



The Art of Relationships
PODCAST



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**CENTER for MARRIAGE
& RELATIONSHIPS**

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Connecting **HEART & SOUL**

Granada Heights Friends, Sept 25-26, 2026



Biola University
CENTER for MARRIAGE
& RELATIONSHIPS

Dr. Chris and Alisa Grace

Center for Marriage & Relationships

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Part of Talbot School of Theology



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SESSION ONE

BECOMING ONE

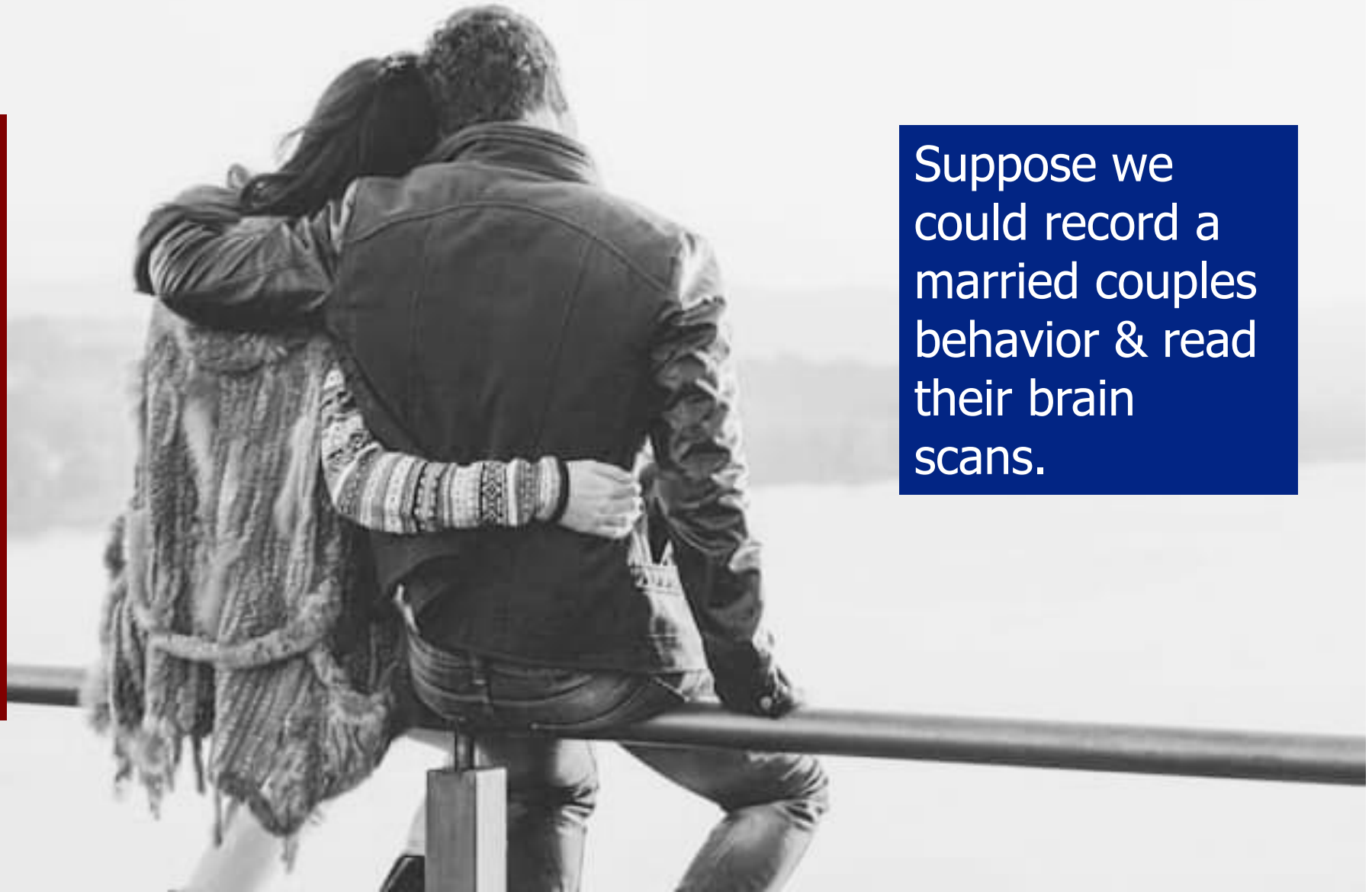
Emotional Intimacy

Most *newly married* couples were passionately in love.
How many married 20+ yrs were passionately in love?

