

# Marriage Enrichment (2) Him vs. Her (1)

*Marriage Enrichment*

By Rev. Arnoud T. Vergunst

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** 1 Peter 3:7

**Preached on:** Wednesday, March 28, 2018

## **Netherlands Reformed Congregation**

W10890 Dead End Street

Waupun, WI 53963

USA

**Website:** [www.nrcwaupun.org](http://www.nrcwaupun.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/atvergunst](http://www.sermonaudio.com/atvergunst)

Well, I appreciate you being here on time. That's important. Somehow we can get Waupun people to be on time, and that's really awesome. So we sing first. We do it a capella. Oh, a piano, there you go.

Does anyone have a psalter to suggest? 246. 1 and 2, 1, 2, 3? All three. 246, 1, 2 and 3.

"O teach Thou us to count our days,  
And set our hearts on wisdom's ways;  
Turn, Lord, to us in our distress  
In pity now Thy servants bless;  
Let mercy's dawn dispel our night,  
And all our day with joy be bright,  
And all our day with joy be bright.

O send the day of joy and light,  
For long has been our sorrow's night;  
Afflicted through the weary years,  
We wait until Thy help appears;  
From age to age with us abide;  
In us let God be glorified,  
In us let God be glorified.

So let there be on us bestowed  
The beauty of the Lord our God;  
The work accomplished by our hand  
Establish Thou, and make it stand;  
Yea, let our hopeful labor be  
Established evermore by thee.  
Established evermore by thee."

I'd like to read with you two passages from the Scripture that will tie in with our subject tonight. The first one is 1 Peter 3, and just verse 7 tonight. First that it is mainly directed to us, husbands,

7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

And then let us turn to Revelation 2 and that brings us to the letter to the Ephesians that Jesus wrote and I'll just try to read the first five verses, really.

1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Just so far because it's only part of that is significant for our subject tonight.

So we together pray first?

*Lord, as we sang together, so let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, upon us personally, upon us as a couple in our marriage life, upon us as a family, and O gracious God, we pray therefore that thou in mercy would pour out thy Spirit within us and upon us and upon our seed that we may indeed be families in which godliness may flourish and embrace the love and the beauty of love may be practiced and seen, may nourish and strengthen each of us personally. And great Lord, we pray therefore also that as we this evening consider another little aspect of this journey in marriage together, that thou would give us the thoughts that we may share and gather this evening may also become for us as couples and marriages to be a strength and a source of inspiration or a learning curve, perhaps, for some of us who may be struggling in some areas like this. So we pray for those here, we pray for those listening at home and wherever they may be, and ask thee, Lord, that thy blessing may rest upon these efforts for they glory and kingdom name's sake. We pray in Jesus' name alone. Amen.*

Well, thank you for joining us tonight again. Mind you, that if you have a question to send me, you can do that via your phone from here or from wherever you are at home. So I received a couple of emails or text messages after the fact last time, there were no questions, there were just comments so from those who were listening elsewhere. So if you don't have my phone number with you, then here it is, 920-791-1327. Of course, it

does mean you need a pen if you don't have one. So I'll repeat it again, especially for those at home, 920-791-1327.

So welcome again tonight. I appreciate your coming here and some it's more easy, of course, to sit at home and listen at home, but it's also nice to have some people to look at and so I appreciate that, that you are here this evening.

Now remember that the key to marriage enrichment is not being here. What is the key? It's doing some of the assignments or the discussions afterwards and evaluate your own marriage life by what I have shared with you. So the key to the enrichment is the doing afterwards and I hope you took the time last time to look at some of the assignments that I shared with you on the outline.

So let's again go tonight. My key text tonight is the one on your outline.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And that's where my subject is tonight, him versus her and we will spend a couple of evenings on this subject to really explore that a little bit more than what I can do tonight and for some of that, of course, is perhaps well-known, some of it is perhaps not so well-known.

