

## GOD'S DESIGN:

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# Intimacy with God – Intimacy with your Spouse

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Dr. Ron Hawkins<sup>1</sup>, a former professor describes intimacy as:

Oneness, with healthy separateness.  
One personality should not dominate the other.  
People tend to lose respect for what they dominate.  
Without respect they find it difficult to love.

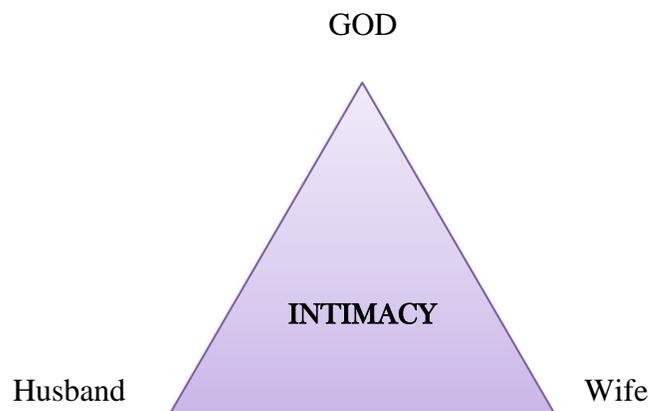
**Intimacy is the ultimate goal** of your marriage;  
**it is also the ultimate relationship** we have with God.

C.S. Lewis<sup>2</sup> stated...

“The most precious gift that marriage gave me was the constant impact  
of something very close and intimate,  
yet all the time unmistakably other, resistant... in a word, real.”

### **Intimacy with God**

Our marriages before God are a covenant: a threefold triangle



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<sup>1</sup> Hawkins, R. E. (1992). Strengthening Marital Intimacy. Ada, MI.: Baker Publishing. Pg. 9

<sup>2</sup> Lewis, C.S. (2012) A Grief Observed. London, Eng.: Faber & Faber, p. 11.

Commitment to God as well as commitment to our marriage,  
is the *unconditional acceptance* of the other partner.

It is the absence of rejection  
it means each will always be there (have your back) no matter what.

Commitment is *the surrender* of personal pleasure and comfort  
Commitment costs something; dependability has a price tag!

Commitment means organizing your time,  
thoughts and resources for the benefit of others.

God commits Himself to us, as we respond in love toward Him.  
He loves unconditionally; He has given His all –

Intimacy with God and with each other is born out of love!

### **But... What is Love?**

For God the Father, love meant extreme sacrifice...  
to the point of turning away from his own son... if only for a moment  
God **loved us** so much... He chose to send His one and only Son, to die for us.

What the writers say...

“What is love, but acceptance of the other, whatever he is”.  
Anais Nin (1932-1953)

“Love is like a fever which comes and goes quite independently of the will...  
there are no age limits for love.”  
Stendhall (1822)

Love can change a person, the way a parent can change a baby -  
Awkwardly, and often with a great deal of mess”  
Lemony Snicket

“Nothing is mysterious, no human relation. Except Love”  
Susan Sontag

“Of all forms of caution, caution in love is perhaps the most fatal to true happiness”  
Bertrand Russell

Love is an untamed force. When we try to control it, it destroys us.  
When we try to imprison it, it enslaves us.  
When we try to understand it, it leaves us feeling lost and confused.

According to scripture, this is love...