40%

The other 60 percent weren't necessarily unhappy. Many had high levels of relationship satisfaction and were still in love, just not so intensely.

Suppose we could record a married couples behavior & read their brain scans.



BECOMING ONE

Emotional Intimacy

"...This is my beloved, and this is my friend"
—Solomon

"Forty years of research on what makes for a happy marriage can be summed up in 4 words: A deep, abiding **friendship**." —John Gottman

Strategy 1:

RECOGNIZE
“BIDS FOR CONNECTION”

An invitation to connect...

Up to 70% of our communication may fall into the miscommunication category. Why?

There are 8 possible messages when 2 people talk:

1. What you intend to say
2. What you actually said
3. What you think you said
4. What the other person hears
5. What the other person thinks he heard
6. What the other person intends to say
7. What the other person actually says
8. What the other person thinks he said

Bids for connection

A bid is an invitation to connect (engage, interact)

—any positive action or comment that you do to get your spouse's attention, affirmation, affection, or support.

Three Possible Responses:

1. Turn Away: Neutral (+/-) response, miss or intentionally ignore the comment, act as if they never said or did it.
2. Turn Against: Negative (-) response, irritable
3. Turn Toward: Positive response (+), mindful and aware, respond positively

The Connection Bid

“Is my outfit okay?”

“Can you pick up dinner?”

Fist-bump between spouses.

“I had a really hard day.”

“Want to watch a movie?”

“How was work today?”

“Let’s go get some coffee”

Leg touching you at night in bed.

The Hidden Request

Will you affirm me?

Will you help me?

Are we a team?

Will you comfort me?

I miss you.

Can we emotionally connect?

Can we catch up?

Am I desirable? Can we be intimate?

Transfer of Affect

Unfortunately...

our spouse's bids go unnoticed, ignored or
unanswered by us.

Says, "I don't want to connect with you."

The goal of a bid for connection is awareness!

Learn to recognize when your spouse makes a bid,
and turn toward him/her.

Strategy 2:

DEVELOP CONNECTION RITUALS

CREATE SACRED MOMENTS

Soulmates use simple, *everyday rituals* to stay connected.

*They are behaviors/opportunities, **done repeatedly** day after day, to stay connected.*

(Examples)

*Regular behaviors that **promote a sense of security and attachment***

3 KEY CONNECTION RITUALS

1: Saying ***Goodbye***

#2: ***Greeting*** each other

#3: Saying ***Goodnight***

COUPLE CONNECTION

1. Identify some connection rituals in your marriage.
2. What is one connection ritual you will focus on using **regularly** over the next two weeks?

1. Eat meals together without screens.
2. Start the day with a touch-base" conversation: "What's on your plate today? How can I help you today? How can I pray for you today?"
3. Partings: Hug and kiss goodbye
4. Reunions: Hug and kiss (before you greet the kids!)
5. Debrief for 30 minutes each evening about your day, things mentioned in the am touch-base, showing interest and compassion for your spouse.
6. Keep dating: be your husband's gf/wife's bf (1 in 1, 1 in 7, 1 in 30, 1 in 365).
7. Do things together (Errands, Chores, Projects, Studying, Exercise, Errands, Hobbies, Excursions, Serving, etc.)
8. Express non-sexual affection throughout the day
9. Express out loud admiration and appreciation/gratitude. (Use specific examples.)
10. Use nicknames for each other (never mean!).
11. Ritual phrases: "I'm so glad I married you." "I'd rather be with you than anyone else in the world." "You're my hero." "Hello beautiful." "I definitely married up!"
12. Do a chore you know your spouse hates to do.
13. Praise/compliment your spouse in front others – especially your kids!
14. Do small acts of kindness and consideration.
15. Watch your favorite TV/Netflix series with your favorite snack.

