
RP Christians Sidebar Compendium
Full Sidebar Compilation

compiled by u/RPChristof - please direct typos or updates to my inbox

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RP Christians Sidebar Compendium

Single Digits - Advice for Singles

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1 Is Sex Outside of Marriage a Sin? An Official Stance.

This issue has come up countless times since this sub started, and I suspect it will keep coming up. For the purpose of enforcing Rule 7, let me be clear: any encouragement that someone engage in sex outside of marriage will be deemed a rule violation, the comment will be removed, and the person potentially temp or permabanned, depending on the context.

That said, legitimate conversation about the following are still perfectly acceptable: (1) whether or not it is actually sinful, (2) why God or the church believe it is sinful, (3) the practical and spiritual ramifications on life if one side or the other is true (ex. if it weren't sinful, let's explore what that would look like), etc.

Old Testament

The first thing to note is that marriage itself is defined by two things: (1) two people becoming one flesh (i.e. sex) and (2) a mutual covenant. The mutuality of that covenant in biblical times didn't even have to be between the people having sex - it could have been between the groom and the bride's father, for example. All that matters is that there is sex and a covenant.

Exodus 22:16-17 is a great example of this. The ordinary flow was bride price \rightarrow marriage \rightarrow sex. If someone violated this order by skipping straight to sex, he was obligated under the Mosaic law to go back and fulfill the first two, thereby legitimizing the sexual conduct through the bride price and marriage. Even if the marriage was refused (i.e. no covenant), the bride price for a virgin still had to be paid. This should make it clear that at least for Israel's society before the time of the Kings (i.e. when God made the laws rather than man), it was considered a violation of the law to have sex with someone outside of a (1) bride price and (2) marriage.

Note that this doesn't read like, "Park anywhere you want, as long as you're willing to pay the parking ticket." It's more like, "It is against the law to park there. If you do park there, you will have to pay a parking ticket." To that end, Exodus 22:16-17 is not an authorization to have sex outside of marriage as long as you're willing to pay the price; it's a condemnation of the practice, the penalty for which is the bride price and an obligation into marriage.

I should also note that I lean toward the view that if two people intentionally and with consent engage in becoming one flesh, then this intentional consent satisfies the "covenant" component. Accordingly, "premarital sex" isn't really even a thing - it's more "pre-ceremony sex." The reason I lean toward the view (I can still be persuaded otherwise) that intentional consent implies a covenant is because the act of becoming one flesh is clearly reserved for marriage (as this entire post demonstrates), and thus an intention to engage in such an act implies the covenants that are associated with the marriage context within which the sex is meant to occur. It's like going to the bar and ordering a drink. The context of your behavior implies that you understand and are bound to the covenant of paying for that drink. It is a contract by conduct (which is recognized even under most every modern legal jurisdiction and not just in ancient Israel) rather than by express words. Accordingly, if two people try to engage in sex without having a ceremony, they should be held to the legal requirements of marriage (under God's law, not man's) and treated as though they are married. This, if true, resolves the entire debate about premarital sex in full - because there would be no such thing as premarital sex, except in the case of non consensual sex.

New Testament

Now, there are several other OT passages I could dive into, but I don't like delving too much into the Mosaic law because that was really only applicable to Israel. Given that I'm not an Israelite in the time of Moses, there are certainly principles I can learn about God from the laws he established, but they are not by any means binding to me today as a non-Israelite. So, what else does the Bible say?

Jesus' framing of the issue is fairly telling. He gives the famous "except for porneia" line after which

the disciples marvel at the severity of the restriction. Accordingly, this concept of porneia - whatever it means - is not meant to be interpreted in a way that makes it easier to get divorced. That is; Jesus meant a very narrow thing when he said that, which would cause the disciples to have the sharp reaction they did. But more interesting is that Jesus' response to the conversation is to skip straight to indefinite celibacy, as if those are the only two options. Either you get married, or you remain celibate. We can't really read a middle-ground in the way Jesus is talking about this. This tells us that Jesus' frame of mind was that sex outside of marriage is sin.

In 1 Cor. 7:8-9 Paul says that the unmarried and widows should actually stay single. However, if two people are burning with passion for one another, it is better to marry. If they were able legitimately to have sex without getting married, given Paul's extremely strong language in the rest of this chapter against marriage, I can't imagine Paul would have recommended marriage in that situation when "sex while staying single" was an option. This tells us that Paul's frame of mind was that sex outside of marriage is sin.

Neither of them were quoting the old testament LAW when citing these conclusions or establishing the context for expressing their frame of mind. Jesus cited the order of creation as the context for his assertion and his only reference to the law was in response to a question that was asked - and then he creates a direct contrast from his position from the technical legal conclusion, demonstrating that the OT law is not the basis for his opinion and mental framework on the issue.

It is also interesting, of course, that prostitutes were condemned as sinners. Most prostitutes' only crime was that they had sex outside of marriage. We're not talking about bestiality or objectophilia or other perversions, for which they would not have been paid. We're simply talking about sex outside of a marriage context - and yet they were considered sinners. We don't see Mary Magdalene going back to her old ways after finding Jesus. 1 Cor. 6:15-18 actually notes a clear imperative not to have sex with a prostitute, stating that this would be like trying to unite Christ with her. Paul didn't contemplate that the prostitute might be a Christian because he assumes that any Christian would have repented from prostitution (i.e. a lifestyle of sex outside of marriage), further evidencing Paul's mental framework regarding sex outside of marriage while writing his epistles.

Reflecting the Image of God

Direct passages aside, there's also a general spiritual framework for understanding the issue. As Ephesians 5 informs us, the husband-wife relationship is parallel in scripture with the relationship between God and his people (today: Christ-church, but it also applied in Israel, per numerous OT passages). Accordingly, if we want to understand appropriate boundaries for physically reproductive acts (i.e. sex), we can look to the example God sets for us in how he engages in spiritual reproduction.

Simply put: God does not reproduce with non-believers. Matthew 7 makes it clear: "No bad tree produces good fruit." We do see God using non-believers for his purposes, but we don't see the Spirit indwelling them for evangelistic intent with any success. So, if a man were to enter into a woman in a reproductive act, this would violate the parallel image of God that our physical conduct should be reflecting about His character.

Now, one could easily argue, "That's why we use protection - that way we're not producing fruit outside of marriage" and that the "having kids within marriage" concept is what's really spiritually protected. But this fails to do justice to the effort involved and the uncertainty associated with many forms of "protection." We don't see God indwelling with a non-believer at all - not in the same way he does with believers, at least. We see an external drawing toward himself and subtle nudges in appropriate directions. But when Romans 8:9 references an indwelling Holy Spirit, that's only for believers who are known as Christ's bride - and by extension, a man entering into a woman is only for his bride.

Don't Fall Into the Linguistic Trap

Some will try to argue that the Greek and Hebrew words in the passages usually referenced regarding premarital sex are more general terms for "illicit sexual activity," and don't specifically refer to premarital sex, and therefore premarital sex isn't explicitly rejected. This fails for two reasons.

First, there are lots of things not directly mentioned in the Bible, which we know to be sinful today. In fact, the Bible contemplates this in Romans 1 where it says that the person with the depraved mind "invents new ways of doing evil." Watching videos of child pornography on the internet didn't exist in biblical times, but it certainly would have fallen under some other category of sin, including "illicit sexual activity." I can hardly imagine anyone making a case that posting videos of minor children engaging in sexual activity on the internet does not fall into the category of "illicit sexual activity." Virtually everyone agrees about this, right? So, who decides what falls under *porneia* (or other words used for "fornication") and what doesn't? It seems arbitrary for someone to determine that child porn does, but premarital sex doesn't. What standard is being used to create that distinction?

Second, and in partial response to the above, it matters what people would have understood by the words being communicated at that time. We must assume that Jesus believed his intended audience would understand what he meant when he used certain words. This is clear from Matthew 13:13-17, where Jesus says directly that there are some people who he doesn't want to understand what he's saying, but others who he does intend to understand plainly. We have no reason to believe that his disciples were among the crowd he intended to confuse with his words when he talked about sexual immorality. So, what would these people have understood by the word *porneia* and other other such words associated with premarital sex? They would have known the common use of those words at that time, which includes premarital sex as being within the scope of the word. This is evidenced by countless literary texts including those outside the Bible which utilize those words to reference sex among non married persons. We cannot ex post facto remove a common understanding of a word in one time period and say, "Well, today we don't mean it that way, so the meaning of the Bible changed when our human dictionaries changed." Whether premarital sex is considered "illicit" today has no bearing on whether it was considered *porneia* 2,000 years ago.

Conclusion

There are, of course, countless other arguments that I do not have the time or interest to go through. However, for the purpose of this sub: premarital sex will be deemed "sin" and it will be a rule violation for anyone to recommend it.

If anyone wants to debate the merits of this position, be my guest. However, in the absence of a retraction, this rule remains.

That said, there is also great grace and love for those who have engaged in premarital sex. The Bible gives incredible judgment and condemnation against those who continue in willful, defiant, unrepentant sin ... so don't go there. But if it's part of your past, it's part of your past. We'll take you as you are in the face of repentance and never look back, except to the degree that your past may have practical (as opposed to spiritual) ramifications on your future.

2 Getting Laid Like A Christian

2.1 Part I

Turns out I have far less time than I'd like to have to dedicate to writing. That said, I figured it was better to post something (even if not fine tuned) than nothing at all. The following is based on my own experience. I hope this generates discussion if nothing else.

You are single and want to get laid. If you didnt, you wouldnt be here.

Rule 1: You are not seeking to befriend, date, court, or even marry a woman. Those are simply the means to an end: sex.

It is vital to keep the end goal in mind.

This is lost on many and is actively discouraged in some circles. But it matters. For some messed up reason Christians feel like their interactions with the opposite sex have to be entirely asexual. Thats stupid and counter-productive. Sexual attraction is not generated through sanitized interactions, but by playful and confident frame. That doesnt mean go around verbally groping everyone with boobs. Simply put, purity is not the same thing as asexuality. If you are on a coffee date (how stereotypical) with a hot single Christian woman, you should be running game and actively building sexual attraction. If she goes to the bathroom and notices her panties are soaked, youre doing it right.

All of the tactics of game apply. You should be teasing her, dropping a neg or two if she is especially attractive or full of herself, and holding concrete frame as she throws tests at you, laughing as you turn it back on her with a pressure flip. Just because a girl is a Christian doesnt mean her vagina works differently.

Should you test for theological compatibility? Should you verify she is wife material? Yes, of course. But that can be later down the line. Start with getting her attracted to you.

What if you generate a lot of attraction and she pushes boundaries? What if she wants you to sleep with her? Good. Shes a woman. Thats what they want (even the Christians women) in the presence of alphas. She will probably screw you enthusiastically if you marry her. Dont buckle. Brush her off with a smirk and make her keep qualifying herself to you. She will have to earn her way into your domain, your heart, and your pants. She will appreciate it more if she works for it anyway.

My wife, a Christian, occasionally was tempted with desire to have sex with me before we got married. I smirked and told her no each time. Sometimes Id tease her even more before pulling away and telling her that we wouldnt until we got hitched. I explained that my mission was more important than her. It made her wet. Her respect for me grew tremendously, even though it frustrated her too. Was it hard to turn down a horny, willing, foxy woman? Not really. I was firmly living in my own frame. Failing to resist temptation is simply breaking your own frame and succumbing to hers.

Did that make her less of a Christian? No. They are the weaker sex. She was behaving the way women should. They want sex. She was playing the cards God dealt her: seduction. Women are temptresses, praise be to God! You dont want a shrew without a sex drive of her own.

Think about it. This is why married men so often struggle with porn. They thought getting married would provide an outlet for sexual release and they would be fulfilled sexually. Perhaps that is how it went at first. Then the sex got stale. She started to give starfish sex. Even if she wouldnt refuse him, but she wouldnt initiate. Even if she initiated, it was out of duty, not desire. Then the husband sees a virtual library of women who are not only willing, but enthusiastic and euphoric about sex. Thats the real allure. Thats the catch: unlike the wife who tolerates sex, the pixel vixens all but beg you to plow them because they love it. Thats what you actually wanted all along, but you settled or let things get stale.

Dont misunderstand. I am not advocating for porn. I am simply explaining why it is so alluring for men, even the otherwise happily married kind. I am also not suggesting that a stale marriage bed will always remain that way. It can turned around by men stepping up to the plate. That said, you can make it far easier on yourself by being a high quality man and not settling for the first pair of legs willing to open for you, if only you sign on the dotted line and bind yourself to her for the rest of your life.

Dont make stupid trades.

So how do you find these magical unicorns (hot Christian women who want sex for their own pleasures sake)? That is a subject for a future post, but the first step is embracing your sexual urges and interacting

with women and intentionally generating sexual attraction.

2.2 Part II

In my previous post I went over Rule 1: *You are not seeking to befriend, date, court, or even marry a woman.* Those are simply a means to an end: sex.

I explained that having this clear goal in mind clarifies your mission and informs your interactions with the single Christian hotties (SCH) you are attracted to. So the question remains, where do you find these elusive SCH?

”Hot, Single, or Christian. Pick Two.”

If youve spent any time in church recently youve probably felt like you were faced with this annoying question. The hot girls and usually taken or not Christian. One of the reasons I find RPChristians to be a useful sub-community in the greater RP realm is because we Christians are faced with some long odds unique to people of faith.

How Rare is Rare?

Especially those of particular denominational preferences. For example: of the 320 million citizens of the United States, the Association of Religion Data Archives counted approximately 66 million members of main-line and evangelical churches. Only about 5.8 million were Reformed. So if you are a Reformed Christian in the United States, your pool of like-minded folks is roughly 1.8% of the population.

It gets worse.

You have to divide that number roughly in half because, limp wristed pansy liberal Christians aside, we dont marry other dudes. So we are talking about 0.9% of the population. Ouch. Then you have to take out the women who are already married, too old for you, and too young (edit: as in, below the age of consent), and you are left with a very small pool indeed. Oh, dont forget to take out the ones who you arent even attracted to.

This is some dirty back of the napkin sort of math, but the point is clear: we are talking about a very small subset of the population. See this¹ comment by /u/ruizbujc for a more precise analysis.

So who is ready to go unicorn hunting?

Pre-Requisites

Before diving into the topic of tracking down such a rare species, I need to clear something up. With this post I am going to assume that you:

- understand your own faith and have your own strong theological convictions
- have read the side bar(s)
- begun lifting and have gotten your fitness in order
- improved your overall appearance by dressing well
- figured out your hygiene and stopped smelling like rancid mule carcass
- killed off stupid unattractive habits like slouching, self-deprecating talk, picking your nose, etc etc
- built up a stable financial platform from which to launch your attack on life
- got your responsibilities in order and cleaned up your domain

¹https://www.reddit.com/r/TrueChristian/comments/3s17lr/do_dedicated_christian_women_still_exist_out_there/cwtr1hu/

- have practiced social interactions and built up a healthy social network
- have a good handle on intermediate game

If you havent done these things, you should stop reading this and go get it figured out. I may write about some of those topics in the future if I feel like I have something unique to add, but honestly others have done a great job dealing with those topics at length. No need to re-invent the wheel. Seriously though. Go figure it out. You dont have to be a master RP Jedi, but If you arent in a fairly solid position in those areas you arent going to attract Mrs. Unicorn even if you do find her. Dont go hunting if you dont know how to shoot a gun.

Warning: Christians are especially prone to oneitis and must guard against it. Because of the extreme mate scarcity of SCHs, Christian men are especially prone to overly fixating on one woman. It can be difficult to have an abundance mentality when there isnt much in the way of real abundance. We will talk more about it, but keep it in mind that you must be aware of oneitis much more than the frat bro who can go pump any other willing broad without losing sleep.

Lastly, dont get your panties in a twist because I am not offering the usual Christian platitudes: Just pray about it! Im sure youve heard more than enough of those and I am not interested in offering them. Yes, pray about it. Yes, read your Bible. Yes, talk to your pastor. Duh.

With all that said, lets talk strategy. The following is a series of tactics in no particular order. Consider these tools. Apply the ones that make sense to your situation.

Change Your Geography

In the famous words of Flo Rida, Where them girls at? Seriously. If you are a Catholic, and live in Tennessee, the least Catholic state in the United States (3,504 Catholics per 100,000 people) you need to get the hell out and move to somewhere like Massachusetts where there are almost 13 times more Catholics (44,905 per 100,000). Or you can literally get the hell out and repent of your erroneous doctrine and swim the Tiber. Happy belated Reformation Day.

In all seriousness, your geography has a massive influence on your ability to find a wife. You have no room to moan about not finding a SCH if you live in San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, or a similar unchurched city. After all, Abraham had to do some geography hacking to find a wife for Isaac.

Change Your Social Network

You can only make one first impression. How you present yourself to someone the first time will, so some degree, act as an anchor that can be difficult to change. If youve been involved in the same church, friend group, bible study, etc. for any length of time, there is a good chance you have a label of some kind. If you are seen as the desperate to find a wife thirsty guy, the barely makes ends meet guy, or some other negative image guy, this will play heavily against you.

The odds are, if youve done any sort of self-improvement while a part of the group, they will still see you as the guy you used to be. People hate change, even positive change can be difficult to accept because it is uncomfortable. Even those who want to see that change and celebrate it cant entirely cleanse their previous image of you. No matter how long you know them, some part of their image of you will be the guy who used to be. That is the anchoring effect working.

Imagine you have that image at your Bible study or church. A new SCH attends. She sees you and finds your well dress, confident, muscular self to be very attractive. Then she starts getting to know the other girls in the group. You know, the ones who cringed when they saw you crash and burn with several other women in church. They know who you really are and begin to tear down the attraction the new SCH felt. Later, when you confidently and winsomely approach her, she sees the old you even though she never met him. The worse you were as a beta loser, the harder this group think will work against you. Women are creatures who like to outsource their thoughts and conclusions to others. They resist making their own

decisions, so when a group of other women give them prepackaged judgments about you there is a very good chance they will latch onto the opinions of the group rather than form their own conclusions.

In a nut shell this is just the flip side of social proof. If this is holding you back, find other groups. You dont have to forsake your friends, but if youve worked a scorched earth campaign on your image with your friend group you will be better served finding more fertile soils to farm.

Lead Something at Church

You dont have to join the pastorate to get noticed, but having some sort of leadership role that contributes value to the people of God is both helpful to the kingdom and a manifest demonstration of your ability to exercise dominion. Whether it be the sound team, worship, a Bible study, or community outreach, if you take charge of something it wont go unnoticed. At the very least your pastor will be happy. Ive never met a pastor who didnt want more men to step up and help lead.

Look Outside Your Denomination

Theological differences DO matter. They can have a huge impact on your marriage and life. That said, women are designed to adopt the frame of a man if his is stronger. If you are rock solid on your theological position and can both defend it and make a good case for it, there is a good chance that she can and will be persuaded to change her mind. She is like water and will adopt the shape of the vessel she is poured into. Dont go do something stupid and marry someone involved in a cult or heretical schismatic group, but if she has some Pentecostal leanings but you are a cessationist, odds are you can persuade her.

My best friend married a woman who had been a Jehovahs witness before they dated. Another friend is a staunch Calvinist and his wife had grown up distinctly Arminian. Due to strong frame and God's grace both women are now theologically aligned to their men. Men lead, women follow. If she cant, next her before you commit.

Note that I am NOT advocating for missional dating. That said, Ive seen it work when the man had impeccable frame and she was at least open to matters of the faith. In fact, my wife just looked over my shoulder and read that last line and said well yeah, you did that with me and sauntered away with a smirk.

Get Involved In Non-Church Groups and Activities

Youd be surprised at who youd meet. Speaking of my wife, I met her before she was a Christian. I was swimming at the local watering hole and met her. We talked for awhile, I applied some minor game and got her contact info, just because. We didnt really communicate until she started attending church about six months later. Long story short, she eventually became a Christian and we got married 5 years ago. This is a story in and of itself, but the bottom line was that God can do some great stuff with people who were once strangers. Even if you dont find anyone of spouse potential, you will improve your social network, get a chance to practice your social interaction and game, and improve your perceived abundance.

Improve Your Perceived Abundance

You and I know the reality that finding your unicorn is a daunting task and the deck is stacked against you. But, like a skilled magician you can use some illusion to your advantage. One core RP truth is that abundance mentality is crucial for success with women. More than just a mentality, actual abundance is needed. As mentioned before, women (and many guys) prefer to outsource their judgments about other people, especially new people. If a woman walks into a room and sees a guy confidently chatting up a couple hotties and making them laugh, she will make a positive assessment of his overall desirability. After all, if those two gorgeous women are enjoying his company, he must have something special to offer, right? This is called pre-selection and it has a compounding effect: the more women who are into you, the more women will be into you. This is a good feedback loop to get working for you.

The magic to pulling this off is that it doesnt matter if the women who are into you are wife material or not. The SCH doesnt know that youd never actually marry the woman who is flirting with you, all she

knows is that she finds you desirable and so should she. Women love competition and the feeling of getting the shiny toy that all the other women fought her for. When I met my wife, I was leading a large young adult Bible study group at my church. There were about five other women there who were obviously interested in me. In addition, there were several attractive non-Christian women that I knew who were, lets just say very forward in showing their interest in me. To this day my wife gets a little gleeful thinking about me picking her over them.

As somewhat of a side note, this demonstration of abundance helped to establish a foundational level of dread in my marriage. My wife knows I get attention from attractive women and acts to keep me focused on her. She loves being the one who gets my attention because she knows that it is highly valued by others. I can say from experience and observation that it is far better to marry out of abundance than to marry out of scarcity.

Use The Internet To Your Advantage

Dont date online. LDRs are hell and I do not advise them at all. That said, the internet is a great sorting tool to meet people to be with in real life. Ive never used dating websites or met women online, but Ive known others who have been successful in this area. Most often I see people who met in special interest groups on Facebook or other social media get together as they already share a common, often rare, interest.

If I were advising someone thinking about going this route, I would suggest that the key to success is meeting them in person as soon as is reasonably possible. Once youve established a real life connection, treat them like you would any other person who you met offline. The online route is efficient in that it helps screen out incompatible people, but it can be costly. Be prepared to spend some time and money traveling to meet up.

When meeting them, assuming you find them attractive and want to pursue more, I would imagine you want to work it similar to a One Night Stand in that the goal is to quickly generate high levels of attraction. After all, you can get to know someone at a distance, but attraction is built in person and you only have a small window. You want to leave them wanting more of you, because it is that desire for more that would motivate a change in geography to be more suitable to being with you. You dont want to be the one chasing them, let them chase you. Beyond these initial thoughts on using the internet, I have little to offer as it isnt hasnt been in my experience. If you have some gems of advise to share, please do so in the comments.

Import

There is at trope of sorts that exists in the manosphere that to get a good wife you have to go to eastern Europe or some far flung exotic jungle to find a woman who hasnt been infected by feminism. While it is sort of overblown, there is something to be said about going hunting abroad. You gain all the benefits of changing geography and social groups in quick order. Plus, despite some negativity, Ive found that Americans are an exotic commodity elsewhere in the world. When Ive traveled, Ive found that people are immediately fascinated by me when they find out I am American. It is an easy icebreaker and the conversation can go anywhere. It can be loads of fun.

A friend of mine met his wife overseas (both are believers). After a few trips back and forth and some emigration issue, she moved to the States and theyve been happily married for years. Again, this isnt something I can write about from my own experience, but I think this has a lot of potential.

Look For Younger Women

Last one for now. I strongly recommend finding a wife who is a few years younger than you, especially if you are young. If youve established your life at all, it is likely you will have more wisdom, income, and experience than her. This makes it very easy for her to adopt your frame. Since, as /u/Red-Curious often points out, good wives are seldom found and often built, a young wife is much more easily taught and molded to suit you. Plus she will likely have a lower n-count and the odds of finding a virgin sharply decrease as you look further up the age scale. As an added benefit, she will retain her youthful attractiveness longer into the

relationship.

There are certain risks with this strategy. While there is risk with any woman, there is a greater likelihood that women who married young will wonder what if about riding the CC and the fear of missing out on her younger years may rear up later in life. There are some things you can do to mitigate this, but know that the risk may be elevated. Overall, despite the risks, I am an advocate for this position as I think the guaranteed upsides outweigh the possible risks.

There are more strategies to consider, but this is good for now. The bottom line is this: if you haven't run at least some of the plays listed here, I don't want to hear you cry like a little girl about not finding a wife. Try harder.

3 Screening For A Wife

3.1 Part I: The Foundation

***Disclaimer:** AWALT remains true. There is no 100% effective way to screen for undesirable female behavior. All women come equipped with both hamster and wheel. That said, the following post provides a framework to help screen out candidates who are most likely to be disloyal or otherwise unsuitable for marriage.*

Assumptions

In this post I am assuming that you have already familiarized themselves with, and put into real practice, the general concepts of The Red Pill. I am assuming you know how to be attractive and not be unattractive.

- **Faith** - You know what you believe solidly and can comfortably share it with others
- **Fitness** - Sub 15% body fat (at least), intermediate level lifts, or otherwise "built" or "shredded" look.
- **Finances** - Able to live comfortably on your own income.

If you aren't thriving in these three areas, you need to focus on improving them and come back to this post later. Missing those benchmarks will all but guarantee you are only going to attract low-tier women who you wouldn't want to commit to anyway. Lastly, assuming you have the "3 F's" in check, I am assuming you are able to attract and game women. If you aren't that far along, don't worry about screening for a suitable wife yet. Go back to the sidebars then go out and practice. Skipping basic training and heading to the battlefield before you are ready is a great way to get your face shot off.

Foundation #1 - Mission / Worldview

A family member of mine used to be a bank teller. Part of her job was screening currency for counterfeit. Rather than teaching her what counterfeit bills look like, her instructor taught her what the genuine article looked like. By becoming intimately familiar with what genuine greenbacks looked like, she was able to easily spot and screen out counterfeit bills.

Developing a solid and well defined worldview and mission works similarly. The better you understand this world, and your mission in it, the more capable you will be to screen out those who do not match up with you. A wife is supposed to be a helper. You cannot determine whether or not she can be a helper to you if you do not know what you need help with.

Having a robust framework of thought and conviction on matters of religion, family, politics, economics, etc. is likewise imperative. The better developed your worldview (the interconnected nature of these and other topics) the easier it will be for you to determine if someone else's worldview is compatible.

Finally, the more well studied you are the more fascinating and mysterious you will seem to others, which can be very attractive. Throughout my life I've been accused of being a "mind reader" because I somehow "get"

someone better than they understand themselves within an hour of meeting them. This is a consequence of being well studied and being able to see how seemingly disparate thoughts intersect. More than a party trick, this allows one to make close connections quickly and screen people far more efficiently.

Developing Your Worldview:

I cannot supply you with your mission, that is ultimately between you and God. That said, here are some tips on developing a solid worldview:

Tip 1: Take a stand on hot button / controversial topics. What is your position on:

- Abortion?
- Pre-marital sex?
- Credo-baptism vs Paedobaptism?
- Pre-destination vs Autonomous free will?
- Capitalism vs Socialism?
- Statism vs Individualism?
- The death penalty?
- Is smoking marijuana a sin?
- Etc. etc. etc.

If you are decidedly undecided, fix that. Take a stand. Don't be dogmatic about it and be willing to entertain arguments against your belief. Ultimately what you believe about these and other "theoretical" concepts will be the concrete and screws that hold your frame together. Frame, as you should know by now, is everything. A woman, especially your future wife, will constantly test your frame. Better build it with formidable solid stuff like theology and philosophy than with pop-psychology and bubble gum. Taking stances on controversial topics acts as an early screen. If you are outspoken in your belief that feminism is cancer, SJW feminist snowflakes will melt when they encounter you and screen themselves out.

Tip 2: Consume quality information in copious amounts. Don't just read blog posts and reddit comments. As good and helpful as many of them are, often the richest content to be found is in books. Branch out from the sidebar. Search for the most influential books in human history for any given topic. I would recommend getting them as audio-books and play them with a player that allows you to control the speed. Start with 1.25 speed, then once you adapt, turn it to 1.5 speed. Continue to incrementally increase the speed until you are used to hearing content coming at you at 2 times speed. This not only allows you to consume twice as much information and get far better use of your time, but it will train your mind to think faster which will aid you on thinking on your feet in real world conversations. I have been listening to almost all of my audio book and podcast content at about 2.25 speed for the last several years and have benefited tremendously from it.

Tip 3: Ask questions of the smart people around you. You probably know people who have studied a given topic in detail that could help you shortcut your learning. Sometimes the hardest part of developing your worldview is not knowing enough about the topic to know what questions to ask. Talking to a real life person will help distill down years worth of study into a few hours, which will dramatically reduce your learning curve. For example, I have recently begun studying the Civil War and the events leading up to it. A friend of mine has a small library of books he has read on the topic. Just talking to him about it for a couple hours has given me a whole new framework that makes the topic infinitely more approachable.

Tip 4: Teach or debate your beliefs to deepen your understanding and conviction. By having to teach your stance, or defend it against someone who opposes it, you will gain a far deeper knowledge and conviction on the matter. Deficits in your understanding will be exposed which then allows you to go back and fill in the gaps with better information later. Whether it be faith, politics, or anything else of substance, do

this enough and you will be rock-solid confident in your worldview. Even without discussing the topics, the mental confidence this rock solid conviction creates will naturally come out in your interactions with others and confidence creates wet panties.

Tip 5: Change your mind when you are presented with better evidence. Slavish devotion to a belief is mere dogmatism.

It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it. -
Aristotle

That said, there comes a time when growth demands we abandon one belief for another. It is a humbling thing to admit that you were wrong, but there is power in knowing that you are more devoted to The Truth than an ideology.

Foundation #2: Abundance

Oneitis - An unhealthy romantic obsession with one person that leads to impaired judgement. Faults are overlooked and merits are exaggerated.

One cannot expect to reliably screen for a wife while experiencing oneitis. By focusing disproportionately on one woman, you experience tunnel vision and will lack the ability to objectively evaluate her faults and merits. Only by having viable alternatives will you be able to know for sure that a decision was reached out of reasonable evaluation and not out of skewed perception based on scarcity.

Imagine you were in the market to buy a car. Imagine that there was only one dealership in town, and that dealership had only one car in your price range. In such a scenario you are far more likely to overlook the vehicle's faults and settle. This is what scarcity does. What would any reasonable person do? They would expand their options (improve abundance) by looking at other towns and other dealerships. By expanding the range of viable options one positions themselves to make better decisions. This is basic economics: competitive markets provide more value at a lower price to the consumer. This is obvious on its face in the realm of purchasing a vehicle, but many fail to apply the same reasoning to their romantic efforts. Do not fall for the Disney fairy tale trap; there is no "one" until a ring is on the finger.

Not only will building abundance enhance your ability to make an informed objective decision, there is a compounding effect at play. A man who has several women interested in him reaps the benefits of social proof, pre-selection, and high-value status. Every woman attracted to him makes it more likely for additional women to be attracted to him. Abundance breeds abundance. Further, if a man has visible abundance when he selects a woman to marry, the marriage starts with a baseline level of dread. This baseline dread has an "anchoring" effect that works in the man's favor. She will always have the satisfaction of beating other women to *The Prize*(tm), but will know that the man didn't *have* to choose her and *could* replace her if he needed to. When I went exclusive with my wife, there were about six other viable women in our social circle who were clearly into me. Over five years later, my wife still gets giddy knowing she beat out the other women and has never doubted my high-status and ability to attract women, thus experiencing a low level dread that gets her panties wet to this day.

For the sake of brevity I will not elaborate here on how to build abundance. Perhaps that could be a future post if there is a demand for it. Suffice to say, the sidebar of this and other RP subs have plenty of material on the matter.

The following post will be less theory and much more practical in nature. (i.e., how to get her to reveal her thinking, how to assess her for consistency, etc.) Stay tuned.

3.2 Part 2: Methods

Disclaimer: AWALT remains true. There is no 100% effective way to screen for undesirable female behavior. All women come equipped with both hamster and wheel. That said, the following post provides a framework to help screen out candidates who are most likely to be disloyal or otherwise unsuitable for marriage.

Assumptions

In the previous post we looked at the two foundational elements that need to be in place before you are able to effectively screen for a wife; worldview (mission) and abundance. This second part post assumes you understand and are actively developing a robust worldview and are cultivating abundance. Once you've established options, the question we are seeking to answer is: how do I screen for the best viable option?

How To Screen Well

Before determining *what* to screen for, we need to discuss *how* to screen effectively. Effective screening requires collecting and analyzing relevant information about a potential candidate for a wife. You want this information to be as free from bias as possible. In the last post we covered how to protect yourself from your own bias (i.e., Oneitis) through abundance. Now we need to employ effective strategies for combating *her biasing* the information (i.e., pretending to be what she thinks you want her to be). There is no way to get 100% unbiased information, but with a thoughtful approach one can reduce the degree of bias considerably and garner enough reasonably objective information to make positive decisions.

Methods

The following is a list of considerations and techniques of gaining unbiased information to add to your tool belt. These skills, though fairly obvious and seemingly basic, can allow you to get a highly perceptive "read" on people. These skills extend beyond the Sexual Market Place and can give you an edge in the workplace, during interviews, and many other areas of life. In my career I have done hundreds (if not thousands) of interviews, and in another role I did some minor criminal interrogation. I used (and still use) these techniques frequently and can attest to their effectiveness. There are many more that could be added, these are simply ones that I have used to great effect; use what works, shelf the rest. Each item could be a post itself, so bare with the shotgun drive by. If you have questions, ask in a comment.

1. **Try not to let on to your own beliefs.** The less she knows about your own convictions, the less she can bias her answers in a way that she believes you will agree with. If a girl knows you are against abortion and says she is too, you cannot know if she is genuine or seeking your approval. On the other hand, if you've never indicated your stance and she says she opposes child murder, that is a much more reliable piece of data.
2. **Don't interview her.** Not only is it not sexy, but if she is interested in you and feels like you are interviewing her for the position of Wife / Sex Kitten, she will answer in ways that she thinks will please you. You don't want this. Don't rapid fire questions, space them out over time. Serious questions should be rare and on topic. Remember what she answers.
3. **Ask her the same questions again later.** By asking the questions again in a different setting and at a different time you can check for patterns of consistency. If she said she wanted a big family when you asked her around your friends, but then wants few kids, if any, around her friends, that is a Rosie O'Donald sized red flag.
4. **Watch what she does more than what she says.** This should be obvious, but actions speak louder than words. Words are cheap. If her actions do not line up with what she says, make a mental note of this as it can be a major data point. Sure, women often say one thing ("I like nerdy sweet guys") and then do another (Hooks up with bodybuilder Chad), there are degrees of inconsistency. If she says she is not a night person, but stays up super late to hang out with you, this is could be a positive inconsistency where she is adopting your frame. On the other hand, if she says she doesn't like it when guys objectify her but she constantly wears super sexy outfits that leave little to the imagination, this can be a red flag.
5. **Make sure your questions are organic.** If you are having a conversation about favorite foods, and you throw out a question about her political leanings, you will raise her suspicions that she is being interviewed. Also, who does that? Don't be a sperg.
6. **Hang out with her when she is inebriated.** This obviously depends on your theological convictions, but a little liquor can loosen the tongue and lower inhibitions to the point where she may be more honest than she otherwise would be. This is often best done in a group setting or in public to

prevent obvious sexual overtones. I've heard women admit amazing things after a couple drinks. If the woman you are screening becomes a completely different person when inebriated, you should be cautious. Sometimes people loosen up in a positive way, other times they may shock you with their "real" uninhibited self.

7. **Be less interested in what she believes, and more interested in why she believes it.** While women tend to be emotionally driven in their beliefs, logic, to varying degrees, still plays a significant role. The more logical a woman is, the easier her erroneous beliefs can be changed.
8. **Look for consistency in her "belief network".** If she believes animal cruelty is wrong, but abortion is okay, she isn't thinking coherently.
9. **Ask presumptive questions.** Don't ask, "Have you ever lied to someone you love?" but "What is the biggest lie you've told and got away with?" Don't ask, "Do you enjoy physical touch?" but "Where is your favorite place to be touched?" etc.
10. **Ask crazy / silly questions.** Keep it light, but pay attention. When she asks you in turn, answer in a silly way. "What would you outlaw if you were emperor of the world?" You: "Skinny Jeans!"
11. **Try to change her mind about something unimportant.** Is she teachable? If she can't be persuaded that The Foo Fighters is super over-rated and is actually a terrible band, can you expect to convince her of anything substantial?

What To Screen For

Now equipped with the screening tools above, we can turn to the question of what qualities to be screening for. This list could go on forever, but here are some of the big ones that are both high scope in importance and readily ascertained.

Desirable qualities

Low N Count This should go without saying, but women who aren't accustomed to riding the CC and engaging in promiscuous behavior are less likely to engage in such behavior in the future.

Teachability/Openmindedness In our day, perhaps more than ever, good wives are made, not found. You want to find a woman who is flexible enough to adopt your frame without too much difficulty or protest, but isn't immature and "tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes." (Eph 4:14).

Responsiveness to dread A woman who sees you as the prize from the get go and fears losing you will be much happier in marriage. Dread is a tool and the more responsive she is to it, the less of it you may need to employ. That said, overly jealous behavior is just plain annoying, so there can be too much of a good thing with this one.

Genuine Faith(tm) Duh. This is r/RPChristians after all. There are many ways to screen for this, but you can't know the genuine article if you don't have a good understanding of your own faith, so start there. Keep in mind that many women have Genuine Faith(tm) but may be less articulate in explaining doctrine. That's usually okay, but if they resist theological teaching be very wary.

Political agreeableness Leftism is evil. 'Nuff said.

Family oriented She doesn't need a desire to compete with Octomom, but she should like kids and want her own. Better yet is if she has a history of babysitting, being a nanny, or caring for younger kids. If she doesn't want kids or hates the idea of being a parent, next her.

