

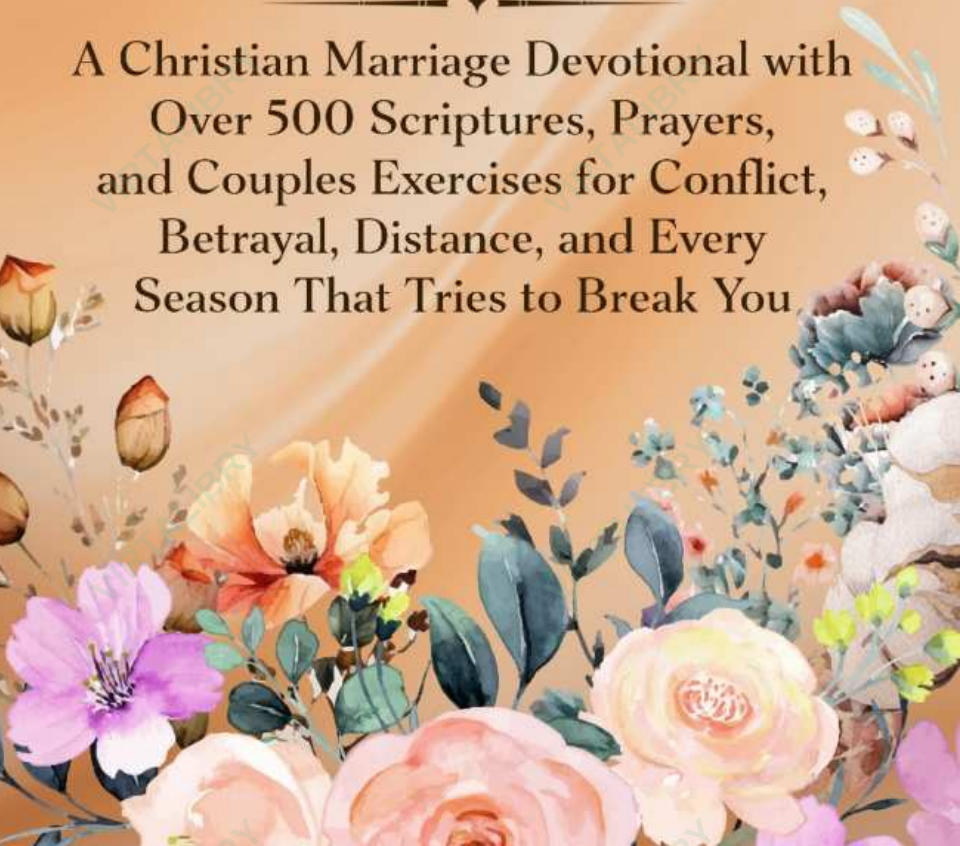


GRACE ST. JAMES

# *Hold On,* MARRIAGE

— ♦ —

A Christian Marriage Devotional with  
Over 500 Scriptures, Prayers,  
and Couples Exercises for Conflict,  
Betrayal, Distance, and Every  
Season That Tries to Break You



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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version of the Holy Bible.

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## FOREWORD

Nobody stands at the altar thinking this is going to be the hard part.

You are in a beautiful dress or a sharp suit and the person in front of you is the one you chose and everything feels full of promise. You say the words. You mean them. And somewhere in the back of your mind you believe that love, real love, the kind you feel in your chest when they walk into a room, will be enough to carry you through whatever comes next. And then life happens.

The bills stack up and the kids are exhausting and someone says something that cannot be unsaid and suddenly you are lying in the same bed next to a person you are not sure you know anymore and you are wondering how you got here and whether this is just how marriage is or whether something is actually broken.

Maybe that is where you are right now. Maybe the distance between you and your spouse has been growing so slowly you almost did not notice until one day you looked up and realized how far apart you had drifted. Maybe there was a specific moment, a betrayal, a blow-up, a season of grief that you walked through separately instead of together, and now you are carrying something heavy and you do not know how to put it down. Maybe your marriage is not in crisis but it is not what you dreamed it would be either and that quiet disappointment has settled in like a fog you cannot quite shake.

Or maybe you are one of the ones who picked this up because you love your spouse fiercely and you want to love them better and you are smart enough to know that good marriages do not stay good on accident.

Wherever you are, this book is for you.

What you are holding is not a marriage self-help book. It is not a list of tips or techniques or five steps to a better relationship. It is something much older and much more powerful than that. It is the Word of God, spoken directly into the real and specific struggles that happen inside a marriage, the conflict and the distance and the betrayal and the loneliness and the long slow work of learning to love someone well over a lifetime.

These promises were true for the couples who came before you. They are true for you today. And they will be true long after this difficult season has passed.

You are not the first person to wonder if their marriage is going to make it. You are not the first person to feel more alone inside a relationship than they ever felt outside of one. You are not the first person to need God to show up in a very specific and practical way in the middle of something that feels too broken to fix.

But here is what I want you to know before you turn another page.

God has not looked away from your marriage. Not for a single second. He was there on the day you made the vow and He is here on the day you are reading these words and every hard day in between has been held in hands that do not grow tired and do not give up and do not let go of the things they love.

Your marriage is one of those things.

So come as you are. Bring the anger and the grief and the hope and the doubt. Bring the version of your marriage that you are proud of and the version you are embarrassed by. Bring it all. God is not surprised by any of it and His Word has something to say to every single part of it.

Turn to the chapter that speaks to where you are right now. Read it slowly. Pray the prayer at the end. Let the question sit with you longer than is comfortable.

And hold on.

Because the God who designed marriage is still in the business of saving it.

*Grace St. James*

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## DEDICATION

*To my husband.*

*You taught me something I did not know I needed to learn when I thought I already knew how to love.*

*You taught me how to apologize.*

*Not the kind of apology that comes with an explanation attached or a but waiting at the end of it. The real kind. The kind that costs something. The kind that walks into a room without its armor on and says I was wrong and I am sorry and means every word of it without waiting to see if you will be met with grace before deciding to be humble.*

*I used to think that kind of vulnerability made a person smaller. I watched you and learned that it does exactly the opposite.*

*There is something that happens in a marriage when one person is willing to go first. When someone lays down their defense and chooses honesty over self-protection, something shifts. Walls come down. Trust gets built in the moments where it would have been so much simpler to stay proud and stay closed. You showed me that the bravest thing a person can do in a marriage is let themselves be fully known and still choose to stay.*

*That is what humility looks like up close. That is what it does. It does not make you smaller. It makes the space*

*between two people safe enough for something real to grow.*

*This book exists because of what I have watched you live. Because you showed me that a marriage does not need to be perfect to be powerful. It just needs two people who are willing to be honest with God and honest with each other and willing to keep showing up even when showing up is hard.*

*Thank you for showing up.*

*Thank you for going first.*

*Thank you for teaching me that saying I am sorry is not the end of something. It is almost always the beginning.*

*I love you. I choose you. I am still learning from you.*

*-Grace*

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## WHEN YOU CANNOT STOP FIGHTING

WHEN EVERY CONVERSATION TURNS INTO A  
CONFLICT AND YOU ARE EXHAUSTED BY IT

*A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word  
stirs up anger.*

**PROVERBS 15:1**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE REMINDED THAT YOUR  
SPOUSE IS NOT YOUR ENEMY

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but  
against principalities, against powers, against the rulers  
of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of  
wickedness in the heavenly places.*

**EPHESIANS 6:12**

WHEN ANGER HAS GOTTEN THE BETTER OF YOU AND  
YOU REGRET WHAT YOU SAID

*Be angry, and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down  
on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.*

**EPHESIANS 4:26-27**

WHEN YOU NEED TO SLOW DOWN BEFORE YOU  
SPEAK

*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift  
to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of  
man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

**JAMES 1:19-20**

WHEN PRIDE IS KEEPING BOTH OF YOU FROM  
MAKING PEACE

*By pride comes nothing but strife, but with the well-  
advised is wisdom.*

**PROVERBS 13:10**

WHEN YOU NEED TO CHOOSE KINDNESS EVEN WHEN  
YOU DO NOT FEEL LIKE IT

*And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving  
one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

**EPHESIANS 4:32**

WHEN YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND YOUR SPOUSE  
BEFORE YOU DEMAND TO BE UNDERSTOOD

*The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the  
ear of the wise seeks knowledge.*

**PROVERBS 18:15**

WHEN THE ARGUMENT HAS GONE TOO FAR AND  
SOMEONE NEEDS TO BE THE FIRST TO STOP

*The beginning of strife is like releasing water;  
therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts.*

**PROVERBS 17:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO SPEAK THE TRUTH BUT DO IT  
WITH LOVE

*But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all  
things into Him who is the head, Christ.*

**EPHESIANS 4:15**

WHEN YOU NEED TO PURSUE PEACE AND NOT JUST  
WINNING THE ARGUMENT

*Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to  
peace and to mutual edification.*

**ROMANS 14:19**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD CAN BRING  
UNITY OUT OF THIS DIVISION

*Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you  
to be like-minded toward one another, according to  
Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth  
glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**ROMANS 15:5-6**

WHEN YOU NEED TO GUARD YOUR WORDS BEFORE  
THEY DO MORE DAMAGE

*Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and  
those who love it will eat its fruit.*

**PROVERBS 18:21**

WHEN YOU NEED TO FORGIVE QUICKLY AND NOT LET  
THE ROOT GO DEEPER

*Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of  
God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause  
trouble, and by this many become defiled.*

**HEBREWS 12:15**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO HELP YOU LOVE YOUR  
SPOUSE THE WAY HE LOVES BOTH OF YOU

*Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love  
does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave  
rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no  
evil.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BRING GOD INTO THE MIDDLE  
OF THIS CONFLICT

*"Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth  
concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for  
them by My Father in heaven."*

**MATTHEW 18:19**

WHEN YOU NEED TO REMEMBER THAT LOVE COVERS  
WHAT CONFLICT WANTS TO EXPOSE

*And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins.*

**1 PETER 4:8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD HIMSELF IS A  
PEACEMAKER AND WILL HELP YOU BECOME ONE TOO

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*

**MATTHEW 5:9**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE WHO CANNOT STOP FIGHTING

*Lord, we are tired of fighting and honestly, we are tired of each other right now. I am not going to pretend otherwise because You already know it. But Your Word says that You are the God of peace, and we need You to step into the middle of what has been happening between us. Help us to stop seeing each other as the problem and start seeing the real enemy for what he is. Tame our tongues. Soften our hearts. Remind us that we are on the same team even when it does not feel that way. Teach us how to fight for our marriage instead of fighting against each other. We cannot do this without You and we are asking You to help us right now.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*If you are honest, is there something underneath the fighting that has never actually been said out loud, and what would change between you and your spouse if that thing finally got brought into the light?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Ceasefire Conversation*

Set a timer for twenty minutes and sit somewhere comfortable together, phones down and screens off. Take turns answering these three questions out loud, one at a time. No interrupting. No defending. Just listening.

**Question one:** When we fight, what is the thing I most need you to understand about how I feel that I do not think you actually understand yet?

**Question two:** What is one thing I do during conflict that I know makes things worse, and what would I want to do differently?

**Question three:** What would it look like for us to fight for our marriage instead of against each other the next time things get hard?

When you are both done talking, do one small thing together before the night is over. Make coffee. Take a walk around the block. Sit outside for ten minutes. It does not have to be deep. It just has to be together. You are practicing the thing that conflict tries to take away, the choice to stay close.

## WHEN YOU FEEL MORE LIKE ROOMMATES THAN PARTNERS

WHEN THE DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU HAS GROWN SO  
SLOWLY YOU DID NOT NOTICE UNTIL IT WAS WIDE

*Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up.*

**ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE REMINDED WHAT YOU ARE  
BUILDING TOGETHER AND WHY IT MATTERS

*Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.*

**PSALM 127:1**

WHEN YOU MISS YOUR SPOUSE EVEN THOUGH THEY  
ARE RIGHT THERE IN THE SAME HOUSE

*"Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it."*

**SONG OF SOLOMON 8:6-7**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO GIVE BOTH OF YOU A NEW  
HEART TOWARD EACH OTHER

*"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."*

**EZEKIEL 36:26**

WHEN BUSYNESS AND ROUTINE HAVE REPLACED  
REAL CONNECTION

*Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife  
of your youth.*

**PROVERBS 5:18**

WHEN YOU NEED TO TURN TOWARD EACH OTHER  
INSTEAD OF AWAY

*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of  
Christ.*

**GALATIANS 6:2**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD DESIGNED  
MARRIAGE FOR DEEP AND LASTING COMPANIONSHIP

*"It is not good that man should be alone; I will make  
him a helper comparable to him."*

**GENESIS 2:18**

WHEN YOU NEED COURAGE TO BE VULNERABLE  
AGAIN AFTER PULLING AWAY

*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear,  
because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not  
been made perfect in love.*

**1 JOHN 4:18**

WHEN YOU NEED TO PURSUE YOUR SPOUSE THE WAY  
GOD PURSUES YOU

*"I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore  
with lovingkindness I have drawn you."*

**JEREMIAH 31:3**

WHEN YOU NEED TO CHOOSE YOUR MARRIAGE  
INTENTIONALLY AND NOT JUST MAINTAIN IT

*"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have  
left your first love. Remember therefore from where you  
have fallen; repent and do the first works."*

**REVELATION 2:4-5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT WHAT FEELS DEAD  
CAN LIVE AGAIN

*"Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth;  
shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the  
wilderness and rivers in the desert."*

**ISAIAH 43:19**

WHEN YOU NEED TO STOP WAITING FOR YOUR  
SPOUSE TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE

*"And just as you want men to do to you, you also do  
to them likewise."*

**LUKE 6:31**

WHEN YOU NEED TO PRAY TOGETHER EVEN WHEN IT  
FEELS AWKWARD

*Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for  
one another, that you may be healed. The effective,  
fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

**JAMES 5:16**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD CAN RESTORE  
WHAT SLOWLY DRIFTED AWAY

*"So I will restore to you the years that the swarming  
locust has eaten."*

**JOEL 2:25**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE KNIT BACK TOGETHER IN  
HEART AND IN PURPOSE

*Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you  
to be like-minded toward one another, according to  
Christ Jesus.*

**ROMANS 15:5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT A CORD OF THREE STRANDS HOLDS EVEN WHEN TWO HAVE LOOSENED THEIR GRIP

*Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

**ECCLESIASTES 4:12**

WHEN YOU NEED TO LOVE YOUR SPOUSE AS YOU LOVE YOURSELF AND MEAN IT

*So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.*

**EPHESIANS 5:28**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE FEELING DISCONNECTED

*Father, somewhere along the way we stopped really seeing each other. The days got full and the conversations got shallow and now we are living parallel lives under the same roof and honestly it is lonely. We do not want this. I do not want this. So I am asking You to do what only You can do and breathe life back into what has gone quiet between us. Help me to turn toward my spouse instead of away. Give us words to say and ears to hear and the courage to be close again. Remind us both why we chose each other and who we are when we are actually fighting for this thing together. Rebuild what drifted. You are the God who restores and we need that right now.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*When did you last make your spouse feel like they were the most important person in the room, and what is one thing you could do this week, however small, to make them feel that way again?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Two Lists*

Each of you needs a piece of paper and a pen. Sit at the same table but write your lists separately first.

List one: Write down five things your spouse does that you genuinely appreciate but have not said out loud recently. Not big dramatic things. The small everyday things. The way they make the coffee. The way they handle something with the kids. The thing they do that you would notice immediately if they stopped doing it.

List two: Write down five things you loved doing together in the early days of your relationship that you have not done in a long time.

When you are both finished, read your appreciation lists to each other out loud. All five things. Look at each other when you do it.

Then take your second lists and find one thing that appears on both of them or one thing from either list that you could actually do this week. Put it on the calendar before you go to bed tonight. Not someday. This week.

You are not trying to recreate the past. You are just reminding each other that you are still two people who chose this and who still have things worth choosing together.

## WHEN TRUST HAS BEEN BROKEN

WHEN SOMETHING WAS DONE OR SAID THAT YOU  
CANNOT SEEM TO GET PAST

*The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart,  
and saves such as have a contrite spirit.*

**PSALM 34:18**

WHEN THE PAIN FEELS TOO BIG TO JUST PRAY AWAY  
AND YOU NEED GOD TO MEET YOU IN IT

*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their  
wounds.*

**PSALM 147:3**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD SAW WHAT  
HAPPENED AND HAS NOT LOOKED AWAY

*You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your  
bottle; are they not in Your book?*

**PSALM 56:8**

WHEN YOU ARE STRUGGLING TO TRUST YOUR  
SPOUSE AND STRUGGLING TO TRUST GOD TOO

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on  
your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge  
Him, and He shall direct your paths.*

**PROVERBS 3:5-6**

WHEN YOU NEED SOMETHING HONEST TO HOLD  
ONTO WHILE YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT COMES NEXT

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in  
trouble.*

**PSALM 46:1**

WHEN YOU WANT TO PUNISH YOUR SPOUSE AND  
NEED GOD TO TALK YOU DOWN

*Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

**ROMANS 12:19**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT WHAT FEELS  
PERMANENTLY BROKEN CAN BE MADE NEW

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:17**

WHEN YOU ARE NOT READY TO FORGIVE YET BUT  
YOU ARE WILLING TO BE MADE WILLING

*Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy.*

**MICAH 7:18**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO BRING BEAUTY OUT OF  
WHAT THIS BETRAYAL HAS BURNED DOWN

*To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.*

**ISAIAH 61:3**

WHEN YOU ARE TEMPTED TO GIVE UP BECAUSE  
REBUILDING FEELS IMPOSSIBLE

*"With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

**MATTHEW 19:26**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD CAN WORK  
EVEN THIS FOR YOUR GOOD

*And we know that all things work together for good  
to those who love God, to those who are the called  
according to His purpose.*

**ROMANS 8:28**

WHEN THE WEIGHT OF WHAT HAPPENED IS MORE  
THAN YOU CAN CARRY ON YOUR OWN

*Cast your burden on the LORD, and He shall sustain  
you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.*

**PSALM 55:22**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT LOVE IS STRONG  
ENOUGH TO BEAR THIS IF YOU LET IT

*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all  
things, endures all things.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD  
FORGIVENESS EVEN THOUGH IT IS HARD

*Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of  
you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord  
forgave you.*

**COLOSSIANS 3:13**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD'S KINDNESS  
TOWARD YOUR MARRIAGE WILL NOT DEPART EVEN  
NOW

*"For the mountains shall depart and the hills be  
removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor  
shall My covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD,  
who has mercy on you.*

**ISAIAH 54:10**

WHEN YOU ARE PRESSED DOWN AND NEED TO  
KNOW YOU ARE NOT DESTROYED

*We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed;  
we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not  
forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 4:8-9**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT HIS MERCIES  
COVER THIS MORNING TOO

*Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed,  
because His compassions fail not. They are new every  
morning; great is Your faithfulness.*

**LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE WALKING THROUGH BROKEN TRUST

*Father, something broke in this marriage and I am not going to pretend it did not hurt. It did. It still does. But I am coming to You because You are the only One who can do something with this kind of pain. Heal what is wounded in me. Convict and restore what needs to be dealt with in my spouse. Show us both what it looks like to rebuild on something more solid than just feelings or promises we made in our own strength. I am not asking You to make it easy. I am asking You to make it possible. Be near to us in this. You said You are close to the brokenhearted and I am holding You to that right now.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Is there a difference between forgiving your spouse and trusting them again, and are you willing to let God lead you through both of those things at His pace instead of demanding they happen at the same time?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Honest Table*

This one requires some courage so give each other permission to be honest before you start. Sit down together somewhere private and quiet and take turns answering these questions. The rule is simple. No defensiveness and no fixing. Just listening and acknowledging what you heard.

