**DEVELOPING THE SPIRITUAL UNION IN MARRIAGE**

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**Outline**

1. Oneness + Order = God’s Image in Marriage
2. Knowing
3. The Ingredients of Spiritual Connection

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**God’s Image in Marriage**

**The Trinity**

1. **Oneness**: Father, Son and Holy Ghost are all equally God, one essence, one purpose.
2. **Order**: Father, Son, Holy Spirit

**Marriage**

1. **Oneness**: all equally human, important, created in God’s image, one in the marriage bond, one purpose.
2. **Order**: Christ, Man, Woman

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**Oneness: Godhead**

- 1 John 5:7 “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”

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**Oneness: Marriage**

Ephesians 5:31-32
“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”
Oneness: Marriage

- The covenant between husband, wife, and God creates oneness.
- God designed marriage to reveal His glory.
- Marriage symbolizes relationship between Christ and Church:
  - God is glorified when couples express their love for each other.
  - Physical union is an act of spiritual worship and obedience.

Oneness: Hindrances

- Temptations of self-interest, independence, & spiritual laziness
- No effort to seek oneness
- Fear of being open about spiritual things
- Not working through differences
- Not dealing with conflict and anger effectively
- Not following God-given roles
- Allowing something/someone to become a wedge between you

Order

1. Godhead
2. Marriage
3. Design: Husband & Wife
4. Submission

Order: Godhead

- John 12:49-50, “For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”

Order: Marriage

1 Corinthians 11:3
“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”

Order: Design

- Christ is the ultimate head of the union.
- It is God’s design to have order in marriages and families.
- Spiritual oneness in marriage and Godly order will reveal God to the world.
- What is the opposite of the above principle?
• Love your wife as Christ loved the church.
  • Your wife has a great need to feel loved, accepted, and secure.

• Leadership roles in the home are more about lovingly taking responsibility than being “in charge” or having the last word.

• Understand the husband (spiritual head) sets the standard (a pace-setter) for his family’s spirituality.
  • This does not mean the husband is more spiritual than the wife.

• Husbands should never feel they are “the boss.”

• You will not function as a leader in every situation.

• Consider your wife’s input in decisions:
  • This displays love to your wife and models mutual submission.
  • Submission will be easier when she is able to trust you are ‘in tune’ with her.

• Find ways to live out the role as a helper.
  • Your husband has a great need for respect and honor.

• Your role is not less spiritual or less important.

• Realize attempts to be “helpful” may be interpreted as criticism.
  • Consider thoughtfulness with suggestions

• Identify husband’s comfort with being a spiritual leader.
  • Is he insecure or passive?

• To each other in the fear of God.
  • Ephesians 5:21
    “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”

• Wife to her husband:
  • Ephesians 5:22-23
    “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”

• Necessary during disagreement or uncertainty.
  • Is not just finally agreeing.

• Takes humility and strength.
  • Is not a sign of weakness.

• Wives have need to feel cherished and connected.

• Spiritual effectiveness is influenced by the understanding of emotional needs.
Knowing: Wives Know Husbands

- **Proverbs 31:27** “She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.”

- **1 Peter 3:1** “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;”

- Husbands have need to feel affirmed and respected.
- Your life can speak as loud as words.

Knowing: Practical Ways

- What is his/her love language?
- What are his/her spiritual gifts? Talents?
- What ways does he/she learn most effectively?
- What does he/she love to do?
- How is he/she fed spiritually?
- What things make him feel respected/her feel loved?

Knowing: Parents Know Children

- Periodically assess spiritual development [see “Spiritual Growth Charts For Parents”]
- Strive to meet the emotional needs:
  - Spend quantity and quality time with them.
  - Focused attention, eye contact, gentle physical touch.
  - Tame the tendency to run in too many directions.
  - Children find it easier to respect parents when emotional needs are met.

Knowing: Grandparents Know Grandchildren

- Communicate to your grandchild a particular trait you value in them.
- At milestones, reflect on how you have seen God work in them and their gifts, talents, and interests.
  - Can be brief
  - Remember consistency
- Use “blessing” scriptures (Numbers 6:24-26; Ephesians 3:17-19) as a guide to pray for your grandchildren.

Ingredients: A Menu

- Most important connection as couple/family.
- Heart-focused, not checkmark-focused.
- Be creative, find what works for you.
- Recognize and adapt to the ebb and flow.
- Seek to be intentional and realistic.
- Learn from others.
**Ingredients: Prioritize the Big**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>URGENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I (MANAGE)</strong></td>
<td><strong>II (FOCUS)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Crisis, Emergencies</td>
<td>• Preparation / Planning</td>
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<td>• Deadline-driven projects</td>
<td>• Values Clarification</td>
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<td>• Last-minute preparation for scheduled projects</td>
<td>• Exercise</td>
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<td><strong>III (AVOID)</strong></td>
<td><strong>IV (TRIVIAL)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Interruptions, some calls</td>
<td>• Trivial busywork</td>
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<td>• Some mail / reports</td>
<td>• Junk mail</td>
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<td>• Some meetings</td>
<td>• Time wasters</td>
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<td>• Many “pressing” matters</td>
<td>• Escape activities</td>
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**The Word**

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

*John 17:17*

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**Ingredients: The Word**

Colossians 3:16

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

- There is power in reading, speaking, and discussing the Word.
- Sharing spiritual matters, creates tight bond and highlights foundation of marriage.
- The Word points your children to Christ.