Red Flags

Too numerous to list seriously, you'll know them if you see them. If you are unsure, post about it here and get outside perspective. If you have to ask, it's a good sign it's a serious red flag.

Finally, one quick rule of thumb when screening for a wife is this: "If it's not a 'Hell yeah!' then it's a no."

Happy hunting, may the Lord be with you.

4 Should Christians Care About Physical Attractiveness?

In a recent post u/macmeeler asked an interesting question: how much (should you) value physical attraction in dating? This is a great question and I wanted to post a full response. This is my opinion, so take it or leave it as you will.

Summary

Physical attractiveness in a potential spouse is extremely important for Christians, perhaps more so than for non-Christians

Body

Imagine you moved to a country and were going to buy your first house there. As you begin the process you are shocked to discover that you were only allowed to buy one house in your entire life, and that selling it or buying another would lead to a life long prison sentence. How picky would you be in that situation?

Though it is a poor analogy, it illustrates a serious point: Unlike first time home-owners who often buy a starter house, Christians who enter marriage dont get do-overs. Barring a few narrow circumstances laid out by in scripture (which vary somewhat depending on who you ask), divorce simply isnt a faithful option for the Christian. This should make us pause before rushing into a lifelong permanent commitment.

It gets worse. In the fictitious permanent home ownership scenario above, you can at least redecorate or remodel however you please. Not so with spouses. Unlike a house, a spouse has a will of their own and cannot so easily be renovated or reshaped. In many cases, unless you have a highly pliable spouse, who you marry is who you get.

Simply put: You cannot go into a marriage resting your hope that certain attributes in your spouse will change favorably. You have to decide on what is, not what may be.

Ever person has preferences in attributes in a spouse, and everyone will rank or weigh those attributes differently. For some, orientation towards family life or the desire to be a stay at home mother are highly desirable attribute in a potential wife. For such a person, settling on this issue and marrying someone who does not match this is likely to be utter foolishness. Certainly, no person is perfect. We are talking about two sinners pairing together after all; at some point everyone who marries settles. We all have a cross to bear, but in this area we do get some input on how much that cross weighs.

I knew enough about myself when I was dating to know that I place an inordinate premium on physical attractiveness and overall sexuality. I also knew how competitive I was. Healthy or not, I was aware that if I did not find a top tier wife in terms of looks, I would have always wondering what if? and questioning my decision. To bring back the house buying scenario, why settle for a shack when you know that with some effort you could secure the funds for a mansion?

Is this just vanity? Somewhat. But consider this: much of our outward appearance signals our inward self. This is what I mean:

Being overweight signals:

- Poor health and potential risks of expensive complications
- Doesnt value healthy living

- Will struggle keeping up with me in my hobbies
- Likely to pass on unhealthy genetics to my kids
- More likely to die young from preventable causes
- Lacks discipline in eating, exercise, or both
- Laziness, lack of concern for the value good health brings to a relationship

Ugly clothing / makeup signals:

- Unaware of social dynamics or conventions
- Lack of confidence
- Over-developed sense of shame; may indicate frigidity in the bedroom
- Laziness, lack of concern for the value good aesthetics brings to a relationship

Poor hygiene:

- Laziness, lack of concern for grossing the crap out of people around them
- Being gross and horrible in general (seriously, how hard is it to shower daily and brush your freaking teeth??)

You get the point. Being basically healthy and attractive has never been easier in the history of humanity, so why not expect that someone you are going to PLEDGE THE REST OF YOUR LIFE TO avails themselves of the opportunity? These outward attributes reveal inward realities that I care little for. Seriously, gym memberships are CHEAP. Learning how to eat and workout more effectively than 80% of the population takes like 30 minutes of googling and reading. Makeup, dental work, clothes, etc have never been cheaper or more accessible. The kind of woman who has no desire or drive to take advantage of the situation and put in even a modicum of effort is not the kind of woman I find myself interested in.

Am I being ridiculous? I dont think so. Seriously, a woman (or man) who wants to marry, but doesnt take steps to improve their physical attractiveness is saying this:

Uhm, yeah, so, despite it being easier and cheaper to be fit, well dressed, groomed, and generally attractive than just about ever before, I dont really want to bother with it. In fact, even though there are entire industries, YouTube series, even charities, designed with the express purpose to make the process of being attractive as easy as possible, its just too much for me. So heres what Im offering: pledge yourself, for your ENTIRE LIFE, to me to be your sole sexual outlet forever, forsaking all others no matter how attractive or motivated sexually they may be. Oh and this still applies even if you get jacked and model tier hot. In fact, I hope you do because that would be good for me because I know you cant ethically justify leaving me because you want to be faithful to Christ. How does that sound?

Screw that deal. Talk about not loving your neighbor.

Being unattractive and trying to find an attractive spouse is not only selfish and short-sighted, its a violation of the Golden Rule: treat others as you would have them treat you.

I plan to be fit, healthy, well dressed and groomed, and sexually vibrant. I like presenting that as a gift to my wife. Knowing this, I found a wife who would to the same in turn.

Bottom Line

So is sexual, physical, attractiveness important for Christians? Unless you really dont place a high premium on it as most guys do: yes it is.

Now a caveat: people age, disfigurement happens, and life doesnt always turn out as expected. That said, there is a world of difference ethically speaking between someone who is unattractive because of a maiming accident and someone who eats themselves to death. Someone who strives to maintain their attractiveness as they age, is not the same as someone who gains some baby weight and somehow never lost it decades later. Again, its about what externals reveal about internal character. I get that my wife and I are going to age. I am also highly confident that we will be fit and look good for our age.

Physical attractiveness is important and its okay to discriminate against spousal candidates based on it. Who knows, maybe some of the lazy folks in the congregation would get motivated if the lie of looks dont matter wasnt so pervasive.

Or maybe Im just an unsanctified jerk.

5 Social Influence And Defying Context

This originated as my first and only post on TRP (also posted on MRP) a few months ago, which was fairly well received, but for some reason I never actually posted it here. Anyway, given the request for content relevant for single guys, here's another one for you to dive into. It does talk about marriage issues too, but the overall concept is more useful for singles looking to meet new people.

In the last week alone I've had 4 or 5 guys approach me with issues where the root of their problem is their inability to defy context. Consider:

- "I really like this girl, but I can't come up with a good reason to start a conversation."
- "I really think a boundary needs to be set with my wife, but the issue is in the past, so I need to wait until it comes up again to talk about it."
- "I want to do something, but it would be out of character and people might think I'm weird."
- "I really do/don't want to do this, but it would be socially awkward or unacceptable for me to do/not do it."

These (and more) are signs of a person who is controlled by social constructs.

Social Influence Matters

Given the frequency with which I see this as an issue on RPChristians, I'm going to have to dive into this some more over there too, but social influence and the size of your social circle matters.

When I start mentoring guys one of the first things I tell them is that if they want to earn influence with people, they must advance their social network - and I'm talking in the real world, not on reddit or facebook. Social networking is how I make most of my money. It's how I advance my mission. It's how I increase my sphere of influence. It's how I dread my wife. Etc.

A guy once told me, "I'd like to meet more girls, but I'm just not good at initiating conversations. How can I have more girls in my social circle?" The answer seems too obvious: *Increase your social circle*. He replies, "But I'm not good at meeting new people?" I point to a couple sitting at the table next to us and said, *There you are - new people. Go introduce yourself*. He couldn't do it (at least not back then). "I can't, he says." *Why not?* "Because it would be weird."

What he meant was: "There's no context for me to talk to them."

The Non-Importance of Context

I have spent most of my life practicing the art of defying social norms when it would advantage me to do so. Don't get me wrong: **defying social norms absolutely can be disadvantageous to you in many circumstances**. But complying with social norms against your own interests can be equally disadvantageous. Why do we do it? Because it's "safe." Screw safe. Women don't want safe. Safe is not sexy.

Consider many of the Blue Pill PUA strategies. A lot of them revolve around creating context or leveraging an existing context. Why? Because they're too scared to break context. Examples: (1) Spill something small on her and try to clean it up, then start a conversation. (2) Bump into her, apologize, and start a conversation. (3) Take something innocuous going on in the room and use it as a context to start a conversation. The list goes on.

This happens in blue pill marriages all the time too. Examples: (1) Guy takes wife out on a date to create a context for sex afterward. (2) Guy puts on a racy movie/TV show or encourages his wife to read the Twilight/50 Shades books to create a context for his wife to get a little horny. (3) Guy starts massaging his wife's shoulders while they talk on the couch after dinner, hoping to transition that into sex. The list goes on.

Yes, context can be utilized for your advantage. But the one who has no qualms with breaking social niceties to get what he wants - that is an attractive man, not only to his wife and other women, but to prospective employers, reporters, social media junkies, and passive follower types all across the world.

What To Do?

One of the things I've recently started assigning guys to do: *Go start a 60+ second conversation with someone you've never met before and without context.*

One guy came back saying, "I had a few dates with girls I met online, and those conversations were over 60 seconds each," so he thought he'd done well. But that defeated the point of the exercise. He had context for the conversation. She expected him to talk to her on the date. I sent him back out to try again. The point wasn't for him to have conversations - it was to stretch him past his comfort zone. I wanted him learning to be comfortable engaging with people in new ways, whether it made sense to do so or not.

In my younger days this type of task was scary. In college and law school I started mastering it as an art. Today, I have no-context conversations with people almost every single day.

- In the elevator? *How's it going?*
- At the grocery store? *You're definitely going to want to pick up a box of these.*
- Walking down the street? *Nice day. Heading anywhere interesting?*

Yeah, people think I'm weird sometimes. More often they're thinking, "That was really cool that someone I don't know wanted to talk to me." Initiating without context often makes people feel good about themselves - especially if you employ charm in the midst of your context-defying conversations.

But even beyond making them feel good about themselves, it makes them feel good about you. They think, "Most people just stick to themselves, but that guy is actually interested in talking to people. He just does what he wants. I wish I could be like that." The phrase "I wish I could be like that" is a stone's throw away from, "I'll buy whatever he's selling." If I'm selling sex, she's buying.

After you've been doing this a while, you'll be surprised how many people you end up recognizing around town. I live in a suburb of 35,000 people. No matter what side of town I'm on, if I walk into a grocery

store there's about a 75% chance I'll run into someone who waves to me because they remember me from a past conversation, and maybe 50/50 that one of these people re-initiates a new conversation [and this is not counting the people who no-context initiate with me]. *THEY* are the ones initiating now. Why? Because they had a positive experience talking to me, even though the only other times I've talked to them have been at a restaurant or in a store at the mall or whatever. I once overheard one such acquaintance asking another, "Oh, how do you know him?" with the answer, "I don't really know, I just see him around a lot and we chat."

I suppose if I wanted to, I could really leverage this for some money-making opportunities. For now, it's enough that most places we go, my wife sees that people know me - and she wonders how. I'm not going to the movies with these people. I'm not going to meals. I'm not calling them on the phone. I'll let her hamster spin on that one.

What's Holding You Back?

Are you living the life you want? If not, what's stopping you? You ever just walk up to your wife and grab her crotch? "No! I could never do that. I have to kino her first. Then I've got to get her into bed. Then, once it's clear we're going to have sex, that's when I have **context** to grab her crotch." Screw context. If you want to do it, do it. Is it always going to be wise? Probably not. Oh well. Figure out discretion as you go.

Did she cross a boundary in a restaurant? You going to do something about it? "Not yet. We're in public. Strangers might see how I'm talking to her - that's a double-whammy. It's poor social etiquette to have a confrontation in public, and I can't let anyone know that I set boundaries on my wife's behavior." So, you decide to wait until you're home to bring it up, but the conversation has long since moved on and you think, "Well, things are going well now, so there's really no **context** to bring it up and it might spoil the mood, so I'll just let this one slide." Then you fester some resentment. If it's important to you, just bring it up. Screw social norms. Let the people at the table next to you gawk at the fact that you're not ashamed.

In fact, social norms are the constructs your wife utilizes to keep you in control. They're how she creates her expectations for the relationship. They're also what establishes a sense of monotony in many dead bedrooms because they make you predictable. If you learn to defy social norms, she will never know what to expect from you. That's exciting. That's sexy. That's what lets her know you're worth being with - because you'll do what others won't, which makes you far more suitable as a protector and provider. It simultaneously adds healthy instability and reliability in the relationship. Screw context, screw your wife.

6 Finding the Girl You Can't Keep Yourself From Banging

Someone recently PMed me about the single life. I know OZ has more of his incredible wisdom on the way for single men, but given that I just made this write-up anyway, I might as well share it more openly, with tweaks and adjustments to generalize and refine the content a bit.

Marriage Orientation

Are your life aspirations right now oriented toward marriage or away from marriage? There are all kinds of secular reasons for why you'll find an orientation away from marriage is ideal, which you can read about from TRP/MRP and the many comments by u/Whitified (not to say he doesn't have biblical reasons as well). Marriage laws, emotional complexities, risk factors, and all kinds of other things tell us that modern day marriage is a bad idea. But let's set that aside for now and just consider a biblical aspect.

I am an extremely firm believer in Matthew 6:33 - "Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you as well." In other words, if God wants it for you, then he'll give it to you ... if you seek His purposes first in your life. The implication is, of course, that if you're not seeking God, he's under no obligation to provide "all these things" to you. Jesus didn't end that verse with, "Or don't seek him, it doesn't really matter ... he'll still give you all that anyway."

1 Cor. 7 can in relevant part be summed up this way: *Don't look for a spouse because she'll distract you from your mission to God. If you're pursuing God first and find yourself about to engage in sexual sin with someone, then go ahead and get married. But even when you're married, you should live like you're single, fully devoted to God.*

For singles, take Paul's words to heart: don't pursue marriage at all. "Monk mode" should not be an X month thing for you. It should be with the mindset: "This will last until I'm in a context with someone where I know I won't be able to stop myself from sleeping with her for much longer." You're not pursuing a relationship (or even necessarily in one); you're pursuing God and finding yourself with women swarming you anyway - **BECAUSE** of your faithfulness to God.

This sounds counter-intuitive to many because you might secretly maintain your blue pill ideologies. It's hard to kick the idea that marriage is an ideal that should be sought after, as it was in the Old Testament times. But physical marriage was replaced by spiritual marriage to Christ. It and sex are no longer, in a post-Gospel world, the epitome of human existence. In fact, under current marriage laws, modern marriage doesn't even resemble Old Testament marriage anymore anyway, so even that is no longer a realistic ideal.

5 Steps To Finding A Wife (by not trying)

Here's my general guide for single guys:

ONE: Find a mission in life. I personally believe this mission must involve the calling to make disciples as Jesus did (as opposed to the modern dictionary/church definition of "discipleship"). For further reading: Master Plan of Evangelism, by Robert Coleman, and Lost Art of Disciple Making, by LeRoy Eims. Master Plan casts the vision, Lost Art gives you practical tools for getting it done. You can also ask me for a copy of my book on discipleship and I'm happy to share it free of charge. Also listen to the sermon Born to Reproduce, by Dawson Trotman, which can be found here (top link). It's old, but still probably the best sermon I've ever heard. I listen to it at least 2-3 times per year.

TWO: Start living your mission. Start making disciples in the context of your particular skill set, interests, hobbies, spiritual gifts, etc. For me, that involves a lot of TV watching. I kid you not ... I'm a writer and love different plot structures, so I utilize TV as an opportunity to hone my craft, but also to connect with friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. Watching shows together is an easy way to build a connection with someone and to start a conversation with new people.

This, of course, doesn't distract me from lifting, reading, studying/memorizing Scripture, working full-time, spending time with my kids, etc. It just means that I focus my hobby time into things that help advance my calling to make disciples, creating relational bridges that can be leveraged for the Gospel and raising new believers into spiritual maturity. About 95% of America is addicted to TV and I'm not aware of a more universal hobby, so it makes sense to fish with the widest net.

THREE: Develop orbiters. As you live out your vision I guarantee people will take notice. I have never known an active disciple-maker (especially in a college setting, as the original question-asker was in) whose efforts didn't get noticed. Join a campus ministry (Navigators is my preferred, if you have one locally) or local church and utilize their meetings as an opportunity to find believers to disciple. Let the leadership know what you're doing. That leader will likely partner with you, which will drastically increase your social network alongside his (which is usually large if he's good at his job), and place you in front of plenty of women (possibly even the object of your ONEitis - **NOT THAT YOU SHOULD CARE**) who will take notice of your spiritual maturity and lifestyle for Christ.

Once the orbiters start to take notice of what you're doing and the fruit your life is bearing for the Kingdom, they're going to want to do three things: (1) Follow in your footsteps, modeling discipleship in their own lives; (2) Learn from you on how to accomplish that; and (3) "Leech" off of/help in your successes in your own ministry for God's Kingdom. Note that this process will typically also naturally weed out most of the

women who don't take their faith very seriously, which means the types of orbiters you'll be amassing (as I did over a decade ago when I did this in college before I lost my alpha post-marriage) are the types of quality women you'll be looking for with low or 0 n-counts and who are likely to take their faith seriously. Admittedly, post-college the attractive draw of this becomes more difficult (a lot of the people you'll be attracting will be married), but it's not entirely negated in value. The real goal here is to be sorting out which women can actually be on board with your mission and not.

FOUR: Cultivate your orbiters. Your mission and lifestyle will be an inspiration to others, including those women, who will want to latch onto your life. In a TRP sense, it could be argued they want to "leech off of your spiritual credit." For example, I recently asked my wife why she's with me as opposed to some other guy (there was appropriate context for the question). Her answer: "Because I know on judgment day you're going to be the one God's impressed with and I want to be able to tell him I helped you do it." I'm not trying to toot my own horn, but to give you an idea of the female mentality - and this is *how spiritual marriage SHOULD be*. A great external reference (I'm a musical junkie) is the song A Part of That from the musical The Last Five Years (Anna Kendrick sings the song in the movie, which is on Netflix). Long story short, you're going to find plenty of women who want to "leech" off of your spiritual credit ... or more theologically accurate: "be your helper" alongside the mission you're on. For the record: the reason my marriage sucked for 7 years is because when I got married I made my mission secondary to my marriage. HUGE mistake. Again, 1 Cor. 7 says, "Let those with wives live as if they had none." That means putting your mission first. Read 108 on the sidebar (I think that's the "life-cycle of a relationship" post), as that goes into more detail on the point and why the mission cannot be something internal to the home, like making enough money or buying a big enough house. Your real goal in all of this part of the process is to be finding an orbiter (or many) who is on the same mission you are (which likely will be caused by your influence in the first place) and to work together in tandem toward the fulfillment of that mission.

- Let me be abundantly clear here. This coop mission is what creates the context for your being together. This is what will put you in proximity enough to start having those sexual desires for one another - not because you're chasing tail, as if you needed a relationship to keep you happy and fulfilled.

FIVE: Start the relationship. Once you've got your flock of orbiters/plates/whatever you want to call them, eventually you're going to start feeling strong sexual urges toward one of them that surpasses the rest. When you feel that, do your best to avoid it. If she keeps pursuing you and you're getting tempted into a lustful relationship, then start orienting yourself toward marrying her.

Orientation Of The Pursuit

Bear in mind that this is different from the blue pill ideologies put out by the church, which suggests that the man must pursue the woman. Note that the verses that imply God chasing after people are usually with his bride in a post-marriage context - and it's not in an "I was wrong! I neeeeeed you! Please come back!!!" kind of way, but a "Hey, get back here. Stop wandering off!" way. It's usually a pattern of, "So and so was in the fold, then they left, then God pursued them and they returned." even to that end, there are still several examples where God lets people walk away and doesn't necessarily pursue them relentlessly to force them back.

But before marriage we see things more like Psalm 14:2, "The Lord looked down from heaven ... to see if there are any who ... seek after God." Jeremiah 20:12-13, "You will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." Deuteronomy 4:29, "But from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him." 1 Chronicles 28:9, "If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever." 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people ... pray and seek my face ... I will hear from heaven" (really, every few chapters of 1/2 Chronicles has passages about this). Doing a word search is producing virtually all examples of us seeking God, almost never in the reverse.

Skipping to the NT ... Matthew 6:33, 7:7, 28:5; Mark 3:32, 16:6; Luke 5:18, 11:9, 12:31, 19:3 (interestingly, when Jesus says "the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost" - a counter example in verse 10 - it's given in the context of Zacchaeus first seeking Jesus); John 6:24, 7:34, 8:21, 13:33, 20:15; Acts 15:17, 17:27; Romans 10:20; Colossians 3:1 ... and in all of this I found only one use of the word "seek" related to

Jesus seeking us: John 4:23. But as with Luke 19:3 (Zacchaeus), this is the woman at the well and Jesus prefaces his conversation with asking for a drink from her, then saying, "If you knew who I was, you would have been the one asking me, not the other way around." Long story short: this feminized notion that God is just always seeking after us is only referenced in a few places, whereas there's an overwhelmingly greater amount of passages referencing the idea that Jesus' bride and those he wants to draw into relationship with himself are expected to seek Him. Now, the Spirit does have to draw us to God (John 6:44) - we can't seek him on our own. But that "draw" from God's Spirit is the same as a godly man having a spirit about him that is alluring women, drawing them to seek after him.

If you pursue something, it means you value it more than what you presently have or who you currently are - you're beneath it. If you are content in what you have, you'd have no reason to pursue anything else. As Christians, we are called to be discontented with a yearning in our soul for the size of God's Kingdom until all nations have been reached. But in relationships, we ARE called to be content in Christ. If you're pursuing relationships with women as a high priority in your life, that tells me you're (1) not content in your relationship with Christ, and (2) that you're "lesser" than (or status-wise: "beneath") the woman you're pursuing.

Conclusion

I guess what I'm saying in all of this is that you shouldn't be worrying about finding a wife. You should be the kind of man who makes women worry about whether or not they can find a guy like you. Be that man and women will come. But "that guy" isn't chasing tail all the time. He's on an independent mission for Christ. James Bond never said, "Hold on, MI-6 ... let me go find my girl first, then I'll go do my mission for you." He found her as part of his pursuit of that mission (not a perfect example, but you get the point).

7 Plate Theory and/v. Christianity

This comes up a lot, so let me finally address it somewhat officially. Nothing here is necessarily new from what I've said in comments of other threads, but I'll spell it out in more detail anyway.

Defining The Term

I always have to quote Rollo on this one because the secular guys like to take this concept further than it has to go. In Rational Male Year One ¶ Plate Theory II ¶ 2nd actual paragraph:

Spinning Plates doesn't necessarily mean you're f— all of your plates. It's more of a spreading out of your efforts across a wider pool of subjects.

That's it. For anyone who wants to know my definition of spinning plates it's just that: *Exerting effort toward a relationship with a woman = spinning a plate.* Exerting effort toward multiple women = spinning plates (plural).

The Basics

The whole point of secular RP's sexual strategy is to **fix yourself** so that you're high enough quality of a man to have either a sufficient **number of plates** or a sufficient **quality of plates** to keep you sexually satisfied.

Now, for every married guy out there, your wife is a plate, whether you like to think of her that way or not. She's a woman who's in a relationship with you and you're exerting effort toward that relationship. Even in a secular context, if she's nothing more than a sparring partner to you - that's still effort. You're still testing all your RPness on her to see how well you can spin that particular plate.

Secular RP says that if she is your only plate and you're not sexually satisfied (which is where most men are when finding MRP), you can do one of three things:

- **Fix Yourself:** There's a good chance you're not a high enough quality of man to warrant the type of sexual satisfaction you're looking for. Fix this, fix your problem.
 - **Up the Quality:** If you've already got your "RPness" in top-notch order and she's just not a high quality plate, you can train her to be higher quality (they use the phrase: "create your slut").
 - **Up the Quantity:** Just give up and find someone else.
-

The Purpose

In his first post on plate theory, Rollo appropriately starts off the whole series with this:

the essence of plate theory is that **a man is as confident and valuable as his options**. This is the essence of the abundance mindset - confidence is derived from options.

Spinning plates is a sexual strategy of its own right, but a man without an abundance mentality won't be able to keep those plates in the air. You can put in a lot of effort, but get no return. Spinning plates only works with an abundance mentality. Incidentally, spinning plates is also how you get an abundance mentality. That's where "fake it til you make it" comes in to resolve the Catch-22.

Once you have an abundance mentality, the need to spin plates decreases proportionately to your increase of abundance mentality. With this in mind, "**Fix Yourself**" includes developing an abundance mentality, and spinning plates is one method of doing this. With that abundance, the quantity of plates doesn't matter as much because you already know you are the quality of man who could keep them spinning if he wanted to.

Effort

There are different levels of effort required to spin different plates:

- Some plates require no effort, spinning themselves. We call these orbiters. You get IOIs that are totally unprovoked.
- Others require little more than natural exposure to you. Simply saying "hi" with a smile is enough to get some IOIs back.
- Others require intentional exposure. If you're both in the same conversation she wouldn't care much, but if you were to isolate her or otherwise escalate with her while in the group dynamic, she'd start giving IOIs, having seen your intentional displays of interest toward her.
- Others require high effort. This is usually where your wife is. She takes for granted the fact that you're supposed to be interested in her, so getting IOIs back requires more than you'd need to pick up the girl at the bar - especially since she already knows all of your moves.

Now, this scale actually only makes sense under two conditions: (1) you're not the highest value man in her relational network, and (2) you accept practical realities of interpersonal relationships.

I say the second simply to note that no matter how high value you are, some women might stop thinking about you as soon as you're out of the room. I'm sure even Channing Tatum meets women who aren't still swooning over him 3 days after he said hi to her. Sometimes they just move on.

But the first point is more relevant in that the higher value you are, the lower effort you need. A girl who would require intentional exposure from you to garner her interest might naturally orbit Channing Tatum if he was in her relational network, even if he never went out of his way to say hi to her. Why? Because he's probably higher value than you are. As your value rises from the "fix yourself" category, the amount of effort you need to exert to spin a plate goes way down.

This is why many blue pill men exhaust themselves trying to make their marriages work, only to end up in divorce. They are low-value men, so they have to put in an incredible amount of effort and at some point they simply say, "It just isn't worth it." To be fair, most secular RP men come to the exact same conclusion: "If I have to put in actual effort to get my wife to screw me, it just isn't worth it," and they go onto the "up the quantity" category.

How To Spin

This section is more of a joke. Spinning = effort. It's that simple. How do I spin? Say hi to a girl and let her orbit me = low effort. Put my hand on her back and start to flirt and suggest another meetup = moderate effort. Isolate her and follow-up with her on subsequent days = higher effort. Buying her crap, frequent compliments, and a bunch of other beta stuff that rarely works = high effort.

Remember: showing that you need to put in a lot of effort to get her spinning for you is a real obvious display of who has the higher value in the relationship. Also remember that just because you can spin doesn't mean you should spin. Ergo ...

Responsibilities and Boundaries

Do I sin when I say "hi" and smile to a random girl on the street who isn't my wife? Have I intentionally led her on? Have I done anything designed to cause her to lust for me? Of course not. There's nothing wrong with saying "hi" to someone with a smile, but if you're a high value man this is going to generate interest anyway. That interest means her head is *spinning* with thoughts about me. I can't control what she thinks about.

Girls Do It Too

Now, girls do this constantly. Even among church girls, we constantly see them interested in different boys, and they'll spend time with each of these boys to figure out who they might want to start dating or "court-ing." Nobody condemns these girls for spinning plates, but that's what they're doing - and the church even encourages this. That's the whole point of the "courtship" model - be friends with lots of people in group settings so you can get an idea of who you might be interested in and what you want to look for in a man. Sometimes they're spinning multiple man-plates because they're not sure which, or if any, of them will ultimately ask her out, so she keeps building new relationships and meeting new guys until one of them finally has the guts to take her to dinner.

Of course, women often get shamed in the church for causing men to think lustful thoughts. So, we get overly prude girls who are afraid of their sexuality. But many people in the modern church are finally starting to realize that this isn't what the Bible meant when it said not to cause a brother to stumble into sin. Women are now being appropriately empowered in the church: "What men think about you is not your responsibility ... (unless you're acting in a way uniquely designed to cause them to think that)."

Responsibility

The same goes for men and "Christian plate spinning." If you say hi and smile to a girl, most will simply be put in a good mood and that's about it. Although I have abundance, I'm also conscious of reality: I'm not Channing Tatum. Even if I was, it's not my fault if a smile makes her go home to gab with her friends about the cute guy at the gym and she starts planning her wedding day. That's not your responsibility how emotionally invested she gets ... with certain limitations.

Specifically, if you are a married man with no intention of having an affair with her, yet still wink at her while cupping your junk and flashing her your tattoo ... now you're responsible for generating whatever reaction she comes up with to that.

Guidelines

If you want to have a general guideline to know what's okay and not, here's my suggestion:

- **Don't put yourself in a position where you're tempted to sin.** Suppose you made a funny comment to a girl on the street and she starts walking with you to continue the conversation. She gets to her house and invites you inside. If going in will cause you to sin, don't do it. It's that simple.
- **Don't put her in a position to want to tempt you to sin.** Even if you have a high threshold for temptation, if you're engaging with her in a way that makes her want to test your boundaries, that's bad news and leading her on. You're trying to "awaken love before it so desires" with her, per Song of Songs.
- **Don't do anything likely to cause her to believe you would do something sinful with her.** Simple enough.
- **Be up-front about your limitations.** When I get IOIs, I often make passive comments that let her know where I'll cut off a relationship - things like referencing my wife in a positive way, mentioning my faith (evangelism purposes there too), etc. From there, if she wants to make false assumptions about where the relationship might go, it's not on my head.

Female Friends

If I follow these guidelines and never hear from her again, so be it. If she doesn't care and continues to engage with me anyway, suddenly I have a female friend.

I can hear it now: *Ooooooh ... there goes that Christian guy who is actually friends with a girl! Shame on him! Whoop-ti-do.*

Can guys and girls ever truly be "just friends"? I don't care. That's a philosophical or psychological or biological question ... and I'm not a philosopher, psychologist, or biologist (though I pretend to be all 3 at times). As long as she's aware of where she stands with me, and I'm not doing anything to cause her to think she can go further, and I'm not doing anything to cause her to tempt me to go further ... let her do what she's going to do.

If being "just friends" is possible, then I've just made a friend and my life is presumably better for it (otherwise I wouldn't keep her as a friend). If it's not possible, then we have the illusion of friendship and she's technically a romantic plate - but as long as I'm not responsible for the degree of her romantic feelings for me (acknowledging that in this worldview those feelings will always be there no matter what - whether positive or negative), I can continue in the illusion without fault ... particularly if I can keep my romantic feelings toward her in check, which goes back to the point about not putting myself in the way of temptation.

For Singles

When you're single, some of this changes. The "sniper" approach of singling out a target who you really want to be with (i.e. ONEitis) is obviously a bad idea. It doesn't work. It also carries with it the false theological implication of "soul mates," which we only see in Scripture as the exception to the rule (like Hosea and Jacob), whereas the overwhelming majority of marriages in Scripture seem to have been formed by whatever social construct prevailed at any given time throughout history.

In modern social dynamics, plate spinning makes sense. It's how a lot of people operate. *It's how most women themselves actually operate!* Single girls are trying to get male attention all the time. They don't pick one target and say, "I will ignore every advance from every other man except him." They keep their options open. If you're a single guy, you need to do the same. The concept of "spinning plates" as a single guy really isn't all that much different from the stereotypical "group courtship" model - you hang out in bunches and see who piques your interest.

Once you're in an LTR, I still call you "single" for these purposes - and I would encourage you to keep your options open until you actually marry, or are at least engaged. Sure, at some point if you do decide to go through with it, there is value in changing this dynamic. But until that vow is taken, don't leave room for regret. Don't be the guy who meets the girl of his dreams the day before his wedding, ignores her, then secretly thinks about her every time he's in a fight with his wife - "If only ..."

Example

I once said "hi" to a hot girl at the gym and smiled at her. I asked to use the weights that were behind her and made a comment about how busy it was. She smiled back and obliged with a typical response. I move on to another area of the gym.

Now, I could have just squeezed behind her and grabbed the weights while avoiding any actual communication. I decided to be friendly instead. I put the plate up and give it a couple small taps, then left it alone.

A few minutes later, she comes over to the bench I was at and starts talking to me. That plate is now spinning a lot faster than what my slight tapping would have warranted. Next time I'm at the gym, she approaches me and chats again - and this continues several times, often with "wow"s and compliments at how much I lift, hair swishes, giggles, and other IOIs.

- Is she into me? Probably.
 - Have I given her any reason at all to think I'd be into her? Not really - I was just a high value man around her who decided to be friendly rather than cold. I knew that this was "effort" at the time, but not unnatural effort for my character. I knew that it might generate interest, but not at an inappropriate level.
 - Have I taken appropriate measures to let her know how fast/long she can keep spinning in my world? Absolutely.
 - Does she keep coming back anyway? You bet.
 - Does that help me keep abundance? At first, but not anymore because I already have abundance even without her IOIs.
 - Am I responsible for her ongoing emotional connection to me? No. I maintain boundaries (ex. not letting her touch me, passive references to affirm that I'm not interested).
 - Is her interest in me affecting her relationships with other men? Doubtful.
-

Summary

Spinning plates = effort toward a relationship with someone.

Some plates spin on their own. This is not you spinning that plate - it just spins and that's not your fault. But she is your plate nonetheless.

Even mild and innocuous forms of interaction are effort and can start a plate spinning, but that's okay. You can't be expected to avoid all contact with anyone who might possibly lust or obsess over you.

As your value goes up, the amount of effort you put in goes a lot further in starting/keeping a plate spinning. Be ready for that by knowing your limits and establishing clear boundaries for what you will/won't do.

The more effort you put into keeping a plate spinning (like your wife), the more you are communicating low value to that plate. She assumes she's worth the effort and that, implicitly, since you're putting in

effort to get her, she has no reason to put in effort to keep you spinning as one of her plates.

If you're single, keep your options open until you actually create a covenant with someone, lest you regret what could have been.

8 Q&A Guide to IOIs

Here's another one for the single guys out there. How can you tell if she's interested?

Mental Framework

The first thing I want to say is that you shouldn't care whether she's interested. You should be the one to decide if she's interested in you or not. I know it sounds weird and is not technically accurate, but it's a lot closer to the truth than the inverse - that you're at her whims. If she's interested in you or not is a lot decided by whether or not you think she's interested in you. If you assume she's not interested in you, I guarantee that even if she is interested in you, she'll start questioning that interest when she sees your insecurity (an exception to be made for low-value women who are desperate).

More to the point: if you assume she's interested in you, even if she's not interested, your confidence in that assumption makes her interested. It might not be enough interest to get you a date, but at least you're starting to register on her radar at all.

So, if you're asking whether or not someone is interested or if something is an IOI, this shows a fundamental breakdown in your mental framework. The answer is always: "Yes, she's interested in me," followed by, "So, what am I going to do about it?" When you get a hard no, that's when you can feel free to move on. Of course, if you're single and not in a committed relationship you should always be moving on, not stopping to wait for someone who may or may not give you a hard no.

This is where I've written in the past about "Christian plate spinning" and the shotgun/sniper mentalities. Girls - even devout Christian ones - build relationships with many guys who they hope will ask them out. Likewise, it's your prerogative and imperative, if you're a marriage-seeker, to build relationships with many women to figure out who you might want to ask out and possibly commit to. It's not wrong when girls do it. It's not wrong when guys do it. It's just being wise instead of putting all your eggs in one basket.

With that framework in mind, your goal should simply be to initiate and approach as if she's just been waiting over there, longing for you to say hi. If you have that level of confidence, you can garner interest that wasn't objectively there before. At best, you meet someone new who could be your future spouse. At worst, she says no and you move on. I suppose it could get worse if you have a garbage frame, letting her "no" be a condemnation over you and your sense of self-worth, but that's for you to figure out. Go read the 400-series to nip that issue in the bud before it even starts - your satisfaction comes from Christ, not from getting a date with a pretty girl. Whether she says yes or no, your excitement meter should remain relatively stable. The more variance you see in your emotional state from a girl's response to your initiation, the more power she has over you in the relationship, the harder it will be for you to feel like a leader over her because you'll want to supplicate to her to keep her bumping that meter higher and higher for you, which isn't sustainable in the long-run.

Q&A

Okay R-C, that's great, but it doesn't help us figure out whether she's actually interested.

That's what many of you are thinking, I'm sure. My point is that it shouldn't matter if she's actually interested or not. You initiate with her as often and whichever way you feel like it until you don't feel like it anymore.

A hard no should make you not feel like it anymore because you won't get any return on your investment in the relationship. But if it's a soft no, you have to figure out for yourself when the odds of things working out will finally be outweighed by the time and effort your putting in. If all you're doing is texting once every couple weeks, that's pretty low effort, but it might be worth it long-term. But if she works at Starbucks and you're going in there to buy a coffee everyday just to say hi and strike up a conversation, that's a lot of time and money you're investing for an indeterminate probability.

Cool, but you're still dodging the question. How can I evaluate the "probability" of her giving me a positive response down the road?

My gut reaction is simply to say: if she's not showing interest up-front, move on and don't look back. Your probability is pretty low - odds that I wouldn't bet on. But I do know that sometimes legitimate things can come up that don't necessarily mean "disinterest" or that sometimes good relationships need to be cultivated from very little - a seed, if you will - before they can blossom into something beautiful, just as is true for those God intends to make part of his bride. So ...

