

GRACE CHURCH RETREAT—INTIMACY IN MARRIAGE

Our goal in this session is to encourage you in the joy and privilege of intimacy in your relationship with your spouse. Linda and I are convinced that everything—the devil, the world, the demands of job, the demands of children, the pull of a thousand and one things in life, our own sin—everything is aligned in a conspiracy to rob us of the unique call to intimacy and oneness between husband and wife. Ruts in marriage relationship are a dime a dozen. And most Christian couples fall prey to them day in and day out.

Before we got married, both of us developed a God-inspired determination to fight marital ruts with a passion. We had both experienced them in our combined 50 years of marriage before we met each other. And we had continually seen them in the body of Christ.

Please, please, let me plead with you. Your wife/husband is not just an ordinary person. She/he is the one out of billions that God Almighty has selected to be your soul-mate, your spiritual partner, your lover, your very best friend, and the one you love to hang out with more than any one else on the planet. And she/he is the one that God has willed you to be one with more than any other person.

We desperately want to serve you to that end in this session.

Here's what we'd like to do:

- **Teach on God's purpose in marriage**
- **Consider some incredible quotes**
- **Share parts of our marriage story and things we have learned**
- **Pass on 2 lists: Intimacy Enhancers and Intimacy Inhibitors**
- **Put the magnifying glass on the glory of sex in marriage**
- **ABOVE ALL—MAKE THIS PARTICIPATORY. Please interrupt and discuss with us.**

1. God's Purpose in Marriage

2. Things we have learned

3. Intimacy Enhancers/Inhibitors

4. Quotes

5. Sex and Romance—God's gift to be enjoyed to the fullest—3 recommended books

INTIMACY ENHANCERS

- Seeking God together—often (as our heartfelt treasure, Bible reading, prayer, books)
- Being intentionally gospel centered in the relationship (Quote from our vows, ex. Gift card organizer)
- Cultivating an attitude of gratefulness, which is an intimate companion of affection
- Purposing to think warmly and affectionately of each other
- Intimate conversation (non-logistical), drawing out, soul searching, often
- Remembering good things together (ex. 10 Highlights)
- Love-notes (cards, texts, and emails) Ex. 24G—Text from Linda while eating with pastors.
- Laughing together—shared jokes
- “Touching her heart and mind before her body” CJ Mahaney (see book)
- 7 Sure ways to kindle romance—CJ—p. 42
- Date nights!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Get Aways!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Extravagance in time, expenditures, focus
- Much physical touch. Stopping regularly JUST to be alone and close.
- Kissing—really kissing—a lot—tenderly, passionately. SOS 4:10-11
- Prioritizing sex.

INTIMACY INHIBITORS

- Opposite of all the above
- Harsh words/looks. HUGE RUT! If you are in this rut—you absolutely MUST intentionally get out. How? Mutual repentance, forgiveness, determination
- Discontentment with life, with relationship, with standard of living
- Unrealistic expectations. BIG DEAL! BIG RUT! Discuss...
- Busyness. Continuing re-prioritization. What is God’s purpose for our lives? John 17, Eph. 5:29
- Fatigue
- Stress (Linda’s revelation—“peaceably”)
- Ask your wife, “Do you feel most like a wife, a mother, or a business partner?”
- Insensitivity

