ONE COMMUNITY CHURCH

CREATING A VISION FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

By: Dr. Conway Edwards

I. WHY CREATE A WRITTEN VISION FOR YOUR MARRIAGE?

Many couples live day to day, paycheck to paycheck, emotion to emotion, never pausing long enough to think about what they want for their marriages. Couples spend months preparing for the wedding day but rarely any time praying about and talking through what they want their marriage to look like and what their values and goals are for their marriage. Proverbs 29:18a says, "Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained..." Too many people today are living unrestrained, with no boundaries when it comes to their finances, their moral values and their goals for the future.

Creating a written vision for your marriage will help you and your spouse to identify your priorities, primary values, and goals for the type of marriage you desire. It will provide safety and security in the marriage as you both know what direction you're headed and it will serve as a reminder of the commitment you made to reach these goals. This workbook is not meant to be done in one sitting, but may be done during a weekend getaway with your spouse or over the course of a few scheduled times without distractions. Take a few minutes to pray with your spouse for God's guidance before you begin working through the pages of this workbook. If you get stuck on any section of the workbook, take a break, pray again for wisdom, and then start again when you have time free from distraction.

"Do two walk together, unless they have agreed to do so?" Amos 3:3

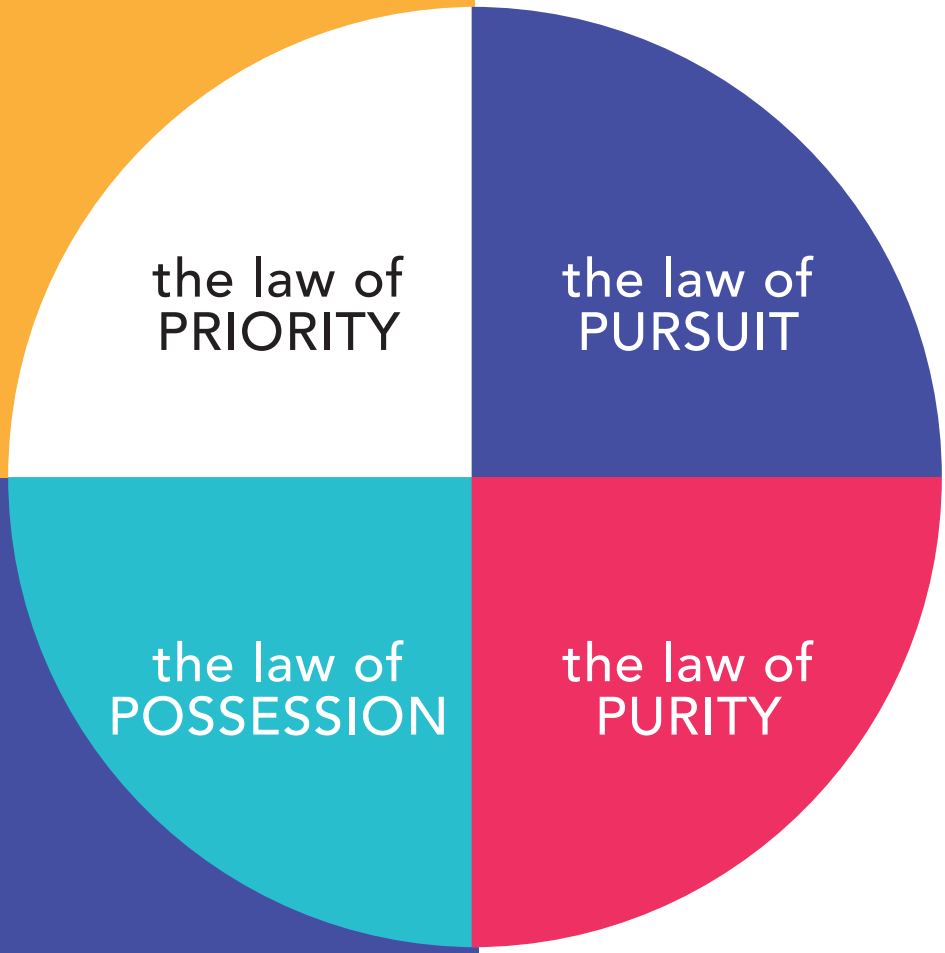
II. GOD'S VISION FOR MARRIAGE

Before identifying the unique values and goals specific to your marriage, it's important to first understand what the Bible says about the purpose of marriage. Read the following passages in order to discover two purposes for marriage: Genesis 2:24-25, Ephesians 5:21-33