So what happened to our first love of those premarriage and early marriage days? You notice that in Ephesians 5:1, sorry, in Revelation 2 when God speaks to the Ephesian church he says, "I have one thing that I'm missing in your relationship with me. You do all the right things, you do all the right doctrines, but that glow of that first love has died down." So that's why I wrote that, read that passage; there is really nothing to do more than the reference that there is a first love that we all have known and I hope you all still know. It is not necessarily true that what you saw and say, "Ah, that first love, that's only for the honeymoon state. You know, once things settle down, that first love is going to be over." That's maybe the fact but that's not necessarily needed to be that way otherwise God would not imply in Revelation 2, "I am missing that first love."

You know, when we think about our early dating days, your feelings ran high, romantic feelings were very intense, you found the other half irresistible, and if you think back on your dating time, you were making sacrifices all the time to please each other and I wonder if you look back today compared to then, whether that's still the case. We all know that and I bring this to my thought when I wrote some of these things. Sometimes women are joining men on their hunting trips in their dating period even though they hate hunting, and after marriage say, "No, I'm not hunting. I don't like hunting, never liked it." But you did it. Sometimes men pretend they like shopping with her and they spend hours shopping in those times when we're dating but after marriage, "No, you can go shop on your own. That's not for me." You see, we all recognize some of these things, right? We were able to adjust our sleeping patterns in those days majorly. We'd stay awake for

hours at night listening or talking, and now we fall asleep or we set the phone off to the side, even worse, James.

So in the early days we put up with all kinds of inconveniences somehow, sacrifices, self-denial, and that's what we define the first love, don't we? And then the marriage day came and, of course, we intend to keep it all up like that, we are sincerely committing ourselves to sacred vows to keep this journey of marriage love going and that's how we all start and you expect it only to get better, to find out that that actually is not quite so easy when the challenges of life come and the realism is kicking in. So what happened to our first love of our premarriage and early marriage days?

Now I'm 22 years married. Boy, I had that right. So I need to ask myself if I now think about 22 years back when I started my marriage to Michelle, am I having still that same first love that was there or has that just given place to the, you know, we'll just live as we are but the glow is gone? And that should not be the case. As a matter of fact, I should have more love and more glow, more romantic feelings for my wife after these 22 years of journeying together. By the way, that is the case. I'm not going to lie about it.

So what is the secrets of this ongoing romantic relationship of love and marriage? And I'm starting with this romantic relationship for a moment because that we can all really identify with. What are the secrets of keeping that indeed going? Because, believe it or not, that romantic feeling between us as husband and wife really is the fuel. If that's missing, things become commonplace and we lose the excitement and the beauty of what God has instituted in marriage life.

So the first secret is simply this, it's education. We read the text again that we just read in our opening, 1 Peter 3:7, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." Knowledge, Peter says. Notice that, dwell with them according to knowledge, not according to feelings. Now you say, "You wanted to talk about feelings, pastor, romantic feelings, it's feelings, right?" Yeah, and yet it begins with knowledge. Knowledge is, of course, not the same as feelings. This knowledge does not come naturally. That's what Peter says, "Husbands, learn, learn and dwell with them according to knowledge." You've got to learn this. This knowledge that we need in order to live with our spouse is also not written nicely in a little pamphlet somewhere that came along with our wife, did it? "Here are the directions of me." Sometimes our spouse and sometimes we as husbands or as a wife, we don't really even know what we exactly need as we grow up in our relationship with marriage.

So the second thing that I want to point out in this verse is, husbands, we are the main responsible party in the joy and in the quality and in the satisfaction and the richness of the marriage life. I have over the years of my counseling experience, I come across that truth more and more. Sure, not all the wives are perfect, none of them are, but if we as men really live out what God says we are to be, I think we would see dramatic changes in our marriages and in the contentment and the joy and willingness, even, of our spouses to take the position that God has given them. I mean, who would object to having a husband

who was Christ-like and who lives for her and sacrifices himself for her? So, again, brothers in our midst, your task as husbands is so vital.