**Question one:** On a scale of one to ten how safe do I feel being fully honest with you right now, and what would need to change to make that number higher?

**Question two:** Is there something I have been carrying about what happened between us that I have never fully said out loud because I was afraid of how you would respond?

**Question three:** What is one thing you could do consistently over the next thirty days that would help me feel like trust is actually being rebuilt and not just talked about?

After you have both answered all three questions, the person who broke the trust speaks last and says this, in their own words, not a script. What I am committing to do differently is this. And then they say the specific thing. Not a general I will try harder. The specific thing.

Write it down. Both of you keep a copy.

Trust is not rebuilt in one conversation. But it starts with one honest one. This is yours.

## WHEN INFIDELITY HAS SHATTERED EVERYTHING

WHEN YOU FOUND OUT AND YOUR WHOLE WORLD  
COLLAPSED IN A SINGLE MOMENT

*The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I  
fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I  
be afraid?*

**PSALM 27:1**

WHEN THE GRIEF OF THIS BETRAYAL FEELS LIKE MORE  
THAN YOU CAN SURVIVE

*Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the  
morning.*

**PSALM 30:5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD SEES EXACTLY  
WHAT HAPPENED AND HE IS NOT SILENT ABOUT IT

*The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, and  
delivers them out of all their troubles.*

**PSALM 34:17**

WHEN THE PAIN IS SO DEEP THAT YOU NEED TO  
KNOW JESUS UNDERSTANDS WHAT BETRAYAL FEELS  
LIKE

*Jesus wept.*

**JOHN 11:35**

WHEN YOU ARE WALKING THROUGH THE DEEPEST WATER OF YOUR LIFE AND NEED TO KNOW YOU WILL NOT DROWN

*"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you."*

**ISAIAH 43:2**

WHEN YOUR HEART HAS BEEN PULLED UP FROM THE ROOT AND YOU NEED SOMETHING SOLID TO STAND ON

*From the end of the earth I will cry to You, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

**PSALM 61:2**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD HAS NOT FORGOTTEN YOU IN THIS

*"Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands."*

**ISAIAH 49:15-16**

WHEN YOU ARE ASKING GOD WHETHER YOUR MARRIAGE CAN ACTUALLY BE REBUILT AFTER THIS

*"Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?"*

**JEREMIAH 32:27**

WHEN THE ONE WHO BROKE YOUR TRUST NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT GENUINE REPENTANCE LOOKS LIKE

*Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.*

**ACTS 3:19**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD'S GRACE IS BIG ENOUGH FOR WHAT HAPPENED IN YOUR MARRIAGE

*"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."*

**2 CORINTHIANS 12:9**

WHEN YOU WONDER IF YOU WILL EVER STOP FEELING THIS WAY

*Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

**PSALM 126:5-6**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE STILL BECAUSE YOUR MIND IS GOING TO PLACES THAT ARE NOT HELPING YOU

*"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"*

**PSALM 46:10**

WHEN YOU NEED HOPE THAT GOD HAS A FUTURE FOR YOU REGARDLESS OF WHAT YOUR SPOUSE CHOOSES

*"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD, "plans for peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."*

**JEREMIAH 29:11**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT WHAT THIS SIN DID TO YOUR MARRIAGE IS NOT BIGGER THAN WHAT GRACE CAN DO

*But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.*

**ROMANS 5:20**

WHEN YOU ARE READY TO CONSIDER FORGIVENESS  
BUT NEED TO KNOW IT IS NOT THE SAME AS  
PRETENDING IT NEVER HAPPENED

*"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free  
indeed."*

**JOHN 8:36**

WHEN YOU NEED TO WAIT ON GOD FOR WHAT  
COMES NEXT INSTEAD OF MAKING DECISIONS OUT OF  
PURE PAIN

*Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall  
strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD.*

**PSALM 27:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD CAN BRING  
YOU UP OUT OF THIS PIT

*He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the  
miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established  
my steps.*

**PSALM 40:2**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE IN THE WRECKAGE OF INFIDELITY

*God, I do not have clean words for this prayer. I am angry and I am devastated and I do not know what tomorrow looks like and I need You to be honest with me about whether You can actually do something with this. Your Word says You can. So I am choosing to believe that even though everything in me wants to run. If there is going to be any healing here it is going to have to come from You because neither one of us has what it takes to get there on our own. Draw near to the one who is broken. Convict and restore the one who broke the covenant. And give us both the wisdom to know what the next right step is, not the next ten steps, just the next one. We need You. That is the most honest thing I can say right now.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation, and reconciliation is not the same as restoration. Which one of those three things is God asking you to take one step toward today, and what would that step actually look like?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Letter You Never Sent*

This one is going to take some time and some courage and it is worth both.

Each of you is going to write a letter. Not to send. Not to read out loud unless you both choose to. Just to write.

The letter starts with these words: *What I have never fully told you about how this hurt me is...*

Write everything. The parts that still sting. The questions you never got answered. The thing you wished had been different. The moment you replay. Do not edit yourself and do not soften it to protect anyone's feelings. This letter is for you first. It is about getting what is inside of you onto paper so it stops living rent free in your chest.

When you are both finished, sit together quietly. You each have a choice. You can share your letter or you can simply tell your spouse one sentence from it, the most important one, the one that most needs to be heard.

Then the spouse who receives that sentence says only this: *Thank you for trusting me with that. I hear you.*

No explaining. No defending. Just receiving.

Then pray together using the prayer from this chapter as your starting point. Let it be the last word in the room tonight, not the hurt, but God.

## WHEN YOU FEEL INVISIBLE IN YOUR OWN MARRIAGE

WHEN YOU WONDER IF YOUR SPOUSE ACTUALLY SEES YOU ANYMORE

*O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.*

**PSALM 139:1-2**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT EVEN IF YOUR SPOUSE IS NOT PAYING ATTENTION, GOD NEVER STOPS

*"Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."*

**LUKE 12:6-7**

WHEN YOU FEEL TAKEN FOR GRANTED AND NEED TO KNOW YOUR WORK IS NOT INVISIBLE TO GOD

*For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name.*

**HEBREWS 6:10**

WHEN YOU NEED TO HEAR THAT YOU ARE PRECIOUS AND THAT SOMEONE KNOWS YOUR WORTH

*"Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you."*

**ISAIAH 43:4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD DELIGHTS IN YOU EVEN ON THE DAYS YOUR SPOUSE BARELY NOTICES YOU

*"The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."*

**ZEPHANIAH 3:17**

WHEN YOU NEED YOUR IDENTITY TO COME FROM GOD AND NOT FROM HOW YOUR SPOUSE TREATS YOU

*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

**1 PETER 2:9**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD SEES EVERY PART OF YOU AND CALLS IT GOOD

*I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.*

**PSALM 139:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TENDERLY GOD REGARDS YOU ON YOUR MOST OVERLOOKED DAYS

*Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me under the shadow of Your wings.*

**PSALM 17:8**

WHEN YOU ARE CARRYING MORE THAN YOUR SHARE AND NO ONE SEEMS TO NOTICE

*"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

**MATTHEW 11:28**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW YOUR VALUE IS NOT  
DETERMINED BY HOW SEEN YOU FEEL

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus  
for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we  
should walk in them.*

**EPHESIANS 2:10**

WHEN YOU NEED YOUR SPOUSE TO TRULY SEE YOU  
AGAIN AND YOU NEED TO PRAY THAT INTO EXISTENCE

*"I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the  
LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their  
God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart."*

**JEREMIAH 24:7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD CHOSE YOU  
SPECIFICALLY AND ON PURPOSE

*Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of  
the world, that we should be holy and without blame  
before Him in love.*

**EPHESIANS 1:4**

WHEN YOU ARE TEMPTED TO LOOK FOR THAT  
FEELING OF BEING SEEN IN THE WRONG PLACES

*Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring  
the issues of life.*

**PROVERBS 4:23**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD THINKS  
ABOUT YOU MORE THAN YOU KNOW

*How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!  
How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they  
would be more in number than the sand.*

**PSALM 139:17-18**

WHEN YOU NEED COURAGE TO TELL YOUR SPOUSE  
WHAT YOU NEED INSTEAD OF JUST HOPING THEY  
FIGURE IT OUT

*You do not have because you do not ask.*

**JAMES 4:2**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD HAS  
CROWNED YOU WITH GLORY AND HONOR EVEN WHEN  
YOUR SPOUSE HAS NOT ACTED LIKE IT

*What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son  
of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little  
lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with  
glory and honor.*

**PSALM 8:4-5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE FULLY  
KNOWN AND FULLY LOVED AND THAT IS NEVER GOING  
TO CHANGE

*For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor  
angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present  
nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other  
created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love  
of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**ROMANS 8:38-39**

## A PRAYER FOR THE SPOUSE WHO FEELS INVISIBLE

*Father, I need You to remind me who I am because right now my marriage is not doing that job very well. I feel overlooked and undervalued and honestly a little forgotten, and I know that is not the whole truth but it is where I am today. So first, meet me here. Let me feel how completely You see me. Every part of me that my spouse has walked past lately, You notice. Every sacrifice that went unacknowledged, You recorded. I am not invisible to You and I need that to be enough while I trust You to work on the rest. And Lord, where my spouse has grown blind to what they have right in front of them, open their eyes. Help us to see each other the way You see us, with tenderness and with intention. Do not let either of us take the other for granted one more day.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Is there a difference between being unseen and being unwilling to ask to be seen, and is it possible that the conversation you have been waiting for your spouse to start is actually the one God has been waiting for you to start?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Mirror Exercise*

This one is going to feel a little uncomfortable and that is exactly why it works.

Sit facing each other. Close enough that you have to actually look at each other. Set a timer for two minutes and do not say anything. Just look. Not in a staring contest way but in a 'I am actually seeing you' right now way. Notice the things you stopped noticing. The person who has been right in front of you that you have maybe been looking past lately.

When the timer goes off, each of you answers this question out loud.

**What I see when I look at you that I do not say nearly enough is...**

Take your time. Do not rush to fill the silence. Say the real thing, not the safe thing. Then each of you answers this second question.

**The way I most need you to see me right now, the thing I most need you to notice about where I am, is...**

When you are both done, the spouse who spoke last reaches over and takes the other person's hand and just holds it for sixty seconds without saying anything.

You are not fixing anything tonight. You are just reminding each other that you are still seen. Sometimes that is the most important thing a marriage can do.

## WHEN BITTERNESS HAS TAKEN ROOT

WHEN RESENTMENT HAS BEEN BUILDING SO LONG IT FEELS LIKE PART OF WHO YOU ARE NOW

*Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.*

**EPHESIANS 4:31**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT BITTERNESS IS HURTING YOU MORE THAN IT IS HURTING YOUR SPOUSE

*For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.*

**ACTS 8:23**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BRING EVERY BITTER THOUGHT UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST

*Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 10:5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO STOP REPLAYING WHAT HAPPENED AND START RENEWING YOUR MIND

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

**ROMANS 12:2**

WHEN YOU NEED TO CHOOSE WHAT YOU MEDITATE  
ON BECAUSE IT IS SHAPING WHO YOU ARE BECOMING

*Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO FORGIVE EVEN THOUGH WHAT  
WAS DONE GENUINELY DESERVED BETTER

*"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

**MATTHEW 6:14-15**

WHEN YOU NEED A MODEL FOR FORGIVENESS THAT  
GOES FURTHER THAN YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD GO

*Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."*

**MATTHEW 18:21-22**

WHEN YOU ARE STANDING IN PRAYER BUT  
BITTERNESS IS BLOCKING EVERYTHING

*"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."*

**MARK 11:25**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO CREATE SOMETHING  
CLEAN IN YOU WHERE BITTERNESS HAS BEEN LIVING

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

**PSALM 51:10**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW FAR GOD HAS  
REMOVED YOUR SINS AND HOW FAR YOU NEED TO  
REMOVE THIS

*As far as the east is from the west, so far has He  
removed our transgressions from us.*

**PSALM 103:12**

WHEN YOU NEED LOVE TO COVER WHAT BITTERNESS  
KEEPS UNCOVERING

*Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins.*

**PROVERBS 10:12**

WHEN YOU NEED TO PUT ON SOMETHING NEW  
BECAUSE YOU HAVE WORN BITTERNESS LONG ENOUGH

*Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put  
on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness,  
longsuffering.*

**COLOSSIANS 3:12**

WHEN YOU NEED TO STOP REPAYING WHAT WAS  
DONE TO YOU AND START TRUSTING GOD WITH IT  
INSTEAD

*Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things  
in the sight of all men.*

**ROMANS 12:17**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT OVERCOMING  
BITTERNESS IS NOT WEAKNESS, IT IS WARFARE

*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with  
good.*

**ROMANS 12:21**

WHEN YOU WANT TO LET THIS GO BUT YOU NEED  
GOD TO ACTUALLY HELP YOU DO THAT

*Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of  
God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit  
who was given to us.*

**ROMANS 5:5**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO RESTORE THE JOY THAT  
BITTERNESS STOLE FROM YOUR MARRIAGE

*Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold  
me by Your generous Spirit.*

**PSALM 51:12**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THERE IS FREEDOM  
WAITING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF RELEASING THIS

*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who  
are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the  
flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

**ROMANS 8:1**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE DEALING WITH BITTERNESS

*Lord, I will be honest with You. I have been holding onto this and I have told myself it was justified. Maybe some of it was. But Your Word is clear that bitterness is not a place I can afford to live, and I can feel what it has been doing to me and to this marriage. So today I am asking You to help me put it down. Not because what happened did not matter. It did. But because I want the freedom that forgiveness brings more than I want to keep score. Clean out what has settled in my heart. Give me the love I do not naturally have right now. And where my spouse is also carrying bitterness, Lord, do the same work in them. We cannot build anything good on this foundation. We need Your help to lay a new one.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*If bitterness is a prison, who is actually serving the sentence, and what would your marriage look like thirty days from now if you decided today that you were done letting what happened back then have authority over what happens next?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Root Check*

Before you do this exercise together you are each going to do something privately first.

Find a quiet place alone and ask yourself this honest question: Is there bitterness growing in me toward my spouse that I have been calling something else? Maybe you have been calling it exhaustion or frustration or just feeling distant. Sit with that for a few minutes. Be honest with yourself the way you would want your spouse to be honest with you.

Write down the answer. Just for you. Nobody else sees this.

Now come together and take turns answering these three questions out loud.

**Question one:** Is there something I have been holding against you that I told you I forgave but honestly have not fully let go of yet?

**Question two:** What do I need from you right now that would actually help me release this instead of just pushing it back down?

**Question three:** What is one way I have contributed to the distance between us that I have not fully owned yet?

The rule for this conversation is simple. When your spouse is answering you do not defend yourself. You just

listen. When they are finished you say thank you for telling me that. Nothing else until it is your turn.

When you are both done talking, pray together out loud. Even if it is awkward. Even if it is short. Even if all you can manage is God help us. That counts. That is enough. Let Him into the room before you close the night.

# WHEN YOU THINK YOU HAVE FALLEN OUT OF LOVE

WHEN THE FEELINGS ARE GONE AND YOU ARE  
SCARED BY HOW GONE THEY ARE

*Love never fails.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT LOVE IS BIGGER  
THAN A FEELING AND GOD CAN REBUILD WHAT FADED

*"I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and  
speak comfort to her."*

**HOSEA 2:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT LOVE IS  
SOMETHING YOU DO BEFORE IT IS SOMETHING YOU  
FEEL

*Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and  
in truth.*

**1 JOHN 3:18**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW WHERE REAL LOVE  
ACTUALLY COMES FROM

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God;  
and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.  
He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

**1 JOHN 4:7-8**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO DO SOMETHING IN YOUR  
HEART THAT YOU CANNOT DO ON YOUR OWN

*"And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart  
and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your  
God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you  
may live."*

**DEUTERONOMY 30:6**

WHEN YOU NEED TO LOVE YOUR SPOUSE THE WAY  
JESUS LOVES YOU AND NEED HIS HELP TO GET THERE

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one  
another; as I have loved you, that you also love one  
another."*

**JOHN 13:34**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT CHOOSING TO  
STAY AND SERVE IS ITSELF AN ACT OF LOVE

*For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do  
not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but  
through love serve one another.*

**GALATIANS 5:13**

WHEN YOU NEED TO STOP WAITING TO FEEL IT AND  
START DECIDING TO DO IT

*And above all these things put on love, which is the  
bond of perfection.*

**COLOSSIANS 3:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO DELIGHT YOURSELF IN GOD  
FIRST SO THAT LOVE CAN FLOW FROM THAT PLACE

*Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give  
you the desires of your heart.*

**PSALM 37:4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO LOOK AT YOUR SPOUSE  
THROUGH THE EYES OF SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN  
SHOWN GREAT LOVE

*We love Him because He first loved us.*

**1 JOHN 4:19**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT LOVE EXPRESSED  
THROUGH SACRIFICE IS THE MOST POWERFUL KIND

*By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

**1 JOHN 3:16**

WHEN YOU NEED TO STOP PUTTING YOURSELF FIRST  
AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WHEN  
YOU DO

*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

**PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4**

WHEN YOU NEED A PROMISE THAT GOD WILL  
RESTORE WHAT YOUR HEART LOST SOMEWHERE ALONG  
THE WAY

*"I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy."*

**HOSEA 2:19**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE REMINDED WHAT LOVE  
ACTUALLY REQUIRES OF YOU

*"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

**MATTHEW 22:37-39**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT THE GREATEST  
LOVE DOES NOT DEPEND ON HOW IT FEELS TODAY

*"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down  
one's life for his friends."*

**JOHN 15:13**

WHEN YOU NEED TO REMEMBER THAT LOVE IS NOT  
WHAT YOUR MARRIAGE IS RUNNING OUT OF, IT IS WHAT  
GOD IS READY TO POUR IN

*Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of  
God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit  
who was given to us.*

**ROMANS 5:5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT HIS BANNER OVER  
YOUR MARRIAGE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AND STILL IS LOVE

*He brought me to the banqueting house, and his  
banner over me was love.*

**SONG OF SOLOMON 2:4**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE WHOSE LOVE HAS GROWN COLD

*Father, I am going to be honest because You already know the truth anyway. The feelings that used to come easily are not coming anymore. And that scares me. But Your Word says that love never fails and I am choosing to stand on that today even when my heart does not feel it. I am asking You to do what I cannot do on my own. Reignite something in me. Give me eyes to see my spouse the way You see them. Help me to love not because I feel like it but because You first loved me and that is the standard You set. I do not want to just stay in this marriage. I want to actually love well inside of it. Come and do what only You can do.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*If love is a decision before it is a feeling, what is one decision you could make today toward your spouse that has nothing to do with how you feel right now, and are you willing to make it anyway and watch what God does with it?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The First Love List*

Sometimes the feelings do not come back because we stopped doing the things that created them in the first place. This exercise is about going back before you go forward.

