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## **PREFACE**

I have been inspired to write this book because there are too many unhappy people in broken marriages that do not have to stay broken. Whether you are living in an unhappy marriage where you are still able to put on a good show for the world or a marriage where your unhappiness is visual because it cannot be contained, you do not have to stay in that condition. If you are a couple who is seriously interested in enjoying your marriage and loving your spouse, you can break the chain of unhappiness to change for the better. Why was marriage created? If you can look beyond the surface to find the answer to that question, your search will lead you on a life-changing path where you will find joy in your marriage, yourself, and your life as you embrace the deeper truth within God's design for marriage.

Marriage is awesome for those who understand what God has fashioned it to accomplish. God created mankind to be relational beings. Within His Book of Love, which we call the Bible, God incorporated a manual on how to live a successful, fulfilled, and joyous life. He illuminates the blessings given to those who choose to follow His knowledge and wisdom and shows how living a life outside of His design is riddled with both perceived and real struggles and stressors. There is no guesswork here; the message of marital bliss and the longevity that God has presented to mankind is in plain sight for those who seek the truth in His word. However, the truth is hidden or lay dormant, unhidden yet in secret, from those who only seek to satisfy themselves. If you have been conditioned to only see what the world is showing, to only hear what the world is saying, and to only believe the bias of your own interpretation, you will miss it.

When a manufacturer designs a car, he writes a manual on how to use and take care of the car for its best performance and longevity. People who want those specified results read and follow the manual. When a contractor builds a new house, he leaves an owner's manual for the best operation of the home, which includes information on appliance usage, trash and recycling pickup, and utility requirements. Homeowners who

want to be prepared and have peace of mind will read, learn, and follow those instructions. In order to drive a car, we must have a driver's license, and to acquire that license, we must learn the laws and pass a test. We must stay committed to following certain rules, guidelines, and laws if we want to keep our driving privileges.

From birth to the grave, mankind has been conditioned to be compliant with instructions, laws, guidelines, and requirements. In every aspect of our lives, when we want or value something, we show great fortitude and commitment in following rules, and we enjoy the benefits, confidence, and peace of mind they bring. In the midst of so many hurt people and broken relationships, why do men and women have such a problem reading their Creator's manual to find the path that leads to the benefits of a successful marriage, relationship, and life? Why do many of God's followers or those who have read and profess to understand their Designer's Book of Love, miss the path or find it hard to commit and follow the truth for the privilege of its blessings? Why are so many people eager to search for ways to improve marriage from every source on the planet instead of connecting to the Source who created marriage?

Since the beginning of time, the first and greatest challenge mankind ever had to face was truth. And we continue to grapple with it today. Whether it's relationships, kingdoms, or life itself, history has demonstrated how a lack of truth can be a destroyer of all. Instead of time diminishing this challenge, the lack of truth continues to spread like a plague. And once society allows the deception that our experiences, perspectives, thinking, and interpretations can substitute as truth, there will be too many competing avenues of distorted information (biases or lies) to process, and the real truth will fade away like a relic of the past. In the absence of truth, facts are irrelevant because decisions will no longer need principles or a foundation of evidence to which to be anchored. When decisions are based on the winds of interpretations, chaos is born, order is relaxed, rules are changed, laws cannot be trusted, agreements become worthless, and communication is eclipsed by polarization. The results are manifested in people living in discord, distrust, fear, hate, or silence. Fortunately, those who have eyes to see will understand that this is only a dress rehearsal to

delude the hearts and condition the minds of the people to one day accept the greatest deception ever known to mankind. However, take comfort in knowing that God's truth never changes. Even in the face of mankind's manipulation, God's truth, which is the only pure truth, stands the test of time and is still there waiting to be uncovered and received.

As the chapters in this book are unfolded, you will find that there is a map or a blueprint for a wonderful, fulfilling, joyous, and purposeful marriage on Earth, which is also linked to the truth for your eternal joy with God in Heaven. However, like any blueprint, there are guidelines and instructions that you must embrace for a successful journey. Please understand, I am not saying you cannot have a relationship when following a different path. You will find benefits, struggles, and happy and unhappy times in every relationship. I only want you to ask yourself, If you choose to follow a different path, will it lead you on a joyous journey, and will it prepare you for your final destination?