Weekly

State of the Union: what's coming up this week, any concerns/past hurts to discuss. End with: "How can I make you feel loved this week?"

Summary

1. Marriage is NOT static. You're always either *intentionally moving* toward being *soul mates* or *naturally drifting* toward being *roommates*.
2. Practice the 2 Strategies for Connecting:
 - a. **Notice** and **turn toward** your partner's **Bids** **to Connect**
 - b. **Rituals of Connection** every day.

1. Name 2 of my closest friends
2. Name 2 people I admire.
3. Where was I born?
4. Who is my favorite relative?
5. What if my favorite time of day for lovemaking?
6. What was one of my best childhood experiences?
7. What do I like to do with my time off?
8. What is my favorite movie?
9. What do I fear most?
10. What is my favorite way to spend an evening?
11. What medical problems do I worry about most?
12. What is my favorite restaurant?
13. Name my favorite novel.
14. What was I wearing when we met?
15. What is my favorite drink?
16. What spot on my body is most sensitive?
17. What is my favorite outfit to wear when I want to look sexy?
18. What is my favorite holiday?
19. What physical quality am I most attracted to in you?
20. What did I think about you when we first met?
21. What is my favorite getaway place?
22. What's my favorite musical group or composer?

When you _____ Couple Activity

I feel _____

Known (John 14:7)
Enjoyed (Zeph. 3:17)
Treasured (James 1:18)
Beloved (1 John 3:1)
Favored (Eph. 2:10)
Appreciated (Ps.100)
Valued (Eph 1:11)
Accepted (Ro 5:8)

1. Have fun and laugh with me.
2. Have meaningful conversations with me
3. Love and accept me unconditionally.
4. Believe in me
5. Listen and show interest in what I share.
6. Validate my feelings.
7. Don't judge my feelings and thoughts.
8. Share your feelings and thoughts.
9. Act curious about me.
10. Provide affection.
11. Spend time with me.
12. Serve in ways that are meaningful to me.
13. Are honest.
14. Provide positive affirmation.
15. Take my side and are loyal to me.

Conclusion: Ask yourself 3 questions...

1. When I look at the slide that contrasts how we see ourselves vs how God sees us, do I see myself as known, treasured and loved, or do I see myself through my scar/filters?
Does my spouse feel known, treasured, loved by me?
2. How am I allowing my scars/filters to influence my marriage?
3. How would my marriage be different if I choose to view/love my spouse the way God views me?

SESSIONS TWO & THREE

BECOMING ONE

Communication & Conflict

THE SECRET TO A GREAT MARRIAGE

“You have been entrusted with the heart of another human being. Whatever else your life’s great mission will entail, loving and defending this heart next to you is part of your great quest.”

—John and Stasi Eldridge

Communication

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer everyone.

—Colossians 4:6

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

—Ephesians 4:32

Communication

All communication (and “miscommunication”) involves emotion, primarily via the *transfer* of affect/emotion.

Every conversation we have either communicates *“I like you” or “I don’t like you.”*

(Even **transactional** communication, like at a drive thru)

This is especially true during times of conflict

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in *unity*!

Psalm 133:1

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you *agree with one another* in what you say and that there be *no divisions among you*, but that you be perfectly *united* in mind and thought.

I Cor. 1:10

Conflict in Relationships

Question: Why is talking about a conflict hard?

Question: Why might we lack confidence when entering into a conversation or situation in which we disagree or feel conflict?

COUPLE CONNECTION

Discuss: What was conflict like in your home growing up?

We've got to change the way we view conflict.

- Instead of seeing conflict as “**a problem to be solved,**” we need to see it as “**an opportunity for growth**” in your relationship.

**Knowing the hidden issues and deeper emotions
can defuse high conflict situations
and soften disagreements**

Main Causes:

- Unmet expectations
 - Misunderstanding/misperception
 - Bad communication
 - Past hurts/traumas
 - Future fears or anxiety
- Personality differences
 - Cultural differences
 - Value differences
 - Shutting-off emotionally
 - Selfishness
 - Abuse



Conflict in Relationships

Managing the Conflict

1. How important is the disagreement?
 - Is it a hill to die on?
 - Is it realistic to expect change?

Conflict in Relationships

Research on married couples conflict (e.g., John Gottman)

31% of major continuing disagreements are about **resolvable issues** such as **preferences/style**.