Each of you is going to answer these questions separately first. Write your answers down. Take your time with them.

**Question one:** What are three specific things my spouse did in the early days of our relationship that made me feel completely chosen? Not general things. Specific ones. The exact moments you still remember.

**Question two:** When did I last do something for my spouse that had nothing to do with logistics or responsibility or keeping the household running and everything to do with simply wanting to make them feel loved?

**Question three:** If I am honest with myself has love become something I wait to feel before I act on, and what would change if I flipped that around and acted first and trusted the feeling to follow?

Now share your answers with each other.

After you have both shared, each of you makes one commitment out loud. Not a grand gesture. Something small and specific and doable this week. Something that says I still want to make you feel chosen.

Then do it. Do not wait until the moment feels right. The moment will not feel right until you make it right.

Here is the thing about love that nobody tells you when you are standing at the altar. It is less of a feeling that carries you and more of a muscle that grows stronger every time you choose to use it. You are not falling out of love. You are just out of practice.

Start practicing again tonight.

## WHEN COMMUNICATION HAS BROKEN DOWN

WHEN YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE HAVE STOPPED  
REALLY TALKING AND NEITHER OF YOU KNOWS HOW TO  
START AGAIN

*Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but  
what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart  
grace to the hearers.*

**EPHESIANS 4:29**

WHEN YOU NEED TO REMEMBER THAT WHAT COMES  
OUT OF YOUR MOUTH STARTS IN YOUR HEART

*A good man out of the good treasure of his heart  
brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure  
of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of  
the heart his mouth speaks.*

**LUKE 6:45**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO GUARD YOUR MOUTH  
BEFORE YOUR WORDS DO MORE DAMAGE

*Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over  
the door of my lips.*

**PSALM 141:3**

WHEN YOUR WORDS HAVE BEEN WEAPONS AND  
YOU NEED THEM TO BECOME SOMETHING ELSE

*There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword,  
but the tongue of the wise promotes health.*

**PROVERBS 12:18**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT THE RIGHT WORD  
AT THE RIGHT TIME CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING

*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.*

**PROVERBS 25:11**

WHEN YOU NEED YOUR CONVERSATIONS TO BUILD  
SOMETHING INSTEAD OF TEARING IT DOWN

*Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:11**

WHEN YOU NEED TO SPEAK WITH GRACE ESPECIALLY  
WHEN THE CONVERSATION IS HARD

*Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*

**COLOSSIANS 4:6**

WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN TALKING AT EACH OTHER  
INSTEAD OF TO EACH OTHER

*The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips.*

**PROVERBS 16:23**

WHEN YOU NEED TO CHOOSE YOUR WORDS  
CAREFULLY BECAUSE THEY CARRY MORE WEIGHT THAN  
YOU REALIZE

*Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.*

**PROVERBS 16:24**

WHEN SILENCE HAS BECOME A WEAPON IN YOUR MARRIAGE AND IT IS TIME TO LAY IT DOWN

*To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.*

**ECCLESIASTES 3:1, 7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK BECAUSE THE WORDS CANNOT BE TAKEN BACK

*Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

**PROVERBS 29:20**

WHEN YOU NEED WHAT COMES OUT OF YOUR MOUTH TO BE SOMETHING GOD CAN ACTUALLY WORK WITH

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.*

**PSALM 19:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO RECEIVE YOUR SPOUSE THE WAY GOD HAS RECEIVED YOU BEFORE YOU SAY ANOTHER WORD

*Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.*

**ROMANS 15:7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO GUARD YOUR TONGUE AND ACTUALLY MEAN IT THIS TIME

*Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.*

**PROVERBS 21:23**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO GIVE YOU THE RIGHT WORDS FOR A CONVERSATION THAT KEEPS GOING WRONG

*The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary.*

**ISAIAH 50:4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT LEARNING TO SPEAK TRUTH IN LOVE IS A PROCESS AND GOD WILL HELP YOU GET THERE

*But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ.*

**EPHESIANS 4:15**

WHEN YOU NEED TO COME TO THE TABLE DIFFERENTLY THAN YOU HAVE BEEN COMING

*A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is.*

**PROVERBS 15:23**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE WHO HAS STOPPED COMMUNICATING WELL

*Lord, somewhere along the way our words started doing damage instead of building something. We stopped listening. We started defending. And now there is this silence between us that feels safer than saying the wrong thing again. But You are the God who spoke the world into existence and You care deeply about what we say and how we say it. Teach us how to talk to each other again. Put a guard over our mouths when what wants to come out would only make things worse. Give us words that heal instead of words that wound. And give us the humility to listen to our spouse the way we want to be listened to. We want to be the kind of couple who talks about the real things, with grace, with honesty, and with You in the room.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Is there something true that you have needed to say to your spouse for a long time that you have been packaging in criticism or burying in silence, and what would it look like to finally say it clearly, kindly, and without an agenda?*

# DRAW CLOSER

## The Translation Exercise

Here is something most couples do not realize. You are not actually fighting about what you think you are fighting about. Underneath the argument about dishes or money or who said what is almost always a deeper need that never got named out loud. This exercise is about finding that need and saying it clearly.

Think about the last real argument you had. Not a small irritation but an actual conflict that left one or both of you feeling unheard.

Each of you answers these questions separately first, writing your answers down before you share them.

**Question one:** In that argument what was I actually saying underneath the words I was using? If I am honest the real message I was trying to get across was...

**Question two:** What did I need from you in that moment that I did not know how to ask for directly?

**Question three:** What is my default communication style when I feel threatened or unheard? Do I go loud or go silent? Do I attack or withdraw? And what does my partner need from me instead?

Now share your answers with each other.

When your spouse finishes talking resist the urge to respond immediately. Instead repeat back what you heard them say in your own words. Not a paraphrase that makes you look right. An honest reflection of what they actually said.

Then ask them one simple question.

## **Did I get that right?**

Let them answer. Adjust if you need to. Try again.

You are practicing something that will change your marriage if you keep doing it. Learning to hear what your spouse is actually saying instead of just responding to how they said it.

## WHEN MONEY IS TEARING YOU APART

WHEN FINANCIAL STRESS HAS BECOME THE THIRD PERSON IN YOUR MARRIAGE

*"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*

**MATTHEW 6:24**

WHEN YOU ARE ARGUING ABOUT MONEY MORE THAN YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE

*The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.*

**PROVERBS 21:5**

WHEN FEAR ABOUT FINANCES IS MAKING YOU TAKE IT OUT ON EACH OTHER

*"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."*

**MATTHEW 6:31-32**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW WHO ACTUALLY OWNS EVERYTHING YOU ARE FIGHTING ABOUT

*The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.*

**PSALM 24:1**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE REMINDED THAT GOD IS  
YOUR SOURCE AND NOT YOUR INCOME

*And my God shall supply all your need according to His  
riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:19**

WHEN ONE OF YOU IS A SPENDER AND ONE OF YOU  
IS A SAVER AND YOU CANNOT FIND THE MIDDLE

*He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in  
much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also  
in much.*

**LUKE 16:10**

WHEN YOU NEED TO HONOR GOD WITH WHAT YOU  
HAVE EVEN WHEN IT DOES NOT FEEL LIKE ENOUGH

*Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the  
firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled  
with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.*

**PROVERBS 3:9-10**

WHEN YOU NEED TO STOP LOVING MONEY AND  
START USING IT AS A TOOL FOR YOUR FAMILY

*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for  
which some have strayed from the faith in their  
greediness, and pierced themselves through with many  
sorrows.*

**1 TIMOTHY 6:10**

WHEN YOU NEED CONTENTMENT MORE THAN YOU  
NEED A BIGGER INCOME

*Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we  
brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can  
carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with  
these we shall be content.*

**1 TIMOTHY 6:6-8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS THE ONE WHO GIVES YOU THE ABILITY TO BUILD WEALTH IN THE FIRST PLACE

*"And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."*

**DEUTERONOMY 8:18**

WHEN YOU NEED A PROMISE TO STAND ON WHEN THE BANK ACCOUNT SAYS OTHERWISE

*I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread.*

**PSALM 37:25**

WHEN YOU NEED TO SEEK GOD FIRST AND TRUST THAT EVERYTHING ELSE WILL FOLLOW

*"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."*

**MATTHEW 6:33**

WHEN YOU NEED TO LET GO OF WHAT YOU HAVE AND TRUST GOD TO MULTIPLY IT

*"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom."*

**LUKE 6:38**

WHEN YOU NEED TO REMEMBER THAT YOUR LIFE AND YOUR MARRIAGE ARE WORTH MORE THAN YOUR NET WORTH

*And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."*

**LUKE 12:15**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE CONTENT TOGETHER  
INSTEAD OF STRIVING SEPARATELY

*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

**HEBREWS 13:5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GENEROSITY WILL  
NOT BANKRUPT YOU, IT WILL BLESS YOU

*There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty.*

**PROVERBS 11:24**

WHEN YOU NEED TO CALL ON THE GOD WHO  
PROVIDES AND TRUST THAT HE WILL DO IT AGAIN

*And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."*

**GENESIS 22:14**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE UNDER FINANCIAL PRESSURE

*Father, money has been getting between us and we do not want it to have that kind of power in our marriage anymore. We are scared and we are stressed and sometimes we take that out on each other instead of bringing it to You together. So today we are bringing it to You. You own everything. You know exactly what we need. You have promised to supply it. Help us to get on the same team about our finances instead of pulling in opposite directions. Give us wisdom on how to manage what You have entrusted to us. And most of all, remind us that what we are building together is worth so much more than what is or is not in our bank account. Our security is in You and we choose that today.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*If you and your spouse sat down together this week and asked God to be the head of your finances instead of fear or habit, what is one specific thing you believe He would ask you to change, and are you willing to have that conversation with your spouse?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Money Table*

Most couples fight about money without ever actually talking about money. They talk around it, at each other about it, past each other about it, but rarely do they sit down and have the honest, unglamorous, necessary conversation that actually moves things forward. This exercise is that conversation.

Before you sit down together each of you answers these questions privately and writes down your answers.

**Question one:** What did money mean in the home I grew up in? Was it a source of security or stress or shame or power? And how has that shaped the way I handle it now in ways I have never fully admitted?

**Question two:** What is my biggest fear about our financial situation right now? Not what I say when someone asks how things are going. The real fear I have at two in the morning.

**Question three:** Where do I think we are not on the same team about money, and what would it look like for us to actually get on the same team?

Now come together and share your answers. No judgment and no problem solving yet. Just listening.

After you have both shared, pray together specifically about your finances. Name the actual numbers if you can. Name the actual fears. God already knows them and there is something powerful about saying them out loud together in His presence instead of carrying them separately in silence.

Then do one practical thing before you go to bed. It does not have to be big. Make a budget. Delete an app. Schedule a meeting with a financial advisor. Agree on one spending boundary for the next thirty days.

You are not solving everything tonight. You are just deciding to face it together instead of apart. That is where all the real progress starts.

## WHEN PARENTING DIFFERENCES ARE DIVIDING YOU

WHEN YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE CANNOT AGREE ON  
HOW TO RAISE YOUR CHILDREN AND IT IS CREATING A  
WALL BETWEEN YOU

*Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?*

**AMOS 3:3**

WHEN YOU NEED TO GET ON THE SAME PAGE AND  
ONLY GOD CAN GET YOU THERE

*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our  
Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and  
that there be no divisions among you, but that you be  
perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the  
same judgment.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 1:10**

WHEN YOU NEED WISDOM ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN  
THAT IS BIGGER THAN BOTH OF YOUR OPINIONS

*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who  
gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be  
given to him.*

**JAMES 1:5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD HIMSELF WILL  
TEACH YOUR CHILDREN AND TAKE SOME OF THE  
PRESSURE OFF YOUR DISAGREEMENTS

*"All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and  
great shall be the peace of your children."*

**ISAIAH 54:13**

WHEN YOU ARE TOO HARD ON YOUR CHILDREN AND  
YOUR SPOUSE IS TRYING TO TELL YOU THAT

*And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

**EPHESIANS 6:4**

WHEN YOU ARE TOO EASY ON YOUR CHILDREN AND  
YOUR SPOUSE IS TRYING TO TELL YOU THAT

*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

**PROVERBS 22:6**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT CONSISTENCY  
BETWEEN BOTH PARENTS IS ONE OF THE GREATEST  
GIFTS YOU CAN GIVE YOUR CHILDREN

*The righteous man walks in his integrity; his children are blessed after him.*

**PROVERBS 20:7**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO SHOW YOU BOTH THE WAY  
FORWARD WITH YOUR CHILDREN

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.*

**PSALM 32:8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO DECLARE TOGETHER WHAT  
KIND OF HOME YOU ARE BUILDING

*"As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

**JOSHUA 24:15**

WHEN YOU NEED TO REMEMBER THAT YOUR  
CHILDREN ARE A GIFT TO BE STEWARDED TOGETHER

*Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth.*

**PSALM 127:3-4**

WHEN YOU NEED GODLY COUNSEL BEFORE YOU LET  
THIS DISAGREEMENT GO ANY FURTHER

*Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the  
multitude of counselors there is safety.*

**PROVERBS 11:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT  
GOD TOGETHER INSTEAD OF SEPARATELY

*"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and  
shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you  
walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise  
up."*

**DEUTERONOMY 6:7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO STOP UNDERMINING EACH  
OTHER IN FRONT OF YOUR CHILDREN

*Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat  
him with a rod, he will not die.*

**PROVERBS 23:13**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT JESUS HIMSELF  
TAKES THE WELLBEING OF YOUR CHILDREN SERIOUSLY

*"But whoever causes one of these little ones who  
believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a  
millstone were hung around his neck, and he were  
drowned in the depth of the sea."*

**MATTHEW 18:6**

WHEN YOU NEED TO LET FAITH BE THE THING YOU  
ARE MOST INTENTIONAL ABOUT PASSING ON

*We will not hide them from their children, telling to  
the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His  
strength and His wonderful works that He has done.*

**PSALM 78:4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO PRAY FOR YOUR CHILDREN  
TOGETHER INSTEAD OF ARGUING ABOUT THEM  
SEPARATELY

*"Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth  
concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for  
them by My Father in heaven."*

**MATTHEW 18:19**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT YOUR  
FAITHFULNESS AS PARENTS IS SHAPING YOUR  
CHILDREN'S FUTURE

*"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget  
the works of God, but keep His commandments."*

**PSALM 78:7**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE WHO PARENTS DIFFERENTLY

*Lord, we both love our children deeply and we both want what is best for them. But we have been letting our differences in how we do this become a source of division instead of a conversation we have with You in the room. We need Your wisdom. Not just one of our opinions winning. Actual wisdom. Show us where we each need to adjust. Help us to present a united front to our children not because we have pretended to agree but because we have genuinely sought You together. Let our home be built on Your Word and let what we model for our children be something they will want to carry into their own families one day. We cannot do this well without You.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*When your children are grown, will they remember their parents as a united team who sought God together, or will they remember two people who pulled in different directions, and what needs to change today for that answer to be the one you actually want?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Parent Meeting*

This one is going to require you to put your spouse hat on and take your parent hat off for a few minutes. That is harder than it sounds. But it is necessary.

Find a time when the kids are not around. Sit down together and leave the frustration about last Tuesday's argument over screen time at the door. This is not a debate. This is a conversation between two people who love the same children and want to raise them well together.

Each of you answers these questions separately first and writes down your answers.

**Question one:** What did discipline and parenting look like in the home I grew up in and how has that shaped what I think is normal or right as a parent now?

**Question two:** Where do I feel most unsupported by my spouse as a parent and what would it look like for them to have my back in that specific area?

**Question three:** What is one parenting value that is non-negotiable for me and have I ever clearly communicated that to my spouse or have I just expected them to know it?

Now share your answers with each other.

When you are both done talking agree on one parenting decision you have been handling inconsistently and decide together tonight how you will handle it going forward. Write it down. Both of you sign

it if you want to. You are making a small covenant with each other about how you will lead your family together.

Your kids do not need perfect parents. They need parents who are on the same team. Start building that team tonight. You are teaching your children the kind of relationship they should accept in their life. Be sure the lesson is a good one.

## WHEN BLENDED FAMILY LIFE IS HARDER THAN YOU EXPECTED

WHEN THE FAMILY YOU IMAGINED AND THE FAMILY  
YOU ACTUALLY HAVE LOOK NOTHING ALIKE

*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and  
peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the  
power of the Holy Spirit.*

**ROMANS 15:13**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD HIMSELF IS  
THE ONE WHO BUILDS FAMILIES OUT OF BROKEN PIECES

*God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those  
who are bound into prosperity.*

**PSALM 68:6**

WHEN STEPCHILDREN ARE RESISTANT AND YOUR  
HEART IS TIRED FROM TRYING

*And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due  
season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

**GALATIANS 6:9**

WHEN YOU NEED TO LOVE CHILDREN WHO DID NOT  
CHOOSE YOU AND DO NOT MAKE IT EASY

*"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly,  
I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of  
these My brethren, you did it to Me.'"*

**MATTHEW 25:40**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS A FATHER  
TO EVERY CHILD IN YOUR HOME REGARDLESS OF HOW  
THEY GOT THERE

*A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is  
God in His holy habitation.*

**PSALM 68:5**

WHEN LOYALTY CONFLICTS BETWEEN BIOLOGICAL  
PARENTS AND STEPPARENTS ARE TEARING YOUR  
MARRIAGE APART

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren  
to dwell together in unity.*

**PSALM 133:1**

WHEN YOUR CHILDREN FEEL LIKE OUTSIDERS IN  
THEIR OWN HOME AND YOU NEED GOD TO FIX THAT

*Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and  
foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and  
members of the household of God.*

**EPHESIANS 2:19**

WHEN YOU NEED PATIENCE WITH CHILDREN WHO  
ARE STILL GRIEVING WHAT THEY LOST

*The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and  
his glory is to overlook a transgression.*

**PROVERBS 19:11**

WHEN A CHILD IN YOUR HOME FEELS ABANDONED  
AND YOU NEED A PROMISE TO STAND ON FOR THEM

*When my father and my mother forsake me, then the  
LORD will take care of me.*

**PSALM 27:10**

WHEN YOUR SPOUSE AND YOUR CHILDREN ARE NOT  
BONDING THE WAY YOU HOPED AND YOU DO NOT  
KNOW WHAT TO DO

*"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid  
them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."*

**MATTHEW 19:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO EXTEND GRACE TO A CHILD  
WHO IS ACTING OUT BECAUSE THEY ARE HURTING

*We then who are strong ought to bear with the  
scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

**ROMANS 15:1**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD ADOPTED  
YOU AND HE KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT IT COSTS

*For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to  
fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we  
cry out, "Abba, Father."*

**ROMANS 8:15**

WHEN YOUR BLENDED FAMILY NEEDS TO BECOME  
ONE BODY THAT ACTUALLY FUNCTIONS TOGETHER

*Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly  
love, in honor giving preference to one another.*

**ROMANS 12:10**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT AS A FATHER OR  
MOTHER FIGURE GOD SEES YOUR COMPASSION FOR  
THESE CHILDREN

*As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those  
who fear Him.*

**PSALM 103:13**

WHEN THE COMPLEXITY OF TWO HOUSEHOLDS IS  
MAKING YOUR MARRIAGE FEEL IMPOSSIBLE

*"I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit,  
who leads you by the way you should go."*

**ISAIAH 48:17**

WHEN YOU NEED TO STOP COMPETING WITH YOUR  
SPOUSE'S EX AND START FOCUSING ON WHAT GOD IS  
BUILDING

*Instead of your shame you shall have double honor,  
and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their  
portion.*

**ISAIAH 61:7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KEEP CHOOSING THIS FAMILY  
EVEN WHEN IT IS HARD BECAUSE GOD CHOSE YOU FIRST

*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that  
while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**ROMANS 5:8**

## A PRAYER FOR THE BLENDED FAMILY

*Father, this family is more complicated than we expected and some days it feels like we are holding something together with our bare hands. There are children carrying wounds we did not cause and loyalties we cannot compete with and dynamics we did not sign up for. But You put us together on purpose and we believe that. So we are asking You today to do what only You can do in a home like ours. Bring unity where there has been division. Build trust where there has been resistance. Help us to love every child in this house with patience and consistency even when it is not returned. Show us how to be a family not just a household. We trust You with every broken piece of this.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Is there a child in your blended family that you have been keeping at arm's length because loving them fully feels too risky, and what would it mean for your marriage and your home if you decided to close that distance starting today?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Empty Chair*

This one is for the blended family that is trying to figure out how to be a family when not everyone at the table chose to be there.

