

THE OUTLINE

PART 1

MAKE YOUR TOP PRIORITIES YOUR PRIORITY

CONFUSED PRIORITIES

THREE DECISIONS:

1. A non-negotiable date night every week
2. Be out 3 nights a week
3. Veto power

THE PRIORITIES WE ALL BELIEVE...BUT STRUGGLE PUTTING INTO ACTION

- God
- Marriage
- Children/Grandchildren
- Vocation

The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities

The Result: Overcommitted and under-connected

“If the devil can’t make you bad, he will make you busy.”

- Crisis Mode Living and Marriage

The Definition of Insanity: Doing the same thing over and over again and hoping for a different result.

REPAIR THE PAST

- Be ruthlessly honest about your own brokenness
- Focus on your stuff, not his/hers
- “If the tooth is infected, pull it.”
- Seek forgiveness/give forgiveness

THE GOAL: THE EPHESIANS 5:21 MARRIAGE

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Ephesians 5:21

- Am I a servant lover or a selfish lover?

FOUR QUESTIONS

- What is right about our marriage?
- What is wrong about our marriage?
- What is confusing about our marriage?
- What is missing from our marriage?

PERSONAL & GROUP REFLECTION

PART 1

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What makes it difficult for you to make your marriage a priority?
2. How does busyness affect your relationship?
3. In being “ruthlessly honest” about your own brokenness, what keeps you from a deeper intimacy with your spouse?
4. If you were going to create a goal for your marriage, what would it be?
5. Which of the above four questions give you the most insight to your relationship? Why?

THE OUTLINE

PART 2

| COMMUNICATION, CONNECTION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- “Communication is a learned trait.”

- Sometimes the reason there is a lot of tension or miscommunication is because we simply haven’t put energy into the skills it will take to build that healthy foundation.

- Examine Your Life (Again!)

“There is a time to search, and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away.” Ecclesiastes 3:6

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

| THE A.W.E. FACTOR IN YOUR LIFE AND MARRIAGE

- Affection

- Warmth

- Encouragement

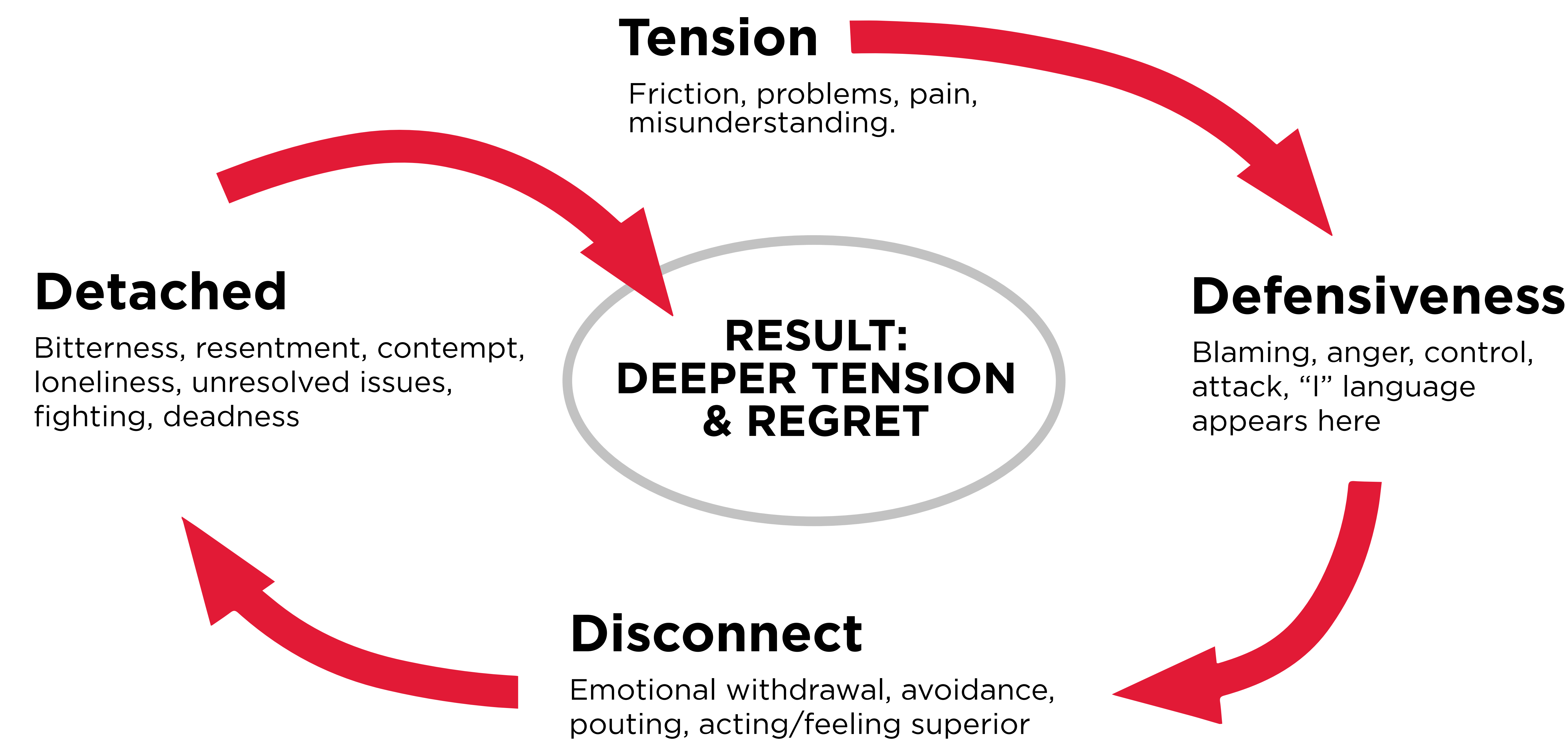
“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.” Proverbs 17:22

