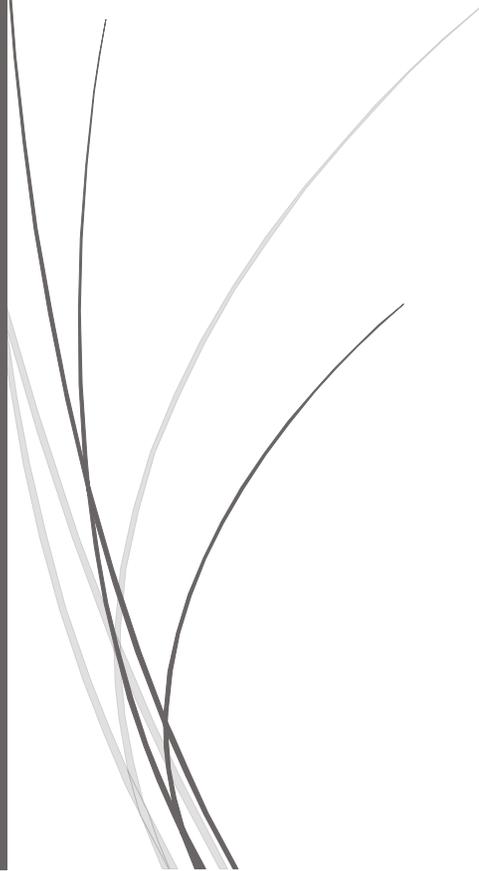


Lesson 7

**THE PATH TO SOUL  
SATISFYING LOVE**  
A RELATIONSHIP IN RETREAT



**Marriage**Helper





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## UNDERSTANDING WHAT TAKES YOU THE WRONG WAY ON THE LOVEPATH...

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar; so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me." (Genesis 16:1-5)

Unfortunately, many couples believe their relationship will last forever and do not see the signs when their relationship deteriorates.

If you are not married, this chapter will not apply to you now, but will be of great value when you enter a relationship.

If you are married, our goal is to help you understand and be aware of those things that could negatively affect your relationship. Maybe some of them already exist.

## BIBLICAL VIEW OF MAINTAINING MARRIAGE

Most Bible-reading folks know that God wants marriages to stay together. No matter how much one may wish to justify divorcing a mate, the Bible continues to contain passages such as:

- *And this is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then, to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth.*

*“For I hate divorce,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “and him who covers his garment with wrong,” says the LORD of hosts. “So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.” (Malachi 2:13-16)*

- God bluntly demonstrates in this passage His unhappiness with the worship of those who “deal treacherously” with their companions and mates by covenant.
    - Marriage is a covenant before God.
    - A covenant is a formal agreement with legal and spiritual validity.
  - He says that those who have a remnant of the Spirit do not do this to their spouses.
  - In the strongest words He tells us that God hates divorce and warns that we should “take heed to our spirit, that [we] do not deal treacherously” with our spouses by divorcing.
- [Jesus teaches] *And it was said, “Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce”; but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. (Matthew 5:31-32)*
- *...some Pharisees came to Him [Jesus], testing Him, and saying, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?” And He answered and said, “Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh’? Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.” They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?” He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” (Matthew 19:3-9)*

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- [Jesus said] *“...from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh; consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”* And in the house the disciples began questioning Him about this again. And He said to them, *“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.”* (Mark 10:6-12)
- [Paul writes] *But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband (but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not send his wife away.* (1 Corinthians 7:10-11)
- God is so intent on maintaining covenant that He uses a broken marriage as an illustration of how He viewed the nation of Israel when they broke their covenant with Him by leaving Him for the worship of idols.
- *Then the LORD said to me in the days of Josiah the king, “Have you seen what faithless Israel did? She went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and she was a harlot there. And I thought, ‘After she has done all these things, she will return to Me’; but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also. And it came about because of the lightness of her harlotry, that she polluted the land and committed adultery with stones and trees.”* (Jeremiah 3:6-9)

If we are to maintain marriages, not divorcing our mates, then we must do all it takes to keep our marriages together. The trouble is most people do not notice their relationship deteriorating until it becomes so bad that they strongly desire leaving each other to the point of seeking every excuse to justify their departure.

