

Guarding the Doors #7

Monday

Who Defines Your View and of Intimacy? The World or God's Word?

There is a pull from the world that seeks to mold and shape us into its image. Have you felt it? The Scriptures are clear that as Believers, we are to "*be in the world but not of the world.*" The enemy of the cross, Satan, continually offers us counterfeit ways of doing life. He seeks to move us away from godly thinking at every point.

Intimacy is one area he specializes in seeking to derail our relationships with God, spouses, children, parents and friends. The Apostle Paul addresses this battle for our allegiance in *Romans 12:1, 2*. "*1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God---this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is---His good, pleasing and perfect will.*"

In *verse 1*, Paul urges in the strongest language to totally surrender our entire person, body mind and spirit, to God. In *verse 2*, Paul recognizes Satan's involvement in the world system to squeeze us into its mold. More importantly, he recognizes that we have a choice in the matter! Then he tells us how to "*be transformed.*" He says, "*by the renewing of your mind.*" That renewing process takes place as we study the Word of God allowing the Holy Spirit to use it to cleanse our minds and to help us understand what God's perspective is on whatever the subject happens to be. He finishes the verse off with assuring us that once our mind is renewed we will be able to discern the will of God.

In this world today, we must learn how to "think Christian." This is exactly what Paul is addressing in these verses. If we will surrender and "*be transformed by the renewing of your mind,*" then we will have a correct view on what true intimacy is and not fall victim to the schemes of our enemy.

Tuesday

God, Intimacy and You!

The key word for the week is INTIMACY. *The Webster's New World College Dictionary* defines the root word intimate for us: "1 pertaining to the inmost character of a thing; fundamental [the intimate structure of the atom] 2 most private or personal [his intimate feelings] 3 closely acquainted or associated; very familiar [an intimate friend] 4 promoting a feeling of privacy, coziness, romance, etc. 5 a) resulting from careful study or investigation; b) very close [intimate acquaintance with the facts]..." It is interesting that as we read this definition we are reminded what intimacy is not. For example, we can not be intimate with a person that we hardly know anything about or spend time

with. We may know who they are, but we don't know them. We lack true intimacy with them.

How intimate is God with you? Does He know you? Is He very familiar with you? Scripture answers that question for us in a variety of places. *Psalm 139:13-16* tells us: "*13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, 16 your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*" Think about that. Before our parents knew us, God knew us! Before today got here, God knew about it and that we would be here! In fact, God knows us so well that He knows what is best for us as individuals. Look at *Psalm 16:11*: "*You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*" God is saying that He is the giver of what is right for you! That is because He knows you. He created you. He has studied you. He has an intimate acquaintance with the facts about you. In short, God is intimate with you.

Let's redirect the focus now. How intimate are you with God? Do you know Him? Have you studied Him? Do you know His character? Do you know His passions? Do you know what pleases Him? Do you spend time with Him in prayer, listening? Do you spend time in His love letter to you, the Bible?

Intimacy with God has a way of softening our hearts so that we can afford to be intimate with others. Don't miss out on becoming intimate with the only one that is truly, perfectly, intimate with you!

Wednesday

Intimacy and Marriage

"*The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."* (*Gen. 2:18*) What an interesting change of events recorded for us in the Creation Story. There were three basic creations: 1) *Gen. 1:1*, The Heavens and Earth; 2) *Gen. 1:20*, Somatic or living creatures in water and birds; and 3) *Gen. 1:26, 27*, Man in the "Image of God." After each of the first two creations God said, in some form, "*It is good.*" But after He created man He states that "*It is not good...*" Imagine the significance of this statement. Adam is in a perfect environment. Sin has not touched the face of the earth. Adam walks with God in a way that we don't. And yet, "*It is not good...*" But the reason is found in the second half of the sentence: "*It is not good for the man to be alone.*" What this tells us is that God created Adam with the emotional capacity and need to be intimate with another of his own kind. And so, God created Eve. The significance of Eve's creation was not lost on Adam. He sees her for the first time and pronounces the world's first love song: *Gen. 2:23* "*This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man.*" Adam was saying, "*At last, I have someone corresponding to me!*" "*Bone of my bones,*

and flesh of my flesh,” became a favorite Old Testament saying to describe an intimate, personal relationship.