Before you do this exercise together spend a few minutes alone thinking about every child in your home, biological or not, and ask yourself this honest question. Have I been loving this child the way they need to be loved or the way that is easiest for me?

Write down what comes up. Be honest with yourself first.

Now come together and take turns answering these questions out loud.

**Question one:** Which child in our home do I find it hardest to connect with and what do I think is underneath that difficulty for me personally?

**Question two:** Is there a moment recently where I put my own discomfort ahead of what one of our children needed and what would I do differently if I had that moment back?

**Question three:** What is one thing we could do together this week as a family that would make every child in this home feel like they genuinely belong here?

When you are both done talking do something that might feel small but is actually significant. Go together and do something kind and intentional for the child in your home who feels most like an outsider right now. Not a grand gesture. A quiet one. A note under their pillow.

Their favorite meal. Sitting with them while they do something they love. Make it intentional. Let them know they are seen and valued.

You are not just building a marriage. You are building a family. Every child in your home is watching to see if they are safe here. Show them they are.

## WHEN GRIEF HAS CREATED DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU

WHEN LOSS HAS LEFT YOU BOTH HURTING BUT  
SOMEHOW HURTING ALONE

*Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those  
who weep.*

**ROMANS 12:15**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS THE  
COMFORTER AND HE IS IN THIS GRIEF WITH BOTH OF  
YOU

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who  
comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to  
comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort  
with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4**

WHEN YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE ARE GRIEVING  
DIFFERENTLY AND IT IS MAKING YOU FEEL LIKE  
STRANGERS

*Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your  
heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.*

**PSALM 62:8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD SEES EVERY  
TEAR BOTH OF YOU HAVE CRIED

*The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His  
ears are open to their cry.*

**PSALM 34:15**

WHEN THE LOSS FEELS TOO BIG FOR YOUR MARRIAGE TO HOLD AND YOU NEED GOD TO HOLD IT INSTEAD

*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.*

**1 PETER 5:7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO GRIEVE WITH HOPE INSTEAD OF GRIEVING AS THOUGH NOTHING IS LEFT

*But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.*

**1 THESSALONIANS 4:13**

WHEN YOU CANNOT FIND THE WORDS TO PRAY AND NEED THE SPIRIT TO CARRY YOU

*Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

**ROMANS 8:26**

WHEN YOUR HEART HAS GIVEN OUT AND YOU NEED GOD TO BE YOUR STRENGTH TODAY

*My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

**PSALM 73:26**

WHEN GRIEF HAS SHUT DOWN COMMUNICATION IN YOUR MARRIAGE AND YOU NEED GOD TO REOPEN IT

*"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" says your God.*

**ISAIAH 40:1**

WHEN YOU NEED A PROMISE THAT WHAT YOU ARE  
WALKING THROUGH IS NOT THE END OF THE STORY

*"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes;  
there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.  
There shall be no more pain, for the former things have  
passed away."*

**REVELATION 21:4**

WHEN YOUR SPOUSE IS DROWNING IN GRIEF AND  
YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW TO REACH THEM

*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their  
wounds.*

**PSALM 147:3**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT MORNING IS STILL  
COMING EVEN IN THE DARKEST VALLEY

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow  
of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod  
and Your staff, they comfort me.*

**PSALM 23:4**

WHEN YOU NEED SOMETHING TO ANCHOR YOUR  
HOPE WHEN GRIEF SAYS THERE IS NONE

*I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at  
last on the earth.*

**JOB 19:25**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT YOUR SORROW IS  
NOT WASTED AND WILL NOT HAVE THE FINAL WORD

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, you will weep and  
lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be  
sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy."*

**JOHN 16:20**

WHEN A MISCARRIAGE OR THE LOSS OF A CHILD HAS LEFT A WOUND IN YOUR MARRIAGE THAT WORDS CANNOT REACH

*"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."*

**MATTHEW 5:4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT WHAT THIS GRIEF IS PRODUCING IN YOU IS WORTH MORE THAN YOU CAN SEE RIGHT NOW

*For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 4:17**

WHEN YOU NEED TO HOLD ONTO THE PROMISE THAT DEATH DOES NOT GET THE LAST WORD IN YOUR STORY

*He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces.*

**ISAIAH 25:8**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE GRIEVING TOGETHER

*Father, we are both in pain and we have not always known how to be in pain together. Sometimes grief pulls us toward each other and sometimes it builds a wall between us and we do not always know how to cross it. But You are the God of all comfort and we need You to be that for both of us right now. Meet us each where we are. Do not let this loss become something that separates us. Instead let it be the thing that drives us both toward You and toward each other. We cannot carry this alone and we were never meant to. Hold us together when the weight of it wants to pull us apart. You are near to the brokenhearted and we are claiming that promise today as a couple.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Have you told your spouse what you actually need from them in this grief, and is it possible that they are not pulling away but simply grieving in the only way they know how, and what would it look like to reach toward them today instead of waiting for them to reach first?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Grief Map*

Grief does not look the same on any two people and that difference can create more distance than the loss itself if you are not careful. This exercise is about closing that gap by finally letting each other in.

Find a quiet evening when you are not rushed. Sit together somewhere comfortable and answer these questions out loud, one at a time, taking turns.

**Question one:** How do I grieve? Do I go quiet or do I need to talk? Do I need space or do I need closeness? Have I ever actually told you what I need when I am hurting or have I just expected you to figure it out?

**Question two:** Is there a part of this grief that I have been carrying completely alone because I did not think you could handle it or because I did not want to add to your pain?

**Question three:** What is one thing you have done during this season, however small, that actually helped me, and have I ever told you that?

When you are both finished talking do not try to fix anything or wrap it up neatly. Just sit together for a few minutes in the quiet. You do not have to say anything. You just have to stay.

Grief is lonely enough on its own. Make sure you are not grieving in the same house in separate rooms when you could be grieving in the same room in each other's arms.

## WHEN MENTAL HEALTH IS AFFECTING YOUR MARRIAGE

WHEN DEPRESSION OR ANXIETY HAS MOVED INTO  
YOUR HOME AND IS AFFECTING EVERYTHING

*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power  
and of love and of a sound mind.*

**2 TIMOTHY 1:7**

WHEN THE ONE WHO IS STRUGGLING NEEDS TO  
KNOW THEY ARE NOT A BURDEN, THEY ARE BELOVED

*"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you  
by your name; you are Mine."*

**ISAIAH 43:1**

WHEN YOUR MIND IS NOT COOPERATING AND YOU  
NEED GOD TO STAND GUARD OVER IT

*You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is  
stayed on You, because he trusts in You.*

**ISAIAH 26:3**

WHEN YOU NEED PEACE THAT DOES NOT DEPEND ON  
YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES OR YOUR BRAIN CHEMISTRY

*"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as  
the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be  
troubled, neither let it be afraid."*

**JOHN 14:27**

WHEN YOUR SOUL IS CAST DOWN AND YOU NEED  
SOMETHING TO HOLD ON TO

*Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you  
disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise  
Him for the help of His countenance.*

**PSALM 42:5**

WHEN YOU ARE THE SPOUSE CARRYING THE WEIGHT  
OF LOVING SOMEONE THROUGH A MENTAL HEALTH  
STRUGGLE

*And if one member suffers, all the members suffer  
with it; or if one member is honored, all the members  
rejoice with it.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 12:26**

WHEN THE JOURNEY IS LONG AND YOU NEED  
STRENGTH THAT IS TAILORED TO THIS SPECIFIC SEASON

*As your days, so shall your strength be.*

**DEUTERONOMY 33:25**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD TENDS TO THE  
EXHAUSTED WITH GENTLENESS AND NOT JUDGMENT

*Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly  
an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat."  
And the angel of the LORD came back the second time,  
and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the  
journey is too great for you."*

**1 KINGS 19:5-7**

WHEN ANXIETY IS LOUD AND YOU NEED TO BRING IT  
TO GOD BEFORE IT TAKES OVER THE MARRIAGE

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer  
and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be  
made known to God; and the peace of God, which  
surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and  
minds through Christ Jesus.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO STRENGTHEN WHAT HAS  
BECOME WEAK IN BOTH OF YOU

*He gives power to the weak, and to those who have  
no might He increases strength.*

**ISAIAH 40:29**

WHEN THE DARKNESS IS REAL AND YOU NEED GOD  
TO MEET YOU IN IT WITHOUT MINIMIZING IT

*In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried out to  
my God; He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry  
came before Him, even to His ears.*

**PSALM 18:6**

WHEN YOU NEED TO CARRY YOUR SPOUSE TO JESUS  
THE WAY THOSE FOUR FRIENDS CARRIED THEIR FRIEND

*Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was  
carried by four men. When Jesus saw their faith, He said  
to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."*

**MARK 2:3, 5**

WHEN YOU NEED STRENGTH THAT COMES FROM  
INSIDE AND NOT FROM CIRCUMSTANCES

*That He would grant you, according to the riches of  
His glory, to be strengthened with might through His  
Spirit in the inner man.*

**EPHESIANS 3:16**

WHEN SHAME IS KEEPING EITHER OF YOU FROM  
GETTING THE HELP YOU NEED

*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who  
are in Christ Jesus.*

**ROMANS 8:1**

WHEN THE ANXIETIES ARE MULTIPLYING AND YOU NEED GOD TO BRING COMFORT IN THE MIDDLE OF THEM

*In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul.*

**PSALM 94:19**

WHEN YOU NEED TO RESTORE EACH OTHER WITH GENTLENESS AND NOT WITH PRESSURE

*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*

**GALATIANS 6:1**

WHEN YOU NEED TO SPEAK STRENGTH AND COURAGE OVER THE ONE WHO HAS NONE LEFT

*Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come."*

**ISAIAH 35:3-4**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE NAVIGATING MENTAL HEALTH TOGETHER

*Lord, this is one of the harder chapters of our marriage and we need You in it more than we have words to say. To the one who is struggling, remind them that they are not broken beyond Your reach and that there is no shame in needing help. To the one who is caring, remind them that You see every quiet sacrifice they are making and that their strength is not gone, it is just being renewed. Help us not to let this become something we navigate separately or in silence. Give us the courage to get the help we need, whether that is prayer, community, counseling, or medication, and let us never treat asking for help as a failure of faith. You made us whole people and You care about every part of us.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Is there a conversation about mental health that has needed to happen in your marriage for a long time that fear or shame has been delaying, and what would change for both of you if you decided today that getting help was an act of love and not a sign of weakness?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Safe Word*

This exercise is not about fixing anything, but about creating a system of safety between you so that the hard days do not have to be navigated alone or in silence.

Before you sit down together each of you spends a few minutes alone answering this question in writing.

What does it look like when I am not okay? Not the version I show the world. The real version. What are the signs that I am struggling that I wish my spouse knew how to recognize and respond to?

Write it down in as much detail as you can. This is one of the most generous things you can do for your marriage.

Now come together and share what you wrote. Take turns. No interrupting and no trying to solve it while they are still talking.

After you have both shared, together you are going to do three things.

**First:** Agree on a safe word or phrase. Something simple that either of you can say at any moment that means I am not okay right now and I need you to come close without asking a lot of questions. It can be anything. Pick something that feels like you.

**Second:** Agree on what coming close actually looks like for each of you. For some people it means a hug. For others it means sitting nearby in silence. For others it means a glass of water and no talking. Name it

specifically so your spouse knows exactly what to do when the safe word gets used.

**Third:** Agree to remove shame from this conversation permanently. What happens in the hard seasons of your mental health is not a character flaw. It is not a spiritual failure. It is not something to hide from each other. It is something to face together with God in the room.

Practice the safe word tonight. Just once. Even if everything is fine right now. Let your spouse respond the way you asked them to. Feel what it feels like to be cared for exactly the way you need.

That is what safety feels like. Build more of it.

## WHEN INTIMACY HAS FADED

WHEN THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL CLOSENESS  
THAT USED TO COME NATURALLY HAS GONE QUIET

*"I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine."*

**SONG OF SOLOMON 6:3**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD CREATED  
PHYSICAL INTIMACY IN MARRIAGE AND HE CALLS IT  
GOOD

*Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed  
undefiled.*

**HEBREWS 13:4**

WHEN YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE HAVE STOPPED  
REACHING FOR EACH OTHER AND NEITHER OF YOU HAS  
SAID IT OUT LOUD YET

*"I found him whom my soul loves. I held him and  
would not let him go."*

**SONG OF SOLOMON 3:4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT PHYSICAL  
INTIMACY IS NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU DO, IT IS  
SOMETHING YOU PROTECT

*Let the husband render to his wife the affection due  
her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. Do not  
deprive one another except with consent for a time, that  
you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come  
together again so that Satan does not tempt you because  
of your lack of self-control.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 7:3, 5**

WHEN SHAME OR PAST HURT HAS MADE  
VULNERABILITY IN THE BEDROOM FEEL IMPOSSIBLE

*And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and  
were not ashamed.*

**GENESIS 2:25**

WHEN YOU NEED YOUR HUSBAND TO UNDERSTAND  
THAT EMOTIONAL CONNECTION AND PHYSICAL  
INTIMACY ARE NOT SEPARATE THINGS FOR YOU

*Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with  
understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker  
vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life,  
that your prayers may not be hindered.*

**1 PETER 3:7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT YOUR BODY IS  
SACRED AND INTIMACY WITH YOUR SPOUSE IS AN ACT  
OF WORSHIP

*Or do you not know that your body is the temple of  
the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God,  
and you are not your own? For you were bought at a  
price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your  
spirit, which are God's.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20**

WHEN ONE OF YOU IS CARRYING WOUNDS THAT ARE  
MAKING CLOSENESS FEEL UNSAFE

*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their  
wounds.*

**PSALM 147:3**

WHEN YOU NEED TO PURSUE YOUR SPOUSE AND  
STOP WAITING TO FEEL LIKE IT FIRST

*"I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me."*

**SONG OF SOLOMON 7:10**

WHEN YOU NEED YOUR MARRIAGE BED TO BE A PLACE OF SAFETY AND JOY AGAIN

*Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love.*

**PROVERBS 5:18-19**

WHEN HUSBANDS NEED TO BE REMINDED WHAT LOVING THEIR WIVES ACTUALLY REQUIRES OF THEM

*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.*

**EPHESIANS 5:25**

WHEN YOU NEED A PICTURE OF WHAT REAL DESIRE IN A MARRIAGE LOOKS LIKE

*"You have ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; you have ravished my heart with one look of your eyes."*

**SONG OF SOLOMON 4:9**

WHEN YOU NEED TO LEAVE EVERYTHING ELSE OUTSIDE THE DOOR AND COME BACK TO EACH OTHER

*"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."*

**GENESIS 2:24**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT BEING TRULY KNOWN BY YOUR SPOUSE IS ONE OF GOD'S GIFTS TO MARRIAGE

*"His mouth is most sweet, yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend."*

**SONG OF SOLOMON 5:16**

WHEN YOU NEED TO GUARD YOUR MARRIAGE BED  
FROM EVERYTHING COMPETING FOR THAT SPACE

*She is your companion and your wife by covenant.*

**MALACHI 2:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT ONENESS IN  
MARRIAGE IS GOD'S DESIGN AND HE WANTS IT FOR YOU

*For this reason a man shall leave his father and  
mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall  
become one flesh.*

**EPHESIANS 5:31**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO RESTORE DESIRE AND  
DELIGHT IN YOUR MARRIAGE

*"Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth;  
shall you not know it?"*

**ISAIAH 43:19**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE WHOSE INTIMACY HAS FADED

*Lord, You designed this part of our marriage and You called it good. So I am bringing it to You honestly because something has gone quiet between us in this area and we do not always know how to talk about it. Whether it is exhaustion or hurt or distance or something we have never said out loud, You know what is behind it. Heal what needs healing. Restore what has faded. Help us to pursue each other with intentionality and tenderness. Remove the shame and the silence and replace them with safety and desire. We want the kind of intimacy You designed for marriage, not just physical but deeply connected in every way. Do what only You can do in this part of our life together.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Is there something outside the bedroom that has been creating distance inside it, and are you willing to have the honest conversation that could begin to close that gap, starting not with what you need from your spouse but with what you are willing to give? Have you seen a medical doctor to check health and hormone levels to rule out any physical issues?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Honest Inventory*

Before you do this exercise together understand something. This conversation is only going to work if both of you agree going in that there is no shame allowed in the room. What gets said here stays between you and God. You are not here to criticize or perform or defend. You are here to be known and to know.

Each of you answers these questions privately first. Write your answers down.

**Question one:** On a scale of one to ten how connected do I feel to my spouse right now, not just physically but emotionally, and what is the biggest thing contributing to that number being what it is?

**Question two:** Is there something from my past or from our history together that has made vulnerability in this area of our marriage feel unsafe for me? Have I ever told my spouse that?

**Question three:** What is one thing my spouse could do consistently that would make me feel more desired and pursued, and have I ever clearly asked for it or have I just hoped they would figure it out?

Now sit together and share your answers. When your spouse is talking resist every urge to get defensive or explain yourself. Just listen. Just receive what they are telling you. This is a gift they are giving you even if it is uncomfortable to unwrap.

When you are both done each of you makes one commitment out loud. One specific and actionable thing you will do in the next seven days to move toward your spouse in this area.

Then before the night is over do something that has nothing to do with physical intimacy but everything to do with emotional closeness. Talk about something you have not talked about in a long time. Laugh about something. Sit outside together. Hold hands while you pray.

Intimacy is rebuilt in small moments of choosing each other. Start choosing tonight.