1. **Touching.** If she touches you at all, she's probably interested. Physical contact is a clear violation of personal space in most contexts. Nevertheless, people will violate your personal space as a means of showing you that they're okay with you violating their personal space. That's a clear sign of interest.
2. **Verbal Affirmation.** If she directly says she's interested, she's interested. This is one of the few times where you can ignore "trust what she does, not what she says." This, of course, does not apply to married men, where their wives have an internal sense of obligation to say they are interested in and love their husbands when, in fact, they do not. When a woman does not have this obligation, but communicates it anyway, that's often reliable, despite the fact that they could be intentionally deceptive just to screw with you, which they can do with their actions too (in high school I had a girl do that to me, so I do admit it's a real thing).
3. **No Context Initiation.** If she initiates a no-context conversation with you, this is a good sign she's interested. Girls don't start random conversations with creepy guys. If she does start one with you, you've just graduated to "he's not a creep" status. To be clear, a "context conversation" is when there is some socially normative basis for initiating with someone - like a food worker chatting with you while you order, or a girl asking you if you're done with a set of weights that she wants to use. As such "no context" is when no normal person would initiate with you unless they had an internal desire to want to talk to you independent of everything else going around. Some people will create a context to initiate with you, like bumping into you "by accident" or pretending to notice something innocuous and relevant, but which didn't really need to be mentioned, like how warm a pair of boots might look on a cold winter day. "Created context" is the same as "no context."
4. **Availability.** People don't make time for things they don't want to do. They do make time for things they're interested in. A friend recently asked a girl out to coffee and she said something like, "Okay, but I want to be clear up-front that I'm only interested in being friends." He went anyway. She made time for him. This means she had some interest in getting coffee with him. What was that interest? It was either (1) preserving her own self-image as being a nice girl who is friendly even toward men she isn't interested in; or (2) she is interested in him, but wants to deflate any of his expectations to give herself more control over the future of the relationship in the event she changes her mind during the meet-up. He stressed about which one it was. But, actuality aside, this is a good indicator that she's open-minded about his interest in her. Remember that indicators are not absolute proof; they're simply factors we consider when trying to assess what may or may not be true. If she makes herself available once, this might not indicate a lot. If she makes herself available again, that adds a lot of strength to the belief that she's interested.
5. **Mannerisms.** This is where "look what she does, not what she says" comes back. If she's smiling a lot, playing with her hair, primping herself when she thinks you're not looking, using a flirty tone of voice, etc. - those are all good signs. I put this last on the list, though, because guys often misread these "signs," thinking she's doing one of these things when she isn't. Why might guys misread these signs? Because of selective perception.

Woah, Red, you're telling me that if she taps my shoulder to ask me to move out of the way, that means she has the hots for me?

No. Obviously you have to use some common sense here. Basic social niceties are not considered an entry into one's own personal space. We assume that on a crowded subway you'll be bumping into people or that if you're in someone's way, they might tap you and ask you to move. Nobody feels like their space has been entered when that happens. But when someone stands unusually close to you during a conversation, or touches your hand or arm, that's somewhat unusual and often takes a bit of courage to do that. I know that some people are touchy-feely people in general ... but again, it's still an *indicator* - and only one of many.

Do any girls actually verbally admit that they're interested in you?

Yes. This guy (Andrew Hales)² does a lot of videos about cold-approaching people in various prank-like contexts. In this particular video he's testing whether or not acting like a douche will actually yield positive reception. In the very first clip, he is walking by a girl, stops and says, "Hey, are you a slut? Do you want my number?" She laughs and says yes. He says, "You're hot." She says, "Thank you! I love when guys say that." She asks what he's doing, he says, "Just picking up chicks. I'm bored." She says, "What a fun thing to do on a Sunday. You picked the right one!"

So yes, it doesn't matter how ridiculous you're being - if she's interested in you, she very well might tell you. She may not either, but it does happen - and it should not stop even when you get married, although your effort in seeking these types of responses should change drastically.

That's a cool video, but he's initiating with them. That's what I've always been taught is the man's job. Are you saying I should wait for girls to initiate with me?

No. I'm simply saying that if she does initiate with you without context, she might be interested in you. You should still be initiating separately. Even more so, if you initiate once and she initiates after that as a follow-up, even though there's now a context due to your first contact, this is another very strong indicator that she's interested. People don't follow-up with people that they don't care about or who they have no interest in seeing again.

What if I'm getting the impression she's interested, but she's just really busy and isn't available on the days I try to get together?

Some people are advance planners and don't work well on spontaneity. You have to account for this. If you're stopping in the coffee shop and asking her to hang out when she gets off, she might legitimately have plans. Or maybe she's interested, but doesn't want to get together without having the time to get primed for the date. If this happens 3 or 4 times in a row, it might be a bad sign; but it could also just be a sign that she needs to plan things in advance.

Of course, she also might just be using a "busy schedule" to avoid actually having to spend time with you. The way you test this is to ask her about something 3-4 weeks out and not on a holiday. Short of vacations, most single people don't schedule things that far in advance - or if they do, it's usually flexible. Another way is to offer an alternative time a few times. If she wants to hang out with you, she'll suggest another day.

What you shouldn't do is ask her to give you a day. It sounds RP because you're making her pursue you. But she might give you a day just because she feels pressured to do so, and then you're still in the dark. Try a few weeks out and give a few options and if she responds to any of your dates or with a different suggestion of her own, she's interested.

Okay, but what if she gives me a day, but she just looks kind of awkward and not into it? Should I even bother?

Yes, you should bother. Some girls don't know how to feel. It's your job to ease their anxieties about the approach into something comfortable. For girls who are used to getting asked out or who know they're

²<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtjBt4Ou9SY>

hot, this is somewhat natural. But for many Christian girls it's not. They're shy and not used to putting themselves in social situations where they get approached like this. Accept that it's awkward for her, go on the date, and gauge how she is after you've had time to smooth things over with your conversation skills.

What if she doesn't text me after the date and it's been a week already?

So what? Do what you want to do. You want to ask her out again? Do it. If you don't, don't. The key is that you're doing what you want to do, inviting her along as often as you feel like inviting her along, and moving on when she stops responding to your initiation. Your job isn't to pursue her; it's to initiate with her and invite her to pursue you, just like Jesus did when he said, "I'm here to fish for men. Come with me and I'll make you a fisher of men too." He was doing his thing, asking others to come along, and moving on from place to place whether those people joined him or not.

Wait, when you say "doing what you want to do, inviting her along" - does that mean I shouldn't be trying to schedule special dates?

If you're trying to impress her with your date, you're going to fail. Sure, it might work, but you're still setting a bad precedent for the relationship: that it's all about impressing her. For my first date with my wife, I simply said, "I'm going to grab some food. Want to come?" and we went to the local Skyline Chili - a pseudo-fast-food place that's delicious. I'd asked her this before and she didn't come. This time she did. Regardless of whether she came or not, I went anyway.

Other times I said, "I feel like going on a walk. Want to join me?" and she did. Or, "I'm going to church. You in?" and she'd say yes. Or, "I'm discipling a guy and need some time to process how I can lead him. Want to help me talk through it?" and she would. Or, "I'm about to have a quiet time/pray/fellowship with other Christians/etc. Want to join me?" and she would. Nowadays I say, "I feel like renting a movie and microwaving some popcorn. You in?" or "I want to take the kids to the pool. You coming?" or whatever ... and sometimes she joins, sometimes she doesn't. Either way, I'm moving. I'm doing things. I'm living my life. I'm inviting her to be a part of my life. I'm leading.

Between these times - from when we got married and for about 7 years after that - I did something totally different. I said, "What do you want to do?" "Where would you like to go eat?" "What movie would you like to see?" Even when I made plans, it was, "I bet she would love doing this!" and I'd craft the "perfect date" week after week. That got me nothing except a wife who showed contempt against me.

As I often say, you've got to be a man on a mission. Your mission is what's going to create the foundation and context for your relationship. That mission should keep you on the move. The direction you're moving should be the direction you're inviting her to join you in moving. I kid you not, sometimes it's even as simple as going to the grocery store. "I'm out of bananas. Want to go shopping with me?" [Emphasize the first A in banana instead of the second and do this habitually - recurring obvious mispronunciation of words is a fun little game that for some reason many women find endearing as a humorous quirk - especially when they know you're doing it on purpose.]

If you're moving and she's joining, that's the best IOI. How much effort you put into inviting her to join you can be assessed by contemplating all of the above.

RP Christians Sidebar Compendium

100s - Theory and Understanding

Author(s): u/Red-Curious, u/OsmiumZulu

compiled by u/RPChristof - please direct typos or updates to my inbox

101 Fitness Develops Attraction

This post highlights a biblical foundation for maintaining our bodies in good shape with God as our motivator.

Pretty much any RP sub is going to tell you that the first place to start is hitting the gym. You want to improve your relationship and sex life? Get fit. This goes both ways, but Christian men seem to have a harder time wrapping their heads around the need to be physically fit.

Who Judges Your Weight?

I had gained nearly 100lbs through the first 7 years of my marriage. In a couple weeks I'll have my 9th anniversary and have lost more than half of that while gaining muscle mass. How could I let myself go?

- Pastor preached, "Your body shape should never get so bad that it hinders your ministry." Meh, I was still actively involved in ministry and a leader in my church, so no problems there.
- My doctor said my cholesterol was a little high, but still within appropriate ranges; otherwise I was perfectly healthy. So, no concerns there.
- My bedroom was dead even when I was in shape, so no motivation to get back in shape there.

I didn't have a reason. I went to the three key motivators in my life (God, health, and sex) and none of them got me off my butt. They all affirmed that there was no real imperative to conquer my obesity. I wasn't particularly happy with my body, but it didn't bother me either. So, why should I bother changing?

Because I'm a man under God!

My pastor is not the ultimate judge of how much I should weigh. My doctor can tell me what might happen if I get too obese, but his stamp of approval shouldn't be my validation. Even my wife should not be the judge over how physically fit I should be. Truth be told, I shouldn't be either. God is my judge.

A Clear Conscience Doesn't Make It Right

I've mastered the clear conscience. For reasons I won't get into here, I am fairly immune to things like guilt and shame, which are most people's primary motivators for getting into shape. God had to dig 1 Corinthians 4:3-4 in me for me to realize that my clear conscience about my weight didn't make it right:

- I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

Although my ultimate judgment is grounded on Christ in me and not my faults, I have to accept the fact that Paul wrote this passage as a Christian, after he was saved. His non-innocence doesn't condemn him to hell, but that doesn't mean it's right either. We have a responsibility to God and to live as though we will be judged by God. James 2:12 says this:

- Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom.

I have freedom in Christ and am right for resting in that freedom! But this does not excuse me from living as if I will be judged by the law anyway. The Bible clearly condemns gluttony in a number of places. Although it does not set height-to-weight thresholds or the righteous BMI level, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 does implore us to take control over our bodies, and 6:12 says that we should not be mastered by anything.

Fitness Develops Attraction

In Genesis 1-2 we see God creating man and woman in their naked bodies and saying, "It is very good." It's not explicitly stated, but I seriously doubt God created Adam and Even as swollen up balloons. They ate healthy in the garden and when they were kicked out they worked hard for their meals (see Genesis 3). These are the people from whom the entire earth was populated! I can only imagine there was great physical

attraction to have enough sex to make so many babies for each successive generation to multiply.

This attraction between men and women for physically fit bodies was ingrained in us by God for the purpose of giving us motivation to (1) work the earth he gave us, making us fit, and (2) filling the earth with offspring. There are a ton of books that talk about these biological imperatives and why physical fitness is attractive on a biological level, so I won't go much further than that.

But I am also reminded of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. Genesis 39:6-7 - "Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, 'Lie with me.'" This shows us that not only is physical fitness attractive among peers, but it can even be enough to warrant crossing social gaps. In this case, Potiphar's wife could have been killed if she was caught (which is why she ultimately shifts blame to Joseph), but that attraction to his being "handsome in form and appearance" just drove her nuts to the point where she couldn't resist herself.

Fitness Is Not The Only Factor

Let's not be fooled - physical fitness isn't the only thing necessary to breed attraction. But it does make attraction much, much easier to foster between two people. If you're not attracted to your spouse, it's often because you don't feel attractive yourself.

Seriously, I had given up on fixing my DB. My libido went kaput and I literally didn't care whether or not my wife slept with me. We went about a year and a half with no sex at all. Although there were other factors playing into this, I did notice one thing in particular: **As I got in shape, I felt sexier, which in turn made me start desiring sex again.** My wife experienced the same thing when she lost her baby weight after each of our first three children. **Feeling sexy makes you want to have sex.**

Once I started desiring sex again, that was a gateway to other aspects of self-improvement beyond just physical fitness that I knew were necessary to foster attraction with my wife and develop a healthy sex life. But it took me a solid 5 months of intentional fitness and dieting before I developed enough desire to start functioning with my body and in my marriage the way I know God intended - and the way I wanted before I gave up on sex.

This isn't a license for men to ship their wives off to the gym or vice versa in order to get them wanting sex again. This is a basic psychological strategy to put you in a position to develop your own **internal motivation** to want to follow through with improving your sex life. This internal motivation is key. Why? Because your spouse knows when you're faking it - when you give only to get. If you give her the gift of a physically fit husband in order to get sex from her, she might comply here and there to reward your good behavior, but in doing so, you're putting her in the position of leading the relationship by deciding when you get rewarded or not, and you're not going to be happy with obligation sex in the long-run. You have to do it for you and for God because God is your judge, not your wife.

Again, this isn't a magic wand to fix all your problems. That's why it's 101 level material. It doesn't take a lot of skill or in-depth study ... just get some exercise and start dieting. Anyone can do it. A failure to be able to do this is a failure to maintain self-control, which is part of the fruit of the Spirit. I'll let you ponder the implications of that on your own.

102 Desire And The Curse

God is the one who designed men and women, so let's look to God's original design and his compensation for the fall to see how our internal desires manifest and can be understood.

Basic Roles

Most Christian men have been raised with the, "Let me run that by my wife first" mentality. In response, women have taken a liking to having the power. In fact, God told us they would:

Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.

That word for "desire" is teshukatech, which is the same word used a chapter later in Genesis 4:7

Sin is crouching at your door; its desire [teshukatov] is for you, but you must master it

Notice the stark similarities in these two phrases spaced only a single chapter apart? The man must treat his wife's desire to boss him around as a sin that he must attain mastery over.

To put it bluntly: **Men are to lead; women are to help.**

Desire

Desire is an emotional investment in an object or outcome. God designed both genders to have desires, but women in particular are more susceptible to making decisions based on desire. Even before the fall and the curse, the serpent saw God had created woman this way and used it to his advantage, tricking Eve instead of Adam (see also 1 Timothy 2:13-14):

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate (Genesis 3:6).

Interestingly, Eve's desire to rule over Adam is dictated as a product of the curse. This makes me think that **Eve's original desire actually was for Adam to rule over her and that she be his helper, as God declared.** For this reason (as confirmed by pragmatic observation of marital satisfaction issues in my practice of divorce law), I am fully persuaded that women have two irreconcilable desires: (1) a husband who will lead her, and (2) power to make her husband give her everything else she wants.

In traditional thinking, these conflicting desires are mutually exclusive. If she lets her husband lead, she loses her power to control getting everything else she wants. If she takes back that control, she may get all those other things, but she no longer has a husband who will lead her. In biblical thinking, the husband will lead in a way that will naturally satisfy most of the wife's other desires as well because he loves her. But this is done on his authority and not her demands.

Man v. Stuff

A woman must choose between her desire for her man or her desire for other stuff. When a woman takes control of a relationship, she is communicating, "My comforts are more important than having a desirable husband." When she cedes control to the man's frame she communicates, "I desire you more than my comforts."

Although women must make this choice, it's important to recognize that **the ultimate decision is the man's to make.** If the man refuses to lead her, her decision to let him lead is worthless. She will still not be fueled by her desire for him. If the man does lead appropriately, even if she does not want him to, his God-given authority gives his frame an advantage over hers and he will win if he persists. The reason the woman must make the choice is because this determines how happy she will be living in light of the context that the man has set for the marriage.

We must remember that a marriage is about the people, not the stuff. Although a woman may be happy because she controls her man to get all of the other stuff she desires met, virtually all of these women openly acknowledge that they do not feel secure in the marriage itself. Most such women would readily acknowledge, "I have a good life, but an unsatisfactory marriage." For the marriage to work, the primary desire must be for the person and not all the other stuff.

Here's where it gets difficult: **A man cannot make himself desire his wife, nor can a woman make herself desire her husband.** Instead, we must make ourselves desirable to one another. From here, it is essential to recognize that **healthy marriages require mutually supported efforts toward**

self-improvement. The previous post (101) explains how fitness is one basic way we can start moving in the right direction.

Base Attraction

God gave the command to "be fruitful and multiply" before the fall. In order to ensure this command would be followed, he gave us all libidos. In order to ensure our libidos did not hinder us from doing everything else he put us on the earth to do, he made our libidos dependent on our actual fulfillment of those duties and *our ability to let the other person fulfill their duties in the context of a relationship with us*. When Adam and Eve became sinners, they lost the ability to trust their natural impulses because of the new sinful nature. To help set things right, God articulated the curse as a clarification of our duties:

Women are to bear healthy children and help their husbands, who would lead them. Men are to work hard to provide what is necessary for life and lead their wives.

A person is considered "attractive" if they have the appearance of: (1) being able to fulfill their duty, and (2) being able to let the other person fulfill their duty also.

Physical beauty is a sign of a woman's ability to bear healthy children (her duty). Most widely acknowledged standards of beauty are also expressions of frailty, showing a need for provision and protection (letting him fulfill his duty). Although a female body-builder is extremely physically fit, most men do not find her giant muscles and bulging veins attractive because it subconsciously implies that she does not need the man's leadership, provision, and protection. They tend to partner with men who are even more physically fit than they are (elements of hypergamy here, to be discussed later).

Physical fitness and a history of being a hard-worker are attractive on a man because they are expressions that he will continue to work hard to meet her and the children's needs and provide what is necessary for life (his duty). A video game nerd or porn addict are not attractive to women because these men defer to fantasy worlds for life experience rather than looking to real women for reproductive acts and being a helper (letting her fulfill her duty).

103 Desire Cultivates Intimacy

Explore the Hebrew concepts of love and the Greek koinonia bond that Jesus intended those in a oneness relationship to have. See the influence these concepts can have in fostering physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional intimacy with your spouse.

Something that TRP/MRP doesn't touch on much is the God-given imperative toward intimacy. They recontextualize intimacy in the only contexts in which it can be understood by non-Christians. To adapt something from a conversation I had with /u/rocknrollchuck:

- TRP assumes we are unitary beings - we have physical impulses and that's it. Accordingly, physical intimacy (i.e. sex) is all that matter.
- MRP assumes we are binary beings - we have physical impulses and emotional longings, both of which must be satisfied for an LTR to work. Accordingly, physical and emotional intimacy (i.e. sex and comfort-sharing moments) are all that matter and need to be found in balance.
- RPC knows we are trinitarian beings - we have physical impulses, emotional longings, and spiritual authority, all of which must work and be exercised in harmony for a person and relationship to be healthy. That spiritual authority is not "frame" or "having a vision" in the ordinary sense of the word, which plays on physical and emotional attractiveness. It is Christ in us, radiating from us as we live in the pattern he set for us.
 - It's worth noting that we also have a "mind," which is that part of our identity that balances these three attributes of our God-given, yet culturally-broken character.

The goal of Christian relationships is to develop a oneness bond with someone in all of these areas and not just one or two. Although it may not be the best technical definition, it really helps me to understand intimacy as this: **Intimacy is a oneness bond created by internalization of external things.**

Three Types of Oneness/Intimacy

Ephesians 4:4 says, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called." In short: physical, spiritual, emotional. Paul acknowledges the need for unity among believers by saying, "Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose" (Philippians 2:2). Of the things above, the only one he leaves out is physical oneness. Why? Because marriage is the only context in which the true, perfect oneness trifacta can exist. Here are examples of how this can play out for a Christian:

- Physical - Sex is deeply intimate. It is literally an external man becoming internal within the woman, making the two become one.
- Emotional - Heart-to-heart conversations are intimate. There are external situations that are discussed that the listener/recipient internalizes, fostering empathy and creating a common heart.
- Spiritual - Communion is intimate. It is taking external bread and wine/juice and internalizing it (Jesus' body and blood entering into us) in a context that is meant to be shared with those who are also one with Christ, creating a unity between fellow believers, including spouses, because of Christ in us (more on this later).

Three Types Of Love, Born From Intimacy

In the Hebrew, there are three core words for "love," all found in Song of Solomon.

- Raya - a friendship that says, "We do things together, we get along great, we have similar interests, and we enjoy each other's company. I am excited to be around him/her." [Although it's not exact, the Greek equivalent would be a combination of agape and phileo.]
 - Ahava - a commitment that says, "No matter how bad things get, I will always be by your side and will remain faithful to you." [Greek pseudo-equivalent = pragma.]
 - Dod - a passion that says, "I long for you and can't wait to see you every day; to be with you, close to you, and united with you. [Greek pseudo-equivalent = eros.]
- Raya = emotional oneness; Ahava = spiritual oneness; Dod = physical oneness

In MMSLP, Athol Kay refers to these as Dopamine (Raya), Oxytocin/Vasopressin (Ahava), and Testosterone (Dod). A lack of any one of these creates problems:

- No Raya = boring couples who get isolated and feel like their relationship is going nowhere; great sex and strong commitment don't fix their day to day living
- No Ahava = spouses cheating on each other. If the sex and friendship are great, but there's no strong commitment, someone will leave when the next best thing comes along.
- No Dod = dead bedroom for the rest of your life.

If you combine two of these things together, such as a lack of dod and a lack of ahava, the sexlessness is what will prompt the divorce. If little raya is coupled with a lack of dod, it will be the boring monotony that leads to divorce. If raya and dod are lacking, you might remain married, but it will be purely a roommates-relationship with ever-increasing hostility and cold-shoulders.

Koinonia

It's worth a brief pause to describe spiritual intimacy in greater detail, as this is the most elusive subject. Spiritual bonds can be formed in the context of physical and emotional connections. For example, 1 Cor. 6 and 2 Cor. 6 both talk about how sex makes you become spiritually one with someone, and also implies that whoever else you are spiritually one with is being bound to that link as well, specifically citing trying to create a oneness bond between Belial (demon/idol) and Christ when a Christian and non-Christian sleep together. Other passages like Ezekiel 36:26 imply a connection between the heart and the spirit.

But there are also purely spiritual connections, which tangentially impact physical and emotional aspects of relationships. The word the Bible uses for this in many examples *Koinonia*. Most often, that word is translated as "fellowship." But it carries a context of what that fellowship entails that goes deeper than the English translation would imply.

The Greek word for "communion" used in many translations of 1 Cor. 10:16 (more currently: participation or sharing) is *Koinonia*. This term is most commonly used in Scripture to reference a oneness bond, usually formed in the spirit. Consider:

- "You were called into *fellowship* with His Son" (1 Cor. 1:9)
- "What *fellowship* has light with darkness?" in the context of two people becoming one flesh (2 Cor. 6:14)
- "May the ... *fellowship* of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14)
- "In view of your *fellowship/participation* with the Gospel" (Philippians 1:5)
- "Any *participation* in the Spirit" in the context of being "united" with Christ (Philippians 2:1)
- "So that you also may have *fellowship* with us. And our *fellowship* is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ ... If we claim to have *fellowship* with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have *fellowship* with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:3, 6-7).

These concepts are very reminiscent of Jesus' saying, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). Similarly, Jesus asks beginning in John 17:21, "That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one - I in them and you in me - so that they may be brought to complete unity." Jesus isn't talking about "unity" in a "let's all get along" kind of way that we tend to think of it today. He literally means a oneness bond between our spirits that goes deeper than simply "getting along" or even merely acting in unison for a common purpose.

Relationship and Impact

In his book *Understanding People*, Dr. Larry Crabb (Christian psychologist) suggests that all people are driven by two core longings: (1) relationships and (2) a need to have an impact on our world. The first is derived from the fact that "it is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). The second is from the fact that even before the fall God gave us a world and He intended us to use it. Note that even before the fall, the command was to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28) That meant humanity was destined to leave Eden regardless. People need to know that what they do matters and will leave a lasting impact because God created us not as idle dummies, but for a purpose that we must live out.

- In MMSLP terms, fostering relationships requires developing healthy beta skills (comfort, reliability, trust, affection); having an impact on our world requires developing healthy alpha skills (one-track-mind, confidence, maintaining composure in the face of testing, strength and determination). A man is best able to foster physical intimacy (as well as spiritual and emotional) with his wife when he is living in light of these core longings and expressing them in a manner consistent with God's original design for humanity. As I said in 102, he made our libidos dependent on this to some base degree.

I have found throughout my life and marriage that it is impossible to experience healthy intimacy if we are not living out both of these. I can be the greatest preacher who ever lived, sharing the Gospel all over the world, making a difference not only in our world, but in God's Kingdom for eternity. That's a huge impact! But if I try to do this as an isolated effort, I will feel sorely dissatisfied - not because God can't satisfy me, but because he decided when he created me that he wanted me to require other human relationships to satisfy me as well (Genesis 2:18). This may come in the form of a spouse, but it doesn't have to (Matthew 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:7). If I lack this relational connection with God's people (spouse or otherwise), I will be sorely missing an aspect of my relationship with God that will prevent me from experiencing intimacy with my creator. To be clear: I challenge you to look through the Bible and count the number of examples of people having a corporate relationship with God (ex. on a national level, church-level, small groups, praying together, etc.) as compared with having an individual, personal relationship with God. Although our present church culture idolizes the personal relationship aspect of our faith (because our culture idolizes individualism), God has always intended us to relate with him predominantly in a corporate fashion, hence creating Eve to be one with Adam so they could be with God together and not independently.

Similarly, I can have the best spouse in the world and more close friends and family than I know what to do with - not just superficial relationships, but close and meaningful ones. But if I'm just spending all my time swapping emotional baggage and uplifting hearts with no actual active effort to do what God put me here to do, I will lack a fulfilling relationship with God. To be plainly logical, sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2). Failing to do what God has commanded us to do is sin - not just in the negative commands, but the proactive ones as well (James 4:17). A prime example: God commanded us to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20). If I'm not establishing a lifestyle of disciple-making, I am not having the impact on the world that Jesus intended me to have. As a result, I am in sin, and this separates me from God. Sure, arguments could be made that Isaiah 59:2 might be about a pre-salvation impact of sin, but there's more than enough to back up the fact that post-salvation does have an impact on our spiritual intimacy with God as well.

Now I want to be clear: we cannot compartmentalize these two desires and expect to be fine. I cannot say, "I will have an intimate relationship with my wife, but will make disciples with my church buddies." This simply does not work. God intended the compulsion for relationships and the command to impact the world he gave us are inextricably linked. An effort to separate them will also be a type of compartmentalization of our relationship with God. How many men or women like it when you have a highly emotional connection through a very deep and intimate conversation (emotion), but get mad at your partner when that doesn't lead to sex (physical)? That's because our desires aren't meant to be compartmentalized - they're meant to function in balance and unity. Likewise, if you have a deeply emotional connection with God, but that's not compelling you to share your faith, there is a serious problem and the intimacy you're feeling might only be one-way, just as the intimacy the wife feels in that emotional conversation isn't received the same way by her husband when it does not escalate into a physical connection as well.

Conclusion

If we want to experience true intimacy (relationally, sexually, and spiritually), we must be seeking godly relationships and working within the context of those relationships to have an impact on our world. We must have a *koινωνia*-type oneness bond with one another. Although we can have this type of bond with brothers and sisters in Christ in general, it is only with our spouse that we can share all aspects of intimacy. These aspects should not be compartmentalized, but should function harmoniously for the purpose of doing what God put us here to do.

It should go without saying: as intimacy develops in one area, it is more likely to overflow into other areas, *but this does not happen magically by itself - the man must be intentional about facilitating this in the relationship*. Good Christian sex strategy could be as simple as fostering intimacy and addressing core longings where your efforts are currently at their weakest. For guys who are predominantly beta, you might not be weak in the "relationship" side of things or expressing *raya* or *ahava*, but you need to start taking measures to work on your physical traits or alpha qualities such as your *dod* appeal or proving that you have something to offer the world and not just something to offer your spouse.

104 When She Feels Sexy

Many people are more interested in the concepts of sex, marriage, relationships, etc. than they are in the person they married. When a wife thinks "he wants sex" she's unimpressed; but when she thinks "he wants me" gears start turning. How can you communicate your desire for your spouse in a way that most effectively fosters reciprocal attraction?

Feeling Sexy

Here's something I have noticed as a trend in my marriage, although I had never really connected the dots until recently.

Axiom 1: *When a woman feels sexy, her interest in sex goes up proportionately to how sexy she feels.*

Corollary 1: *Feeling sexy and feeling beautiful/pretty are not the same.*

This should go without saying, but:

- Sexy: a woman feels sexy when she knows someone has a strong desire to sleep with her.
- Beautiful: a woman feels beautiful/pretty when she knows she's radiating a positive aesthetic in her environment.

Women need to experience both of these, but only one of them significantly contributes to a higher libido.

One of the most powerful libido-stimulating factors for a woman is believing that she's irresistibly sexy to the point that people will fight for (or even against) her. I'd dare say this is even stronger when coming from her husband. Why? Because most women like being re-affirmed that they have made good decisions. If the attention is coming from outside the marriage, this creates minor insecurity that she made a bad decision in marrying her husband. But if it's coming from her husband, she is affirmed that she married the right guy. This increases attraction.

Directed Desire and Fitness Tests

In 102 and 103 I talked about desire and intimacy. Here's an added corollary that combines some concepts toward improving your marital sex life:

Corollary 2: *Your wife needs to know that she is so irresistible that you will fight through any barrier to get in her panties - even barriers that she herself puts up.*

This is why we talk about passing fitness tests. Sure, there's all the talk about frame (and I'm sure there will be posts on that too), but every time you do pass a test in a way that escalates your physical connection, you're telling her that your desire for her is so strong that you're going to plow through any obstacles in the way of getting her. When a man buckles at "I'm too tired" or "I'm too busy right now," she subconsciously interprets this as: *he wants sex, but I'm not sexy enough to be worth his trying a little harder.*

The key in this is the distinction between "**he wants sex**" and "**he wants me**." She has to believe that **she** is the only one who can make you feel this way. If she sees you as just some sex-crazed chump stuck with her low libido, she'll chalk up your bold passion as your high libido finally having had enough. You need to show her that you don't want some other woman; you want her and no one else. *Your desire is directed at her and her alone.*

So, if Sexy Suzy walks down the street and propositions you, your attitude needs to be: "Screw that, do you have any idea how hot my wife is?" When you bear that attitude toward your wife, regardless of whether or not she sees it, you yourself will be bolder about your sex life and your wife will likely eventually feel it. Of course, you've got to maintain a degree of OI in this.

Generic v. Specific Compliments

The problem is that just telling your wife, "I desire you more than any other woman" doesn't convince her. You've got to get the conversation decked out with specifics that wouldn't apply to the masses. This can be tricky, but here are some examples in three fairly common areas of physical appearance.

Clothes

- **Generic:** "That dress is driving me crazy"
 - Her interpretation: "He might have a fetish for this style of dress."
- **Specific:** "The way that dress fits over your body is so tight, and your hips curving out that way ... it's turning me on."
 - Her interpretation: "He noticed the way my unique body shape is complimented and accentuated by my dress - and that makes him want me."

Hair

- **Generic:** "I love the way your hair looks today."
 - Her interpretation: "He likes this hair style on women, generally."
- **Specific:** "When you put your hair up that way, it reminds me of when we were at that one event, and the sex we had afterward - I can't get that out of my mind. [Playful/sarcastic:] Go change your hairdo or I might actually go insane."
 - Her interpretation: "He likes this hair style, but his memories of me are what's turning him on. We must have a strong connection."

Skin

- **Generic:** "Your skin looks so smooth, I just want to rub my hands all over you."
 - Her interpretation: "He generally likes soft skin. I happened to use lotion today."
- **Specific:** "Your skin feels so smooth, I want to gently glide my hands across your legs and feel all the goosebumps that come up."
 - Her interpretation: "He's attracted by the way my body responds to his touch."

Guys are notoriously bad at compliments. We stick with the generic because it's easy, but wives want to know that **it's her and her alone** that we crave. If she thinks it's just about getting sex and any woman will do, that's a huge turn-off. To her, you've just become like the stereotypical sex-craved man-pig who would hump a rock if it wasn't sinful. Show her she's wrong!

To address the lack of Scripture in this post, my source of inspiration is not only my personal experience, but 90% of the book of Song of Songs. Pretty much the entire book is one compliment after another, unique to the other person - all leading toward a heightened sense of physical intimacy. Rather than quoting dozens of verse examples to back this post up, I'll let you read the book yourself.

105 Non-Negotiable Attraction

Playing the "this for that" game might get someone to fulfill an obligation, but if you actually want to be desired, it takes something more. Let's look at how Jesus draws his bride to himself through the Gospel as a model for how we can draw our bride to us as well.

I've talked some about cultivating desire, which leads to intimacy, and using that intimate knowledge to develop a feeling of being "sexy." But a few points need to be clarified, as most RP people should already know:

Axiom 1: Attraction cannot be negotiated or will-powered into existence.

Axiom 2: You can't fix your wife; you can only fix yourself.

Axiom 3: Some people won't respond, even if you do fix yourself; and it's okay to let them walk away if they insist.

Interestingly, all of these principles are found straight in the Bible, which can re-affirm that we do right by following them.

Total Depravity

I don't care if you're Calvinist or Arminian - we all agree that humans are sinful from birth and cannot be saved (read: reconciled relationship with God, the way he wants) unless God draws him (John 6:44). We may disagree with what that "drawing" actually is, but the core principle is there. Hebrews 11:6 goes another step: "And without faith it is impossible to please God." Isaiah 64:6 clarifies, "Even their good deeds are as filthy rags." Genesis 6:5 makes this bolder: "Every inclination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil all of the time." In Romans 3:11, Paul re-frames the human condition in the context of relational desire and pursuit: "No one understands; no one seeks God."

In short, if God wanted a healthy relationship with us he could not sit by and wait for us to come to him. We were utterly incapable of doing anything that would genuinely please him. Even when we try and think our motives are pure, our hearts deceive us and we are really doing wrong if it's of our own effort (see Proverbs 14:12, 16:2, 21:27, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 8:8). Jesus even says boldly in Matthew 7 that some people think they're doing right by Him, but in the end he tells them, "I never know you; away from me you evildoers."

Totally Depraved Spouse

This is how we must imagine our spouses. Wives will not enter into right, reconciled relationships with their husbands (read: genuine desire for their husbands, the way we want) unless the husband draws her. In reality, God can change her heart in the absence of our efforts, but it's idiotic to make that assumption without a prophetic guarantee. I know I prayed endlessly for God to change my wife. The response I got from God was, essentially, "Screw that, go change yourself." So, I ask:

ONE - How many of you have endured sexlessness and disrespect from your spouse and just hoped that without you doing anything different they would magically change?

TWO - How many of you have had your spouse try to initiate sex or serve you around the house, but totally killed the mood because you knew their motive was out of duty and not desire?

Now you know how God feels! God doesn't bargain for our obedience. He doesn't negotiate for our love. He knows this would be futile *because we are incapable of loving and desiring him of our own will-power*. In the same way, our wives are **incapable** of loving and desiring us of their own will-power.

Don't Fix, Be Fixed

Fortunately, God's pretty smart, so he gave us the answer. Pop quiz: which did God say was the answer to our sin and depravity?

- (A) Screw them, they can all go to hell!
- (B) I'll just magically fix them because I love them!

- (C) I'll just keep waiting until maybe someone down there figures out how to solve this problem!
- (D) Maybe I can negotiate with them: I give them heaven, they give me sinless perfection!
- (E) I'll put the responsibility for their salvation on myself, be perfect myself, set the example by myself for what I expect, own all the crap and sin in the world myself, and let them respond to who I am, taking on my identity through my being in them, rather than me trying to "fix them" as they are.

[Obviously the answer is E!]

Instead of fixing us, God became an example to us of what a "fixed" human being looks like. That was incredibly alluring! Everywhere he went, people were drawn to him. When you fix yourself, people are drawn to you. In Jerusalem, Cana, Capernaum, the gym, the grocery store, and the park ... people turn their heads and notice the one who is living as a "fixed" and right person who "has it all together" (or by RP terminology, is fit and has mastered OYS and frame, etc.).

The Break-Down

Let me split this up into pieces.

I'll put the responsibility for their salvation on myself

Husbands, if you want to make your wives right with God and with you, the responsibility for accomplishing this is on you, not them. Just as God determined that the responsibility was his and not the church's to figure out, so it is with husbands and wives.

be perfect myself, set the example by myself for what I expect

This is why RP refrains: "fix the man, not the marriage."

own all the crap and sin in the world myself

OYS, yes ... but also taking responsibility for things that go wrong in the family. Jesus bore the church's sins. Not just the ones he thought weren't so bad ... **all of them**. So, when your wife screws up, don't shift the blame. You're the captain. Ephesians 5:23 literally sets up the metaphor that you are "God" to your wife. I love what Brother Lawrence said when he was convicted with sin: "I shall never do otherwise, if you leave me to myself. It is you who must hinder my falling and mend what is amiss" (Practice of the Presence of God). Husbands, this is part of leading your wives.

*let them respond to **who I am***

God doesn't force every person on the planet to respond to him. He's OI. He accepts the fact that some people will reject him, and yet this actually glorifies him even when people reject him! He loves them and cares about their salvation, but his frame is unaffected by their rejection of him. He doesn't push them away, but he certainly lets them walk away, or never approach to begin with.

Instead, the focus is on letting people respond to who he is as expressed by all the things he has done for us, most notably through the Gospel. Salvation is about responding to what God has revealed to us about who he is. It's not about us; it's about him.

taking on my identity through my being in them, rather than me trying to "fix them" as they are

The result of being "saved" - after we have responded to true RP manliness from God, his bride (the church) fits within his frame, taking on his identity rather than trying to craft one for itself. God does not fix our broken frames to be like his anymore than we should bolster our wives' frames to secure for her her own independent identity. God opens his frame up and says, "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved" (John 10:9). To reword that in RP terms: "Jesus is the door to God's frame; whoever goes through Him will rest securely in God's frame." That's what you want your wife to do!

