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WHY YOUR MARRIAGE NEEDS EASTER

Hans Molegraaf

Communication techniques can help you get along with your spouse.

Conflict resolution tips can help you to fight fair.

And, understanding how you and your spouse are designed differently is critical to helping you pursue oneness with your spouse instead of sameness.

All these things and more can legitimately help your marriage. But at the end of the day, your marriage needs more than a set of principles to go the distance. Your marriage needs a person, and that person is Jesus.

I'm not trying to be super spiritual, but rather profoundly practical.

Jesus offers so much more than a trip to a perfect place at the end of your life. What He offers can actually help you here, and help you now...in your life, and in your marriage.

I want to suggest the story of Easter (Jesus life, death, resurrection, and ascension) provides the **MODEL**, the **MUSCLE**, and the **MOTIVATION** for you and your spouse to not just go the distance, but **THRIVE** in your marriage.

Easter Provides The Model For Marriage

Jesus lived a perfect life on this earth in relationship with everyone he ever interacted with. His life provides a perfect model for how we should relate to each other in all our relationships, but especially marriage.

Jesus Loved When He Wasn't Being Loved – Loving a spouse who loves you is easy. Loving a spouse who doesn't, isn't. Jesus demonstrated his love to the very people that would eventually be responsible for his murder. When God asks us to demonstrate love to our spouse, even though they may be less than deserving, we should be willing to love like Jesus 1st loved us (Romans 5:8).

The greatest motivation to love your spouse when the going gets tough is found in the main character of the story of Easter. Jesus.

Jesus Served When He Deserved to Be Served – Christ had a right to be served, a right to be worshipped, a right to all the wealth, the finest home, the finest food, and an ultimate life of comfort. Yet, he chose to set aside those rights and focus on his responsibility given to him by God, *"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve."* In the same way, we should purpose to set aside what we think we deserve from our spouse, and purpose to focus on our responsibility to serve them (Mark 10:45, Philippians 2:6-8).

Jesus Loved The Way God Wanted Him To, Even When He Wanted A Different Way – When Jesus was in the garden before going to the cross, He cried out to God and asked if there was any other way for him to express

His love outside of being crucified. But in the end, Christ submitted and said, *"...not my will, but yours be done."* When God asks us to demonstrate love to our spouse in a certain way, even when we don't feel like it and even when it requires sacrifice, we should submit to God (Luke 22:42).

Jesus Persevered When He Deserved To Rest – Christ was falsely accused, wrongfully and brutally beaten, and went through excruciating pain carrying his own means of death (the cross) through the streets of Jerusalem, and up the hill to Golgotha. Christ persevered in the most difficult of conditions because he valued what he would accomplish (offer of forgiveness, salvation for all men, and ultimately God's glory) more than his personal comfort. He allowed this joy to motivate him to endure his difficult circumstances (Hebrews 12:2). When you're tired of loving your spouse, remember what your love will accomplish (God's glory – 1 Corinthians 10:31) and allow that to fill your heart with joy knowing that your

love towards your spouse is giving God's heart pleasure.

Jesus Offered Forgiveness To People Who Didn't Deserve it – At the most intense point of his suffering on the cross, and moments before his death, Christ initiated forgiveness towards the people that put him there. In the same way, as we are enduring suffering in our

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marriage, we should be willing to initiate forgiveness towards our spouse (Luke 23:34).

Easter Provides The Muscle For Marriage

I know Christ's model of love is a high bar. I also know the last thing you need in your marriage is an impossible to-do list. If marriage was as easy as having a list of do's and don'ts, everyone would have a great marriage.

As I'm sure you've already experienced, marriage takes more than a to-do list. It takes more than a list of how to's. It takes more than looking at Jesus, and doing as he did. It also takes **muscle**.

Here's the sobering truth. You don't have what it takes to have the marriage you want, and that God desires you to have. You need muscle you weren't created with. The muscle you need is the same power that raised Jesus

Christ from the dead: the ALL-powerful Spirit of God. Easter had to happen in order for this muscle to be made available to live inside of us, and be our ever present and all powerful help in our time of need (John 16:7).

Let your inadequacy and failures to love your spouse be a reminder of your need for the All-Powerful Spirit of God to help you (1 Corinthians 12:9).

Ask Him for help in your marriage (John 15:5).

Easter Provides The Motivation For Marriage

You have a model, you have the muscle, so what else does the story of Easter offer you in your marriage?

Motivation.