*"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us!"*

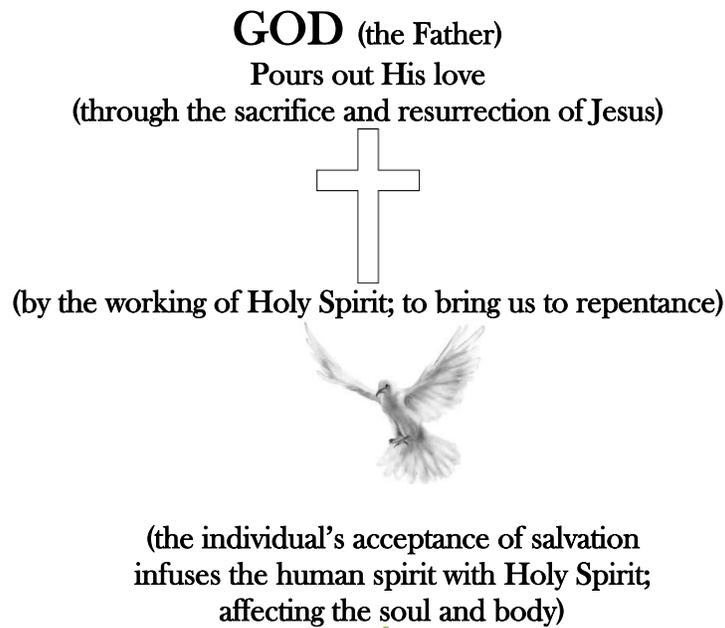
I John 3:16

C.S. Lewis <sup>3</sup>

“There is no safe investment.  
*To love at all is to be vulnerable.*  
Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken.  
If you want to make sure of keeping it intact,  
you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal.  
Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries;  
avoid all entanglements;  
lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness.  
But in that casket – safe, dark, motionless, airless – it will change.  
It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable,  
impenetrable, irredeemable.

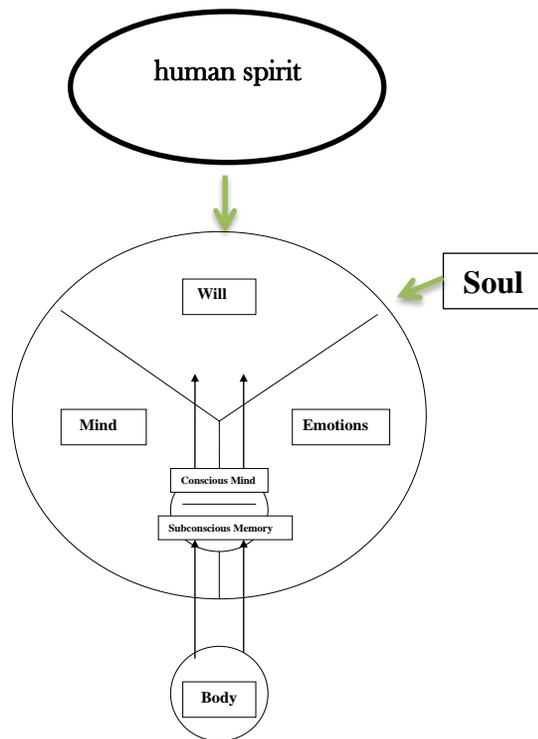
The alternative to tragedy,  
or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation.  
The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe  
from all the dangers and **perturbations** of love... is Hell”!

This quote from Lewis is one of my favorites. To love at all is to **be vulnerable!** It is the love that God poured out for all mankind.



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<sup>3</sup> C.S. Lewis Quotes: <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/980060-there-is-no-safe-investment-to-love-at-all-is>



(adapted from Ellet Canada training manual, 1995<sup>4</sup>)

## **This is LOVE**

Allowing God to love you requires vulnerability.

It means opening yourself up to being 'seen' by God, warts and all!

Allowing your spouse to truly love you requires vulnerability.

It means opening yourself up to being 'seen' by your spouse, warts and all!

I believe vulnerability is the footstool of intimacy.

You cannot truly be intimate with someone unless you are completely vulnerable.

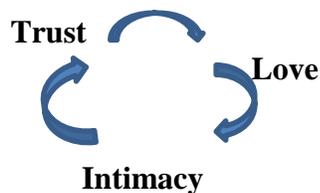
I'm not talking here about sex; sex in itself is not intimacy.

Sex can create and deepen intimacy,  
but only if there is a place of emotional vulnerability  
which both spouses know will not be violated.

Creating intimacy is all about trust and trust builds love and intimacy! The cycle never ends

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<sup>4</sup> Ellet Ministries Training Program (1995): The International School of Evangelism, Healing and Deliverance.  
Horribin, P. (2008). Healing through Deliverance: The Foundation and Practice of Deliverance Ministry Hardcover.  
UK: Chosen Books



This is the same cycle in our relationship with God.

We begin by trusting His Word, His truth.

We Accept His love (which by the way never fails!)