I would like to warn anyone planning to read this book that if you do not know the Lord, want to know your Creator, have a belief in God, or have a basic acceptance and knowledge of who He is or His miraculous nature, then you will not fully understand the concepts within this book. So save your money and your time; just put the book down and walk away because what I am about to tell you may seem like foolishness if you have no knowledge of God. Please do not get offended by the messenger; I get my wisdom directly from God, who said in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." In basic terms, even the most erudite, philosophically brilliant, highly educated people in the world may have difficulty understanding God's ways because their focus is on elevating the levels of one's mind, and God's ways are solely focused on elevating the levels of His Spirit in one's heart.

The sad truth is that there are many people who really do not understand their Heavenly Father, His Spirit, or His love for them because the conversations many people have with their Creator are borderline monologues with an emphasis on self. They have yet to fully grasp the

difference between the flesh and the Spirit, which nullifies the importance of (or need to be intentional towards) having a multidirectional path for a Spirit-filled relationship that results in an expected dialogue of some type.

However, if you still wish to read a book that you may not understand, I implore you to first seek God in prayer and then borrow a Bible. But before reading, pray, not just for understanding but also to know God and to receive the power that He freely offers to those who ask in faith. Then believe that what you have asked for in faith has been granted. Don't expect to feel differently; however, do expect to live differently as you continue to listen to Him speak to you through His word, from your circumstances, past your objections, by your convictions, and into your heart. Let God quietly inspire you to follow His path toward your life solutions. Live in your request with confidence, knowing that God has already answered your prayer. A sincere dialogue with God through prayer will allow one to experience God's love, which moves one to follow His word because of love and not just follow His word in blind isolation of His love.

This book will definitely conflict with the norms and understanding of today's societal concepts because love, God's truth, and faith are the basis on which this book is written. Most versions of religious books tell a similar story when individuals read for an understanding of love as it pertains to the horizontal relationships mankind should have with one another. However, the stories may change when individuals read to understand the vertical relationship that our Heavenly Father above wants us to have with Him or the unhidden secrets (for those who have eyes to see) in prophecy. Interestingly, if you feel that you have a relationship with God yet have still been unsuccessful in marriage and other relationships, this book will question your presumptions, test your perceptions, shake your traditions, and have you examine yourself by searching His word for answers and a deeper relationship with the Father you call God. The only difference is that you will now be searching on His terms and not your own.

For those who have not been deterred and are still interested in learning, please join me on a journey back to the beginning of time to examine the foundation of our original design, innate self, and God-ordained marriage.



The understanding of your original design and the purpose of your marriage can speak volumes and are relevant to why you are moving but not going anywhere in your pursuit of a fabulous relationship and fulfilling life. This does not mean that you will not have challenges or struggles; it only means that when you understand what God wants to do for you and through you, your challenges are no longer an ominous, purposeless struggle. As your heart is opened and your perspective changes, you will think, walk, and talk differently because you now understand and value the process that is graciously intimated in 2 Corinthians 4:17: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Before you start, I need you to take a mustard seed of faith as you pray for spiritual discernment. For those who really do not have faith or do not understand what faith in God really is, just take a second and ask God to help you with your lack of faith. Ask for God to remove any thinking that does not allow you to comprehend how God can use His marital design to perfect your character in Him as He draws you closer to your spouse and into His Kingdom. Unfortunately, that is impossible without God's Spirit of truth leading you.

## I. GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN—IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONAL GROWTH

*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

—Genesis 1:26–27

Wow! Just reading that we were created in the image of God gives us reason to pause. Being reminded that we were also created in His likeness should remove any imaginary theories about evolution. Imagine, every time God looks at those who love Him, He sees Himself. There is no question that humans were created to be relational beings, and our very first and most important relationship is our spiritual relationship with God.

When God made the earth, the sun, the moon, and everything outside of mankind, He spoke the words. But when God created man, it was such a sacred, joyous, and holy endeavor that God actually formed man from the dust of the ground. One can only imagine the process and display of love and thoughtfulness that, having spoken the solar system of planets into existence, God would take the time to bring some dust particles together to form man in His image. God demonstrated the ultimate resuscitation when He breathed His life-giving breath into man's nostrils to create a living soul. Can you fathom how excited God must have been to draw His face closer to the lifeless face He just formed in His image out of dust? I do not think there are words in the human language to express that type of awesomeness or excitement. Genesis 2:7 explains, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The breath that God gave us had His authority to

activate the physical form He designed from the dust of the ground and give us the power to become a living soul.

