

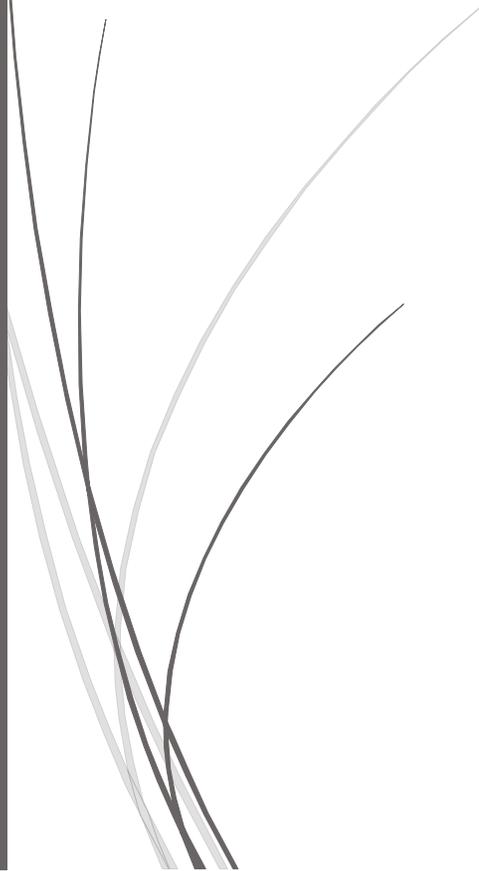
Lesson 9

THE PATH TO SOUL SATISFYING LOVE

ASPIRATION



MarriageHelper





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UNDERSTANDING THE FULFILLMENT OF INTIMACY...

May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. (James 4:1)

We all have an aspiration for our lives.

We use the term Aspiration to refer to that which you want in your life. You may not be aware of your deepest aspiration or life desire. If you are, you may have abandoned it as hopeless, impractical, likely to be rejected by your partner, or selfish. However, to abandon a deeply held aspiration does not remove it from your heart and soul; because of your abandonment, it may lead to greater problems in your life and your relationship.

You will note that sometimes we use the word aspiration, at other times dream, and yet at other time life desire. In the context of this chapter, they all refer to the same thing.

If you are not in a relationship: This chapter is just as important to you as to those who are married. Most of what we share with those in a relationship applies to you, but additionally we provide an extra exercise for you later in this chapter.

If you are in a relationship: You may at first discount how important this principle is to your relationship. However, many couples have disagreements about something or other when in reality they are fighting over their unfulfilled dreams or life desires.

BIBLICAL VIEW OF ASPIRATION

The Bible demonstrates clearly the power of a dream. Not a wish, but a true calling one feels on his or her life.

Perhaps the clearest story of this occurs in the life of Joseph.

“Please listen to this dream which I have had; for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.” Then his brothers said to him, “Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, “Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”



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And he related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?” And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind. (Genesis 37:5-11)

Joseph believed this dream would come to realization and that belief affected everything he did – including endurance to all his trials – for the rest of his life. He never abandoned it, thought it foolish, or gave it up because of the doubt of others. Think of how his dream guided his life.

- His brothers ridiculed him, hating him, but he never wavered in his belief that he would accomplish his dream. (Genesis 37:5-11)
- His father, who loved him deeply, rebuked him for holding a dream that seemed arrogant. As much as he loved his father, Joseph did not falter. (Genesis 37:10)
- His brothers sold him into slavery. (Genesis 37:23-28) Anyone with common sense would know that a slave would never be a ruler. Yet Joseph preserved in believing his dream would come true.
- In Potiphar’s house, Joseph became a leader, knowing that someday he would be a leader that even his parents would follow. His dream directed his future. (Genesis 39:1-6)
- “Mrs. Potiphar” attempted to seduce Joseph. Perhaps he could have justified yielding to her favors by considering how his family had turned against him. However, a man who genuinely believes he is destined to royalty would not allow himself to be tempted by anything that jeopardized his integrity or compromised his duty. (Genesis 39:7-13)
- Thrown into prison by Potiphar because of the lies of his spurned would-be lover, Joseph never faltered. If he had shared his dream with fellow prisoners, they would have laughed at his naivety and told him in strong language that slaves do not become kings. (Genesis 39:19-21) Yet, his dream led him onward to the point that Joseph grew to a position of leadership within the prison.