But none of this can be done if you are trying to lobby for your wife's desire, as if we could overcome the sinful nature on our own in the absence of God's help. What I call "the sinful nature" here can, in part, parallel the concept of *hypergamy* in the wife, but that's another post for another day.

106 What Doesn't Work

We've all seen sitcoms. They give a humorous caricature of what real people try to do to get sex from their spouse. Unfortunately these strategies rarely ever work, yet somehow we are emotionally committed to them. Let's reorient ourselves away from begging, arguing, or demanding sex or from covert tactics we employ that make us feel like we deserve sex ... and just learn to be attractive the way we once were when we were single and first alluring our spouse in the first place.

A short one for /u/OsmiumZulu. This is a filler because I obviously can't count to 7 correctly. Nevertheless, it's a massively important concept I realized about a year ago, which often goes unnoticed. Even though I haven't heard it said directly in TRP/MRP, I doubt anyone would disagree:

Axiom: If it wouldn't make a single person want to sleep with you, it's not going to make your spouse want to sleep with you.

Someone on another sub was complaining:

I have argued, pleaded, cried, begged, demanded

...and then concluded that divorce was the only option. I once tried these things too. Know what I learned? If it doesn't work with single people, it probably won't work on your spouse either. Imagine going to the bar...

- **Argue:** I'm really mad that you haven't had sex with me yet. I know we just met, but here's a list of 7 reasons why your actions have upset me ...
- **Pleading:** Please, please, please have sex with me! I just need to get laid. I'll do anything!
- **Crying:** ¡Sob, sob, sob! ... I'm so sorry, I'm just pathetic and miserable. If you'd have sex with me, ¡sob! ... maybe I wouldn't be so sad right now ... ¡single man tear!
- **Begging:** Come on. Please? You know you want to. DO IT! Come on. It'll be fun. Stop looking at that hot guy, I'll take you home. I don't have any STDs. C'mon. C'mooooon. Pleeceasssee! C'mon!
- **Demanding:** The Bible says you must submit and have sex with me! I know we're not married yet, but you're just a woman and I'm a man, so you'd better do what I say.

These don't come from a place of cultivating desire; rather, they're from self-entitlement. To add a few that aren't on that guy's list:

- **Chore Play:** Hey, I see you spilled some beer on your skirt. How about we go back to your place, I'll do your laundry, wash your windows, vacuum the carpet, and organize your fridge, and if I do all of that you'll have sex with me, right?
- **Bragging:** Hey, I just bench-pressed 250lbs at the gym. I also got a pretty good bonus. Do you want to sleep with me now?
- **Gift-Giving:** I bought you some flowers and chocolates. These are pretty romantic things and I didn't skimp on the cheap stuff. Is that enough to buy some sex for the night?
- **Flattery:** You're looking really good tonight. You're pretty much the hottest girl I've ever seen. How do you get your hair so silky? You're so out of my league, it's amazing you're even talking to me.
- **Unwanted Touch:** Oh, I'm sorry, was that your boob I just grabbed? Hmm, let me feel the other one too. [Groping] Are you getting turned on now?

My efforts in these areas with my wife in the past haven't necessarily been this extreme, but you get the point. It always boggles my mind that people (including myself!) by default try to use different tactics to try to get their spouse to sleep with them than they would employ with trying to get together with a single person.

A couple key verses:

- **2 Thess. 3:10** - "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat." By extension: if you're not willing to put in the work to improve yourself and flirt with your wife, don't expect the benefit of what that work would have gotten you. Lift. Sidebar. Etc.
- **James 4:1-12** - (in part) "What causes quarrels and fights among you? Is it not this: that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions." This is self-entitlement mentality. We do this to God and we do it to our spouses. Don't do that. God doesn't respond to it. She won't either.

Also, go back to Song of Solomon. He had a great body and he knew how to flirt. He was a high quality man worthy of her desire. He had a mission from God apart from her and was pursuing it and this attracted her to him. He was surrounded by other men - armed guards even. Other maidens took notice of him. Be a high quality man. Period.

High quality men do get chores done, buy their women gifts, flirt through flattery, and grope their wives - but they can get away with these things because, like Solomon, they're not using them as manipulative tactics. They do it because they want to. The first list? I don't know any high quality men who do those things at all, nor does Solomon model them for us.

107 Comparison Game and Positive Dread

Has your wife every compared you to some other guy or herself to other women she knows? Maybe she doesn't do it overtly, but secretly she's wishing you were more like him or that she could have the life that Bob gives his wife. Why does she do that and how should we respond? How do we win with our wives and girlfriends when we're constantly being compared to other men?

Hyper-Hypergamy

It's no secret that women are predominantly hypergamous. This means that they will always trade up for the better man if the risks of doing so are outweighed by the benefits.

If you remember the previous post on the curse, you'll know that women also desire to rule over their husbands. Putting these two concepts together, the woman's real imperative is:

- **Find the best man possible, marry him, then leverage the relationship to rule over him.**

It's not about finding the best man just for the sake of having the best man. There's a greater power to be won when she is a queen over an 8 than a queen over a 5. And even when she has conquered that 8, she will not be satisfied because now she sees all the 9s and 10s.

Satan's Ploy

Satan did the same thing. From Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 we get the impression that Satan had great authority, but he was not content being master over angles who were a 5. He wanted the perfect 10 to master. So, he says, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High" (Isa. 14:14).

Flash forward to the first sin itself. Satan's tells Eve: "You will be like God" (Genesis 3:5). Sound familiar? He's tempting her with the exact thing that ruined him - but he's not telling her the outcome. Satan was cast out of heaven (Ez. 28:16) and Eve was cast out of Eden, but not before she tried to take leadership over her man by having him eat the fruit too (Gen. 3:6). This is where the curse sets in: that Eve's desire would be to rule over her husband, but that he would actually be the one to rule over her.

Satan imparted his struggle, his curse, on Eve, and the daughters of Eve have been struggling with this hyper-hypergamy ever since. **It's not enough to have the best man; they must also rule over the best man.**

The Comparison Game

I've never seen this concept talked about on an RP forum, but it's one that is fairly infallible in my experience with women. I have yet to find an exception. AWALT.

- Start with basic hypergamy. Higher SMV = better; will trade up if circumstances permit.
- Preselection = if other women find a man desirable, there must be something about him you don't know yet.
 - This at first seems to be only for "new" men, as it's the only way to gauge the non-looks aspects of their SMV, by trusting the attention of other women. That said, this works in marriages too. When a guy starts improving his SMV, when he starts getting attention from other women, his wife starts to realize, "Maybe there's more to his changes than I've noticed."
- Preselection assumes competition against the other women who prove the preselection. **The comparison game** goes one step further: *Women have an innate drive to outdo other women in the aspects of their lives that matter to them. How good their husband is always matters.*
 - Something like how good a woman's job is might not matter at all to a housewife, so she won't feel the need to compete with a working mom on that front. Instead, she will compete with her on how happy and successful her children are. That does matter to her. Since the working mom presumably also cares about the upbringing of her children, it becomes a two-way competition, increasing emotional investment in the outcome.
- The comparison game is the primary motivator for women to keep a separate frame from their husbands, to strengthen those frames, and to force their husbands into those frames. On an external level, they will appear to other women as having won the comparison game. Ironically, this is counter-productive because on an internal level the wife will know that her husband is not as high-quality as she brags about him being.

Note: It doesn't help that men are constantly comparing women to each other.

Positive Dread

Dread is the concern that other women want what you have and might actually get it. Interestingly, it's not a negative in low/moderate doses. Women actually **want** to experience some degree of dread. It is an internal sign to her that she is winning the comparison game. Other girls want her guy, but she's the one who locked him down.

In appropriate levels, her husband becomes the trophy that she can wave around to all the other women proving she is the champion of the comparison game. But if the trophy is external-only (i.e. she's the one sculpting it), then she will know she cheated and that the victory is hollow. If it's the real deal - a true RP man - then she has won for real and she experiences the fullness of this victory over the other women.

I do distinguish this from more overt versions of dread, where the woman is controlled by fear of her man, not pride in her man. It reminds me of a comedian who once said: "There's no greater compliment a guy can pay me than staring at my wife's rack." Take that in the reverse and that's how dread helps win the comparison game.

Husbands: Don't Play The Game

By now, it might be tempting to help your wife win the comparison game so she'll take pride in you and desire you more for it. There is some benefit in this, but in my personal experience, it's not an effective strategy. This is a trap, just as the game itself is a trap for the woman. When she wins against one person, there's always a new competitor just around the corner. You also might find yourself becoming a slave to the game's rules rather than being your own man.

Paul says plainly: **”Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with oen another, they are without understanding”** (2 Cor. 10:12).

My wife used to cry every time she came home from her sister’s house. Somehow she always found some aspect of her sister’s life that was better than hers. Her sister has a strong frame, so my wife’s frame would crack to her sister every time. As a good beta, I used to pull out the duct tape and fix her frame with all the reassurance and confidence she needed, then we’d start fortifying it. Next thing I knew, I was inside her frame, as that was the best angle to hammer in those nails and lay a concrete border.

My wife couldn’t wait for her sister to come over to our house so they could play the comparison game again, this time on her turf. If it failed, I got an emotional lashing for not making her frame strong enough. If it succeeded, my wife set her sights on new targets (subconsciously, of course; it became other women at church she’d compare herself against instead of her sister).

Solution? Don’t play the game.

Saving Her From Herself - Developing Wifey OI

We all have a sinful nature. That is who I am in my core self apart from Christ. God had to save me from myself. In my last post on Non-Negotiable Attraction, I commented that **”the sinful nature’ here can, in part, parallel the concept of *hypergamy* in the wife.”** Without God giving us a new identity (2 Cor. 5:17), we will always be ruled by our sinful nature (Romans 3:9-18).

Similarly, unless a husband gives his wife a new identity, she will always be ruled by her hypergamy and the comparison trap (because we now know it’s not just a game). When we rest in God’s frame (per that previous post), we assume His identity. Likewise, when your wife rests in your frame, she assumes your identity. I previously quoted 2 Cor. 10:12. The next verse says, **”But we will not boast beyond limits [frame], but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us.”** That is, your wife’s only concern will be what you have delegated to her within your frame - and she will be free to boast about this: that she is fully pleasing to her man, making her a great wife with a great man.

My frame will destroy my wife’s sister’s frame every time. She can’t convince me to do things her way because I’m not playing a comparison game with her. I’m not trying to do everything she can do, then one-up her. I am my own man. In my view, I’m not at competition with my wife’s sister and I DNGAFlip who is better at what. When my wife rests in my frame, she stops playing the comparison trap and appreciates what we have for what it is. Why? Because that’s what I’ve told her to do (with my actions, not my words - words will always fail with that instruction).

When my wife visits her sister alone, she still struggles periodically. But, interestingly, whenever we go together, she comes back all smiles.

Incidentally, this ends up winning her the comparison game anyway. It is the wife’s version of OI. When she stops caring about comparing herself to others because she rests in her man’s frame instead of battling theirs, that is the only way she will get the kind of life she really wants. When she has that, she will win the comparison game incidentally.

108 Life Path of a Relationship

This one is a game-changer. It is the first real introduction to how a man’s mission can be the only thing that turns a dying marriage into a successful one. Whether you’re just starting to get interested in a woman or you’ve been married for 25 years, this path will probably ring true for where you are and what you can expect down the road.

A few years ago I developed this set of graphs to explain life-cycles at different layers of interactivity. It is the culmination of most everything I've learned in analyzing marriage after marriage in my career, as

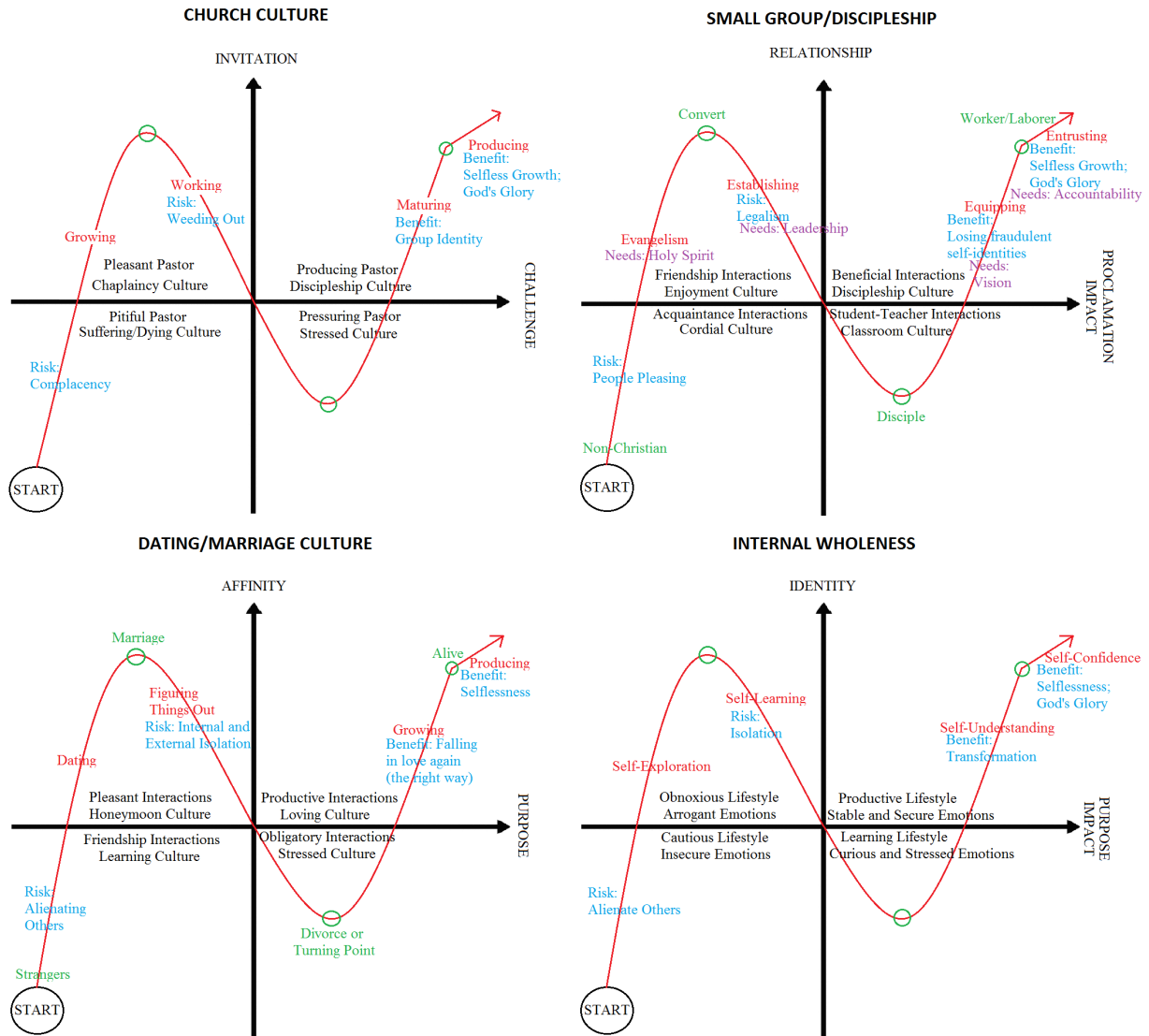


Figure 1: Life Cycle Graphs

well as my experience in ministry over the last couple decades. It has resonated soundly with groups I've led, couples I've counseled, and men I've discipled.

Four things to note in advance: (1) Only focus on the lower-left graph, ignoring the other 3 for now (we'll probably circle back to those someday); (2) the axes are for demonstrative purposes only, they don't imply a "0" value or "negatives" if you're on the left/bottom end of it; (3) this graph is not to-scale as far as time, as one phase could be 3 months and another take 8 years; and (4) it might be helpful to split your browser so you have the graph on one side of your screen and this post on the other for quick-reference.

For context, the dating/marriage culture graph was originally created for the purpose of explaining to Christians how so many couples get to the point of filing for divorce, or otherwise having a major breakthrough/turn-around in their relationship and how to move in the right direction (a "main event" in RP terms). I've since adapted it for a few other purposes as well.

Lower-Left Quadrant

Everyone starts with absolutely no relational affinity or relational purpose because there's no relationship - you're strangers. Then you meet and become friends. Even if you're dating right after the first interaction, you're really just purposed-friends at that point. You still have to go through all the same phases that a non-dating friendship would involve, which is predominantly about learning as much about each other as possible.

During this phase, your relational affinity (especially when you're dating) should be increasing like wild-fire. If it's not, why are you still with him/her? The result of the rapid relational connectivity growth is a risk of alienating others. There's a common trope about the guy who drops all his buddies as soon as he finds a girl, and girls go through similar things. Also, even when you are around people together, the lovey-dovey aspects of your public interactions may cause people to not want to be around you. But these ongoing interactions with others are what will ground the relationship in reality and are quite necessary for the relationship to grow in a healthy manner and at a healthy pace. Too much exclusivity is dangerous.

The relationship doesn't move very far along on the "purpose" axis because the only real purpose during this phase is to discern whether or not you're going to get married. The actual emotional connectivity/affinity, however, moves very quickly. There should actually be some minor ups and downs, but this shows the overall trend.

The biggest and most common mistake people make in this phase is the assumption that the rapid increase of relational affinity will equate to a successful marriage. They have ignored the "purpose" axis altogether or assume that it will just work itself out. As a result, people dive head-first into bad relationships and get in too deep to the point where it's hard to back out.

Upper-Left Quadrant

As the relationship becomes more serious, it dives deeper than a friendship. Everything is sunshine and rainbows as you start to uncover deeper truths about how the other thinks, what their passions are, how they respond to different situations, etc. You're still learning, but it's less about discovering new things and more about enjoying what you have together.

That degree of relational affinity continues to rise until you get married. If I were smarter when I made the graph, I would have made that green circle much larger, as the actual peak could be either before or after the wedding, but you get the idea all the same. Shortly after the marriage, the couple starts figuring out how their marriage will function. Interactively, things stay positive for a while, but as basic life obligations set in, the affinity decreases, albeit still pleasant.

Before the wedding point, the risk is still the time-restriction and lovey-dovey alienation. After the wedding, most couples end up isolating themselves from the outside world not because they're spending so much time with each other or too touchy-feely that it makes people gag, but because life obligations increase and limit time. You've suddenly got a mortgage to worry about, kids to feed, a couple car payments, shuttling kids around, etc.

Most people really start figuring out an **actual** relational purpose during this phase (albeit, it's never a good one), so there's a lot more horizontal motion on the graph. There's also a huge swing in affinity that happens.

Lower-Right Quadrant

As stress increases, people start living out of obligation and not desire. In the previous phase, the stressors affected the relationship, but not necessarily your mood. In this phase, you're actually feeling the stress.

The result is that you hit a "main event", where you're either going to get divorced or something's going to change. **Every marriage hits a main event - sometimes several.** Personally, I've had 3 main events that I know of in my marriage - the most recent being about 3 years ago, immediately before developing this graph, which I crafted to show how my wife and I got through it. We haven't had a main event since.

For most people, their "purpose" is something akin to making a lot of money, having their dream home, x number of kids, a great sex life, vacationing at all their ideal spots, etc. This is an actual purpose, but it's a really bad one. The "main event" precludes a couple from getting any further in these purposes because they're not able to enjoy them together. As long as they stay in the lower-right quadrant, any and all progress on the "purpose" meter will actually stagnate. They may even be stuck in one point on the graph for a very long time, never moving up, down, left, or right at all. This non-motion usually happens immediately before the "divorce/turning point," but never after.

When a marriage hits the lowest point, there are usually 3 things that will happen:

First: Divorce

Divorcing is basically trashing this whole chart and starting over with someone else, beginning at 'start' all over again. Because virtually 100% of relationships hit a main event ("ARALT," I'll say), all you're really doing is hoping that when you do hit this point in the next relationship it won't hit as hard. Most people either (1) numb themselves to divorce or (2) numb themselves to the stress so they can tolerate more before hitting that main event.

Second: Regress

This is the most common answer I see, and it's also the least useful. The mentality is something like this: "We used to be happy back in the upper-left quadrant, so let's figure out what we were doing back then and find ways of returning there." Result? Blow your savings on a vacation, kill your budget to get more frequent baby-sitting, ignore mowing the yard and cleaning the house to have more time for date-nights, etc. The bottom-line is that you're sacrificing the pace at which you've been progressing forward in order to glide backwards up that affinity line again.

Most people will successfully get back in the upper-left quadrant again, and the more resources (forward progress on the "purpose" axis) they throw at it, the further back (and up the affinity axis) they'll go - but as a rule, you can never get further than the marriage/honeymoon point because the higher you get, the more resources it takes to make the next step up. The law of diminishing returns sets in. I should note here: everyone's mileage per resources may vary. Some people might not have to expend a large % of their resources to get 3/4 the way back again, whereas for others they might need to exhaust their entire life retirement contributions to do it (I've seen it happen many times).

Eventually, the resources run out (or you're not willing to expend any further) and you end up sliding forward again. It can happen at a slow, steady pace because you've had a nice recharge and that lasts you for a while, or it can be all at once as soon as the fun stops. Regardless, people always hit the "main event" again.

Many people regress repeatedly every time they get there, sometimes even before the main event because they can see it coming. But each time you get there you're losing your resources. So, if you've been incredibly financially successful, you might be able to afford keeping this up for a long time - even forever. But for most people who have more traditional income fluctuation degrees over time, it means that the next "main event" will hit harder than the last because you have less resources to get you up that hill again. Also, even for the wealthy, they're losing their time with every cycle, which is a precious resource that cannot be self-generated.

Third: Progress

The last option is the rarest one to see happen, but is the only one I've seen with a lasting solution. That solution is to begin operating together for a common mission. That mission can never be: "make \$X, get a dream house, have Y kids, get crazy awesome sex, and visit Z places in the world." This is not a sustainable life purpose because all people will find when they achieve it they are still not satisfied, and when that's all

people are shooting for, your forward progress will always plateau. Those are things that held your affinity at the "marriage" bubble, but it's not going to work going forward. Instead, your purpose has to go beyond you.

Personally, I believe the only true purpose is the one Jesus gave us: disciple-making. If that's not your purpose (or at least part of it), then you won't get the satisfaction from God that comes with fulfilling what he put you here to do, and the result is that you won't be satisfied with each other. That said, I don't discount the possibility that other purposes can work - but it's always got to be something bigger than you and your spouse. Your own internal spiritual well-being (even together) is also insufficient and will not provide that satisfaction, so when couples have "get closer to God together" as their purpose, they **ALWAYS** end up sorely disappointed in the long-term.

When my wife and I were at the "main event" a few times, we refused the divorce path, and fiddled with regression in very small ways to no avail, always returning to the "main event," and in quick succession (all 3 happened over only 2 years; we've been married for 9). We didn't spend much resources, so didn't get much return - and I'm glad we didn't waste more effort on that process!

At the time, I had already (since before we were even married) been committed to the vision of disciple-making. My wife was intellectually, but she had a lot of baggage that prevented her from connecting with that purpose in her heart. Instead, for her, it was all about the "\$X income, dream house, great kids, etc." I was a terrible leader during this time and didn't know how to awaken her heart to this. Instead, I just saw that we weren't on the same page. I lost all attraction to her and the thought of having sex together was often repulsive to me, although I harbored the hope that maybe if our sex life returned my attraction would as well. I mistakenly blamed our poor sex life for my dissatisfaction in the marriage.

About 3 years ago I stopped being so passive and started leading and became more independent of her in my pursuit of the mission God gave me (and I believe all Christians, including my wife). I removed her as my emotional center and made it Christ, putting his mission for me as my priority. This caused a lot of friction in our relationship, embittering her toward the idea of discipleship. But (and that is a story for another day), when she came around, things started changing for us.

At first, she became individually invested and began discipling other women. This helped, but did not actually solve our problems. More things had to change to the point where now we're on the same mission together, rather than individually invested alongside each other. Our relationship has flourished ever since. Instead of regressing, we started pushing forward. Our progress in life did not decrease - it kept increasing, but our relational affinity began to grow in the midst of that progress now - even because of it.

Upper-Right Quadrant

The relational interactions and emotional connectivity changed very rapidly - almost as fast an increase as when we were dating. Those fuzzy romantic feelings came back, and her heart started skipping when I walked in the door again. The sexual interest I had lost in her began to return and I was actually attracted to my wife again. It was like falling in love all over again, but instead of "marriage" being a destination, our eyes were now on God's Kingdom in the vein of Matthew 6:33.

Now, let me be clear: the fuzzies came back for her, but not the tingles. This is a huge distinction to make. My relational satisfaction skyrocketed, but I still experienced sexual dissatisfaction. This is when I first truly realized that sex wasn't the cause of our relational problems, it was only a contributing factor. When sex became an isolated dissatisfaction, I had a better perspective on my marriage as a whole to start moving in the right direction again, leading to the many pre-RP improvements I had started - and ultimately getting me to RP in the first place. This is why RP resonates with me quite strongly: because I literally had everything else figured out except the tingles. Most people come in with crappy relationships and crappy sex-lives and RP is really only designed to fix the sex-life (although MRP has some directive toward fixing the relationship too, just not much; TRP has none at all). My hope for RPC is to find a better balance in these things :)

I've heard it said many times on MRP or subs like deadbedrooms: "Our marriage is perfect in every way, except we're not having sex." Most people say that not realizing how imperfect their marriages actually are, thinking sex will be the magical cure. In reality, by solving all of the relational background, I was staging myself perfectly so that when I discovered RP and started implementing actual sexual strategy, all of the nuts and bolts started kicking in all at once and a pulse was revived almost instantly. We've still got a long way to go, but the immediacy of some of the turnaround has been more than I hoped for.

This is when we have truly become "alive" again. Not only our individual lives, but our marriage jointly has become productive for God's Kingdom. We no longer live for ourselves, but for a purpose beyond ourselves - and not individually, but as one joint flesh. We still have to prove responsible with the physical kingdom God's put us in charge of, as our investment in greater things is depending on being faithful with basic things (parable of the minas and all that), but it's not about the physical stuff in life anymore. When we both got on the same page about that, everything changed. Regression still happens periodically, but we've never fallen back to a "main event" - we've always stayed on the upswing of that U shape - usually even in the upper-right quadrant even with some regression.

109 Pursuit, Seduce, Initiate

How many Christian women demand that men be the ones to pursue them? The distinction between "initiating" a relationship and "pursuing" a woman is a significant one that is addressed countless times in the Bible with the way God interacts with his bride. When we understand the proper orientation of our pursuits, we can more effectively reflect God to the world through our marriage.

Pursuit

Christian women love to play the pursuit card. "You're the man. It's your job to pursue me!" This is not a biblical concept. I can't give any citations because they don't exist. At best, I could explain sociological structures that existed at the time the Bible was written, but the Bible never endorses those cultural concepts as God-ordained any more than polygamy. In reality, this is a ploy from the feminist imperative telling women that men should be doing everything and women can just do whatever they want and the "Good-Christian Guy" just needs to keep being a beta chump toward her anyway, no matter how frigid or denying she may be.

Seduce

Instead, what I do see happening repeatedly is that women who wanted men to pursue them had to take the responsibility for seducing the man before he chased her. Interestingly, we have two primary books dedicated to female characters: Esther and Ruth. Esther got her position by seducing the king into selecting her as his new wife. Likewise, Ruth seduced Boaz. Although many like to reject this, it's pretty obvious Naomi had an agenda of hooking the two up from the start and Ruth did whatever Naomi said. The plan was to get Boaz to marry Ruth from the very beginning. Are we really to believe these women weren't chatting up about this plan each night? The Bible as much as tells us they were.

Now, some people would want to throw out the immediate objection: "But we're the bride of Christ and God pursues us, so shouldn't we emulate him by pursuing our wives the same way?" This is the type of thinking of someone who still has the wool pulled over his eyes. This tries to impute the feminist imperative on how we understand God and the Bible when Scripture itself actually says the opposite. Yes, there is an element that God is the original initiator - he has to be because we're incapable of our own salvation apart from him. But once his enabling grace was given:

- "Seek first His Kingdom"
- "Come to me, all you who are weary"
- "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart"
- "Those who seek me diligently find me"

- "Ask and it will be given; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened"
- "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you"
- "He made one man from every nation ... that they should seek him and find him"

This list can go on for ages. But let's also look at the practical observation-approved aspects of the world. If God was pursuing everyone the way we think, then how can billions of people in the world go day by day without ever feeling any real impact of God's pursuit on them? I'll tell you why; or rather Paul will. Starting in Romans 1:18 Paul explains that God puts himself out there - he makes himself known to us, then the responsibility for responding is on us. If we fail to respond to our awareness of God, he hands us over to a darker mentality, then darker and darker until the "depraved mind" in verse 28. Where is God's pursuit in the path that Paul preaches? It's the reverse - the expectation is that we would be the ones to pursue God.

Lost Sheep

Once we're his, if we wander astray he brings us back (the lost sheep and all) - but that's us applying RP to a wandered spouse who is walking away from the relationship, not a pursuit in the way most women mean it when they charge their husbands with pursuing them, which usually amounts to "buy me flowers; give me love notes; massage my back without expecting sex; etc." Sure, we can do these things in our own right when we want to - but not in response to her demand. That actually cheapens our affection because if she can get it on demand, she no longer values it any more than free pens when you're at a job fair.

It's the husband's responsibility to keep his wife safely within his frame (the sheep pen). But at the same time, the wife has a responsibility to seduce her husband just as Ruth and Esther seduced their men, and just as each of God's people began their journey by opening their hearts to God and fostering a condition where he would come in and change our lives. In that sense, "the prayer" is (although often ineffective) an effort to seduce God - to say, "God, I want you to come inside me" just as a wife might do things to communicate to her husband, "I want you to come inside me."

Initiation

Now, I know that some people are ready to accuse: "But you can't control her, so she seduces you and it's worthless!" Righto. Let me be clear, though: the burden of initiation in sex is still on the man, whether she seduces or not. There have been several times that I've initiated with my wife when she made no effort on her appearance that day. After having a baby she had to remember how enjoyable sex is before she could want it again (specifically: enough to seduce me). Otherwise she'd just be eating up all my self-improvement as an easy freebie. Don't be a doormat - initiate even when she's giving you the "off signals" or else what's the point of all your self-improvement? (just be ready to back off on a hard no). As you start to function within the natural order of the system, ideally she will return to that order as well. And if she doesn't, that's why you work on your OI and ultimately why Jesus gave the Matthew 18 process for when someone sins against us (not to mention 1 Cor. 5 and 7).

As I have often said, physical reproduction is synonymous with spiritual reproduction. God is always initiating with us to share our faith. After all, it's his great commission to us. Remember how when you were first saved you thought everyone needed to know about Jesus?!? We have simply rejected him so often that we have numbed ourselves to his approach, like our feminized society tells us is normal and appropriate for wives. By rejecting evangelism, we are accepting the reality of the feminist imperative in the way we live our spiritual lives. If God didn't give me an internal compulsion by His Spirit toward sharing my faith, I'd probably never do it except in fulfillment of a duty (and how much do you enjoy duty sex?). Like any case study of a LL (low libido) on r/deadbedrooms, "I could go the rest of my life without it and I'd be just fine." But boy does God not want that from us. He's initiating all the time - stop numbing yourself to it. Bringing it back to the physical: husbands are and should always be the ones to initiate physically with our wives just as God initiates with us.

Bonus: Does that mean God's a bad leader? No, because he has abundance. If you won't respond to the call to share the Gospel, he'll raise up someone else who will. And if all of humanity rejects him ... "I tell you ... if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out" (Luke 19:40).

The key distinction here between pursuit, seduction, and initiation here is that as God leads us [read: real pursuit, not the way wives present it], if we're faithful to following, we actually become the [seducers] who are eager to respond to God's [initiation]. As we develop an internalized passion for evangelism, the Spirit no longer has to prompt the desire for evangelism in us - we're constantly wanting it with every new non-Christian we meet, and it's exciting. Sometimes we even do initiate without a clear prompt from the Spirit. In those cases the Spirit either follows suit or he doesn't. God's plan doesn't depend on our actions any more than your plan should depend on your wife's, though we can happily incorporate favorable behavior into our intentions. More often than not, the Spirit responds to our matured desire for evangelism (which is spiritually "sexy" to God) by initiating with us to help us find those opportunities.

Bottom Line

The order goes something like this: (1) Men should lead their wives; (2) Ideally this prompts a wife to be seductive; (3) Husbands then initiate sex with their wives under ideal conditions

- Note 1: The typical female intentions behind "pursue me" are discretionary in #1, not mandatory in any part of this process.
- Note 2: Often-times step 2 has to be skipped for most of the early months of a man's RP journey or through certain life situations (such as time off sex due to a newborn) because until the wife remembers how great it is to have sex with a real man, she's not going to want it enough to seduce you. The conclusion is that it's all your responsibility - but you need to lead her in fulfilling her role (i.e. #2), not in overt ways (i.e. "You need to seduce me, here's how ..."), but by being a man she wants to seduce.

110 Stay Plan is the Go Plan

Some marriages are on the rocks to a degree where divorce seems inevitable. Of course, biblically there is no "stay plan" or "go plan." There is just "the plan" - the orientation of our lives in the direction God would have us go.

Divorce

Most of you know by now that, although being a divorce attorney, I'm fairly against the concept of divorce. I believe all appropriate effort should be made to resolve the marriage. That said, here is when divorce is biblically appropriate:

- *Sexual Immorality* - In Matthew 5:32, Jesus uses the word porneia for sexual immorality instead of moicheia for what we know today as adultery. I won't go too much interpreting that here; there have been other threads about it.
- *Unbelieving Spouse Leaves* - This only applies if your spouse files the divorce first. If your spouse is a believer, you are obligated to follow the Matthew 18 path toward reconciliation/repentance. At the end of that path, if the person still doesn't repent, Jesus says to treat them like a non-believer, at which point 1 Cor. 7 says you're allowed to let the unbelieving spouse leave.
- *Death* - Nuff said.
- *Spouse Disowns You With a Callous Heart* - This one's a lot shakier, so research it yourself. Suffice it to say, Jesus says, "Whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my father in heaven" (Matthew 10:33). If someone is the bride of Christ and verbally declares with a callous heart (Hebrews 6/10 level) that they want nothing more to do with you, just as Jesus disowns his bride before the

Judge, so can you. Just don't run afoul of 2 Timothy 2:13 (with 12 for context) and do this merely because your spouse is lazy or "faithless." It must be active and intentional (see Hebrews 10:26 et seq.).

Stay Plan = Go Plan

With that in mind, MRP has this saying: "The stay plan is the go plan." It's not hard to understand and internalize: *Your path to improvement is the same whether you're trying to save your marriage or preparing for a nasty divorce.*

Now, the immediate objection to this is that we should live differently as married people than as single. This is true. There are clearly different obligations and expectations placed on married people, including biblically. It has an impact on how you live your life. As with the parables of the talents/minas, you should do your best with what God has given you - because this is how you will mature and improve. As you are faithful with little, he will give you more because he knows you will be faithful with much (Luke 16:10). So, be good stewards within your families. More on that to come in other posts, no doubt.

But here's something that gets overlooked: "From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none" (1 Corinthians 7:29). Some people like to discredit this passage saying, "Paul thought Jesus was going to return in a few years; that's the only reason he said that." But if that's an excuse for ignoring the authority of a passage, are we suggesting Paul's intent in writing those words wasn't inspired for the rest of us centuries/millenia later?

Just "The Plan"

There is no "stay plan" or "go plan" - there's just "The Plan." It's the plan Jesus gave us when he ascended: "Make disciples of all nations." In 1 Cor. 7, Paul is making it clear that our mission to God takes precedence over our marriages. Indeed, our marriages are part of that mission (as our spouse and kids are a small part of "all nations") - but we cannot live as if our marriages are the primary, singular most important central point of our lives, which is the beta mentality. God has called us to something bigger.

Our mission is threefold:

- Love **G**od (greatest command) Love **O**thers (second greatest command) Make **D**isciples (great commission)

Most people love to leave that third one out. It's easy to say we're "loving God" and "loving others" when the word "love" is so watered down in modern society. In reality, Jesus clarified: "A new command I give you: Love one another ... as I have loved you so must you love one another." "Love one another" wasn't a new command. The "as I have loved you" part is what's new. How did Jesus love his disciples (this passage was said just before they started eating the last supper, so he's only talking to them)? He disciplined them. He trained and taught them. He rebuked and helped them. He oriented his life around their spiritual growth and well-being so they could reproduce the Gospel in others as he did for them.

If we're not making disciples, we can't legitimately say we love one another. Moreover, if "God is love" (1 John 4:8), then if we are not sharing God with others in our relationship with them, how can we say that we "love" them? Jesus did not say the second greatest command is to "be nice to others" or "be kind" or "be a servant toward" others - he said to "love one another." That biblical understanding of love transcends the individual components. He wasn't referencing 1 Corinthians 13 because that book hadn't been written yet. He was referencing what he had modeled for everyone. The 1 Cor. 13 things were parts of what he modeled, but discipleship was the purpose.

"The Plan" Jesus gave us is to make disciples. All of your self-improvement is worthless if it's not leading toward your participation and fulfillment in that plan. Whether your marriage is on the rocks or in full bloom doesn't matter if you're not making disciples. This is the plan, whether you stay or go. Jesus says in

Matthew 7 that we'll know who is truly in him by their fruit. Where's your fruit? If you're so wrapped up in your marriage that you forget your greater purpose, that's about as beta as it gets, no matter how good you get at passing tests, lifting weights, or whatever.

Do you have a plan? Is it the one Jesus gave you or did you make it up yourself and decide to go a different direction?

111 Polygamy x Hypergamy

A biblical and historical look at the foundations of male polygamous desires and how hypergamy ascended as the dominant influence on intergender social dynamics. Ultimately, if a man wants his wife to be a good bride, he must model what it looks like to be Christ's bride first.

