Experiencing God’s Dream For
Your Marriage
(Part 2)

What Went Wrong?
Barriers to Intimacy in Your Marriage
Genesis 3

Introduction: “A problem clearly defined is 50% solved”

Premise #1: We all have legitimate needs/longings.

Premise #2: God originally designed our spouse to be a major tool in His hands to meet those needs/longings.

Premise #3: The “Fall” (sin, Genesis 3) short-circuited man’s relationship with God, his mate, and his world.

Premise #4: What was once the most natural relational response (other-centered, grace-giving) is now the most unnatural of responses, requiring supernatural enablement and hard work to achieve.
Four barriers to intimacy:

◆ Spiritual barriers = Sin, shame, selfishness

- Differences - Originally designed to compliment and complete one another; have become sources of friction, confusion, and competition.
- Sharing - Has turned to shame.
- Givers - Have become takers and manipulators.
- Builders - Have become blamers.
- Openness - Has given way to hiding.

The Answer = ________________________________

Resource: The Bible; Genesis 3

◆ Psychological barriers = Personality differences

- Introvert vs. Extrovert
- Assertive vs. Easy Going
- Factual vs. Abstract
- Systematic vs. Spontaneous

The Answer = ________________________________

Resource: The Intimacy Factor by David and Jan Stoops
Gender barriers = Male / Female differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Males Tend to Be…</th>
<th>Females Tend to Be…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More achievement focused</td>
<td>More relationally focused</td>
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<tr>
<td>More theoretical and generalist</td>
<td>More specific and detail oriented</td>
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<td>More information oriented in communication</td>
<td>More emotion oriented in communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>More action oriented</td>
<td>More verbal oriented</td>
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<tr>
<td>More facts oriented</td>
<td>More intuitively oriented</td>
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<tr>
<td>More goal oriented</td>
<td>More supportive and nurturing oriented</td>
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</tbody>
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(Above taken from To Understand Each Other by Paul Tournier)

The Answer = ______________________________

Resources: His Needs Her Needs by Willard F. Harley, Jr.  
Men Are From Mars, Women are From Venus by John Gray

Historical barriers = “Our Baggage” from the past

- Family Upbringing
- Traumatic Events
- False Beliefs / "Games We Play"
- Rejection and Past Relationships

The Answer = ______________________________

Resources: The Search for Significance by Robert S. McGee;  
Unstuck: How to Overcome the Pain in Your Past, by Chip Ingram
Summary:

The Result: We knowingly and unknowingly put up “protective walls” that keep us from being deeply touched and loved in ways we are desperate to experience.

- **Women** focus on ____________, struggle with loneliness, and fear abandonment.
- A woman’s wrong strategy centers around ________________.
- **Men** focus on ____________, struggle with futility, and fear failure.
- A man’s wrong strategy centers around ________________.

God’s solution: Honest, grace-filled, understanding, communication, to lovingly “pull down” the walls, risk vulnerability, and restore intimacy.

Discussion Questions (Married & Single):

1. What new insight did you gain about BARRIERS in your marriage? In your relationships (singles)?

2. How does understanding these barriers adjust your EXPECTATIONS in marriage? In your most significant relationships (singles)?

3. What specific step do you discern God would have you take to begin “pulling-down” the walls in your marriage? In your most meaningful relationships (singles)?