

God's Desire for Marriage – 32:30 27:30
Outline & Mentality - Common Protestant Outline
Adapted for the Restore, Rekindle, Renew Enrichment
(3RE CHANGES IN BOLD ITALIC CAPS)

Objective

To show that God's desire for marriage is for us to live a responsible and intimate relationship, which will lead us to unity.

Goals of this presentation

To know

- they can make responsible choices that lead to intimacy in their relationship
- forgiveness and healing are essential to an intimate and responsible lifestyle
- God is invested in their relationship
- the presence of God in their relationship strengthens their love and intimacy

To do

- make a choice to live intimately and responsibly

To experience

- the joy that God desires for them
- the unity that has come through their dialogues during this Marriage Encounter experience

Flow of the presentation

We begin with the statement that everyone longs for happiness, connecting God's Desire for Marriage with Marriage in Today's World. We follow with examples of how society and media propose we find happiness. We joyfully share the unity and happiness experienced from dialogues and our realization that this is what God desires for our marriage. We define unity and illustrate choices that lead us to unity. We describe the life-giving effect these choices have on our relationship. We introduce the concept that forgiveness and healing are part of living intimately and responsibly and give examples of forgiveness and healing in our relationship. We share God's Word from Genesis that God reveals Himself through the love of a couple. We affirm the holiness of couples, specifically in their sexual relationship. We recall a moment of intimacy in our relationship. We reflect on the effects of striving for intimacy on our sexual relationship, spiritual growth, and emotional growth. We conclude God's Desire for Marriage by motivating the couples to make a choice between God's desire for their marriage (unity) or the world's plan (instant gratification and resulting emptiness).

Connection with other presentations

Marriage in Today's World and God's Desire for Marriage both focus on how we live our daily lives as husband and wife. In Marriage in Today's World, we talk about living with attitudes and behaviors of "married singles" and how this lifestyle leads to disillusionment. Here we explore

our deepest longing as husband and wife to find happiness by living intimately and responsibly with each other, which is God's desire.

Cautions

- In order to write this presentation, the presenters should re-evaluate their lifestyle to ensure that they are truly living intimately and responsibly in their relationship with each other. The talk must be filled with the joy and hope that we have found in living God's desire for us as a couple.
- God's Desire for Marriage is not about couple prayer, forming a relationship with God as a couple, nor finding God through our spouse.

NOTE:

God's Desire for Marriage is often viewed as the "conversion" talk of a Marriage Encounter experience because it offers the couples hope for intimacy and unity in their marriage in the midst of an often-turbulent Saturday. They see the reality of choosing between the world's values and God's values to fulfill their yearning for happiness, and they are presented with an inspiring vision of the importance of their marriage to God. Our choice to strive for unity in an intimate and responsible relationship must be seen clearly through our real-life examples.

I. Introduction and optional opening prayer (CL or CS: 0:30)

State:

This presentation is titled "God's Desire for Marriage." It can be found on page _____ of the Workbook.

Opening prayer (optional)

Suggested wording:

Heavenly Father, in our marriage relationship we have a glimpse of Your great love for us. Give us a burning desire for each other. Help us to recognize that our deepest longing as husband and wife is to live in a loving relationship. May we come to see how much You long for us to experience the joy of unity so Your love can be revealed to everyone around us.

II. Living intimately and responsibly (Total time: 6:30)

II A. All of us long for happiness (LH or LW: 1:30)

Begin by stating that all of us long for happiness.

II A 1. Society and the media propose various ways to find happiness

Give several brief examples of how society and the media propose that we find happiness. Since only one spouse shares this section, these examples should be applicable to either gender.

Examples might include:

- driving a classy car
- buying designer brand clothes
- having a new home in the "right" neighborhood
- going on that dream vacation
- dining with expensive food and wine
- getting that promotion at work
- owning the newest technology
- achieving the "perfect" body, etc.

Mention that the choices the world offers to achieve happiness are frequently "I" choices that can distract and separate us as a couple.

II A 2. True happiness results from the unity that comes from living intimately and responsibly

Transition with a sentence such as:

True happiness comes from making "we" choices.

