

## **The Lack of Intimacy in Marriage – Part 3<sup>i</sup>**

### **Review**

G-d loved marriage so much that He not only created marriage and presided over the very first wedding, but also He took tremendous pleasure in pronouncing them husband and wife, commanding them to fill the earth and be happy. When the second man Adam came and he commissioned us to go and “repopulate the earth” and recover what Satan had stolen from the first man Adam, and when He chose a perfect representation of what His relationship between Yah and His People would be like, He chose marriage. The L-rd chose to be “married” to His people. He chose marriage to represent the relationship between the Lamb of G-d, the Son of G-d and the Believing Community, His Bridal Body.

### **A Satanic Strategy**

If G-d so loved marriage that He chose it as His perfect analogy, then the flip side of that is Satan hates marriage with a passion. In particular, Satan hates even more the marriages of believing couples. An area of concern today, while not as drastic as the breaking of marriages, is that of believing couples that remain together but they do have no intimacy—or not as much intimacy as they should or would like to have. This is Satan’s scheme: if he cannot destroy your marriage, he will undermine it to the point that ‘you put up with it.’

The good news is that G-d is the one who invented marriage. The good news is that the Bible tells us that a spouse is a gift from G-d (Scripture uses the term wife, but I believe it is applicable to both). Every time I use this terminology, I can read in the eyes of so many husbands “if this is a gift from G-d, wow! I wonder what the devil will bring my way, you know” Why is it that so many people feel so strongly in a negative sense about marriage. One of the clearest symptoms of lack on intimacy in a marriage is that they longer look at each other’s eyes when they talk. If a spouse is a gift from G-d, then why am I not enjoying His gift as much as I should?

### **Tracing Lack of Intimacy in Marriage to a Violation of a Scriptural Principle**

Every time we deal with consequences that are negative, we have to identify the Biblical principle that we have violated. There is a Biblical principle in Deuteronomy 24:5 that is very clear: “*If a man has recently married his wife, he is not to be subject to military service; he is to be free of external obligations and left at home for one year to make his new wife happy.*” {By the way, this is one of the 613 *Mitzvot* in the *Torah*}. In other words when a man takes a wife, he is not to be charged with any extraordinary duties, nor to go out to war, but to stay home. The word that people most often use to describe their first year of marriage is “hectic.” However, the Bible word for sexual relationships is the Hebrew word *yodea*, e.g., to know (intimately.) In our society, we have reduced sexual intimacy to something often understood purely at a physical level. But the Bible takes sexual relationships to the level of the soul, to ‘knowing each other.’ When you get married, that first year, that first month, that first week, and that first night, you are confronted with all your insecurities. You have never been with another person alone and here you are, totally exposed (literally and figuratively.) Unless you create the right environment, unless you provide your undivided attention to what is at hand, you are not going to have excellence.

When we pray for marriages we pray according to the already stated Will of G-d. We want to present G-d’s solutions in the context of spiritual warfare because we can see more and more marriages turned around when we apply the power of G-d (firstly) to the situation. Clearly, many of us have violated G-d’s principle in Deut. 24:5 and as such we have sinned. We must, therefore, repent of that sin in order to begin the process of restitution and to gain godly intimacy in our marriages.

## **Two Commands – One Promise {Continued}**

When G-d joins a man and a woman together in marriage, G-d gave two different commands with the same promise as a reward for keeping that command. He told husbands to love their wives. And He told wives to honor or respect their husbands. Sometimes, in the flesh, we have thought that it would have been easier if G-d gave a straightforward command: for the wives to be submissive and for the husbands to make sure that they stayed submissive. But wives using the same principle would argue that the command should have been for husbands to love them and for them to make sure that their husbands love them, and every time you don't, they are to tell you that you don't. However, it appears G-d had a little bit of a sense of humor because He gave us two different commands that on the surface seem to have very little relationship with each other. We husbands are to love our wives and you wives are to respect and submit to your husbands.

When I appear before the Judgment Seat of the Messiah, and I have to give an account for everything I have done in the flesh, whether good or bad, my wife will have to wait outside. Whether or not your wife was submissive is none of your business. This command was given to wives and not to husbands. Similarly is none of your business wives whether or not your husband loved you. What do I mean by this? Because one of the most destructive fights between a husband and a wife are when a husband picks up a passage that was written for wives and reads out loud in anger to his wife (or vice-versa). He might say something like: "look what the Bible says!" Husbands; the Bible says that to your wife, not to you. So sit tight and stay put. She has to deal with that passage. Why is that? Very simple; G-d gave us two different commands, but they have the same promise. In Ephesians it says that we are to love our wives the same way the Messiah loves the Congregation. If we love our wives, the same thing will happen to our wives that is happening to the Body of Messiah: the spots and the wrinkles are going to be removed.

