

Chapter 5: Fighting for Intimacy

Discussion: The challenge for week 4 was twofold.

First, you were challenged to choose an “analog” moment for your family and intentionally focus on time together, with conversations centered on gratitude. What did you do? How did the time impact your relationship(s)?

Second, you were challenged to start a group text with another couple to share real struggles. Please share, without breaking confidence, how the interactions encouraged or challenged you. If you did not share with another couple, discuss what is preventing you.

Awareness: What’s true or what’s happening?

1. Strategically, the chapter on intimacy follows parenting because children are often the greatest intimacy police. What excuses do you hear couples use to justify a lack of intimacy in their marriage? Why should couples find solutions and not point fingers, place blame, or make excuses for their lack of intimacy?
2. The author jokes about the challenges children can pose to intimacy. Share stories about interrupted intimate moments from your own relationship. In what ways have you seen real life (kids, work, stress, family dynamics, etc.) keep you from spending time together as a couple?
3. While we want to keep our most intimate times with our spouse private, there is also a benefit to our kids seeing a loving marital relationship lived out in front of them. How do you annoy your kids (in a positive way) with the way you love one another? How can modeling love for your spouse benefit your relationship as a couple and your relationship with your kids?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 7:1–7. How is a healthy sexual relationship with your spouse a necessary component of spiritual warfare? How does a healthy intimate life deny Satan a foothold in a Christian home?
5. Sex is a component of marital intimacy, and, in many ways, it is the reward for intimacy rather than the foundation. Discuss ways to build marital intimacy outside of the bedroom.
6. Couples aren’t always honest with one another about their expectations for intimacy, including their “sexpectations.” Discuss how a lack of honest communication about expectations in a marriage relationship can lead to conflict.
7. Extramarital sexual sin involves more than physical adultery. Read Job 31:1. How does guarding your eyes and making a covenant with your eyes protect and strengthen your marriage? Are there habits, activities, boundaries, or forms of entertainment that may not be technically “wrong” but still create discomfort, temptation, or distance in your relationship?

Ownership: Where does this show up in my or our life?

8. On a scale of 1 to 10—where 1 is total chaos, and 10 is a Fortune 500 CEO’s calendar—how much of your marriage is being lived intentionally versus simply being managed moment to moment?
9. The author explains that true intimacy means being fully known—including past relationships, failures, and sexual sin—and choosing to love anyway. How must Christ’s forgiveness shape the way you respond to your spouse’s past?
10. Are there parts of your spouse’s past that are still affecting your intimacy today? What steps can you take to fully forgive, move forward, and strengthen your relationship moving ahead?

Action: What are we going to do about it this week?

11. If there are steps that you need to take to forgive and move forward in your marriage, commit to beginning that process immediately.
12. How can you choose to make a covenant with your spouse to honor one another in the areas of purity, honesty, and protecting your relationship?

Key Verses for Study: Chapter 5

- **Genesis 2:24-25:** 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.
- **Ephesians 5:31-32:** 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.
- **1 Corinthians 7:5:** Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.
- **Psalms 103:11-12:** 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

Application for the Week

The "Face-to-Face" Calendar Audit:

Planning for intimacy, romance, or sex can feel unromantic to some people, but the things that matter most rarely happen by accident. What practical steps can you take to intentionally create time together and strengthen your relationship—inside and outside the bedroom? This week, sit down with your spouse and look at your calendars together. Instead of only scheduling work meetings, practices, and responsibilities, intentionally schedule time for one another—and then protect those commitments.

Also, schedule one **"Face-to-Face"** date (in the light) and have an honest, potentially awkward conversation about your **"Flesh-to-Flesh"** expectations (in the dark). Use this time to "outdo one another in showing love" by listening to your spouse's needs and adjusting your plan to honor them.