Tell about the happiness you experienced through your Marriage Encounter dialogues and your realization that this is what God desires for your marriage—to live an intimate and responsible relationship. Explain that when we live an intimate and responsible relationship, we experience "unity," which we define as "oneness of heart and mind." Describe the true happiness you experience in your unity as a couple. End by pointing out that perhaps they have experienced a taste of this unity already.

II B. Unity (Other Lay spouse: 1:30)

Briefly teach the meaning of unity and personalize as shown in the suggested wording (using your spouse's name and communicating your joy).

Suggested wording:

God's desire for us is unity, because, when we are one, we are the best couple we can be. Unity is oneness of mind and heart. Unity makes us more than we are as individuals. We don't lose our separate identities and become dependent on each other, rather, we are interdependent by choice. It is not the same as uniformity or expecting (my spouse) to be exactly like me. We won't agree on everything. Our differences add to our uniqueness as a couple and enrich our oneness. When I love (my spouse) as the unique person God created him/her to be, (my spouse) becomes even more fully the person s/he was created to be. And when (my spouse) loves me for who I am, I can reach my full potential. By bringing out the best in each other, we become a better couple.

Unity does not require us to be joined at the hip. When we live in an intimate, responsible way I feel more confident out in the world even when I'm not with (my spouse). I carry with me the peace and confidence of our relationship. I stand taller and feel happier because of the bond between us. Our unity calls both of us to take 100% responsibility for becoming the best couple we can be. We are fully invested in each other. The beautiful thing about our unity is that it's bigger than both of us, and it allows us to embrace a much greater measure of joy than we ever thought possible.

Formation:

Unity does NOT mean that we are the same – that is uniformity. Unity is oneness of heart and mind. This means that two hearts and two minds come together in an experience of the other. "And the two become one flesh" is more than just our sexual union; it is two whole and complete people bringing their completeness to each other – bodies, hearts, minds, souls – experiencing the fullness of the other. We are not two halves coming together; but two wholes making a new whole. God desires that we reach this oneness of heart, mind, and body as we experience the other's heart, mind, and body. This joins us in a bond that is as beautiful as it is unbreakable, a sign of God's unity within. As we live responsibly in our relationship by making decisions to love and be loved, we reach out in love to the heart and mind of the other. As we live intimately in our relationship, we open ourselves to the love of the other, and we allow the other to see into our very heart and mind. We might especially notice this in our dialogue when we share our deepest selves with each other and when we truly experience the other's feeling.

II C. Give examples of choices I am making to attempt to live a more intimate and responsible relationship (LH or LW and CL or CS: 1:00 each)

Suggested transition:

We achieve this beautiful unity that God desires for us by living intimately and responsibly.

LH or LW and CL or CS share examples of choices you have made and continue to make as you strive to live an intimate and responsible relationship. What choices lead to unity? Focus on behavior and attitude changes that are concise, clear, and reflect your everyday lives so they sound relatable and attainable to the participants. Your choices should reflect the definitions of intimate and responsible relationship as given in the Workbook. It is not necessary to read the definitions, but refer to the page:

- Intimate relationship – being open to love and be loved
- Responsible relationship – making decisions to love and be loved in our daily lives

Examples of attitudes that damage unity include (but are not limited to):

- independence
- me-first
- scorekeeping
- peace at any price
- I have a right to be angry
- inferiority
- superiority

Illustrate your daily efforts, sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing, but never giving up, such as:

- being less critical of each other
- giving up control and trusting your spouse
- being willing to work through difficult issues together
- doing things together
- asking your spouse for advice or help
- giving more compliments
- expressing greater tenderness and gentleness toward each other
- making time for romantic moments

These choices are not made out of a sense of duty or obligation. Rather, they reflect behavior and attitude changes that move you from a married singles lifestyle to a lifestyle that brings unity and true happiness. Conclude this section by giving examples of the specific effects on your relationship such as the examples below (avoid vague words or phrases such as “closer,” “more loving,” “better relationship,” or “deeper”):

- growing trust
- a sense of belonging
- greater gentleness, tenderness or attentiveness between you
- being present to each other

- greater sense of responsibility for your relationship
- experiencing joy

Formation:

Intimacy is more complex than closeness. Closeness could arise from situations such as a romantic dinner, watching our children with pride, or doing activities together. It is a feeling that can easily disappear when difficulties arise. We can experience closeness even when we merely tolerate each other's feelings. An analogy of closeness would be two glasses of water next to each other; intimacy would be the water mixed together.