The Bible says that when we love our wives with unconditional (Greek, *agape*) love, the Love of G-d, the wrinkles and spots that are there, are removed and that is the promise. In 1 Peter Chapter 3 it says that if a wife is submissive to her own husband, and her husband is disobedient to the Word, what happens to that husband through the wife's submission: he is won over. Our problem nowadays is that we read and interpret this principle through the grid of psychology. If we apply psychological assumptions to this while overlooking an important factor in 1 Peter Chapter 3—the whole chapter has to do with marriage, not just the first 7 verses. If you read the whole chapter, you'll find that the context of 1 Peter 3 is spiritual warfare. It says that when we suffer by doing right, something happens in the spiritual realm such that the spiritual powers and authorities and principalities behave the way they are supposed to behave—they remain subject to Messiah *Yeshua*. That is why the Bible says to the wives to "*submit yourself to your own husbands as unto the Lord.*" The answer is because the L-rd has all principalities and powers under His authority. But when a wife rebels, and by rebelling against her husband she is actually rebelling against Messiah *Yeshua*, she gives ground to all demonic forces to agitate her and to cause the marriage to flounder. Husbands, isn't this an exciting promise? We are commanded to love our wives the way Messiah loves the Congregation of Believers (the Body of Messiah). However, the Body that Messiah *Yeshua* loves is actually full of wrinkles and spots. But the Bible says that by loving the Bride Body, those wrinkles and spots will be eliminated and He will be able to present her to Himself without spots or wrinkles. That is the promise.

Similarly wives, the Bible says that wives should submit, not to obedient husbands only, but also to disobedient ones. Why? Because the Bible says, not psychology, but the Bible says that those husbands will be won over by their wives. People say, but rabbi, that doesn't make any sense. It doesn't. The wisdom of G-d is foolishness to men. You see, our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. It doesn't have to make sense. Because when makes sense, the best you can do hope for what psychology gives you as the highest price—coping. You will be able to cope with it. Praise G-d that the word 'coping' does not appear, not even once in the Bible. The word you do find in this Book is OVERCOMING. This is why the Good News of the Gospel are the "bomb," I love to proclaim that those forces that are trying to destroy your

marriage are subject to Messiah *Yeshua*. If we “*humble ourselves therefore, under the might hand of G-d*” (1 Peter 5:6-7) and “*resist the devil,*” (James 4:7) the Bible says “*he shall flee*” and your marriage will be safe.

Why is it that G-d tell husbands to love their wives and wives to respect their husbands? We men don't care so much for love, we care for respect. We do not expect to get to work and the secretaries go “we love, we love you!” That would be totally embarrassing to a man. We don't want to be loved. If some man or some woman tells me they love me because of the way I conduct my business, I do not know how to deal with that. But when I hear echoes that people think I am an honorable person and that I am respected, then I can't help but feel good. Why is that? Because according to Peter we have inherited a futile lifestyle (worthless way of life) from our forefathers (see 1 Peter 1:18). This lifestyle is futile and worthless because it can never satisfy. We are conceived in sin, by sinful people, and we are born into a sinful world and we are raised in a sinful society. The stack is loaded against us, we can never win. In order to ‘cope with it’ and to deal with all the frustration and futility of life, the world focuses on ‘making it big.’ The biggest car, the biggest bank account, the biggest house, the most expensive dress, the biggest business; these are the things the world wants. Why? It gives a false sense (yet it is real to many who have these things) of security. Bringing that over to the believing community, when a wife respects her husband and builds him through honest praise, she is giving that man the only thing that he really cares about.

Many wives come to ministers and say “it will not work.” “My husband is so abusive, and he is already into his own world so much that if I encourage him one inch, he will take a mile (63,680 inches!). When I have been gives such type of comments I like to point out that the reason they are into that tug of war is because that husband is trying to get out of his secular job the respect he doesn't get at home. But the moment that wife begins to express respect, and at the beginning it is hard to find anything positive, especially since there is so much disrespect all over the place, yet there has to be something good somewhere to begin with, it is amazing how such words (baby steps) become music to his ears.