How do we reconcile the discrepancy that we are meant to model life for others (1 Cor. 11:1, Phil. 3:17, John 13:15), while also acknowledging that there are genuine differences between men and women? At what point does modeling stop and instruction become an authority for its own sake apart from demonstration?

Biology v. Spirit

RP appropriately acknowledges that there are clear biological distinctions between men and women. These distinctions extend to spiritual ones as well. Where they try to explain concepts of male polygamy and female hypergamy from an evolutionary standpoint, the Bible is far more clear: this is a result of original design combined with the implications of sin and the curse (i.e. spiritual in nature and not purely biological).

So, when RP says things like *women would rather share a high value man than have a beta to themselves*, it's a biological prerogative to hold different standards between men and women. Men should be expected to want multiple women (who share him), and women should be expected to want to leave the man they're with to be with the best guy in her life (other factors affecting the judgment notwithstanding, of course).

That said, from a spiritual standpoint we have to grasp what Paul says in Romans 7:25 - "I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin." When RP talks about the biological distinctions between men and women and the imperative that causes, they are spot on. But the Christian should also have a spiritual truth planted in them which can save them from their biological impulses, which have been distorted by the fall (James 1:21, referencing the parable of the sower).

As such, secular RP may endorse things like cheating as a biological imperative (whether by a polygamous or hypergamous drive), and they have every right to do so from their limited perspective. But when we factor in spiritual redemption, we have a higher purpose that demands we escape our biological impulses of the flesh. We can find victory in the battle between flesh and spirit because of Christ in us - and we know that living solely from a biological imperative has dreadful spiritual consequences (see Hebrews 10:26 et seq).

To put it more clearly: **RP properly understands biological dynamics, but misses the spiritual compulsion found in those with Christ.** As a result, we must consider the whole picture and not merely the biological truths that RP presents to us.

History

It's worth noting that the polygamy/hypergamy divide is one that is evident all throughout history - not only in biblical cultures and examples, but worldwide and throughout time. Most notably is the direction of polygamous societies. We predominantly see men with multiple wives, scarcely the reverse. Even the biblical examples we see follow this pattern, something God even seems to endorse or otherwise neglects to condemn (2 Samuel 12, Jacob with Leah and Rachel as compared with Abraham and Hagar, 1 Timothy 3).

Polygamy

I'm not endorsing polygamy in a modern society. If it's illegal in your country, Romans 12 should be clear enough: respect that law. My point is simply that when RP talks about "spinning plates," from a historical perspective this seems commonplace for men, but would be inappropriate for women, where hypergamy would lend itself more toward serial monogamy with each successive man being of higher value than the last.

In both circumstances, cheating is expected and permitted in the RP view - but from a spiritual vantage point we must re-evaluate.

Historically, if a man had multiple "plates," he married each of them, bringing a financial obligation of support into the mix. They could not simply divorce their wife and pick up another without having some obligation to the "wife of your first youth," to whom God consistently calls us to be faithful.

Because of this financial obligation to each, in societies where polygamy was permitted, it was usually only exercised by the wealthy and elite - the truly high value men who had the resources to support all of these women. I simply don't see this being true for most men in modern America, who can barely support one family within a reasonable standard of living, even if the laws on polygamy did change.

Hypergamy

That said modern first world countries do blatantly permit serial monogamy. Divorce laws are geared to this exact purpose, having begun with the initiation of no fault divorce as early as 1969. To this end, many RP men are rightly frustrated that female hypergamous tendencies have been legalized - even encouraged, whereas male polygamous tendencies are stifled and socially shamed.

Men are not permitted to marry multiple women, and they're spat on when they cheat on their wives, or must keep their pornography (pseudo-expression of polygamy) habits a secret. In turn, women are praised for being empowered enough to leave their "no-good, deadbeat husbands" in favor of finding and marrying a higher-value man. But from a spiritual perspective, let's consider the above activities: (1) polygamy in a marriage context, (2) extramarital polygamy/cheating, (3) pornography, (4) divorce and remarriage. 2-4 are clearly condemned by Scripture, yet are technically legal in society, whereas the only one that Scripture may actually endorse (or at least passively permit) is the one that has been made illegal.

Conclusions?

I don't know that I have a conclusion on that point, as much as I find it a point of intrigue. If there is any conclusion to be had, it is simply in understanding that the feminist imperative has managed to stifle the male impulse while legalizing and praising women for exercising their hypergamous drive. After all, what gang of girls or beta men (i.e. 95% of society) wouldn't side with the wife who tells a fine tale of dissatisfaction in her marriage and takes matters into her own hands through divorce, then to find a better man? The cultural narrative paints this as a success story for the woman, not a failure for the marriage. Biblically, this just seems sick and demented to me.

One additional matter of note is that most RP men complain about no-fault divorce laws as being a horrendous evil that gave women all the power by making divorce easier. I agree. Yet at the same time, these same men want to have the ability to divorce their wives easier with fewer/no consequences. This is where things have gone too far. The true spiritual imperative (as opposed to a purely biological outlook) should be for laws to encourage marriages to remain together, not to advantage one side or the other for leaving.

DAISNAID

Now, when RP addresses distinctions between men and women, there is some backlash about the general "do as I say, not as I do" mentality. That is, it's easy to tell women: "This is how you should behave, but I don't have to behave that way because my biological imperative is different from yours."

But we must remember that from a spiritual perspective (again, not a purely biological one), men live in a dual role. Although in a physical sense, we are the men in our physical marriages, at a spiritual level we function as the bride of Christ and are submissive to his headship the same way we expect our wives to be submissive to our headship (1 Cor. 11:3). So ...

- If a man tells his wife to be submissive, is he submissive toward Christ? If so, the phrase becomes: "Do as I do."
- If he tells her not to cheat, does he whore himself out to worldly idols? If not he's better off saying, "Do as I do."
- If he wants his wife to engage in frequent reproductive acts, is he engaging in spiritual reproduction with Christ through the Spirit? If so, "Do as I do."

To this end, husbands must lead their wives by modeling for them what a good bride looks like. We simply do this in a spiritual sense and not in a physical one. We cannot simply say, "Do as I say, not as I do," and explain it away based on the differences in our biological impulses of our flesh/sin nature.

This is something the secular RP community can not possibly understand - and it is also why there can never be any true argument that the dominant/submissive or leader/helper dynamic makes one gender "inferior" or "unequal" to the other from a value-perspective - only from an authority/role perspective. Of course, we are spiritually inferior to God, who never plays the submissive, although Jesus modeled even that, as 1 Cor. 11:3 points out.

112 Alpha Scripture

God doesn't say things out of the blue just because he feels like it. What he tells us is designed to redeem us into the creation he always intended us to be. Looking at the 10 commandments as an example, what can we glean from God's imperatives to us that informs us about the type of people he wants us to become?

Scripture As An Alpha

I'm always intrigued at how certain things that seem so obvious are somehow missed by the church. I DO NOT endorse reading Scripture for the purpose of finding a particular result. So, don't read it just to affirm alpha/RP tendencies or to force them where they don't belong. But the modern western church reading of many passages does exactly that, only from a blue framework.

They will read a passage like David and Michal (see 207) and totally miss the relational dynamic between the two. They will see it as: "David was passionate about God; Michal was not; Michal got punished and David didn't. Therefore, this is a story about how God interacts with those who are or aren't passionate about Him." Is that in the passage? Absolutely. But to completely ignore the fact of how David was dealing with his wife's outburst, or to refuse to make a statement on that tells me that:

- (1) BP Christians simply are incapable of seeing everything God intends to communicate in Scripture because they're filtering out what goes against their psychological conditioning; or
- (2) They're intentionally re-interpreting Scripture to avoid making statements that would be politically incorrect or culturally unacceptable.

Either way, it's wrong.

Now, reading Scripture from a red framework can lead to similar problems, but the risk is much lower. Why? Because the world was far redder back then than it is today. Blue is the dominant color today; red was the dominant color back then. So, if we want to understand what an author was trying to communicate, if we're going to have any bias in how we filter things, I'd much rather have a bias that's more consistent with the inclinations the author of each book likely held as well.

Moses didn't bat an eye at the concept of slavery or having a homosexual stoned. Today, Christians wince

when they read those things because culture doesn't like it. I'm not calling to bring OT law back. I'm not Jewish, so I'm not under that law in the first place, just as the apostles said not to impose that law on the Gentiles. I'm glad that we don't have biblical slavery as a dominant economic force today. I'm glad I can embrace homosexual friends for the sake of the Gospel in their hearts today. But if we want to *understand* what the authors meant and were thinking when they wrote those passages, we've got to approach interpretation from the same mindset they were in - not one that has been polluted by worldly thinking. James 1:27 says that this (plus taking care of orphans and widows) is the only 'religious' practice that is "pure and undefiled before God."

How To

The key to doing this is first and foremost to escape the fantasy world. Swallow the pill and accept the fact that God had an agenda when he created humanity and that agenda has been tainted. The "red pill" tries to explain how the world operates in the midst of this conflict between intentional design and mankind's fallen nature. Figure that out first.

Next, get some historical perspective. Once your Bible study skills are up to par, start reading some commentaries and learn what life was like back then. Don't just make wild assumptions or take the footnotes in your Bible at face value. Actually dig in and look it up. Get in the mind-set of the author.

Most importantly, ask the question "why?" to everything. Don't just read it and apply it. Try to figure out why God wants you to apply it in the first place.

Examples

The ten commandments are an easy example. Most people read; "Do not lie" and let that be the end of it. They do the best they can to stop lying, and that's that. But have you ever stopped to think about *why God doesn't want us to lie?*

One can try to explain this stuff away with "higher morality" - to believe that there is some standard higher than God that decides right from wrong, and that God is always on the "good" side of this standard and wants us to be as well. That's garbage. There's no standard higher than God. God is the standard. If God wanted to say, "Lying is good - do it as often as you can," he could have done that. Who am I to put him in a box? But he didn't do this. *Why not?*

Probably because he wants to make us into the type of people who don't have to lie. Alpha men don't need to lie. Alphas are all OYS and tell it like it is. The beta avoids lying because he's afraid of the consequences, whether as small as getting caught or as grand as not wanting to be condemned to hell.

Consider some more:

- "Do not steal" = God wants us to become the type of people who don't have to steal. Alphas position their lives in a way where we can provide for those we love, not relying on someone else's work to get the job done. The beta avoids stealing because "it's wrong" or he might get caught.
- "Do not take the Lord's name in vain" = God wants us to be the type of people who both honor Him in the relationship we were designed to survive on, and also don't need to invoke the name of God over every trite thing in life. Betas "swear to God" that whatever story they're peddling to the girl at the bar actually happened. They ask God to "da** it" for them because they can't (or won't) do it themselves. God didn't want people to become so weak and passive as to defer everything to him when he empowered us with his authority to live and act on his behalf as his ambassadors and representatives.
- "Do not commit adultery" = God wants us to become the types of men who don't have to - men who dominate the bedroom with our wives and are satisfied with making good use of what he's given us.

The beta's reason for avoiding adultery is one of fear that he might lose his wife. The alpha's reason is simply that he doesn't have to or want to.

By now you should get the idea. God wrote the Bible for a reason - for *our benefit*. If we take it at face value and never ask *why?*, we'll never become the type of people God wants to mold us into. Specifically, the *why* of it all explains exactly who it is God's trying to help us become - and for men, that's the path to being alpha.

113 Frame

113.1 Introduction to Frame

Who are you in Christ? How does your identity from God shape the way you orient your relationships or marriage? Do you cede God's intentions for you when your wife is angry? These questions hit at the core of what it means to have "frame" and how your framework for viewing the world and operating in it should shape not only your own life, but the direction your family moves.

I thought I was done with 100-content (I like the number 12), but here's a glaring one I was recently reminded I left out, and I'm sure there's more.

FRAME IS NOT:

- Avoiding getting butthurt.
- Biting your tongue.
- Being snarky in the face of an emotional whirlwind.
- Being an unmoveable rock against pressure.
- Stoicism.

I get the sense from here and MRP that many new guys think some or all of these things about "frame" - that somehow being stoic and snarky means you have a great frame. Just ... no. Those are all things that are natural byproducts of frame. They are things that guys with a strong frame will do *because of their strong frame*. But they are not your frame itself, nor are they things you do to "maintain a strong frame."

What Is Frame?

I've heard it said on MRP that frame is "who you want to be on your best day." I've also heard of it as "the projection of your worldview onto the world." Holding frame, therefore is living and experiencing your best all the time, no matter what challenges creep up, never acting inconsistently with the worldview within which you want to operate. Breaking frame, then, is being someone you don't want to be or operating in someone else's worldview.

For Christians, let me tweak this: your frame is who *God created you to be* and incorporates *projecting God's worldview through our lives onto the world*. In short, it is your identity. Secular RP lets a man choose his own frame. Christian RP dictates that God assigns us a frame, at least in its core. Holding frame, then, is living out who God calls us to be, no matter what challenges creep up, and projecting God's character to the world through our lives. Breaking frame in a Christian context will be addressed in Part 2.

Strength Of Frame

Another way to think about it is to consider your life as a movie. After all, God is writing a story with time and you're part of it. You are the main character of the plot thread that links the events of your life together. If someone were to watch a movie of your life, your frame is what they would see in you as a character and the influence you have on the plot.

The strength of your frame is, in part, an indication of how "main" your character is - particularly in the lives of others. For example, if I were watching a weak man's movie, I might say, "That's cool, but that alpha side character stole the show." Did he steal the show by being a pompous jerk? Maybe, but probably not. He did it by being the guy that everyone really wished the movie was about.

For example, my kids love the movie Moana. Although the movie is named after her and it's clearly designed by the writers to be her story, Dwayne Johnson as Maui obviously stole the show. He's the one who set the context for Moana's journey and is overall the more interesting character. Although she may have been more determined and persistent and tenacious than him, his frame was stronger than hers. At the end of the day, the plot moved forward on his terms and Moana was mostly there to persuade him to act. It was when HE decided to get things done that things finally got done.

So, if someone were watching a movie about your marriage, for example, would they see you as the main character to whom everyone else responds, or would your wife be the one who runs the show and you're just responding to her? *Everybody Loves Raymond* is another great example of this. We know that Ray is supposed to be the main character, but his wife is really the one who runs the show - not just because she has a more dominant personality than Ray, but because virtually all plot mechanics revolve around her worldview. Ray and company are always trying to appease her wishes and desires, which is the mentality that drives the show forward. Ray simply isn't interesting enough to hold anyone's interest apart from the conflict caused by his wife's projection of her worldview and expectations.

So, is your worldview creating the context in which everyone else around you operates, or are you merely responsive to someone else's (or even several others') influences on your life?

NOTICE that I did not say that a person's frame is strong if he bosses everyone else around and they happen to do it. This might be an indication of a strong frame, but there are numerous other ways to have a strong frame without being bossy. Instead, *bossiness* might be a facet of your individual frame, if you choose to make it so.

What Is Your Frame/Identity?

I have put an immense amount of research into this and Romans 8:16-17 sums up all of my findings quite perfectly: "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him."

Your identity is that you are an *adopted child of God and co-heir with Christ*. Period. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. What that means will be addressed more in Part 2.

Nuanced Individuality in Frame

Premise

Despite having a common core identity, God has created us each uniquely. Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 are both clear that we are one body with one common identity and purpose, one Spirit, one love - but that body has many parts and we each hold our unique place. I believe this works on both a categorical (i.e. roles/positions) and individual level. So, while our core identity might be in common among all believers, our specific blend of function and qualities/traits are unique to us.

To that end, some will be extroverts, others will be shy; some will love sports, others books; some will be intelligent, others passionate. We will all embody a balance of different traits. Although your core identity is given by God, the specifics of how you will live out that identity are often left for you to discern and sometimes decide. In this regard, you have a modicum of flexibility in discerning how you want to portray yourself to the world, although the Bible still gives guidelines on even this.

Mission-Oriented Traits

I always recommend finding your mission first. Your mission will determine which nuances of your frame you should be focusing on. You must become the kind of person who can live out the calling on your life.

"Disciple-making" is a mission I lay on all Christians, but even at that there are nuances about it. If I am gifted as a teacher, I will utilize one-on-one teaching sessions as my context for making disciples. If I am gifted at hospitality, I will invite individuals into my home to share my life. If I am gifted at prophecy, I will speak into the deep places of those I'm working with. If I'm gifted at mercy, I will comfort those around me who are mourning to establish a context for speaking the Word into their lives.

Or to go a different direction, if I'm an extrovert, I'm going to do active things with others so they can observe my life and learn from me. If I'm an introvert, I'll invite them into a private conversation, perhaps at a corner table over coffee. If I love sports, I'll invite them to play on my team. If I like running, I ask them to run with me. If I do the grocery shopping for my house, I have them walk the aisles with me. Get it?

Disciple-making is your mission. How you do it is your calling. See 209 for more. Likewise, your identity is common, but your expression of it (i.e. your frame) is nuanced to your situation - and those nuances should support what is necessary to fulfill your calling. If your calling is to play sports all the time and to share Christ with those on your team, or to invite those you disciple to join your team ... it wouldn't make much sense if part of your frame was being the guy who is a movie aficionado, watching Netflix all day. Likewise, if your calling is to reach movie-lovers, you'd be making a mistake spending 10,000 hours trying to master the art of ice hockey to develop a hockey-player's frame. But both the athlete and the movie lover would do well to hit the gym and spend some time relaxing to Netflix every now and then.

God's Preparation

So now I ask: *What is your mission in life and who is God shaping you to be in order to live out that mission?* Don't try to create your own mission and then train yourself for it; accept the task God has assigned you, which I'm confident he has already been preparing you to carry out for quite some time.

Jeremiah 1:5 says, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." God didn't give Jeremiah a choice on his mission and calling, he assigned it himself.

Then in verse 6 Jeremiah says, "Sorry God, but I'm not good at that." In 7-8 God replies, "I don't care; I'll make you ready." Then in verse 9 we see God touching Jeremiah's mouth and saying, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth."

In short, God is the one who will work through you - who will prepare you for a calling and give you the context for fulfilling your mission. I firmly believe that he has already started doing that (see Acts 17:26-27).

113.2 Practicing Frame

Once you know what your frame is, it's a different matter entirely learning to live it out. If our frame is rooted in God's intentions for our lives, then any time we break our frame or cave to the intentions of anyone else, we sin. How can we strengthen our frame to be the godly leaders we're meant to be?

In Part 1 I explained that frame is your identity and how you project that identity onto your world. As Christians, we find our identity in Christ and we are to reflect Him to the world through our lives. Accordingly, frame should be a natural concept for a Christian. But let's dive deeper into what this looks like in practice.

Living Your Frame

Motive Matters

My discipler once told me, "We are human beings, not human doings. Don't try to force an identity through what you do. Let what you do flow from who you are."

To some degree we should all be familiar with this concept. Even those living in sin understand this. Imagine trying to tell a homosexual person, "Just go have straight sex and you won't be gay anymore; you'll be heterosexual." Can you imagine the reaction? In Christianity we more often know this as legalism. "Just go do all the things Christians are supposed to do and that will make you a Christian" ... right? No, we know that our salvation and identity in Christ is not from our actions.

I remember a German Lit course in college where we were reading things like *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and *Demian*, discussing the nature of identity. Virtually everyone in the class took the "I am what I do" approach. I single-handedly took the opposite: "I am, therefore I do." A Christian girl in the class decided to argue, "I go to Bible studies, I pray, I attend church, I share my faith - and I do all of these things so that I can **BE** a better Christian." I replied, "No, your actions don't make you a better Christian. You should be doing those things *BECAUSE* you are a Christian - *BECAUSE* you love Jesus" (no, it wasn't a Christian school, just a rare classroom conversation). She and the rest of the class, including the teacher, were ultimately persuaded (another rarity in classroom conversation).

The Bible is pretty clear that motive matters. It's also clear that we cannot work our way into God's favor. The greatest command is not, "Do things that make Me feel loved." It's "Love Me." In Matthew 7 when people were *DOING* great and mighty things - casting out demons, prophesying, healing, etc. - Jesus said, "I never knew you."

Matthew 15:8 makes it clear that God wants our heart, not merely our actions. This means that you must internalize your frame. It cannot merely be an outward expression you maintain - it must be the very core of who you are and the motive behind why you do what you do. If you don't grasp it right away, then follow along the *fake it til you make it* path - but faking it indefinitely doesn't count. Eventually you do have to reach *make it*.

Understanding Matters

If your identity, at its core, is that you are an *adopted child of God and co-heir with Christ*, and you're ready to let that be what shapes your lifestyle, you'd better understand the implications of this identity.

The best way to grasp this is to look at human relationships - the parallel God gave us for understanding the relationship God has with His children. As a child of my parents ...

- I take on their surname and accept the first name they gave me. My very name is identified by their household and their wishes.
 - This is what it means when we call ourselves "Christian."
- I accept that they are the primary influences on my upbringing and that their agenda sets the tone for who I will become.
 - God decides who I will be, what I will do, and how to get me to become that. I accept that God has an agenda for my life that may not overlap with my own.
- I observe them as a pattern of living and model my life after the example they have set (for better or worse) until my own unique, personal nuances create room for divergence.
 - I model my character and lifestyle after Jesus as closely as possible, understanding that I am also uniquely crafted with a personality, skill set, interests, etc. tailored to the context of life and ministry God has placed me in (ex. just because Jesus was a carpenter doesn't mean I must be one also).

- I interact with the outside world as often as they lead me to do so and within the boundaries they establish for what I can/cannot do.
 - God is constantly sending people out - "Go, therefore" and not "Stay, therefore." I will engage with His world on his terms and not cross the boundaries he has laid out for how to interact with His children.
- I live within the rules and boundaries my parents create, eventually understanding as I mature that the rules I once despised were actually there for my good.
 - God establishes clear rules and boundaries for living within His house - His Church - and although I may not understand why those boundaries exist, I accept that they are good and profitable and I will abide by them and will see their worth if not on this earth, then in heaven.

I'll let you all figure out the next 30, 60, 100, etc. things that could be added to this list. The point is that you need to be thinking about what it means to be a child of God and how that affects your life. I didn't go into the specifics, but you can - process what those boundaries are that your parents set for you, then process what boundaries God is putting on your life. Then look at the freedoms, empowerment, enabling, etc. and continue exploring the parallels to get a good picture of what it means to be an *adopted child of God and co-heir with Christ*.

Nuance Matters

In Part 1 I talked about us all having "nuanced individuality in frame." This remains true. The above relates to common principles that are inherent among all believers and must be incorporated in our frame - things that we cannot break when creating our frame - that we must embody and project to the world as a reflection of Christ in us. I cannot rightly frame myself as both a Christian and someone who practices sexual immorality. 1 Cor. 5 says that such a person should be kicked out of the church.

But beyond biblical prescription, you're free to identify yourself any way you want. If you want to be the charmer, jock, rebel, goof ball, romantic, etc. or a blend of different attributes ... or if you want to incorporate your athleticism, intellect, passion, empathy, generosity, etc. into your frame - go for it.

Your individuality in how you craft yourself is part of what gives you a high value. If every alpha guy exuded the exact same blend of interests, character traits, mannerisms, etc., then even if we were still the rarity we wouldn't feel authentic and you'd be easily replaceable. Let your individual nuances be at the forefront of your persona while your God-given set of principles by which you live be the core that underlies everything you do.

Breaking Frame

Sin

Breaking frame is when we let someone else's actions or behaviors affect our expression of our identity through our behaviors. Because our frame is given to us by God (including the nuances, which are ours to discover and discern, unique from every other person), any time we sin we are breaking frame.

Know what that means? That people who sin a lot have a weak frame. Think on that one. That sin means you're not living out your identity in Christ - you're living the identity the world gives you. Your behaviors are being shaped by a combination of social pressures, worldly philosophies and ideologies, and a former identity that you forsook when you were adopted by God and took on His identity for your own.

We cannot say that "breaking frame" is selectively weak or strong. I cannot say, "I have a strong frame in my marriage, but a weak frame in regard to sin." You have one identity. You are you. You are not one person in your marriage and another in your faith. Your context doesn't define your frame, so you can't have a context-dependent strength of frame either.

Inconsistency

Beyond morally condemnable sins, any inconsistency between your behaviors and your active expression of living as a child of God is a break of frame - or even worse, an expression of a bad frame (remember: Christians don't have the luxury of "your frame is whatever you want it to be" that non-Christians have). This can apply even when you do things that seem productive.

For example, suppose your wife is complaining and starts to cry as you present a stoic front. You close off your emotions, give your best poker face, and calmly engage in a string of fogging, negative inquiry, broken record, and eventually AA. Well, if that was a negative fitness test, fine. But suppose it was a comfort test. You just failed. Even if you "held frame," you held the wrong frame. You just framed yourself as a jerk who isn't emotionally available and can't be trusted as a source of strength and comfort. Even secular RP understands this.

But take a similar example: your wife is complaining and starts to cry as you start by presenting a stoic front, but suddenly the Spirit moves in you to start crying alongside her (Romans 12:15 - "weep with those who weep"). Now, as an RP man you know that crying alongside your wife should be a rare exception and this doesn't seem to meet the RP criteria, but you do now recognize this as a comfort test, so without crying you begin hugging her, patting her back, and saying, "Everything's going to be okay; we'll get through this." Now you've just broken your God-given frame in order to create one of your own - a secular-manosphere-given frame.

Who are you going to be: the person that other secular men want you to be or the person God wants? Who is the source of your frame? Where does it come from? Are you committed to holding that frame, even when the rest of the world pressures you to change? Are your views evolving and growing or are they being molded and manipulated? These are all things to think about when determining what your frame looks like in practice and who/what you will allow to influence your frame - that includes RPC, as well as MRP, TRP, your church, your friends, etc. We are, at best, advisers - but it is you who must discern God's directive in your life and who must remain faithful and unshakable in how you live out that frame.

114 The Learning Cycle

Have you ever found yourself saying, "I know it in my head, but not in my heart"? This post is about taking new concepts and how we can intentionally ingrain them into our character so that we're no longer faking our way through life with tidbits of knowledge; rather, we are being transformed by what we learn into godliness.

There is a continual process to learning and applying information. Understanding how this works is a fundamental component of life that I often take for granted and forget that some people haven't understood at a conscious level yet.

As with most RP concepts, the learning cycle is a tool that is amoral in itself. It is not distinctly "Christian" or "good" or "unChristian" or "bad." It just is. How you use it is up to you.

I Don't Know What I Don't Know

Everybody starts here with new concepts. Imagine an infant who is totally oblivious to the world on the day of his birth. He has no idea that he's even ignorant at all. In faith, there are things about God, Christianity, spiritual maturity, Scripture, etc. that you're entirely unaware even exist as a concept that you might have to deal with someday. In your marriage, there are aspects about how you and your wife function that you don't even know to look for because you're ignorant of their existence. There are psychological triggers, emotional buttons to push, and physical spots to tingle that are still yet to be discovered and you don't even know they exist.

I Know What I Don't Know

At some point you realize your ignorance. It might be by reading a book or an MRP post, it could be listening to a sermon, or maybe a friend mentions something you've never thought of before. Somehow

you're exposed to something new and you are now aware of your ignorance. You have no idea what the person is talking about, but now you know there's more out there. If it's something stupid like a new species of fish in the deep sea that you didn't know you were missing out on seeing, you might not care. But if it's something important to you, you'll probably be intrigued enough to look into it more.

I Know What I Know

So, after much study, research, discussion, and application you've now finally mastered the subject. Maybe you did really care about that deep-sea fish and you know everything there is to know about it. Or maybe it's a new sexual position that you'd never tried before and you've mastered doing it with your wife. Or perhaps its a sin issue you were previously blind to, but have since repented and now have the tools to battle against it. One way or another, you own that subject - it's yours whenever you want to make use of it. But it doesn't stop there.

I Don't Know What I Know

As you continue to utilize the information and apply it in your daily life, it becomes ingrained in you on a subliminal level. You store your knowledge of deep-sea fish in long-term memory. You forget you ever knew it, but can draw it up on a moment's notice if the subject arises. You no longer have to consciously think about how to maneuver into that awesome sexual position - your bodies just naturally flow into that pattern because it's like second-nature to you. You're no longer cognizant of your efforts to avoid that sin issue because you've developed a habit of living rightly, which is ingrained as part of your being. What you mastered is now a part of you without the need to consciously think about it anymore.

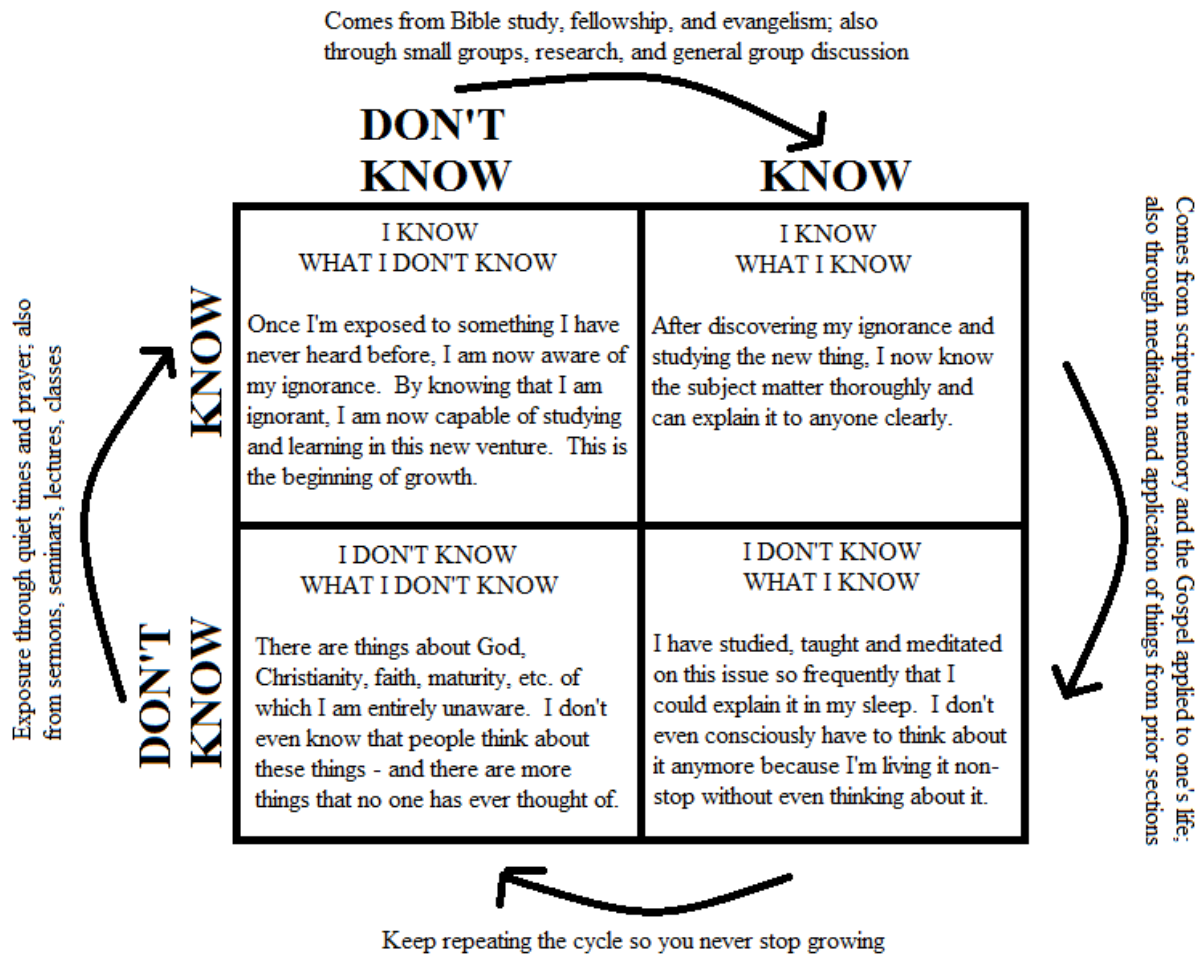
For You

The Box Illustration, which incorporates all of these principles in a neat package that's easy to remember (you can really ignore all the small print and just remember the titles; I created this illustration for the "Establishing" process when I disciple men, utilizing it to help them master and internalize the 7 basics).

Before your RP days you probably didn't even know that "fogging" or "negative inquiry" or "amused mastery" were effective strategies for marital communication. You didn't know what you didn't know. But then you read something about it on an RP forum and suddenly became aware of what you didn't know. You found value in the concept and started practicing it until you mastered it on a conscious level - you know what you know. Then you implement it so often that it becomes second-nature to you, ingrained as part of the way you operate day to day. It's who you are. You don't even know that you're doing it, but there it is anyway.

This is the cycle for mastering RP concepts and internalizing them so that you're not just "faking" it all the time. "Fake it til you make it" is often said on MRP, but it only works if you actually "make it." That last box is when you've finally "made it."

This is the same process you must go through whenever you want to learn about a new theological issue, conquer a new sin, master a new discipline, adopt a new mission, etc. Understanding the inner-workings of this process can be immensely helpful in evaluating how far along you are in mastering a concept and just how much more effort you should put in before moving onto the next one, as you can only juggle so many things at once.



NOTE: Although the 7 basics can be useful in all phases, there are some steps where they are inherently more valuable.

It's also worthwhile to see that there are different church functions that play into each of these and those functions shrink in size as one moves toward maturity ("I don't know what I know"). Specifically: (1) Going from box 1 to 2 requires familiarization, which usually comes from preaching to the masses; (2) but if you want to learn more, going from 2 to 3, you should join a small group to help go deeper than a pastor can on a Sunday morning; (3) and if you really want to make it real in your own life, you've got to partner with someone who can hold you accountable to living things out in your daily life and help you learn how to imply it. This is why discipleship is so important. A church that misses out on any one of these three will be incapable of leading people toward spiritual maturity.

Figure 2: The Box Illustration

For Others

As beneficial as it may be for you to utilize in your own pursuit of self-improvement, there's also an aspect of how you can bring another person along this path. On MRP this is known as the "1,000 foot rope." Your wife is trailing way behind, and when you, the captain of the ship, steer things in a suddenly different direction, there's a bit of a jerk that happens as the rope becomes taught and she's now pulled in a new direction at the full 1,000-foot length, whereas before she may have been drifting alongside the boat with a lot of slack in the line.

In general, if your wife isn't following your lead, it's because she hasn't internalized the direction you're going. Her line is quite a ways out. A lot of that is because she is totally clueless about what you're doing. That can work to your advantage sometimes (i.e. keeping her on edge, being unpredictable), but on the whole, if you want her to follow your lead you've got to give her an opportunity to know where you're going, practice walking in that direction with you, and then internalize and adopt that directive herself also.

Example 1: Sex

On a sexual level, for example, my wife has generally been pretty clueless. She grew up in a hyper-conservative Christian bubble, has never seen porn, has never read a book on improving sexuality, etc. She didn't know what she didn't know. I could have just told her about a new sexual position and had a conversation about exactly how we're going to pull it off, but where's the fun in that? Acta non verba. Instead, I just put her body the way I want it and give it a go. At first it was kind of awkward, as neither of us were really good at it, but we added it to our repertoire and practiced. Each time it was a conscious endeavor to remember how to get back that way again. After a while, it became second nature and we just slide into position without even having to think about it. We just added some (DE)Variety(I) to our sex life.

Example 2: Mission

But I can do the same thing to reel in that 1,000 foot rope on other issues, like living on the same mission. When I met my wife she already knew I was passionate about discipleship and that this was my life mission, so box 1 was already done. From there, I failed as a leader, not understanding how she didn't jump straight from "I know what I don't know" to "I don't know what I know" - I wanted her to go from general awareness to having a subconscious lifestyle of discipleship. That didn't work.

So, I had to utilize Jesus' model of training/leadership to get her on board. She already knew "what" I was doing, so I lived it out myself, "showing her how." Then I encouraged her to give it a go by inviting people in our home that she could converse with in front of me, doing it together in a joint context. Once that was comfortable to her, she started trying it on her own in women's groups and eventually inviting other women out one-on-one to chat, and she'd always report back and discuss with me how it went and I'd help her out. Now she disciples women on her own and doesn't feel like she needs my constant training and attention to live out the mission I've instilled in her - and I can now utilize her relationships with these women to reach even more men that those women are in contact with, advancing my ministry as well, not to mention the credibility boost that I get because of my wife's investment in others' lives.

Although my wife must still make a conscious effort to do all of these things, she does internally feel the compulsion toward the process. The internalized "second nature" part is starting to manifest in the form of those daily moments where she thinks to herself, "I should really give so and so a call and see if she wants to get coffee." This is a beautiful thing - and I'm intentionally leading her from one box to the next until she is at a point where she subconsciously lives out the purposes God has given to me to instill in our family.

Now, this is not rocket science. But it's also a process that often gets taken for granted. When utilized correctly, it can be highly influential in re-orienting a person toward your desired outcome, even to the point of changing their internal character such that they naturally live in alignment with the things you're instilling in them. Use that power wisely, but have fun with it too ;)

115 Dealing With ONEitis

Can't get your mind off that one girl? Have you made an idol of your spouse or female attention? This is a grave error that virtually every man struggles with at some point in life. How can you stop the idolatry and re-orient your life toward Christ in a way that doesn't sacrifice your ability to build healthy relationships with women?

I see this issue coming up again and again and again. I don't post often anymore, but when I see something creep in repeatedly that may not have been addressed in full, it's worth a whirl, so here goes.

Everyone should already know my position on marriage in the first place: avoid it at all costs. If you happen to already be married or one of the ones who can't avoid it, congratulations, you're normal and lack the grace and blessings given to the privileged elite. Culture will tell you that your only job from here is to find the "right one." Who might that be? Is there a "right one"?

What is ONEitis?