Intimacy and marriage go hand in hand. If you are married and intimacy is lacking in your marriage, you and your marriage are in trouble. You can be sure that God wants you to seek help in restoring intimacy with your spouse. Your emotional stability may rest on it.

Thursday

Intimacy Preparation in Marriage!

“24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Gen. 2:24) Once God cared for Adam’s problem of aloneness, He inserted how to ignite an Intimacy Action Plan for generations to come. Notice that the command to *leave and cleave* is directed to the man. Men are to lead by example and their first assignment in marriage is a commitment to give themselves away to their wife. Of course, the wife is to follow that example and give herself away to her husband. In a very practical sense, verse 24 tells us that whatever is important to you in this life should be less important than your marriage.

As you evaluate your marriage, allow the Holy Spirit to survey your heart and challenge you on what place your marriage holds on your list of “what’s important in life to you.” Remember, the groundwork must be laid in order for intimacy to take hold.

Friday

Marriage, Intimacy, Action!

“The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.” (Gen. 2:25) It is within the “Emotional DNA” of man to be intimate. Intimacy is not necessarily a want always, but it is a need. That is, if you are going to be everything that God created you to be! It is true that there are some individuals in this world, due to horrendous circumstances in their lives, seek to withdraw from human intimate contact in order to protect their hearts from further damage. But it must be recognized that even in these cases, where intimacy is not wanted, the need still exists buried under a mountain of pain and fear. We are wired up for intimacy.

As we dissect *Gen. 2:25* we find very interesting truth to consider. *“The man and his wife were both naked...”* The phrase represents openness in every way---feelings, emotions, thoughts, questions, fears, etc. It is the idea that just as they stood there naked, hiding nothing, exposing all, so emotionally they stood there completely naked. This is where Adam’s problem of aloneness is cared for. This is the avenue that God has designed for the majority of humanity to be able to be known. This marriage relationship becomes the human sanctuary where we can BE. Where we can be vulnerable and think and feel out loud.

However, this is all predicated on the later half of the verse: "...and they felt no shame." As long as the marital bond remains a safe place to be known, openness abounds. But if ever a sense of shame is felt by way of verbal or non-verbal communication, the offended partner's spirit recoils and closes up. Intimacy is interrupted and the problem of aloneness is resurrected.

Allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart. Have you offended your spouse and shut down intimacy within your marriage? Or, has your spouse offended you and shut down intimacy? Either way, maybe it's time to have a heart to heart with your spouse.

Saturday

Creating Family Intimacy!

"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21). Marriage and Family was God's idea! He created it to address specific needs and to perform specific functions. In fact, as the Apostle Paul addresses the role of the man and women within the bounds of marriage in Ephesians 5:21-33 he states that *"³² This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church."* Wow! Our marriages go far beyond the superficial "Hollywood" examples our children see paraded in front of them daily in movies and on television.

As you read down through this Ephesians passage it becomes abundantly clear that unless intimacy reigns in our marriages, our roles of mutual submission, wives submitting and respecting their husbands and husbands loving their wives as Christ loved the church are doomed! And if that happens, then our children are left not only watching superficial "Hollywood" examples of marriages in the media but living in the middle of one! God forbid!

Children have the same need for intimacy that adults have. And God has created the family so that children can grow up in a system that promotes expression of feelings, thoughts, questions and all manner of emotions. As parents, we have been given the responsibility to model marriages that align with scripture so that our children will not leave the nest confused as to how to set up their own marriages. As parent's model intimacy with each other and with their children, children feel secure and know how to express and receive intimacy.

Remember, to be the best father you can be is to be the best husband you can be. To be the best mother you can be is to be the best wife you can be. Children thrive in an environment where a husband and wife know how to be intimate with each other.