I want to emphasize for you is the promise attached to the command. G-d said to women if you want to win your husbands don't cook the best meals, or don't do this or that, just respect him. You see, men need respect in order to succeed. That is why so many men after giving their lives to their jobs, when they retire, they get deeply depressed and many commit suicide. Some develop cancers within weeks of retiring and die quickly because now there is no more hope and they are relegated to the reality of no one praising them. This is why this is so a powerful promise. When a man is respected and honored by the one somebody with whom he is one flesh, there is no limit to it. Ladies, for those of you that are not married yet, treasure this in your heart. And if you begin early in your relationship (even on the first day of your marriage) to praise when there are not so many negatives in the picture, is amazing how far your husband will go to love and honor you.

In a similar fashion, G-d tells husbands to love their wives. How are we supposed to love them? There are three dimensions of love described in Scripture. Filial love, brotherly love, friendship love is the first, and we all need that. Marilyn is my friend and I am her friend. Then we have erotic love which is the privilege G-d gives to married couples to enjoy sex. Then we have *agape* love, which is what makes a believer's marriage different from the world's standard. This is why Scripture forbids the marriage of a believer to an unbeliever. You see, the unbelieving world does not have access to the Love of G-d. Of the three loves, the one you can count on 24-7 and 366 days every year is *agape* love. Some days you are angry at each other and you are not friends. Some days the sexual relationship is the last thing that would cross your mind. But the Love of G-d is always there and we can project that to the other person. The reason I believe G-d commanded us to love our wives with *agape* love (genuine love) is because the greatest longing in the soul of a woman is to be loved unconditionally—not for what she does, but because of who she is to you. Men this is so difficult for us! We are so task oriented. Everything we do, we have a reason for it. We classify outcomes as good or bad (positive or negative, i.e., binary). There are things we can use and things we cannot, and we discard those we cannot use for a good

purpose. We either fix things or we throw them away. When we transfer that to our relationship with a woman, it rubs that woman the wrong way. She reasons “the day you can’t fix things with me, you are going to discard me, right.”

Also the way women approach problems is very different than men. Women like to pass problems through a very wide range of emotions. We don’t like emotions, we want the facts. What is the bottom line of the problem, and boom, here we go. There is a longing in the deepest corner of a woman’s heart to be accepted the way she is. And this is why lack of intimacy is the result of a stronghold that begins to be built in that marriage on the first night of their honeymoon. When we men fail to comprehend the command to live with them in an understanding way, studying them, discerning what are they saying, why are they saying what they are saying. And we men have such a flat, one dimensional concept of sexuality that causes us to come across terribly. In contrast, the concept of sexuality with a woman is more three dimensional and complex than that. It has to do with a million things—it has to do with the weather, with flowers, with attentiveness, with opening the door, with being courageous, with being a gentleman, with leading to something. That’s where we men often fail. And when that stronghold begins to be built there, and men do not get what they think they are entitled to, they try harder. And by trying harder they cause the wife to withdraw farther, and is so doing the intensity in which we men pursue that intimacy causes a further withdrawal from the wife compounding the problem. That is why that first year is so important. And that is also why it so important for us men to spend time studying our wives. It is not surprising then that the Bible word for sexual relations in the Torah is the word to know. Yes, to know.

Also we see that in 1 Peter 3 there is a command for wives not to talk. It says that you are to win them without a word. Most wives complaint that their husbands don’t listen to them. It is Biblical ladies, don’t even try it. We men are not wired to listen! “But my husband has a roving eye.” We men are trained and wired to observe. So ladies, don’t talk to your husbands. Hasn’t it happened to you that your husband comes home and he is reading the paper or watching the news or sports on TV or doing something else, and while you are giving him the daily report and he goes “Uhu, aha, umm, yes, aha...” And finally you blow a fuse and you say “you are not listening to me.” And he says “I am” and proceeds to repeat everything you said, only for you to say “you are still not listening tome.” Perhaps that is why the Bible says that you are to win them without a word, as they observe your behavior. Then 1 Peter 3:4 states that what wins a man over is when the wife reveals the hidden person of the heart. The greatest show of respect that a woman can give a man is to reveal the hidden person of the heart. That is, a person that is filled with all of the beauty that a woman can have, but a person that is also filled with all those insecurities and fears. When a woman reveals that, something happens to the heart of that man that he is hooked to that woman forever. In studies of unfaithfulness in believer’s marriages (even cases involving ministers), when one traces the root or the beginning of adulterous relationships, with the men, it began with a woman that gave that man respect, a grateful spirit, and showed him her insecurities, which appealed to his desire to be a protector. The initial move was not for adultery, but for companionship not realizing that such companionship appeals to what is most needful in a man. They say “before I knew it, I was drawn into adultery...” When you track it down for the woman, it was not something physical, it was: “someone I was able to talk to, somebody that I could be myself with, somebody I could pour my soul to and not be rejected...”