1. ONENESS: GENESIS 2:24-25 DESCRIBES THE FIRST MARRIAGE IN THE BIBLE BEING ABOUT ONE WOMAN AND ONE MAN UNITING FOR LIFE TO BRING GOD GLORY AS THEY LIVE, WORK, LOVE AND PARENT.

2. REFLECTING THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH: CHAPTER 5 OF EPHESIANS LAYS OUT A NUMBER OF WAYS THAT HUSBANDS AND WIVES SHOULD LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

THE 4 LAWS OF MARRIAGE



Source: The Four Laws of Love
By Jimmy Evans

the law of PRIORITY

Expressed in the phrase, "a man shall leave his father and mother." In terms of priority, the marriage has to be placed before all other relationships. Don't give priority to your parents, children, work, or hobbies.

the law of PURSUIT

Expressed in the phrase"... and cleave unto his wife." The word cleave sounds foreign in English, but in the original language it means to pursue with all your energy. Are you actively pursuing your spouse? Marriage is work and it requires energy.

the law of POSSESSION

Marriage is about sharing everything, expressed in the phrase, "the two shall become one flesh." When you get married you share everything with your spouse. Selfish people cannot succeed in marriage because selfish people refuse to share. They won't cooperate and ignoring the law of possession will wreck your relationship.

the law of PURITY

Expressed in the phrase, "They were both naked.. and were unashamed." A healthy marriage requires intimacy without fear. If we are careful in how we behave and take responsibility for our issues, this kind of relationship is possible. But if we hurt each other and don't take responsibility, we become sensitive. We refuse to open our hearts to each other.

III. IDENTIFYING VALUES

Our values are what guide the way we live our lives. The decisions you make on a daily basis are driven by the things you value. Take some time individually to think about the top 5 values you have for your marriage. You will then discuss your top 5 with your spouse and together create a combined list you both agree on that will become the guiding values for your marriage. Below are some examples of possible values:

ENJOYING VACATIONS
SHARING HOUSEHOLD DUTIES
OWNING A HOME
EATING DINNER AS A FAMILY
CHILDREN INVOLVED IN SPORTS/ACTIVITIES
SERVING IN MINISTRY
SPIRITUAL GROWTH
EDUCATION(COLLEGE/ADVANCED)
EXTENDED FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS
SPENDING TIME WITH FRIENDS

TOP 5 VALUES FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

01 _____

_____

02 _____

_____

03 _____

_____

04 _____

_____

05 _____

_____

IV. IDENTIFYING VALUES

Now that you and your spouse have identified 5 primary values that will govern your marriage, it's time to brainstorm how you will practically support these values through daily actions. For example: if one of your top values is for the family to eat dinner together, then what is your plan to make that a priority? You may select an action item such as: **we will commit to eating dinner as a family 3 nights per week.** This will give you a goal to keep this value prioritized. Use the space on the following page to identify 1-3 practical actions under each of your top 5 values.

VALUES IN MARRIAGE

VALUE: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

VALUE: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

VALUE: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

VALUE: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

VALUE: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

VALUE: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____



V. INCREASING INTIMACY

Developing intimacy as a couple is one of the keys to success in staying committed to the marriage vision you develop. When the word "intimacy" is discussed, most couples tend to focus only on emotional or physical/sexual intimacy. In reality there are many types of intimacy that are important in marriage. Below we will look at 4 types of intimacy and how you can make them an integral part of your vision for marriage.