As we accept God's love (and return it) we build intimacy with God,

Which means that we trust him more, love Him more, and deepen our relationship with Him?  
This cycle of relationship is continually growing and needs consistent tending.

In order to understand love and intimacy we have to start at the beginning.... Our relationship with God, the father, Jesus the son, and the Holy Spirit.

So let me ask you...

How are you and Jesus doing?  
Do you trust God's Word?  
Have you made Jesus, Lord of your life?

Have you allowed Him to pour His love into you?

Or have you simply said yes to salvation (at least I know where I'm going!)  
and then kept him at arm's length?

I believe there is a big difference between loving Jesus and allowing Him to love you.

Allowing God to love you means truly **being vulnerable** to Him!

It takes **absolute trust** that He is for you, no matter what the circumstances in your life!

I'm not suggesting this is easy by any means.

Remember love must be cultivated.

You will need to pull up those pesky weeds of

- doubt,
- anxiety,
- fear
- and unbelief over and over again.

Your love for God will be challenged by the things of this world:

- pressures
- time
- work
- children

- pleasure
- selfishness
- idolatry

**Charles Spurgeon**<sup>5</sup> in his sermon on Matthew 20:15 said..

“There is no attribute more comforting  
to His children than that of God’s sovereignty”.

Do you believe God is sovereign? A belief in divine sovereignty deepens our worship of God .

### **Creating a positive climate of trust and intimacy**

Marriage specialist and researcher, **John Gottman**<sup>6</sup> distinguishes several areas necessary to create a positive climate of trust and intimacy<sup>7</sup>. He begins with kindness

Kindness is the most important predictor of satisfaction and stability in marriage, it makes each *spouse feel loved, validated, understood and important.*

Some people are naturally kind,

but **kindness is a muscle** that can **grow stronger** with practice.  
Kindness can have many meanings.

Kindness can mean responding in a pleasing way to your partner’s bids for attention.

Do you give them your attention or act annoyed?

How do you respond to bids for intimacy?

Kindness can mean how you act during a disagreement or fight.

#### **Question sheet: How do you act?**

Do you use words of contempt,

Roll your eyes,

Raise your voice,

Act aggressively?

The way we express our anger or feelings is as critical, as the type of language we choose.

Kindness can mean small acts of generosity

Interaction... what are some acts of generosity you use in your marriage?

—a cup of tea, a backrub, an offer to go to the store or clean up.

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<sup>5</sup> Spurgeon, C.H. (1856). Divine Sovereignty, Matthew 20:15. Sermon #70. The Spurgeon Center.

<https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/collection-index/new-park-street-pulpit-volume-2>

<sup>6</sup> Gottman, J.M. (2015). The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert. New York: Harmony House

<sup>7</sup>

Kindness can mean **assuming the best intentions** for your partner.

If he **forgot** to pick up the dry cleaning,  
left his towel on the floor,  
or was late to a date,  
don’t assume the worst.

Kindness can mean celebrating life’s joys and good news together

—being genuinely excited for the other person when things go well  
(and of course being there when things don’t go so well).

More than all these, kindness in marriage means  
how you interact on a daily basis,  
the affection you share,  
the feeling that **you’re in life together** and happy about it.

Couples who were **masters of marriage** felt calm and connected,  
had slower heart rates,  
and warm behavior and language toward one another

Okay, so most of us understand what it means to trust someone.  
If you tell a friend a secret, you expect them to keep it.

You trust them.

If they don’t keep the confidentiality – trust is broken.

As trust is the first element of in loving someone  
Breaking trust, in any manner

Is crippling to a relationship

Sometimes trust is broken simply by not keeping your word.

Doing what you say you will do.

Not being ‘there’ for the other person

At times broken trust in marriage involves something much more serious.

If trust is broken between you and your spouse, it is a crucial matter.

The following are Gottman’s 4 steps to intimacy

- Creating Positive Affect in Safe Settings
- Creating Positive Sentiment Override
- Regulating Conflict
- Creating Shared Symbolic Meaning

I highly recommend *Strengthening Marital Intimacy (Hawkins)* and *The Seven Principles of Making Marriage Work (Gottman)* for further reading