Now notice that Peter says that if we are not living according to knowledge and giving honor unto the wife, considering her as a weaker vessel, we'll have to define that later, there is going to be something happening to your marriage. The grace of life is hindered and your prayer life is hindered. Now that is the last station. There are a lot of stations ahead of that. The spiritual bond between husband and wife is the deepest and the closest bond. So Peter is jumping to the end of all the results of not living together. What's also going to be affected is our emotional life, is our physical life, is our sexual life, is our social life, and eventually he comes to the last one, your prayer life, your spiritual life. If we as husband and wife do not live together, every aspect of our marriage life is going to be affected and if you think back on your own life, yes, you can probably see that.

Now the questions, then: how come that these romantic feelings cool down so quickly and can even emerge into anger feeling flashpoints? This is a question I think that sometimes you may yourself have experienced. "How come that I can have lost some of these feelings and instead become so quickly irritated with my spouse? I never was like that when I was dating her. I could put up with her or with him in those days and now I can't and it seems like these romantic feelings that I used to have are not there anymore." And that is a struggle, friends, because if we are having our marriage life and we are missing this romantic feeling, what are you missing? You're missing the fire in your relationship. You're missing the joy. You live together but you miss out the depth of it.

So the answer, really, now this question is mostly due to ignorance. If you look at the text on the top of the outline again. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Now ignorance of that statement is really often the reason why we lose that romantic feeling that we used to have when we were in our very early stages of our marriage or right before it. So, friends, it is not necessarily that you are pushing the wrong buttons on each other that causes friction to arise between a husband and a wife, more accurately it is that you don't realize there are certain buttons to push, or to say it in a different way, there are certain specific needs that you and I need to fill in each other for that romantic feeling to continue to live on and to grow deeper and to grow more and more. There are often unspoken and perhaps unconscious need in your spouse that need attention, that need your attention whoever you are, that you need to fill and if they are not filled, it's where often the stress and the strain is entering into the marriage relationship where we lose that romantic feeling.

So let's look at that text. I never noticed that myself until some years ago. When God says he created them, he created them male and female. I looked it up today again in the Hebrew. He doesn't say he created man and woman. That's two different words in the Hebrew. Of course, man and woman is used but here he says he created male and female. Masculinity. Femininity. He created, he designed uniquely each of us to be entirely different creatures, both in the image of God, but completely different in our creation, and it is baffling to me why we ask young people to go for three weeks to driver's training and we give them all the lessons on the road before we let them drive the car, we

spend years teaching our young people to become an engineer or to become a doctor, right, or to become a lineman or whatever you want to be, and yet we let young people, and yourself might be one of those, jump into the marriage without any proper education. How many of you did have premarital instruction, other than you two? Oh, you did too. Yeah, right. But most of them don't and all the couples, nah, they have never heard of it or maybe an hour with the minister, right, just to talk a little bit about the form and that's a wonderful effort but really that's far from sufficient. We spend zero time teaching them the depth of this God-created male and female.

So the difference, friends, between you and me as male and female is far more than biology, it's far more than muscle mass, body shape or size or feel. Those are the obvious differences that we all know as males and females. In other words, the differences are far more than sights and sounds and looks and lines. What is it then? What's the difference? There is an incredible internal wiring difference between you and me, I mean between a male and a female. It's quiz time. What's here? What's the way to a man's heart? The dinner table. I asked my wife and she hasn't answered it yet, what is the way to a woman's heart?

"[unintelligible]."

Huh? Well, it's quiz time now so go for it, men, or actually we should ask the women. What is the way to the women's heart? Now maybe they don't even know themselves how to answer that.

"[unintelligible]."

Yeah, we're listening. You notice that's not so easy to answer but there's an obvious difference. You're not saying the dinner table.

"[unintelligible]."

