

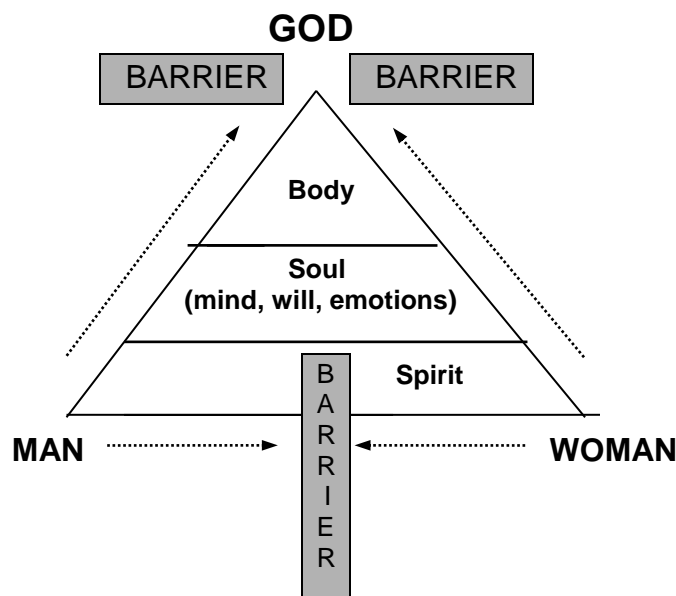
Introduction: “A problem clearly defined is 50% solved”

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

Males Tend to Be...	Females Tend to Be...
More achievement focused	More relationally focused
More theoretical and generalist	More specific and detail oriented
More information oriented in communication	More emotion oriented in communication
More action oriented	More verbal oriented
More facts oriented	More intuitively oriented
More goal oriented	More supportive and nurturing oriented

(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)?