1. EMOTIONAL INTIMACY: EMOTIONAL INTIMACY IS HOW COUPLES CONNECT THROUGH FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS. THIS TYPE OF INTIMACY INVOLVES THE ABILITY TO SHARE WITH EACH OTHER BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FEELINGS.

RATE YOUR CURRENT EMOTIONAL INTIMACY ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5 BELOW:

Husband

1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

DOESN'T KNOW ME EMOTIONALLY — MEETS MY EMOTIONAL NEEDS

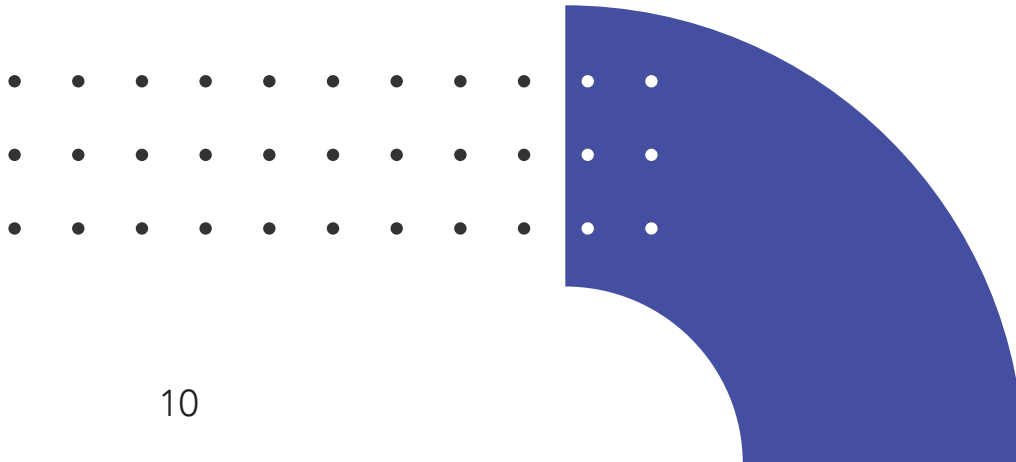
Wife

1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

DOESN'T KNOW ME EMOTIONALLY — MEETS MY EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Emotional intimacy in marriage is about meeting each other's top emotional needs. Dr. Willard Harley identified the top 5 emotional needs of men and women in his book, *His Needs Her Needs*. From the list below identify your top 5 emotional needs and have your spouse do the same. Then discuss 3 ways you can begin to increase emotional intimacy by meeting your spouse's top emotional needs.

ADMIRATION
RECREATIONAL COMPANIONSHIP
CONVERSATION
FINANCIAL SUPPORT
PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS
OPENNESS & HONESTY
SEXUAL FULFILLMENT
FAMILY COMMITMENT
AFFECTION
DOMESTIC SUPPORT



HUSBAND'S TOP 5 EMOTIONAL NEEDS

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

WIFE'S TOP 5 EMOTIONAL NEEDS

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

INCREASE YOUR EMOTIONAL INTIMACY

WHAT ARE 3 WAYS THAT YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE CAN INCREASE YOUR EMOTIONAL INTIMACY.
(FOCUS ACTIONS ON THEIR SPECIFIC EMOTIONAL NEEDS)

_____

_____

_____

2. PHYSICAL INTIMACY: PHYSICAL INTIMACY INCLUDES BOTH SEXUAL AND NON-SEXUAL TOUCH. SINCE MEN AND WOMEN ARE CREATED DIFFERENTLY, PHYSICAL INTIMACY REQUIRES UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO THESE DIFFERENCES. THE KEY IS COMMUNICATION AND INTENTIONALITY.

RATE YOUR CURRENT PHYSICAL INTIMACY ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5 BELOW:

Husband

1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

ICE COLD RED HOT

Wife

1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

ICE COLD RED HOT

LIST 2 WAYS THAT YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE CAN INCREASE YOUR PHYSICAL INTIMACY.