Simply putting in the effort to try to figure them out, now that is a really beautiful statement. What's the difference? Why do women talk so much when they are struggling while men talk less when they're having issues on their minds? Right? You know, you have learned that difference, right? When women are having an issue, they talk forever it seems, and when men have something on their minds, they go in their cave, they don't talk. They resolve it themselves. Why are women allowed to use certain words quite abundantly like "never" and "ever" and "always," and that kind of stuff and we men, we jump on those words and we say, "That's not true. It's not always." But they do, they use those words all the time and it's an entire wiring difference. Yeah, you all know the answer to this, of course, what turns on the sexual biology of a male and what turns on the sexual biology of a female? Widely different ways in which God has wired us.

You see, that's what God says, he created male and female, masculinity and femininity. These differences we need to be aware of if you want to keep this romantic feeling between you both burning up and on and on unto the rest of your marriage life. Why do

women want more to feel, "I cherish you. You're my star." They want to be held and caressed gently but sexless, that means not looking for sex, just to be held, to be caressed, to be gently loved, while men want to hear, you know, "I need you," or "I admire you," or "I respect you." You see, it's a whole different way how males and females work and that's because the Creator made us different that way.

How about this one, why do women count different than men? When you say, "I love you" to your wife and you buy her flowers and you buy a new stove or you her a new car or you take her on vacation, you get one point for every one of those things, and you can say 10 times "I love you," it's 10 times one point, but for we men, we don't count that way. If you say "I love you," it's one, if you give us a truck, you got a million points, right? We count so different. Why is that? Because it's just the way God created us. You as a female, and I as a male, are differently wired.

Now I can go on like this for a little while, which I won't now. Just explore this thought for a moment with you, if I therefore am not keyed in to these differences that God created us with and I will not connect together, what will happen? Well, you can imagine. So to keep the marriage flying high and climb higher after the initial take-off, you need to know how to fuel on in midair, don't you? We need to know what we need to do to keep the fire, fire going. We need to know what dials and gauges to watch. So how do you read each other? What is the other person really saying to me? What is the message I am getting? And she and I will be sitting in the airplane and I saw the pilot sitting there again this week, all these gauges and dials and levers and so on, and obviously he's having to keep his eye on all of those things at the same time, I don't know how he does it, but that tells him something, but are you able to read your wife this way or your husband? If I can't read her or him, then something is going to go wrong in our flight.

So secondly, the second great secret, friends, is to get rid of the wrong education. Wrong education is actually more harmful than the lack of education. What do I mean about wrong education? I said something about it the last time, that some of you for years have been exposed to very toxic influences. Each one of you will have to look at your own situation but as we grow up in our own families or extended families, we've been exposed to toxic influences of dysfunctionality or behavioral patterns or examples of our parents or lack of examples of our parents, and that's worse than no education and that is a real hindrance to this romantic love to keep on flourishing because you know that once the rubber hits the road and you begin to settle into your marriage life, these feelings don't, they're not enough, these initial feelings are not enough to conquer the battles ahead.

So awareness again today. It is tough to have an empty toolbox but it is tougher when we have the wrong tools in the toolbox plus when we have been taught by example, again the only training, of course, that we've had that we use the wrong tools. Imagine I have a leaking gas line and I only have a blowtorch in my toolbox, would that be a good idea? No, but I don't have any tools so I might as well use it, right? So that scenario says it, right? If I have trouble in my marriage and I don't know how to handle it, I can only take out of my toolbox what I have taken into my toolbox when I grew up and those things don't work.

So that's the second reason why we need to know the real secret. Now the third and I think the greatest secret of marriage happiness is regeneration. I'm keenly aware of the fact that the best education doesn't remedy our evil hearts. Nothing so destroys the marriage or douses romantic love than actions that flow out of the toolbox of a selfish, idolatrous and a thoughtless heart. In the work I do, friends, with the counseling work, I see this over and over and over again. Ultimately when there is no grace in the heart, it's hard to keep any marriage on the high pitch that God intended it to be because when idolatry takes over and selfishness takes over and hardness takes over, yeah, anything that's beautiful is going to be destroyed. Without us being united to Christ and without us having Christ living in our heart, we will never experience the absolute beauty and fullness and satisfaction of what marriage was meant to give by the grace of our Designer. So if you're missing Christ, then today you need to begin to seek him again for that. You need to begin to acknowledge that in your own personal life. That is now falling outside of the subject this evening but it is extremely important that we would seek Jesus in our life.

