



A Date to Introduce the Intimacy Booklet to Your Mate

DATE 1

Pre-date Preparation

- Based on your budget, plan to eat out at a favorite restaurant, especially one with ambiance.
- Choose to wear an outfit your spouse will like. This is a date!

Dinner Discussion

Take turns, both answering these questions as you stroll down memory lane.

- What do you remember most about your first date?
- What attracted you to your mate?
- What do you remember most about your honeymoon?
- What are some of the times we have felt closest to each other, over the years?

Reading and Discussing the Booklet

Find a setting where you can read and talk privately, without being interrupted. This may be at home in front of a cozy fire, or in your bedroom. Rotate reading out loud to each other. While one is reading the other might be supplying the foot massage or backrub. Take time to comment on insights that are new to you, and be sure to stop to answer the questions. Allow at least 60 minutes. If you get weary, take a break, (like a walk,) then finish the material for that date.

Discuss What were the strengths of your parent's marriage?

What were the weaknesses?

What do you think is the purpose of marriage?

Read

God's Design for Marriage

- A. A fundamental purpose of the male-female love union in marriage is to reflect the image of God. Man cannot fully bear God's image in isolation. God exists as the Trinity, the union of 3 persons who love one another.

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Gen. 1:26-27

- B. A second purpose of marriage is to give us a foretaste of the joy we will experience when we are forever united in love to Christ our bridegroom.

- We, the church, are betrothed to Christ as his bride.
- The final return of Christ to receive us to himself is portrayed as the wedding of the lamb.
- The richest pleasures of sexual union are a type, a foreshadow of the intense joy that will be ours when we are united to Christ.

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church." Eph. 5:31-32

"For the wedding of the lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean was given her to wear." Revelation 19:7-8

- C. A third purpose for marriage is revealed in the creation account, where marriage is designed by God to overcome the aloneness of Adam.

- Each part of the creation narrative closes with God's statement: "And it was GOOD," until the creation of man.
- After Adam is created, God says. "It is NOT GOOD that man should be alone.
- In naming the animals Adam realizes that none can be a true partner to him. They cannot overcome his loneliness.
- So, God creates woman to be his partner, soul mate, and lover.

"The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'" Genesis 2:18

- D. These 3 purposes come together in a single, clear, focus: God's goal for marriage is a LOVING INTIMACY between husband and wife!

- Eve is created with a spirit, heart, and body which correspond to Adam's. (She is made from Adam and is bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh.)
- Marriage is given as the one safe arena where husband and wife are naked, body, soul, and spirit--laid bare and vulnerable to each other. But within the covenant of marriage, God's design is for Christ-like love to cast out fear. Thus, husband and wife can be naked and not feel ashamed or afraid.
- Adam and Eve's like natures combined with love and the experience of nakedness (baring their hearts and bodies to one another) enable them to experience LOVING INTIMACY, i.e. oneness of spirit, oneness of heart, oneness of body.
- The goal of marriage is to be able to be naked, body and soul, and be so loved and accepted that you never feel ashamed.

"The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame."
Gen. 2:25

- It is to be so fully one with each other that you think of your mate as part of yourself.

"In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself." Eph. 5:28

- An old fashioned way to express God's goal for our marriages is the word "intercourse." Intercourse means, literally, "connection between persons." It is both conversational interaction that connects 2 souls, and sexual interaction, which connects 2 bodies.
- God wants Christian couples to proactively pursue his goal for their marriage—INTIMACY—both the union of soul and union of body.

E. Loving each other in a God-honoring marriage means pursuing **conversation**, which leads to oneness of **soul**.

"The first achievement for the condition of understanding is the will to understand. The second condition is expressing oneself...In order to express oneself, there must be a feeling of warm and kind receptivity and of attentive listening." Paul Tournier, To Understand Each Other

- Sharing our experiences, feelings, ideas, plans, hopes and dreams is the path to the oneness of soul God wants married couples to enjoy.
- This requires taking control of our schedule and making time each day to talk with each other.

- This requires active listening, seeking to understand our mate's feelings and ideas.
- It requires overlooking our mate's weaknesses and deficiencies so they are not afraid to be known as they really are.
- It requires making them feel safe, accepted, and valued.
- It is to know the joy of sharing with another the deepest secrets of each other's hearts and feeling understood.
- It is to never feel alone because you are walking through life hand in hand with your soul mate.

