

Calvary Marriage Conference

Session 2

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Sacred Friendship

- “Happy marriages are based on deep friendship. By this I mean a mutual respect for and enjoyment of each other’s company.” - Dr. John Gottman
- Friendship is the strongest predictor of marital satisfaction and sexual intimacy.
- A healthy friendship in marriage reflects the heart of God: steadfast love, faithfulness, and deep delight in one another.

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Sacred Friendship

Including your spouse doesn't just mean inviting them to events or asking what's for dinner. It means:

- Sharing your thoughts and dreams.
- Inviting them into your challenges and anxieties.
- Keeping them updated on what's going on in your inner world.

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Sacred Friendship

It also means staying curious about each other:

- What's your spouse's biggest current stressor?
- Who are their closest friends? And why?
- What are they excited about lately?
- What are they struggling to forgive?

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Sacred Friendship

As well as having a shared meaning and purpose

- What do we value as a couple?
- What kind of family culture are we creating?
- What legacy do we want to leave?

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ARE - Are you there for me?

- **Accessible** – “Can I reach you?”
- **Responsive** – “Will you be there when I need you?”
- **Engaged** – “Do I matter to you emotionally?”

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Friendship Barriers

- Busyness and Burnout
- Emotional Avoidance
- Assumptions of Stability/Lack of Intentionality

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Friendship Barriers

- Busyness and Burnout
- Emotional Avoidance
- Assumptions of Stability/Lack of Intentionality
- Digital Distractions
- Unforgiveness and hurt

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Rituals of Connection

- Simple, consistent, and emotionally meaningful moments that tether two people back to one another.
- “Love is not just a feeling; it is a series of moments of connection” - Dr. Sue Johnson
 - Rituals can be what structure those moments into reliable, loving habits.
- Relationship satisfaction and emotional security rise when couples engage in predictable, bonding behaviors that reinforce that emotional presence.

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Rituals of Connection

Characteristics of Healthy Rituals of Connection:

1. Predictable – They occur with regularity, offering a sense of stability.
2. Mutual – Both partners participate and value the connection.
3. Emotionally Meaningful – They involve physical or emotional intimacy (or both).
4. Symbolic – They represent “we-ness,” showing the relationship matters.
5. Simple – Often brief and low-effort, but consistent.

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Living in Grace

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.”

John 1:16

“From the fullness of his grace, we have received one blessing after another.”

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Living in Grace

Grace is...

- biblical
- relevant
- free
- blesses
- user friendly

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Acceptance and Appreciation

Romans 15:7

“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.”

1 Thessalonians 5:11

“Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up...”

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Acceptance

1. Who they are
2. What they do...or don't do
3. Who they are...in Christ

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Acceptance

Psalm 139:14

“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

Isaiah 43:4

Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you...”

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God's Perspective

Ephesians 2:10

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

1 John 3:1

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! **FOREVER**
And that is what we are!” **US**

God's Perspective

- Subtle C's
 - correct
 - criticize
 - compare
 - control
- Dysfunctional Dialogues
- Indifference
- Contempt
- Stonewalling
- Divorce

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Forgiveness

Colossians 3:13

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

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Forgiveness

Level I - Mistakes

Level II - Transgressions

Level III - Betrayals (Ugly A's)

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Level I - Mistakes

Mistakes → Grace

Proverbs 17:14

“Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out”

Proverbs 19:11

“A person's wisdom gives yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.”

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Level II - Transgressions

Transgression
Unforgiveness
Process

Ephesians 5:31

Transgression



Response



Rumination



Heart Hardens



Flight/Freeze



Isolation

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Level II - Transgressions

Transgression
Forgiveness Process

Ephesians 5:31

I feel...
I think...

Transgression



Response



Heart Softens



Heart Preparation



Talk



Reconnect

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Forgiveness

Ephesians 4:31

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.”

Ephesians 4:32

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving as in Christ God forgave you.

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Level III - Betrayals

Abuse - Addiction - Adultery

- Remorse: “I’m sorry for what I did...”
- Understanding: “I’m sorry for how I hurt you...”
- Commitment to Change...
- “Please forgive me...when you are ready”

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