(ie. schedule sex, times of non-sexual touch)

_____

_____

3. RECREATIONAL INTIMACY: THIS IS ALL ABOUT EXPERIENCING CLOSENESS THROUGH FUN AND PLAY. RECREATIONAL INTIMACY IS CULTIVATED WHEN COUPLES DO THINGS TOGETHER THAT THEY BOTH ENJOY. IF SPOUSES DO NOT HAVE SIMILAR INTERESTS, THEN YOU SHOULD FIND TIMES TO ENGAGE IN AN ACTIVITY YOUR SPOUSE ENJOYS TO INTENTIONALLY BUILD INTIMACY IN THIS AREA.

RATE YOUR CURRENT RECREATIONAL INTIMACY ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5 BELOW:

Husband

1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

FLYING SOLO — CO-PILOT

Wife

1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

FLYING SOLO — CO-PILOT

LIST 2 WAYS THAT YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE CAN INCREASE YOUR RECREATIONAL INTIMACY.

(ie. attend a sporting event, art festival, hike, etc)

_____

_____

4. SPIRITUAL INTIMACY: SPIRITUAL INTIMACY IS ABOUT CONNECTING WITH GOD TOGETHER. MUCH LIKE THE OTHER TYPES OF INTIMACY, DIFFERENT PEOPLE CONNECT WITH GOD IN DIFFERENT WAYS. PRAYING TOGETHER AS A COUPLE, READING THE BIBLE, AND SERVING TOGETHER ARE ALL WAYS TO DEVELOP SPIRITUAL INTIMACY. YOU CAN ALSO ENGAGE IN SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES YOUR SPOUSE ENJOYS TO GROW IN THIS AREA.

RATE YOUR CURRENT SPIRITUAL INTIMACY ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5 BELOW:

Husband

1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

DISCONNECTED CONNECTED

Wife

1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

DISCONNECTED CONNECTED

LIST 2 WAYS THAT YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE CAN INCREASE YOUR SPIRITUAL INTIMACY.

(ie. reading the Bible, praying and serving together)

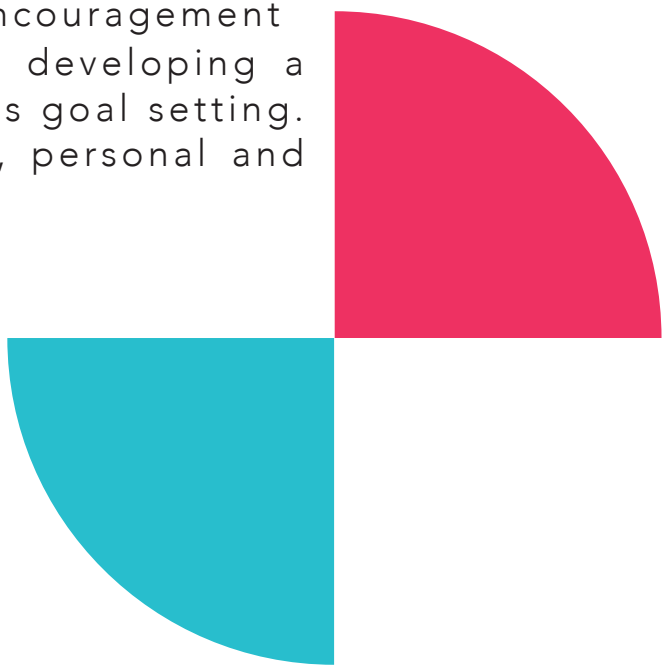
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MARRIAGE GOALS

"Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart." Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

As seen in the scripture above, when two spouses are working together in the same direction with common goals, the outcome is far better than two people working individually. One of the greatest benefits inherent to marriage is built in support, encouragement and accountability. The final aspect in developing a vision for marriage that we will discuss is goal setting. Take the time now to discuss marriage, personal and ministry goals with your spouse.



VI. MARRIAGE GOALS

Using all that you have learned about your marriage and one another so far in this Vision workbook, now identify **3 marriage goals** that you want to pursue as a couple this next year. These goals will help you maintain the values and priorities you have created thus far.