The breath, the body, and the soul are combined in harmony; all three are unified as one for man to exist. The soul, which is housed in a responsive vessel of flesh, is made up of the logical calculating choice of the mind, the emotional will and desires of the heart, and a measure of faith from the Spirit. Adam and Eve walked with God in the Spirit of God before they chose to expose themselves to the carnal influences of the world. Just like the child who is born in the image of his or her parents, we are created in the image of God. We are created to glorify God by following His word to be productive, procreating sustainers and tamers of the earth. We have all heard the words “You are just like your father.” Prior to sin, Adam and Eve were just like their Heavenly Father. As God nurtured His children, He created a bond of love, honor, obedience, blessings, and praise that displayed His likeness in their nature. A similar form of His likeness can also be observed in many of God’s unique creations in nature. Have you ever taken the time to really observe God’s creations? Notice how the grass and trees grow upward to praise their Creator; witness how the flowers rise up to bloom with radiant colors in praise for God and how their sweet scents remind us of God’s careful consideration for our well-being. Have you ever enjoyed hearing how the leaves sing praises when stroked by the wind, how the grass dances in unison and praises with every breeze? Have you noticed how the sea obeys its boundary and the sun its timing? Have you seen a rainbow display its beautiful spectrum of light to honor God’s promise expressed thousands of years ago?

It should bring great joy and peace to your heart to know that everything God has created points to Him as the Creator. In addition to their purposes, God’s creations show us His awesome power and praise for Him. Our God is a God of intricate order and love, which is shown through the specific details and synergy of His creations. Each creation has specific instructions with the ultimate purpose of sustaining and growing life on this planet. God’s handiwork shows that He is worth praising every second of every day. God, through His love, has granted men and women the privilege and responsibility of leading and having the most intimate relationship with Him and His creations.

## II. THE VERY FIRST MARRIAGE

*And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*

—Genesis 2:21–25

Individually and relationally, we were created for God’s glory. Being created in His likeness, we are imbued with the gifts of love and choice by His power. These two gifts come with a lot of authority and influence. One gives us peace, joy, comfort, and strength, and the other gives us free will to choose. It is in the nature of the created to seek to know their Creator, who instilled within mankind’s DNA a purpose to worship, lead, create, manage, and replenish the earth.

It is not to be overlooked that after creating Adam, God spent one-on-one time instructing and counseling him, and then He put him to work. Also notice that Eve was not an afterthought. God knew that the directives and great heights He wanted for mankind could not be accomplished by man or Adam alone. He also knew there would be a time when the synergy of the two would be needed to help each other grow together as one in Him. Before God engaged in the process of creating the animals and birds, He stated that He was going to make a wife for man. “And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:18). Eve’s delay was by design. God delayed her creation until Adam understood who God was, who he was in God, and what God wanted to accomplish through him. God was also demonstrating the sacredness of a one-on-one relationship with Him and the importance of divinity’s connection with humanity. He was essentially giving mankind the blueprint for relationships, leadership, and marriage. He wanted man to recognize that

the relationship between God and man is first and takes priority for more reasons than one. He was preparing us for what was to come as He demonstrated that His relationship with man and woman should be established first, before a relationship with a spouse or any other person. To ensure there was no confusion about what to do in a marriage, God gave us a three-step process to begin a successful marriage where the husband and wife would (1) leave their parents, (2) cleave to each other, and (3) become one flesh.

After God demonstrated the importance of His relationship with man, God implemented Adam's training for his life and career as the leader. In understanding his innate purpose, Adam's thoughts were aligned with the vision God instilled in him to subdue the earth. Adam eagerly accepted the responsibility that accompanied the privilege of being the leader God created him to be, having dominion over all. God supplied a home for Adam to rent; He called it the Garden of Eden. "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed . . . And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:8,15). Adam was instructed and understood all points of his bartered rental agreement, which included how to cultivate and take care of the home. He was also given instructions to enjoy the food of almost every tree, followed by only one condition: a commandment not to eat from a particular tree. God also explained the consequences of breaching the rental agreement. Adam's only rental payment was his obedience to God's word, as explained in Genesis 2:16–17: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