We can experience intimacy when we accept our spouse's feelings (and therefore, his/her innermost being) without judgment or prejudice. Intimacy is living with confidence in the love of the other, from the physical level to the spiritual and emotional levels.

To create this intimacy, it takes openness on the part of both husband and wife. It's a combination of one spouse making a decision to love and the other spouse accepting and returning the love. Making a decision to love isn't only for when we aren't feeling very loving. It can be something we do out of the ordinary because we want to express how much we care for the other. Intimacy happens when we make decisions to drop self-protective defenses and reveal our inmost self to each other through sharing our feelings. Intimacy relates to Gen 2:25: *And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.*

Intimacy is not a feeling; it does not come and go depending on the circumstances. Intimacy is not about what I do for my spouse; it is not an act of kindness or even compassion. Intimacy is a condition of the heart, an attitude that opens us to accept our spouse and to make decisions to overcome behaviors and fears that can imprison us. We are secure enough to allow our spouse to love us as we are, without fear or shame.

II D. Forgiveness and healing are a part of living intimately and responsibly (CL or CS: 1:30)

Provide a transition statement. Suggested wording:

As great as it is to live this intimate lifestyle, it makes us more vulnerable to being hurt. This should not hold us back, however, because forgiveness and healing are a necessary part of living intimately and responsibly and can lead us to even greater joy.

Give an example of forgiveness and healing in your relationship, a situation where you offended your spouse. This should be a minor hurt so as not to distract the couples from the focus.

Teach the important difference between saying "I'm sorry" versus "Will you please forgive me?" (Saying "I'm sorry" can be very easy, and sometimes is said just to free myself from guilt. In asking for forgiveness, I humble myself by giving the power to my spouse; the focus is on our relationship.)

In your example, it is important to indicate that your spouse responded and did forgive you.

Many may be hearing this concept for the first time in their marriage.

End with your awareness of growing intimacy because you took responsibility for healing your relationship.

In this section, we are simply introducing the concept of forgiveness and healing in our relationship. This concept will be developed further in Marriage as Covenant. What we illustrate in this example is how we take responsibility for our intimacy by asking our spouse for forgiveness, which is the first step in the healing process.

III. God's desire for marriage is for us to be the best couple we can be (Total time: 2:30)

III A. "God's desire for marriage is for us to be the best couple we can be." (LH or LW: 0:15)

Read as is:

"God's desire for marriage is for us to be the best couple we can be."

Suggested transition:

You have heard our examples of living intimately and responsibly. Now let's listen to what God's Word tells us.

III B. Read Genesis 2:24-25 (LH or LW: 0:15)

Read as is:

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

III C. Comment on text/reading

III C 1. Gen. 2:24 - Responsible (LH or LW: 1:00)

The Lay spouse who did not share in II C. comments on the reading's admonition for us to exercise responsibility in our marriage.

We leave father and mother and all else behind to be with our spouse. Briefly connect the scripture to how we both need to be responsible, or accountable, for the quality of our relationship. Comment on how "...and the two become one body" means that we love our spouse unconditionally with no boundaries between us. Becoming one body means to love the other without expecting something in return, to love them for being themselves. Be personal in your illustrations and do not simply repeat the generalities of the mentality or sound preachy.

III C 2. Gen. 2:25 - Intimate (CL or CS: 1:00)

The Clergy spouse who did not share in II D comments on the reading's admonition for us to seek intimacy in our marriage.

“The man and his wife were both naked yet they felt no shame.” Being naked here refers not only to the physical, but also to the emotional level. Share how intimacy is living with confidence in the love of the other, from the physical level to the innermost part of your life. Such intimacy calls us to be honest, open, tender, and trusting with each other. Intimacy allows us to be secure enough to let our spouse love us as we are, without fear or shame.

This section is short, so you must be concise and clear. The brief examples you use should be daily choices you are making to be the best couple you can be, which is God's desire for marriage. This sharing should not focus on your relationship with God. Be personal in your illustrations and do not simply repeat the generalities of the mentality or sound preachy.