69% are about **unresolvable** “*perpetual problems*” that never get resolved but *must be “managed.”*

Events

versus

Issues

Event: “What” we argue about—like being too loud, or being late, or spending money. The circumstances. Events are the verbal, or the **text**.

Issue: The hidden emotions or feelings that drive the conflict. Issues are what are implied, **or the subtext**.

**What was the “event” this couple
was arguing about?**

What was the deeper “issue” or emotion?

Events

versus

Issues



Being late



Tech use



**Disrespected
Unfair
Ignored
Unimportant
Judged**

- Unloved
- Disrespected
- Rejected
- Failure
- Abandoned
- Controlled
- Disconnected
- Helpless

- Inadequate
- Invalidated
- Devalued
- Worthless
- Judged
- Unimportant
- Don't measure up
- Not good enough

The amygdala—emotional part of brain—was lit up.

As couples named their emotions, information moved to the prefrontal cortex—the decision part of brain.



Know your filters (issues)!

Perspectives, perceptions and misinterpretations, color how we view ourselves and others.

Scar Study

"We see what we expect to see..."

Question:

- What "filter" do I use with myself?
- What "filter" do I use with spouse?
- What "filter" do I use with God?

Conflict in Relationships

Managing the Conflict

1. How important is the disagreement?
 - Is it a hill to die on?
 - Is it unrealistic to expect change?
2. Identify the *(hidden) issues and emotional subtext*
 - One or multiple issues involved?
 - Any core concerns/fears?
3. Be willing to take responsibility
Ask: What is MY contribution? What can I own?

SESSION FOUR

BECOMING ONE

Spiritual Intimacy

Spiritually Intimate Marriages

A spiritually intimate marriage is one where a couple is prayerfully seeking after God in the innermost, sanctified places of connection that exist between a husband and a wife.

"Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God." Ruth

1:16

Spiritually Intimate Marriages

Spiritual intimacy is the process of opening our heart (the core aspects of ourselves) to another and to the Lord.

It is connecting the core of one's being to another without giving up one's own self. We mutually experience closeness with God through our relationship with Jesus Christ.

This joint spiritual connection creates a strong and powerful emotional and physical closeness with one another.

Spiritual intimacy may best be thought of as the power of the Holy Spirit being released in your relationship.

Spiritually Intimate Marriages

Spiritual intimacy is characterized by:

1. An "openness of heart" with our spouse
2. A consistent prayer life (for and with our spouse)
3. A desire to grow spiritually (personally and as a couple)
4. A passionate, romantic sex life
5. A sharing of spiritual values and purposes
6. A commitment to God's Word

John 13:34

"A *new* commandment I give to you:
Love one another. *As I have loved you,* so you
must love one another." - Jesus

The building of an intimate marriage requires the building of a *Christ-centered* marriage.

Just because you call yourself a believer and follow Jesus does not mean that you have a *Christ-centered* marriage.

Home full of
Christians



A Christian Home

Relationship with
two Christians



A Christian
Relationship

Marriage with two
Christians



A Christian
Marriage

Marriage with 2 Christians

- Jesus is Valued
- Problem-Focused
- You Are Here for Me
(Self-Focused)
- Conditional Love (Contract)
- I Focus on Me & You
- I Hear You
- I Want to Be Understood
- I Want to Be Served
- I Assume the Worst
- I Pray Periodically
- Individual Spirituality
- Lord, Change Him/Her

Christ-Centered Marriage

- Jesus is Lord
- Growth-Focused
- I Am Here for You
(Other-Focused)
- Unconditional Love (Covenant)
- I Focus on Us
- I Listen to You
- I Choose to Understand
- I Seek Opportunities to Serve
- I Assume the Best
- I Pray Without Ceasing
- Shared Spirituality
- Lord, Change Me

So HOW do we sacrificially love this?

WE can't!

Roman 7:19 – “I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep doing!”

But GOD can and will!