God proceeded with the creation of the animals and birds, and Adam engaged his job in accordance with his position as a leader, which included Adam serving and subduing the planet. Adam's career started with the responsibility of dressing and keeping the Garden of Eden and naming every animal that roamed the earth and every bird of the air. As explained in Genesis 2:19, "And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what

### III. GOD’S DESIGN AND GUIDE FOR MEN AND THE HUSBAND

*But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

—1 Timothy 5:8

#### **Man Is Accountable as the Leader**

God created man and gave him the greatest responsibility by equipping him with the intellect and the capacity to lead His plans. In the Garden of Eden, the separation of man from His Creator caused God’s original design and directives to become clouded or distorted. However, man’s innate design in the image of God is still present. Based on Genesis 1:26–29, God innately designed man in God’s image (“Let us make man in our image”), after God’s likeness (“after our likeness”), with a need to lead (“have dominion over . . . every living thing that moveth upon the earth”), with a need to create to fulfill His purpose (“replenish the earth and subdue it”), with a need to nourish and strengthen his physical temple (“I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat”), and with a desire to have a wife as a partner and to procreate (“Be fruitful, and multiply”).

When man presents himself in the image of God and behaves in God’s likeness, the authority man has as the leader of all living things and the commanding influence God has gifted man with when he speaks are astounding. It is a powerful thing when a man can show up and his presence depicts authority. But when men recognize the power of their words and embrace the responsibility that accompanies that authority, they make the world a better place.

In God’s infinite love and wisdom, He designed man to be accountable and in charge of all His creations. Based on God’s word, the definition of a man could never be appropriately summed up in only one word. A husband is

designed to be the priest of his home, the leader, the provider, and the protector of the family. The husband is a man who loves and honors his wife and a father who helps shape and mold the most precious gifts that God has placed in his charge. In short, to be a man, you are a leader, and as leaders, men must also be servants. If you don't understand what that means, learn about the life and work of Jesus Christ, who against many trials stayed true to his purpose as he led his family to God.

Leaders can be placed into many categories; I have listed only four: leader, supportive leader, good leader, and great leader. A leader has the ability to influence others. A supportive leader has the wisdom to guide people to see their limitless potential and to take them to places they have never imagined going. A good leader has the skills to motivate people to lead themselves. A great leader has the gift to inspire people to inspire all other people.

Since being a leader is part of man's innate design, a man who does not lead will find himself lost or living under a cloud of agitation, anger, or stress. He may not realize why, but these are the effects for the man who has disengaged from his purpose and nature to lead. If unresolved, those feelings will just linger and eat away at him to his own detriment; it is difficult to fix what you do not know, understand, recognize, accept, or believe. To help resolve this internal conflict, at the very least, a man must begin to lead himself. Engaging in that process alone will decrease his agitation considerably, particularly if he leads himself in reading God's word and building a relationship with his Creator, where he will not only find the blueprints to understand how to lead, but he will also realize his gifts of authority, which will melt away his confusion, agitation, and anger as he accepts the responsibility he was designed to have.

### **A Man Uncovered**

God's blueprints for men have man covering himself and his family in many ways. Let's take a peek at what is underneath that covering. As the leader, man brings the vision, a goal, a plan, order, respect, and inspiration. He sets the standard and the principles to follow in his home and puts the needs of those in his charge above his own. Proverbs 29:18 also tells us that "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Without a vision, companies fail, and on a microscale, so do people and relationships. A vision brings

## IV. GOD'S DESIGN AND GUIDE FOR WOMEN AND THE WIFE

*Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."*

—Proverbs 31:10–29

### **A Woman Has Amazing Skills**

There is no question that women are amazing, and as God's gift to husbands and mankind, they are the most precious incredible wonder on earth. God wonderfully created man's equal in women and gave them the same commission He did men: to subdue the earth, to have dominion over His creations, and to be fruitful and multiply together as one. God made her to be a wife and an awesome companion with a unique fit, and God gave her several great responsibilities. God designed the wife to lead, support, compliment, and be one with her husband as they strive to fulfill God's plan as one. God has intimated in Genesis 2:18, "It is not good that the man



should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.” Clearly, God designed the woman to play multiple roles that utilize many types of skills. There are women who excel at administration and organization, motivating and encouraging, expressing untethered insight and concerns, sharing new ideas and different perspectives, making calculations and conceptualizing, engaging in research and deductive reasoning, listening and collaborating, gatekeeping and resolving challenges, sensing and addressing the needs of the visionary, and managing and bringing life to her husband’s vision. The list is endless. Even though a woman may be dominant in one or more of those areas, there are times when she may need to exercise all skill sets.