- Communication and Connection

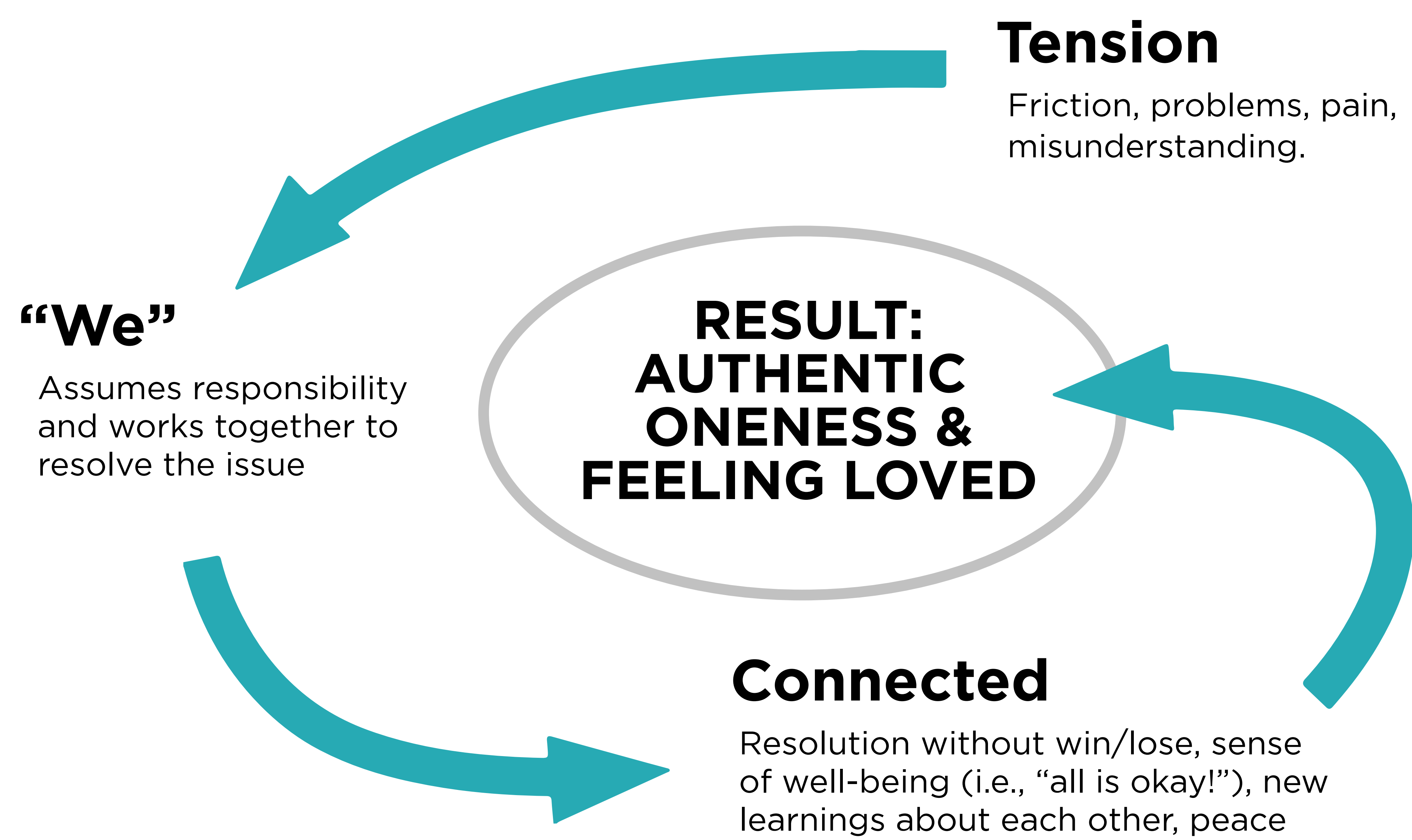
- Be Proactive

- Weekly Connection: The Summit
 - Date night
 - Business meeting
 - Spiritual growth
- Communication and Conflict Resolution

NEGATIVE CONFLICT DANCE



POSITIVE CONFLICT DANCE



PERSONAL & GROUP REFLECTION

PART 2

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. “Communication is a learned trait.” What aspects of your communication would you like to work on for a better relationship?
2. What would the AWE factor look like for your marriage?
3. Jim talked about being proactive with communication through a date night, business meeting (the summit), and time for spiritual growth. What are your thoughts about implementing each of these opportunities for communication?
4. When you look at the Negative Conflict Dance, which areas of the dance are easiest for you?
5. By putting the Positive Conflict Dance into practice, how would it improve your relationship with your spouse?