I believe most people understand what to do in marriage (model). I also believe that most believing people understand their need for the All-Powerful Spirit to help them in marriage (muscle). But, I believe where most people fall short in marriage is in motivation. They know what they should do but just don't do it. Their "ought to" doesn't match their "want to". Again, the story of Easter, actually the main character of Easter, doesn't disappoint in providing a solution.

The story of Easter is not *only* a distant, academic, story of a man who did some good things for some people, died on a cross, and then miraculously came back to life**. The story of Easter is as personal and heartfelt a story as you've ever heard. It's a story of a Creator coming to the rescue of his creation. It's a story of Someone who gave up everything, so that He could give you everything. It's the most relevant, practical, and inspiring story that's ever existed. The story of Easter is the climax of every other story ever told, including your own. Jesus created you. He loved you, but you didn't love Him and you lived against him. You were God's enemy, but Jesus continued to love you and pursue you by opening your eyes to your need for Him. He met you right where you were, and moved you to believe in Him, live for Him, and represent Him in everything you do. Then, Jesus gave you an all powerful helper in this life and started preparing a perfect place to spend your life in eternity.

As you consider who Jesus is, what He's done for you, and what He's promised you, there should be a certain level of motivation to do what he says. Not out of obligation or duty, but out of gratefulness.

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10 Things to say to your Husband WHEN MARRIAGE IS HARD

1. What do you need from me right now?
2. How can I help you take some of the burden off today?
3. I'm sorry.
4. Thank you for _____.
5. I'm proud of you because _____.
6. Our kids are lucky to have a dad like you.
7. Please forgive me.
8. I love you because _____.
9. I'm going to make more of an effort to _____.
10. Thank you for being someone I can respect.

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Marriage will be difficult at times. More accurately put, your SPOUSE will be difficult to love at times. It's in those times where you need more than a model and some muscle to continue loving them. You need motivation, and your greatest motivation to love your spouse when the going gets tough, is found in the main character of the story of Easter. Jesus.

In short, don't love your spouse as they deserve, but love them as Christ deserves.

The greatest motivation to love your spouse when the going gets tough is found in the main character of the story of Easter. Jesus.

Easter gives us the **model**, the **muscle** and the **motivation** to love our spouse in the most difficult of circumstances. I hope you celebrate who Christ is, what's he's done for you, and what he offers you this Easter like never before. I also pray that the realities Easter season brings to your marriage would transform the way you interact with your spouse in the days, weeks, and months ahead.

Adapted from: <https://www.marriagerevolution.org/why-your-marriage-needs->

20 Little Things to Make a Big Difference in Your Marriage

1. Greet him warmly.
2. Offer a kind word.
3. Give thanks.
4. Speak the truth.
5. Look at the bright side.
6. Shrug off small annoyances.
7. Snuggle together.
8. Serve cheerfully.
9. Pray for each other.
10. Listen carefully.
11. Apologize humbly.
12. Kiss on the lips.
13. Laugh at each other's jokes.
14. Give a soft answer.
15. Step away together.
16. Smile at him.
17. Forgive fully.
18. Spend time together.
19. Build up.
20. Decide you're going to love each other.

Club 3A Women



Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—
— HEBREWS 2:14 niv

Marital Intimacy Is More Than Sex Five Ways to Connect with Your Spouse

by Josh Squires



“We just don’t feel *connected*.” Both of them felt the same way. Somewhere in the timeline of their relationship they had begun to drift apart, and now they felt as if they were living lives that were running on a parallel track rather than living lives intimately connected. But how do you solve the problem of “connectedness”?

Usually when people begin to feel disconnected from one another, the root issue of the problem is intimacy. There are a number of reasons that intimacy may decline. Some of them are subtle, yet insidious, like the ever-increasing busyness of family life. Other reasons are overt and intentional, like trying to use the lack of intimacy as payback. Whatever the reason, once intimacy begins to wane, it can become hard to get back on track. One of the keys to re-connecting is understanding that intimacy is a multifaceted thing. In fact, there are five different types of intimacy, and only when we keep all five functioning can we have marriages that feel profoundly connected.

1. Spiritual Intimacy

The first – and most foundational – type of intimacy is spiritual intimacy. Spiritual intimacy can be seen as the hub from which all other intimacy types protrude. If spiritual intimacy is high, then the other types of intimacy, though they will have seasons of greater or lesser intensity, will have a certain level of natural resiliency. Spiritual intimacy comes from being in the word together, praying for one another, and worshipping together. The word of God is the nourishment of our souls ([Matthew 4:4](#); [Deuteronomy 8:3](#)). When we are on the same spiritual diet, we can expect to grow in similar ways and therefore grow together – not separately.