IV. God reveals Himself through the love of a couple, which is their Matrimonial Spirituality (CL and/or CS: 7:00)

IV A. Read Genesis 1:26-27 (1:00)

Transition:

Provide an appropriate transition and introduction to this Scripture,

Read as is:

“Then God said: ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’ So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

IV B. It is through the couple's love for each other that we can come to know and understand that God is Love for all of us (1:00)

Suggested wording:

God created male and female in His image so that in their love, they can reflect His love. Married couples are called to be the living, breathing image and likeness of God. God is three persons in a love relationship: the Holy Trinity. Husband and wife are likewise united in a love relationship. St. John writes, "He who loves, knows God." When couples strive to live God's desire for their marriage and love each other unconditionally, as God loves all of us, they are one of the beautiful, visible, tangible ways that He makes Himself present in the world. People who have never known God in their lives can experience Him through the love of a couple – and a couple can experience God in the love they have for each other.

IV C. Share your awareness of the holiness of couples (5:00)

Begin with your personal awareness of the holiness of specific couples you know, mentioning their faithfulness, the way they forgive each other, their unselfish love for their children, or other similar qualities. Your sharing should help the participants recognize that they too are called to be holy in all aspects of their marriage relationship. Their unconditional giving to each other sexually allows them to participate in the great mystery of life.

Use most of this time to emphasize the importance of the act of lovemaking. It affords a married couple an opportunity for the most intimate, unconditional giving of one to the other. Lovemaking is a very holy part of their covenant/sacrament. Sexual intercourse must serve to build a true, loving communion between the spouses by expressing the sincere and passionate gift of self to the other. (A list of ideas concerning healthy, life-giving sexuality is at the end of this Outline & Mentality, but you may bring in any points that are well-grounded and Christian.)

Openness to life is also a part of this holiness in that husband and wife participate willingly in the creative power of God's love. What joy to be a part of this!

V. To be married is an extraordinary vocation/way of life (Total time: 10:00)

V A. Transition (LH or LW: 1:00)

Suggested wording:

We realize now that to be married really is an extraordinary way of life! We have been called by God to this vocation of marriage so that His love can be revealed. This is not a burden to weigh us down, but rather a joy to lift us up. This awareness brings an urgency to follow God's desire to be the best couple we can be. We're no longer willing to settle for the average and the ordinary; we choose to strive for intimacy and unity.

We'd like to share an example of the extraordinary fulfillment we experience in our marriage when we live our vocation as God desires. Listen as we share this dialogue about a recent time when we experienced intimacy. You can turn to page __ to follow the steps of our dialogue.

V B. Share a dialogue on the question "Name a time when I experienced intimacy with you. What is my strongest feeling as I recall that time now?" (LH & LW: 6:00)

V B 1. Read letters

Each spouse reads his/her own love letter on: "Name a time when I experienced intimacy with you. What is my strongest feeling as I recall that time now?"

When writing the love letter, remember to:

- Briefly mention the specific circumstance when you experienced intimacy with your spouse.
- Name the feeling you have as you RECALL that time, not your feeling when the experience occurred.

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- Describe one feeling with as much detail as possible.
- Create a simple, relatable dialogue; but the true happiness and intimacy that you attained in the situation and in the dialogue should come out clearly.
- Select a time in your relationship when you both experienced being open to love or to be loved (it is not necessary for the two letters to be on the same situation).

Intimacy results when you make the decision to love and your spouse accepts and acknowledges your act of love. Stepping out of your behavior pattern and doing something to or for your spouse that you wouldn't normally do, such as initiating a romantic moment, is a decision to love and creates an opportunity for intimacy. Making the decision to be loved by your spouse when you are not feeling lovable can also create intimacy; i.e., accepting a tender embrace from your spouse when you are disappointed in yourself opens you to the love of your spouse and creates an opportunity for intimacy.

These are not times when you felt close to your spouse and he/she was not aware of it, such as a time when you watched him/her play with your children or when your spouse praised you to his/her relatives. Intimacy is more than just accepting a kindness or sharing a planned romantic evening, it is a soul-level awareness of loving and being loved that takes your relationship to another dimension.