## WHEN YOU NEED TO FORGIVE YOUR SPOUSE AGAIN

WHEN YOU ALREADY FORGAVE THIS AND YOU  
CANNOT BELIEVE YOU ARE HERE AGAIN

*"Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."*

**LUKE 17:3-4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD'S  
FORGIVENESS OF YOU IS THE REASON YOU CAN KEEP  
FORGIVING THEM

*For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.*

**PSALM 86:5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW WHAT REAL  
FORGIVENESS ACTUALLY DOES WITH THE OFFENSE

*He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*

**MICAH 7:19**

WHEN THE ENEMY IS USING YOUR UNWILLINGNESS  
TO FORGIVE AS A FOOHOLD IN YOUR MARRIAGE

*Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 2:10-11**

WHEN YOU NEED A MODEL FOR FORGIVENESS THAT  
RAN TOWARD THE OFFENDER INSTEAD OF AWAY

*But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.*

**LUKE 15:20**

WHEN FORGIVING FEELS LIKE LETTING THEM OFF THE  
HOOK AND YOU NEED TO KNOW IT IS NOT

*If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.*

**PSALM 130:3-4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD HIMSELF  
CHOOSES NOT TO REMEMBER AND YOU CAN CHOOSE  
THAT TOO

*"Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."*

**HEBREWS 10:17**

WHEN YOU NEED TO PURSUE PEACE EVEN WHEN IT  
COSTS YOU SOMETHING

*Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.*

**HEBREWS 12:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT FORGIVING YOUR SPOUSE DOES NOT MEAN WHAT THEY DID WAS OKAY

*"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins."*

**ISAIAH 43:25**

WHEN GUILT AND SHAME ON THEIR SIDE NEEDS TO MEET GRACE ON YOUR SIDE

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*

**EPHESIANS 1:7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BRING WHAT HAPPENED TO GOD BEFORE YOU BRING IT BACK UP TO YOUR SPOUSE

*Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*

**MATTHEW 5:23-24**

WHEN FORGIVING YOUR SPOUSE REQUIRES YOU TO LOVE THEM THE WAY GOD LOVED YOU FIRST

*"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."*

**MATTHEW 5:44**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT A RIGHTEOUS PERSON GETS BACK UP AND FORGIVENESS IS PART OF HOW THEY DO IT

*For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again.*

**PROVERBS 24:16**

WHEN YOU NEED TO CONFESS TO GOD THAT FORGIVENESS IS HARD RIGHT NOW AND NEED HIS HELP WITH IT

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

**1 JOHN 1:9**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW GOD HAS TREATED YOUR OWN OFFENSES BEFORE YOU DECIDE HOW TO TREAT YOUR SPOUSE'S

*He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him.*

**PSALM 103:10-11**

WHEN YOU NEED TO WIPE THE RECORD CLEAN THE WAY GOD WIPED YOURS

*And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us.*

**COLOSSIANS 2:13-14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT BLESSED IS EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE WHEN YOU CHOOSE FORGIVENESS

*Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.*

**ROMANS 4:7-8**

## A PRAYER FOR THE SPOUSE WHO HAS TO FORGIVE AGAIN

*Lord, I am tired of forgiving this. I am going to be honest because You already know it anyway. Part of me wanted to be done and I thought I was done and here I am again. So I am asking You to give me what I do not naturally have right now. The grace to forgive not because they deserve it but because You forgave me when I did not deserve it either. Help me to release this completely and not pick it back up tomorrow. Protect my marriage from the enemy who wants to use this unforgiveness as a door. And do whatever You need to do in my spouse that needs to be done so that I am not standing here again next month having this same conversation with You. I want to be free. I choose forgiveness today even if I have to choose it again tomorrow.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Is the forgiveness you have been offering your spouse actually forgiveness or is it a temporary ceasefire, and what would it look like to bring this offense fully to God today and leave it there instead of carrying it back home with you?*

# DRAW CLOSER

## *The Release*

This one is going to require you to be honest about something you have probably been pretending is resolved. That takes courage. Do it anyway.

Before you come together spend some time alone with God first. Just you and Him. Ask Him to show you what you are still holding. Not what you think you should be holding or what feels justified to hold. What you are actually holding. Write it down. Be specific. Name the offense. Name the feeling. Name the way it still shows up in how you treat your spouse even when you do not mean it to.

Now do something physical. Write what you are releasing on a piece of paper. Hold it in your hands for a moment. Pray over it. Then tear it up or burn it if you can do so safely or throw it away. Let the physical act of releasing it mean something.

Now come together with your spouse and answer these questions out loud.

**Question one:** I want to tell you honestly that I have been carrying something I said I forgave and I have not fully let it go. What I am still holding is this.

**Question two:** What I need from you to help me actually get there is this.

**Question three:** What I am committing to do differently starting today is this.

After you have both shared, pray together. Out loud. Specifically. Name what you are releasing to God and ask Him to fill the space it leaves behind with something better than the resentment that was living there.

Forgiveness is not a one-time event. It is a daily practice. You are not failing because you have to choose it again today. You are actually getting better at one of the hardest and holiest things a marriage requires.

Choose it again. It is worth it every single time.

## WHEN YOU ARE THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

WHEN YOU KNOW YOU WERE WRONG AND THE  
HARDEST PART IS ACTUALLY SAYING IT

*He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever  
confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.*

**PROVERBS 28:13**

WHEN PRIDE IS THE ONLY THING STANDING  
BETWEEN YOU AND THE APOLOGY YOUR SPOUSE NEEDS

*When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the  
humble is wisdom.*

**PROVERBS 11:2**

WHEN YOU NEED TO COME TO YOURSELF THE WAY  
THE PRODIGAL SON DID AND STOP MAKING EXCUSES

*"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of  
my father's hired servants have bread enough and to  
spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my  
father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against  
heaven and before you.'"*

**LUKE 15:17-18**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO SEARCH YOU HONESTLY  
BEFORE YOU GO TO YOUR SPOUSE

*I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have  
not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the  
LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.*

**PSALM 32:5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT A BROKEN AND CONTRITE HEART IS NOT A WEAKNESS, IT IS EXACTLY WHAT GOD IS LOOKING FOR

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, these, O God, You will not despise.*

**PSALM 51:17**

WHEN YOU NEED TO HUMBLE YOURSELF UNDER GOD'S HAND BEFORE YOU CAN HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE YOUR SPOUSE

*Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.*

**1 PETER 5:6**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT REPENTANCE IS NOT JUST WORDS, IT IS A DIRECTION CHANGE

*"Bear fruits worthy of repentance."*

**MATTHEW 3:8**

WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN JUSTIFYING YOURSELF AND NEED TO STOP

*Let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*

**GALATIANS 6:4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS CLOSE TO THE HUMBLE AND THAT IS REASON ENOUGH TO GET THERE

*"But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word."*

**ISAIAH 66:2**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO HAVE MERCY ON YOU  
BEFORE YOU CAN ASK YOUR SPOUSE FOR THE SAME

*Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.*

**PSALM 51:1**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT CONFESSING AND  
TURNING IS EXACTLY WHAT OPENS THE DOOR TO  
RESTORATION

*"Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts.*

**ZECHARIAH 1:3**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD RESISTS THE  
PROUD AND YOU CANNOT AFFORD THAT IN YOUR  
MARRIAGE RIGHT NOW

*But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."*

**JAMES 4:6**

WHEN YOUR SPOUSE NEEDS ACTIONS NOT JUST AN  
APOLOGY

*They should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.*

**ACTS 26:20**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT ALL HAVE FALLEN  
SHORT AND ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS IS NOT BENEATH  
YOU

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

**ROMANS 3:23-24**

WHEN YOU NEED THE COURAGE TO SAY THE EXACT  
WORDS YOUR SPOUSE HAS BEEN WAITING TO HEAR

*Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not  
do it, to him it is sin.*

**JAMES 4:17**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT WALKING HUMBLY  
IS NOT OPTIONAL, IT IS THE STANDARD GOD HOLDS YOU  
TO

*He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what  
does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love  
mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?*

**MICAH 6:8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT THE SAME GRACE  
GOD EXTENDED TO YOU IS WHAT YOUR SPOUSE NEEDS  
FROM YOU NOW

*And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving  
one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

**EPHESIANS 4:32**

## A PRAYER FOR THE SPOUSE WHO NEEDS TO APOLOGIZE

*Father, I was wrong. Not partially wrong, not wrong with good reasons, just wrong. And I have been carrying the weight of that or avoiding it or justifying it and I am tired of all of it. I need Your help to do what pride has been making very hard. Humble me. Not in a way that crushes me but in a way that frees me. Give me the specific words my spouse needs to hear and the willingness to say them without conditions or qualifications. Help me to show them through my actions that I mean it and not just with one conversation. I do not want a ceasefire. I want real restoration. And I know that starts with me being willing to go first.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Is there an apology sitting inside you right now that has conditions attached to it, like waiting for your spouse to apologize first or softening it until it barely counts, and what would it look like to give your spouse the clean, full version today without any conditions at all?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Full Apology*

Most of us were never actually taught how to apologize. We were taught to say sorry and move on. But sorry without substance does not rebuild anything. It just puts a temporary cover over something that needs real attention. This exercise is about learning to apologize in a way that actually lands.

Before you come together spend time alone writing out your apology. Not a draft you will read word for word. Just getting honest with yourself about what you are actually apologizing for. Use these prompts to help you get there.

**What I did or said that caused harm was this specifically.**

**The impact I believe it had on you was this.**

**The reason I did it, not as an excuse but as honest self-reflection, was this.**

**What I am committing to do differently going forward is this specific thing.**

Now come together and deliver your apology out loud. Look at your spouse when you do it. Do not rush through it. Do not soften it so much that it loses its weight. Say the real thing.

When you are finished your spouse has two choices and only two. They can say thank you for telling me that. Or they can say I hear you and I need a little time. Both are valid. Neither opens the floor for a counter argument tonight.

After the apology is given, the spouse who gave it asks one question and one question only.

**Is there anything else I need to understand about how this affected you that I have not fully heard yet?**

Then listen. Do not defend. Do not explain. Just listen and let what they say actually change something in you.

A real apology is one of the most powerful things that can happen in a marriage. Not because it erases what happened but because it proves that the relationship matters more than being right. That is worth more than most people realize until they finally experience it.

A heartfelt apology shows great strength of character when we admit when we are failing. It builds respect in our mates when they see we are self-aware. No one is perfect. We all fall down and require the grace of Christ to lift us back up. An apology shows our partner that we see our faults and are striving to be better. That builds trust and deep love between two people who are walking with God guiding their footsteps.

# WHEN YOUR MARRIAGE HAS BECOME UNSAFE

*A note before you read: If you are in immediate danger, please call 911 or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233. God does not ask you to stay in a situation where your life or safety is at risk. What follows is written for you with that truth already on the table.*

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD SEES WHAT IS  
HAPPENING TO YOU AND IT GRIEVES HIM

*The LORD tests the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates.*

**PSALM 11:5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT WHAT IS BEING  
DONE TO YOU IS NOT LOVE AND GOD NEVER CALLED IT  
THAT

*Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS NOT  
ASKING YOU TO ENDURE VIOLENCE IN THE NAME OF  
MARRIAGE

*"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed."*

**LUKE 4:18**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT LEAVING TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN IS NOT ABANDONMENT, IT IS WISDOM

*"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."*

**MATTHEW 10:16**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD HIMSELF IS YOUR REFUGE WHEN YOUR HOME NO LONGER IS

*The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.*

**PSALM 9:9**

WHEN YOU NEED DELIVERANCE FROM VIOLENCE AND NEED TO KNOW GOD HEARS THAT PRAYER

*Rescue me, O LORD, from evil men; preserve me from violent men, who plan evil things in their hearts and stir up wars continually.*

**PSALM 140:1-2**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD HIMSELF REDEEMS PEOPLE FROM OPPRESSION AND VIOLENCE

*He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; and precious shall be their blood in His sight.*

**PSALM 72:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT SCRIPTURE DOES NOT REQUIRE YOU TO REMAIN IN BONDAGE

*But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 7:15**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO FIGHT FOR YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE TOO EXHAUSTED AND TOO AFRAID TO FIGHT FOR YOURSELF

*"The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."*

**EXODUS 14:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GETTING HELP IS NOT WEAKNESS, IT IS EXACTLY WHAT GOD PUTS AUTHORITIES IN PLACE FOR

*For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.*

**ROMANS 13:4**

WHEN SHAME IS KEEPING YOU SILENT AND YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT NONE OF THIS IS YOUR FAULT

*Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame.*

**ISAIAH 54:4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW WHERE YOUR HELP IS ACTUALLY COMING FROM

*I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.*

**PSALM 121:1-2**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD DELIVERS HIS OWN OUT OF AFFLICTION AND HE WILL DELIVER YOU

*Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.*

**PSALM 34:19**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT NO WEAPON  
FORMED AGAINST YOU BY THIS PERSON WILL HAVE THE  
FINAL WORD

*"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD."*

**ISAIAH 54:17**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS CALLING  
PEOPLE AROUND YOU TO HELP YOU GET FREE

*Deliver the poor and needy; free them from the hand of the wicked.*

**PSALM 82:4**

WHEN YOU NEED COURAGE TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP  
TOWARD SAFETY

*I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*

**PSALM 34:4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT SAFETY IS ON THE  
OTHER SIDE AND GOD IS ALREADY THERE

*"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD, "plans for peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."*

**JEREMIAH 29:11**

## A PRAYER FOR THE SPOUSE IN AN UNSAFE MARRIAGE

*Lord, I am going to say out loud what I have been afraid to say. I am not safe. And I need You to help me in a way that is real and practical right now, not just spiritual but physical. You see everything that has happened behind closed doors and You have not looked away. You do not ask me to stay where I am being harmed. Your Word calls You the deliverer of the oppressed and I am standing on that today. Give me courage. Show me who I can trust. Open a door of safety for me and for my children. Protect me as I take the steps I need to take. And remind me that leaving is not giving up on You. It is trusting You enough to believe that You have something better than this on the other side. I am Yours and I belong to a God who fights for me.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Is there one person in your life, a pastor, a counselor, a trusted friend, or a family member, who you could tell the truth to this week, and do you believe that God has already placed that person in your life on purpose for exactly this moment?*

## DRAW CLOSER

*A note before this exercise: This Draw Closer is written differently than the others. If you are currently in a dangerous situation please do not do this exercise with your spouse present. Your safety comes first. This exercise is written for those who are in the process of leaving safely or who are working with a counselor or pastor in a supervised setting.*

### *The Safety Plan*

This is not a reconciliation exercise. This is a clarity exercise. And it may be one of the most important things you do.

Find a trusted person, a counselor, a pastor, a close friend who knows your situation, and ask them to sit with you while you work through these questions. Do not do this alone and do not do this with your spouse until a trained professional has helped you assess whether that is safe.

**Question one:** What does safety look like for me and my children right now, today, in practical and specific terms?

**Question two:** Who are the three people I can call at any hour who know my situation and will help me without judgment?

**Question three:** What is my plan if things escalate? Where will I go? What will I take? Who will I call first?

Write the answers down and keep them somewhere only you can access them.

Then answer this final question for yourself alone.

**What is one step I can take this week toward safety that I have been putting off because I am afraid or because I keep hoping things will change on their own?**

Name the step. Tell your safe person what it is. Let them help you take it.

You are not failing your marriage by protecting yourself. You are not failing God by refusing to stay where you are being harmed. You are not alone in this even when it feels like you are completely alone.

God sees you. He is already going ahead of you into whatever comes next. And the people He has placed around you are there on purpose. Let them help.

Prioritize your safety, get the help of professionals, have a plan, and know that you are not responsible for the actions of your abuser. Let them work it out with God, that is not your job. Give yourself the same amount of grace that you would give to a beloved friend. In Gods eyes you are worthy of saving.

## WHEN YOU ARE WONDERING IF YOUR MARRIAGE CAN SURVIVE

WHEN YOU ARE STANDING IN THE WRECKAGE AND  
ASKING GOD IF THERE IS ANYTHING LEFT TO WORK WITH

*"Can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord GOD,  
You know." Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these  
bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of  
the LORD!'"*

**EZEKIEL 37:3-4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT WHAT LOOKS  
DEAD TO YOU DOES NOT LOOK DEAD TO GOD

*"With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with  
God all things are possible."*

**MARK 10:27**

WHEN YOU NEED SOMETHING TO ANCHOR YOUR  
HOPE WHEN EVERYTHING ELSE IS SHAKING

*This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure  
and steadfast.*

**HEBREWS 6:19**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD JOINED YOU  
TOGETHER AND HE HAS NOT STOPPED CARING ABOUT  
THAT

*"Therefore what God has joined together, let not man  
separate."*

**MARK 10:9**

WHEN YOU NEED TO FIGHT FOR YOUR MARRIAGE  
EVEN WHEN YOU ARE TIRED

*"Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses."*

**NEHEMIAH 4:14**

WHEN YOUR MARRIAGE NEEDS A MIRACLE AND YOU  
NEED TO KNOW GOD STILL DOES THOSE

*"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know."*

**JEREMIAH 33:3**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT EVERYTHING YOU  
AND YOUR SPOUSE HAVE BEEN THROUGH CAN BE  
REDEEMED

*And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities.*

**ISAIAH 61:4**

WHEN EVERYTHING IN YOU WANTS TO QUIT AND  
YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT HOLDING ON IS WORTH  
SOMETHING

*Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.*

**HEBREWS 10:35-36**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT WHAT THIS  
SEASON IS PRODUCING IN YOU IS NOT WASTED

*And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

**ROMANS 5:3-4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT IF GOD IS FOR YOUR MARRIAGE NOTHING CAN ULTIMATELY DESTROY IT

*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

**ROMANS 8:31**

WHEN YOUR HOPE HAS BEEN DEFERRED SO MANY TIMES THAT IT IS HARD TO HOPE AGAIN

*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

**ROMANS 15:4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO WAIT ON GOD INSTEAD OF MAKING A DECISION OUT OF EXHAUSTION

*My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him.*

**PSALM 62:5**

WHEN THE VISION FOR YOUR MARRIAGE FEELS DELAYED BUT YOU NEED TO KNOW IT HAS NOT BEEN CANCELLED

*For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

**HABAKKUK 2:3**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD CAN RESTORE WHAT THE YEARS OF PAIN HAVE EATEN AWAY

*"For I will restore health to you and heal you of your wounds," says the LORD.*

**JEREMIAH 30:17**

WHEN YOU HAVE CRIED OUT TO GOD IN YOUR TROUBLE AND NEED TO KNOW HE HEARD YOU

*Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their chains in pieces.*

**PSALM 107:13-14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO DECLARE THAT BOTH OF YOU ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS IN CHRIST

*Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*

**ROMANS 8:37**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT HE WHO BEGAN A GOOD WORK IN YOUR MARRIAGE IS NOT FINISHED YET

*Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

**PHILIPPIANS 1:6**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE WHO DOES NOT KNOW IF THEY CAN MAKE IT

*Lord, we are honest with You today because we have run out of the energy it takes to pretend. We do not know if this is going to make it and that is terrifying. But You are the God who calls dry bones to life and restores what seemed past saving and builds roads in places where there were none. We are not asking You for easy. We are asking You for possible. Show up in our marriage the way only You can. Give us both the will to fight for this when we would rather walk away. If there is something here worth saving, and we believe there is, then save it. We cannot do this without You and we are done trying. We are placing what is left of this marriage in Your hands and trusting You with the outcome.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Before you make any final decision about your marriage, have you brought it to God with complete honesty and complete surrender, not asking Him to bless what you have already decided but genuinely opening your hands and asking Him what He wants to do with it?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Honest Crossroads*

This exercise is for the couple who is standing at the edge of something and is not sure which way to go. It is not going to tell you what to decide. That is between you, your spouse, and God. What it is going to do is help you get honest about where you actually are so you stop making decisions by default and start making them on purpose.

