

## Building Intimacy

Proverbs 5:15-18

A loving and meaningful marriage requires intimacy. *For two hearts to embrace each other intimacy is a must.* **Intimacy is the close sharing of ourselves with our mates – our thoughts, feelings, plans, hopes and dreams – our very souls and bodies.** Intimacy has two essential elements: **First**, the security of being truly loved, accepted, and valued for what we are. And **second**, the significance and privilege of making a substantial, lasting, positive impact on another person we love. When we love and stay close to each other as God wills, we make each other better and stronger.

For two hearts to bond, they cannot be strangers. Some might think that intimacy occurs immediately after marriage. But this is not true, intimacy takes work for two people to grow close.

There are *three types of intimacy in marriage*. **The first is emotional:** loving support, sharing of burdens, sharing of goals, showing esteem for our mate, and loving attention. In **Song of Solomon 3:2** the bride says, ***“I will seek him whom my soul loves.”*** You see, true intimacy is more than a physical desire; it must involve the whole person, so that we join with **Song of Solomon 6:3** and say, ***“I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.”*** *It is two hearts and two lives so intertwined that they belong to each other and they long for each other.*

**A second form of intimacy is physical:** affection, touching, sharing in duties, and the sexual act. **Genesis 4:1** says, ***“Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.”*** God regards this physical intimacy between husband and wife in marriage **as honorable.** **1 Cor. 7:2-3** says, ***“But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.”*** Physical intimacy is not only approved in marriage, but it is also God’s will.

**A third kind of intimacy is spiritual:** *shared prayer and devotions, shared morals and values, shared spiritual goals, and a shared style of handling forgiveness and reconciliation.* I think here of Aquila and Priscilla, who were tent-makers and worked and traveled with Paul. When you read about one, you read about the other. When Apollos came to Ephesus, **Acts 18:26** says that Priscilla and Aquila pulled him aside ***“and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”*** **1 Cor. 16:19** says that Aquila and Priscilla had a church meeting in their house. And in **Romans 16:3-4**, Paul said, ***“Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well.”*** They not only served the Lord together, they risked their necks together, to save Paul’s.

When couples share faith and values, they are able to teach others the gospel together and to **give their children an unconfused message about God.** When a husband and wife disagree over morals, spiritual truths, and values, they leave their children guessing as to what is right and wrong. Couples need to be spiritually united in the truths of God’s word.

The Scriptures give a sad picture of a husband and wife who never had that kind of intimacy that God desires. I am speaking of King David and his wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul. **2 Samuel 6:16** records, *“As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, and she despised him in her heart.”* And then **verse 23** simply says, *“Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.”* You see intimacy is first a matter of the heart. To have true intimacy two people must love each other and must maintain that love.

*How does a married couple develop this type of intimacy?* **First, they must accept and welcome one another as life partners.** All husbands and wives have differences in the way they think, the way they do things, and the way they like to eat, the things they eat and the way they react to things. Accepting your spouse means I will love and respect them, even when we may differ on things that do not matter. Some things matter and some don't. We need to accept our spouses in matters that don't involve approving of sin. *Should your spouse sin, loving them means, humbly confronting them about it, and hoping that they will repent.* But in those matters that don't involve sin, you need to love and accept them as a person.

**Second, everyone needs affection.** They need to know that they are cared for through loving words and through physical touch. Hugs and kisses are essential to happiness in marriage. Sweet notes, caring deeds, and expressions of love ought to flow between husbands and wives. *Virginia Satir*, a family therapist once said, *“We need four hugs a day for survival. We need eight hugs a day for maintenance. We need twelve hugs a day for growth.”* Five times in Scripture Christians are urged to greet one another with a holy kiss or a kiss of love. Everyone needs affection.

**Third, husbands and wives need appreciation.** They need the feeling of gratefulness from their spouse. It hurts to feel unappreciated for what you do for your family. Every husband and wife need recognition for the good they do and the sacrifices they make for the family. Saying *“thank you”* and *“I appreciate you”* should be a part of our everyday conversation with our mates.