Your sharing prepares the couples for the dialogue question at the end of this talk. It should be about an ordinary, everyday event when you made a decision to love which resulted in a very special moment, an experience of intimacy. For the purposes of teaching, the circumstance of intimacy should be outside of your daily dialogue as this will be more relatable to the participants. The circumstance must be within your relationship at a time when you both experienced intimacy.

V B 2. Summarize dialogue and share effects

The spouse whose feeling is chosen for the dialogue sharing will summarize the verbal dialogue. Tell how you decided whose feeling was the strongest from your love letters and then summarize your verbal dialogue, including how you got to the moment when your spouse was able to experience (not merely understand) your feeling. Your non-verbal communication should be very evident in this summary. Mention the specific effects of this dialogue on your relationship. Then both husband and wife briefly share how and why this was such a treasured time, the resulting intimacy and the feelings you experienced after sharing the letters. Conclude with your awareness that this joy is what God desires for you.

Suggested transition statement (personalize with the name of your spouse):

God's desire for our marriage is attainable when we take responsibility for the quality of our relationship. When ____ and I strive for intimacy through dialogues like this one, we see positive effects in every aspect of our lives together.

V C. Share examples of the effects we experience when we strive for intimacy (LH & LW and CL or CS: Total time: 3:00)

V C 1. Sexually (LH or LW: 1:00)

Share how intimacy in your couple relationship has affected your sexual relationship both in and out of the bedroom. The effect on your lovemaking when you strive for intimacy should be presented with enthusiasm, both verbally and non-verbally. It is important to mention your sexual awareness of each other throughout the day: tone of voice, playfulness, affectionate touch, tenderness. Our sexuality is part of God's plan for Christian marriage, and we want to make daily decisions to be sexually passionate in our relationship.

Formation:

Our sexuality involves our total sexual relationship, not just intercourse. We communicate sexually 24/7 and it is important that we are open to expressing our sexuality and being responsive to our spouse's sexual expression all day, every day. Sexuality is not "being sexy" but using my physical attractiveness, an entire frame of reference, a total way of experiencing life, the way we relate to each other as man and woman. All perceptions and interactions, especially with our spouse, are sexual. Being sexual is relationship-oriented, a response to the other and to love. Sexuality is ultimately a God-given way to express love in the most intimate and powerful way. Some qualities that enhance the way we communicate sexually with our spouse include:

- *Gentleness* is the way we express ourselves verbally, our tone of voice; not so much what we say, but how we say it that expresses our love and physical attraction to our spouse. It's seeing and reacting with the eyes of a lover.
- *Tenderness* is a physical attitude that expresses our acceptance and sensitivity. It could be a wink, smile, loving caress or even a gentle massage to soothe tired muscles.
- *Attentiveness* is being aware of our spouse, regardless of the situation or who else is around. It is showing interest in them and focusing on *their* needs – being aware of our spouse even when we are not in each other's physical presence. It is offering our praise and affirmation when they need it the most.
- *Presence* is being available to our spouse (physically, mentally and emotionally) for support and encouragement. It means setting aside our day and emptying our heart to take our lover inside.

V C 2. Spiritually (Other Lay spouse: 1:00)

Share how the intimacy in your relationship has affected your spiritual growth as a couple.

This section is about your awareness of how God has become a real partner in your day-to-day life as a result of your growing intimacy. It is not limited to couple prayer.

When our attempts to model our love on God's love begin to bear fruit, we are more aware of God as a companion we can trust. Our unconditional love for each other allows us to experience God's love in a very tangible way. For example, when a husband reaches for his wife and lets

her cry in his arms, it's as though God Himself has put His arms around her and reassured her with His everlasting love. When a wife stops what she is doing to focus on the needs of her husband, she is extending God's unconditional love to him.

As we learn to respond to each other with unselfish love, we are aware that God is right there with us, encouraging us every step of the way. This brings new depth and richness to our relationship with God.

V C 3. Emotionally (CL or CS: 1:00)

Illustrate the emotional effects of striving for intimacy in your spousal relationship. Share the specific effects this has on your emotional growth. An intimate and responsible relationship creates good emotional health and leads to happiness.