...the chief jailer committed to Joseph's charge all the prisoners who were in the jail; so that whatever was done there, he was responsible for it. The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph's charge because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made to prosper. (Genesis 39:22-23)



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- As we know from the end of the story, Joseph did become a ruler – just as his dream had always been – and his family did bow to him. Though they had thought his dream arrogant, they discovered it was the best thing that ever could have happened to them and their children.

...do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life...to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt. (Genesis 45:5-8)

His dream began during the seventeenth year of his life. It finally came to fulfillment in the thirtieth year. During thirteen years of misery – ridicule, rejection, slavery, prison – he always followed his dream.

A dream is far from a wish. It is a part of our identity, our purpose, and our fulfillment. When we have a dream, it diminishes our lives to forgo that dream, even if we do that for someone we love. If they are not completely selfish (everyone has some degree of selfishness, even Joseph), dreams are meant to be accomplished.

In marriage, you grow to the highest point on the LovePath – and the deepest level of love – if you assist each other in achieving your dreams.

OUR DREAMS

Therapist John Gottman at the University of Washington lists some common “deep” dreams or life desires. His list has 35 dreams. We list a few of them here.

- A sense of freedom
- Adventure
- Healing
- Having a sense of power
- Having a sense of order
- Travel

Often a person does not understand his/her life desire because s/he focuses on a mundane life desire that is easier to note. As Gottman writes, “For example, underneath the dream to make lots of money may be a deep need for security.”



KNOWING & UNDERSTANDING YOUR DEEPEST ASPIRATION

Looking deeper into yourself sometimes takes weeks or even months. Trying to finish it too fast may lead you to miss the underlying deep dreams altogether.

Think carefully and come to awareness of more easily discerned dreams that cause you disagreements or arguments. Particularly think of a repetitive disagreement that you have with each other that appears to have no possible solution.

Write here any and all arguments that occur repetitively between you and your spouse.

Examine your side of the argument to see what you argue for. Is it moving to another city? Quitting your job and taking one with more adventure but less income? Whatever it is, write here what you try to accomplish for yourself in these recurring arguments.

Examine what you wrote in the question above about your side of the argument. Dig deep into your mind, your emotions, and your intuition to answer this one question: What is the deep dream or desire within me that underlies what I argue for?

When you feel you know and understand your deepest desire, write it here. Spell it out in detail. Make it clear enough that others can comprehend it.

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When both you and your spouse answer the previous question, share your deepest dream with each other. Even though this is not an argument, it is still communication in which you wish a win-win. Be sure that you employ the guidelines from chapter eight.

Write here the deep dream or desire that your spouse has. Write it in enough detail that when you return to it to read it later, you will grasp all of the meaning, emotion, and dedication s/he has to this aspiration.

COOPERATING IN ACHIEVING DESIRES

Often couples find that their deepest desires conflict. How can he be free as a bird when she wants order and careful planning? How can one wish to travel the world when the other desires capturing the warmth of a home where everyone eats dinner together every night? The answer comes from learning to cooperate. Why do some people not want to do that? Some of the reasons are:

- Fear that if I help my partner achieve his/her dreams, mine will not be achieved
- Belief that my spouse has a dream that is unreasonable
- Resistance because my partner's dream contradicts my beliefs and values

Write here any reason that you find yourself hesitating to help your partner fulfill his/her dream or desire. Be honest with yourself.

Write here how you can overcome that hesitation.

**Aspiration**

To overcome these and other reasons that a person wishes not to cooperate, choose to find a way that each of you can fulfill your desire while helping the other fulfill his/her desires. Though that may seem impossible, approach it with the mindset that together you can find a way to do this. Follow the guidelines in chapter eight. Also:

- Do not try to persuade.
- Listen carefully to each other.
- The goal is to make sure that each of you will fulfill your deepest dreams.
- Each has to be a part of the other's dream and actively help it to come to realization.
- Do not settle on a potential solution until both of you enthusiastically agree.
- Note that the solution does not have to be one that will be accomplished quickly. It may be a solution that requires a plan that will take time to complete. That works well as long as both of you continue to work that plan.
- *If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:1-4)*

DEVELOPING THE PLAN

When you reach a potential solution that both of you enthusiastically agree upon, write it here in detail.

Now together develop a plan for the implementation of this solution, making bullet points for each action required and a probable time for completion of that action. Remember, as long as both agree, it may stretch to months or years.



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Write your plan, bullet points, actions, and times here.

COOPERATING OVER TIME

Constantly monitor the implementation of your plan. If at any point either of you feels the plan is not going as expected or desired, you must together analyze what is not working well and how to correct it.

If it becomes clear the plan will not work, we suggest that together you back up one step at a time until you find the step where you can refocus. Then work down the steps again with that new focus.