**Fourth, we must give our spouses our undivided attention, interest, and support.** *Withholding your attention* from your spouse says, *“I don't care about you.”* When your spouse needs you, don't selfishly refuse them. Giving your spouse your attention is how you let them know you genuinely care for them and respect them. You want your spouse to feel highly valued and prized in your heart. Show them by paying attention.

**Fifth, when your spouse hurts physically or emotionally, give them comfort.** Comfort means saying tender words, putting your arm around them, and feeling their hurts with them. When Mary and Martha lost their brother Lazarus, Jesus wept with them. Paul in **2 Cor. 1:3-4** said, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”* When those we love hurt, we should empathize and give comfort.

**Sixth, everyone needs encouragement.** Husbands and wives need to know their spouses believe in them and want them to move forward and grow as a person. *1 Thess. 5:11* says to Christians, **“Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”** We especially need encouragement from the person that we have married.

**Seventh, we need to be secure in our relationship with the one we love.** We need the secure feeling that our spouse will be there when we need help. We also need that secure feeling that they will do all they can to keep us safe and secure from all dangers and harm. A secure and stable home, where mom and dad love each other, is the best place for children to grow up and prosper.

**Last, husbands and wives need to support one another.** Each one needs to know that he or she has someone to walk alongside and help carry the loads of life. They have someone to share victories and their grief, someone who understands their burdens and their dreams. *Marriage is a partnership of two people who complete each other and who help each other succeed in the challenges of life.* Everyone needs to know there is someone in their corner who will cheer them and stand by them. Just as the Lord supports and watches over us. We as married couples need to say to our spouses, **“I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5).**

*It is vitally important for husbands and wives to pray together.* When a man and woman marry, *they no longer think nor act as a single person.* It is no longer “I” but “we”. All of life is lived in connection with your spouse. Everything you do affects this significant person. *You are a team of two,* and when you work together, you function better. When you confront problems and crises in your life, you can find tremendous comfort and support in your loved one who prays for you and with you. *No matter the crises, when you share the burden with your spouse; that will lighten the load.*

Praying together brings peace for a couple. *Philippians 4:6-7* says, **“do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”**

*Why are we discussing intimacy this morning?* **Because intimacy with our spouses is what keeps our marriages strong and secure.** When people grow close to each other, intimacy allows each to see the other as they really are. They see their strengths and weaknesses, their beauty and their flaws. This kind of closeness may seem to open the door to vulnerability, but it also provides the greatest sense of security. It allows us to say, *“My spouse loves me in in spite of my flaws and weaknesses. My spouse loves me for me.”* When I think of the love that my wife has given me in spite of my weaknesses, I am grateful for her, as God’s gift to me. Because of her faith in God and her love for me, she **“bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”** God loves us that way, and so should we.

Willard F. Harley, in his book, *“His Needs, Her Needs,”* suggests, **“Give your undivided attention to your spouse a minimum of fifteen hours each week, meeting some of your spouse’s most important needs.”** There simply isn’t any substitute for time. When you marry for a lifetime, you pass through several stages of life, and each stage is different. By maintaining

close intimacy, two people can grow together for a lifetime. When you give your spouse your time; you are actually giving him or her your most precious possession – yourself.

That is true of marriage, and it is true of our relationship with God. You cannot be close to God if you never spend time with Him. Everyday read from His word and pray fervently to Him; praise Him in song; and count your blessings. When you give God your time; you are giving him your most precious possession – yourself.

When we become Christians, the Lord adds us to His church; and we unite with Christ in a covenant relationship. We have His promise of grace and love, but we must commit to trust and obey Him. To enter that covenant relationship, we must hear His words, confess our faith in Him, repent of our sins, and be baptized into Christ. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in water and it means we are baptized into His death. And that is when the blood of Jesus washes away our sins and causes us to be born again. In baptism we are crucified with Christ and we rise to walk in newness of life (**Romans 6:3-7**).