Now the topic tonight about this him versus her, before we look at some differences I want to look at the similarity and what is the similarity between him and her is we all have an inner need or an hunger for love and marriage was designed to give and to receive this love. We all know that our babies and our children need love. There are extraordinary examples known in history of children dying simply because they were not given love. They were totally healthy, they're fed but they're not loved and not cuddled and not held, and they died just because of that. So the Creator knows that we need love. We need the cuddles. We need the nurturing of a loving tender interaction with others. Now marriages also crumble, marriages need love. They need that constantly. They need that repeatedly. There is never a moment in a marriage when love is beyond need, yeah? So we need love and the marriage relationship was designed by God to supply this love.

Now in marriage, there are two types of love and we'll look at them briefly for a moment tonight in relationship to each other. We have the romantic feeling love, I started with that tonight, but we also have another love, it's called the caring love, and you need to look at those for a moment tonight with me and see how they're interrelated.

The romantic feeling love is the feeling of being in love; that's finding the other person so irresistible you want to spend time with him or her, you want to do all the things you want to do for him or her like we did in our dating; we'll do things that we don't even feel like doing perhaps because our romantic feelings are so inflamed. That is the emotional feeling we feel in our brain and in our stomach. Now I do not believe that that romantic love needs to end in any marriage relationship. If it is, there's something amiss. If there is no romantic love, then there needs to be something done to rekindle that because that is the secret. If that romantic love is not there in your relationship, then you're missing this flame.

Now that leads to the second kind of love, that's caring love. Right away romantic love cannot be commanded, right? It's a feeling. You can't command a feeling. I cannot generate romantic feelings by command. They are generated, as you think back on, think



back on your time, now how did the romantic love between you both start? Well, love at first sight, some people say. Now that may be the case but it is actually as you listened and as you learned and as you shared and as you did things together that love, that romantic love began to glow and to begin to grow, and all the way to the marriage day and then it goes downhill, it seems like it for many.

So let's look at caring love. Caring love is the love in which you decide to act in love despite a lack of loving feelings. In the Bible it's called agape love. It is the highest form of love. It's a love that is not anything to do with your feelings, it could actually be contrary to your feelings. Caring love is a love in which you act in such a way with the purpose to make your spouse happy no matter how you feel about it. Your purpose is, "I want to make my spouse happy and this is what I am going to do to do that." So this may be contrary to your feelings and I want you to think about that, that's how God loves. God feels angry with the wicked every day, he feels angry and what does he do to the wicked every day? Shines the sun. Sends the rain. Does good things. Steps over his feelings in order to show care, providential care. So are we to. If you want to keep the flame of romantic love going, you need to start looking at caring love.

So to be aware of these two is critical. It is the romantic love feelings, it is the flame and the joy of your marriage. That's the excitement of the marriage. It is the caring love that is the fuel to these romantic feelings. If the caring love is not there, then your romantic feelings are going to die down along with it as well.

Question here, you say, "Pastor, I am showing caring love actions and yet I don't seem to kindle any romantic feelings in my spouse. I'm doing all kinds of caring things for her or for him, but it doesn't seem to do anything except I meet with more resistance and more rejection and I even meet with rebellion. So what am I doing wrong?" Yeah, can you picture this situation in your mind? Doing all the right things? This is not an uncommon situation, by the way, this is often the very confusion, especially when you listen to the person who says, "Well, there's a tension in the marriage," and I'm listening to them and I say, "What are you doing for your wife?" "I'm doing this, this, this and this." And I'm thinking, "Well, he's doing quite a bit." I wonder why there's no romantic love feelings. Or she's listing all the things that she's doing for her husband and I say, "Wow, this is doing quite a bit also. Why is there not that spark of this romantic feeling coming through?" Now that's the question that we need to take a look at tonight for a moment and the result or the reason often is that we are misreading him versus her.