VI. The call to make a conscious choice between the world's way or God's desire for our marriage (LH or LW: 1:00)

Tell the couples that we have talked about the difference between the world's way and God's way for their marriage. Ask them to make a choice. Will the choice be the world's way with its instant gratification and the emptiness that results? Or will they choose the joy of living God's desire for their marriage? Let them know that the choice is theirs alone to make.

The same spouse reads and teaches the dialogue question, emphasizing that, just as in our dialogue sharing, we're not talking about physical intimacy but about a time when I experienced the tenderness and love of my spouse. It doesn't have to be a mountain-top experience.

Question:

Name a time when I experienced intimacy with you. What is my strongest feeling as I recall that time now?

Writing time: 20 minutes

Dialogue time: 20 minutes

Wives stay in the conference room to write (recommended).

VII. WRAP UP AND MOTIVATION (LH OR LW: 5:00)

VII A. THE JOURNEY

TONIGHT WE HAD A MIX OF THE DIFFICULT WITH THE GOOD NEWS. HOPEFULLY THE COUPLES ARE SEEING THE VALUE OF THE JOURNEY AND HARD WORK. AT LEAST WE HAVE STARTED UNLOADING GARBAGE FROM THE BACKPACKS. WE ARE OVER HALF-WAY THERE.

VII B. TAKE HOME DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

QUICKLY REVIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF DOING DIALOGUE QUESTIONS.

VII C. MISSION POSSIBLE

WE ARE ON STEP 4 OF THE SEVEN STEPS TO COUPLE PRAYER: EACH PERSON PRAYS ALOUD BRIEFLY, SIDE BY SIDE, ASKING GOD FOR HELP FOR FRIENDS, FOR EXAMPLE.

VII D. PRESENTERS' WILLINGNESS TO STAY CONNECTED

THE PRESENTERS NEED TO WARMLY ENCOURAGE ANYONE TO CONTACT THEM WITH QUESTIONS OR NEED FOR SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT.

VII E. INVITATION TO DEEPER INTIMACY (A MEDITATION)

OTHER MEDITATIONS AND SONGS WILL DO, AS A CHANGE OF PACE, BUT HERE IS ONE:

"BEFORE WE WRAP UP TONIGHT, HAVE A LOOK AT THIS PHOTO [OF A SLOT CANYON]. IMAGINE YOURSELF IN THIS SLOT CANYON. IT IS SILENT, AND THERE IS A SENSE OF BEING FAR REMOVED...EVEN PROTECTED...FROM THE WORLD ABOVE. AS YOU WALK, YOUR FOOTSTEPS ARE QUIET IN THE COOL SAND. THE AIR SMELLS FRESH AND UNPOLLUTED. AS YOU FOLLOW THE PATH, YOU MOVE IN AND OUT OF LIGHT. YOU LET YOUR FINGERTIPS LIGHTLY GLIDE ALONG THE CANYON WALLS, WHICH FEEL SMOOTH BUT SOLID. YOU CAN IMAGINE THE YEARS IT TOOK TO FORM THEM. CAN YOU PERCEIVE THE BEAUTY OF GOD'S CREATION HERE? WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'LL DISCOVER AROUND THE NEXT TURN?

THIS SLOT CANYON IS LIKE YOUR RELATIONSHIP. YOU TWO ARE A SAFE HAVEN FOR EACH OTHER -- YOU PROTECT EACH OTHER, YOU ARE THERE FOR EACH OTHER. NO MATTER WHAT GOES ON IN THE WORLD AROUND YOU, YOU ARE WALKING TOGETHER DOWN THE SAME PATH. AS YOU EXPLORE EACH OTHER'S MINDS AND HEARTS, YOU DISCOVER NEW THINGS AROUND EVERY TURN. YOU ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE AWARE OF HOW BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED YOUR SPOUSE IS. GOD MADE YOU FOR EACH OTHER. CAN YOU SENSE THE BEAUTY OF GOD'S CREATION IN EACH OTHER? IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP? WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR FUTURE TOGETHER HOLDS?

WE INVITE YOU TO A DEEPER INTIMACY WITH EACH OTHER. A DEEPER INTIMACY THAN THOSE CONVERSATIONS YOU HAD WHEN YOU FIRST MET, A DEEPER INTIMACY THAN YOU'VE EVEN ACHIEVED DURING THIS ENRICHMENT.