Just as a brief recap, ONEitis is the view that this *one particular girl* in your life is unique among women and that she would be your "ideal partner." This is also referred to as a "soul mate" in many Christian circles.

This idea is rooted in a subconscious philosophy that goes something like this. Some people are good potential partners for you for a long-term marriage and others aren't. As such, there is a "good fit" and a "bad fit." If these exist, then it makes sense that there would also be a "worst fit" and "best fit." And if there is a "best," then because God wants what's "best" for us, then he must also want us to marry whoever that "best" fit would be.

Here's where it falls apart: except in rare examples, God doesn't tell us who that "best" fit is and we often change our minds about this. As sinners, our own perspective is unreliable. More so, there are numbers of situations where people exit marriages for perfectly legitimate reasons (ex. spouse dies) and end up remarried. So, does that mean a person has two soul mates? Or does it mean that God will allow us to marry someone who isn't our soul mate? Or, even if soul mates do exist, how do we even know that the object of our ONEitis is actually that person?

For example, consider Jacob. He had ONEitis for Rachel. After all, she was "beautiful in form and appearance." He worked for 7 years to get her. He gets drunk on his wedding night and wakes up next to Leah, whose "eyes were weak." Long story short, he works another 7 years to get Rachel. What does God do? He closes Rachel's womb, but opens Leah's, giving her 4 sons. Rachel, his perfect, beloved bride and object of his ONEitis, becomes a nagging wife and blames Jacob for her barrenness. Jacob, of course, becomes infuriated. What does Rachel do? Gives him her servant to sleep with, who gives him 2 sons. Then Leah gets jealous and gives her servant to him also, who gives him two more sons. Then Leah has two more sons. Then Rachel finally has a child: Joseph. Years later Rachel had another son and died in the process. In all, Jacob's infatuation with Rachel caused him great stress and trouble and 14+ years of his life. He had in mind that she was the perfect girl, but God blessed his marriage with Leah instead. How can we take this other than to say that we can't trust our own emotional proclivities toward someone.

There are simply too many variable that prevent us from deriving any actual pragmatic use or application of the "soul mate" myth, and developing ONEitis for someone goes another step further into being downright unhealthy. Let's explore why.

Married Men

Even if you're single, listen up: your wife is not your soul mate - at least not in the way most people mean that term. Sure, she's your mate, and you have a spiritual bond that might even extend to the "soul" level, but she's not the one perfect person *God hand-picked for you from the beginning of time who you were destined to marry*. I could spend a lot of time debating that issue, but for now I'll just ask you to take my word for it. I'm more concerned today with the harmful implications of living as if your wife is your soul mate in the way culture traditionally defines that term.

Distraction

If you believe your wife is your soulmate, it's easy to fall into the mistaken belief that God's plan had been leading you to her all along - as if she is your destination. False. Even if God did predestine who you would marry, that's only a way-point on a much longer journey in life.

To use a crude example, Frodo's goal wasn't to find a fellowship. It was to get the ring to Mordor. The fellowship was formed because he needed help getting that job done. If you view your marriage as your destination in life, you'll be forever lacking in what God designed you to do. Mission first.

Loss Paralysis

Having a ONEitis for your wife will paralyze you if you lose her - and the fear of this happening will have present ramifications at a subconscious or even overt level. I knew a guy who was head over heels for his wife. He was reasonably happy, but sacrificed a lot in order to keep her around. The fear of losing her caused him to compromise his job, his friends, and his long-term life ambitions and ministry opportunities. No, she didn't divorce him. She died. He wondered if he would ever find happiness again.

As much as the preemptive influence of the potential of losing her affected his life negatively, the actual loss paralyzed him even more. He hasn't recovered to this day. He has not remarried because no one will ever live up to his first wife. He has not renewed his vigor for Christ because he can't get past his loss. I know, your wife is still alive and with you ... but don't let your attachment to her dominate your decisions today. As my former pastor used to say in front of his wife: "I love my wife, but if I lose her I won't be devastated. I will be sad for a time, but I will move on because all I need is Jesus. She helps me walk with him, but my relationship with and satisfaction in Christ is not defined by her contribution to that relationship and satisfaction."

Divorce

Accepting the "soul mate" myth and succumbing to ONEitis is (from my observation and analysis) the leading cause for divorce in Christian marriages. Many people - men and women alike - believe that if they are unhappy in their marriages, they must not have married their "soul mate," and therefore they must divorce their current spouse to go find their actual soul mate. Alternatively, developing ONEitis for someone other than your spouse can obviously lead to the same conclusion.

My dad is a shining example of this. He never officially bought into the soul mate myth, but did develop a ONEitis for another woman and took the view, "I'm obviously not with the woman God wants me married to if I'm so unhappy in my marriage and this other woman makes me feel this way." Needless to say, my dad was not a red pill man. He caved to my mom's whims, or employed covert methods of getting his way and DEERed when he got caught. His ONEitis got him married to my mom and it also got him divorced from her. Be smarter than that.

Conclusion

There's a lot more to say here, but you get the gist. God's plan for you is not to divorce your wife (Malachi 2:16); but it is to reconcile and redeem your marriage with her. Likewise, God's plan is not for you to make an idol of your wife; it is to view her in the proper context of the role for which God agreed to entrust her to you in the first place: to be your helper on a bigger mission (Genesis 2:18). You are not to view your wife as the only woman who could ever make you happy. Six months of marriage and you'll realize this isn't true. Instead, you're to view her as the one God entrusted to you to train to work alongside you.

The man who has ONEitis for his wife will live out of fear of losing her. The man who has options will not live by fear, but by purpose.

Single Men

Knowing what ONEitis can do to a married man, I now turn to the single men and ask: *Why would you want that to be the foundation of your relationship?* If indeed you are seeking marriage, it does not make sense to let such bad theology and philosophy be the cornerstone of your relationship because that will not only doom you from a praxeological point of view, but in a spiritual and psychological way as well. Without rehashing some of the above, consider:

Proverbs

The soul mate myth leads men to the irrational conclusion that God has something wonderful in store for them through marriage. This is not necessarily true. Sure, "He who finds a wife finds what is good" (Prov. 18:22), but there are lots of things that God calls "good" that we find repulsive. Even the serpent was called "good" by God when he was first created.

Many men marry harpy women who have no discretion, grace, elegance, femininity, etc. Proverbs has a lot to say about those types of women too (11:22 comes to mind). Yet we don't hear these verses quoted too often in church (21:9 and 27:15 if you need some more). 18:22 gets quoted generally for an "it's good to get married" sentiment, but we fail to recognize that "good" also includes stories like Hosea and Gomer, David and Michal, and your best friend who regrets having married his high school sweetheart when he was 22 and fresh out of college. These are "good" marriages because they have a lot to reveal to us about how we relate with God as His bride. But just because something is "good" doesn't necessarily mean I want it or will enjoy it anymore than, say, chemo therapy.

Selective Perception

It's a common psychological phenomenon that we have a tendency not to notice or otherwise quickly ignore/forget things that cause us emotional discomfort or which contradict our prior beliefs. As far as I'm aware, this happens in relationships far more often than anywhere else and is probably deserving of a post of its own. For now, suffice it to say that ONEitis creates an incredibly strong emotional attachment to a particular view of a woman that, once manifest, will make it almost impossible to view the relationship from a rational, objective stance, making your ability to evaluate the potential future of the relationship nearly impossible.

I once dated a girl named Rachel. She was a stereotypical college nympho. I didn't know any better. When I first met, we had several deep discussions of theology and the Gospel and she knew all the right things to say. But she also cheated on me with at least two dozen men during the 9 months that we dated. She complained it was because I wouldn't sleep with her until marriage, so she had to get her needs met elsewhere. Now, you'd think after the first dozen for sure I would have been gone. But my selective perception told me that she was really a good, godly woman who just got stuck in a bad rut and that if I forgave her the way God forgave me, she would eventually repent as all godly women do. Sounds funny, right? Yes, you should be laughing at my idiocy. But this is what ONEitis does to a man. The emotional attachment a man develops for a particular woman can lead to disastrous results. When I did finally leave her, it was after summer break and I had enough space to gain a right perception.

Standards

A man should have standards. ONEitis tells you to abandon those standards because this one girl is more than worth everything else you're giving up. The worst is when a Christian man develops ONEitis for a non-Christian. The most fundamental biblical standard of all - not to marry a non-Christian - somehow gets thrown by the wayside because an emotional investment in a particular relationship tells a man that she's more important than God's Word. Don't let that happen to you.

I already told you about Rachel, for whom I violated many, many, many standards in order to keep the relationship alive for longer than it should have gone. So let me turn you instead to my friend Nick. He was physically fit - 8-pack and all - but overall a very weird and awkward guy who didn't know how to charm a woman or cut his hair. Well, there was a girl in our church who had been around the block, including with 3 of Nick's closest friends at the time. She had a kid with one of them, followed by a hysterectomy that precluded her from having her own kids. She was also a druggie. Nick wanted kids, but he also wanted her. It pained him to see her sleeping with his friends, but he waited out those relationships and 7 years after we graduated high school he started dating her and married her. Now he's raising his friend's kid, paying all the support, and is with a woman who can't give him kids of his own, whose looks have quickly faded from all the drug use, and who leaves him with many questions about her fidelity ... and he's realizing she wasn't all his mind had made her up to be. He sacrificed his standards and put himself in a bad spot, but feels

trapped because he (rightly) won't divorce her and he's (wrongly) too scared to stand up to her because she might divorce him ...?!?

Lost Opportunity

This should go without saying, but as you focus all of your efforts and attention on one woman, you will inherently ignore the other opportunities in front of you. When I was in high school I was infatuated with a girl named Jessica. I had ONEitis to the extreme. Like a sniper, I played the long game and waited for my chance. I missed my shot. In the meantime, I had passed up every other opportunity that came along. Our homecoming queen even asked me to prom and I turned her down. I can't say objectively that was a mistake. But I can say definitively that I could have been a wiser man in college (especially in light of my relationship with Rachel) if I had not been paralyzed against other relationships by my ONEitis for Jessica.

Conclusion

If you're single, stay single. If you want to get married anyway, don't say I didn't warn you - but at least make sure you're exercising wise decisions and not acting out of an irrational infatuation. Allowing yourself to become infatuated with a woman will preclude you from seeing what God might intend from the relationship, from perceiving the reality of who the woman is, and may cause you to violate your own personal standards in finding a wife.

Curing ONEitis

So, what do you do if you find yourself with ONEitis for a spouse or girl you want to date?

Time Together

Spend more time with her. Some people recommend ghosting her and moving on. This is generally a bad idea. I already mentioned Jessica, my high school ONEitis. Even to this day, I will every now and then find myself in a dream about *what could have been*. Why is that still lingering in my head? Because I don't know what could have been. If I knew what it would be like to be around her, it's all but guaranteed that I either (1) would have had her or (2) would have found a reason not to want her - and that reason exists for every woman on the face of the planet, even the one you'll one day marry, or who you're already married to.

Rachel, on the other hand - I am quite glad I left her. I acted on my crush, got to know her, and realized that she wasn't all my mind had made her out to be. The same thing happened with my wife. I had ONEitis for her for a time, but I was more cautious. I spent time getting to know her first. I realized she had some flaws before we started dating, but I was able to evaluate those flaws in light of the 3 years of context I had with her before we started dating. Even after marriage, the flaws abounded more and more - far beyond what I knew - and any lingering ONEitis died.

But here's the thing: I couldn't truly love my wife until I killed my ONEitis for her. Before then, I was married to an ideology of the woman who shared my bed. Today I am married to the woman herself. It is only when I see her and not my image of her that I can finally evaluate our relationship properly and learn how to lead rather than be a figure-head.

Mission

I know you're getting sick of me saying this, but it's particularly powerful on this subject. If you have something better to do with your life than chase girls, you won't find yourself obsessed with chasing a girl. It's really that simple. If chasing girls is the most important thing in your life, then you've got bigger issues than this post can address. If that's the case, PM me or one of the mods and we can help you with that.

Shotgun Mentality

When plagued with ONEitis it's easy to adopt a sniper mentality toward the object of your ONEitis. She's not an object for you to fixate on like that; she's a girl just like any other girl. I'm reminded of Notting Hill's famous line when the gorgeous actress tells the bookshop owner, "I'm just a girl standing in front of a boy asking him to love her." She's just a girl. There are lots of girls out there. Yes, spend more time with the object of your ONEitis, but also spend more time with other girls. The goal isn't to shift your ONEitis to another more attainable girl. Rather, by spending time around more women you'll realize that no one woman is this perfect ideal who stands light-years above the rest. If you don't do this, then if you're married and another woman does come along who you're attracted to, you may easily be swayed into believing she's something better than your wife because you won't have the social experience to recognize that every relationship with a woman will come with its own challenges not unlike what you may experience with your wife - 1 Cor. 10:13 and all.

I used to have a friend who told me his ex was "one in a million" and that he'd "never find another girl like her again." Two months and a few dates later and he finally realizes that she wasn't as special as he thought - and neither are the new girls he's been seeing. Everyone is unique, and there are certainly some who are more attuned to our specific tastes and interests than others, but on the whole nobody is perfect the way that ONEitis would have us believe.

From a married man's perspective, I am not encouraging you to go on dates with other women. What I am saying is that if you have no other female friends in your life and your wife is the only woman you have any meaningful contact with, you're going to be in trouble. First, it's socially limiting and can seriously hinder your mission by God. Second, if the only woman you know is your wife, it's easy to idolize her in an unhealthy way. Third, by building relationships with other women, you can gain a better insight into how to relate with your own wife, having observed female nature and developing a right perception of how your wife fits within the context of other women in her and your social circles. Fourth, you will be more resilient to temptation when that inevitable moment comes that another woman does find you attractive and attempts to seduce you, whereas the isolated man is more infatuated when something new comes along.

Satisfaction

The most effective cure for ONEitis is simply to go to God for your satisfaction. I wrote this up more fully in 404. Someone with ONEitis is "illegitimately empty" if he's single or "illegitimately full" (or possibly even empty, depending on how she treats him) if he's married. Neither option is good for the Christian. In reality, you should be able to be a widower/divorcee who is homeless and starving and still smiling with joy - and if you don't believe that, contemplate again which circle you think you're in. Those who are legitimately full in Christ have no compulsion or longing for the things of this world. We may seek them to the degree that they enhance our influence in this world or our mission for Christ, but they are not a pursuit in and of themselves, as ONEitis would have us believe.

This is my ultimate conclusion and the one I implore you all to adopt: to look to Christ for your satisfaction, not to your wife or the woman you wish you could be with. When your mind is rightly oriented toward God, you will be able to choose with sober judgment a helper who is suitable to meet all of your God-given needs.

RP Christians Sidebar Compendium

200s - Practical "How-To" Guides

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201 Healthy Sexual Desire v. Lust

Men are too often shamed into believing that every hint of attraction they have for a woman is somehow evil and sinful. This simply isn't true. But there is a point where it becomes so. Let's walk through a series of progressive examples to figure out where that line might be.

This issue comes up a lot in Christian circles and it's worth discussing here too, especially since RP thinking is mostly derived from these in the first place.

What Is Lust?

When Jesus says in Matthew 5:28, "Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart," he's using the words *epithumeo* for lust and *moicheia* for adultery. This is different from the word *porneia* that he gives as the exception for divorce, but that's beside the point and /u/BluePillProfessor already tackled that issue in a separate post. *Moicheia* is actual adultery, as defined in their culture (which is a little different from how we view it, but not too too far off).

But that word *epithumeo* does not mean "lust" in the way we think of the word today. It's actually the same word that Exodus 20:17 in the Septuagint (earliest known Greek translation of the OT) translates as, "You shall not covet [epithumeo] your neighbor's wife."

Biblically, the idea of *coveting* is not merely any old desire. It's an *I would if I could* mentality. If you see your neighbor's cow and think, "If I knew I wouldn't get caught, I'd totally steal his cow!" that's coveting. If you see it and think, "Dang, that's a great cow. I wish I had a cow like that. But I don't ... oh well." That's not coveting. That's desire.

Desire is healthy. Coveting is not. It's really that simple. If we were to stifle all of our desires and pretend we never wanted anything that anyone else has, we would totally lack all ambition in life and fail as a species. Paul saying things like, "Run in such a way to win the prize!" (1 Cor. 9:24) makes no sense if we're not allowed to desire something we don't yet have.

Drawing The Line

Here's my simple test for discerning whether you're lusting or not:

- Is the object of your desire not your spouse?
- If there were no earthly hindrances to gratifying yourself with the object of your desire, would you do it?

If the answer to both questions is yes, then it's sinful lust. If the answer to either question is no, then it's not sinful.

Examples

Assume someone is just looking and not necessarily touching himself or anything (which de facto proves point 2).

- She's only a character on the screen; she's not a real person; I can't have sex with a screen. If she stepped out of the screen and into your basement, would you bang her?
- I don't know where she lives - it's probably the other side of the world. Okay, if she knocked on your door and walked in your bedroom, would you bang her?
- I keep eyeing my girlfriend; she's getting me hot, but there are too many people around right now, which helps me keep control. If you were alone, would you have sex with her right then and there?
- There's not enough time, so I'm just looking. If you got a free pass from all of your deadlines, would you then proceed?

- You're alone with your GF on the couch making out. No one else is around, you have no deadlines, you're super into it, but you're afraid if you try to go further she might say no, so you exercise restraint. If you knew for a fact she'd say yes, would you bang her?
- Suppose she would say yes and you're extremely confident of this, but you're afraid of what your mom might think if she found out. If you knew for a fact your mom would approve, would you do it?
- Suppose everyone would approve of this, but you know you're not married and you don't want to ruin your sense of moral superiority. If you knew your sense of moral superiority could not be tarnished by sleeping with your girlfriend, would you do it?
- Suppose everyone would approve, you have no worries or concerns about it, you're appropriately humble, but you know that it's wrong to sleep with someone outside of marriage because God said so. This isn't lust - it's appropriately self-controlled desire. Why? Because it's not an "earthly" hindrance.
- Suppose you know God wouldn't want you to do it, but you also have the moral superiority thing going on, you're also afraid of her saying no, you're also afraid of what people would think if they found out, etc., and now in that situation you would refuse, and it is impossible to discern which of these hindrances would be primarily responsible for your refusal and you are not sure if "honoring God" alone would be enough (but it might be, you just don't know) ... *This is probably sinful lust. At the very least, you know you're being reckless with your thoughts because you don't know whether or not you would be able to restrain your desire if all of those other things were removed. As such, you're exposing yourself to temptation without knowing if you can resist on the right motives alone - and that itself goes against the grain of the command to "flee from temptation," rather than the repeated condemnation the Scriptures give to our efforts to justify our temptations and desires on some technicality.

Clarifying Internal Motivators

As noted above, one of the "hindrances" can be internalized humanistic motivations. For example, "I'd feel really guilty afterward" is a hindrance that's usually not a righteous motivation.

This gets me a lot of heat in Christian circles, but I fully believe that all forms of feeling "guilty" are not from God - that Jesus came to free us from guilt. So, when pastors talk about "guilt" as a healthy reaction to sin that keeps us motivated to avoid sin, I usually object and say something like this:

No, trying to avoid guilt is a humanistic motivation that places our own internal emotional state as an ultimate priority. Our reason for living should be our faith, hope, and love. Romans 14 says anything that does not come from faith is sin. So, if your motivation is a desire to avoid negative feelings, you're really doing it for yourself, not for God, and that's sin - and that applies to all negative feelings, not just guilt. The better option is simply to eliminate this guilt and negativity from your life altogether. After all, you're already forgiven - why bother feeling guilty when God has already declared you "not guilty"? Then, live in that freedom out of appreciation for the verdict he rendered, not for fear that he might undo that verdict and somehow make you feel or be guilty again.

Final Thoughts

Sadly, many people think they're in "honoring God" mode, when in reality, if the circumstances were right, that alone would not be enough to hold them back. The temptation of having some porn star in your bedroom without consequence, without guilt, without anyone finding out, etc., and she's all over you ... "honoring God" simply wouldn't be enough of a motivator for as many people as would like to think it would be. As a result, many people force themselves into that last category in the hopes that creating ambiguity can give them some wiggle room.

Now ... the thing that gives context to all of this is that actual self-gratification in any of these circumstances proves that you actually would act if you had the opportunity because you are acting. So, if the thought leads you to beat off, then it's sinful lust, unless the object of your desire is your spouse ... in which case it

would not be sinful lust (although there's debate over whether or not it would fall under some other kind of "sin" category).

202 Conquering Addiction

A personal story from a man who discovered that the only way to conquer addiction - whether from video games, pornography, food, etc. - is through the Gospel of Jesus and nothing else.

I was invited to talk about this because I'm someone with a very addictive personality who has found freedom in the Gospel. I have been able to help many men find that same freedom not through cheap psychological tricks or will-power or anything else the world says will solve their sin and addiction, but through the Gospel itself. So, here's a blurb I wrote that outlines the foundational perception shift that happened in me, paving the way for the transformation that needed to take place so that I was no longer one addicted, but one transformed by the Gospel. I say this not to boast, but to encourage others that just as Christ overcame my weaknesses, he can overcome yours as well.

Are you having trouble with addiction? You try and try to change, but you always seem to come back to the same old sin? Therapy, consequences, trying harder nothing seems to work. You wonder if you'll always be this way and if Jesus can ever forgive you.

As someone with a similar addictive personality (ex. lying, video games, food), I fully understand where you're coming from. That said, conquering addictions is not about trying the "next best thing" to keep you motivated. Specifically, there are three layers toward life-change.

Inspiration

You're struggling with compulsive lying or sloth or gluttony or lust and you hear this really great sermon, or the perfect quote at the perfect time. Everything starts to make sense for a time! You see your struggle in a whole new way, and you're so thankful for it. Your perception has shifted to understand your sin in an appropriate context. Buuuuut...a few days/weeks later, the novelty of the idea wears off and you're back in your old rut.

Motivation

You're sick and tired of the same old rut. Even these inspiring things you're hearing and seeing aren't doing the trick. So, eventually you take those words to heart and finally say, "I'm going to do it for real this time!" And you do. You continue filling your head with these inspiring thoughts and images and messages of all kinds. They're great! And you feel like you're finally making progress. The struggle is still there, but through perseverance and endurance, you're starting to build your character to a degree that Paul references in Romans 5. Or at least that's what you thought. Then you get burned out. One relapse and you feel like you're right back where you started. The addiction never went away.

Transformation

You've tried everything and you just can't do it. Nothing works! Accountability groups, putting a lock on your fridge, setting alarms to tell you to get off the games, inspiring/motivating quotes all over your wall and monitor that you don't even notice anymore. You may even have thought about getting a tattoo on your "special hand" that would sanctify it with a holy symbol so that the immense guilt of degrading that symbol with such villainy could hopefully be a deterrent. But then you realize that it's silly to assume that guilt could save you from...becoming guilty.

But aren't these all good things? Of course they are! Why should I stop trying? And then you remember Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." All of your religious practices, high moral values, and good, practical ideas to guide you toward godly living aren't going to conquer your sin. If only there were something that could help! It sounds like the Gospel

all over again! But I'm already a Christian...I've accepted the Gospel, so I'm done with that part now. Right?

And as you continue pursuing Christ, you come across 1 Corinthians 6:12. You realize, "I'm always going to be a sinner. Nothing can stop me from that but God alone. And yet I'm under grace and not the law so I don't need to worry about being condemned for my sin." And you decide to accept who you are before God. You don't stop trying to rid yourself of sin, but you acknowledge that you can't quit unless God stops you. So, you confess it to Christ and don't let it bother you anymore.

And then you keep studying and come across 2 Corinthians 3:17-18: "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." There it is.

You realize that you fail in your sin because no amount of inspiration or motivation will ever solve your problem. Every other religion out there uses inspiration and motivation to try to conquer our sin problem to make us better people. But that's why they fail. Because we can never make ourselves better. You at your core are always going to be a filthy wretch. So, you think, "If my core being is always going to be this sinful mess that can't stop the addiction...maybe the problem isn't trying to improve myself, but to get a new self altogether." And so, as the verse says, you ask the Spirit to transform you.

But nothing happens at first. You cling onto the hope of Luke 11:13: "How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" And yet you find nothing. There's no transformation. These verses have inspired and motivated you yet again, but nothing has really changed. You're not really sure what to expect or if you ever expected anything at all. Can this "Gospel" thing really work to save me from a particular sin and not just general sin?

The sin is so deeply ingrained that you think, "There's no way it's just going to be gone overnight!" And then you finally run across James 1:6-7 in your quiet times: "But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord."

You call your faith into question. "If God hasn't saved me from this sin, have I really been saved from any sin? Doesn't it just take one sin to warrant God's wrath? And if I continue in sin, have I really been set free from it? Have I really risen with Christ and been made perfect with Him?" You know you're right to question these things not for instability sake, but because the questioning leads you back to the Gospel.

You read 1 Corinthians 3:11: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." You finally understand that you were never truly building a solid foundation with all those wasted efforts. Jesus had been preparing you for this moment all along. All of those foolish attempts at stopping your sin the accountability partners, the quiet times and motivating messages and meditation on the scriptures and prayer sessions, the anti-porn blockers they were merely digging yourself into a hole. But you needed that hole, because without a hole there is nothing to pour The Foundation into. And the deeper the hole is dug, the more concrete can be poured into it so that the foundation that is Christ is...well...concrete.

So, you don't get rid of all those human-effort things you've been trying after all, you're not in the business of filling in the hole of your heart with dirt. Instead, you leave the hole in place and fill it with Jesus. What does this mean? It means that, for once, you finally understand that although you were soil at one time (Matthew 13:1-23), that soil was dug away and replaced with the concrete foundation of Jesus. You are not yourself anymore; rather, you abide with Christ. And just as Jesus and the Father are one (John 10:30), and even as you are the bride of Christ and have a wonderful Father-in-law who has adopted you as one of His own to make your relationship more than simply a legal one you tell yourself, "I can do nothing on my own. I can only do what I see my Father doing, because whatever the Father does, I do also" (John 5:19).

And therein you ask for transformation of the Holy Spirit and it is given to you and so you become something you never were. This does not mean your flesh doesn't take over from time to time; but you

realize that even when you do stumble, the impulse isn't a master over you; rather, it is something you have enjoyed (wrongfully) at your discretion, and which can be stopped freely because you no longer exercise your own discretion, but the freedom that comes from the Father. In this way, the sinful flesh remains, but the addiction is gone.

This is only a blurb I wrote documenting my story as to the beginning of overcoming addiction. From what I understand, Red plans to go deeper on overcoming addiction in the future, so I'll leave it at this for now.

203 Lifting and Diet

Let's face it, most men in America today are fat slobs who need to diet and exercise. Even those in reasonable shape could stand to improve. No matter where you're at, even if you're already a veteran weight lifter, you'll find some useful advice here.

Taken From u/Red-Curious original Post:

Where 100 level posts have been more about theory, 200 level stuff I'm hoping to focus on being practical "how to" stuff. From a Christian perspective, the biggest issue with male sexuality is pornography or sinful lust, so I wanted to cover that first. The next things I think many Christians struggle with are sloth and gluttony. So, although there may be more fun posts down the line, let's hit the big ones right off the bat. **If you're interested in writing a "how-to" on something for this 200-Level series, let me know.** I'd appreciate having lots of guest writers here :) As previously noted, taking care of your body is essential and should be motivated by your internal desire to do right by God with what He's given you. So, how do we do this?

Biblical Context

A few things up-front: Proverbs 24:5 says, "A wise man is full of strength, and a man of knowledge enhances his might." Why? Because wise people know how important it is to be strong and given the pros v. cons, you'd have to be pretty dumb to choose to be weak when strength is an option. Similarly, even for women, Proverbs 31 describes a desirable woman saying, "She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong." In all of this, though, remember the lesson of 1 Timothy 4:8 - "For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come."

Lifting

New Content:

Gentlemen, I wanted to write a lifting & diet 2.0 post to elaborate on the previous points as well as offer some insight I've picked up in my 7 years of training seriously. (Notice I said training, not working out - I believe you must approach the gym the same way you would seriously train for anything, be it a test or war)

Credentials: 6' 200 13% bf (visible six pack and shade of obliques unflexed — solid definition when flexed curr. shredding) Bench: 325, Deadlift: 545, OHP: 205, Squat: 335

We will get to programming shortly, but there are really only two types of weight training: (1) strength training (6 reps, heavy weight) and (2) hypertrophy training (8+ reps, moderate weight). Now, men SHOULD be strong, and I actually program around improving my strength most of the year, but strength training is biologically less effective at increasing the size of your muscle cells (hypertrophy = aesthetics). With that in mind, you need an adequate strength base to effectively train for hypertrophy (repping the bar on bench for sets of 8 is not going to make you grow very much) so it is always important to master the big 5 lifts (SQUAT, BENCH, DEADLIFT, OHP, ROW) and continue improving your strength base, especially in the beginning.

The name of the game for growth is something called **progressive overload** continually increasing the demand placed on your body over time, guaranteeing muscle and strength gains. There are three factors that affect progressive overload: (1) **Intensity** (weight / effort), (2) **Volume** (reps x sets), and (3) **Frequency** (how often you can train a body part). Without getting too granular, here are a few ways one can progressively overload a muscle:

- add more weight
- do more reps
- do more sets
- train more often
- reduce rest.

Adding more weight, reps, or sets is something all level lifters can do to progressively overload and a perfect segue into beginner programming.

Beginner Programming

Its in the sidebar for a reason: StrongLifts 5x5. I dont say this because I love it, but because it is very effective at acclimating the body and mind to progressive overload, moving heavy weight, and the ample resources for the program available online. There is not much to add here besides telling you not to skimp on accessories (Chin-ups, Dips, etc. pick compound exercises) and weighted ab work youre only in the gym 3x per week, make the most of it. Well get to it below but incorporate cardio your heart is a muscle too.

Briefly, SL 5x5 is a 3 days per week workout centered on 5 core movements: the barbell bench, barbell squat, barbell row (pendlay row is my suggestion), barbell overhead press, and barbell deadlift (conventional). You alternate workouts (A B A B), completing 5 working sets of 5 reps (1x5 for deadlifts), increasing the weight by 5 lbs in the session following a successful 5x5 reps. Colloquially known as newbie gains, its advised you continue following this training regiment until you reach a plateau and are no longer increasing weight at a consistent level.

Dont start out too close to your 5 RM if you are just beginning to lift you must acclimate your body to squatting and heavy compounds three days per week. To that end you will want to be working up to 80-90% of your 1RM as you progress. Finally, I am a fan of some assistance work with the program. Setting a goal like 50 bodyweight pull-ups or dips in as few sets as possible after you complete your 5x5s will give you some additional volume and attack muscle groups from different angles. (Note: keep sets low on assistance movements, and opt for easy to complete exercises Id stay away from direct arm work) The webpage and internet are full of resources to help you get started here and there is a downloadable app in the App Store.

Intermediate/Advanced Programming

Ive experimented with a couple of these and bounce around between them over the course of a year. I dont suggest changing splits more than once every 2ish months or you really never get a chance to become comfortable in a given movement or rep range. To that end, I think these are all effective in their own right coupled with the right programming outside of lifting days. Im not going to plagiarize, so I will summarize the programs and then point you to appropriate links for more detail. I cant stress enough how a thirst for knowledge about how the body and training work will help you grow in the gym more efficiently.

3 Days/Week

Hypertrophy Specific Training (HST)³ HST takes a very scientific approach to programming and is literally (mathematically) centered on progressive overload. At a high level, you work out in 6-8 week cycles,

³<http://hypertrophyspecific.com/>

cut up into 2-week blocks. Each week you work out 3 times per week, alternating full body routines (i.e. A B A B A B) increasing weight each week, and decreasing the rep range every 2 weeks (i.e. 2 weeks @ 15 reps, 2 weeks at 10 reps, etc.). There is an extremely thorough eBook, active forums on the webpage, and a downloadable spreadsheet you can use to track. I feel great when I run this and like to do it in the summer when I am more active outside the gym I supplement the 3 days with 2 or 3 days of: cardio (LISS/HIIT), sports (bball, boxing, etc.), random ClassPass classes, or Ill go in one day and do a barbell complex for cardio. This also really gives me time to focus on flexibility and mobility – my weakpoints.

4 Days / Week

The GZCL Method⁴: Made famous by powerlifter Cody Lefever, is an excellent method centered on the Big 4. Each day you start with a Tier 1 movement (Squat, Bench, OHP, Deadlift) and are moving heavy weight close to your max in low rep ranges (1-5), you move on to Tier 2 programming, another compound at submaximal weight, before wrapping up with Tier 3 Isolation type movements. Again, there is an extremely active subreddit associated with the GZCL method and his blog is filled with nuggets of information. Check out the link if even to understand the methodology - I think it has applicability in all programming. One way to run this would be MT, W:off, ThF, SaSu:off where you use the off days as you see fit (cardio).

5 Days / Week

Power Hypertrophy Adaptive Training (PHAT)⁵: This one, made famous by competitive bodybuilder/powerlifter Layne Norton, incorporates two heavy power days (Upper Power, Lower Power) focused on improving strength with 3 hypertrophy days split across body parts (Back+Shoulders, Legs, Chest+Arms) where the goal is mind-muscle connection and growth. This is a common training method and more information and different variations can be found on the internet. Ways Ive split this up: SuM, T: off, WTF (lol), Sa: off.

Generic Training Structure

In general, most training splits (including the 2 listed above) follow one of two principles: alternating upper and lower body days, or cycles of push-pull-legs over the course of a week. (i.e. Upper-Lower-off-Upper-Lower-off-off, Upper-Lower-Upper-Lower-Upper-Lower-off, Push-Pull-Legs-off-Push-Pull-Legs, Push-Pull-Legs-off-Push-Pull-off, where the second pull day is deadlifts) They also follow a rule of thumb that you start your workout heavy, with compound movements working your way through sets of multiple compounds into isolation movements and machine work. Also note that the 7 day week is an arbitrary measure, so if u go PPL-off-PPL-off, and your second Push A lands on a Tuesday, it doesnt matter. Consistency matters.

Your Push muscles: Pectorals, Lateral/Anterior Delts, Triceps

Your Pull muscles: your entire Back and Rear delts.

Notice how much larger your pull muscles are than your push (proportionally) this should indicate the importance of emphasizing copious pulling work into any of your routines and taking back and rear delt work very seriously to avoid posture and spinal problems. To that end, girls love a big back.

Upper/Lower can be split into Vertical Push/Pull, Quad Dominant, Horizontal Push/Pull, Ham Dominant or something to that effect.

This should give you the flexibility to design your own training program predicated on progressive overload, remembering that this is a marathon not a sprint. 275x8 vs 275x6 IS improvement.

Abs

I wish I had \$1 for every time I was told compound movements work the abs enough. This is just plain not true abs are made in the kitchen but defined in the gym so they (like calves) should be trained like the rest

⁴<https://swolateveryheight.blogspot.com/2016/02/gzcl-applications-adaptations.html>

⁵<http://www.simplyshredded.com/mega-feature-layne-norton-training-series-full-powerhypertrophy-routine-updated-2011.html>

of your body. Ive found that the easiest way to consistently train abs aggressively is to do it **FIRST THING** in the gym waiting until after my session always resulted in half-assed effort due to low energy levels and no results. Using the same principle of progressive overload, I do 4-5 sets of weighted abs (crunch or leg raise movement be cognizant that your abs are doing the work not your hips) before I begin mobility work or warmup sets on my first exercise. On cardio days Ill work in an ab circuit or do high-rep weightless abs with no rest (crunches, Russian twists, etc. the P90x type). Trust me when I say there is nothing worse than cutting to sub-10% and realizing that you just have tiny abs.

The internet is a wealth of knowledge for lifting information and exercise ideas obviously check your sources, but if you have a question I almost guarantee typing it into google will yield the answer you are looking for. To that end, realize that 99.9% of celebrity fitness personas are on steroids; virtually anyone who is paid to look good is on some type of PED. I say this so you dont waste your time or money on Get Ripped Quick programs and because for naturals, its proven that muscles are most effective when stimulated every 48-72 hours, hence the programming suggestions all recommending a min. of 2x per week of each body part. Form is more important than anything, leave your ego at the door and grow. Finally, dont spend more than 90 min in the gym be intense.

Cardio

There are two types of cardio: (1) Low Intensity Steady State (LISS) and (2) High-Intensity Interval Training. Your heart is a muscle, and as such, should be adequately trained. First and foremost, warm-up on lifting days should consist of 5-10 min of moderate intensity cardio on a bike, elliptical, or treadmill (if you really like running) to elevate your heart rate and body temperature. Its proven that the risk of injury is greatly diminished by doing so and personally its meditative for me as I mentally prepare to lift.

Beyond warming up, the two types of cardio have utility in their own ways. To be brief, I look at LISS as negative calories when Im cutting, but also recognize the negative impact it has on my metabolism and propensity to be catabolic, so I limit how often I do it. (By this I mean I dont run 5 miles per day, there is nothing wrong with running a few miles at a decent pace every now and then its just not for me) I prefer to go bike riding through the city then boring machine cardio. If I do to machine cardio, I prefer the elliptical b/c its easy on my joints or going for a jog on the rolling hills setting (max inc. 5%) at about 6.0 speed on the treadmill its incredible how much of an impact incline has on calories burned. Common bodybuilding methods are: incline treadmill walking, elliptical, and high resistance slow biking the goal is to keep your HR between 130-140 (55-70% of MHR).

Conversely, HIIT is hyper-effective at burning fat and you are working in a much higher HR range. This is how you really get into good shape, but too much HIIT will wear you out so there is obviously a balance to be had. High Intensity Interval Training is exactly what it sounds like, short bursts of near-maximum intensity followed by medium bursts of low-intensity exercise. You can do this on a rower, sprints (I prefer a track but have used a treadmill), or bike. Common work/rest intervals are: 30s high/90s low, 20s high/60s low. I include non-interval high-intensity training in this category as well; things like Tabata, barbell complexes where you put a light weight on the bar and do a series of movements at a prescribed rep range without dropping the bar and limited rest times, or track workouts all have the same effect on fat-burning.