“If spiritual intimacy is high, then the other types of intimacy will have a natural resiliency.”

The old adage that the family that prays together stays together, while not infallible, is generally true. At the same time, this doesn’t just mean praying in each other’s presence, but actually making each other a central part of your prayers privately (and not just asking God to fix all

the things that annoy you about your spouse). Worship is an incredibly intimate act that knits the souls of Jesus’s people closer to each other and himself. There are legitimate reasons that spouses may not be worshipping next to each other (e.g., helping out with nurseries or choir), but if connectedness is an issue, it may be time to put those activities aside for a season, while you focus on the spiritual intimacy between you and your spouse.

2. Recreational Intimacy

The second type of intimacy is recreational intimacy. Recreational intimacy is the bond that is created and strengthened by doing activities together. These activities can range vastly, from the mild (e.g., doing a crossword together) to the extreme (e.g., hang gliding), but it is the mutual enjoyment of them that fuels a couple’s connection.

“Our marriages need the ability to laugh and play together if they are to endure the times of tears and toil.”

This sort of intimacy tends to be its highest early in the relationship when both partners are willing to do and try things outside of their comfort zone just to have the opportunity to be in each other’s presence. As presence becomes more the norm than the exception, our motivation to engage in uninteresting activities may dwindle. Furthermore, as life gets more complicated with jobs, kids, house, and much more, the opportunities to engage in recreational activity plummet, and the cost can skyrocket. Nonetheless, God has made us to enjoy life’s activities – especially with our spouses ([Ecclesiastes 9:9](#)) – and our marriages need the ability to laugh and play together if they are to endure the times of tears and toil.

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3. Intellectual Intimacy

The third type of intimacy is intellectual intimacy. Intellectual intimacy is the activity of connecting to one another by discussing certain issues. The topics can be lighthearted (e.g., favorite movie) or serious (e.g., politics), but mental exercise with your spouse reinforces the relationship cord.

Similar to recreational intimacy, intellectual intimacy tends to be at its highest at the beginning of a relationship. Oftentimes it's because the couple is still getting to know each other,, and how they think on various topics. As time passes, couples often assume they know how their spouse thinks on nearly every issue, and they cease exploring each other's intellectual worlds. While a spouse can often predict what the other will think on a particular issue, details matter. No matter how many times a couple has discussed an issue, there is almost always some piece that is new and can be explored. And the rewards for doing so are well worth it.

4. Physical Intimacy

The fourth type of intimacy is physical intimacy. Physical intimacy is the domain most people think of when they hear the word "intimate." This includes, but is not limited to sexual activity. There is also nonsexual physical intimacy such as holding hands, cuddling on the couch, or a hug. Sometimes nonsexual physical intimacy (e.g., cuddling) can lead to something more amorous (sexual activity), but it doesn't always have to – and in fact, this is one of the biggest complaints for women.

Men often take any physical intimacy as a sign that women want sexual intimacy, when sometimes they just need to cuddle. Still, of all the types of intimacy, this one pays the biggest dividends for men. When asked to rank how close they feel to their spouse, men typically feel the most connected when physical intimacy (and especially sexual physical intimacy) is highest. This is no surprise to the Christian, as God instructs man to delight in these activities with his wife ([Proverbs 5:18-19](#)).

5. Emotional Intimacy

The fifth type of intimacy is emotional intimacy. Emotional intimacy is the sharing of one's own experiences with another. Men grapple with this distinction over and above that of intellectual intimacy; however, one (intellectual intimacy) discusses topics and is usually dominated by thoughts, whereas the other (emotional intimacy) discusses experience and is usually dominated by emotion. Men also generally have a much more lim-

ited emotional vocabulary and tend to be less comfortable with emotive speech. Therefore, men often misunderstand their spouses when they speak, thinking that what she wants is an exchange of ideas when what she really wants is someone to identify with her feelings.

Regardless of any limitations, men are called to shepherd their wife's heart, just as much as women are called to shepherd their husband's sexuality. Just as men feel most connected when physical intimacy is highest, women generally feel most connected when emotional intimacy is highest. There is a reason that the first thing Adam does when he sees Eve is not get her into bed, but utters the world's first love poem ([Genesis 2:23](#)).