Let me give you an example. Your caring act may be very well-intended, may be very genuine, may be well thought out, may be despite your feelings, and may miss the point. Let me give you this example. You're rising at 5 o'clock in the morning and with caring love you make coffee and you bake muffins and you get eggs and bacon ready for your spouse but your spouse hates eggs and bacon smell in the morning. Your caring love is triggering, what? "Oh, I can't stand this smell in the morning!" So even though your loving action, you're triggering an opposite reaction in your spouse because you haven't been thinking about her not liking eggs and bacon in the morning. Now it's a simple example that could be multiplied perhaps in others. So now your breakfast care is

actually failing to push the button in your spouse, it's actually pushing the wrong button so all your hard work fails and what do you feel like doing now? "Oh, forget it. I'm not anymore making breakfast at 5 o'clock for her or for him." Instead of creating nice feelings that spurred romanticism, it doused it. Can you understand that problem? And maybe you can recognize some of that as you go through your own marriage thinking.

So therefore the secret is to explore what caring acts will actually trigger the romantic love feelings in my spouse. That is where you and I need to focus on in this coming time, and I sent you back here again to the homework assignment: you and I need to experience or explore what are the caring acts that will trigger the romantic feelings in my spouse? And that's a secret of an absolute stunning beautiful relationship. This happens, indeed, when you meet their needs, their emotional needs, their physical needs, their sexual needs, their social needs, their spiritual needs, or their intellectual needs or their recreational needs. Notice there are all these elements, there's about six areas here I just listed off the top of my head, they are all aspects in the marriage that need to be fulfilled by each other and if I don't, the spark is gone. And I guess when we look, think back about that dating period, what were we doing then? We were spending recreational time together, we were spending conversation time together, hours of that, we were spending attention time together, we went out of our way to please the other on hunting trips or shopping trips or whatever else you guys did when you were dating, all of that you did to, what? To try to nurture those needs that you thought were there and perhaps discovered that were there and now maybe you have forgotten that your spouse still has those needs.

Now if I then come to the last part of our topic tonight, it's an interesting statement, interesting concept by William Harvey that I picked up on the love bank analogy and I kind of like what I read in his books in the last couple weeks. He comes out with this love bank analogy. He says each of us have a love account for each person we know. Bear with me for a moment to give this some feet in your thinking. He said we have a love bank account for each person that we know. Now obviously focus tonight on the person you know the best which is your spouse. We have also an individual love account for every child in your family if you have children, or your parents and your in-laws or friends and colleagues. Now the person that treats us well, the child that obeys us well, that honors us, that is respectful, or the spouse that is loving and caring, what are they doing with every action but making a deposit in your love bank account? Yeah, they're just giving you this deposit in your mind. And those who give us attention, they meet our personal needs, they listen to us, they show care, deny themselves, big, big deposits. The opposite, of course, can happen too. Harsh words, forgetfulness, callousness, disrespect, unloving, angry, selfish actions, what are they? Love bank withdrawals. And as long as we keep feeding them the deposits, everything is okay but if you keep on drawing out too many withdrawals, what's going to happen? The balance is gonna tip.

William Harvey actually explains very interestingly this is quite often the reason why marriages fall apart by one of the spouse beginning to go after another person. At work most of the time is where these affairs begin and why is that happening? Well, imagine this, you know, you're home, your wife and you don't have a good relationship so you stress and angry and you are angry and you don't talk, and she doesn't meet your needs

and he doesn't meet her needs, but you're at work and here you're working with someone, a secretary or a colleague, and you know, you're just talking, you run into each other and all of a sudden you begin to spill a little bit more of your troubles in your heart and in your life to that person and you meet someone who's listening to you. You need someone who cares. You need someone who shows you attention. That's how it starts and it's shocking how a man and women just walk out of their own relationships because what's happening is the emotional needs that are not met at home are now met outside of the home by someone else and off they walk.

