married with no preparation equals the other two choices on the dumb scale! Next to being a disciple of Christ, marriage is the greatest earthly commitment most people make, yet they too often assume that they can handle this commitment with little or no preparation.

In truth, many of us got married with little preparation and still managed to have successful marriages. Indeed, this “trial and error” method will work for couples committed to making their marriage work, but there is a reason it is called trial and error. I write as an advocate of premarital counseling, something I am privileged to regularly engage in with couples.

Very few things are entered into with no formal preparation or orientation—jobs, driving, skiing, music

performance—well, you get the picture. But, hey, who needs formal preparation for the most important relationship between people! With divorce rates running frighteningly high and many other marriages suffering through commitments that range from unsatisfying to miserable, we should embrace what helps us build satisfying marriages where two people become stronger together than they are apart.

Research involving twenty-three separate studies on the effectiveness of premarital counseling and education programs reported that these resulted in stronger marriages. Those who utilized these preparations appeared to be better at resolving problems and enjoyed higher levels of relationship quality.¹ Failure to understand and accept individual uniquenesses due to differing backgrounds, personalities, and gender can cause one to feel threatened by another. Premarital counseling deals with this and fosters relationship skills for communication, conflict resolution, financial management, sexual relationships, etc, thus helping couples enter marriage with greater confidence and less fear.

We naturally “see through our own eyes.” Premarital counseling gives tools to see through the eyes of the other. When one understands and accepts another’s differences and respects and admires those unique qualities, the individual feels valued and the marriage bond is strengthened. Removing the mystery of another’s personality and communication differences moves the couple’s interaction into a safer context. Knowing why one thinks, reacts, and communicates in a different manner can change us to see that a person’s uniqueness is good. When we don’t understand these differences, we may wrongly assume that the other person should be just like us.

Counseling before marriage educates the couple in significant areas that will either deepen or divide their relationship. The couple must learn to harmonize their lives together in areas of faith, communication, conflict resolution, social and recreational life, financial management, sexual expectations, gender differences, family roles, child-rearing, careers, personalities, love languages, etc.

Faith: What they believe and how that faith is practiced is the foundation of all else.

Communication: Some have said that there are only three problems in marriage: communication, communication, and communication.

Conflict Resolution: I tell couples that the only difference between successful marriages and unsuccessful marriages is that those who are in successful marriages

resolve their problems. Resolving problems deepens intimacy in a relationship when individuals dare to open up their personal “worlds” to one another to resolve their concerns. Avoiding problems or arguing to win rather than to solve creates hostility and distance.

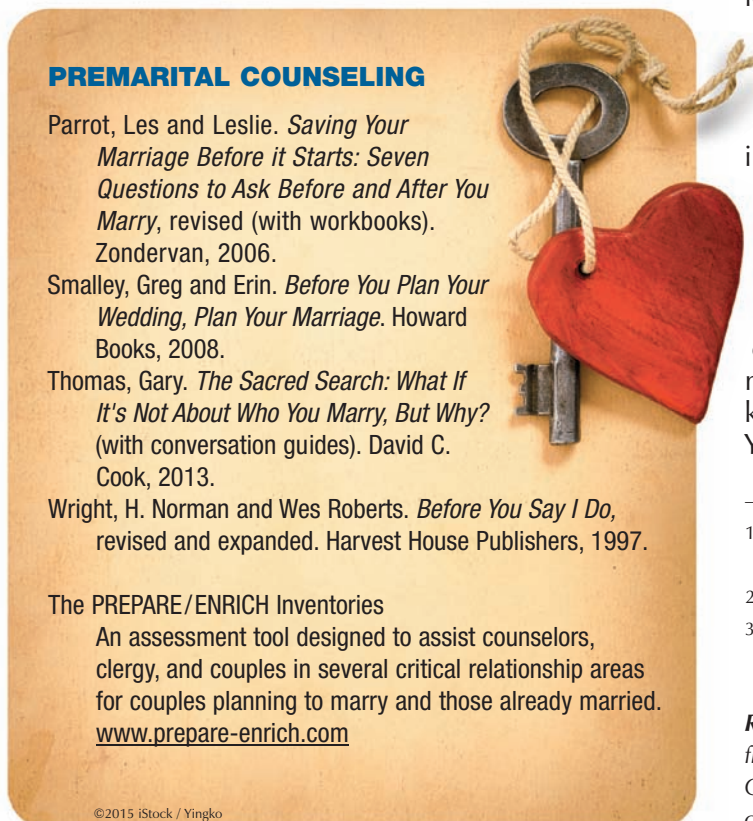
Social and Recreational Life: The ability to share socially and recreationally (or “leisure activity,” as the PREPARE Inventory² calls it) is highly connected to satisfied marriages. Couples do not need to enjoy all of the same activities, but they must have social and recreational activities that they genuinely enjoy together.

Financial Management: Financial conflict is one of the top causes of marital conflict. It is better to address differences ahead of marriage than to fight it out later.

Gender Differences: Men and women typically solve problems differently. Our memories even differ. Women remember what they associate with emotion, and men recall physical and competitive activities. This difference affects how we relate to one another. Women relate best through dialogue and intimate sharing of experiences, personal perspectives, and emotional content. Men associate relationships more with shared activities and often are uncomfortable or overwhelmed with the kind of interaction more natural to women.

Love Languages: Understanding the differences in how we sense that we are loved is vital to marriage and a valid topic of premarital counseling. Gary Chapman³ popularized the five love languages: words of affirmation, quality time, gifts, acts of service, and physical touch. Failing to understand and appreciate a spouse’s love language may result in a couple “shouting” that they love one another but neither one hearing it; they are each speaking in a “foreign” language to the other. Learning what each one’s love language is and teaching a couple to learn to become “bilingual” in their language of love will more capably speak love into the other’s life.

There are many things that the preventive “medicine” of premarital education (counseling) can do to enable a couple to begin their marriage with knowledge rather than mystery and strength rather than weakness. Why not make it a practice to begin marriage with knowledge and understanding rather than trial and error! You need it, and so do those watching you. ■



PREMARITAL COUNSELING

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Smalley, Greg and Erin. *Before You Plan Your Wedding, Plan Your Marriage*. Howard Books, 2008.

Thomas, Gary. *The Sacred Search: What If It's Not About Who You Marry, But Why?* (with conversation guides). David C. Cook, 2013.

Wright, H. Norman and Wes Roberts. *Before You Say I Do*, revised and expanded. Harvest House Publishers, 1997.

The PREPARE/ENRICH Inventories
An assessment tool designed to assist counselors, clergy, and couples in several critical relationship areas for couples planning to marry and those already married.
www.prepare-enrich.com

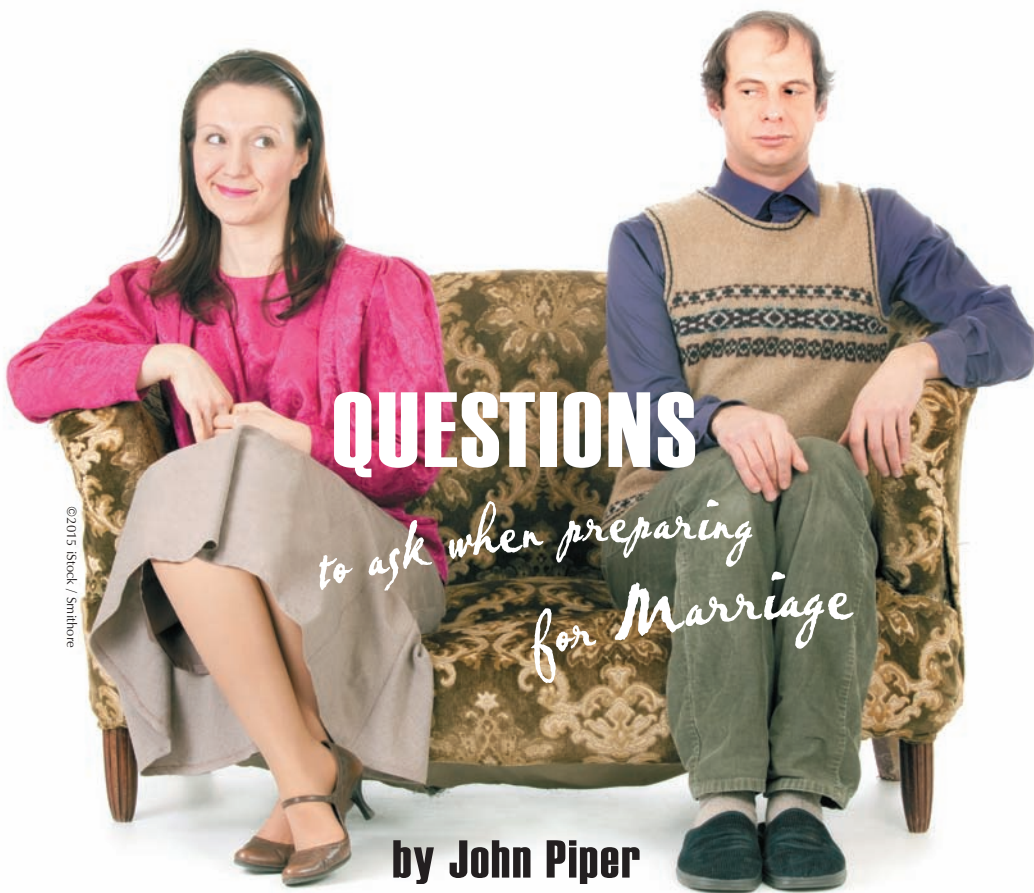
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1. “Premarital Counseling Builds Better Union.” Accessed at www.webmd.com on 12/29/2014.

2. Prepare Inventory is available at www.prepare-enrich.com.

3. Chapman, Gary. *The Five Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts*. Northfield Publishing, 2010.

Rev. Richard Miles (BRE '74) has a master’s degree in counseling from Liberty University and is Vice President for Student Affairs at God’s Bible School. He is available to hold marriage seminars and can be contacted at rmiles@gbs.edu.



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QUESTIONS

*to ask when preparing
for Marriage*

by John Piper

In each of these sections, one item could be added that I have not listed; namely: How do you handle and live with differences? How do you decide what can remain differences without jeopardizing the relationship?

Theology

- What do you believe about everything?
- How do you form your views?
- How do you handle the Bible?

Worship and Devotion

- How important is corporate worship?
- What are your daily personal devotional practices?
- What would our family devotions look like? Who leads out in this?
- Are we doing this now in an appropriate way: praying together about our lives and future, reading the Bible together?

Husband and Wife

- What is the meaning of headship and submission in the Bible and in our marriage?
- What are expectations about situations where one of you might be alone with someone of the opposite sex?
- How are tasks shared in the home: cleaning, cooking, washing dishes, yard work, car upkeep, repairs, shopping for food, and household stuff?
- What are the expectations for togetherness?
- How do you understand who initiates sex and how often?
- Who does the checkbook—or are there two?

Friends

- Is it good to do things with friends but without spouse?
- What will you do if one of you really likes to hang out with so-and-so and the other doesn't?

Children

- If and when should we have children? Why? How many?
- What are the standards of behavior?
- What are the appropriate ways to discipline them?
- What about school? Home school? Christian school? Public school?