High-level, think marathoner vs. sprinter body and determine which is more aesthetic. Cardio is a must and mixing the two types into your regular regiment will make you look and feel noticeably better.

Diet

Remember when I said all the fitness celebs are on steroids? Well even for them, diet is the single most important factor in their physique. If you want to look aesthetic you have to dial in your diet; when I first started working out I was taught that its 75% diet, 20% training, 5% your supplementation and that steroids do not change those ratios by more than 15%. The numbers are arbitrary, but I cannot stress enough how limited my results were until I consciously started watching what I put in my body.

Again, there are a million diets out there, pick whatever works for you. I've tried keto but hated it because I'm a carb-fiend. I think IF works wonders when you're cutting b/c it's really hard to eat a lot of food when you're only eating two big meals and a snack (and you learn to fast!). Carb cycling is a proven method for shedding weight but at the end of the day, the most important thing is Calories In v. Calories Out.

Generally speaking here's the framework:

1. calculate your TDEE the # of calories you burn in a day to maintain your weight (either use an online calculator or track what you eat for a week and track your weight) and determine what your daily calorie goals are going to be (+/- 300-500 for bulking/cutting is a fair start)
2. set up a MyFitnessPal account and download the app so you can track every piece of food that goes into your mouth
3. Choose the appropriate macro selections (Base case: 1-1.2 g/lb protein, 50-60g fat, rest carbs) for your diet and set them as goals in MyFitnessPal
4. Buy a cheap food scale on amazon and weigh/measure what is going in your mouth.

If you are having trouble gaining / losing weight or you suffer from wild swings in weight, I bet you will be astounded by your calorie intake over the course of a week. The MyFitnessPal app has a QR code tracker and a lot of foods from places you may eat out at. I stress the tracking of food because it will equip you to be able to eyeball meals and mentally track where you are at as a day progresses. I still weigh 80% of my food (all the carbs for sure) and keep a mental count of calories and eyeball protein going all day this comes with time but is the required discipline it takes to lean out.

As far as what types of foods to eat, I think there's a ton out there on this. Never been a big fad diet person but whatever works for you.

- **Carbs:** I eat a lot of rice (white is fine, brown rice is actually harder to digest classic mixup), oats, and occasionally potatoes (sweet, white, red, nondiscriminatory). I don't eat a lot of bread.
- **Veggies:** veggies are carbs, but I don't really count the green stuff. I eat tons of spinach, brussels sprouts, broccoli, green beans normally buy frozen and steam. Incredible how much better I feel when I increase my vegetable intake.
- **Protein:** Nondiscriminatory I think beef has gotten a bad rap as of late but eat lean cuts marinated overnight, lot of crockpot chicken, ground turkey, lean fish, and the occasional bison or salmon.
- **Fruit:** Also a carb, max. 1 or 2 servings per day only your liver can convert fructose into glycogen and the amount it needs to become glycogen-full is pretty small. I like to use frozen berries (straw-, blue-), a scoop of protein, handful of spinach, a Greek yogurt, and cup of whole milk or almond milk post-workout for a smoothie. Maybe have a banana but not a big fruit eater
- **Fats:** stay away from corn-based oils and trans-fat otherwise don't think it's too important. Avocados, Coconut Oil, Olive Oil (as a dressing, low smoke point means it loses nutritional value when heated above said temp), butter, nut butter, nuts, fatty-fish

Learn to love meal prep. I love cooking, it's a passion of mine, but learning to prep meals and fridge/freeze for the week is imperative to being successful here. Check out fitcrunch.life great resource for meal planning/calorie counting/grocery list generation. There are recipes and subreddits all over with meal prep and healthy meal ideas have fun with it, or better yet enlist your woman to help.

I was anything but brief, but I wanted to share as much information as I could with you all. I have a number of the programs I described customized to my liking in excel spreadsheets I suggest you browse the appropriate pages, learn the methodology, and explore their templates but I am happy to share what I've got with anyone. Just send me a PM with email and what splits you are interested in and I will shoot them over to you. Any questions? Drop a line below. Godspeed.

TL;DR:

- Choose a plan and stick with it
- Do cardio
- Do Abs
- Progressively Overload your Lifts
- Track your macros
- Get Shredded

204 Abundance Mentality and Humility

Many people don't know how to make wise decisions in life. They trade one resource for another trying just to survive. But God designed us to live an abundant life - both in this life and the next. How can we experience this abundance and how does that affect our relationships? How can we remain humble through all of this?

Abundance mentality comes natural for me, even when I was a broke law student, living on student loans. Let's get the definitions out of the way real fast:

- **Abundance Mentality:** To be bare-bones, if you believe you have options, you have abundance. This applies to finances, time, relationships, sex, etc.
- **Humility:** Having a right perception of who you are before God and man.

Discerning Humility

I do not have an abundance of Ferraris in my garage, nor do I have the option to to have an abundance of them. I might be able to have one if I took out a loan. I am humble about the fact that I'm not a Ferrari-owner.

I do have an abundance of racquetball skills. I can play pretty much anyone I want and know I'm probably going to win. I am also humble about this. In all due humility, I can look a man in the eyes with a straight face and tell him, "I am probably the best racquetball player you know." Why? Because it's true. Now, if I go on and on about my skills, I have shifted to bragging, which usually relates to pride. **Humility doesn't mean downplaying yourself; but it does involve downplaying how much you talk about yourself.** Confidence or cocky/funny techniques do not defy humility, if they are delivered appropriately and revert to basic rules of being a good conversationalist: listen more than you talk.

Jesus could say point blank, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6), essentially declaring himself to be the single most important person in all of human history - and yet he has not lost his humility in such a bold claim because he is speaking accurately of himself. Moreover, we see Jesus engaging with other people on their own terms far more often than we see him bragging about his status as a divine savior. You'd think this would be something Jesus would be shouting from the rooftops: "I am your savior! Come follow me!" Instead, he's constantly running from the crowds, rarely ever looking for them, occasionally even saying things that cause people to walk away from him (more on that in 300-level stuff to come).

Contentment: The Path to Abundance Mentality

RP spends a lot of time deconditioning people from the social agenda of the Western World. One such agenda should be the American Dream. "If you try hard enough, you can have a great job, lots of money, a hot spouse, beautiful house, etc." There's nothing wrong with wanting to improve your life circumstances.

But the fact of the matter is that not everyone is going to be a millionaire. The American dream is impossible for everyone. Even if it you can get it done, there's an important step along the way: **contentment**.

Paul says in Philippians 4, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation ... whether living in plenty [abundance] or in want [scarcity] ... I can do all things through him who gives me strength." That oft quoted 4:13 verse doesn't mean you can faith yourself some wings and fly! It means that no matter how hard things get, you can do it because Jesus empowers you. Paul concludes the book: "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." See Matthew 6:33 (and the passage before) for more affirmation from Jesus' own mouth.

When we are content, we are only one step away from experiencing abundance mentality. I say "mentality" because "abundance" itself is a very nebulous concept. Just this morning I saw a comment on TRP saying, "Nobody can be red pill if you only make \$40,000/yr." This is idiotic. I've known millionaires who did not feel like they were living in abundance. If a person perceives himself to have options, he will feel like he's living in abundance and will radiate abundance, even if he is not in relative abundance with respect to those around him. To people in third world countries, an impoverished American citizen lives in abundance, but that American doesn't usually experience an abundance mentality - he experiences a scarcity mentality.

Scarcity: The Path Away from Abundance Mentality

I see post after post on TRP/MRP saying things like, "How do you guys do it? Where do you find the time? How do you get the money? Find the friends?" All of this stems from a lack of contentment. "If only I had a little more (blank) ..." is the mantra. When we think this way about our lives, abundance is impossible. We're desperately trying to increase one resource, but exhausting two others to get it. Eventually people just feel broken. The eat-work-sleep cycle gives a defeatist attitude. I shouldn't have to spell this out, but it's worth being clear: *If we think we don't have enough, then we are slaves to our scarcity and can't live like we have options.*

The resource-swap game is the pit that people with a scarcity mentality get stuck in. We're slaves to the next "need" on our list of scarce things in life. Sometimes that means you're so exhausted that you withdraw from your savings [money] to afford a couple days off work [time]. Other times it means reading sidebar for a few hours instead of mowing your lawn [time] so you can figure out how to impress been pining over [relationship]. Or it could dropping frame [relationship] to vent those feels that have been killing you [emotional]. Whatever it is - stop playing the resource-swap game. If you're constantly putting one resource in debt to pay the debt on another resource, you'll never get out and you'll never be satisfied.

Acquiring Abundance Mentality

If you're not living in an abundance mentality, here are a few steps I've coached men through that can really help:

Step 1: Identify your scarcity mentality - all the ways you feel pressured to do something to get something (i.e. the resource swap game). Throw that crap out the window. How? Read Philippians 4 - pray about it, meditate on it, and memorize the whole chapter. Heck, memorize the whole book. Philippians is the most RP book of the Bible I know. It's 104 verses. At 2 verses/wk you'll have the whole book memorized in exactly a year. No excuses. Do it.

Step 2: Start with money. This is where most people feel like they're lacking abundance - because more is never enough. Develop a skeletal budget - something you know is beneath your capabilities. Live on that budget for 3 months and put everything else into a separate bank account.

- No eating out. No buying name-brand stuff. No junk food. No new clothes. Replace your own break pads - watch a YouTube video (it's not hard). Ditch the 3-bedroom apartment for a 2-bedroom if you're really that tight on your budget. Don't live beyond your means. This will help you really learn

to OYS, while giving you some extra bank as well. Just don't cheat. If you really can't fathom how this will work, go hang out with hispanic immigrants for a week - learn from them. They really have this low-budget/abundance mentality thing figured out.

- Your real purpose in this phase is to learn to be content with little to nothing. Paul goes on and on about how his life was made and how great things were before Christ, then concludes: "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish." Where was that? Oh yeah, Philippians 3 - the whole book ... memorize it.

Step 3: Time. When you learn to be content with nothing, you'll start to realize your financial excess. Once you have a financial abundance mentality (which, again, is all relative - if you're making \$20k/yr you're in financial abundance relative to 90%+ of the world), start utilizing that financial excess for things that free up other resources that are harder to self-generate, like time.

- Hire someone to clean your house for \$100/mo, or mow your yard for \$20 every couple weeks. Pay the \$5 fee to have someone do your grocery shopping for you and have it delivered to your door. These seem like luxuries, but you're really buying your time back. Your scarcity of time is going away and you'll have an abundance of it. 9 times out of 10, once you've figured out that budget, the excess finances are better served buying harder-to-acquire resources [time, relationship, etc.] rather than more stuff. Always start with time. This is the easiest non-producible resource to buy. At this point, go ahead and pay the mechanic to change your break pads - if you think the cost/time ratio for that investment is better than for another investment.
- *Note:* This is different from the "resource swap game" because instead of going in the negative on one to get out of the negative on another, you're spending excess of one for more of another. Huge difference there.

Step 4: Once you have an abundance of time, you'll have more opportunity to head to the gym, read sidebar, practice game, etc. What you're doing here is spending your newly acquired abundance of time to improve yourself and acquire an abundance in your relational life, whether with your spouse or, if you're single, trying to find a date. Incidentally, this self-improvement will almost certainly improve your confidence and dominance in your vocation, helping you shift upward, earning more money, giving more abundance to buy more time to spend on more self-improvement, to get/keep that girl on fire for you - and a positive feedback loop is formed.

Humility Revisited

Notice that in all of this I never said, "Go flaunting how much abundance you have." That's for chumps. Betas *try* to impress people. Alphas are impressive people - not because of objective abundance (which doesn't exist), but because of an abundance mentality. They don't flaunt it; they just have to be it. When you feel like you have the option to decide what to do with your time, how to spend your money, what to do with your wife, which girl to ask out, etc. ... you're not cultivating pride, you're cultivating freedom. Jesus came to set us free (John 8:36). Know what that freedom leads to? You knew I couldn't write this post without this reference: "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

205 How to Lead

By now you should be familiar with the concept that men are designed to lead. But is the way you're trying to do that actually effective with the people who you intend to follow? This post addresses different leadership styles in the hope that if one method isn't working, another will.

I often train small group leaders. This is a concept that Red thought would be useful in the "how to" stuff here, so here goes. Although this was developed for group-leading, I apply these concepts in my marriage as well. I'll try to keep it in that context. I'll also assume I don't need to go into the Scriptural basis

for why men need to know how to lead - I think you've all got that part down by now. Also, if requested, I can provide Scriptural examples of God employing all of these leadership styles.

I've noticed 6 basic leadership styles at play. There may be more, but most everything can fit into one of these (or a hybrid).

Thinkers

Lecturer - Leader spends a majority of the time talking and answering his own questions. If he asks an open question, it's either rhetorical or response time is limited. Lecturers are great at conveying lots of information in a small amount of time, and they function efficiently with silent spouses who are naturally submissive. However, if your spouse is naturally outspoken and has genuine value to contribute to the conversation, this can cause friction.

Investigator - Leader has a preset conclusion and asks directed questions to guide others to that destination, only revealing the answer if he is unskilled in his questions or others aren't willing to play along. This works really well when there is an actual, knowable ideal destination, but that's not always the case. It can cause minor friction if the other person feels like you're just playing a game with them (i.e. the unskilled investigator), and it can be fairly ineffective if your spouse isn't willing to talk openly to answer the questions at a particular time.

Coach - Leader asks directed questions to help point others in a right direction and resolve comprehension obstacles. Instead of discerning a clear answer, it's more about moving in the right direction. This works well when applied to extremely emotional spouses who have a natural aversion to intellectualism (hopefully helping them overcome that aversion over time), but can really be stifling to someone who doesn't have any life issues holding them back from marching forward in life.

Feelers

Life Sharer - Leader communicates important information by relating it to personal life experiences (usually one's own, but not necessarily). This works extremely well for sensors/feelers (Meyers-Briggs) and those who are unfamiliar with how to connect what they know to what they do. It comes off as condescending when people already have a solid connection between their head and heart. In a marriage context, it can look like guiding your spouse through a difficult situation by sharing when you were in a similar situation; or it could be like in spy movies when two secret agents are getting attacked and one says to the other, "Remember Fresno?" then they both know exactly what to do.

Delegator - Leader develops others by assigning tasks to develop a specific trait or otherwise to put them in positions that are necessary for their healthy functioning. So, if a wife is stressed out, the husband might say, "Here's \$50, go to the mall and buy something pretty" (delegating a task to address her immediate need). If she's lacking patience, he might have her go to the grocery store and take all the kids with her. If she's feeling insecure about her looks, he might have her go to the gym with him. This works extremely well for those who don't know how to manage their own lives and for training them how to take charge in smaller areas without constantly calling you every time something goes wrong. It can be very damaging to those with no innate skill and aren't ready for the tasks assigned.

Parent - Leader meets others where they're at, modeling for others what he wants their life to look like. If your wife isn't having daily quiet times, have them with her until she's comfortable doing it on her own. If she's yelling at the kids too much, step in and show her (not tell her) how you handle those situations. This works really well in most every one-on-one context, but is harder to implement in group settings. It can also come off as being condescending if the leader isn't skilled.

I've already grouped these in terms of thinker/feeler. But it's also important to note that I also ordered them within each category a specific way.

- Lecturer/Sharer are the thinker/feeler ways of communicating information and expectations at/to

someone with you as the primary actor in the conversation. You set the goal and tell them what it is; you process the information on how to get them there, then convey it.

- The goal of these two is simply to relay information. The person will typically remain dependent on the leader for everything over which they have not yet received a lecture.
 - Investigator/Delegator are ways of getting someone to a predetermined destination by engaging them as the primary actor in the conversation. You set the goal without telling them, they process the information you present on how to get there.
 - The goal of these two is to teach others how to process information for themselves. The person will typically remain dependent on the leader for direction, but will learn how to accomplish that direction on their own without constantly bugging the leader with every new situation.
 - Coach/Parent are ways of guiding people in a direction they want to move, but haven't been successful. They are the primary actor in the conversation. They set the goal, they process the information you present on how to achieve that goal.
 - The goal of these two is to help people learn how to function independently. The person will eventually cease to be dependent on the leader, but will develop a healthy appreciation for the leader's role in his/her life.
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Notes

Everyone gravitates toward one or two leadership styles as their natural skill-set and will inherently be weak at a couple, but learned proficiency at all of them is possible.

It's also important to realize that not everyone will respond to every type of leadership. My wife responds best to life sharing, whereas I'm a natural investigator and sharing was my weakest. I had to become proficient in life sharing in order to help her through difficult times where a series of questions to reveal the core of the issue would have been much easier for me, yet would make her feel like I had no empathy.

It's also worth noting that in group settings, there are different group purposes and functions. Each leadership style is more effective at accomplishing a specific function. So, if the purpose of the group is to introduce people to lots of new information about our faith that they may not have heard before, a lecturer or life sharer may be ideal. If the purpose is to go in-depth with studying a passage, the investigator or delegator may be more equipped. If the purpose is to share life together and bear one another's burdens, the coach and parent are ideal. The list goes on (and not always in those pairings). This also holds true with your spouse, depending on the purpose of a given conversation or situation you may find yourself in.

Examples

Suppose your wife is struggling to have regular quiet times ...

Lecturer: Here are dozens of verses that talk about why it's important. Now I'm going to explain to you a series of techniques to help you set goals and stay focused, like setting a cell phone reminder.

Investigator: ¿Predetermines that the person needs to set a phone reminder¿ What, specifically, is hindering your efforts? I get busy, or just don't remember. What do you do to remember things that need to get done at your job? Keep a calendar. What if you're not at the office? An alarm goes off on my phone. Do you have your phone with you at all times at home too? Usually. ¿Light bulb goes on and they figure it out from there.¿

Coach: Why is this important to you? What are things you've tried so far? What's worked and what hasn't? What other strategies could you employ to become more consistent in your quiet times?

Life Sharer: I used to have problems with consistency in my quiet times. I tried (blank) and it worked really well for me.

Delegator: Set a phone reminder each night and try that for the next couple weeks. If that doesn't work, come back and I'll give you something else to try.

Parent: I love having quiet times. Why don't we just do it together? That way I can help you remember and we can have fun chatting about what God shows us each day! [Usually uncommunicated intent: After a while, I'll phase out and you should be able to continue on your own without me.]

206 Brace Yourself for Battle

Conflict in a relationship is inevitable. How do you handle it in a way consistent with biblical principles? How can we communicate love while leading in the midst of relational discord?

It's been a while since I've brought this topic up, so let's talk about frame. Let's talk about dealing with the emotionally volatile woman who thinks she can wear you down with feeeeeeellllzzz.

Strike First

How many of you have noticed your wife visibly upset and thought to yourself ...

- Beta: "I better do something to appease her before she rips my head off"
- Purple: Avoid her. "If she's going to have an attitude, I'm going to withdraw."
- Jesus-Level: Call her out on it and get the party started.

No kidding. The pharisees were mad at Jesus and started merely *thinking* mean and nasty things. Does he just avoid them and keep preaching? No, he stops what he's doing and calls them out: "Why are you thinking these things?!" (Mark 2:8).

I know when my wife's upset. Rather than letting it linger until she explodes, I defuse that bomb right away. "You're not acting normal. What's going on?" She usually tries to be evasive at that point because she hasn't processed what she wants to say yet. **DO NOT** give her time to let her hamster spin up a million reasons why she's justified in being mad at you. Nip it in the bud to find out what the core issue is - not the rationalizations she'll come up with after-the-fact.

The battle is inevitable. Strike first to keep it on your terms, not hers. Why? Because you're capable of steering the ship where it needs to go. When she's angry, she's only thinking about where she wants it to go. Let her lead the argument and the ship crashes. You're the captain for a reason. If you know there's an iceberg ahead, don't let the ship steer straight for it until your first mate calls it out first. This isn't a game or a test. This is your life.

Negative Inquiry

This WISNIFG gem is probably the most underrated tool for beginners in the entire manosphere. We hear lots about AA, AM, fogging, etc. because they're easy and fun. Those are predominantly deflection tools to avoid actually dealing with the issues. Before discovering RP I had already put STFU, AM, and fogging as my primary tools - AA was a nice addition. But my wife (to steal a BPP description) "has a lawyer level hamster." She's smart and deflecting can only work for so long.

That's where NI comes into play. NI is for when you don't want to deflect - you want to cut through the crap and get straight to the core of the issue. Like Kevin Costner said in the climactic scene of *The Post Man*, "Wouldn't it be great if wars could be fought just by the a-holes who started them?" All the hamstering (on both sides!) just creates infantry, air force, navy, etc. that makes the war quite explosive

and tragic. That's why we don't DEER anymore. NI says, "No, I want to know what's REALLY causing this problem - and let's fight that instead."

How do you NI? Just ask, "Why does (blank) make you so upset?" followed by, "Why is that bad?" followed by, "Why don't you like it when I (blank)?" and so on down the line. The goal here is to get to one of two possible results:

- *Less Likely*: She realizes that her demands and arguments are silly and apologizes for the whole thing. I've seen this happen, but it's not often.
- *More Likely*: She reveals the actual core of the issue. In my experience, that core issue is usually as simple as, "Because that's my personal preference." Sometimes there's a legitimate reason behind it, but it's almost always just a matter of her personal preference.

If the NI doesn't end the matter with the "less likely" option, once the "more likely" option concludes, just AA that sucker away. "I don't know why! I just don't like it when you do that." Darn right you don't! Let me see if I can figure out some other things you don't like either. *¡wink, wink!* *¡Pull a kino move!* No, sorry, I like that one too much. I'm not giving that up.

Now, when it comes to NI, Jesus is Lord! His primary MO was to respond to accusations with a question that cut through the garbage and got to the heart of the issue. I referenced Mark 2:8 above for starting the fight. Know what he did immediately afterward? NI! "Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk?'" In other words: "What's so bad about what I just did?"

Exercise Authority

As good as old-me used to be at arguing, this is where I always fell short. I knew how to stand up to my wife in a fight, but I often found myself questioning my own behavior. Learning to be intentional about NI has helped a lot at finding the core issue - but my weak frame always left me wondering: *Maybe she's right. Maybe I really should change that aspect about me or what I do.* This is idiotic when it's really just a personal preference thing - especially when it's an issue that affects the direction the ship is headed.

When you engage in NI, there's an implicit jab at your spouse that subliminally translates: "*What's so bad about (blank)?*" into "*There's nothing wrong with (blank).*" Now, *maybe there is something wrong with (blank).* That's why you're asking it as a question and not making it as a statement. But the statement is heard nonetheless. This gives you the ability to decide for yourself whether the answer she gives holds the value of a concerned first mate or a narcissistic insurgent. Sometimes my wife actually sees in my blind spot. That's why she's there! To help me. But when it really does boil down to just a personal preference issue and she wants her preferences to control how the ship is run - not only does a line need to be drawn, I've got to communicate that line clearly. I must exercise my authority in a way that makes it clear: "This issue is now over."

If you leave the issue lingering, she's going to keep hamstering out - and you probably will too. That's where resentment lives. Arguments must end with a clear plan of action. As the man, you must exercise your authority by making it clear: "We've said everything there is to say. This is what we're going to do from here." Don't ask for feedback. You're leading, not negotiating.

Let's finish our Mark 2 story. After Jesus demonstrated the above in 8 and 9, now in verse 10 he says, "'But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' So he said to the man, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God."

Look at that pattern again. The pharisees had an attitude. Jesus didn't wait for them to blow up at him - he took charge and initiated the confrontation. Then he asks the moralizing question, knowing that his answer is in the right. Then he demonstrates his authority by carrying out a plan of action that proves

his authority and heightened his glory as the people were amazed. Go and do likewise.

Caveat

Let me be clear up-front: none of this is meant to be a license to engage in protracted discussions about your wife's feelings and whether or not they make sense. Still prioritize *Acta Non Verba*. If it's a small issue or they're only surface-level emotions, AA/AM/Fog/etc. - all the deflecting tactics, then get back to leading by living.

This post is more for when it's a major issue where you know your silence could lead to mutiny. To recap, the plan is: STFU and listen to everything she has to say. When she seems done, ask to make sure: "Is there anything else you'd like to say?" If she keeps talking, keep STFU. When she's finally done, that's when you engage in your NI. If that doesn't resolve things, once you're at the core of the problem, simply communicate your action plan and end the conversation.

- "But when I NI, I don't know how to respond to her answers. They seem to make sense." If she's giving you good feedback, fog and make a conclusion that incorporates the good things she's offering. If it's garbage feedback, just remind yourself: *YOU DON'T HAVE TO RESPOND*. That's operating in her frame. Just ask more questions until you get to that core, which means she most likely admits it's just a personal preference on her part. Be steadfast and don't give up.
- "I tried that and it didn't work! She kept trying to bring it up again!" That's because you didn't end the conversation - you left something still in limbo. If you're clueless about what, just broken record your action plan. Be steadfast and don't give up.
- "But my action plan isn't working!" That's because you're a garbage leader with a weak frame. Learn to be steadfast and don't give up. But be smart too. Go read more books until you're able to think on your feet.

Steadfastness

2 Peter 1:5-7 shows a clear path: "For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love." Paul tells us that "love" is the greatest of the virtues (1 Cor. 13:13). Jesus says the greatest and second greatest commands revolve around our ability to love. Everything hangs on our ability to love, he says. So, how do we get to love?

1. You can't truly love without faith. God is love. Those without God cannot love. Period. It all starts here.
2. Once you have faith, you're finally freed from sin and able to do good, taking on positive virtues.
3. As your virtuous character develops, you start to learn and understand how the world works and what God wants you doing in it
4. That knowledge of how God created the world to function and the impact of sin on the world (which we call being "RP-Aware") leads to self-control. Before taking the red pill, Neo was always running around, controlled by his environment. Once he took the pill and mastered seeing the code behind the world, the environment was controlled by him. He was in control of himself and his situations. [For Christians the rabbit hole goes much, much deeper than basic RP-awareness, but that's for another post]. Once one is in control of his emotions, decisions, actions, etc. he is able to be steadfast. This is as far as you need to be in order to deal with the raging battles your spouse is likely trying to draw you into. Self-control is about your external response. Steadfastness is your internal security in the midst of your controlled responses. One who is not steadfast will quickly lose their self-control. You have to keep pushing forward or you will fall back.

5. Interestingly, the implication of the verse is that a person *cannot be godly* until he has developed his iron frame - one that is both externally applied and internally experienced.
6. Once you have your iron frame and have molded it after godliness, this is when you can finally have the strength to help others. You can't genuinely be an asset to your environment until you're strong enough to deal with your own issues first. Again, once Neo was aware (knowledge/3) he gained control (4), which led to an inner-calm (5), which made him all god-like (6) to function within the matrix - *AND ONLY THEN* did he have the power to help his sleeping brothers and sisters (7).
7. And only when we help our brethren can we truly say we are living of love. "By this all men will know that you are my disciples: If you love one another" (John 13:34-35) ... and, "Whoever does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20).

Similarly, if you say you love your wife but don't have an iron frame, you're deceiving yourself. You must be her oak. If you can't brace yourself for the battles she tries to wage against you, then you are incapable of loving her.

207 Perseverance, Sin, and Fitness Tests

Sin wants to control us. Women's curse in Genesis 3 is that they want to control us too. The stories of Odysseus and Jason speak volumes about how we should handle the temptation to cave, and the lives of David and Solomon give a clear picture of what this looks like.

Perseverance and self-control through tests are a crucial aspect of the red pill framework and also part of the fruit of the Spirit. We can't say we are "mature and complete, not lacking anything" until we have mastery over ourselves, our desires, our mission, etc., which the bible says comes directly as a result of passing tests (James 1:3-4).

The question is simple: *How do we develop this perseverance and self-control?*

Odysseus and Jason

Odysseus was on a quest that would lead him past the island of the sirens - vicious monsters who would lure men in by singing an enchanting and alluring song. Even the most strong-willed men would be unwittingly tempted to their shores to be eaten alive. Fortunately, Odysseus was smart and had a plan.

He filled the ears of every crewman with wax so that they would be unable to hear the sirens' song. But Odysseus wanted to know the beautiful melody that men would die for. So, he had his men chain him to the mast of the ship. As they passed by the sirens' island, Odysseus beat his chains against the mast at the seduction of the song, but his men were instructed not to let him free. They heard nothing and knew to ignore their leader's pleadings. He pulled at his chains so hard that his hands were bloodied and his muscles were torn at exerting so much force, but his restraints held him at bay. In the end, the crew were none the wiser as to what all the fuss was about; but Odysseus was a bloodied and beaten man.

Jason, on the other hand, had a different idea. He sought a man named Orpheus to accompany him. Together they journeyed with the Argonauts past the sirens' island. And when that beautiful song was sung, all of the crew rushed to the side of the boat as if to jump in the water and swim ashore. But Orpheus stops them, saying, "Hold on guys, I got this ..." He whips out his lute and begins playing a melody so much more wondrous than the sirens' song that the crew cared very little for the foul temptresses as their ship sailed safely past.

Avoidance of Sin

This story presents a double-whammy for us. The first aspect is in teaching us how to address the temptation of sin in the world.

- **WAX:** The first option is to be like Odysseus' crew, who poured wax in their ears. They avoided every possible temptation so they could go on about their business. For the weak-willed there is merit to this, but we are incapable of bubbling ourselves off from the world indefinitely. The sirens only used one sense (sound), but our enemy uses all 5 - and we are not to end up gouging out our eyes every time we lust (Matthew 5:29-30), so there has to be a better way.
- **CHAINS:** The second option is to be like Odysseus. We set clear boundaries and limitations in our lives to make it virtually impossible for us to sin. We see the sin. We smell it. Our lips can taste it. But our safeguards hold us back. We live our lives always wondering how great things could have been if only we could have broken the self-imposed chains that have been holding us back. In the end, we become bitter, never truly satisfied. The focus is on what we've missed, not what we get.
- **LUTE:** The third option is that of Jason - find something better to do than dawdle in temptation. More specifically, as alluring as temptation from the enemy may be, we have God. What can be better than that? If we know the actual joy that a genuine relationship with God brings (and I don't pretend that everyone on this sub has this - or even that every Christian has experienced it yet) ... there is no room for being drawn away by sin. It's not even worth our time anymore. Why leave what's great and healthy to get what's mediocre and will kill you?

What's your usual approach to sin?

Fitness Tests

Our wives tempt and test us the same way as sin. I'm not even kidding. Take a look at this:

- Genesis 3:16 - "Your desire [*teshukatech*] will be for your husband, and he will rule over you" (NLT: "Your desire will be to control your husband")
- Genesis 4:7 - "Sin is crouching at your door; its desire [*teshukatech*] is for you, but you must master it"

Just a chapter apart, we see the same phrase to describe what sin does as what wives do to vie for control. Now, the manosphere labels these as "fitness tests" under the impression that women secretly want us to pass the test - to tell them "no" and maintain our headship over the family. They're right. This desire comes from the way God created women before the fall.

But sin has tainted that desire, as with all things, and women are now lost in their ability to discern whether they want a man who can lead them or a man who will supplicate to them. I always appreciate the Wife of Bath's story in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, where a knight is sentenced to death unless he can answer what all women want. Stumbling upon an old hag he deals with her for the answer: *Wommen desiren to have sovereyntee, As wel over hir housbond as hir love, And for to been in maistrie hym above.*

How do we handle this?

- **WAX:** This is the epitome of STFU, but in more of an extreme ridiculousness kind of way. Pretending like you don't hear her has some merit, but as with this method in response to sin, it cannot practically last indefinitely any more than Odysseus' crew would be willing to leave wax in their ears for the rest of their lives. They eventually sailed past the sirens, but many of us are living with one "until death do us part."
- **CHAINS:** Just as Odysseus engaged in the sirens' song, but refused to be lured away, this is engaging in your wife's emotional hurricane, but digging your heels in and refusing to budge. In arguments, it's called DEERING. Yeah, you may be standing at the end of the day, but you'll have gained nothing and probably gotten all butthurt as a result. If it's not in an argument, it's letting yourself linger on the beta mentalities, enjoying the juicy bites of sweet deliciousness it promises, all the while knowing that actually sinking your teeth in will mean death. You won't get her dripping juices - you'll only have killed yourself a little inside with each passing day and nothing to show for it. Even if you fail to give in, you'll always be wondering what the fantasy world of dazzling blue might have offered if only it were real.

- **LUTE:** Simply put, you've got better things to do. Go do that instead.
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Songs of Solomon

Interestingly, we see this solution played out perfectly in Scripture. In Song of Solomon 5:2-6:3 we see a conflict play out between the Shulammitte woman and Solomon. Here's an easier rewording to see this:

- 5:2 - She's asleep and he wakes her up wanting to come in
- 5:3 - Her: "I don't have clothes on. Do you really expect me to answer the door? And my feet are clean, do you really think I'm going to get them dirty walking across the floor?"
- 5:4 - Solomon starts to open the door anyway, but changes his mind. "Screw her, if she's going to be like that."
- 5:5-6 - She finally finishes getting ready, but by the time she opens the door, he's gone. He had better things to do than deal with her defiance.
- 5:7-8 - His withdrawal causes her to get all sore and butthurt (assuming the "watchmen found me ... they beat me, they bruised me" = metaphor for her emotional state; I can't imagine anyone would physically do this to one of Solomon's wives).
- 5:9 - 6:2 - She remembers how great he is and longs to have him back, then finds him and makes up.
- 6:3 et seq - He doesn't act all butthurt about it; instead he continues to seduce her.

Let me summarize: (1) She gets defiant; (2) He withdraws his time and affection without getting butthurt; (3) She gets upset; (4) She remembers how great it is to be "his"; (5) He seduces her and she willingly accepts.

David

In 2 Samuel 6 we see another example of biblical conflict. The church actually notices this one, but sees it as a triumph for how much we should love God, not a model of how to deal with a wife who's acting like a shrew. They miss the point of the story. Something tells me that readers in Old Testament times understood that this was about how David handled Michal, not how cool it was that David celebrated in his underwear.

- 6:16-19 - David has a purpose higher than his wife and begins leaping for joy publicly in his underwear to see it advancing. Michal "despised him in her heart." David ignores her and goes about the celebration.
- 6:20 - Michal unleashes her emotional hurricane on David about the situation.
- 6:21 - David says, "You're right; I was undignified, but I've got bigger stuff going on than you. I'm going to keep doing whatever it is I feel like doing. You're not going to ruin my good mood - I'll keep celebrating."
- 6:22 - David ups it a notch (amplifies): "In fact, I'll make myself even more ridiculous and you can watch! Oh yeah, and all the other girls are going to gawk over me."
- 6:23 - God curses Michal and makes her barren.
- 7:1 et seq - David focuses on his vision of building a temple for God, seemingly giving Michal no further thought. She is never mentioned in the Bible again. The next we hear of David with a woman is with Bathsheba, who becomes his wife and the mother of Solomon, his true heir (2 Samuel 11).

Let me summarize: (1) She gets defiant; (2) He agrees that he was undignified, then amplifies and threatens to become even more undignified and to get the attention of other women; (3) She gets upset, but doesn't relent [unlike the Shulammitte woman in Song of Songs], so God curses her and David ends up with Bathsheba.

Conclusion

We see at least five key principles in these stories to help us understand, as men, how to respond to our wives when they're fighting for control in the relationship:

- Neither Solomon nor David got butthurt.
- Solomon withdrew his time and attention; he had better things to do.
- David employed agree and amplify because he knew he did no wrong and wouldn't have his passion for God stifled by his wife.
- Both Solomon and David seem to have an amused mastery over their affairs - life's a thing to be enjoyed and celebrated, not a cause for bickering.
- In one case the relationship worked out; in the other it didn't. None of this guarantees results - it only creates conditions where results are most likely to occur. Be OI.

Did I miss anything? What other passages do you all see that demonstrate how to handle marital conflict? These are the only two I can think of off the top of my head that are directly on-point and give a specific example, as opposed to generic instruction without any context.

208 Leadership Part 2

What was Jesus' specific method for leading his prospective bride while he was on the earth? What can we learn from his method about leading the women we are in relationships with?

The last post on leadership (by ruizbujc) centered around styles. That is, if you're trying to lead someone through lecturing and they're not responding, switch to life-sharing or delegating and see if that changes the result. I've had great success employing those methods in my own life. Specifically, my wife learns best by life-sharing. So, when she was freaking out about something and I tried to talk her through the logical solution, she just got all huffy at me. I stopped myself, shared a story about a time when I had implemented the logical solution in a similar situation to what she was in - and all of a sudden she's all gushing and happy and felt like she really understood what I was trying to say. It was weird, like waving a magic wand. But this post will focus more on the process of leadership.

How Jesus Did It

I've examined the Scriptures repeatedly to try to discern how Jesus started a movement and led his followers into becoming the apostles as we know them - flunkies who managed to turn the world upside-down. Here's the general trend:

- **Tell them what:** Jesus usually started by preaching. He laid out a road map and said, "Here's what I expect of my followers." He gave clear boundaries and enforced them. He said things like, "Anyone who doesn't (blank) cannot be my disciple" or "By this: (blank), all men will know you are my disciples."
- **Show them how:** The next thing he did was to live by example. He put into practice what he preached. Others saw his life and wanted to follow in his footsteps.
- **Let them try:** When they were ready, Jesus would give his followers opportunities to make a difference. He called Peter out to walk on the water in front of him. He asked the disciples to feed the 5,000. He let them try to cast out demons and heal people. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't. He always gave feedback.
- **Send them out:** After developing some competency, Jesus sent them off to practice on their own - outside of his presence. At first he sends out the 12, then shortly after he sends the 72. And he tells them that their being "sent out" would soon become a permanent endeavor. But he always gave feedback when they returned, answering their questions and continuing to train them.