Cycles of Intimacy vs. Cycles of Isolation

Now, here's the tricky part: When men feel disconnected, they often try to get physical intimacy via the route of recreational intimacy (let's do something fun together and maybe we will end up in bed together), whereas women, when they feel disconnected, often try to get emotional intimacy via the route of intellectual intimacy (let's talk about something and maybe we will end up sharing our feelings). Both spouses feel the disconnection, but are trying to solve the problem in opposite ways. Further complicating the matter, men often do not feel like talking or sharing their emotions if they do not feel physically intimate. And women often do not want physical intimacy if they do not feel emotionally intimate.

"Shepherding your spouse in these areas is the key to feeling this sort of genuine, robust connection."

Here couples can easily find themselves in cycles of isolation, more and more demanding that their own intimacy needs be met before they are willing to meet their spouse's. This is where the Christian commitment to love one another, even when it hurts ([John 13:34-35](#); [Galatians 5:13](#); [6:2](#); [Ephesians 4:2, 32](#); [1 Peter 4:8-10](#)), can help the couple move from cycles of isolation to cycles of intimacy, as they lovingly put each other's needs before their own.

Shepherding our spouse in these areas, even when we ourselves feel out of touch, is the key to feeling this sort of genuine, robust connection. This type of connection does more than give us warm and fuzzy feelings for a moment. It helps ground us in the intimate love of the one in whom our connection is eternal and unfailing: God himself.

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/marital-intimacy-is-more-than-sex>

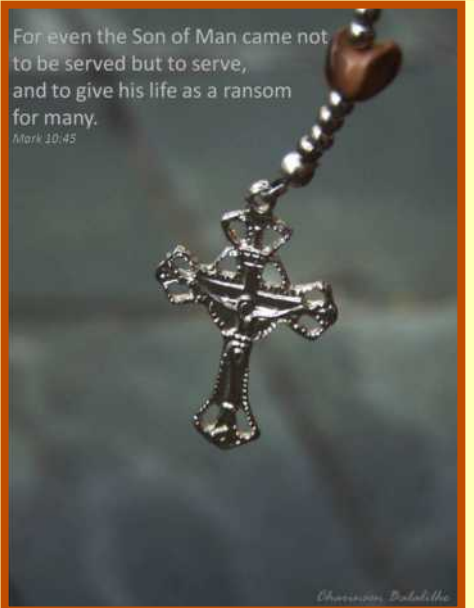
MARRIAGE
365

THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES

discover how to love your spouse

	what is it?	how to express?	after conflict?
Words of Affirmation	verbal compliments that express your love and appreciation	brag to others about your spouse, write love letters	speak words that build security and initiate a sincere apology
Acts of Service	any act that eases the burden of responsibility	wash the dishes, pamper your spouse, offer "let me do that for you."	make behavior changes requested through conflict
Quality Time	focused and undivided attention spent together	turn off electronics, go for a walk, plan date nights, start a hobby together	make eye contact, active listening with empathy, don't interrupt
Giving Gifts	tangible symbols that reflect your thoughtfulness and effort	make birthdays and anniversaries special, surprise them with their favorite treat	give a small token of your love and an apology note
Physical Touch	a non-sexual touch that reinforces your presence	long hugs, gentle caressing, kissing, massages, hand holding	hold each other without saying a word, cuddle together in the bed