Lifestyle

- Own a home or not? Why?
- How many cars? New? Used?
- How do you make money decisions?
- Where will you buy clothes: Department store? Thrift store? In between? Why?

Entertainment

- How much money should we spend on entertainment?
- How often should we eat out? Where?
- What kind of vacations are appropriate and helpful for us?
- Should we have a television?

Conflict

- How do you handle your frustration or anger?
- What if we disagree both about what should be done, and whether it is serious?
- Will we go to bed angry at each other?
- What is our view of getting help from friends or counselors?

Work

- Who is the main breadwinner?
- Should the wife work outside the home? Before kids? With kids at home? After kids?
- What are your views of daycare for children? ■

Excerpted with permission. See complete article at www.desiringGod.org/blog/posts/questions-to-ask-when-preparing-for-marriage.

John Piper is founder of desiringGod.org, chancellor of Bethlehem College and Seminary, and author of more than 50 books.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015

Love's Treasures

If love made us perfect and flawless, there would be no need for passages in the Bible to remind us that “love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Pet. 4:8 RSV), or the lengthy description given in 1 Corinthians 13 (MSG) which tells us that love:

Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,
Doesn't revel when others grovel,
Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,
Puts up with anything,
Trusts God always,
Always looks for the best,
Never looks back,
But keeps going to the end.

The cold, hard reality is that regardless of how deeply in love we are, how spiritual we are, or how smart and well educated we are, we are all flawed. We are all earthen vessels, as we are reminded in 2 Corinthians 4:7, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us” (NKJV).

Whether we admit it or not, we are acutely aware that we are all flawed and faulty. We come into the world “blemished” (to use a good biblical word) and then we are “spotted” by the experiences of life. Our “earthen vessels” get banged-up and broken. But do those in love even notice the blemishes and spots? It is often said that LOVE IS BLIND.

Lovers are often blind to the beloved's negative traits and tend to create an idealized image of the beloved. In a surprising number of cases, people fall in love with their idealized vision of their lovers, or with the idea of being in love, rather than with the actual reality of their lovers.¹

But, is love REALLY blind? If we want something, we will argue for it, persuading ourselves of its legitimacy and of our need for it. It is largely a one-sided argument. Our reasoning will rarely contradict what we desire. We see what we want to see. Very selective.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say LOVE IS FOOLISH. Blindness tends to



in Earthen Vessels by John Parker

be willful in that we are foolishly choosing not to “see” the blemishes and spots. That does not change the reality of their existence. We may overlook them now, but eventually they will come into focus. It is often just a matter of time. This is why short courtships are risky and “hot romances” involving physical passion before marriage are dangerous and usually lead to a difficult marriage relationship. This is also why it is so important to have good premarital counseling. Yes, love—especially young love and new love—tends to live in denial!

If love is blind, MARRIAGE IS AN EYE OPENER. It is amazing how getting married removes the blinders from one's eyes! How I wish we could get couples to see before they get married what becomes so glaringly obvious after they get married!

So marriage is a real education for both husband and wife. Why? Simply because couples too often marry for all the wrong reasons and with all the wrong expectations! Their marriages are not built on honesty, thoughtfulness, and prayer. They are often built on physical or emotional passions rather than the proper foundation of true Agape love! Does that mean that it is not possible to rebuild the foundations of a healthy love relationship afterward? NO! It IS possible to rebuild, and repair, and restore a healthy love relationship.

When the stresses of life and relationships take the blinders off of our eyes, old fears suddenly surface and old hang-ups which had been well hidden start appearing. The baggage we brought into the marriage starts getting unpacked. There is no running to our fairy tale world of denial. So what do we do when we find ourselves disappointed in this magic world of matrimony with the cold hard realities of life?

The key to confronting the disappointments of unmet expectations in marriage relationships is found in a principle which Jesus taught us. It is in making our marriage partner the “treasure” of our heart. A treasure in an “earthen vessel!”

Jesus said “FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO” (Mt. 6:21). What a powerful principle! God has designed us in such a way that our emotions spontaneously attach to whatever we TREASURE. HEARTS attach to TREASURES!

As Dr. Gary Smalley declared in the title of his best-selling book, love is a decision.² What a powerful, transformative truth that is. When we decide to treasure someone enough to pursue a lifelong marriage relationship with them, our emotions and affections attach.

We all get excited when we enjoy the “treasures” of our hearts. We’re willing to be inconvenienced, to spend time and money, and even to suffer or wait to get that treasure—whether it’s a trophy fish, big-antlered buck, antique, or collectable! We get emotional, in our own way, when we discover and experience those treasures.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if our spouse could become the treasure of our heart? If we could get our eyes off the glamour gals and guys of Hollywood—the glossy ads showing toned and tanned bodies and flawless features—and purposefully decide to treasure our spouse, we would discover that TRUE beauty is often found in earthen vessels. That discovery may take a lifetime to fully understand!

Jesus talked a lot about the “treasure principle.” He said when a man finds a treasure “hidden” (not readily visible) in a “field” (not a glamorous place), he goes and sells all that he has to buy that field (Mt. 13:44). Think about those two key concepts: “hidden treasure” (it has to be sought; it is not readily apparent on the surface), and “field treasure” (not in a glamorous place, but in a common place).

Jesus says the person who finds the hidden treasure will joyfully sell all that he has in order to purchase the field that contains it. The lesson to be learned is this: When you joyfully sacrifice to buy the field, you get the treasure. In the process, your “EMOTIONS” get connected to the “selling ALL that you have to buy the field” because you know that beneath the surface of that ordinary field lies hidden treasure.

The reality is this—God designed us to long to be treasured. When you treasure your spouse, beautiful things happen.

There is not a more beautiful and accurate picture of what marriage is to be than that of Christ’s love for the Church (believers) as His bride and how, though we are far from perfect, He has sacrificed Himself to redeem us and to enable us to become His PERFECT BRIDE!


“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless” (Eph. 5:25-27, NIV). ■

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2. Smalley, Gary and John Trent. *Love is a Decision*. Thomas Nelson, 2001.

John Parker has been involved in pastoral ministry and missions since graduating from God’s Bible School (BRE ’78). He and his wife Cathy (Horrall) (BRE ’78) are currently pastoring the Village Park Bible Methodist Church in Westfield, IN.

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MARRIAGE RESOURCE WEBSITES

www.5lovelanguages.com
www.authenticintimacy.com
www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage
www.familylife.com
www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage
www.marriagebuilders.com
www.christiancounselingadvice.com
www.counselingalliance.com
www.crisisfamilycare.com

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DWELL TOGETHER with understanding

by Daryl Muir

Ellie planted herself before me, obviously perplexed. “I have a question. Are girls hard to understand?” I worked strenuously to keep my face straight and managed to ask, “Are guys hard for you to understand?”

“Well, yes! But girls aren’t.”

Brian, her boyfriend, strode by at that moment, singularly intent on departing the premises. He offered, “If guys are hard for you to understand, it’s because they think differently—which is why it’s hard for guys to understand girls.”

I posed an example. “You could have the exact same set of circumstances on two different days, and have a different reaction each time, right?”

“Yeeaah...”

“That goes completely over a guy’s head. Guys think logically...or try to. Occasionally there’s the epic fail. For a girl, it depends on how she’s feeling about herself that day, whether she’s happy with her outfit, whether it’s a bad-hair day, whether it’s sunny or dreary, what someone said to her that morning, the color of the spotlight on the corner—everything depends.” Her expression turned wry.

“Another hindrance to understanding: Girls speak in code. If you know the code, you’re OK. Guys usually don’t.”

“Say a couple have been on a delightful honeymoon and come home expecting to live the greatest romance ever to grace the earth. They plan a shopping trip together for Thursday evening. On Thursday afternoon, his buddies call asking if he wants to play a round of golf that night. He asks her if it’s OK, and she says, ‘Do what you want.’ So he plays golf.

“When he gets home, spring has inexplicably turned to winter. The romance accumulating in his heart through four hours of separation gets squashed like a bug.

“But you told me to do what I want!”

“Yes, but what she really wanted was to see what was in his heart, and now she knows, and she isn’t happy about it. If he said he was going to go shopping with her but then decides that he would rather go golfing, he obviously doesn’t care about her and doesn’t want to spend time with her, and he isn’t the man she

thought she married, and she is destined to be miserable and lonely forever after, and it’s all his fault.

“He’s thinking, ‘This is a catch-22, with no escape!’”

After a reflective pause, Ellie admitted, “Well, maybe girls can be hard to understand.”

She never did tell me the source of tension, but Ellie and Brian (not their real names) were experiencing the frustration of every couple building a relationship. They suddenly realize they’re not on the same wavelength. Even when deeply in love, men and women trip over miscues and miscommunication that leave them baffled and frustrated.

Besides the obvious physical differences, mental and emotional distinctions make male and female seem worlds apart. But in spite of the divergence, 1 Peter 3:7 obligates spouses to dwell together with understanding. It becomes a spiritual issue if they don’t. Husbands and wives are heirs together of the grace of life, and

their prayers are hindered if they don’t take whatever steps necessary to cross the gulf between them.

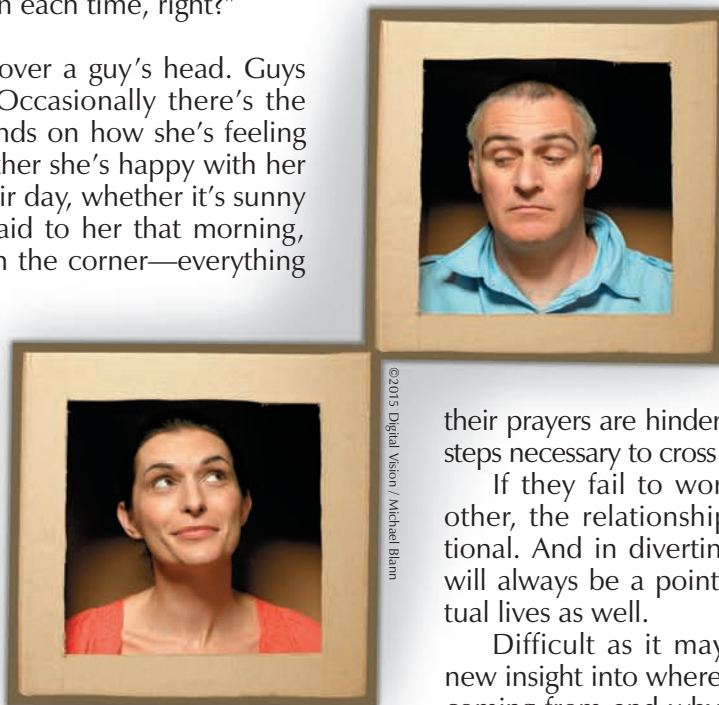
If they fail to work at understanding one another, the relationship quickly becomes dysfunctional. And in diverting from full obedience, there will always be a point of dysfunction in their spiritual lives as well.

Difficult as it may seem, it’s possible to gain new insight into where those of the opposite sex are coming from and why they think as they do. Some general physiological and developmental comparisons will help lay the foundation (see chart next page).

Understanding those natural differences affords a better handle on everyday interaction. Men and women see through disparate lenses. Assuming we think alike will sabotage the most celestial romance.

It’s easier to maintain harmony when you recognize that men and women hardly ever think alike, even when they come to the same conclusion. His mind will take one route to get there, hers another. Occasionally the routes never merge, so it helps to know up front that compromise may be the order of the day.