"The word, *"intimacy"* comes from a Latin word that means "innermost." What this translates into for those of us in the marriage relationship is a vulnerable sharing of our inner thoughts, feelings, spirit, and true self. Both men and women need to feel secure in this sharing and confident of their spouse's support. This support is achieved through listening, empathy, prayer, or reassurance."

Barbara Rosberg, The 5 Love Needs of Men and Women

"Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way...so that nothing will hinder your prayers." I. Peter 3:7

- F. Loving each other in a God-honoring marriage will also mean pursuing LOVEMAKING, which leads to oneness of BODY.

"Lovemaking is the most practical, binding, and enriching experience of all married love. There is one person who knows you and wants to know you more, better than anyone but God. And that's why God gave you sex, to interact at the deepest possible human levels. Your sex life as a married couple will make your self esteem go up or down. Ann Ortland, Sex in a Growing Marriage

- Sexual union is the outward, physical expression of the inner emotional and spiritual reality of ONENESS.
- Though it is not a sacrament because it is not a means of grace for the Christian, it functions in a very similar way.
- The wine and bread in communion as well as the water in baptism are OUTWARD PHYSICAL signs and seals, which express an INNER SPIRITUAL reality. Sexual union is an OUTWARD PHYSICAL joining of 2 bodies which express the INNER SPIRITUAL union of 2 hearts.
- Just as celebrating the sacraments strengthens our love relationship with Christ, so the celebration of sexual union strengthens our love relationship with our spouse.

- Whenever a husband and wife come together in sexual union, they are both renewing and celebrating their marriage vows.
- God urges married couples to enjoy frequent, passionate sex.

"In the Song of Solomon, God enters the bridal chamber, where the newlyweds lay entwined in each other's arms. He raises his hand over them and blesses them. His benediction urges them to feast on the joy of their sexual union. 'Eat friends: drink and imbibe deeply, O lovers.'"

Dennis and Barbara Rainey, Simply Romantic Nights

G. When a couple STOPS regularly pursuing intimacy of HEART and BODY they expose each other to the temptation to be unfaithful.

- A woman whose husband is eager to spend time sharing their hearts feels loved. She is unlikely to stray because their emotional oneness is so fulfilling to her.
- A man whose wife is eager to make love to him feels loved. He is less likely to stray because their sexual oneness is so fulfilling to him.

"For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double edged sword... Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer—may her breasts satisfy you always. May you ever be intoxicated by her love. Why be captivated my son by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife? Prov. 5:3, 15-20

"The wife's body does not belong to her alone, but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent...so that Satan will not tempt you " 1 Cor. 7:4-5

H. The Biblical design for loving intimacy in marriage exalts BOTH oneness of soul and oneness of body. Biblically, the human body is not considered inferior to the soul, nor the soul inferior to the body.

To be naked with another is a sort of picture or symbolic demonstration of perfect honesty, perfect trust, perfect giving and commitment, and if the heart is not naked along with the body, then the whole action becomes a lie and a mockery.

Mike Mason. The Mvsterv of Marriage

- Joining bodies in sex apart from joining lives in marriage is wrong. (I. Thes. 4:3)
- Joining lives in marriage without joining bodies in sex is also wrong. (I. Cor. 7:5)
- Biblically, body and soul belong together.
- Unlike some pagan philosophies, Christianity has always upheld a high view of the physical body and therefore of sexual union.
- God takes great pleasure in a couple's sexual union as well as their spiritual/emotional union.

Discuss What ideas in this section are new to you?

Do you agree that when a couple stops pursuing intimacy of heart and body, they expose each other to temptation?

Why do you believe couples stop pursuing intimacy of heart? Intimacy of body?

In sections I below, many male-female tendencies are mentioned. Which ones do you see or not see in yourself?

- I. God has perfectly designed husband and wife with different but complementary sexual natures. These are some typical differences.

<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>
Crave physical intimacy	Crave emotional intimacy
Give love to get sex	Give sex to get love
Body can disconnect from mind heart, and soul	Body, mind, heart, and soul are intricately connected
Recurrent physical needs cycle stimulated by what they see	Emotional needs cycle Stimulated by what they hear
Vulnerable to unfaithfulness in the absence of physical touch	Vulnerable to unfaithfulness in the absence of emotional connection
Shannon Ethridge, <u>Every Woman's Battle</u>	

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, He created him. Male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27

You have completed the Overview of how God created marriage to be. The booklet continues, explaining how our race's fall into sin has corrupted this original design and how to recover that intimacy which is God's purpose for your marriage. You can order [Intimacy: God's Design for Marriage](http://www.forgingbonds.org/resources.html) at <http://www.forgingbonds.org/resources.html>.