IF YOU ARE NOT IN A RELATIONSHIP

We strongly recommend that you work through the exercises above that apply to your knowing and comprehending your own deepest desires. The exercises about disagreements and arguments may not be of value to you now, but they will be if you enter into a relationship. It appears two people in a relationship hardly ever have the same deepest desire.

When you feel comfortable knowing and understanding your deepest life desire, use the following to evaluate any relationship that you develop. It may save quite a bit of misery down the line.

**Aspiration**

When dating seriously enough to talk about more intimate matters, begin a process to understand the person's deepest life desires. Share with him/her the section above about discovering and comprehending one's own life desires. Lead him/her through it until s/he is comfortable that s/he knows and understands his/her personal deepest dreams.

Use this checklist in considering a long-term future with this person.

1. Is the person's deepest dream compatible with yours or apparently incompatible?
2. Do you feel that you can accept and honor the person's deepest life desire to the point you will help him/her achieve it?
3. Did the person demonstrate respect for your deepest life desire and indicate that s/he would help you achieve it?
4. Are your respective dreams so different that it would take a great deal of compromise – perhaps emotionally draining – for each of you to achieve his/her deepest life desires?
5. Are you willing to put that much effort into developing a future with this person?

Discovering each other's deepest aspirations relatively early in a relationship can prevent conflict that would occur later. Remember that most couples argue over mundane life desires that disguise the deep dream under it. You can bypass those arguments by knowing, appreciating, and becoming part of each other's deepest life desires before making any commitment to each other.

IN CONCLUSION

We did not lead you through control exercises in this chapter because it is unlikely you can do the things above without relinquishing control and working in harmony. However, if you find that control is an issue:

1. Keep track of circumstances in which you felt the other was attempting to control you.
2. When you both are calm, share with the other the circumstance, what you felt, and why you felt it.
3. Ask the person if s/he realizes s/he was controlling in that circumstance. If so, ask why s/he felt the need to control.



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4. Mutually agree that when you feel controlled you have the right to say that and the other person will stop that action and approach the subject in a loving, kind, and cooperative way.

MOVING ON

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



Aspiration

DAILY THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

DAY ONE

Spend a few minutes meditating and talking with God about your deepest life aspiration or dream. Jot your thoughts here.

The one thing that I will make sure I pray about today that will help me live the dream that I believe God has for me is...

DAY TWO

Spend a few minutes meditating and talking with God about why you have your deepest life aspiration or dream. Where did it come from? When did you first realize it? What does it mean to you? Jot your thoughts here.



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The one thing that I will make sure I pray about today that will help me live the dream that I believe God has for me is...

DAY THREE

Spend a few minutes meditating and talking with God about whether your deepest life aspiration or dream is of God. Will it benefit His Kingdom? How? Do you believe that God gave you this dream or is He unhappy that you have this dream? Jot your thoughts here.

The one thing that I will make sure I pray about today that will help me live the dream that I believe God has for me is...

DAY FOUR

Spend a few minutes meditating and talking with God about how He has prepared you to fulfill your deepest life aspiration or dream. What gifts did He give you? Talents? Education, both formal and from life? Jot your thoughts here.



Aspiration

The one thing that I will make sure I pray about today that will help me live the dream that I believe God has for me is...

DAY FIVE

Spend a few minutes meditating and talking with God about what you should do NOW to fulfill your deepest life aspiration or dream. Jot your thoughts here.

The one thing that I will make sure I pray about today that will help me live the dream that I believe God has for me is...



SHARING TIME

What we think and write about has dramatically more effect on us than what we talk about. Write your answers so that you get the most from this study.

1. What is your dream or aspiration for your life? Don't hesitate, feel it's silly, or analyze whether it's possible, just write down here what it is deep inside you?
2. Think deeply. What is it that your dream or life desire really means that you want? Look for the core issue. Try to see past the façade to the central element. Write your answer here if you can.
3. How has God gifted you for fulfilling that dream or life desire? What talents do you have? What have you learned in life that equips you?
4. Does something in your current life conflict with your deepest desire/aspiration? What steps can you take to overcome this conflict?



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5. (For couples) Do you know your spouse's greatest aspiration? How can you help them achieve it?

(For singles) How could a potential mate help you achieve your aspirations?

6. Recurring arguments are often symptoms of unrealized dreams and desires. Think about a recurring argument you have with your spouse/those closest to you. What steps can you take to end the argument and focus on the underlying aspiration?



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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.