Authors, Bill and Pam Farrel, titled their book, *Men Are Like Waffles—Women are Like Spaghetti*,¹ because, for men, life is full of little boxes, but he can be only in



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womenversusmen

Girls develop the right side of the brain faster: the areas of speech, vocabulary, pronunciation, and reading.

Girls have more neural connections between right and left hemispheres of the brain, making multitasking easier.

Girls tend to play with toys that have faces, and use terms of endearment while they hold hands skipping down the walk.

Women value relationships, communication, and love.

Women respond to conflict by talking, the tend-and-befriend approach.

Boys develop the left side faster: the areas of visual / spatial skills, analytical thinking, and problem solving.

Boys have more neural connections within each hemisphere, enabling greater powers of concentration.

Boys tend to play with cars and trucks, or anything mechanical, and are more likely to be aggressively strafing alien invaders than playing quietly.

Men value success, achievement, and accomplishment.

Men are almost certain to withdraw, the fight-or-flight response.

one box at a time; for women, thoughts, feelings, and circumstances are intertwined like a ball of noodles.

This means that when he seems bothered by the fact that you're trying to talk to him while he's deep in a project, it isn't because you're the irritation. He's in a box, and overlapping another box breaks concentration and is frustrating, even confusing.

When she is crying for no apparent reason, and at a loss to explain, it's because multiple conversations and situations have interlaced themselves in her mind, producing emotional upheaval. A wise husband will sit down and gently draw her out, one puzzle piece at a time, until all the connections are unraveled.

Husbands, if your wife is upset about something, she needs to talk about it. Don't ever say, "OK, here's what we're going to do!" The goal is not to fix it. The goal is for her to be heard and understood. Look her in the eye, listen closely, nod and verbalize assent and understanding, and hear her out. If something needs fixed, that will come later. First, she needs her feelings and emotions to be validated and processed, or the problem will never go away.

Men are wired for accomplishment, so the male response is to take care of the problem and ask questions later. Women are wired for relationship, and that connection is most essential when emotions turn tumultuous.

Ladies, you must understand this: "Men...don't...take...hints." If you want to say something, or need something, just say it. That's how men communicate, and they won't take offense at directness, as women might, if it's said with respect.

When women speak, there may be paragraphs of hidden meaning between the lines. Men say what they think. Don't try to interpret what he said to figure out what he *really* meant. He already told you.

Men must learn "the code." Realize that there may be much unspoken behind those beautiful, inscrutable eyes. Restate what you're hearing for confirmation. Ask

probing questions about what hasn't been said. She'll talk if she's assured you want to hear her and won't react negatively.

In *Love and Respect*,² Emerson Eggerichs points out how Ephesians 5 requires men and women to exhibit traits that don't come naturally. Women must respect their husbands, and men must love their wives self-sacrificially. Whether or not it's instinctive, a husband must proffer selfless nurture and gentleness or he'll crush his wife's spirit. A wife must be respectful, whether she feels respect at the moment or not. Whatever the conversation, the least disrespect, real or perceived, will bring the discourse to a destructive end.

The vaunted "male ego" is as mythical as Pegasus. Women think men are rough and ready, and that nothing fazes them. The truth is that men are extremely fragile inside. Disrespect, especially from his wife, will devastate a man.

God designed the contrasts to complement one another, the strengths to balance the weaknesses. Rather than wishing them away, the distinctions should be accepted and celebrated.

Work at understanding your spouse. Study his/her character and personality as your favorite subject. As complex and dynamic as human nature is, that's a lifetime assignment; but the depth and unity of a relationship based in understanding make it eminently worthwhile. And together, you are heirs of grace unavailable to those who never bother. ■

1. Farrel, Bill and Pam. *Men are Like Waffles—Women are Like Spaghetti: Understanding and Delighting in Your Differences*. Harvest House, 2007.

2. Eggerichs, Emerson. *Love and Respect: The Love She Most Desires; The Respect He Desperately Needs*. Thomas Nelson, 2007.

Daryl Muir ('86) is the Assistant Resident Director for Men at God's Bible School and College. He also is a speaker for *Marriage Matters and Men of Integrity*.

NEWS

from the Hilltop

MISSIONARY CONVENTION

On November 9-11, GBS hosted its bi-annual missionary convention. We were delighted and honored to have Dr. Danny McCain (shown here) as the convention's main speaker, as well as representatives from nine different missions organizations as special guests and workshop speakers. McCain, a prolific



author, professor, and twenty-five year veteran missionary to Nigeria, inspired the students and guests in attendance.

Following the opening service on Sunday, everyone enjoyed a delicious international meal prepared and served by international students at GBS.

Students, faculty, and staff alike were challenged as they listened to Danny recount his experiences of



International students sing during the convention.

working side by side with Muslims and Christians in Nigeria's education system. Each of Dr. McCain's messages was recorded and all are available on our YouTube channel "GBSC 1900."

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM 2014

The King of Light, a musical drama produced by the Division of Music, brought more than 2,100 persons to the Adcock Chapel. The 85-voice choir, 40-piece orchestra, and cast of actors performed excellently. But even more satisfying are the reports of audience members and students accepting Christ. We received a number of comments. Here are two.

"It's been years since I was so moved by a Christmas program as I was last night. Slam dunk! Awesome, deep gospel. Very well presented. Superbly performed." —*Tim Keep*

"I just returned from delivering the last of the 22 young African

REVIVALIST FAMILY

On these pages, we feature items about GBS alumni, significant events scheduled throughout the "Revivalist Family," and brief news notes from across the Holiness Movement.

DEATHS



Rev. Russell L. Roberts, 89, passed safely into the arms of Jesus on November 17 at Harry Hynes Memorial Hospice Center in Wichita, KS. Russell was born in Kentucky in 1924 to Bradley and Angie (Nichols) Roberts, the fifth of ten children. He was a Navy Veteran of World War II. On July 21, 1943, he married Emma Wilson. Emma died in 1989 and he married Marjorie (Sue) Kiger Tamsett the following year. Rev. Roberts was in full-time ministry as pastor, evangelist, and singer for 54 years. For 23 years he served as President of the John T. Hatfield Camp near

Greenfield, IN. Survivors include his daughters, Marjorie Ann and Theresa Lynn; son Gary Lee; two step-daughters, Cinda and Brenda; 13 grandchildren and step-grandchildren; and 30 great-grandchildren and step-great-grandchildren; brother, Ray; and sister, Faye. Services were held at the Sproles Family Funeral Home with Rev. Stephen Kirkman officiating. Interment followed at the Glen Cove Cemetery with military honors conducted by contingents from the U.S. Navy, the American Legion, and Veterans of Foreign Wars.



George Robb French, 78, passed away quickly and gently November 18 after a major stroke. He was born in Pasadena in 1936. After graduation from high school, he served as S.D. Herron's assistant pastor. In 1965, he married Ann Ellenburg from Easley, SC. In 1969, the Frenches moved to Hobe Sound, FL, where G.R. served as business manager for Florida



Brittany Cravens sings a solo – GBS Christmas program 2014

people that Mae and I brought from our international church to the Christmas program. My heart was thoroughly warmed and ministered to as I sat there and listened to that wonderful ministry so graciously given. I don't think our young internationals had ever witnessed anything like this. I am so thankful for how well the truth of the Christmas spirit was presented to them. My prayer for these dear ones is that they will have a brighter vision of Jesus as was given

to them today.... The program...was professionally rendered with grace and sincerity." —Pastor Lloyd Terpenning (ThB '67), Good Shepherd International Church.

NEW EMPLOYEES

We would like to announce three new employees, all beginning their jobs in January 2015.

For many years there was at least one Wolf on the faculty of GBS. Then Deanna married and moved to Northern Ireland (2007), Garen and Sheila retired (2010 and 2012), and the last Wolf offspring, Rachele, graduated (HS '07, BA '11) and departed from the campus, leaving GBS Wolf-less. Well, that is no longer the case!

Rachele Wolf is returning as the new Aldersgate Christian Academy music teacher. She has completed her MA in Music at Miami University ('14) and has been working to



complete licensure requirements.

Two other new employees will be working in the Facilities Department. **Brian Spangler** will be working with the grounds crew, vehicles, and general maintenance. Since his GBS graduation (AA '14), Brian has been doing construction work and living in East Rochester, OH.



Jonathan Valentine will also be working with the grounds crew and general maintenance. He attended Aldersgate Christian Academy while his parents, Phil and Rhoda, worked at GBS (2010-13). Since completing high school ('14), Jonathan has been working at a machine shop in Newport, TN.

We welcome these new employees as they return to our campus! ■



Evangelistic Association (FEA Ministries) and chair of the Ministerial Department of Hobe Sound Bible College. He also taught numerous courses, including Bible, psychology, philosophy, systematic theology, Acts, and many others. He had a BA in Religion from Central Wesleyan College ('58), a Master of Divinity from Asbury Theological Seminary ('61), and a Master of Christian Education from Freedom University. He became president of FEA and Chairman of the Sea Breeze Camp Meeting in 1979. In 1980 he accepted an appointment as senior pastor of Hobe Sound Bible Church and served until 1988. In 1988 he resigned in order to give full attention to the leadership and development of the expanding ministries of FEA. Rev. French is survived by Ann, his wife of 49 years; two daughters, Christinna and Ann Marie; a son, John; six grandchildren; three sisters and three brothers. The memorial service was held at the Hobe Sound Bible Church with interment following at the Forest Hill Memorial Park in Palm City, FL.

NOTICE

Evangelistic Faith Missions has been granted membership in Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). According to the mission agency's president, Steven Hight, the ECFA guidelines will help EFM make sure that all of their processes and systems are appropriately transparent and legal. At the same time, people may be more likely to support EFM because the ECFA seal began to appear in the *Missionary Herald* in the January issue. In an age in which people are made to wonder whom they can trust, even among Christian organizations, the ECFA seal is a stamp of approval and confidence granted by a noteworthy Christian watchdog organization. "Interestingly," says Hight, "as we looked through the ECFA membership list, the only other conservative holiness organization that we found there was God's Bible School and College!" ■

Boundaries in Marriage

Protecting, Containing, and Defining You, Me, and Us

by Rebecca Miller

If there were ever a relationship where boundaries could get confused, it is marriage. The problem arises when one trespasses on the other's personhood—the elements of the soul—and tries to control the feelings, attitudes, behaviors, choices, and values of the other. Our relationship with Christ—and other successful relationships—is based on freedom.¹

Personal boundaries are perhaps the most confusing and misunderstood concept within a marriage relationship. It has been said more marriages fail because of poor boundaries than any other reason. Two questions arise.

First, are boundaries compatible with submitting one to another? Thankfully we are not left alone on this journey of learning how to “do” life with the one we love. Christ has gone before us. A healthy marriage is a mirror of the relationship Christ has with His bride, the church. Christ loves His bride unconditionally, sacrificially, and with grace, ultimately giving His life for her. His bride freely responds to His love, knowing He has her best interest at heart. Christ never takes our will, nor does he demand submission. Submission is always a free choice. Similarly, in a healthy marriage when a husband loves his wife unconditionally, sacrificially, and with grace as Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25), his wife is free to choose to submit to his love and leadership (Eph. 5:22), secure in knowing he has her best interest at heart. Submission is to be practiced by both the husband and the wife out of reverence to Christ (Eph. 5:21). When submission becomes an issue in marriage, there is usually a control problem at its root. Mirroring Christ's relationship with His bride, there is no room for control or demands in a marriage.