So it's critical for our marriage health that we focus on this satisfying of each other's needs so that we have no need to find somebody else to do it. So behavior makes love deposits, behavior makes love withdrawals of your account and what happens when the love bank accounts are high toward a certain person? Well, you can already figure that out. What happens, of course, that fuels romantic feelings and desires. Now when it goes beyond a certain level, I don't know what level it is but there comes a point when the love bank account deposits grow and grow and you begin to feel romantic feelings for one another and, yeah, what happens when the love bank account drops? It creates distance. It creates repulsive feelings and anger.

Now I want you to think about this concept a little bit more as you go away from here. It has a lot of value. It has a lot of good use, I think, this idea of our action is a deposit or is a withdrawal. So what needs to change so that I will make love bank deposits? I have two things here. First, your habits need to change, that become deposits instead of withdrawals. Yeah, what do you and I want in our marriages? They tell me we want our brides to say something like this, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." This is what the bride said in Song of Solomon and I could just take it on the face value, she really is full of desire for him. Yeah, what needs to happen for the bridegroom to sing again, "As the lily is among the thorns, so is my, so are you among the daughters of Israel." Yeah, or to say it in a paraphrase, "As the lily is among the thorns, so are you among all the beauties of those women around me. You are the most beautiful." What needs to happen for us men to say things like this again and again and not just only in our dating time when we are trying to capture the bride, but in our marriage life when we want to keep the bride? What needs to happen, friends? When the bridegroom would say such a thing and the bride would respond, "Well as the apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons of men. You stand out above all other men in my eyes." Yeah, that is what we want in our marriage, don't we? And when the bridegroom invites the bride, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." We don't want our bride to hide in the clefts of the rock. We don't want her to withdraw, we want her to say to us, "Indeed, come, my beloved, into your garden and eat the pleasant fruit." What needs to happen for that language that you find in the Song of Solomon? To be alive. To be there in all of your marriage life. No, look at your habits, look at what you do, look at the little foxes that spoil the vine, Song of Solomon says. Little words, little actions, lack of actions, big actions, could be all kinds of things, but habits that we have acquired or things we fail to do that we used to do.

Now in the second, however, and that's more the focus tonight, is you need to understand the him versus her primary and unique emotional needs. Now before you look at the habits, you might also look at the differences. We all have primary emotional needs and I have listed on your assignment today 13 of them, 12 of them or so, and this is your assignment for this coming time, to look at those and to identify for yourself which are your primary ones? Which are your primary five ones? Why is it important? If I do not understand what my wife's five primary emotional needs are and I might be trying to fill in my caring love five other emotional needs, let's say that my wife really has an emotional need for conversation. This doesn't come as a surprise, right, men, that all women have that one? I'm not sure where it sits on your list, you'll find out, but let's assume my wife has a tremendous need for conversation, that's her first primary need and I hate talking and I don't like listening. So I want to show my caring love to do everything to make a lot of money to financially support her. So I come in with a big paycheck every week and I give her it all and somehow it doesn't click. I mean, I don't get back what I'm trying to do for her. I'm making all this big money for her, I'm bringing this financial check and I'm not getting any romanticism back in there, why not? Well, financial support may be on your wife as number 13 and conversation was number 1, and that you don't do because you're hardly home, and when you're home and you come in and you sit down, within five minutes you're snoring.

So can you see what I'm trying to say? Your needs, her needs are not met because you've got different ones in your mind you think she wants. Now this is why it's so important for you and me to know the differences, to communicate these differences so you'll have to speak it out to each other, and then the third, of course, you need to become an expert in meeting these emotional, social, intellectual, sexual or spiritual needs of your spouse. Now once that is happening, I would be surprised if you would say to me, "That did not do anything to my romantic flame." And really, friends, we will have to explore a little bit more of these differences, of course, but I've given you just your homework first today to begin to think about your own needs.