Do you see the power of those promises given to us by the L-rd in His Word? As we love our wives unconditionally, we don’t have to change them. The L-rd will change them. We have to love them. That’s what we have to do, love them with unconditional, genuine love day in and day out, until they feel secure enough that they unlock the innermost chamber of their hearts and they reveal the hidden person. And when that happens, you have intimacy at the highest possible level.

Then in 1 Peter 3:7 we husband are told to live with our wives in an understanding way. We want to single out this word, understanding. The responsibility is with us men to understand our wives. Not so much for our wives to understand us, but for us to understand them. Why do women do what they do? Many men are so igno-

rant that they thought on the day they got married, that except for the obvious gender differences, they were about the same. Big surprise! It is a different ballgame. You have to give them priority and spend time

### **Examples**

1. A woman's concept of time is very different than a man's. "Just a minute Honey, and I'll be ready."
2. Saving money: for us men this is a straightforward operation. You get \$50 and you save by putting the \$50 in a savings account. He'll get home to find a smiling wife that informs him, "Honey, I saved you \$50 today. He reasons, "I just put \$50 in the bank, she saved me \$50, so now I have \$100, right?" Wrong! She went to the mall, found a \$100 dress on sale for \$50 on a blue light special, and she could help but save the family budget fifty bucks. So she took out the \$50 out of the savings account to pay for the dress, and informs you how she just saved you fifty bucks...
3. Shopping: the quickest way for any man to catch a depression is to go shopping. If a man goes to the store, and asks a question, he feels so guilty he must buy something. Ladies can walk into a store, ransack it, try ten dresses and leave without saying good day to the person, they feel good about it. I am so glad ladies like to shop, else the world would look like a military camp—olive drab.
4. Clothes. A wife will sit at the edge of the bed staring into the three story walk-in closet full of clothes and say the most dreaded words any man would ever want to hear: "Honey, I have nothing to wear." The worst thing you can do as a husband is to give her any suggestions. Don't. When we decide what we are going to wear we often start with our socks, and move from there on. What happens is that for all practical purposes, that closet is empty in the mind of that wife... Bring them tea and commensurate with them, "yeah, Honey, you do not have anything to wear. I guess we'll just stay home from now on."
5. Problem solving: example, a broken washing machine. By the time you get home, you have it figured out and you can't wait to get home and fix it. Don't do it! Your wife needs to talk about the problem. They will recite to you all of the symptoms they have noticed and how they felt it was going to fail (when you first bought it, they recited all the reasons they felt that was the one). They have a need to go back and forth, not so much in logic, but needful to filter that issue through a wide range of emotions. Sit down and relax and enjoy it. Don't try to change it. Watch them go back and forth...

### **In Conclusion**

Before a woman reveals her innermost being to you, she will test you in these mundane things. She is not coming to you saying "Honey, let me make an appointment so we can discuss the rest of our lives." She will test you on how you dealt with the washing machine, clothing and shopping and time and so on. And finally when she feels secure enough, that you are committed to her and you are loving her wrinkles and spots and her handicaps and you are loving them, then finally she feels secure enough to open up and what do you do then? With the Love of G-d in your heart, you wash them away. Now you have intimacy. Intimacy that is not based on performance, it is based on commitment.

When Scripture states that our wives are weaker physically, the container maybe weaker, but the content is of the same strength—the Grace of G-d, being fellow heirs. When there are fights, the woman hurts more. Thus, the Bible tells us to treat them as if they are weaker vessels. The penalty for an unsubmitive wife is fear, for an unloving husband is that his prayers will be not answered. Let us repent and strive to become the most intimate of married people.

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<sup>i</sup> Adapted from Ed Silvano, 1992