_____

_____

_____

sample goals: pray together daily; quarterly overnight get away without the children; weekly date night; weekly "staff" meeting with spouse to discuss family logistic/goals, conference once a year

VII. MINISTRY GOALS

One of the greatest ways to grow in spiritual intimacy with God and with your spouse is to serve others using the gifts God has placed within you. Take some time to identify 3 ministry goals as a couple that you can commit to over the next year. The following questions might help spark some ideas of how to use your unique talents and passions.

WHAT SPECIFIC AREAS OF YOUR CHURCH WOULD YOU MOST ENJOY BEING INVOLVED IN?
WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE FOR MINISTERING TOGETHER BASED ON YOUR SIMILAR PASSIONS?
WHAT TALENTS OR GIFTS DO YOU SEE IN YOUR SPOUSE THAT YOU THINK WOULD BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS?

_____

_____

_____

"For even the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."
Mark 10:45

VIII. PERSONAL GOALS

The quality of your marriage relationship will always be a bi-product of your individual relationships with God, so part of your growth in marriage will be directly connected to your growth as individuals. As a couple, discuss and develop some individual goals that you can encourage each other in over the next year.

LIST 2 PERSONAL GOALS FOR EACH SPOUSE THAT YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH THIS YEAR THAT WILL HELP YOU GROW **SPIRITUALLY**:

H _____

_____

W _____

_____

"And you shall love the Lord
your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your mind,
and with all your strength."
Mark 12:30

LIST 2 PERSONAL GOALS FOR EACH SPOUSE THAT YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH THIS YEAR THAT WILL HELP YOU GROW **INTELLECTUALLY**:

H _____

_____

W _____

_____

sample goals: read 20 minutes each night; read _____ books per month; take a class on a subject that interests you; sign up for a Bible class at church.

LIST 2 PERSONAL GOALS FOR EACH SPOUSE THAT YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH THIS YEAR THAT WILL HELP YOU GROW **PHYSICALLY**:

H _____

_____

W _____

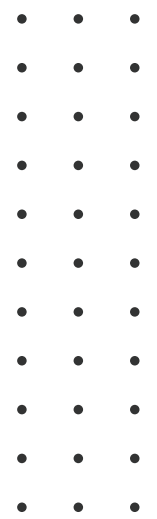
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sample goals: eat healthy; exercise 30 min 3x per week; get more sleep; routine doctor visits; etc

WHAT'S NEXT?

Hopefully this workbook has been helpful in getting you and your spouse to communicate, dream, plan and commit to different areas of your relationship that will ultimately serve to strengthen your marriage. Great marriages don't just happen, they are the result of intentional effort driven by a clear vision.

You have now identified core values to guide your marriage and committed to action steps for each value. You have agreed upon action steps to increase four areas of intimacy in your relationship. Additionally you have set goals for your marriage and personally so that you are being intentional about your growth. The final step to make sure this vision workbook becomes a consistent part of your marriage is to decide now how you will keep the vision in front of you as you take off running again with your busy schedules, work, family and demands of life. Use the next two pages to identify when you will meet as a couple on a consistent basis to evaluate, revise if needed and remember the values, goals and vision for your marriage.



"Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble"
2 Peter 2:10

HIS VISION COMMITMENT

I commit to meet _____ *(twice a week, weekly, every 2 weeks, monthly)* to review this vision workbook. I give my wife permission to hold me accountable in my personal goals and in the goals we have set as a couple. I will also commit to encouraging my wife in her pursuit of individual goals. I will look for opportunities to daily serve my wife by meeting her primary emotional needs as identified in the emotional intimacy section.

*Husband:*_____

HER VISION COMMITMENT

I commit to meet _____ *(twice a week, weekly, every 2 weeks, monthly)* to review this vision workbook. I give my husband permission to hold me accountable in my personal goals and in the goals we have set as a couple. I will also commit to encouraging my husband in his pursuit of individual goals. I will look for opportunities to daily serve my husband by meeting his primary emotional needs as identified in the emotional intimacy section.

Wife:_____

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