THE OUTLINE

PART 3

- Creative Romance

- Let's get practical

- Sex is fun...
- Sex is created by God...
- Sex is pleasurable...
- Sex can be complicated...
- Sex is deeply intimate...
- Sex is sacred...
- Sex is communication...
- Sex takes work...

"A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh." Matthew 19:4

- "A Theology of Healthy Sexuality"

A foundation...

- God created sex
- God created sex and He sees it as very good
- Guard your heart

- Romance and Intimacy

"Outdo one another in showing honor." Romans 12:10

A. DEVELOPING SEXUAL INTIMACY

- If there is no emotional intimacy or connection, there will be little interest in sexual intimacy
- If you do not have time to talk, you won't have much physical intimacy
- Foreplay begins before you get into the bedroom
- Handle the delicate problems with care and counsel
- Keep learning, even after all these years
- "I'm too tired" means you have your priorities in the wrong place
- Kids don't have to spoil the romance

PERSONAL & GROUP REFLECTION

PART 3

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Who taught you about sex education? Parents? Friends? A book? The internet? Do you believe you have a healthy view of sexuality in marriage? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever thought about a “healthy theology of sexuality”? How can this be helpful to your view of sexuality?
3. Jim mentioned emotional connection as well as physical connection. Do you have any reaction to his thoughts?
4. How comfortable are you talking about sexuality with your spouse?
5. What is the biggest “take away” from this section for you and why?

THE OUTLINE

PART 4

B. DATING AND CONTINUE COURTING WITH CREATIVITY

C. SCHEDULE TIMES OF INTIMACY: “IT’S WEDNESDAY!”

D. PURITY AND FIDELITY

In honor of God, my family and spouse, I commit my life to sexual purity and integrity.

It involves:

- Honoring God with your body
- Renewing your mind for good
- Turning your eyes from worthless things
- Guarding your heart above all else

- Emotional affairs

- Pornography

E. CREATE AN “ENGEDI” FOR YOUR SEXUAL INTIMACY

| SONG OF SOLOMON 1:9-14

Solomon speaks:

*“To me, my darling, you are like my mare among the chariots of Pharaoh.
Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, your neck with strings of beads. We will
make for you ornaments of gold with beads of silver.”*

Tirzah speaks:

*“While the king was at his table, my perfume gave forth its fragrance. My
beloved is to me a pouch of myrrh which lies all night between my breasts.
My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of Engedi.”*

- Experience Engedi

PERSONAL & GROUP REFLECTION

PART 4

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you committed to spending 1% of each week on a date with your spouse? Are you willing to brainstorm some date ideas together? Is there anything stopping you from a weekly date commitment?
2. Would scheduling times of intimacy be helpful for your relationship? For some people, this idea is a game changer and for others it's not needed.
3. What is your reaction to Jim's thoughts on purity and fidelity in a marriage? Is there any issue you need to deal with as a couple?
4. What are your thoughts on the Solomon scripture Jim shared? Did you gain any insight?
5. Are you willing to initiate an "Engedi experience" in the next two weeks? If so, what is the plan? (If you are sharing these questions in a group, no need to answer this last question publicly. 😊)

THE OUTLINE

PART 5

| GROWING SPIRITUALLY TOGETHER

“... A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So, they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate.” Matthew 19:4-6

- Blocks to growing spiritually together

- Busyness
- Low-level anger
- Lack of forgiveness
- Lack of respect
- Very few role models
- Spiritual warfare

- Refreshing your marriage spiritually

A. Intentionality is the key

B. Pray Often

C. Worship Together

D. Time with God Together – The Closer Challenge 20 minutes a week

E. Couples Time

F. Solo/Sabbath

G. Yearly Retreat

H. Read a marriage book a year

- Commitment and Perseverance are key

PERSONAL & GROUP REFLECTION

PART 5

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Jim mentioned that spiritual intimacy is often the least developed area of intimacy in a marriage. Can you relate to any of the blocks he mentioned?
2. It's obvious that intentionality is key. What are your thoughts about praying and worshipping together on a regular basis?
3. Are you willing to commit to the "Closer Challenge"? That's 20 minutes a week of spiritual connection. Do you have a plan? Remember Jim and Cathy Burns' book, *Closer*, is an excellent starting place.
4. Joining a couple's group, experiencing a marriage retreat, and reading one marriage book each year are all helpful ideas to refresh your marriage. Are you willing to commit to one or more of those ideas?
5. As unromantic as it sounds, commitment and perseverance are the foundation to keeping your marriage strong. What have you done to maintain commitment and perseverance in your relationship?