Second, how can we each have boundaries yet become one? The issue of maintaining individuality while becoming one in marriage seems mysterious; however, we may gain insight by considering the Trinity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each has His own personhood and responsibilities, yet together They are one Godhead. Similarly, a husband and wife continue to have their own individ-

GOD'S REVIVALIST and BIBLE ADVOCATE



ual identities when they join together as one. This “oneness” is a complementing of the other, rather than a completing of the other. There is me, there is you, and there is us. This concept will be addressed more fully when discussing enmeshment.

PURPOSE OF BOUNDARIES

Personal boundaries have three purposes: *protect*, *contain*, and *define*. Typically we think of boundaries as an invisible fence protecting us from others. Saying “No” to a person whose behavior is hurtful to us is not rebellion. Saying “No” is a protective boundary that serves to protect us and our marriage. While protection is crucial within relationships, boundaries are much more than self-protection. Containment boundaries also protect others from us, preventing us from going into their space. If I am hurt, angry, or feeling another strong emotion, containment boundaries help to keep me from spewing my toxic emotions onto the other person. The purpose of defining boundaries, or what I refer to as the “identity” boundaries, is to protect the embodiment of the self—my reality—and say, “this is who I am.” Our reality is composed of our body and how we look, our thoughts and what we believe to be true, our feelings and emotions, and our behaviors—what we do or do not do.

Personal boundaries have external and internal systems. External boundary systems set limits that protect the body and control distance and touch. Internal boundary systems function like a filter, protecting our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

We are responsible for setting boundaries for ourselves—that is why they are known as personal boundaries. We are not responsible for setting boundaries for other adults as boundaries are not to be used to control another person. Boundaries are protective tools, not offensive weapons. Learning to set boundaries can feel uncomfortable at first, especially when it goes against the basic survival skills learned during childhood. This is especially true if our caregivers were neglectful or abusive, or if we learned to suppress our emotions in order to survive. We may have been taught that emotions are either “good” or “bad,” and learned it was not safe to express “bad” emotions

such as anger or fear. Emotions are neither “good” nor “bad.” They just *are*. All emotions have been given to us by God for a purpose—they are messengers to inform us something is going on. This does not mean that emotions are “facts” which give us license to autocratically act on them. (Road rage is a good example.) Rather, we must listen closely with a rational mind to what our emotions are telling us, and take responsibility to act appropriately.

SETTING BOUNDARIES

A guide for setting boundaries is *know*, *name*, *maintain*.

1. Begin with *knowing* your own reality, who you are, what you believe, what you need. Embrace your worth and value. Honor your emotions. Know your limits. If you do not get this right, you will be unable to set appropriate boundaries. In fact, in order to get it right, you might have to have help in determining these aspects of your reality.

2. Once your reality is known, *name* your boundary. Verbalize the boundary clearly, calmly, yet firmly in as few words as possible using “I” statements. Do not justify or apologize for the boundary. Apologies send mixed messages. Healthy boundaries are firm but flexible—firm enough to protect our reality, while flexible enough to admit new ideas and perspectives. Healthy boundaries are those that “protect without isolating, contain without imprisoning, and preserve identity while permitting external connection.”²

3. Once the boundary has been named, you need to *maintain* the integrity of the boundary by having a consequence if the boundary is violated. A boundary without a consequence is reduced to a mere wish. Communicate consequences without threatening and hold the other person accountable for his/her own behaviors.

An example of a healthy listening boundary: “I know I cannot control you. I know I have worth and value (knowing) and I will no longer tolerate being disrespected (naming). If you continue to be disrespectful and demeaning, I will remove myself from this conversation (maintaining).”

BOUNDARY PROBLEMS

Boundaries are challenging to get right. They can be too rigid/controlling, (p22) ➡

CONTROL

and the marriage relationship

by Don Davison

On August 9, 1980, two starry-eyed kids started a journey together, as Linda and I were married in my home church in Bloomington, Illinois. Neither one of us had any clue as to how much our family history would color—and challenge—our days ahead.

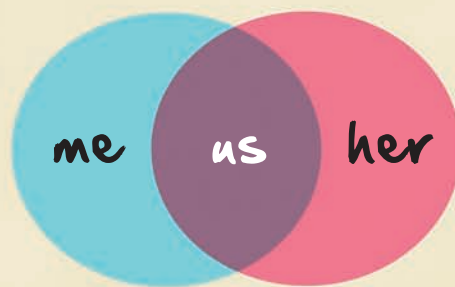
The atmosphere in my home growing up was physically abusive and emotionally traumatizing. A snapshot of one of those shaping moments occurred after I went to the altar. I was a little 8-year-old boy and seriously doubt I knew all the theological ramifications of what I was seeking. I was a little kid who wanted to go up front, find Jesus, and be a good boy. We were about a mile from the church on our way home—with me seated in the backseat of our car—when something happened that triggered my mother to turn around from the front and spew the words, “I don’t know what you think you got at that altar, but you didn’t get anything!”

Mom belittled a young boy seeking God. Apparently God hadn’t heard me, and I had no worth—no respect as an individual. By the time I had hardened into an adult and left home, I had a crippling, brittle bitterness towards my mother. It contaminated my overall sense of wellbeing and damaged my relationships with others. In fact, by the time I got married, I was emotionally detached—to the point that I couldn’t even feel sympathy for other people. Early on in our marriage, I distinctly remember the emotion of sympathy waking up for the first time in my mind and heart because of the tenderness of my

wife. Empathizing with hurting people was brand new for me.

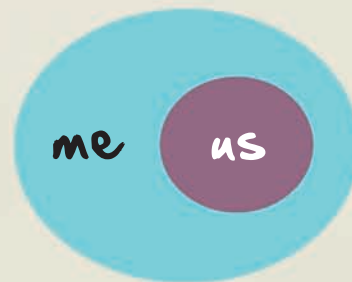
Because the home I grew up in was not reliable and safe, my outer world was out of control. I entered marriage thinking I had to have control in order to survive. To be safe, I had to control every aspect of my reality... my relationship with my wife, my children, my job...EVERYTHING. The underlying theme of my life was control.

Linda, on the other hand, came from a well-balanced home. Throughout her upbringing as a missionary kid, she had a picture of God as trustworthy and placed in Him her innocent faith. She knew Him to be a safe, forgiving God who delighted in answering prayer. This in turn helped her to develop into a warm and trusting young lady. God created her, of course, as an individual—a magnificent creation with her own mind, values, and feelings. That’s how she came into our marriage. And, our marriage should have looked like this:



Her life and my life each should have been represented by the large, separate circles, with her God-given individuality free to FLOURISH within our marriage. Our “life circles” would have overlapped in a strong, emotionally-safe connection of marriage.

The greater part of those individual circles—our individuality—who God created each of us uniquely to be—should never have been swallowed up in the marriage, lost and rubbed out. But Linda’s individuality had vanished, because my view of marriage was this:



Linda’s circle—her life—was totally lost in mine. To many husbands, that circle within the circle is a perfect picture of submission—just the way things “ought” to be. In fact, that model might look cozy to some men—like your arms around your wife. But to HER...and to your children...it feels more like smothering.

That model of marriage meant that Linda’s voice—her mind, her feelings, her values—were silenced unless they served my life. She became a function—an extension—of me.

One of the powerful resources that God has brought into our marriage is the book *Boundaries in Marriage* (by Cloud and Townsend, Zondervan, 2002). We each have a copy. I read mine as I travel; she reads hers at home. I make my notes in the margins...some of them are marked “ouch.” There are tears on some pages.

As I was reading the book on one of my many trips, God helped me to see my wife as an individual, with her own mind, her own feelings, and her own values. It was a “God moment” for me! As tears filled my eyes, I said, “Jesus, I believe You’re calling me to this—to allow and enable my wife—to recognize that my wife is to thrive as an individual within our marriage” as beautiful overlapping circles, not the circle within the circle.

Submission can’t mean unchecked power on my part and unquestioned

compliance on hers. It is a gift—not something I take. God works that way with us. And we men are to inspire submission—not demand it.

Our relationship and its correction and healing have been more about a journey than an arrival at a destination. I have seen the language of “arrival” give way to the reality—and beauty—of “journey” thinking. There came a key point in my life and our marriage when God led me to surrender my need for control to Him. When I did, He also gave me a new Christ-centered love for Linda. And, the Holy Spirit gave me four specific things to do in order to keep my relationship with Linda corrected and pleasing to Him. It was only after I thought on these things that I realized that the acronym that would help me remember them actually spells R-E-S-T.

R Do not *raise* my voice in uncontrolled anger when talking to my wife.

E Provide for her *emotional* safety from any threat from me or from anyone else as much as possible. Give her eye contact when I talk with her to see into her soul and validate her worth. (I had too often avoided eye contact as a means of control.)

S Don't resolve conflicts with *silent* standoffs, but courteously communicate about the problem and commit it to God for proper resolution in His timing. Jesus left us an example so that we should follow His steps: “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pet. 2:21-23).

T *Trust* the Holy Spirit to empower these things and make them possible, because I can't do them in my own strength.

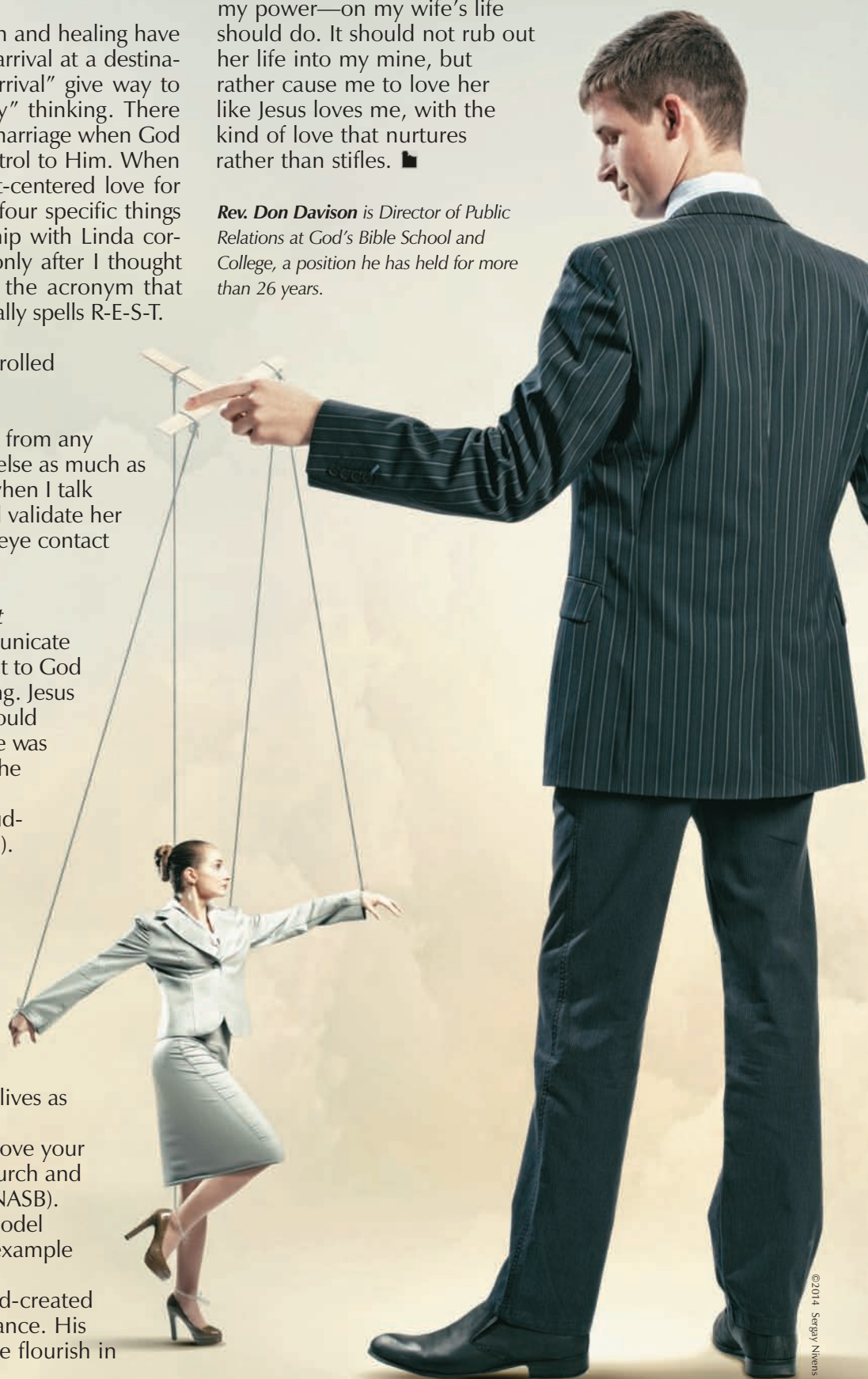
Webster defines REST as “peace of mind; mental and emotional calm; tranquility.” Jesus Christ desires to bring REST to our personal lives as well as to our marriages.