Each of you answers these questions privately first. Write your answers down. Take as long as you need.

**Question one:** If I am completely honest about where I am right now, not where I think I should be or where I want to be, but where I actually am, I would describe my commitment to this marriage as this.

**Question two:** What is the one thing, if it changed, that would make me willing to fight for this with everything I have? And have I ever clearly told my spouse that specific thing?

**Question three:** Have I brought this marriage to God in complete and total surrender, meaning I have opened my hands and asked Him what He wants instead of asking Him to bless what I have already decided? If not what is stopping me?

Now come together. This conversation requires more groundwork than most so before you share your answers agree on these two rules.

No ultimatums tonight and no decisions tonight. Tonight is only for honesty.

Share what you wrote. When your spouse is talking do not calculate your response. Just listen. Let what they say actually reach you.

When you are both done ask God one question together out loud.

**Lord what do You want to do with this marriage and are we willing to let You do it?**

Then sit in the silence long enough to mean it.

You do not have to have the answer tonight. You just have to be willing to ask the question and stay in the room long enough to hear what God says back. That willingness is not nothing. It is actually everything.

# WHEN OUTSIDE VOICES ARE THREATENING YOUR MARRIAGE

WHEN PEOPLE OUTSIDE YOUR MARRIAGE ARE HAVING MORE INFLUENCE OVER IT THAN THEY SHOULD

*"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."*

**GENESIS 2:24**

WHEN THE COUNSEL YOU ARE RECEIVING IS PULLING YOU AWAY FROM YOUR SPOUSE INSTEAD OF TOWARD THEM

*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.*

**PSALM 1:1**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT THE COMPANY YOU KEEP IS SHAPING YOUR MARRIAGE WHETHER YOU REALIZE IT OR NOT

*Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*

**1 CORINTHIANS 15:33**

WHEN IN-LAWS OR FAMILY MEMBERS ARE CREATING DIVISION BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE

*He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips.*

**PROVERBS 20:19**

WHEN YOU NEED TO RECOGNIZE THE SMALL THINGS  
THAT ARE QUIETLY DAMAGING WHAT YOU HAVE BUILT

*"Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines,  
for our vines have tender grapes."*

**SONG OF SOLOMON 2:15**

WHEN YOU ARE BEING PRESSURED TO CHOOSE  
BETWEEN YOUR SPOUSE AND SOMEONE ELSE AND NEED  
CLARITY

*Do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please  
men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a  
bondservant of Christ.*

**GALATIANS 1:10**

WHEN SOMEONE OUTSIDE YOUR MARRIAGE HAS  
BEEN GETTING WHAT BELONGS TO YOUR SPOUSE

*Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring  
the issues of life.*

**PROVERBS 4:23**

WHEN YOU NEED TO CHOOSE YOUR FRIENDSHIPS  
MORE CAREFULLY FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR MARRIAGE

*He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the  
companion of fools will be destroyed.*

**PROVERBS 13:20**

WHEN SOMEONE IS PLANTING SEEDS OF DOUBT  
ABOUT YOUR SPOUSE AND YOU NEED TO RECOGNIZE  
WHAT THAT IS

*Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause  
divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you  
learned, and avoid them.*

**ROMANS 16:17**

WHEN YOUR MARRIAGE NEEDS TO STAND UNITED  
AND NOT DIVIDED

*"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand."*

**MATTHEW 12:25**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW WHO TO ACTUALLY TAKE  
COUNSEL FROM ABOUT YOUR MARRIAGE

*The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray.*

**PROVERBS 12:26**

WHEN SOCIAL MEDIA OR COMPARISON TO OTHER  
COUPLES IS STEALING YOUR CONTENTMENT

*For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 10:12**

WHEN YOU NEED TO GUARD YOUR MARRIAGE THE  
WAY YOU WOULD GUARD ANYTHING PRECIOUS

*The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.*

**PROVERBS 18:10**

WHEN YOU NEED TO RECOGNIZE A FALSE FRIEND  
BEFORE THEY DO MORE DAMAGE

*Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*

**PROVERBS 27:6**

WHEN THE ENEMY IS USING PEOPLE TO DIVIDE WHAT GOD PUT TOGETHER

*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith.*

**1 PETER 5:8-9**

WHEN YOU NEED TO PUT ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD AGAINST EVERYTHING COMING AGAINST YOUR MARRIAGE

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

**EPHESIANS 6:10-11**

WHEN YOU NEED TO DECLARE THAT YOUR MARRIAGE BELONGS TO GOD AND OUTSIDE FORCES DO NOT GET THE FINAL SAY

*"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD."*

**ISAIAH 54:17**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE PROTECTING THEIR MARRIAGE FROM OUTSIDE VOICES

*Lord, we need to be honest about who and what we have been letting into our marriage that does not belong there. Some of it has come through family. Some through friends. Some through screens and comparisons and voices that seemed harmless until we noticed the damage they were doing. Help us to build a wall around what You have given us, not out of isolation but out of wisdom. Give us the discernment to know whose counsel actually points us toward each other and toward You. Help us to leave and cleave the way You designed, fully, not just physically but emotionally. What You joined together, we are committed to protecting. Guard our marriage from every outside force that wants to pull it apart.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Is there a voice in your life right now, a person, a platform, or a habit, that consistently makes you feel worse about your spouse or your marriage, and what would change if you decided today to give that voice less access?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Audit*

This one is going to require some honesty about the people and things you have been giving access to your marriage that you probably have not examined closely enough. Think of it like a security check. Not because you are looking for reasons to be suspicious but because what you protect tends to thrive and what you leave unguarded tends to erode.

Each of you answers these questions privately first and writes your answers down.

**Question one:** Who are the three to five people who have the most influence over how I think and feel about my marriage right now? Are they people who consistently point me toward my spouse and toward God or do they tend to pull me away from both?

**Question two:** Is there a relationship in my life right now, a friendship, a work relationship, an online connection, that has been getting something that belongs to my spouse? Emotional energy, private information about our marriage, time and attention that should be going home first?

**Question three:** What is one boundary I know we need to put in place to protect our marriage that I have been avoiding because it feels awkward or because I do not want to have that conversation?

Now come together and share your answers with each other. When your spouse names something that is hard to hear do not get defensive. Get curious. Ask them to help you understand why it concerns them.

When you are both done do something together that might feel small but is actually significant. Pray specifically over your marriage by name. Not a general prayer. A specific declaration.

Say out loud together: This marriage belongs to God and we are closing the door to every voice that does not build it up.

Then identify one specific boundary you are both willing to put in place this week. Name it. Agree on it. Write it down.

You are not building walls to keep the world out. You are building a fence around something worth protecting. There is a difference and your marriage is worth knowing that difference.

## WHEN YOUR SPOUSE DOES NOT SHARE YOUR FAITH

WHEN YOU LOVE SOMEONE WHO DOES NOT YET  
LOVE THE GOD YOU LOVE AND THE GAP FEELS  
ENORMOUS

*Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.*

**1 PETER 3:1-2**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT YOUR  
FAITHFULNESS IN THIS MARRIAGE IS DOING SOMETHING  
SPIRITUALLY SIGNIFICANT

*For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 7:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO HOLD ON TO HOPE THAT YOUR  
SPOUSE WILL COME TO FAITH

*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

**2 PETER 3:9**

WHEN YOU NEED A PROMISE TO STAND ON FOR  
YOUR HOUSEHOLD

*"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."*

**ACTS 16:31**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KEEP PRAYING FOR YOUR  
SPOUSE AND NOT LOSE HEART

*"Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart."*

**LUKE 18:1**

WHEN YOU FEEL THE WEIGHT OF PRAYING ALONE  
AND NEED TO KNOW GOD HEARS EVERY WORD

*"And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily."*

**LUKE 18:7-8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO LET YOUR LIFE PREACH WHAT  
YOUR MOUTH HAS ALREADY SAID ENOUGH TIMES

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

**MATTHEW 5:16**

WHEN YOU FEEL LONELY CARRYING YOUR FAITH  
INSIDE A MARRIAGE WHERE IT IS NOT SHARED

*"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."*

**PROVERBS 3:5-6**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS THE ONE WHO DRAWS PEOPLE TO HIMSELF AND THAT IS NOT YOUR JOB

*"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him."*

**JOHN 6:44**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KEEP PRAYING WITHOUT CEASING FOR YOUR SPOUSE

*Pray without ceasing.*

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:17**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT THE WORD OF GOD YOU HAVE PLANTED IN YOUR HOME WILL NOT RETURN VOID

*"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."*

**ISAIAH 55:11**

WHEN YOUR HEART'S DESIRE IS FOR YOUR SPOUSE TO KNOW GOD AND YOU NEED TO BRING THAT DESIRE TO HIM

*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.*

**ROMANS 10:1**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD TAKES NO PLEASURE IN ANYONE BEING LOST, INCLUDING YOUR SPOUSE

*"As I live," says the Lord GOD, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live."*

**EZEKIEL 33:11**

WHEN YOU NEED TO PRAY WITH OTHERS FOR YOUR SPOUSE BECAUSE THIS IS TOO HEAVY TO CARRY ALONE

*Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men... who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

**1 TIMOTHY 2:1, 4**

WHEN YOU NEED STRENGTH TO KEEP LOVING WELL IN A SPIRITUALLY MISMATCHED MARRIAGE

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:13**

WHEN FAITH COMES BY HEARING AND YOU NEED TO TRUST THAT WHAT YOUR SPOUSE HAS SEEN IN YOU IS ALREADY DOING SOMETHING

*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

**ROMANS 10:17**

WHEN YOU NEED TO COMMIT THIS TO PRAYER AND LEAVE THE OUTCOME IN GOD'S HANDS

*Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.*

**COLOSSIANS 4:2**

## A PRAYER FOR THE SPOUSE BELIEVING ALONE

*Lord, I love this person and I long for them to know You the way I know You. The distance that exists between us spiritually is real and some days it is one of the loneliest places I have ever stood. I am not going to preach at them today. But I am going to pray. Pursue my spouse with the same relentless love that pursued me before I knew You. Soften what is hard. Open what is closed. Let the life I live in this marriage be something that makes them curious about the God I serve. And while I wait, keep me rooted. Keep me faithful. Keep me from growing bitter or resentful. I trust You with the soul of the person I married and I believe that what You began in bringing us together You are still working out in ways I cannot see.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*If your spouse's only picture of who God is comes from watching how you treat them inside your marriage, what is that picture currently showing them, and is there anything you would want to change about it today?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Bridge*

This exercise is designed for the couple where one spouse is a believer and one is not, or where faith looks very different for each of you. It is not designed to convert anyone or win an argument. It is designed to build a bridge of understanding across a gap that can quietly widen if it is never honestly addressed.

Each of you answers these questions privately first and writes your answers down.

**Question one:** What does faith mean to me personally, not what I think it should mean or what I was taught growing up, but what it actually means to me in my daily life right now?

**Question two:** How has the difference in our faith or our approach to faith made me feel in this marriage? Has it created loneliness or tension or resentment that I have never fully named out loud?

**Question three:** What do I genuinely need from my spouse in this area that I have never clearly asked for? Not for them to change their beliefs but for them to respect or support or make space for mine?

Now come together and share your answers. This conversation requires an extra measure of gentleness so before you begin agree on one rule together.

We are not here to convince each other of anything tonight. We are here to understand each other better.

When your spouse finishes sharing ask them one follow up question. Just one. Something that shows you

were actually listening and that you want to understand more deeply.

When you are both done the believing spouse closes with a simple prayer. Not a long one. Not a performance. Just a quiet honest word to God that their spouse can hear and that does not feel like pressure.

Something like: Lord thank You for this person. Help us to love each other well across every difference between us. Keep working on both of us.

You are not going to solve the faith gap tonight. But you can close the distance gap. And sometimes closing the distance is exactly what makes space for God to do the rest.

## WHEN LONELINESS HAS SETTLED INTO YOUR MARRIAGE

WHEN YOU ARE MARRIED AND STILL FEEL  
COMPLETELY ALONE AND THAT FEELS LIKE THE  
CRUELEST KIND OF LONELY

*O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul  
thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty  
land where there is no water.*

**PSALM 63:1**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD SEES THE  
SPECIFIC LONELINESS OF BEING UNSEEN INSIDE A  
MARRIAGE

*But You have seen, for You observe trouble and grief,  
to repay it by Your hand. The helpless commits himself to  
You.*

**PSALM 10:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO RUN TO GOD FIRST BEFORE YOU  
TRY TO FIX THE LONELINESS ANOTHER WAY

*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*

**JAMES 4:8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT JESUS HIMSELF  
KNOWS WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE MISUNDERSTOOD  
AND ALONE

*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot  
sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points  
tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

**HEBREWS 4:15**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS NOT  
DISTANT FROM YOUR LONELINESS, HE IS IN THE MIDDLE  
OF IT

*"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

**MATTHEW 28:20**

WHEN YOUR SOUL IS QUIETLY ACHING AND YOU  
NEED GOD TO FILL WHAT YOUR SPOUSE CANNOT

*Truly my soul silently waits for God; from Him comes  
my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is  
my defense; I shall not be greatly moved.*

**PSALM 62:1-2**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW GOD COMFORTS THOSE  
WHO FEEL BROUGHT LOW AND UNSEEN

*Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast,  
comforted us.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 7:6**

WHEN YOU NEED TO HEAR THAT GOD CALLS YOU HIS  
FRIEND AND MEANS IT

*"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does  
not know what his master is doing; but I have called you  
friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have  
made known to you."*

**JOHN 15:15**

WHEN YOU NEED TO RETURN TO YOUR REST  
BECAUSE YOU HAVE BEEN FEEDING THE LONELINESS  
INSTEAD OF BRINGING IT TO GOD

*Return to your rest, O my soul, for the LORD has dealt  
bountifully with you.*

**PSALM 116:7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS KNOCKING ON THE DOOR OF YOUR HEART AND IS CLOSE ENOUGH TO HEAR HIM

*"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."*

**REVELATION 3:20**

WHEN YOU NEED THE LORD TO GUIDE YOU THROUGH THIS SEASON AND SATISFY WHAT FEELS DRY AND EMPTY

*The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.*

**ISAIAH 58:11**

WHEN ISOLATION HAS BECOME YOUR NORMAL AND YOU NEED COMMUNITY OUTSIDE YOUR MARRIAGE TOO

*And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another.*

**HEBREWS 10:24-25**

WHEN YOU NEED TO REACH TOWARD YOUR SPOUSE EVEN THOUGH IT FEELS RISKY

*I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.*

**PSALM 16:8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD COMFORTS THE WAY ONLY A MOTHER CAN AND HE IS DOING THAT FOR YOU RIGHT NOW

*"As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you."*

**ISAIAH 66:13**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT IN CHRIST YOU ARE  
NEVER TRULY ALONE REGARDLESS OF WHAT YOUR  
MARRIAGE FEELS LIKE TODAY

*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have  
been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

**EPHESIANS 2:13**

WHEN YOU NEED A FRIEND WHO IS CLOSER THAN  
WHAT YOUR MARRIAGE HAS BEEN OFFERING LATELY

*A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but  
there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*

**PROVERBS 18:24**

WHEN YOU NEED TO SEE HOW GREATLY GOD HAS  
LAVISHED HIS LOVE ON YOU EVEN IN THIS LONELY  
SEASON

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us,  
that we should be called children of God! And that is what  
we are!*

**1 JOHN 3:1**

## A PRAYER FOR THE SPOUSE WHO FEELS LONELY INSIDE THEIR MARRIAGE

*Lord, there is a specific kind of pain in being lonely inside a marriage and I need You to meet me in it today. I did not expect to feel this alone here. And I am bringing that honestly to You because I do not know what else to do with it. Fill what is empty in me the way only You can. Be the companion that my spouse has not been in this season. And then Lord, help me to turn toward them with whatever courage I have left rather than turning away. I do not want to grow so accustomed to this loneliness that I stop fighting against it. Remind me that You are already here. That I am already known. And that the loneliness I feel is not the final word over my life or my marriage.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Is there a difference between your spouse not meeting your need for connection and your spouse not knowing that the need exists, and what would happen if you told them clearly and kindly exactly what you are missing instead of waiting for them to figure it out on their own?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Reach*

Loneliness inside a marriage is one of the quietest and most confusing kinds of pain because from the outside everything looks fine. You live together. You share a bed. You parent together. You split the grocery list. And yet there is this hollow space between you that neither of you has found the words for yet. This exercise is about finding the words.

Each of you answers these questions privately first and writes your answers down.

**Question one:** When do I feel most lonely in this marriage? Is it at a specific time of day or in a specific situation or after a specific kind of interaction? Be as specific as you can.

**Question two:** What is the difference between being physically present with my spouse and actually feeling connected to them and when did I last feel genuinely connected?

**Question three:** What have I been doing with the loneliness instead of bringing it to my spouse? Have I been filling it with work or social media or friendships or busyness or food or anything else that keeps me from having to name what is actually missing?

Now come together and share your answers. When your spouse tells you they have been lonely do not take it as an accusation. Take it as an invitation. They are telling you where the door is. Walk through it.

When you are both done do something together tonight that has no agenda attached to it. Not a serious conversation. Not problem solving. Just something you both enjoy. Watch something that makes you laugh. Cook a meal together. Take a drive with no destination. Sit on the porch and just talk about something light. Grab a deck of cards or play a board game.

Connection does not always require depth. Sometimes it just requires presence. Undistracted, unhurried, chosen presence.

Be present for each other tonight like you mean it. Because you do.