Now the assignment for this coming week, before looking at the next assignment so please don't go all the way to number 2 before you do this, take a piece of paper and write down what you think you could do for your spouse that would make him or her the happiest. In other words, you're actually going to think about what are her or his needs before you do anything else. What would it be that would make your husband or your wife the happiest?

Now then do number 2 and that is an important area, identifying your own personal emotional needs, and if you fail to really connect, you get an electric shock and I will describe it as that. But if you are indeed connected to them, you get high voltage currents that keeps your marriage aglow. And really it's interesting as I read this book, been reading, of course, over my years already but this is such an important one that every young couple that comes to me for their premarital, I make them identify what they think are their needs and they have to write 20 needs down, all kinds of needs. They haven't really thought about it yet, really. They only come up with two or three. I say, "No, that's not enough. You need to have 20 of them on the list." So begin to think about what your

personal needs are in every area of your life and then communicate those to your spouse to be because that's one way for you both to grow together into your marriage journey, that you know those needs and begin to key in how to fulfill it.

Now that's not an exercise that you only have to do before you're married, that really should be doing that continually. What's happening? Our bodies change, our circumstances change, our families change, and our needs change, and what worked five years ago is maybe not what works today. Well, five years ago my primary need may not be my primary need at all at this moment. So once a year you need to go through this exercise, at least. Have a little marriage retreat and go through this again. Maybe anniversary time is a good time to remind yourself of, "Let's sit down again to identify our needs and are we meeting them or are they changing, and let's revive and let's refuel the relationships."

Now I am over my time for five minutes, so sorry about that. The goal is to have this only 35-40 minutes so I'm a little bit over time. Are there any questions from you tonight or any observations to add? No? No questions to discuss here on this subject?

"[unintelligible]."

Yeah, no, I have nothing on my phone because I didn't switch off the.... So, pardon?

"[unintelligible]."

There must be a lot of good marriages out there. That's fine and that's the purpose of this all, isn't it? However, the facts are that that's not necessarily true, is it, James? It's every week or so that I get something on my journey through life and I say, "Wow, how can it be so quickly deteriorating?"

No, let's sing with a closing song, then, and then we'll have a little refreshment yet together. So let's go back again to the marriage psalm. It doesn't do any harm to sing this one again and again to remind ourselves of that. Where is it? 368. No, not 368, what is it? Pardon? 360, there you go. So let's do 1 and 2.

"Blest the man that fears Jehovah,  
Walking ever in His ways;  
By thy toil thou shalt be prospered  
And be happy all thy days.

In thy wife thou shalt have gladness,  
She shall fill thy home with good,  
Happy in her loving service  
And the joys of motherhood."

Well, let us pray.

*Great God in heaven, we adore thy work as Creator having created us so different as male and as female and Lord, as we've just made a brief beginning in exploring these differences of our primary personal needs as well as our personal characteristics as males and females. And Lord, we pray especially that this understanding may deepen and that we may begin to see what are the keys and what are the secrets of making our marriages this wonderful and satisfying relationships that thou had intended it to be for men. And O God, as we've also discovered tonight, the greatest secret of this is our own hearts, our fallenness, our sinful, selfish, proud and thoughtless often in our dealings, and what a way to destroy what is fragile and what is beautiful. So please, Lord, give us repentance tonight and enter into our hearts and lives with thy Holy Spirit that we may indeed be born again if we're not and may flourish in godliness. And Lord, as we go home to explore our differences and identify for one another, may it bring also profitable discussions and important discoveries of where we are not connecting in our caring love, not reaching the goal, and therefore not stirring up the romantic feelings that are such an important part of our marriage life. And so, look up us, Lord, as we go from here. We have all those that have been listening perhaps elsewhere tonight and we ask that thou would bless us now. In Jesus' name hear us. Amen.*