*based on The 5 Love Languages, written by Dr. Gary Chapman



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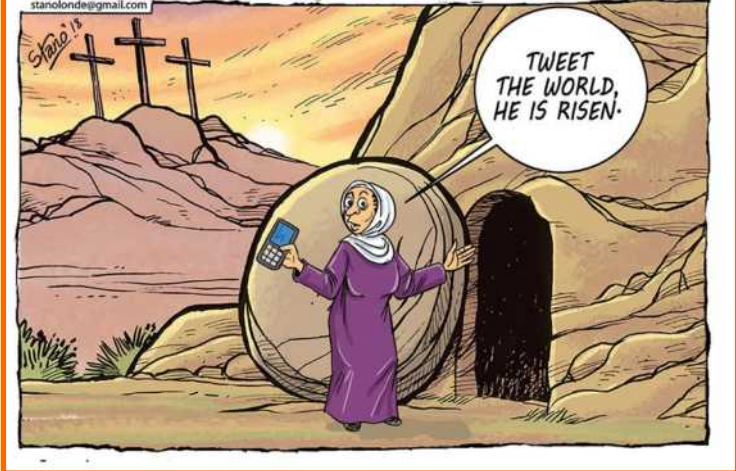
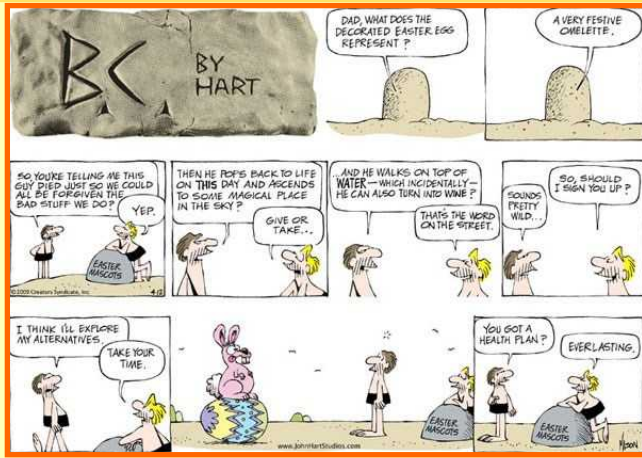
O JESUS! MEEK AND HUMBLE OF HEART, HEAR ME.
FROM THE DESIRE OF BEING ESTEEMED,
DELIVER ME, JESUS.
FROM THE DESIRE OF BEING LOVED...
FROM THE DESIRE OF BEING EXTOLLED ...
FROM THE DESIRE OF BEING HONORED ...
FROM THE DESIRE OF BEING PRAISED ...
FROM THE DESIRE OF BEING PREFERRED TO OTHERS...
FROM THE DESIRE OF BEING CONSULTED ...
FROM THE DESIRE OF BEING APPROVED ...
FROM THE FEAR OF BEING HUMILIATED ...
FROM THE FEAR OF BEING DESPISED...
FROM THE FEAR OF SUFFERING REBUKES ...
FROM THE FEAR OF BEING CALUMNIATED ...
FROM THE FEAR OF BEING FORGOTTEN ...
FROM THE FEAR OF BEING RIDICULED ...
FROM THE FEAR OF BEING WRONGED ...
FROM THE FEAR OF BEING SUSPECTED ...
THAT OTHERS MAY BE LOVED MORE THAN I,
JESUS, GRANT ME THE GRACE TO DESIRE IT.
THAT OTHERS MAY BE ESTEEMED MORE THAN I ...
THAT, IN THE OPINION OF THE WORLD,
OTHERS MAY INCREASE AND I MAY DECREASE ...
THAT OTHERS MAY BE CHOSEN AND I SET ASIDE ...
THAT OTHERS MAY BE PRAISED AND I UNNOTICED ...
THAT OTHERS MAY BE PREFERRED TO ME IN EVERYTHING...
THAT OTHERS MAY BECOME HOLIER THAN I, PROVIDED
THAT I MAY BECOME AS HOLY AS I SHOULD...

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“The crucifix does not signify defeat or failure. It reveals to us the Love that overcomes evil and sin.”

~ Pope Francis



Catholic Engaged Encounter of Trinidad and Tobago (CEETT) News Update

In spite of the COVID restrictions and the peculiar situation in which we find ourselves, CEETT has continued to serve couples who are preparing for marriage, to continue to ensure they have the best possible foundation for their future Sacrament, and have an ongoing support system for them as they begin their lives together. Since May 2020 to April 2021, we have convened twelve (12) virtual "Zoom" weekends. We have tried to keep the numbers per weekend to no more than sixteen (16) couples, to ensure the best possible personal experience. Due to the demand for weekends, we had two weekends in October and November last year (2020), so as not to compromise the interaction. Each weekend has its own Whatsapp gp.



In addition, to keeping the community connected, the members have steadfastly been faithful to our Wednesday night prayer and sharing (every Wed since early Aug 2020), also on "Zoom" where we pray, share on various topics/scripture and catch up with what's happening in everyone's lives,, sharing our experiences, as we navigate these uncertain times. All done in a very informal and relaxed atmosphere (there is **always** an after meeting lime!).
On March 14th, 2021 we had a one day Retreat, attended by 19 members (some with children!) as we made every attempt to ensure that the Ministry had a group spiritual experience, and keep us aware of the One who called us to this work, and to strengthen our marriage relationships, to be more effective witnesses.

We are also looking to take advantage of these times to reach out in a different way to our couples, via our Facebook, Instagram and webpage, to provide resources and a forum where couples can feel welcomed, listened to, and find resources for their marriage. Look out for future webinars, "podcasts" and other such as we re-invent our outreach and embrace of our married couples! God Bless you all....