WE INVITE YOU TO DIG DEEP WITH EACH OTHER. CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY AT HOME, AS YOU DIALOGUE, AS YOU PRAY TOGETHER, AS YOU ROMANCE EACH OTHER. THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO DEEPEN YOUR INTIMACY. EXPLORE THEM ALL, AND RELISH THE JOY IT BRINGS TO YOUR LIFE TOGETHER."

VII F. TEASER ABOUT NEXT SESSION

NEXT WEEK WILL BE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO PUT INTO PRACTICE WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED SO FAR. WE WILL SPEND MORE TIME ON THE TOPIC OF DIALOGUE AND HOW THIS TOOL CAN BE A LIFELONG SUPPORT FOR YOUR MARRIAE.

VII G. TRANSITION, CLOSING PRAYER, DISMISSAL

How we live out the concepts of this presentation:

We live out the concepts of God's Desire for Marriage by making choices to change behaviors and attitudes that move us from a married singles lifestyle to living responsibly and intimately in our relationship. We are proactive in seeking forgiveness and healing and take the initiative to ask for forgiveness. We are accountable for the quality of our relationship and vulnerable to our spouse from the physical level to the inmost part of ourselves. We invite God into our relationship and choose to love each other in ways that will make God present in the world. We rely on God's grace to reflect His love to our spouse and live the values necessary for intimate and responsible relationship. We dialogue daily to strengthen our sexual, spiritual, and emotional growth.

An assessment for us as a couple:

- Which of my behaviors most interferes with my ability to live out God's desire for our marriage?
- How would I describe, in my own words, what it means to live responsibly with you?
- In what specific ways have I chosen to love you unconditionally?
- How has being open to love or to be loved improved our sexual relationship? Our spiritual growth?
- How, specifically, do we strive for unity in our relationship?
- How have we invited God to be part of our relationship every day?

Points that could be included in IV C.

- Our lovemaking is such a vital and holy part of our Marriage Covenant/Sacrament that it's important to strive for quality in this area of our life.
- Sex can either hurt or enhance our relationship, depending on how we go about it.
- To be accepted as a whole person, we must realize the “hard-wired” differences between men and woman and respect it rather than resent it. These differences are not contradictory but complementary:
 - Most men are driven more by physical intimacy-needs and women more by emotional intimacy-needs.
 - It's often said that men give love to get sex, and women give sex to get love. That's not bashing either men or women. It's simply the way God made us.
 - Men make an emotional commitment to make it easier for women to make an erotic commitment; women make an erotic commitment to make it easier for men to make an emotional one. Men spell intimacy S-E-X. Women spell it T-A-L-K.
 - For men, when all is right in the bedroom, all is right in the world. For women, when is all is right in the world, all is right in the bedroom.
 - For most men, desire is an instinct. But for most women, desire is a decision – a decision to love. But the GOAL for both is similar, namely, the fulfillment that comes from being desired and affirmed in this very special way. The route to get there is what's different.
 - Women long for affection on a regular, recurring basis, not just once a month; men long to experience a regular, recurring sexual release, not just once a month.
 - There are physiological differences: a “bonding hormone” protects the heart and gives us a sense of emotional connectedness. For women, this bonding hormone is released by repeated affectionate touch/hugs. For men, it surges up to five times above normal immediately before orgasm. For both men and women, a solid marriage with lots of affection and regular sex is wonderful preventive medicine!
 - When we understand our sexual differences and respect them instead of resenting them, then sex becomes the superglue that bonds us together in an exquisite intimacy that is one of God's most beautiful gifts to us in marriage.
 - What's the biggest mistake a man can make with his wife sexually? It's showing affection only when he wants sex. What's the biggest mistake a woman can make with her husband sexually? It's not knowing how to say No. Most men would rather do anything than make love to a woman who's just doing her “duty.”
- If there's something else besides occasional illness or exhaustion that gets in the way of lovemaking, get it out on the table and talk about it without blame or accusation. Don't let it simmer on the back burner. Go seek help.
- It's ok to plan your sex life. If it's only random and spur-of-the-moment, chances are one of us will be ready and the other will not.
- Dr. Kevin Leman, author of Sheet Music: “Good lovers learn to know their lover better than they know themselves. ...stop viewing sex through your perception alone....”
- There are good reasons for women to make their husbands happy in the bedroom:
 - A sexually fulfilled husband will do anything for you
 - It's a scriptural mandate (1 Cor. 7:3-5)