To keep that from happening to you, this chapter takes you through intense exercises to honestly evaluate where you are in your relationship, even to the point of admitting its weaknesses.



## THE PLACE TO START

Our goal in this chapter is to uncover for you and your partner anything causing either of you to move – knowingly or unknowingly – backward down the LovePath. We hope to help you find anything that happens or does not happen in your relationship.

- The physical attraction within the **Attraction** step refers to what you perceive the other person does for him- herself that either attracts or repulses you.
- The physical fulfillment within the **Attachment** step refers to what the person does for you that leads you to want either to stay or move away.
- As you answer each question, think not only in terms of what your spouse does, but also in terms of what s/he does not do.
- Later in this chapter, we will ask you to share the answers below with your spouse. We urge you to be absolutely open and honest, but we realize that may not be possible because of the nature of your relationship. If you cannot be open and honest, we strongly suggest that you evaluate your relationship. A relationship lacking openness and honesty never reaches the level of love the LovePath offers. If that is the case in your relationship, consider professional counseling.
- We realize that you will not study the **Aspiration** step until chapter nine. However, we ask questions about that step as well. We make those questions clear enough that you should be able to answer them.



## EXAMINING ATTRACTIVENESS

Before answering the questions below, look over the ratings in chapter two.

1. Write everything about his/her physical appearance that is not as fulfilling to you as you wish. (For example, you may mention weight or physical condition, hygiene, dress, etc.) This should be your perception of what the person does for him-herself.
2. Write everything about his/her intellectual attraction that is not as fulfilling to you as you wish. (For example, it may be a lack of meaningful conversation, little interest in keeping up with information important to you, etc.)
3. Write everything about his/her emotional attraction that is not as fulfilling to you as you wish. (For example, it may be a lack of emotional safety, or a lack of opportunities to enjoy life with one another, etc.)
4. Write everything about his/her spiritual attraction that is not as fulfilling to you as you wish. (For example, it may be a conflict in important beliefs and values, disagreement about religion, disappointment with morality, etc.)



## EXAMINING ACCEPTANCE

Before answering the questions below, briefly look over acceptance in chapter three.

1. Write anything about his/her acceptance of you that is not as fulfilling to you as you wish. (For example, s/he does not accept your feelings about his/her parents, rejects your emotions as invalid, constantly criticizes you and tells you how to do things differently, etc.)
2. Write everything about him/her that you find difficult to accept as s/he wishes you to accept. (For example, it may be a habit, the way s/he talks to you, feeling left out of things, etc.)
3. Write everything about every hurt you have from this relationship. (For example, feeling unaccepted as the person rather than the picture s/he wants you to paint, hurt from feeling mistreated, hurt from feeling that s/her does not listen to you, etc.)



## EXAMINING ATTACHMENT

Before answering the questions below, briefly look over chapter five about attachment. Remember, this section is what the person does for you.

1. Write anything about his/her failure to meet your physical needs. (For example, it might be sexual fulfillment, helping you get in shape, etc.)
2. Write everything about his/her failure to meet your intellectual needs. (For example, it may be having a daily conversation, taking a class together to learn how to invest money, etc.)
3. Write everything about his/her failure to meet your important emotional needs. (For example, wanting more demonstrated affection, hearing often his/her love for you, surprising you with gifts, etc.)
4. Write everything about his/her failure to meet your spiritual needs. (For example, not praying with you or your children, not learning spiritual matters together, not attending religious service with you, not living by your moral standards, etc.)



## EXAMINING ASPIRATION

You have not reached the point in the workbook to prepare you for these questions. Answer as best you can.

1. Write everything about his/her rejection of – or ignoring of – the goals and dreams you have for your life. (For example, it may be that you want children and s/he does not, you wish to be a teacher and s/he berates that profession, you wish to have a close-knit family home every evening but s/he wants to travel, etc.)
  