Paul challenged us husbands to “love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her” (Eph. 5:25 NASB). Jesus has been showing me how to model true love to Linda...after the selfless example of His love for His bride, the church.

He has never snuffed out my God-created individuality by a demeaning dominance. His touch on my life has always made me flourish in

relationship with Him. And that is exactly what my influence—not my power—on my wife's life should do. It should not rub out her life into my mine, but rather cause me to love her like Jesus loves me, with the kind of love that nurtures rather than stifles. ■

Rev. Don Davison is Director of Public Relations at God's Bible School and College, a position he has held for more than 26 years.



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Submission—the word alone seems to have the ability to quickly put any group of women on guard. There is a reputation that follows this topic because it has sometimes been misrepresented or taught with an unbalanced approach. At the heart of the issue, however, is a biblical principle that is bigger than any man-made rulebook. 1 Corinthians 10:31 gives a foundational value that should guide every Christian: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” This verse is an encouragement to those in relationships in which submission comes easy, and a support to those in relationships under the strain of tension. We may choose hopelessness in our circumstances; or we may choose contentment as we give the gift of obedience to our Heavenly Father by following Ephesians 5:22, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.” The joy of truly understanding the subject of submission comes when we realize the valuable gift we have to give!

There seems to be a misconception that in order to be a “submissive wife,” a lady may no longer have her own opinions, hobbies, or any sort of interests outside of those which solely serve her husband. I believe, however, that submission is not about becoming a woman without individuality; rather, it is about becoming a woman with a servant’s heart. When we say, “I do,” God doesn’t ask us to give up who He made us to be; rather, He wants us to bring our unique gifts to the marriage as we become a team. In the con-

text of marriage, I still have a point of view that is my own; however, in the give-and-take of discussion, it is my husband who has the final decision to make. This is not to suppress my “rights”; rather, I do so to honor my husband as the head of our home. My husband answers to God for the choices he makes in leading our family. As his wife, I answer to God for how easy I make his job—through my choices to submit to both God and man. God’s design for marriage is ultimately a beautiful example of leadership, teamwork, deference, and individual thriving.

I personally have been blessed to have a husband who has represented God’s reflected nature so well that the act of submitting to his authority now comes easily. That was not always the case. When we first got married, I was excited that I finally had my independence and freedom. Part of that excitement was the chance to escape the tension I had experienced in a home where my father was quite controlling (see article p.16) and demanded respect through words and actions. Because of those early experiences, I made many “resolves.” While there has since been a beautiful story of healing and hope that has unfolded in my family, at that point I was still bringing those unhealthy “resolves” from my early upbringing into a promising new marriage. It was unnecessary baggage. Thankfully, my

The Gift of **Submission**

by Amber Jones



GOD’S REVIVALIST and BIBLE ADVOCATE

husband made it impossible for me to keep my unhealthy “resolves.” His compassionate validation of my pain and struggles; his gracious, yet direct way of tearing down my unneeded defenses; his patient, Christ-like attitude in the midst of disagreements; his consistency, approval, attention, time, and so much more changed my initial attitude of “Bring it on, Buddy!” to one of absolute admiration. I could not help but respect him. This man had earned my joyous, freely-given submission.

So what was it that made that “freely-given submission” possible? My husband understood that submission is a two-way street that we must walk together as a team. Before and after Ephesians 5:22 where wives are addressed, there are verses that speak to husbands. We are to submit one to another, and then the word to men is specifically to love your wives “even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). Vital to a woman feeling free to choose abandoned submission to her husband is the wife knowing she is cherished by her husband. As women, we feel loved when we feel cherished, and we feel cherished when we feel safe. More important than financial security, safety involves an environment of Christ-like consistency, emotional protection for ourselves and our children, and the knowledge that we are valued by our husbands.

It takes intentionality to foster a healthy environment of emotional consistency within the home. It might involve each spouse taking a long look at the stereotypes of gender-specific behaviors adopted from parents. How have these healthy or unhealthy behaviors impacted the new marriage? What are ways those behaviors can be altered to reflect more of a servant-spirit toward one another? In what ways can we better be team players? In other words, “How can I step out of my comfort zone and really connect with you in your world and serve you?” When we as spouses begin to look together at the honest answers behind these questions—and purposefully take steps of humble obedience—that’s when God can bring miraculous change!

Time has taught me that my caring husband’s actions may make my choice to submit easier, but it is still a choice that I make. And, that choice is grounded first in my commitment to my Savior to live to glorify Him always...in good times and in difficult times. The choice to submit will naturally flow out of a deepening relationship with our Creator-God Who has also told us, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil” (Jer. 29:11); and, “...Be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5). It is in reliance on our Heavenly Father and His great love for us that we can feel secure enough to trust—even when submission in the human context does not come easily or seems to be “earned.”

So, should the topic of submission make us shut down or withdraw? Absolutely not! We have a beautiful answer—the idea that submission is a gift, a choice, an act of spiritual obedience. Becoming a submissive woman does not involve giving up boundaries of self-care and safety; rather, it means becoming one who keeps those healthy boundaries intact while living out compassion to those around her. Submission begins with a foundation of trust found in the security of intimately knowing our unconditionally loving Heavenly Father. Then, out of that, flows a desire to serve our husbands, our families, and those with whom we come into contact. Is it always an easy choice? Again, absolutely not! However, it is always a choice that is rewarded by God’s beautiful blessing of peace. By first trusting our Father’s heart—even in the difficult relationships—we can rest in His hope, courage, direction, love, intimacy, and purpose. ■

Amber (Davison) Jones (GBS HS '01) is a stay-at-home mom who resides in Hubbardston, MI, with husband Daron and their three children.

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the issue is *intimacy.*

by Tim Barber

No simple formula for protecting our marriages exists. The enemy of our souls knows each person and each couple's particular vulnerabilities and will exploit those vulnerabilities to his gain whenever possible. One potential vulnerable area is sex. In this brief article, I will address ways to protect our marriages from potential problems that have a sexual component. The reality is this: it's almost never about sex. More often it is about the absence of appropriate intimacy.

Two principles guide my comments. First, sex is a good thing. God created us as sexual beings and the joy associated with sex is part of His plan. The second principle may sound contradictory, but the reality is that sex is dangerous.

The first principle is that sex is a good thing. For those marriages that enjoy a happy, fulfilling sex life, this statement needs no explanation. Unfortunately, in many marriages, sex brings sadness, confusion, and pain to the relationship. There are many implications of saying sex is a good thing. Here are two.

Sex is part of God's plan for marriage. Evolutionary psychologists will try to convince us that sex is pleasurable because we evolved in such a way that combines pleasurable sex with reproduction. Doing what brings pleasure increases the likelihood of reproduction, thus ensuring the propagation of the human race. I believe a personal and loving Heavenly Father created us intentionally. I prefer to believe that God Himself chose to link pleasure with the act of sex. I will trust His infinite wisdom in this and accept the joyous gift He bestows upon us. We are created as sexual beings, end of story.

Sex is an expression of intimacy. Sex and intimacy are intended to go together. The physical act of sex should grow out of an emotionally intimate marriage. Studies tell us that couples that enjoy a broad-based intimacy are more sexual. Intimacy should include several aspects of life. Areas to seek intimacy in a more broad-based manner include: physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, recreational, and creativity. Intimacy in any of these areas can be defined as "shared experience," or, to put it another way,

"Into-Me-See." Broad-based intimacy means we share experiences, discuss topics at length, and seek to know what our partner thinks about many different aspects of life. In a real sense we "see into" our mate to know him or her more fully, and we need our mate to see into us. Intimacy is mutual and exists between a husband and wife.

However, the relationship of sex and intimacy is often a problem. Many either confuse physical sex with emotional intimacy, or falsely believe that physical sex leads to emotional intimacy. This reversal of the process (using sex to increase emotional intimacy) leads to multiple problems, which brings us to the second principle.

Sin corrupts the good. This is especially true when it comes to sex. As a result, sex is dangerous and even damaging in many settings. Sex is intended for marriage. We live in a sex-saturated culture. Literature abounds that discusses the dangers of the misuse of sex. Sex addiction, the damaging effects of infidelity, the harm of misinformation given by well-meaning parents about how sex functions within a marriage, and numerous other problems arise all too often. Much could be said here, but allow me to say just this. When sex of any kind extends beyond the Biblical message of healthy sexuality, we find ourselves suffering tremendous consequences.

Shame is a major consequence of the misuse of sex. At its root, shame results in fear of rejection. Shame causes the person to say, "If people knew me, they would reject me." However, 1 John 4:18 reminds us, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear." Protecting the sanctity of sex within marriage helps shield us from shame and, as a result, opens the door to greater emotional intimacy. In this kind of shame-free environment, I do not fear being known. I have learned that knowledge of my spouse, and her knowledge of me, is freeing. The physical act of sex then has a greater opportunity to grow out of appropriate, broad-based intimacy.

Sex and respect go together. This is a delicate and dangerous topic. The sad reality is that many have lost the importance of respect within the context of emo-



not *sex*

tional intimacy in general and sexual intimacy in particular. When any person, male or female, holds himself or herself in a position of superiority over his or her spouse, a cascade of negative consequences follows. If I believe my opinion is right and my spouse's is wrong, I can choose to respectfully disagree. Doing so maintains the dignity of the spouse and protects the emotional intimacy of the marriage. To become dogmatic, judgmental, or just plain stubborn destroys emotional intimacy.