Philippians 2:13 – “For GOD is at work in you, giving you the desire to do His will and the power to do what pleases Him.”

Romans 8:7 – “Letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.”

Absolute surrender daily. *Will you choose to cooperate?*

Spiritual Temperaments

(Gary Thomas)

The Naturalist

The Senate

The Traditionalist

The Ascetic

The Activist

The Caregiver

The Enthusiast

The Contemplative

The Intellectual

- The **NATURALIST** who is most inspired to love God out-of-doors by being in a natural setting. Whether it is a walk in the woods, down a beach, or up a mountain, naturalists see God best by surrounding themselves with His beautiful creation.
- The **SENSATE** who loves God with the senses -- through awareness of taste, smell, touch, sight, and sound.
- The **TRADITIONALIST** who loves God through ritual and symbol. Their life of faith is marked by discipline and structure. They lean towards daily devotion texts, kneeling in prayer, regular church attendance, and experiencing the same ritual week after week to deepen understanding and commitment to God.

- The **ASCETIC** who prefers to love God in solitude and simplicity. There is a deep appreciation for silence and getting away from the world to quiet the noise and experience the Lord.
- The **ACTIVIST** who loves God through contributing toward justice and the enhancement of life in the world. They adopt either social or evangelistic causes and feel quite comfortable with confrontation.
- The **CAREGIVER** who loves God by loving others. These people love God best by being around other people. They feel closest to God when they are with people who love God too.

- The **ENTHUSIAST** who loves God with mystery and celebration.
- The **CONTEMPLATIVE** who loves God through contemplation. They are not wanting to explain God with intellectual concepts as much as they are simply seeking to be near him.
- The **INTELLECTUAL** who loves God with the mind. They feel closest to God when they are reading a stimulating book that brings them fresh understanding of something related to God or the spiritual life.

32 Questions to Spiritual Intimacy

by

Dr. Chris and Alisa Grace

1. What's the first question you want to ask God when you get to heaven?
2. Do you think people in general still value the teachings found in the Bible?
3. Is it better to pray with your eyes open or closed, and why?
4. What was the spiritual life like of your family while growing up?
5. Is it easier to talk about spiritual things with your friends or with strangers?
6. Have you ever read through the whole Bible?
7. Have you ever met someone who reminded you of Jesus?
8. Did you enjoy going to church as a kid? Why or why not?
9. How many copies of the Bible do you own?
10. What do you think heaven is going to be like?
11. What is one thing you would change about church if you could?
12. What is your favorite book of the Bible? Why?
13. Other than the Bible, what book has influenced you the most spiritually?
14. Why do some people say they hear from God more often than others?
15. Do you consider yourself to be more "spiritual" or more "religious"?
16. Do you believe that there really is a hell? Why or why not?

17. What movies/songs/books have you seen that had a spiritual component?
18. What's one of your favorite Bible verses and why?
19. Growing up who was the most spiritually influential person in your life?
20. Do you think we will recognize each other in heaven?
21. Who would you most like to have a spiritual conversation with?
22. Where's your favorite place to pray?
23. Do you find it easy or hard to share your faith or beliefs with a stranger?
24. When you say you will pray for someone do you follow through? Why not?
25. Which is easier for you: to forgive someone or to ask for forgiveness?
26. When do you tend to feel most grateful?
27. Have you ever felt God was silent or distant from you? Describe when.
28. Share three times that you feel God has blessed you recently.
29. Do you believe there are angels present in our world? Why or why not?
30. Describe a time that you felt disappointed with God.
31. Have you sensed God speaking to you recently?
32. Where are you and what are you doing when you feel closest to God?

Praying together: Hold hands, and in silence thank the Lord for your spouse, and ask for a blessing over them. Do this silently for one minute.

- Husbands to your wife: **I'm so glad I'm married to you!**
- Wives to your husband: **I'm so glad I'm married to you!**

Share a hug!

Final Charge: Now what?

1. Attend a marriage event/conference every year.
2. Read a book on marriage once a year.
Read a chapter a week and discuss together.
3. Once a day share something you appreciate or admire about each other.

The result:

A stronger, more connected, and more intimate marriage.