- He will feel good about himself
- He will take on his life work with a vigor and purpose that is unmatched; and appreciates the important things in life.
- Dr. Leman advises men to sexually pursue your wife outside the bedroom, remembering that the worst enemy of sex for women is exhaustion – hence the concept of foreplay starting in the morning, and in the kitchen. For men, it's not exhaustion but the lack of imagination on the part of their wives. Your husband wants to be needed, wanted, and prized. "Mr. Happy doesn't live by a schedule, and has a very short memory."
- Dr. Oz is very concerned about the huge number of sexless marriages in America; it's destroying health and relationships. Assuming there are no extenuating circumstances, here's his prescription to revitalize your sex life: Talk to one another 10 minutes a day. Better yet, we use dialogue. Three times a week, spend 10 minutes touching one another non-sexually. Hugging, holding, caressing, touching one another affectionately for 10 minutes 3 times a week. You can manage that! Sex once a week. -- at least. Dr. Oz says, "Do it! Your health and your marriage are worth it."
- Yes, according to Rev. Mark Gungor, author of Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage, men DO think about sex all the time. The giver of all good gifts is God, who created sex, within marriage of course. Author Stephen Schwamach said "Sex is too good to have just happened. Something this exquisite had to have been lovingly, brilliantly, creatively designed. If an atheist ever comes up to you and demands proof that there is a God, all you have to answer is one word: 'Sex.'"
- Become an expert on the unique needs of your mate and how he/she has needs that you do not (Love & Respect, Dr. Emerson Eggerichs).

Dialogue questions to help the presenters develop their presentations:

HDIF?	How do I feel?
HDIFA?	HDIF about?
HDIFAT?	HDIFA this (or that)?
HDIFAMA?	HDIFA my answer?
HDIFTYT?	HDIF telling you this?

1. What does Gen. 2:24 mean to me? HDIFAMA?
2. What does Gen. 2:25 mean to me? HDIFAMA?
3. Which of my behaviors most interferes with my ability to live out God's desire for our marriage? HDIFAMA?
4. In the last two weeks what choices have I made to love you? HDIFAMA?
5. In the last two weeks what choices have I made that allowed you to love me? HDIFAMA?
6. Do I accept you with all your faults? HDIFAMA?
7. What promises did we make to each other in our marriage ceremony? HDIFA my commitment to keeping those promises?

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8. How have I chosen to live according to God's desire rather than the world's way for marriage? HDIFAMA?
9. What current world version of “happiness” most distracts me from living intimately and responsibly with you? HDIFAMA?
10. How did our dialogues on our original WWME experience bring us unity – being one in heart and mind? HDIFAMA?
11. How have I/we experienced unity in our relationship since our WWME experience? HDIFAMA?
12. What attitude change of mine has had the greatest impact on my willingness to strive for an intimate and responsible relationship with you? HDIFAMA?
13. When is the last time I asked you to forgive me? HDIFA the way you responded to me?
14. When was the last time I forgave you? HDIFA the way I responded to you?
15. People who have never known God can experience Him through our love? HDIFAT?
16. How have my views on our vocation of marriage changed since our WWME experience? HDIFAMA?
17. Name a time within the last two weeks when we experienced intimacy in our relationship. HDIF recalling that special time?
18. Name a time when I experienced intimacy as a result of my decision to love. HDIF recalling that time now?
19. Name a time when I experienced intimacy as a result of your decision to love. HDIF recalling that time now?
20. Name a time when I experienced intimacy as a result of my decision to be loved. HDIF recalling that time now?
21. Name a time when I experienced intimacy as a result of your decision to be loved. HDIF recalling that time now?
22. What specific daily decisions have I made to be sexually passionate with you? HDIFAT?
23. What specific daily decisions have we made to invite God into our relationship? HDIFAT?
24. Do I take 100% responsibility for making us the best couple we can be – or do I wait for you to give an equal share? HDIFAMA?
25. Where is my real comfort zone – living the world’s way or living God’s way for our marriage? HDIFTYT?