Such disrespect is probably never more volatile than in the area of sex. Becoming demanding of sex, whether it is frequency, how it happens, or any number of things that couples disagree about, has the potential to communicate levels of disrespect that destroy emotional intimacy. So what can be done about this?

Rethinking Marriage. Consider two powerful passages of Scripture that address the nature of marriage. Both I Corinthians 7 and Ephesians 5 can be used to help us understand the need for, and the power of, respect. Or, they can be misused to justify one's own desires and wishes. Take a close look at Ephesians 5:21-33 and I Corinthians 7:3-4. Both passages talk about a mutuality, a respect, and an honor that is shown to one another within marriage. Yes, there are roles and other ways to think about the structure of marriage within the larger context of Scripture. However, in these two passages, a level of respect for one another is communicated that has tremendous implications for emotional intimacy. Misused, these passages become a club that destroys respect and emotional intimacy in the process. Used correctly, these passages allow us to think differently about what it means to "love one another" (John 13:34; Rom. 12:10; or I John 4:12). The love demonstrated by Jesus and to which God calls us is a self-sacrificing, respectful, intimate experience that brings great joy (John 10:9-11).

Once again, the issue is intimacy, not sex. Intimacy and sex are related, but are not the same. Our loving God invites us into a relationship with Him that is life transforming. One aspect of that transformation must be in the man-

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ner in which we relate to those closest to us. Sex is good, a God-given gift. It is intended for marriage. But it is also intended to occur within a well-balanced emotionally intimate relationship that involves respect for one another's wishes, desires, and needs. Sex can be hurtful and even divisive within a marriage. I suggest that if we are going to fight in our marriages, let's fight for emotional intimacy. ■

Timothy L. Barber, DMin, MA, LPCC-S, CSAT-S, NCC, a licensed professional clinical counselor, served in pastoral ministry for 22 years and is chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences at Cincinnati Christian University.

➡(p15) too flexible or too permeable, and, at times, all of the above—too permeable with friends, too rigid with the kids, too flexible with our spouse.

Boundaries which are **too rigid/controlling** prevent new ideas or experiences from getting in. The individual with rigid boundaries has a narrow perspective on life and sees anything that lies outside of this perspective as a threat. Rigid boundaries result in lack of connection within relationships by preventing “entering into” the partner’s experience. Example: “She raises the kids. My job is to make money. End of conversation.”

On the opposite end of the spectrum are boundaries that are **too flexible**. An individual whose boundaries are too flexible is easily overwhelmed by the other and is characterized by having difficulty making decisions. Example: “Where do you want to eat?” “I don’t care. Wherever you want.”

Too permeable boundaries often lead to enmeshment. When two individuals are enmeshed in a relationship, neither can be sure where he/she stops and the other begins. Signs include not knowing how to separate your feelings from his/hers, allowing his/her mood to dictate your level of happiness or sadness (codependency), and sacrificing your plans and goals in order to please him/her. Example: “I always wanted to be a farmer, but my wife doesn’t like dirt. So I became an engineer instead. If she’s not happy, I’m not happy.”

BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

Boundary violations are damaging to relationships, and in fact can destroy intimacy and trust. A boundary violation occurs when an external or internal boundary system is crossed. Violations may be intentional or unintentional. Some examples will be helpful in understanding violations.

Emotional boundary violations blur the line separating your emotions from the emotions of others and can result in enmeshment. Telling others how they should or should not feel is a boundary violation. Telling someone what to think or believe is also a boundary violation. We do not have the right to tell someone how to feel, what to think, or what to believe. Example: “Don’t think that way. I don’t want you to get upset. I can’t deal with it.”

Spiritual boundary violations occur when the right to choose spiritual beliefs is not respected. For those of us who strongly adhere to deeply held beliefs, allowing other individuals to choose their spiritual beliefs can be challenging. I have often reflected on the historical account of Jesus’ interaction with the rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16-22). Jesus spoke truth to the young man in love, and then removed himself from the outcome, allowing the young man freedom to choose either to embrace truth or reject truth. Nowhere in the account do we see Jesus being aggressive or trying to manipulate,

neither did He become mired in a dispute. Jesus respectfully allowed the young man to make the choice to reject truth and walk away in sorrow. Perhaps this is the greatest example of boundaries based on giving the freedom to choose for one’s self.

Physical boundary violations include touching a person without his or her permission or coming into their physical space without permission. Sexual boundaries are established by negotiating where, when, and how to engage in sexual activity, including in marriage. A boundary violation occurs when negotiation is absent.

BOUNDARY MYTHS

Certainly adding to the challenge of boundary work are the myths that result from misguided teaching or perhaps from genuine fear of standing up for one’s self. Common boundary myths include, “If I set boundaries, I’m being selfish,” or, “If I set boundaries, I will hurt others.” However we cannot control how others react, neither are we responsible for how they react when we are using our boundaries appropriately. It should also be remembered that setting boundaries with a person who is not accustomed to having boundaries set will often feel like rejection to that person. It is not rejection. It is how a loving, respectful relationship looks and acts.

Boundary work in marriage, while indeed challenging, is relationship changing. When you can know and protect your own reality, and know and respect your partner’s reality, you can then, and only then, freely and lovingly give yourselves to one another—securely protected while knowing and being known. Therefore, the truth is that boundaries actually increase your ability to be present with others.

Gracious and generous God, as you work in my marriage, teach me to respect the personhood of my spouse so that ours is a godly union that glorifies you. Teach me to be honest and take responsibility. Help me to communicate my boundaries clearly and to back them up with actions. Help me to take needed risks in my marriage, knowing that you will be with me. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.¹ ■

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Rebecca Miller has been a licensed professional counselor at Counseling Alliance, Cincinnati, OH, since 2000. She attended God’s Bible School 1975-77, and Steve, her husband of 36 years, attended 1975-76. Rebecca also has been an integral part of the GBS Counseling Center since its inception in 2009.

I TOLD HIM

by Tricia Lovejoy

My husband had turned out the lights as we crawled in bed, and he was recounting the activities of his day—his accomplishments and wins. We were two years into our church plant, and by all accounts we were doing well. More people than expected were showing up for weekend services, our church was becoming known in the community, and we had become a self-supported church. Knocking on doors, mailing out flyers, setting up church in a school cafeteria each week, and late night planning sessions were all paying off, and my husband was beginning to feel like our church just might make it.

I felt it, too. I had logged every hour alongside my husband and had watched as our baby church was beginning to grow. I felt a sense of contentment and purpose in what we were doing, and I knew God had called us to it. Yet, those first two years demanded every ounce of our time and attention. We didn't come up for air, it seems. With little money and no family near for free babysitting, date nights were unheard of. Our conversations were peppered with sermon ideas, staffing suggestions, brainstorming sessions, and meeting agendas. We gave our best to everyone else and came home too tired to engage each other.

So, that night, as we lay in bed in the cover of darkness, I finally said it.

I admitted I wasn't happy. I told him that we had become fantastic ministry partners but our marriage was being tossed by the wayside. My voice was steady, but tears warmed my cheeks as they streamed down. I wanted to see our church grow, but not at the expense of our marriage. What good would it be if we had an impactful ministry but didn't have each other? With quiet reserve I shared my heart. I didn't accuse....I was too weary for that. Maybe even numb. I simply spoke the truth in love.

Then I was quiet. So was my husband. Uncomfortably quiet. My heart pounded as I wondered how he would respond. When he finally did, I knew the Holy Spirit had been at work. My husband didn't become defensive or angry. He was broken. He apologized, and over the next few weeks we made a plan. A plan we still follow today, 12 years later. We pinpointed three ways to partner together in ministry *and* at home.

WHAT I REALLY THOUGHT



1. Partner together to meet the needs of ministry: As a married couple, God says that my husband and I have “become one.” If God has called my husband to a task, then, by extension, He has called me to that task. He has chosen US for ministry. So, whether I like the limelight or prefer to be behind the scenes, I am called to love, support, encourage, and be physically present for ministry. When my husband sees my active involvement and feels my support, He feels loved and honored.

2. Partner together to meet the needs at home: It's not my job to raise the kids and keep the house while my husband is out changing the world. Instead, we act as a team on the home front! My husband pitches in around the house to be a full partner with me—not just with chores, but with fun stuff, like dates, off days, vacations, and family nights. He takes the initiative in these areas to plan fun stuff for our family to do. When I see my husband so “present” in our home life, I feel loved and valued.

3. Partner together to meet the need for intimacy: Knowing the busyness of life, we set some protective boundaries to make home a soft place for us to fall. For instance, we limit appointments, as well as social media, in the evenings. Our goal is to know each other more than everyone else. Intimacy doesn't just happen. It is developed...over time...together.

Maybe you relate to what I experienced 12 years ago. Maybe you're living it right now. Could I give you some advice? Talk to your husband. In love, not anger or bitterness. And make a plan to partner together in ministry *AND* at home. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. ■

Tricia Lovejoy blogs at www.SharpenHer.com, is a pastor's wife and the mother of three fabulous kids. She states: “I am a passionate follower of Jesus. I believe the Bible. My goal is to live my life by its standard and teach others to do the same.”

TIME TOGETHER *ties together*

by Curt and Laura Ferguson

He sits on the park bench while she strolls the arboretum path. Checking the news on his iPhone, he's patient.... Just doesn't have a thing for flowers. She wishes he would walk with her.... Beautiful colors and aromas. Why can't he enjoy them, too? "But," she admits, "I don't really care much for politics, either. Oh well, it was nice of him to bring me here." She sighs wistfully. "It's normal for men and women to enjoy different things." Before walking on, she checks her watch to see how long it will be until they meet back at the car as planned.

"Honey, I'm home." She pokes her head out of the laundry room to catch a kiss. He obliges as he goes past. "How was work, Dear?" "Fine. Are my sweats clean? The guys are meeting for some basketball at 6:30. What's for dinner? I can't eat anything too heavy." A hurried supper later, and she, alone again, pulls out her tablet. Blog browsing. Pinterest. Some on-line shopping. Oh, not to buy anything. Not much anyway. "We can't really afford it. But a girl can dream a little, can't she?"

The alarm rings. He reaches to silence it, and almost simultaneously their youngest one flops against the side of the bed. "Daddy-Mommy-hungry!" She pulls her feet from under the covers and pushes them into her slippers. "Good morning," she yawns. "Let's have some breakfast." Then to both of them, "What sounds good?" "Cap'n Crunch!" shouts the short one as the tall one disappears into the bathroom. His voice emerges: "Thursday morning, Dearest. Men's prayer breakfast is in twenty minutes." "Oh, that's right," she responds. "Have a good day. We'll see you this evening." To the two-year-old, "Run, wake up your sisters and I'll go get breakfast ready." A long day lies ahead. "But," she recalls with a touch of relief, "tonight is my book club while he watches the kids."



time together tips

Take a walk together—slow enough to visit, just vigorous enough to call it exercise.

Take turns reading a book aloud to each other. Discuss it.

Attend or watch lectures or classes, and study together.

Turn off digital devices during meals. Look into each other's eyes. Ask, "What's new about you?" or "What's on your mind?" Listen.