## WHEN ONE OF YOU HAS CHANGED AND YOU FEEL LIKE STRANGERS

WHEN THE PERSON YOU MARRIED AND THE PERSON  
SLEEPING NEXT TO YOU FEEL LIKE TWO DIFFERENT  
PEOPLE

*A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for  
adversity.*

**PROVERBS 17:17**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT CHANGE IS PART  
OF GOD'S DESIGN AND YOUR COVENANT CAN HOLD IT

*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror  
the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the  
same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of  
the Lord.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 3:18**

WHEN YOU NEED TO COMMIT TO KNOWING YOUR  
SPOUSE AGAIN INSTEAD OF GRIEVING WHO THEY USED  
TO BE

*"Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from  
following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and  
wherever you lodge, I will lodge."*

**RUTH 1:16**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS THE  
CONSTANT IN YOUR MARRIAGE EVEN WHEN  
EVERYTHING ELSE HAS SHIFTED

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*

**HEBREWS 13:8**

WHEN ONE OF YOU HAS GROWN IN FAITH AND THE OTHER HAS NOT KEPT PACE AND THE GAP IS SHOWING

*But You are the same, and Your years will have no end.*

**PSALM 102:27**

WHEN YOU NEED TO PURSUE WHO YOUR SPOUSE IS BECOMING AND NOT JUST WHO THEY WERE

*Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation.*

**PSALM 25:4-5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO PRESS FORWARD TOGETHER INSTEAD OF STANDING STILL IN WHO YOU BOTH USED TO BE

*Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

**PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BEAR WITH YOUR SPOUSE'S GROWTH WITH PATIENCE AND NOT WITH RESENTMENT

*With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

**EPHESIANS 4:2-3**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS ORDERING YOUR SPOUSE'S STEPS EVEN WHEN YOU CANNOT SEE WHERE THEY ARE GOING

*The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way.*

**PSALM 37:23**

WHEN THE CHANGING SEASONS OF YOUR MARRIAGE  
NEED GOD AS THEIR ANCHOR

*My times are in Your hand.*

**PSALM 31:15**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE SHARPENED BY YOUR  
SPOUSE'S GROWTH INSTEAD OF THREATENED BY IT

*As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the  
countenance of his friend.*

**PROVERBS 27:17**

WHEN YOU NEED TO STAY ROOTED IN GOD SO THAT  
CHANGE DOES NOT UPROOT YOUR MARRIAGE

*"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear  
fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you,  
unless you abide in Me."*

**JOHN 15:4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD SAW THIS  
SEASON OF CHANGE COMING AND HE HAS ALREADY  
ACCOUNTED FOR IT

*Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And  
in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for  
me, when as yet there were none of them.*

**PSALM 139:16**

WHEN YOU NEED TO COMMIT TO YOUR SPOUSE'S  
FUTURE AND NOT JUST YOUR SHARED PAST

*"Even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs  
I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; even I will  
carry, and will deliver you."*

**ISAIAH 46:4**

WHEN GROWING PAINS IN YOUR MARRIAGE NEED  
TO BE BROUGHT TO GOD BEFORE THEY BECOME  
GROWING WALLS

*For to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

**ROMANS 8:6**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE CONFORMED TOGETHER  
TOWARD THE IMAGE OF CHRIST RATHER THAN PULLING  
IN SEPARATE DIRECTIONS

*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be  
conformed to the image of His Son.*

**ROMANS 8:29**

WHEN YOU NEED TO CHOOSE YOUR SPOUSE AGAIN  
TODAY, NOT THE VERSION YOU REMEMBER BUT THE  
ONE STANDING IN FRONT OF YOU

*Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal  
treacherously with the wife of his youth.*

**MALACHI 2:15**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE WHO FEELS LIKE STRANGERS

*Lord, we are not who we were when we started this. Both of us have changed in ways that are sometimes hard to keep up with and the gap between us can feel wider than we know how to cross. But You knew every version of us before we knew ourselves. You wrote every day of our lives in Your book before one of them came to be. So we are trusting You with this season. Help us to be curious about each other again instead of guarded. Help us to choose to know each other now and not just remember who we used to be. You are the same even when we are not and we are asking You to be the anchor that holds us together while we both keep growing. Keep us growing toward each other and toward You.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*When did you last ask your spouse a genuine question about who they are becoming, not who they were or what they did wrong, but who they are right now, and what would it mean for your marriage if you made that kind of curiosity a regular habit?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Interview*

You knew everything about this person once. Or at least you thought you did. But people grow and shift and become and somewhere in the business of living together you stopped asking the kinds of questions that keep you current with each other. This exercise is about getting curious again.

There are no private answers for this one. This one is a conversation from start to finish. Sit somewhere comfortable, put your phones away, and take turns asking each other these questions. Let the answers surprise you. Let them lead somewhere unexpected. That is the point.

**Question one:** Who are you right now that you were not five years ago? What has changed in you that you are not sure I have fully noticed or understood?

**Question two:** What do you believe now about life or God or yourself or us that you did not believe when we got married and have you ever fully told me that?

**Question three:** What is something you are quietly hoping for or dreaming about right now that you have not said out loud because you were not sure how I would respond?

**Question four:** What is something about who I am becoming that you genuinely admire even if it has been an adjustment for both of us?

**Question five:** What is one way you need me to love the person you are now that might be different from how I have been loving the person you used to be?

When you are both done sit with this question together.

**Are we growing in the same direction or in directions that are pulling us apart, and what would it look like to grow toward each other on purpose?**

You do not have to have the answer tonight. Just be willing to ask it together and stay curious about each other long enough to find out.

The couple that keeps asking questions keeps falling in love. Start asking again tonight.

## WHEN YOU ARE WAITING FOR GOD TO RESTORE WHAT IS BROKEN

WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN PRAYING FOR YOUR  
MARRIAGE TO CHANGE AND THE WAIT IS GETTING LONG

*But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*

**ISAIAH 40:31**

WHEN YOU ARE TEMPTED TO LOSE HEART BECAUSE  
YOU CANNOT YET SEE THE GOODNESS GOD PROMISED

*I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.*

**PSALM 27:13**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT WAITING ON GOD  
IS NOT THE SAME AS WAITING FOR NOTHING

*"The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I hope in Him!" The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.*

**LAMENTATIONS 3:24-26**

WHEN YOU NEED TO WAIT WITH PERSEVERANCE  
AND NOT WITH PANIC

*But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.*

**ROMANS 8:25**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS ALSO WAITING AND WILL BE GRACIOUS WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT

*Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him.*

**ISAIAH 30:18**

WHEN YOU NEED A PICTURE OF PATIENT WAITING THAT GIVES YOU SOMETHING TO HOLD ON TO

*Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts.*

**JAMES 5:7-8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO REST IN GOD INSTEAD OF STRIVING TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN IN YOUR OWN STRENGTH

*Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way.*

**PSALM 37:7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BRING YOUR MARRIAGE BEFORE GOD WITH GENUINE HUMILITY AND PRAYER

*"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

**2 CHRONICLES 7:14**

WHEN YOUR SOUL IS WAITING AND YOU NEED GOD'S WORD TO BE YOUR ANCHOR

*I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope.*

**PSALM 130:5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD ACTS ON  
BEHALF OF THOSE WHO WAIT FOR HIM

*For since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him.*

**ISAIAH 64:4**

WHEN HOPE SEEMS UNREASONABLE BUT YOU ARE  
CHOOSING IT ANYWAY

*Who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations.*

**ROMANS 4:18**

WHEN YOUR FAITH NEEDS TO BE BIGGER THAN  
WHAT YOU CAN SEE RIGHT NOW

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

**HEBREWS 11:1**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE FULLY CONVINCED THAT  
GOD CAN DO WHAT HE PROMISED EVEN IN YOUR  
MARRIAGE

*He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.*

**ROMANS 4:20-21**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD WILL  
COMPLETE WHAT HE STARTED IN YOUR MARRIAGE

*The LORD will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever.*

**PSALM 138:8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO LOOK AHEAD TO THE DAY WHEN  
THE WAITING WILL FEEL LIKE A DREAM

*When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."*

**PSALM 126:1-2**

WHEN YOUR SOUL IS CAST DOWN AND YOU NEED TO  
PREACH HOPE TO IT

*Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God.*

**PSALM 43:5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS YOUR HELP  
AND YOUR SHIELD WHILE YOU WAIT

*Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield.*

**PSALM 33:20**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE WAITING ON GOD TO RESTORE THEIR MARRIAGE

*Lord, we are in the waiting and it is harder than we expected. We have prayed and we have tried and we have believed and some days the evidence on the ground does not match the promises in Your Word and that is a hard place to stand. But we choose to stand here anyway. We choose to believe that You are working even when we cannot see it. We choose to trust that the harvest is coming even though the ground still looks bare. Hold our hope steady. Keep our faith from caving under the weight of how long this has taken. We will not stop praying and we will not stop believing because You are the God who completes what You begin and You began something here. We are trusting You to finish it.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Is there a specific promise from God's Word that you have been standing on for your marriage, and if you wrote it down and put it somewhere you would see it every single day, what would that do to your faith during the hardest moments of the waiting?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Testimony Wall*

Waiting is hard. Waiting together is harder. And waiting together while things are still broken between you can feel like the longest and loneliest stretch of road you have ever walked. This exercise is about building something to stand on while you wait.

Each of you is going to spend some time alone first. Get a piece of paper or open a notes app and do this one thing.

Write down every time God came through for you. Not just in your marriage. In your whole life. The moment that seemed impossible and then it was not. The door that opened when everything else was closed. The provision that showed up at exactly the right time. The relationship that got restored when you had given up on it. The version of yourself you thought was gone for good that came back stronger.

Write as many as you can remember. Take your time. This list is your evidence.

Now come together and take turns reading your lists out loud to each other.

When you are both done answer these questions together.

**Question one:** Based on everything we just heard what does God's track record tell us about whether He can be trusted with what we are waiting for right now?

**Question two:** Is there a specific promise from God's Word that we are choosing to stand on together for our marriage during this season? If not can we find one tonight and write it down somewhere we will both see it every day?

**Question three:** What is one way we can actively encourage each other's faith during this waiting season instead of letting the wait make us both smaller?

After you have answered all three questions write your promise down together. Both of you sign it. Put it somewhere visible. On the bathroom mirror. On the fridge. On the dashboard of your car.

You are not waiting passively. You are waiting with your eyes open and your hands full of evidence that God has never once failed you yet.

He is not about to start now.

## WHEN YOU NEED TO CHOOSE LOVE ON PURPOSE

WHEN THE FEELINGS HAVE NOT SHOWN UP YET AND YOU HAVE TO DECIDE TO LOVE BEFORE THEY DO

*Let all that you do be done with love.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 16:14**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT CHOOSING LOVE IS FULFILLING SOMETHING MUCH BIGGER THAN YOUR MARRIAGE

*Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.*

**ROMANS 13:8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO WALK IN LOVE THE WAY CHRIST WALKED IN IT, WHICH MEANS GOING FIRST

*And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*

**EPHESIANS 5:2**

WHEN LOVE NEEDS TO BE A DECISION TODAY AND NOT A FEELING YOU ARE WAITING ON

*Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.*

**ROMANS 12:9**

WHEN YOUR SPOUSE NEEDS YOU TO DO GOOD FOR THEM AND NOT EVIL ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE

*She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.*

**PROVERBS 31:12**

WHEN YOU NEED TO CHOOSE LOVE FOR YOUR SPOUSE THE SAME WAY YOU CHOOSE IT FOR YOURSELF

*"And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*

**MARK 12:31**

WHEN YOU NEED TO LOVE WITH GENTLENESS AND NOT JUST WITH INTENTION

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*

**GALATIANS 5:22-23**

WHEN HUSBANDS NEED A CLEAR PICTURE OF WHAT CHOOSING LOVE LOOKS LIKE FOR THEM

*Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

**EPHESIANS 5:33**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT CHOOSING TO LOVE YOUR SPOUSE IS CHOOSING TO LET GOD ABIDE IN YOUR HOME

*No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.*

**1 JOHN 4:12**

WHEN YOU NEED TO LOVE YOUR SPOUSE WITH A LOVE THAT DOES NOT CONTRADICT WHAT YOU CLAIM TO BELIEVE

*If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?*

**1 JOHN 4:20**

WHEN YOU NEED TO OPEN YOUR MOUTH WITH WISDOM AND KINDNESS INSTEAD OF WITH WHATEVER COMES NATURALLY

*She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness.*

**PROVERBS 31:26**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT LOVE IS THE GREATEST THING AND IT IS STILL AVAILABLE TO YOUR MARRIAGE

*And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:13**

WHEN YOU NEED LOVE TO BE MORE THAN A FEELING AND LESS THAN A PERFORMANCE

*"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."*

**JOHN 15:12**

WHEN ALL OF YOUR LAW AND ALL OF YOUR EFFORT NEEDS TO BE POINTED IN ONE DIRECTION

*For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

**GALATIANS 5:14**

WHEN YOU NEED STRENGTH AND HONOR TO BE WHAT YOU ARE KNOWN FOR IN THIS MARRIAGE

*Strength and honor are her clothing; she shall rejoice in time to come.*

**PROVERBS 31:25**

WHEN LOVE NEEDS TO COVER WHAT YOUR FEELINGS  
WANT TO EXPOSE TODAY

*And above all things have fervent love for one  
another, for love will cover a multitude of sins.*

**1 PETER 4:8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO CHOOSE YOUR SPOUSE AGAIN  
TODAY THE WAY GOD CHOSE YOU

*"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and  
appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that  
your fruit should remain."*

**JOHN 15:16**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE CHOOSING LOVE ON PURPOSE

*Lord, love is easier to talk about than it is to do. And today I need Your help to do it. Help me to choose my spouse on purpose today. Not because everything is perfect or because I feel like it or because they have earned it. But because You are love and You live in me and that means I have access to something my natural self does not. Help me to do one thing today that says to my spouse that I chose them. One small act of love that is not about my feelings but about my commitment. And do the same work in them. Let us be a couple who keeps choosing each other not because it is always easy but because the God who chose us first made it possible.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*What is one specific and practical thing you could do for your spouse in the next twenty-four hours that would communicate love without any words, and what is stopping you from doing it right now?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Love Language Audit*

Most couples have heard of love languages. Fewer couples actually use that knowledge consistently and intentionally in their marriage. This exercise is about closing the gap between knowing how your spouse receives love and actually doing it on purpose every single day.

Each of you answers these questions privately first and writes your answers down.

**Question one:** How do I most naturally give love to my spouse and is that actually the way they most need to receive it or am I loving them in the language that is most comfortable for me?

**Question two:** When do I feel most loved by my spouse? What specific things do they do that make me feel genuinely chosen and valued? Name three specific moments from the last year where you felt it most clearly.

**Question three:** When do I feel least loved? Not to weaponize it but to name it honestly. What is the thing my spouse does or does not do that consistently leaves me feeling like an afterthought?

Now come together and share your answers. When your spouse tells you what makes them feel most loved write it down. When they tell you what makes them feel least loved write that down too. These are not complaints. They are instructions. Treat them like the gift they are.

When you are both done each of you makes a thirty-day commitment out loud. One specific and practical thing you will do every single day for the next thirty days to love your spouse in the way they actually need to be loved.

Not when you feel like it. Every day.

Put it in your phone as a daily reminder if you need to. Tell a trusted friend what you committed to so you stay accountable. Check in with each other at the end of the thirty days and talk about what changed.

Love is a decision you make before it is a feeling you experience. You already know what your spouse needs. Now go be the person who gives it to them.

## WHEN YOU ARE REBUILDING AFTER A CRISIS

WHEN THE CRISIS HAS PASSED AND NOW COMES THE  
SLOWER AND HARDER WORK OF PUTTING THINGS BACK  
TOGETHER

*"Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt."*

**JEREMIAH 31:4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT WHAT IS BEING  
REBUILT CAN BE GREATER THAN WHAT WAS THERE  
BEFORE

*"The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than  
the former," says the LORD of hosts.*

**HAGGAI 2:9**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KEEP WORKING EVEN WHEN  
THE REBUILDING IS SLOW AND DISCOURAGING

*"Yet now be strong and work; for I am with you," says  
the LORD of hosts. "So My Spirit remains among you; do  
not fear."*

**HAGGAI 2:4-5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS IN THE  
BUSINESS OF MAKING SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL OUT OF  
RUINS

*Those from among you shall build the old waste  
places; you shall raise up the foundations of many  
generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the  
Breach.*

**ISAIAH 58:12**

WHEN WHAT THE ENEMY MEANT TO DESTROY GOD  
IS ALREADY TURNING FOR GOOD

*But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good.*

**GENESIS 50:20**

WHEN THE FOUNDATION YOU ARE REBUILDING ON  
NEEDS TO BE STRONGER THAN THE ONE YOU HAD  
BEFORE

*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**ROMANS 5:1**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO RESTORE YOUR SOUL IN  
THE MIDDLE OF THE REBUILDING

*He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.*

**PSALM 23:3**

WHEN THE FIRE OF THIS CRISIS IS PRODUCING  
SOMETHING IN BOTH OF YOU THAT COULD NOT HAVE  
COME ANY OTHER WAY

*That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

**1 PETER 1:7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD HAS GIVEN  
YOU THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION AND YOUR  
MARRIAGE IS PROOF OF IT

*God has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:18**

WHEN YOU NEED TO DECLARE THAT WHAT SEEMED DEAD IS COMING BACK TO LIFE

*I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.*

**PSALM 118:17**

WHEN MOURNING HAS BEEN YOUR DAILY COMPANION BUT YOU NEED TO KNOW DANCING IS COMING

*You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness.*

**PSALM 30:11**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD WILL RESTORE WHAT THE ENEMY STOLE AND ADD TO IT

*Return to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope. Even today I declare that I will restore double to you.*

**ZECHARIAH 9:12**

WHEN BOTH OF YOU HAVE FALLEN DOWN AND NEED TO KNOW YOU WILL RISE AGAIN

*Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me.*

**MICAH 7:8**

WHEN GOD BLOTTED OUT THE PAST AND YOU NEED TO STOP DIGGING IT BACK UP

*"I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."*

**ISAIAH 44:22**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT THE END OF YOUR  
STORY IS BETTER THAN THE BEGINNING

*Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more  
than his beginning.*

**JOB 42:12**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO REVIVE WHAT SEEMED  
PAST SAVING IN YOUR MARRIAGE

*Will You not revive us again, that Your people may  
rejoice in You?*

**PSALM 85:6**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO STRENGTHEN YOUR  
HANDS FOR THE REBUILDING THAT STILL LIES AHEAD

*You who have shown me great and severe troubles,  
shall revive me again, and bring me up again from the  
depths of the earth. You shall increase my greatness, and  
comfort me on every side.*

**PSALM 71:20-21**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE IN THE MIDDLE OF REBUILDING

*Lord, we are in the rebuilding season and some days it feels slower than we expected and harder than we prepared for. The crisis is behind us but the work is not done yet and we need You in this process just as much as we needed You in the storm. Strengthen our hands for what is still ahead. Keep us from losing heart when the progress feels invisible. Remind us that You are a God who restores double and that the latter end of this marriage can be more beautiful than the beginning. We are not building on our own strength. We are building on Yours. And we believe that what You build will stand.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*Rebuilding takes longer than breaking, and some days the slow pace of it can feel like failure. What would change in how you approach the work of rebuilding today if you believed that every small act of choosing your marriage is laying down a stone that God Himself is watching you place?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Blueprint*

When you rebuild a house after it has been damaged you do not just start throwing up walls and hoping for the best. You look at what the foundation is made of. You decide what was worth keeping and what needs to go. You make a plan. You build with intention. This exercise is about doing that for your marriage.

Each of you should answer these questions privately first and write down your answers.

**Question one:** Looking honestly at what our marriage was before the crisis what were the things that were genuinely strong and worth rebuilding on and what were the things that were already fragile long before everything fell apart?

**Question two:** What does the marriage I want to be living in five years from now actually look like? Not the one I had before. A better one. What is different about it?

**Question three:** What is the one thing I am most afraid of as we rebuild and have I told my spouse that fear or have I been carrying it alone?

Now come together and share your answers. When your spouse names what was fragile before the crisis resist the urge to defend it. They are not attacking the past. They are trying to build a better future. Let them.

When you are both done do this together.

Draw an actual blueprint. It does not have to be fancy. Get a piece of paper and write down three headings.

**What we are keeping. What we are leaving behind.  
What we are building new.**

Fill in each column together. Talk through every item. Disagree where you disagree and find the middle. This is your plan. It belongs to both of you.

When you are done pray over it together. Hand it to God and ask Him to be the architect of what comes next because what He builds does not fall down when the storms come back.

And they will come back. But this time you will be standing on something better than what you had before.

## WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO BE THE FOUNDATION

WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN BUILDING YOUR MARRIAGE  
ON EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE ONE THING THAT WILL  
HOLD

*"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and  
does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his  
house on the rock; and the rain descended, the floods  
came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it  
did not fall, for it was founded on the rock."*

**MATTHEW 7:24-25**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT JESUS HIMSELF IS  
THE ONLY CORNERSTONE YOUR MARRIAGE CAN SAFELY  
REST ON

*For no other foundation can anyone lay than that  
which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 3:11**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW WHAT GOD ACTUALLY  
REQUIRES OF YOU AS A COUPLE

*And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require  
of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His  
ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with  
all your heart and with all your soul?*

**DEUTERONOMY 10:12**

WHEN YOUR MARRIAGE NEEDS TO BE ROOTED IN CHRIST AND NOT JUST CONNECTED TO HIM OCCASIONALLY

*As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith.*

**COLOSSIANS 2:6-7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW WHAT WISE BUILDING IN A MARRIAGE ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE

*Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.*

**PROVERBS 24:3-4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD WANTS TO DWELL IN YOUR HOME AND NOT JUST VISIT IT

*"I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*

**2 CORINTHIANS 6:16**

WHEN THE FOUNDATIONS OF YOUR MARRIAGE HAVE BEEN SHAKEN AND YOU NEED TO KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT

*If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?*

**PSALM 11:3**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD'S WORD TO BE THE LAMP THAT GUIDES EVERY DECISION YOU MAKE AS A COUPLE

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

**PSALM 119:105**

WHEN YOU NEED TO HIDE GOD'S WORD IN YOUR HEART SO THAT IT SHAPES HOW YOU LOVE YOUR SPOUSE

*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.*

**PSALM 119:11**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BUILD TOGETHER AND NOT JUST LIVE TOGETHER

*The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands.*

**PROVERBS 14:1**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT APART FROM GOD YOUR MARRIAGE CANNOT PRODUCE WHAT HE DESIGNED IT TO PRODUCE

*"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."*

**JOHN 15:5**

WHEN YOU NEED TO TASTE AND SEE THAT GOD IS GOOD AND LET THAT TRUTH BE WHAT YOUR MARRIAGE IS BUILT ON

*Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.*

**PSALM 34:8**

WHEN YOU NEED TO MAKE PRAYER A DAILY PRACTICE IN YOUR MARRIAGE AND NOT JUST AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

**ACTS 2:42**

WHEN YOU NEED TO LET THE WORD OF CHRIST FILL  
YOUR HOME FROM THE INSIDE OUT

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom,  
teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and  
hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your  
hearts to the Lord.*

**COLOSSIANS 3:16**

WHEN YOU NEED TO DO EVERYTHING IN YOUR  
MARRIAGE IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the  
name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father  
through Him.*

**COLOSSIANS 3:17**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS NEAR TO  
THE COUPLE WHO CALLS ON HIM TOGETHER

*The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who  
call upon Him in truth.*

**PSALM 145:18**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT THOSE WHO TRUST  
IN GOD AS THEIR FOUNDATION CANNOT BE MOVED

*Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion,  
which cannot be moved, but abides forever.*

**PSALM 125:1**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE MAKING GOD THEIR FOUNDATION

*Lord, we want You to be more than a good luck charm for our marriage or the person we call when things fall apart. We want You to be the actual foundation. The thing everything else is built on. Help us to build our home on Your Word. Help us to pray together regularly and honestly and not just when there is a crisis. Help us to let Your presence be the thing people notice when they walk into our home. Forgive us for the seasons when we put You on the margins of our marriage and tried to run it ourselves. We know how that ends. We are coming back to the rock and we are asking You to hold what we are building. What You build will stand. We are trusting You with all of it.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*If someone watched every interaction in your home for one week without knowing anything about you, would they be able to tell that God is the foundation of your marriage, and if the answer makes you uncomfortable, what is one thing you could change starting today?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The House Rules*

Every family has rules. Most of them are unspoken and some of them were inherited from families you grew up in that had nothing to do with God. This exercise is about deciding together and with purpose what the actual rules of your house are going to be. Not by default, but by intentional choice.

Each of you answers these questions privately first and writes your answers down.

**Question one:** What are the spoken or unspoken rules that currently govern our home and our marriage and where did they come from? Are they rules we chose together or rules we inherited or rules that crept in without either of us noticing?

**Question two:** What does a home where God is genuinely the foundation actually look like in practical everyday terms? Not in theory. In the specific details of our specific life. What would be different about our mornings, our conversations, our conflicts, our priorities?

**Question three:** What is one spiritual practice that I believe would genuinely strengthen our marriage if we did it together consistently and have I ever asked my spouse to do it with me?

Now come together and share your answers. When you are both done do this together.

Write your house rules. The real ones. The ones you actually want governing your home. Keep it simple. Five to seven statements that reflect who you want to be as

a couple and as a family. Things like we pray before we make big decisions or we do not let the sun go down on an unresolved argument or we speak about each other with respect even when we are frustrated. We never criticize our spouse to others. We put our marriage before all others.

Write them down together. Both of you contribute. Both of you agree on every one.

Then do something with them. Frame them. Put them on the wall. Read them together every Sunday morning for the next month. Let them become the standard you hold each other to with grace and with love.

You are not just building a marriage. You are building a legacy. Make sure the foundation it is sitting on is one that will still be standing when your grandchildren walk through the door.

## WHEN YOU ARE LEARNING TO LOVE WELL

WHEN YOU REALIZE THAT LOVING YOUR SPOUSE WELL IS SOMETHING YOU GROW INTO AND NOT SOMETHING YOU ARRIVE AT

*And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent.*

**PHILIPPIANS 1:9-10**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD HIMSELF IS YOUR TEACHER WHEN IT COMES TO LOVING WELL

*But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.*

**1 THESSALONIANS 4:9**

WHEN LOVE NEEDS TO GROW IN YOU BEFORE IT CAN FLOW OUT OF YOU

*And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all.*

**1 THESSALONIANS 3:12**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE ROOTED SO DEEPLY IN GOD'S LOVE THAT IT BECOMES THE THING YOUR SPOUSE EXPERIENCES WHEN THEY EXPERIENCE YOU

*That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.*

**EPHESIANS 3:17-18**

WHEN LOVING WELL REQUIRES WISDOM AND ONLY  
GOD CAN GIVE YOU THE KIND YOU NEED

*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom,  
and in all your getting, get understanding.*

**PROVERBS 4:7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO COMMIT YOUR MARRIAGE TO  
GOD EVERY SINGLE DAY AND LET HIM ORDER YOUR  
STEPS IN IT

*Commit your works to the LORD, and your thoughts  
will be established.*

**PROVERBS 16:3**

WHEN YOU NEED MERCY TO BE SO WOVEN INTO  
WHO YOU ARE THAT YOUR SPOUSE FEELS IT WITHOUT  
YOU HAVING TO TRY

*Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them  
around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart,  
and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and  
man.*

**PROVERBS 3:3-4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT RULING YOUR  
OWN SPIRIT IS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL THINGS  
YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

*He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and  
he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.*

**PROVERBS 16:32**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BUILD LOVE ON TOP OF  
EVERYTHING ELSE YOU ARE GROWING IN

*Add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to  
knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to  
perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness,  
and to brotherly kindness love.*

**2 PETER 1:5-7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT LOVING WELL  
MEANS WALKING ACCORDING TO GOD'S DESIGN AND  
NOT YOUR OWN

*This is love, that we walk according to His  
commandments.*

**2 JOHN 1:6**

WHEN YOU NEED TO ASK GOD TO TEACH YOU THE  
WAY YOU SHOULD WALK IN YOUR MARRIAGE

*Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth;  
unite my heart to fear Your name.*

**PSALM 86:11**

WHEN YOU NEED PURE MOTIVES MORE THAN  
PERFECT PERFORMANCE IN HOW YOU LOVE YOUR  
SPOUSE

*"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."*

**MATTHEW 5:8**

WHEN YOU NEED GOD TO MAKE YOU COMPLETE  
AND AT PEACE SO THAT WHAT YOU BRING TO YOUR  
SPOUSE IS WHOLE

*Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of  
good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God  
of love and peace will be with you.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 13:11**

WHEN YOU NEED HIM TO TEACH YOU TO NUMBER  
YOUR DAYS SO THAT YOU DO NOT WASTE THE ONES YOU  
HAVE WITH YOUR SPOUSE

*So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a  
heart of wisdom.*

**PSALM 90:12**

WHEN YOU NEED TO ABIDE IN LOVE BECAUSE THAT IS WHERE GOD LIVES AND WHERE YOU WANT TO LIVE TOO

*And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.*

**1 JOHN 4:16**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT IF GOD SO LOVED YOU, YOU ARE OBLIGATED AND EQUIPPED TO LOVE YOUR SPOUSE

*Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

**1 JOHN 4:11**

WHEN YOU NEED TO DELIGHT IN DOING GOD'S WILL INSIDE YOUR MARRIAGE AND NOT JUST OUTSIDE OF IT

*I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart.*

**PSALM 40:8**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE LEARNING TO LOVE WELL

*Lord, we are not finished products and we never will be on this side of eternity. But we want to be people who are genuinely growing in how we love each other. Teach us. Not just with information but with transformation. Show us where we have been loving out of habit or obligation or fear instead of out of the overflow of what You have poured into us. Grow patience in us where we are still impatient. Grow gentleness where we are still rough. Grow generosity where we are still withholding. We want our love for each other to be a living picture of how You love us. That is a high standard and we cannot reach it in our own strength. But You are the one teaching us and that means we are going to get there. We commit to staying in the classroom for as long as it takes.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*If you asked your spouse to honestly tell you the one area where they wish you loved them better, do you already know what they would say, and what would it mean for your marriage if you decided to work on that one thing starting today?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Report Card*

Before you panic, this is not about grading each other. It is about giving each other the kind of honest loving feedback that helps you both grow. The kind a good coach gives. The kind a real friend gives. The kind that makes you better instead of just making you feel better.

Each of you answers these questions privately first and writes your answers down. Be honest. Be kind. Remember you are writing about someone you love.

**Question one:** What is the area where I have seen my spouse grow the most in how they love me over the course of our marriage? What specific change have I noticed that I have never fully acknowledged or celebrated out loud?

**Question two:** What is the one area where I believe my spouse is closest to a breakthrough in how they love me if they just kept leaning into it? Not a criticism. An encouragement. Where are they almost there?

**Question three:** What is the one area where I know I still have the most growing to do in how I love my spouse and what would it look like to actually make progress in that area this month?

Now come together and share your answers in this specific order.

Start with question one. Both of you share. Let the appreciation land before you move on. Do not rush past it.

Then share question two. Frame it as I believe in you **not** I need you to fix this. There is a world of difference between those two things and your spouse will feel it.

Then share question three. Go first yourself. Model the humility you want to see. When you are willing to name your own growing edge before asking your spouse about theirs everything changes in the room.

When you are both done ask each other one final question.

What is one thing I can do this week that would make you feel like I am genuinely trying to love you better?

Write down what they say. Do that thing. Not someday. This week.

Learning to love well is the work of a lifetime. But it is the best work there is. And the couple that keeps showing up for it keeps building something worth having.

You are still learning. That means you are still growing. And that is one of the most hopeful things about you.

## WHEN YOU ARE READY TO FIGHT FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

WHEN YOU HAVE DECIDED THAT THIS MARRIAGE IS  
WORTH FIGHTING FOR AND YOU NEED GOD TO ARM  
YOU FOR IT

*Blessed be the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands  
for war, and my fingers for battle.*

**PSALM 144:1**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT THE WEAPONS  
YOU ARE FIGHTING WITH ARE NOT THE ONES THE  
WORLD USES

*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but  
mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 10:4**

WHEN YOU NEED TO PUT ON EVERYTHING GOD HAS  
GIVEN YOU AND STAND

*Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you  
may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done  
all, to stand.*

**EPHESIANS 6:13**

WHEN YOU NEED COURAGE THAT IS NOT NATURAL  
BUT COMMANDED

*"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good  
courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD  
your God is with you wherever you go."*

**JOSHUA 1:9**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT THE BATTLE FOR  
YOUR MARRIAGE IS NOT YOURS ALONE TO FIGHT

*"Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great  
multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's."*

**2 CHRONICLES 20:15**

WHEN YOU NEED TO POSITION YOURSELF AND LET  
GOD DO WHAT ONLY HE CAN DO

*"You will not need to fight in this battle. Position  
yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD,  
who is with you."*

**2 CHRONICLES 20:17**

WHEN YOU NEED TO LAY ASIDE EVERYTHING THAT  
HAS BEEN SLOWING YOU DOWN AND RUN

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so  
great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight,  
and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run  
with endurance the race that is set before us, looking  
unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.*

**HEBREWS 12:1-2**

WHEN YOU NEED TO FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT AND  
HOLD ON TO WHAT IS REAL

*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life,  
to which you were also called.*

**1 TIMOTHY 6:12**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE STRONG IN THE LORD  
BECAUSE YOUR OWN STRENGTH WILL NOT BE ENOUGH  
FOR THIS

*It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my  
way perfect.*

**PSALM 18:32**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT NOTHING CAN  
SEPARATE YOUR MARRIAGE FROM THE LOVE OF GOD IF  
YOU HOLD ON TO HIM

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall  
tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or  
nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

**ROMANS 8:35**

WHEN YOUR HEART NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED  
FOR THE FIGHT AHEAD

*Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your  
heart, all you who hope in the LORD.*

**PSALM 31:24**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT WHAT YOU ARE  
BUILDING IN THIS MARRIAGE IS NOT IN VAIN

*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast,  
immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,  
knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 15:58**

WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW THE ENEMY IS  
OVERCOME AND CLAIM THAT VICTORY FOR YOUR  
MARRIAGE

*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and  
by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their  
lives to the death.*

**REVELATION 12:11**

WHEN YOU NEED TO FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS AND  
STOP LETTING WHAT IS BEHIND YOU DEFINE WHAT IS  
AHEAD

*For consider Him who endured such hostility from  
sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and  
discouraged in your souls.*

**HEBREWS 12:3**

WHEN YOU ARE APPROACHING THE END OF A LONG  
BATTLE AND NEED TO KNOW IT WAS WORTH IT

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race,  
I have kept the faith.*

**2 TIMOTHY 4:7**

WHEN YOU NEED TO STAND FAST IN THE LORD AND  
MEAN IT

*So stand fast in the Lord, beloved.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:1**

WHEN YOU NEED TO DECLARE TOGETHER THAT YOU  
ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS AND ACTUALLY BELIEVE  
IT

*Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors  
through Him who loved us.*

**ROMANS 8:37**

## A PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE READY TO FIGHT FOR THEIR MARRIAGE

*Lord, we are done giving ground to the enemy in our marriage. We are done letting fear and discouragement and past failures tell us what is possible. We are picking up the armor You have given us and we are planting our feet and we are standing. Not in our own strength because we have tried that and it is not enough. But in Yours. You trained our hands for this. You gave us the weapons. You promised to fight with us and for us and before us. So we are declaring today over our marriage that it belongs to You. What You joined together we are committed to protecting. We will fight for this with prayer and with honesty and with forgiveness and with daily choices to love each other well. We will not quit. And we will not lose because You are on our side.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **Question to meditate on:**

*When this chapter of your marriage is written and you look back on it years from now, what do you want to be able to say about how you fought for it, and what is one declaration you are willing to make to your spouse today that says you are still in this and you are not going anywhere?*

## DRAW CLOSER

### *The Declaration*

You made it to the last chapter. That is an accomplishment. It means something about who you are and what you believe about your marriage and I want you to sit with that for a second before you do anything else.

This final exercise is not a question and answer exercise. It is a declaration. It is the thing you say out loud together when you have decided that you are done letting the enemy have any more ground in your marriage and you are ready to take back what belongs to you.

Before you come together each of you spends time alone writing your personal declaration. Not a generic one. Yours personally. Specific to your marriage and your story and the battles you have actually fought to get here.

It starts with these words and then you finish it in your own voice.

*I choose this marriage. I choose this person. I am done letting fear and distance and old wounds and the enemy's lies have authority over what God joined together. Starting today I commit to...*

Write at least five specific commitments. Not vague ones. Real ones. The kind you can be held accountable to. The kind that will actually change something if you keep them.

Now come together. Sit facing each other. Take turns reading your declarations out loud. Look at each other when you do it. Let your spouse hear every word.

When you are both done hold hands and pray together. Let this prayer be the most honest one you have prayed together in a long time. Name what you are fighting for. Name what you are leaving behind. Name what you are trusting God with going forward.

Then do one final thing together.

Write a joint declaration. One paragraph. Both of your voices in it. Something that says this is who we are as a couple and this is what we stand for and this is the God we are standing with.

Sign it. Both of you. Date it.

Put it somewhere you will both see it every single day.

On the hard days it will remind you what you decided when you were clear-eyed and courageous and full of faith.

On the good days it will remind you what you are protecting.

And on the days when you forget why any of this even matters, read it out loud to each other and remember.

You chose this. You keep choosing this. And the God who brought you together is still fighting for what He started.

So are you. Hold on.

## CONCLUSION

Can I just stop for a second and say something to you?

You picked up this book. That matters. Whether you grabbed it because your marriage was falling apart or because you wanted to build something stronger before the cracks showed up, the fact that you are here, that you kept reading, that you brought the real stuff to God instead of burying it, that tells me everything I need to know about the kind of person you are.

Marriage is hard. Not sometimes hard. Not hard for people who did not marry the right person. Hard for everyone. Hard in ways nobody warned you about and hard in seasons you did not see coming. The couple who looks like they have it all together is fighting battles you cannot see. Every marriage has chapters that are not pretty. Every marriage needs God more than it needs good communication skills or date nights or the right advice. It needs a God who shows up in the middle of the mess and says I am still here and I am still working and I have not given up on what I started.

That is who you just spent this book with.

Every promise on these pages was written for the moment when you are too tired to pray anything original. For the night when you do not know how to keep going. For the morning when you wake up and choose your spouse again even though yesterday was hard. These are not just words. They are the living voice

of a God who designed your marriage before you did and who has been interceding for it every single day since.

So please do not put this book on a shelf and forget it. Keep it close. Dog ear the pages that wrecked you. Write in the margins. Come back to the chapter that says exactly what you needed to hear today and read it again next month when you need it again. Pray the prayers out loud. Let your spouse hear you fighting for your marriage in the place where it actually gets fought, on your knees, with God's Word in your mouth and your hands open.

I want to tell you something and I need you to actually hear it.

Your marriage is worth fighting for. Not because it is perfect. Not because it has been easy. But because God put His name on it when you said I do and He does not abandon the things that carry His name.

There will be days when love feels more like a decision than a feeling. Make the decision anyway. There will be seasons when your spouse feels more like a stranger than a partner. Stay curious anyway. There will be moments when forgiveness feels impossible. Ask God for the kind He gives, the kind that costs something and sets you free anyway.

You were not given an easy assignment. You were given a holy one.

Be encouraged. Be strengthened. Be the couple that refuses to quit.

And on the hardest days, hold on.

God is not done with your marriage yet. Not even close.



If this book has encouraged you, a brief review on Amazon helps it find the women who need it most.

To find more of Graces books or leave a review visit <https://GraceStJames/reviews>