2. Write everything about his/her not cooperating with you as you attempt to achieve those things important to you. (For example, it may be that you want him/her to do more around the home so that you can go back to school but s/he refuses, you wish to get a different job but s/he derides the very thought, you wish to learn to play the piano and s/he ridicules that, etc. )

## TALKING IT OUT

If you feel your relationship can handle it, the best thing you can do is discuss what each of you wrote in answer to all the questions above.

Give each other immunity to tell the entire truth. That means that you promise not to hold against the other person anything that s/he tells you as s/he shares answers with you. The person telling the truth should do so with love and tact – *“A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”* (Proverbs 25:11)

If either of you becomes emotional – especially angry – stop the exercise and do not attempt it again until each of you has complete control of your emotions.

Together, go back over every question in this chapter and share your answers. One goes first – toss a coin if necessary – and answers all the questions under that step of the LovePath. As one shares, the other listens without comment or negative body language. Instead, s/he makes notes. When that person finishes sharing all his/her answers to the questions, the other person follows the below steps.

1. Ask for clarification on anything said by the other. This must not be defensive, angry, dismissive, sarcastic, or anything of the kind. It must genuinely be for clarification, nothing more.
2. Ask how important each answer is to the person on a scale of 1 to 10. One is of little importance – a minor nuisance; ten is a potential deal breaker that puts your relationship in jeopardy.
3. Ask that person what s/he feels would repair any dissatisfaction, unhappiness, frustration, or lack of fulfillment. Write down what the person suggests.
4. Discuss possible solutions to anything that rates five or higher on the importance scale. Try to find one on which you both agree without reservation. Do not try to convince the other person to do anything; it must be by mutual enthusiastic agreement.
5. Agree on a path for solution and try it together.

When one person finishes answering all the questions under a particular heading – such as attractiveness – the other then shares all his/her answers. Be aware that this may not happen on the same day. Take your time. Finishing rapidly has no comparison to finishing well. Discuss everything clearly and with compassion.



## IN CONCLUSION

This chapter could be painful and therefore you may have decided to skip it and come back to it later, if at all. That is your privilege. However, if you do not open your eyes, and the eyes of each other, you may find that at least one of you has backtracked down the LovePath. Please consider that and face reality as it is rather than fantasy as you hope it to be.

## MOVING ON

After the next section **Daily Thoughts and Prayers** are questions that you need to answer before sharing with your spouse.



## DAILY THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

### DAY ONE

Spend a few minutes meditating and talking with God about how to be a great spouse for a lifetime. Jot your thoughts here. (If you are single, this same meditation and prayer applies to your future if you ever intend to marry....)

The one thing that I will make sure I pray about today that will help me be married for a lifetime is...

### DAY TWO

Spend a few minutes meditating and talking with God about how to help your mate be a great spouse for a lifetime. Jot your thoughts here. (Singles, think of what you want to help your mate be.)



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The one thing that I will make sure I pray about today that will help me be married for a lifetime is...

### DAY THREE

Spend a few minutes meditating and talking with God about how many marriages end and how He feels about that. Jot your thoughts here.

The one thing that I will make sure I pray about today that will help me be married for a lifetime is...

### DAY FOUR

Spend a few minutes meditating and talking with God about the grace, mercy, understanding, and acceptance that you give your spouse. Jot your thoughts here. (Singles, about how you do these things with people that you love.)



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The one thing that I will make sure I pray about today that will help me be married for a lifetime is...

## DAY FIVE

Meditate today about what you love about yourself—not arrogantly or in vain—but in true evaluation of self... Jot your thoughts here.

The one thing that I will make sure I pray about today that will help me be married for a lifetime is...







## NOTES AS YOU WATCH THE VIDEO



## MARRIAGE HELPER

If your marriage is in crisis—or if you love someone whose marriage is in crisis—our success rate since 1999 is three out of four marriages. It doesn't matter if one spouse comes reluctantly or under pressure. It doesn't matter if one is madly in love with someone else. Our success rate remains just as high. It is, of course, by the grace of God Almighty.

If you wish a miracle for you or someone you love, call now toll free 866-903-0990 or visit us at [www.marriagehelper.com](http://www.marriagehelper.com).