Perhaps these scenes look normal...maybe even heart-warming—husbands and wives who have learned to respect each other's differing interests—not to suggest that these are complete pictures of their marriages. He goes to work. She cares for the home and children. They go to church. They do vacations. They usually meet each other's "needs." He has his life, she has hers; they intersect when it is convenient.

Is this sort of marriage all that God offers? Is this what Christians should expect, or settle for, in marriage? Should we resign ourselves to doing our duties to, and expecting little more than that from, the one person we promised to love and to cherish until death do us part? Or were the vows "until hunting season do us part," or "until Facebook do us part"? Is this one to whom we pledged our life the same one who plays second fiddle to a tee time?

Really?

We've starred in scenes hauntingly similar to those above. As we allowed ourselves to pursue separate interests, we grew apart. Separate interests take time. Time is a limited resource. Time is the currency of life. Want to know what people value? Watch how they spend their time.

There was a time when we could not wait to spend time with one special person. We couldn't get enough time with The One. We gave up just about anything in order to talk with, walk with, share with, grow with, learn with, and quietly be with The One. As a matter of fact, we wanted to spend the rest of our life with The One.

But there came another time, years later, when we awakened to the fact that we didn't have that same insatiable desire to spend time with The One. If you can relate to this transition, ask yourself: what changed? In each marriage, there are two rather unpleasant possibilities.

First, in the early days you really wanted to make The One happy, to fulfill his or her dreams, and to provide The One with lifelong companionship of the most meaningful sort. You loved The One selflessly. If that were once true, is it still...based on how you spend your time?

There is a second possibility. Perhaps during courtship you were pursuing your own happiness. Getting The One was to fulfill your own desires. And now that you got The One, you no longer need to invest any significant time talking, walking, sharing, growing, learning, or being with The One.

Whatever the brutal truth may be, unless we get completely honest with ourselves, our lives—including our marriages—will never change for the better. If we no longer invest time in our relationship, the marriage will starve to death. It might take our Christianity along with it.

A Christian is someone committed to following Jesus. This commitment results in lifelong growth and life-refinement as we continuously learn more about self, others, and Him. Those closest to us help us in this process, since we often don't see ourselves as clearly as others do, and because "two heads are better than one, not because either is infallible, but because they are unlikely to go

wrong in the same direction" (C.S. Lewis). A healthy marriage is one of God's tools to help us live as Christians.

Of course, it's not just "time" that matters. You probably spend about a third of your time together...asleep. You spend hours each week together in church and at meals. That's not it. Nor do we mean being entertained—watching movies, sports, or other vege-tainment* that glorifies all things temporal. Squandering precious time that way, even together, at best robs us of meaningful time, and at worst contributes to discontent and tends to push us away from God and each other.

Two becoming one is far more than a physical phenomenon. Did the marriage license diffuse your desire to discover all else? If so, you miss so much. Really knowing another person intimately is a lifelong pursuit, as is being so known.

Quality time together requires the engagement of two minds. Exchange your thoughts. Talk and listen to each other. Lovingly question each other and yourself. Share struggles. Your spouse is someone you must be able to trust never to "use information against you." Sympathize. Help each other regain perspective. Encourage. Challenge. Think things through...out loud. Choose to appreciate what interests your spouse.

Why does he look forward to the end of his work day, and she to his arrival? Why do you look forward to holidays and weekends? If yours is a vibrant marriage, it is because you still want to spend as much time as you can—to talk, walk, share, grow, learn and be—with The One. Trusting another person with everything, and being so trusted. Choosing the same goals, sharing the same objectives, melding two whole persons into one unit. Losing "his" or "her" life and finding something much better. ■

* "Veg" or "Vegged": to relax in a mindless way, as in, "We vegged out all weekend, watching the soccer channel and ordering pizza."

Curt and Laura Ferguson of Salem, IL, have been actively building their marriage since 1989. Laura, a mother and musician, blogs at www.fergyfamforum.blogspot.com. Curt, an estate planning attorney, blogs occasionally at www.liberty-morality-faith.blogspot.com. They are parents of LaRae (21) and Rachelle (19).



Marriage Counseling

When To Get It And What Kind To Get

by Butch Heath

Every married couple faces problems or difficulties in their marriage relationship as they go through life together. Yes, I mean YOU, and of course I mean me! Many problems in marriage can be resolved if both the husband and wife understand the problem and are willing to work together in resolving it. For many marriage partners, it seems easier to just ignore the problem, hoping it will go away; but most problems do not go away by themselves.

Furthermore, couples too often think the problems they experience are unique to them. But the truth is that most marriages experience the same kinds of problems. The main difference is how each couple reacts.

Couples need to understand that when they have a problem that does not get resolved between them, it is time to seek outside help. Never let the statement, “We are in counseling,” become a stigma to your marriage. It is never a shame to protect your marriage by seeking help for your difficulties. In fact, God has given us biblical admonition concerning the value of counseling. Consider these three verses.

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels (Prov. 1:5).

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety (Prov. 11:14).

Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established (Prov. 15:22).

The application of these verses clearly supports counseling for marital issues. Counseling is the right

choice when a married couple continues to experience unresolved problems.

Why do some couples need counseling and others do not? Those that do not need outside counseling tend to have learned and practice three basic principles for having a healthy, happy, and successful marriage.

1. They understand that men and women think differently and do not try to change that fact.
2. They both have given up their individual rights to the other and practice doing so on a daily basis.
3. They love each other unconditionally with a godly love, which includes the ability to forgive each other.

On the other hand, the couples that need counseling are those who are still struggling to hold on to their rights. Holding on to personal rights makes it hard to understand, to forgive, and to truly love one’s companion.

So, if a couple is experiencing problems, they should talk together about the problem. When both partners seek to understand the problem and are able to resolve it through openness and a spirit of forgiveness towards each other, they usually do not need counseling. It is shocking to discover how many couples with problems never stop to sit down together and talk about them! If you are afraid to talk to your companion about a problem, then you do need to seek outside help.

It has been my experience in counseling couples, some of which are presently facing divorce, that they could resolve their issues in thirty minutes or less if they would be willing to say, “I am sorry”; seek to resolve

the problems; and forgive and forget the past, never bringing it up again once it has been processed.

If, after talking together, you cannot come up with an agreeable resolution to your problems, then you really need to seek help—as a couple. If your companion refuses to go with you for help, then you need to choose to go alone to receive help for yourself.

So couples need to seek counseling when they are unable to personally resolve the issues in their marriage. It is comforting to know that marriage counselors are caring people who are concerned about the burdens and issues in your marriage. They want to help you work through your problems—to overcome them.

The next question is, “Where do I go for counseling and what kind of counseling do I need?” I am suggesting two levels of counseling. The first is pastoral counseling. The second is professional counseling.

Before describing each of these, I want to share some very important concerns for you to consider. The first concern is the issue of privacy. Whether it is pastoral or professional, your counseling must be kept in complete confidence. If you know that the counselor you are considering is one who talks too

much and shares things with others about clients, you should reconsider.

The second concern is the type of problem you are facing. Pastoral counselors are excellent sources for help in the areas of spiritual and social relationships. Professional counselors are excellent sources of help in the areas of medical and psychological assistance. You and your companion must decide which kind of help you need based upon the issues you are facing. If that decision is difficult, begin with pastoral counseling. Early on it can be determined, with the help of the counselor, whether professional counseling is needed.

Pastoral counselors approach the issues in a marriage from a biblical point of view. They are aware of the many broken people in this fallen world who need spiritual guidance and help in overcoming the issues in their marriage. The issues include communication problems, physical problems, financial problems; inappropriate behavior with the opposite sex, sexual sin, trust issues... and the list could go on and on. The pastoral counselor seeks to reconcile the husband and wife through the power of God’s Word, forgiveness, and the redemption of His grace.

Professional counselors tend to approach the issues in a marriage differently than a pastoral counselor. Professional counselors or clinicians are usually licensed or certified in one of the major clinical disciplines.

They begin by making an assessment of the couple’s problems in order to understand their relational issues. They may still use the biblical view in solving the marriage problems, but they also include other processes in assisting the couple to find help. Next they develop a treatment plan, which will provide the principles and resources to move the couple towards healing in their marriage. Clinicians are also qualified to provide testing to determine if medicinal or psychiatric care is needed.

Both levels of counseling, pastoral and professional, have their place in helping marriages. It is up to the couple to try to predetermine their need. If they are not able to resolve their own issues, they should seek help. Many couples start with pastoral counseling because of easier access. If additional help is needed, seek professional counseling, possibly through the recommendation of your pastoral counselor.

Whatever your problem may be, first take it to God in prayer. It is amazing what God can do if you seek Him first. If there is no resolve, let God lead you to the next step. God created marriages and wants them to succeed. He is still redeeming difficult marriages for the couples that seek His transforming power and grace. ■

Butch Heath, after pastoring for many years, founded and directs Crisis Family Care in Hobe Sound, FL. In addition to pastoral counseling, he holds marriage seminars and conferences.

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FIND A COUNSELOR

www.aacc.net/resources/find-a-counselor

American Association of Christian Counselors
Phone: 800.526.8673

www.focusonthefamily.com/counseling/find-a-counselor.aspx

Focus on the Family
Phone: 800.232.6459



Professional Counseling

What To Expect

by Andrew Graham

Many couples recognize that they are in distress and are unable to resolve their issues, but they are unwilling to seek professional help because of an inaccurate conceptualization of what professional counseling looks like. Caricatures of professional counseling abound; professional counselors are seen as aloof cigar-smokers who doodle on scratch-pads while clients lying on couches talk about their childhood; or they are seen as secular humanists who give unconditional affirmation for those engaged in sinful behavior.

These are inaccurate. There are indeed quality professional counselors who are conservative Christians and who have the education and experience to guide couples through their distress to a God-honoring marital relationship. Debunking the stereotypes and providing a brief overview of what can be expected from professional marital counseling is a key component in helping those in distress.

SELECTION OF A PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR

In selecting a professional counselor, a couple wants to make sure the counselor possesses the education and experience to provide the counseling services you need. Even more important, particularly to conservative Christians, is the worldview of the counselor. For both of

these concerns, it is helpful to consult one of two registries (see p.27) maintained by the American Association of Christian Counselors and Focus on the Family. These two organizations screen self-identifying Christian counselors to ensure their professional credentials and their commitment to conservative Christian principles.

After identifying and contacting a professional counselor, a couple can expect to be scheduled for an assessment session that usually lasts 90-120 minutes and typically costs \$120-\$240; subsequent sessions are generally 45-60 minutes long and cost \$90-\$150. Rates vary by region, and many professional counselors offer a sliding scale for those with a lower household income; some Christian professional counselors offer a discount for couples who are in full-time Christian ministry.

ASSESSMENT

Most professional counselors who work with couples start by assessing the individuals and their relationship. While some do this through an interview alone, most often a specific assessment strategy is employed.

A professional counselor may ask that a couple complete a written or online assessment tool. The most popular relationship assessment tool is the PREPARE/ENRICH: PREPARE for premarital couples, and ENRICH

for married couples. The tool is completed by each person independently and assesses the relationship on areas such as communication, conflict resolution, roles, sexuality, finances, spiritual beliefs, personality, and relationship dynamics. This information is helpful to counselors, giving them an idea of how both individuals are thinking and feeling. It helps to identify areas in which the couple have strong agreement and compatibility and areas in which they need to grow in their relationship and understanding of one another.