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**Ingredients: The Word – Application**

- Read together at breakfast or bed time.
- Read with your family after meals.
- Go through a Bible study or devotional book together.
- Pick a topic to study separately, then discuss what you learned.
- Memorize scripture together.
- Review insights from sermons.
- Speak the Gospel message to each other
  - *(Spouses name), you are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus* *(Romans 3:24)*

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**Ingredients: The Word – Resources**

**Spiritual Maturity and Growth**

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**Prayer**

“Pray without ceasing.”

*1 Thessalonians 5:17*
Ingredients: Prayer

Colossians 1:9-10 “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

- Praying together builds intimacy. (i.e. as couple, with God)
- Prayer can happen individually, as a couple, and as a family.

Ingredients: Prayer – Application

- Pray daily for each other and for each of your children.
- Husbands - pray out loud with your family daily.
- Pray aloud together at bed time.
- Set a day of the week to pray for certain topics.
- Share prayer requests with each other.
- Schedule family prayer time and keep a prayer journal.
- Pray scripture together
  - Psalm 119:33-37, Ephesians 1:17-23

Ingredients: Prayer – Resources

PRAYER: AN ADVENTURE WITH GOD

The instruction and comforting Bible study from Integrity First that has been adapted with permission by ACCFS. The study consists of 24 lessons and can be done individually, in small groups, and congregationally. Copies of this study can be purchased from the ACCFS website on this website.

Ingredients: Worship

- Different ways to worship:
  - Individual
  - Couple & Family
  - Congregational

Psalms 35:18, “I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.”

Ingredients: Worship – Application

- Take time to prepare your heart prior to church.
- Keep your personal devotional time vibrant.
- Meditate on God’s Glory, His plans, His power, and His Love.
- View worship as a lifestyle.
- Share with your spouse spiritual insights and personal worship moments from your week.
- Sing and listen to edifying music.
The Beginners Family Worship HANDBOOK
A simple guide for starting family devotions in your home.

Fellowship
“But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”
1 Corinthians 12:18

Ingredients: Worship – Resources

Ingredients: Fellowship

• Personal fellowship with the Triune God
  • 1 John 1:3 “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

• Leads to Christian Community
  • 1 John 1:6-7 “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

Ingredients: Fellowship – Application

• You were made to become part of God’s family.
• Seek to deepen your relationships by:
  • Sharing Life – celebrate milestones, experiencing the various stages of life.
  • Mentoring – the more experienced teaching, coaching, and guiding the less experienced.
  • Accountability – allow others to hold you accountable to live Biblical standards.
  • Support – lifting each other up during difficult times.
  • Encouraging – building up and edifying others.

Ingredients: Fellowship – Resources

General Mentoring Information

Giving - Serving
“The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.”
Proverbs 11:25
Ingredients: Giving/Serving

- God is the best giver.
  - *James 1:17*, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”
- We are to be follow His example.
  - *Luke 6:38*, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

Ingredients: Giving/Serving - Individually

- Spouses serving style may be similar or different.
- Encourage one another in your individual serving roles.
- Learn your individual spiritual gifts and talents
  - ACCFS has a self-study on spiritual gifts available called “Understanding and Developing Spiritual Gifts”

Ingredients: Giving/Serving - Couple

- Couples are encouraged to find ways to give-servetogether.
- Frequency may depend on serving styles

Ingredients: Giving/Serving - Family

- Model servant-lifestyle to your children.
- Serving together will impress your children about the REALITY of your faith more than with words alone.
- Children need to learn through repeated experiences:
  - Learning to live life as a “living sacrifice” is not natural.
  - Children need help understanding their standard of living is higher than most of the world.
  - Helping your children develop a thankful/generous attitude takes work.

Ingredients: Giving/Serving – Application

- Discuss and teach tithing to your children.
- Discuss and prioritize your giving opportunities as a couple/family.
- Talk about each family member’s gifts and talents.
  - Find ways to use those gifts and talents.
  - Take your family on a mission trip.
  - Family nights with service project.

Ingredients: Giving/Serving – Resources

*Serving as a Family*

By Grace Fox

Part of the *Raising World Changers* Series
1. Serving as a Family
2. Teaching Service
3. What Is Service?
4. What Service Looks Like
5. Why Service Is Necessary
6. Practical Service

As a couple reflect on “The Ingredients of Spiritual Connection.” If you were to focus on strengthening one “ingredient” as a couple/family, which one would it be? Think about one or two practical ways you could strengthen this part of your spiritual connection.