As you can see, the definition of a woman could never be appropriately summed into only one word. God created women with the ability to do everything a man can do and more, when He added a special privilege that she alone can experience. This privilege is one of the highest honors on this planet: the honor of carrying, sustaining, and giving birth. Even though women were not designed to be physically as strong as men, their intelligence and spirit are equal. God, being omnipotent and omniscient, never wanted man and woman to compete, to compare each other, or to misunderstand His perfect design for marriage. Therefore, He placed all of the woman’s abilities in a softer, gentler, more delicate, and awesomely more beautiful yet powerful vessel. This is confirmed in 1 Peter 3:7: “giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life.” A wife has many strengths; some of her greatest strengths are her ability to speak a kind word in stressful situations, to bring a soft touch to a stiff neck, to command attention with just a look, to convert a house into a home, to weaken the strongest with a gesture, and to manage the many complexities of the household and her husband’s vision as she strives to become one with her husband.

History has gifted humankind with many great examples of wonderful women and wives who used their skills, talents, and influence to make lives better. Examples of these wonderful women are reflected in God’s word. Hannah prayed for a child and promised God that if He blessed her, she would dedicate her child to Him. After Hannah dedicated him, her son became the prophet Samuel, and God continued to bless her and her husband (1 Samuel 1,2). Tabitha (also known as Dorcas) is another example.

## GOD'S SACRED ESTABLISHED DESIGNS AND INSTITUTIONS AND SATAN'S COUNTERFEITS

In creating this World, God began with a plan. He executed His plan by calling Earth into existence and by designing and forming what He wanted on earth. Then He established a few institutions to bring order to His creations. His process teaches us that it is easier to have order, even in the creation of our own homes or lives, when we start with a plan for order. God's designs, order, creations, and institutions were established to give God glory, sustain life, and give man and woman a fruitful life of love, peace, joy, faith, patience, and purpose. Without order, there is chaos, stress, and destruction. God's word explains that our fight is not with each other. Mankind is fighting against an unseen adversary who is using his influences to destroy God's established designs and institutions by countering God's word and distorting His order. Let's explore a few of God's established designs and institutions to recognize how the adversary is working to dismantle them.

### **God Created the Earth and Its Life-Sustaining System**

The Earth was without form, and God made one land mass surrounded by sea (Genesis 1:1). He also made the light: sun, moon, stars, and firmament (Genesis 1:1–6).

Your adversary does not have the power to create something from nothing; he only has the power to deceive, lie, and tempt men and women with his negative influences. He has no real power, but his methods have proven to be effective against those who are not connected to the power of God.

### **God Created Time**

God lives in infinity, so time is never an issue for Him. Since man lives a finite life, God had to create time for man's existence. After creating the earth, the next thing God did was create two light sources to brighten up the Earth and

establish time. He called the time from evening to morning a day. However, to give time order, God divided time into days, weeks, months, and years. It is amazing how intricately our system works to produce accurate time and seasons. The earth spins on its axis every 24 hours (a day) while simultaneously rotating around the sun every 365 days (a year) as the moon simultaneously circles around the earth approximately every 30 days. On a minuscule scale, if one were to use his or her imagination, it is like the gears on a clock (a wheel in a wheel in a wheel), only the connections are invisible. There is no way to get that type of order and precise coordination from no order or chaos unless God is organizing the chaos (Genesis 1:14).

#### WHAT IS LOVE?

*And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.*

—1 John 4:16–17

The question was asked, What is love? The scripture's simple answer is that God is love, as recited in 1 John 4:8, 16. If God is love, then love is the most powerful force in our universe. It also means that love cannot be confined or fractioned out like a finite piece of pie because it is infinite; there is always more than enough. Similar to a round circular container that encompasses a pie, the circle never ends. Our love is made perfect when we dwell in God and God dwells in us. This confirms that perfect love will always include God because it is the standard from which we were created.