Instead of a formal written assessment, a professional counselor may choose to create a genogram with the couple. A genogram is similar in structure to a family tree, except that it includes visual representations of relationship dynamics. This approach is usually accomplished through interviews.

An interview can be short or long, depending on the context of the counseling and the presenting problem. For a couple seeking some brief marital counseling, a few questions might suffice: what is your presenting concern? How long have you had this concern? What have you tried in the past to address this concern? What worked and what didn't work? If the issue could be completely resolved in an instant, how would your relationship look different than it does now?

ORIENTATION TO COUNSELING

Regardless of the assessment protocol used by the professional counselor, orientation to counseling is usually the next agenda item. In some settings, confidentiality and its limits are addressed even before the initial assessment.

As licensed providers of services, professional counselors are required to secure permission to provide counseling services; this is usually called Informed Consent or Consent to Treat. This document usually includes information about the counselor's professional background, education, credentialing, and worldview; session duration and length of counseling; access to the counselor outside the session; fees for services; explanations about the effectiveness of counseling as well as risks; procedures related to what to do in case of an emergency or complaint; as well as confidentiality and its limits.

Professional counselors are required to maintain confidentiality. Information disclosed during a confidential relationship cannot be shared without the permission of the individual who shared it—with a few important exceptions, such as child abuse, elder abuse, or suicidal or homicidal intent. Apart from these exceptions, counselors are required to assert privilege; information can only be shared with the specific permission of the individual who shared it. In couples counseling, it is important for the profes-

sional counselor to discuss with the couple the level of confidentiality if one of the spouses discloses information while the other is not present.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Once the couple seeking counseling has been assessed and oriented to counseling, professional counselors often reference some key marital enrichment resources that pertain to the couples' specific presenting issue.

These resources might include select passages of Scripture that describe commitment in marriage, such as Matthew 19:6: "So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate" (ESV). They might include a brief overview of the Chapman's five love languages (words of affirmation, acts of service, quality time, gifts, and physical touch) and how important it is to identify the primary love language of each spouse so that their needs are properly met. Or perhaps relevant resources include reflections on Eggerichs' *Love and Respect* or Harley's *His Needs, Her Needs* models.

Many professional counselors encourage couples in distress to engage in homework activities between sessions. Often, these sorts of resources include a collaborative study of Scripture or reading from selected books on Christian marriage (see list on p.9).

EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENT STRATEGIES

Professional counseling is about more than assessment, education, and advice-giving. It is more than providing marital enrichment exercises and recommended reading lists. It is also about using evidence-based strategies that help couples to reach their goals of conflict resolution and improved relationships. One such evidence-based model of couples counseling is Worthington's Hope-Focused Marital Therapy, a model grounded in both Scriptural support and empirical support.

In the Hope-Focused model, following assessment and orientation comes goal-development—to be sure that both spouses are heading in the same direction. Interventions are then selected by the professional counselor that match the goals for counseling.

CONCLUSION

Not all couples in distress need professional counseling. Those who do should locate a trained professional who can guide them to change their current patterns of functioning in a way that preserves their marital commitment and brings glory to God. ■

Andrew Graham, PhD, LMHC, NCC, BCPCC, is an assistant professor at Hobe Sound Bible College where he chairs Counseling and Professional Studies. He founded Christian Counseling Advice in 2009, which can be accessed at www.christiancounselingadvice.com.

Considering

DIVORCE?

To the casual observer, divorce is emblematic of a failed marriage. To the divorcee, it is symptomatic of issues that couldn't or wouldn't be resolved. It may be issues as small as the desire to escape from stressful realities or boredom, to larger things like selfishness, pride, and a misplaced perception of one's self. Such unresolved issues can lead people to "play God"—thumbing their nose at Him and saying, "I can create an imitation. I know better than You what I need."

Divorce doesn't just destroy the union between a man and a woman, it destroys a family. The strands of DNA that mark each family as unique in God's eyes become frayed—damaged often beyond repair. The impact of divorce interrupts the balance of each person within the circle of the family. Rather than a united force—a force bound together by hardships, experience, genealogy, laughter, fun, shared experiences, familial similarities and a million other unnamed threads mysteriously and divinely woven into the family fabric—victims are left hemorrhaging without a legitimate way to cauterize the wound and restore the aborted sacred haven. Divorce is not simply the end of a marriage, it is the end of a family.

The betrayal and disorientation of divorce gives way to the growth of a shell, a cocoon in which to retreat for solace. Self-absorption replaces loving selflessness. Often illegitimate friendships, drugs, alcohol, sex, self mutilation, eating disorders—anything that will dull the memory—become the substitute for children, mother, father, "belonging," "abiding love," "till death us do part." It is rare for children caught up in such situations to walk toward God.

Can an individual, fighting monumental temptations to cross the forbidden chasm, comprehend what all is at stake? During the internal negotiations and sleepless nights that precede a divorce, the messages of culture often misplace the principle of truth. The lies are many. It is about YOU. YOU don't have to put up with this. YOU have to think about YOURSELF. YOU deserve better. If in fact, your worries are truly about you, then you need to pour hot wax in your ears to silence the call of the siren singers luring you to shipwreck and firmly tie yourself to the mast of YOUR FAMILY ship. To do otherwise is to invite grief and heartache that will take up residence and abide with you forever. It will be the unintended outcomes that

will inflict the deepest wounds, leaving jagged scars that never fully heal.

Children with whom you once shared joyous moments, who could look you deep in the eyes with admiration and hold gazes that were unclouded by suspicion, will now offer glances filled with unmasked questions and mystery. Distrust will abide, as you now know that you both have opened doors that were once forbidden and understood as deadly. You will know that you—the father, the mother—betrayed the very ones you cuddled and protected from insecurity and pain. You put the knife to the heart of everything once believed sacred and secure. You will experience the strain, stilted laughter, apathy, unanswered phone calls, shifty eyes, and mistrust.

The new reality will be life lived outside of the Garden of God's perfect will. The cataclysmic event that shook the earth when Eve succumbed to the tempter will rock your world. The once tame lion will roar at your door. Your children will not be who they could have been; they will have an uphill fight to overcome the inheritance you bequeath them.



Every life is filled with varying crosses to bear. Before you trade yours in, reconsider your decision. The very cross you bear makes you who you are. That cross is the avenue to the romance you can enjoy with Jesus. It is your peace—really it is! If you trade it in, you will carry one of your own making, heavy and cumbersome, twisting you into a mangled caricature of your former self. It is much better to embrace the one He crafted for you.

Considering divorce? Tonight, before you pillow your head, slip into that room where YOUR children sleep. Fall on your knees and ask God to keep you from betraying them. Slip into the room of the one with whom you made sacred vows before God and stay until you find a way to forgive! Until you are able to take the first tiny step toward “starting again”! Trust me, it is easier than divorce. ■

The anonymous author has experienced firsthand the heartaches associated with both divorce and remarriage.



the Secret of Marital Success



by A. Wingrove Taylor

What is the secret of success in so sacred and serious a relationship? The biblical secret is love—love that is not human but divine. Your marriage is not only a legal transaction recognized by the state. It is also a love transformation required by the Great Sovereign, our heavenly Father.

The divine love of marriage is not so much EMOTION as it is DEVOTION. It is not a feeling that can soar or sink. It is a foundation that never shifts. It is rooted not in well-being but in the will. Such love helps us to love whether we feel like it or not.

Second, marital love is not so much CONTENTMENT as it is COMMITMENT. When one loves not because one's spouse provides contentment but because one is committed to love, the commitment has a way of neutralizing the non-contentment.

Third, love is not so much SATISFACTION as it is SACRIFICE. As Ephesians 5:25-27 shows, the love that God requires now and always of each husband is the love of giving or sacrificing himself for his wife, even as Christ gave Himself for the church. And the love that God requests of each wife is the love of allowing Christ to set her apart to her husband, even as Christ sanctifies the church and presents it to Himself. Spiritual sacrifice and sanctification, on both sides, will then enhance satisfaction.

I commend the mastery of marriage by this love of devotion, of commitment, and of sacrifice. My wife and I were married in April 1953, but biblical, marital love is still enhancing and enriching our marriage at its current anniversary. It will not fail to enhance and enrich yours. May God abundantly bless you today and always! ■

Dr. A. Wingrove Taylor, Carmel, IN, is a graduate of GBS (BA, ThB '52) and served on its board for 44 years (1970-2014). A significant leader in The Wesleyan Church, he is currently retired.

COLLEGE CHOIR LATE-WINTER TOUR

February 19, Thursday, 7:30 PM
Pell City Area GBS Choir Rally
Agan Tabernacle
Bible Methodist Campgrounds
1355 Chula Vista Dr., Pell City, AL
Mr. Wayne Fleming (205) 956-2857

February 20, Friday, 7:00 PM
South/Central Alabama GBS Choir Rally
Bibb County Board of Education Auditorium
721 Walnut, Centreville, AL
Rally Coordinator: Rev. Steve Vernon
(334) 624-4298

February 21, Saturday, 7:00 PM
Oak Ridge Wesleyan Church
11000 110th Ave. North, Largo, FL
Dr. Phillip Gray, pastor (727) 393-9182

February 22, Sunday, 10:00 AM
Light and Life
5730 Deeson Rd., Lakeland, FL
Dr. Eldred Kelley, pastor (863) 858-6361

February 22, Sunday, 2:30 PM
Lakeland Holiness Camp
Florida Holiness Campground
3335 South Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL
Rev. Glen Allison, president
(863) 646-5152 (office)

February 22, Sunday, 6:00 PM
First Church of the Nazarene
1875 Nursery Road, Clearwater, FL
Rev. Pat Glenn, pastor (727) 536-1498

February 23, Monday, 7:00 PM
Avon Park Camp Association
1001 W. Lake Isis Ave., Avon Park, FL
(Interdenominational Conference Grounds
1200 block of US Hwy 27 North)
(863) 453-6831 (office)

February 24, Tuesday, 7:30 PM
Easley Bible Methodist Church
855 Gentry Memorial Hwy., Easley, SC
Rev. Jonathan Slagenweit, pastor (772) 349-6410

February 25, Wednesday, 6:30 PM
EastLake Community Church
1118 Hendricks Store Rd., Moneta, VA
Rev. Troy Keaton, pastor (540) 297-0966

February 26, Thursday, 7:30 PM
Faith Community Chapel
345 Faith Chapel Rd., Thomasville, NC
Pastor Jonathan Heath (772) 678-1337

February 27, Friday, 7:00 PM
South-Central Ohio GBS Choir Rally
Locust Grove Wesleyan Tabernacle
State Route 41, Locust Grove, OH
Rev. Richard Williams, pastor (937) 587-6275

February 28, Saturday, 6:00 PM
South/Central Indiana GBS Choir Rally
Faith Mission Church
1817 26th St., Bedford, IN
Mr. David Crosley (812) 675-1549

March 1, Sunday, 10:40 AM
Southport Church of the Nazarene
920 E. Southport Rd., Indianapolis, IN
Rev. Bill Swesey, pastor (317) 784-4610

March 1, Sunday, 6:00 PM
Franklin Bible Methodist Church
6000 S. Dixie Hwy., Franklin, OH
Rev. Jack Hooker, Pastor (937) 746-8281

COLLEGE CHOIR



God's Bible School & College
Cincinnati, OH