Based on God's word, one can deduce that if God is absent from love, it is not love at all. It is a finite counterfeit or hybrid consortium of intellect, flesh, and instinctual emotions, which breaks down to one's conditional desire. To keep the terminology simple, let's call this carnal, self, or flesh love, which

produces conditional, selfish, or lustful types of interactions. However, to really understand any biblical verse referencing God's love, one must have an intimate relationship with God, which makes it even more challenging and, at times, misleading for the average worshipper. In our joyful journey of worshipping God, many of us have gotten comfortably complacent and have been duped into worshipping Him carnally in our own strength and will. We have not surrendered all of ourselves to make room for God to dwell in us, which means we have not made the transition to worshipping God in Spirit to incorporate His perfect love. This is why so many wonderful, kind, well-intentioned, good people live in unhappy, contentious marriages that sometimes end in divorce.

There are songs that talk about fifty-fifty love; undoubtedly, those songs are representing flesh love. Unfortunately, that type of conditional love appears to be the basis for many marriages today. The fact that 50% of any love can only work 50% of the time until it does not work at all should not be a surprise. Whenever a spouse gives less than 100% to their marriage, it creates a domino effect that cascades toward unhappiness. Think about it. If a marriage can still have challenges while experiencing 100% of carnal love, imagine what less than 100% will do to that type of marriage. Let's compound that knowledge with the fact that men's and women's perceptions of the love they give or receive are almost never the same. For example, if a wife feels her husband is only giving 90% of himself to the relationship, the conditional response of carnal love will justify her giving 90% in kind. However, the husband will interpret her concept of 90% as only 80%, and he then decides to give her his interpretation of 80%. Unfortunately, the wife construes his 80% as 70% and decides to match it with her perspective of 70%. Do you see the downward spiral carnal love produces? Anything less than 100% of love can open the door to all types of misinterpretations and temptations in a marriage.

## THE TRUE MEANING OF SUBMIT

*Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour*

*of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*

—Ephesians 5:21–25

Depending on where you live and how you were raised, the word *submit* has the ability to conjure up many types of emotions and possibly instigate a few disagreements or heated debates. For some women, the word *submit* is an emotional driver, a major turn-off, and can raise the hairs on a few necks; but for others, it conjures images of safety and protection. Conversely, for some men, that word is a badge of honor, used to bring order and control, while for others, to submit bears the greatest responsibility of leadership and service.

Similar to the words *I love you*, the word *submit* has been hijacked by the world and has become grossly distorted, misrepresented, and confusing to many. However, there is no ambiguity in the way that God uses the word *submit*. In referencing His relationship with us, God says in James 4:7, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” God uses the same word in referencing the family relationship of the husband and wife in Ephesians 5:18 when He says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.” This does not mean that men are smarter than women; nor does it mean that a husband should not listen to his wife. There are occasions when the husband can be so focused on something that God will use his wife to help redirect him.

So what is God really saying when He uses the word *submit* in the relationship between the husband and wife? While the wife is to submit to her husband as the head of the house in all things, the husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. As specified in Ephesians 5:23–26, the husband is to be the savior of the relationship for his wife and family, as Christ is the head of the church and the savior of the body. In loving his wife,

the husband, in word and deed, submits to her need to be saved, to be sanctified, and to be cleansed by bathing her in the refreshing living water of God's word. The goal here is to submit to God so their union as one flesh will be without spot or wrinkle.

This means that husbands are to be an example as they guide their wives in prayer, study, faith, and understanding for a deeper relationship with the Savior. A man walking in his own strength cannot accomplish this directive because in his own strength he can only respond within the limits of his own flesh. It is impossible to be a savior to your wife and marriage without having access to the saving power of your Creator. The husband needs the spiritual power of God to strengthen and broaden his shoulders to carry the weight of the relationship's challenges and difficulties as Christ bore the weight of our sins.

As husbands draw closer to God with their wives in truth, they will experience the submitting of themselves "one to another in the fear of God" as specified in Ephesians 5:21. The wife will submit to her husband's covering as the leader, and the husband will submit to his wife as his most cherished love and partner as they work together in mutual respect and love to remove negativity, pride, and arrogance from the relationship. A relationship rooted in love will never cause anyone to live in fear of anything because perfect love removes all fear as expressed in John 4:18. The world's fear is designed to divide you from God and isolate you from your spouse, leaving you to feel alone and misunderstood. It is liberating to understand that the fear of God draws you closer to Him and your spouse, and His perfect love removes your carnal fears.