- **Pass it on:** His ultimate lesson to them was not merely one for their own benefit, but to help all the others who would be affected by their influence as well. In this way, Jesus would be like a grandfather to those that the 12 reached, and a great-grandfather to the people that the next generation reached, and so on. This is the core of generational ministry and what Jesus means by discipleship.
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How I've Applied It

Now, I've done this twice in my own life. Consider:

- **Tell her what:** At one point early in my journey I informed my wife that I planned to start going to the gym and getting back in shape. I told her that I wanted our family to be healthier and more physically fit. I also commented on dieting. She did not follow, but she at least knew my intentions.
- **Show her how:** So, I started going to the gym on my own, without her. For a while, I was dieting without her too. She saw me diet, but didn't feel like partaking. At some point, she decided after seeing my improvements that she wanted to start going to the gym too. I would have to nudge her along and she'd only go when I went, but something was better than nothing. I tried to instruct her on how to lift weights and not just spin her rotators on the treadmill, but she rejected. Even so, she'd come down to the weight area and watch me lift. She was curious about it all, asked questions, and I showed her what works and how to do it, proper form, etc. But she didn't partake.
- **Let her try:** About a month ago, my wife came down from the treadmills to the gym floor like usual, watched me lift for a bit, then says, "Can I try?" Of course, I get her a set of weights that will push her, but won't break her confidence, and she goes at it fantastically. Similarly, I started a cut diet last week and this time she decided she wanted in, so she's trying with me. She cheats more than I would (last night especially, as the kids bring buckets of candy home for Halloween), but something's better than nothing - she's still developing the will-power to make it through a strict regimen.
- **Send her out:** This past week she's now been going to the gym on her own time while I'm at work (she's still on maternity leave). Is she doing all the lifts I would have instructed her to do? No. But she's taking the initiative to go on her own and not needing me to push her along anymore. She also asks questions when she gets back about what she should be doing for next time. She's still hesitant, but has made substantial progress. Likewise, she's taking ownership in the diet by ordering groceries that are compliant rather than me doing all the grocery shopping anymore. Progress!
- **Pass it on:** She's now talking to friends and neighbors about her new workout routine and the diet we're on. We invited some friends over tomorrow night and will be cooking a delicious, yet compliant meal (I'm grilling babyback ribs, broccoli, an asparagus), and as much as I've invited men to lift with me (who are already members at my gym anyway), she's now talking about using up some of our guest passes to bring some of her neighborhood friends with her to the gym. This is a double-pro because it means she's passing on what I'm showing her in the way of lifting and dieting, while simultaneously building relationships in which we can invest for our mission of making disciples for Christ!

I can give a few dozen other examples of how this process has helped me, as it's one I've been employing since long before my RP days. But only when I developed the assertiveness necessary to stand firm have I noticed the results happening so quickly and more naturally in the relationship, rather than feeling forced. Live like Jesus lived. Give field reports as you're able.

209 Developing Your Mission

Having a mission is perhaps the most important and foundational aspect of being a godly man. This post gives a practical tool for those who haven't yet figured out how to create a clear mission statement for themselves and their family.

The Outline

I usually break this down into vision, mission and calling.

- **Vision:** This can be one of two things: (1) how you conceptualize a perfect world, or (2) how you conceptualize your perfect life.
- **Mission:** This is what you intend to do in life to actualize the vision.
- **Calling:** The unique set of characteristics, talents, spiritual gifts, etc. given to each person that create the context for how the mission is pursued.

In my view, the vision must always incorporate the 3 Greats in some way: Love God, Love Others, Make Disciples. But I'm not going to hold everyone to that. What I do recommend is that your vision err toward the first kind and not merely the latter. If your vision is only about how you conceptualize your own life, I'd suggest you're not thinking big enough and your mission may lack sufficient attractive value to draw women into a passion for the direction your life is moving. That said, I haven't observed this enough to make a definitive statement, so I'm presenting both options anyway.

The mission is the most important part of all of this. It's something that has to transcend your individual circumstances (calling) because you need to be able to invite others to join you in that mission - whether that's your spouse, or friends, because a good mission shouldn't be something you can accomplish alone. Again, if you can do it alone, you're thinking too small.

Vision

Write out a brief (2-4 sentences) description of YOUR perfect world, paying particular attention to the things you wrote down about what you value. If you were the grand master omni-president king of the universe, what would the world look like?

Now, it could be that your "perfect world" description is something like "everyone loves and serves me and bows down to me and gives me everything I want." So be it. Just because it's a global statement doesn't mean it can't be personalized to you. But as believers, I would hope our truest passions rise to heights beyond our own lives - that we actually want to leave a lasting impact on our world for Christ.

But even if you're a non-Christian coming here because practical steps toward finding a mission isn't often brought up on MRP, I would still recommend thinking beyond your own life and finding a cause greater than yourself. Read 108 for more info on why this is so helpful.

Mission

Imagine yourself about to celebrate your 80th birthday. You are surrounded by people who have known you throughout all different phases of life, each sharing stories about how they knew you - from now until that day. Let the details run wild in your mind. Consider all the different ways they might have come in contact with you - through your career, your spouse, a friend of a friend, frequent acquaintance, etc.

- What will these people recall about your character, strengths and skills?
- What did you enjoy doing all those years?
- What are three or four of the most important things you've accomplished in all that time that you'd want people to be talking about?
- Will your memory continue affecting people after you're gone? If so, how did you accomplish that?
- Will others pick up the work you started and continue it, or will those you know scatter to their own directions? If your life's work will continue through those you've touched, how will you have invested that in them?

These questions will help you get a feel for (1) how your life contributed to your vision, and (2) what it might take to make your mission viable and successful.

Calling

Write down two to four things you value. Use this list to stimulate your thinking, but feel free to go beyond and come up with your own words:

- Peace of mind, security, wealth, good health, family, recognition/fame, free time, happiness, spiritual fulfillment, friendships, longevity, making a difference, contributing time/knowledge/money to a cause, travel, sense of accomplishment, respect of others, close relationships, fighting against a cause

List some personal characteristics you feel good about having - up to 10. Look to your answers in the first section of this post to help. A non-exclusive list of suggestions include:

- sense of humor, charm, creativity, enthusiasm, passion, charisma, love of life, love of people, energy, nurturing ability, patience, wit, compassion, people skills, common sense, physical strength, mechanical genius, computer experience, leadership skills, insights, understanding of a topic, artistic ability, bringing the best out of others, street smarts, public speaking skills, intelligence

Consider how you successfully interact with people and write down up to 10 ways (remember: we're talking about when you're 80, not the present). Examples:

- teach, produce, educate, encourage, stimulate, speak, convince, develop, study, lead, love, help, inspire, care, write, promote, manage, motivate, plan, act, serve

These exercises should help you understand your unique calling so that you can develop a personalized path toward carrying out your vision.

Compile And Connect

Now, of the words and phrases you chose above, pick two (or be flexible) of the words/phrases you chose when describing your character. Pick another two regarding what you value. Pick another two of the verbs/verb phrases regarding how you interact with the world.

When picking these things, make sure to focus on the ones that are most crucially important to you. The others can still be incorporated as secondary priorities, skills, traits, etc., but let's hone in on what's most critical for right now.

Combine all of this into one mission statement that can look something like this:

- My life purpose is to use my [character 1] and [character 2] to become someone who [value 1] and [value 2] so that I can [verb 1] and [verb 2] people to move the world toward ...
-

Example

Now, I realize that this seems like an overly basic exercise ... like something you'd give to a graduating high school student who is just entering the real world for the first time. But the fact of the matter is that some people simply don't know how to boil down their personal gifts, talents, and priorities into a clear directive toward a higher aim. So, I still find value in an exercise like this, and when I lead small groups I've found that those I'm teaching - even adults in their 50s - still find value in going through this exercise to remind them what they should be shooting for and what resources they have within themselves to move in that direction.

When I first did this, my statement looked like this (noting that I've modified the format slightly from what I was taught):

- My life purpose is to use my intelligence and creativity to love and lead people, so that the world will be filled with spiritual generations of believers who glorify God by living and discipling among the lost.

Here I am, over a decade later, and I don't think I'd change that much. I might clarify and take out some of the boilerplate formatting to make it more appreciable - but the overall concept is the same. I also see incredible progress toward this goal ...

- My intelligence and creativity are the two traits about myself I have relied upon the most to win people to Christ successfully, and to gain influence with others.
- I have continued to be grounded in my love for people as a primary motivator and utilizing my intelligence and creativity to lead those people I love.
- And I have done this in a manner where I have discipled over 30 men, many of whom have discipled others who have discipled others who have discipled others - to the point where my generational line now extends into at least 14 different countries across the world.

Final Thoughts

I'd love to hear all of your mission statements! Feel free to share, whether they follow this model or not. As I should note with most of the stuff I say, I don't ever want to pretend that my way is ever the only right way (except when I specifically say so, like with a need to incorporate the Great Commission) ... but at the very least I do like to offer a plan to those who otherwise lack a better option on their own. Using a prefabricated cookie-cutter approach I give you that worked for me might not be the best thing for you ... but it's certainly better than not having any plan at all.

210 Mission Matters. Nothing Else.

The church likes to use the "Mission, Master, Mat" trilogy as the three most important Ms in a man's life. But I hold that the Mission is the most important of these and that the other two are actually defined by our mission. This post explores how having a mission is the key to your relationship with God and your girl, and also how a strong commitment to one's mission inherently orients one toward living out virtually every red pill concept in existence.

At the risk of sounding autistic, in light of the countless times I've had to say it on this sub, I'm making this an official part of the side-bar content. **HAVE A MISSION.**

In 209 I referenced how to develop a mission. Sure, it's a little juvenile. But if it works, it works.

Here's the thing: If you're rightly on a mission, *nothing else matters*. The church likes to throw out the three Ms as the most important things in your life: *Master, Mission, Mate*. Screw that. It's *Mission, Mission, Mission*. Here's why the other two don't matter.

Master

Jesus says plainly: "The one who has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me" (John 14:21). It's not a large leap to assume, then, that anyone who deliberately rejects Jesus' commands doesn't love him, and that instead that person will be subject to fiery judgment (Hebrews 10:26-31). There is no middle ground, as Jesus said, "Whoever is not for me is against me" (Matthew 12:30).

Jesus gave us the three greats: (1) love **God**, (2) love **Others**, (3) make **Disciples** (Matthew 22:36-38, 39, and 28:19-20, respectively). I already addressed these more fully in 110. Go read that for a refresher. The point I'm drawing from that post is simply this: *You cannot claim your "master" is a priority if you're not making disciples for Him.*

Mate

You cannot keep a woman attracted to you if you don't have a mission in life that transcends her. Making your wife your mission or a primary aim in your life is the definition of being beta. Alpha men have better things to do in life than try to get girls interested in them. Ironically, having better things to do in life than trying to get girls interested in you is what will get girls interested in you - including your wife.

If you have no mission in life, then you're not going anywhere. If you're not going anywhere, how can your wife follow you? If she's not following you, then either you're following her or you're standing still and she's walking away. Either way, it's not good.

If you do have a mission in life, she might still walk away. That's her choice. If your mission is God-given (like the universal call to make disciples), then her choice to go in any other direction is sin. Follow the Matthew 18 process, and if she refuses to repent you're to treat her as an unbeliever. If she continues walking away from you, 1 Cor. 7 gives you the freedom to let her go. You don't need that in your life - Proverbs has plenty of passages that makes that clear.

All-In-One Package

In 110 I wrote a lot about pursuing your mission above all else. This is Paul's compulsion to us in 1 Cor. 7 - to live as if we were still single: wholly devoted to pleasing God by doing what he put us here to do. But here's why this works.

If your mission for disciple-making is your highest priority in life ...

- **DNGAF:** You DNGAF about anything that pulls you away from that mission.
- **Amused Mastery:** You have an eternal perspective and know that even if your girl leaves you, that won't interfere with your having an impact on eternity.
- **Shotgun/Sniper:** You will have a wide social network, constantly meeting new people to share the Gospel with and potentially disciple, not wasting your time eyeing a girl from afar. You'll find someone who's pursuing Christ alongside you, you'll eventually get inflamed with lust for each other, and you'll decide it's better to marry than to burn with passion.
 - A note on evangedating: this is a "sniper" mentality. It targets all of your efforts into one specific girl. I have no problem with cross-gender evangelism. Just don't use dating as a context to do it. Keep a shotgun approach.
- **Fitness Tests:** You will pass these with ease because you won't be concerned about placating your wife when you've got more important things going on than her.
- **Frame:** You won't be lured into her frame because doing so would interfere with your mission. She will naturally fall into your frame because if she doesn't (1) that would make her a harpy, non-submissive wife, which she'll know is theologically sinful, and (2) because she'll want to share in the glory/credit you eventually get on judgment day.
- **Eternity:** It's probably worth noting that you'll have maximized your glory in eternity for Christ's benefit because of your service to His Kingdom.
- **ONEitis:** You won't care because you're interested in doing what God put you here instead of singling out some hypothetical soul mate.
- **DYELB?:** You will have a natural drive to stay fit because (1) the gym gives you yet another context to meet people who need Jesus and increase your social network for discipleship purposes, and (2) you know that looks matter and staying fit will give you more of a voice in people's lives than if you were a fat slob they're disgusted by, and (3) because you can't disciple someone into spiritual maturity as part of the body of Christ if you're not taking care of the temple he gave you - so your motivation to your mission compels you to do all these things as a natural priority anyway.

- **OYS Type 1:** You'll naturally have your act together because that's how you earn influence in people's lives. As 1 Thess. 4:11-12 says, "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: you should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you [i.e. OYS] **so that** your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody."
- **OYS Type 2:** You'll naturally be owning up to your flaws because confession is an essential part of your testimony, which is how you'll defeat the enemy and take ground for the Kingdom (Revelation 12:11), which Paul modeled for us (ex. Romans 7).
- **Sexuality:** I've already said a number of times on this sub, and I'll refrain it again: physical reproduction is a roadmap to help us understand spiritual reproduction. So, you'll be motivated to have lots of sex, as the physical ecstasy from this experience will remind you of the spiritual ecstasy you get from winning a new convert; and the joy of raising physical children will remind you of the joy you will have in raising spiritual children as well.
- **Dread:** Because your woman won't be your primary focus in life, and because you'll constantly be spending time outside the house working toward your mission, engaging with countless people toward a mission, as a high-value man with a mission, and looking really good to aid in your mission ... you better believe dread will come naturally.

Pretty much everything you learn in secular RP as a pursuit in itself becomes a natural byproduct for the one who is living on mission for Jesus Christ to make disciples of all nations.

If you don't have that mission ... you're screwed. You can try doing secular RP things in the context of being a Christian, but it's only going to get you about as far as secular people get in the first place. If you want the real deal, live out these concepts toward the purpose for which God created you in the first place.

211 An Anatomy of Butthurt

Too many men misunderstand what it means to be "stoic" or to have a "strong frame" and end up making themselves look like idiots in the process. When your wife rejects your advances, how should you respond?

I see this issue come up somewhat regularly on r/askMRP and r/RPChristians, but I don't see a lot of content on this. People are told, "Don't get butthurt," but they apply that phrase in a totally wrong way. So, let's get this clear.

What Is "Not Butthurt"?

To be overly simplistic, there are only two reactions to any tests a woman throws at you: (1) butthurt and (2) not butthurt. Duh. Obviously we want "not butthurt." But most people mistakenly apply this by saying, "X is butthurt. I'm not X, so I wasn't butthurt." In reality, yes, X is butthurt ... but so is Y and Z and A, B, C, and a ton of other things. To that end, it's a waste to try to define everything that is *butthurt*. We're better off trying to define the much more limited response of *not butthurt*. Here's my definition of "not butthurt": **Positive emotional reaction**. That's it.

Now, this isn't the best definition, but for new guys it's the most useful one. Why? Because it leaves no room for ambiguity. We all agree that negative emotional reactions (anger, yelling, resentment, etc.) are definitely butthurt. Positive emotional reactions are not. There is a phase in-between where most guys wind up living, thinking that they're being "stoic." This emotional gray area is too complex for many men to understand or fake their way through, but a woman can sniff it out immediately. You're walking in gray, but they see black and white. This puts you at a serious disadvantage until you've developed a strong sense of your own frame.

So, if you're new around here and you read: "Don't get butthurt," rather than thinking, "Don't react with negative emotions," tell yourself, "Oh, I need to respond with a positive emotional reaction when she does that."

Dissecting Butthurt

Women are emotional creatures. They thrive on emotions. They don't even care what emotions they're feeling most of the time - they just want emotions. Good emotions are the best, obviously. But to the surprise of many a man, bad emotions are actually better to women than no emotions. Accordingly, when a woman is testing you - be it a compliance, fitness, or comfort test - she's trying to evoke an emotional reaction out of you. If she can do this, it shows her that she has power over you.

Consider a wife who asks her husband to warm up the car for her. Assume she's equally capable of doing it or that it's a luxury and not a necessity. This is a clear test. What is hypergamy trying to do here? How should a man respond? I'll give the possible responses in order from worst to best.

- **BETA POSITIVE:** "Sure honey, I'll warm up your car. And maybe when I'm done, will you let me give you a foot rub too? After I get the dishes done first, of course."
 - This is a "not butthurt" response. It's also a garbage one. If she can evoke a positive, supplicating response, that's the ultimate source of affirmation to the BB side of her hypergamous drive. "I have him wrapped around my finger," she thinks. Don't be a BB. If you're her BB, she's going to look elsewhere for her AF. It's not enough to be "not butthurt" - you have to be alpha in your not-butthurt-ness.
 - This is the definition of acting in her frame.
 - **Relevant Passages:** Samson and Delilah - Samson supplicated and it was his downfall (Judges 16); Potiphar's wife - her husband let her live high on the hog and left her alone with a hot guy (Genesis 39)
- **NEGATIVE EMOTION:** "Screw you! Where do you get off thinking you can boss me around, you stupid whore!"
 - Whether you comply or not, if you respond with negative emotion, you're still giving her an emotional high. She might not like it in the moment, but it gives her something to complain about to her girl friends, something to post about on social media, something to stew about in the shower, etc. Her life now has a plot and she gets to take the center stage. Something is better than nothing to her. If she ever feels bored in the relationship and she knows how to get you to react emotionally, she'll do it, even if she knows it's going to blow up in her face. She'll probably even cheat on you because that's going to give her the strongest emotional response of anything she could throw at you. Your negative emotional reaction = a display of her power to manipulate your emotions. Even if she doesn't get her way, because she knows she can manipulate your emotions, you're still her BB. She owns you.
 - This is also acting in her frame.
 - **Relevant Passages:** "Proverbs 29:11 - "A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back." Proverbs 15:18 - "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger
- **NO EMOTION/"ROBOT MODE":** ¡Blank stare¡ "No. I will not warm up your car." ¡She continues to nag¡ "I said no. No means no." ¡Broken record until she's gone.¡
 - This is where most guys screw up. When their wives come at them, they shut down into "robot mode." All emotions go out the window, they look with a plain, blank face, and they engage purely on logical analysis and calculated behavior patterns. I lived in this phase for a long, long time. This is absolutely infuriating to women because it denies them any semblance of what they're looking for, and it also shows them that you can't handle playing the game. It tells them you just don't care. Most guys think this "robot mode" is the same as "being stoic" (for example). It's not. The one redeeming factor in "robot mode" is that you finally learn to STFU and stop caring about whatever crap is spewing out of her mouth and all over your face. With your emotions shut down, it doesn't get to you ... at least not in the moment. But if you get into "robot mode" by bottling up the negative emotions, don't turn yourself back on and experience it all at once afterward.

- This is the ultimate spurn off to hypergamy. She doesn't get BB satisfaction of controlling you, but she also has no AF interest in you. This is the only way I know of actually defying hypergamy. Of course, the goal isn't to defy the system - it's to make it work for you.
 - Congratulations. You've finally left her frame. Of course, you don't have a frame of your own yet either.
 - **Relevant Passages:** 2 Timothy 1:7 - "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." Proverbs 3:6 - "Do not lean on your own understanding." See also all the times God interacts with his people - he's rarely a robot, more often responding with some type of emotion. Toward his people in their infancy, it involved anger. Toward his bride post-Gospel, it's usually a positive emotion, not a negative one.
- **NEUTRAL EMOTION:** "Not today, babe." ;She nags; "It's not a big deal. You can warm up your own car. I'm watching the game. Have fun at work!"
 - This is when your mood actually brights up in response to her tests. AA stops being a tactic you employed in "neutral emotion mode" and just becomes part of who you are. She complains about you not doing the dishes, and her complaint makes you smile. You are happy to hear her complaining about you because (1) it's another opportunity to get her engines revved up, (2) it's genuinely funny to you how she prioritizes and conceptualizes the world, (3) you can enhance the resolution on your relational cartography, and (4) she makes really cute faces when she's feisty.
 - Not only do you have your own frame, but you're inviting her to join you in that frame. You're brightening her mood, despite your rejection of her request. If she accepts your invitation, once she's in your frame, you're the AF she's been waiting for. Congratulations: you've just made hypergamy work for you.
 - **Relevant Passages:** 2 Samuel 6 - David dances naked and his wife nags him about it and he says he'll go out and keep dancing [note: she rejected his frame anyway - that can/does happen]. Luke 10:38-42 - When Martha nags Jesus about Mary and he just enjoys what Mary's doing anyway [presumably Martha did enter Jesus' frame after that].

Now, technically a "neutral emotion" response is "not butthurt" as well. So, when I say that "not butthurt" is only defined by a positive emotional response, you can see where I go wrong. But because most guys think they're "neutral" when in fact they're in "robot mode," and because their wives can see it clear as day ... it's just not worth the risk. So, just skip "neutral emotion" mode altogether and shoot for "alpha positive."

The one caveat I give there is that if you've been living in "beta positive" or "negative emotion" for too long before finding RP, and the idea of being "alpha positive" is unrealistic under your current frame condition, then and only then should you shoot for "neutral emotion," understanding that 9 times out of 10 you're really going to be in "robot mode" and just not realize it.

RP Christians Sidebar Compendium

300s - Spiritual Maturity

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301 The 7 Basics

Every believer needs to start somewhere. Whether you're new or have been a believer for decades, the best way to excel is to master the basics. This post outlines what they are and how to utilize them.

In starting the 300-Level series, take note that this is all about your spiritual maturity and relationship with God. I'll start with two key axioms:

AXIOM 1: You cannot lead someone further than you are, only as far as you are.

AXIOM 2: The greatest way to excel is by mastering the basics.

Luke 6:40 says, "The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher." If you want to lead your wife spiritually, you have to be further ahead spiritually - and the more mature and Christ-like you are, the further you can lead her. She stops growing where you stop growing. If you keep growing, she keeps following. You can't have a wife who follows if she's already at where you are and you're not moving. If she is attracted to spiritual maturity (as I believe all godly women with the Spirit in them are), then you will increase attraction by being a godly man.

The second axiom comes from experience over and over in my own life and in the lives of the 30+ people I've discipled over the years. Michael Jordan's basketball coach once instructed him that the best way to master the game wasn't to learn trick shots or how to dribble between his legs or pass behind his back - it was to master the basics: freethrows, layups, normal dribbling, passing, etc. The same is true in faith. It's not about mastering then next tricky theological concept or figuring out how to heal someone by laying hands on them and praying. These things may come in time, but always start with the basics and make them your go-to.

The 7 Basics

For the past 15 years my view on what these spiritual-growth basics are have not changed, and this list has existed since the 1930s. Here they are:

1. Know the Gospel/Assurance of Salvation
2. Quiet Time/Devotional
3. Bible Study
4. Scripture Memory
5. Prayer
6. Fellowship
7. Evangelism

There are things that could be added to this list, but without new empirical data to prove an improvement beyond what I have seen works with my own eyes, I'm going to stick with this.

What To Do With The Basics?

I'll probably spend time in separate posts going through these in a more detailed break-down, but for right now rank yourself on how competent you believe you are with each of these (i.e. if you put in the effort, how great would your mastery be?) and also rank how intentionally you have been practicing each of these for the last 3 months.

If your competency is low, work on it. Period. I don't mean intellectual understanding of a subject - I

mean your actual ability to practice it. If you have read 2 dozen books on evangelism but you've never actually gone out and shared your faith with someone, you have no competency. It's easy to know how to have a quiet time and to read your Bible periodically, but until you actually develop a relational connection with God through that time, all you're doing is reading a book and acquiring head knowledge, which is low competency. If you know a lot of passages by memory inside and out, but you've never learned to cite them to yourself and/or others when they become applicable, your Scripture memory is low competency. Until you have developed each of these arts in practice, your competence is low.

Once your competence is acceptable or high for all 7, then start balancing a few of these at a time, implementing them in practice as part of your daily routine.

What Does This Have To Do With RP?

As noted above, if your wife has the Holy Spirit in her, she's going to be attracted to a display of the Holy Spirit in you. Your primary reason should simply be because you love God and want to follow him. But the peripheral benefit of attracting your wife should not go unnoticed. If she's not a godly woman, maybe your pursuit of God whole-heartedly will be the example she needs to get her moving in the right direction where you otherwise may have been reinforcing an attitude of materialism and idolatry of the marriage itself in your relationship, among other things.

More to the point, as you grow in these areas, your capacity to lead her will grow as well. I can't count the number of Christian men I've disciplined whose wives were far more spiritually mature than they were. They came to me usually because their wives were fed up with their spiritual immaturity and it was causing major friction in their relationship.

!

As I disciplined these men, they grew to love and pursue God even more than their wives. Want to know what happened? Their wives suddenly wanted to screw them every chance they got. After two years of discipling one guy in particular, he was simply beaming because his wife had started screwing him 2-3 times a day. Why? Because being a godly man is attractive to a godly woman. Rather than the nag who thought she was superior to them, these wives saw that their husbands were now men who had a clear mission of eternal significance and who could lead them in the most important aspect of life and the only one that makes life worth living: faith in Jesus.

Caveat

To be clear, this is a powerful attractive force, but is not the only one. Many of these men who saw these results were already physically fit and I was helping them learn how to own every aspect of their lives. Don't be an idiot. Lift, OYS, frame, etc. These things still matter. But OI is key here - you've got to be doing all this because you love God, not because you want to attract your wife. Why? Because even if your wife can't see through it (and she will), God will see through it. Don't be a Matthew 7 guy who does all the great things God has for us, then Jesus says, "I never knew you."

302 Bible Study

It's easy to pass the responsibility for learning Scripture onto a pastor or small group leader. After all, they're used to spoon feeding their followers. But if you want to lead others, you'll need to know how to do it for yourself first.

When looking at the 7 basics, some of them should come naturally. Many people miss the relational development aspect of having a quiet time, but still know how to have a quiet time all the same. From there it's just a matter of OYS - are you being responsible or lazy?

Types of Study

There are typically three approaches to Bible study:

1. **Mama Bird Studies** - This is where a leader chews up all the food for all of the participants and basically spoon feeds it to them. The participants have almost no prep-work. They just come and learn, asking questions and making comments along the way.
 - Great for spiritual infants or those who simply aren't disciplined enough for a true study.
2. **Off the Cuff Studies** - This is where everyone shows up without any meaningful preparation and shares their thoughts on a passage or topic with one another. There may be a facilitator, but even the facilitator hasn't done any significant preparation.
 - Great for topical studies or life-on-life groups, where you never know what issue someone will bring up that needs discussed.
3. **True Bible Studies** - This is where all participants in the group have agreed upon what passage will be studied and have actually followed through with preparation.
 - True studies are incredibly valuable for anyone who has even a basic degree of competency in how to understand the Scriptures. That said, they are incredibly rare, as it is overwhelmingly difficult to find anyone who is willing to put in the time and effort to give the passage the level of preparation and dedication necessary.

By way of example only, when I study a single chapter (20-ish verses), I typically expect that I will spend a minimum of 3 to 5 hours with the material itself, 30 minutes in prayer throughout the process, and 15 minutes reviewing commentaries to discern whether or not my interpretations are reasonable. On average, this is about 4hr per week process. This process applies when I'm leading a mama bird study or in a true study. When "off the cuff" issues come up, I get a week off. I'll typically maintain this for about 25 weeks out of a year (i.e. 100hrs of Bible study per year).

A general church group is typically lucky if everyone is willing to spend 15 minutes skimming the passage and googling a few key phrases. This is unfortunate, but it is a sad reality for modern church-goers who do not prioritize in-depth understanding of the Scriptures. Take this as a challenge to man up. Work those spiritual muscles like you do your physical ones.

The Inductive Method

Rather than musing over what you think something means, the better interpretive method is to figure out what the author meant when he/she wrote it. The author is the one we agree was inspired by God in writing the Scriptures, not you in reading them. How do we figure out authorial intent?

Background: Learn as much as you can about the culture and the context of the passage.

Observation: Once you have an idea of the context, make as many observations as possible.

Interpretation: Once you have a lot of observations, start asking questions - then use the text to answer the question.

Application: Make it personal. How are you going to live differently now?

Background

I typically advise people to avoid commentaries as much as possible until after their study is complete. When people rely too heavily on commentaries up-front they lose the ability to think for themselves. Instead of studying the Scriptures, it's as if they're sitting in on someone else's Bible study and reporting the results

to their own group. Or a more apt example: it's like going to the gym with your buff friend, having him lift the weights for you, and then bragging to everyone around how impressive you are.

Instead, I recommend that people start by going through the entire 4-part process first and then refer to commentaries at the end to discern whether or not their conclusions are reasonably aligned with a scholarly consensus. The one exception I make is in the case of a passage where it is clear that historical context is going to play a major role, in which case there is some necessity to know this historical context in advance.

In place of commentaries, the up-front part of researching the background should be reading the passages before and after and addressing correlating passages that reference the subject matter. A cursory book overview is also immensely helpful.

Observation

Here's a challenge I give to every man I disciple: make at least 20 observations per verse on average over a passage. So, if you're studying a 5-verse passage, try to make 100+ observations on it. Early on, this will seem almost impossible, as I once thought it was too. As you practice, it'll become second nature and you'll find that even 50+ observations per verse is quite doable.

What types of observations should you be making? I break them up into the following categories with the acronym GRAPES:

Grammar - Look for things like past, present, or future tense; if it says "and" or "or"; who is the object of the sentence? etc.

Repetition - If something is mentioned more than once, it's probably important

Absence - This one is the hardest to process, but look for things that you would normally expect to appear but seem to be missing

Patterns - Look for different things that fit together; for example, if you see the "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" all in a few verses, that's a pretty clear pattern that means something

Extratextual - These are observations based on things outside the text itself; it might involve observing what a Greek word dictionary says or what you noticed in a historical reference book; it most often takes the form of correlating passages outside the one being studied

Statements - This is the most common type of observation and it's the easiest; simply put, you're just noticing what the passage actually says and taking its word for it

Interpretation

s with observation, I give a challenge: 10 questions per verse, then answer them. Let's assume you're studying a 20-verse chapter. You should now have somewhere around 400 observations made. Now, go back through all of those observations and ask 200 questions.

I've found that there are no less than 5 different types of questions. I will use Philippians 1:1 for each of my example questions: "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons"

BASIC - Questions that are readily answerable by the text.

- Ex. Who wrote Philippians?

INTERMEDIATE - Can be answered by the text or surrounding passages, but not immediately apparent from the verse prompting the question.

- Ex. What is an overseer or deacon?

DIFFICULT - Answerable, but require significant research beyond the text itself. These types of questions usually require an understanding of the Bible as a whole and intimate knowledge of God's character to answer.

- Ex. Why is Paul writing this book to the Philippians?

CRITICAL THINKING - Usually don't have a definitive answer, but are worth pondering because they alert us to aspects of God's character of which we would otherwise be ignorant.

- Ex. Why did God have Paul write this letter to the Philippians rather than just telling them directly or having someone in their own city write this book?

CATEGORICAL - This is the most important, yet most difficult type of question to address. They focus on observations that span multiple verses and connect them to a single point that can be succinctly summarized. All of your other observations and questions should be leading to this, as these questions (and their associated answers) are the core of what you're trying to get at with Bible study in the first place.

- Ex. What do verses 1-2 mean? What do 3-11 mean? What do 12-26 mean? 27-30? Based on each of those, what does 1-11 mean? 12-30? What does Chapter 1 mean? How does chapter 1 flow into chapter 2? How does it fit into the greater context of the rest of the book?

Application

An application references some way your life will change because of what you studied. Applications are worthless unless they are practical. My basic rule is that *an application must be observable*. It doesn't have to actually be observed; rather it has to be capable of being observed.

For example, "I'm going to love my wife more this week" is not practical. "I'm going to love my wife more this week by doing (blank), (blank) and (blank)" is practical. That can be observed. The fact that she may never see you doing those things is immaterial. Your goal in loving your wife more shouldn't be to try to get her to notice; rather, it's to be the loving man God told you to be - covert contracts being destroyed in the process.

303 Fellowship

This is arguably the most important of the 7 Basics, and it's also the one that gets overlooked the most. People assume they are great at "fellowship" because they have a few Christian friends they hang out with a lot, but they fail to understand the real depth of relationship Christ intended or the ways that fellowship can be over-applied to the degree of sinfully neglecting other things God has called us to.

Sorry for the general inactivity. Until 10/15 I'm in single-dad mode and have people staying in my basement pretty much every day, so I don't have computer access except when I'm at work (like right now - slow day).

Spend Time With Godly Men

A crucial aspect of both faith and RP prescription is fellowship. In the RP world we talk about the need for men being among other strong, like-minded men. Paul says the same thing: "Join together in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you" (Philippians 3:17)

As believers in Christ, it's not enough simply to be around other RP men (or for women, other RP women), otherwise we'll be led astray. 1 Cor. 15:33 says, "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.'" With all respect to places like MRP, if that's your only or primary source of fellowship, you're in trouble. Any effort to deny this falls in the "do not be deceived" category.

I'm not saying that to promote this sub either. You should have a fellowship of believers *in person* and not just online. As Hebrews 10:25 notes, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing." Don't let an online community be a substitute for real life interpersonal relationships. At best, on reddit we are "leaving messages" for each other - certainly not "meeting together."

Don't Overdo It

With that said, I used to think fellowship was somewhat of a blow-off lesson. Most Christians know how to spend time with other Christians, right? In reality, a few years ago a buddy of mine showed me that fellowship is actually one of the hardest of the 7 basics to master.

Hanging out with other believers is massively important. For a new believer, this is how they're going to stay alive - even to the point that I would call this a priority more than any of the other basics. When a coal is removed from the flame, it burns out almost immediately. Put it back in and it lights on fire again - immediately! New believers should learn how to maintain a healthy balance of fellowship in their lives so they don't lose the life that comes from the gathering of believers.

Here's the problem, though: they go too far. They never learn a healthy balance of fellowship - they learn how to become obsessed with fellowship. New Christians become so excited about their new-found relationship with Jesus that they want to completely abandon their old life and dive head-on into the "church world." Church people are so excited that one among them actually shared the Gospel and "it worked" that they're all too eager to pull that person into everything they're doing. And then that person becomes a "church person" and does the same thing with the next guy who comes around.

The problem is that all these "church people" get so used to hanging out in their own bubble that they forget to build intentional relationships with other non-Christians around them. Sure, they have casual non-Christian acquaintances that they may say hi to every now and then, but conversation rarely goes deep enough for a true heart-to-heart.

The point here is that Christians like fellowship so much that they over-emphasize it and neglect other areas. As I often tell people, it's possible to be "sinfully negligent" of any of the basics (more on that later too), but it's also possible to be "sinfully overdosing" any of these as well.

To the new or "not yet mature" believers: build solid, trusting relationships with those you meet in the church, but don't abandon your old friends who still need to hear about Jesus.

To the rest of you: learn how to re-engage with those in your world for the sake of the Gospel. Doing "the church thing" day in and day out isn't why you're here. Learn how to have an appropriate balance of fellowship with evangelism and not become obsessed with the church life. As I said, this is possibly the most difficult of the 7 basics to master - not because people aren't good at it, but because they're too good at it.

Critical Thinking Question

What defines "good Christian fellowship"?

Consider the following scenario: Bob is hanging out with his church buddies at the bowling alley. They have some drinks, munch on some pizza, tell some jokes. Everyone is laughing and having a good time, swapping stories about stuff they've done recently. After a few frames Bob says before leaving, "Thanks for a good time, guys. It's great to have good Christian fellowship."

Is this "good Christian fellowship"? [Note: rather than giving the answers and a long essay up here, I'd prefer to engage in the comments on this one.]

304 Evangelism

For as much as men love physical reproduction, it's frustrating how little we seem to care for spiritual reproduction with our spiritual spouse. Paul said in Philippians 1 that he'd rather be dead and with Christ, but that God was keeping him here for a reason: helping others journey toward Christ. If we're not doing that, there's no real point in our being alive. So, how do we do witness to others? This post gives a very systematic approach for those who haven't developed a clear plan for sharing their faith yet.

This is such a huge concept that there may be more posts on the topic, but here are the core, basic concepts.

Why Evangelism/Discipleship?

To start, it's worth noting that there are only two good things we can do on earth that we cannot do in heaven. Evangelism/discipleship (two ends of the same spectrum) is one of them. That should tell us that evangelism is pretty darn important. If you're not sharing your faith, why are you even here? You'd be better off just dying and going to heaven. As Paul says:

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know. I am torn between the two. I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. But it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I am certain that I will remain and will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith. (Philippians 1:21-25)

RP Context for Evangelism

I've said many times that physical marriages are meant to parallel our spiritual marriage to Jesus. I also believe firmly that the pre-marriage process (i.e. dating) is meant to parallel the pre-marriage-to-Christ process (i.e. evangelism). So, what works in pre-marriage?

- *Shotgun, not sniper.* As Rollo talks about, you want to spread out your efforts, not just hone in on that one "special snowflake" who you really care about, but who keeps rejecting your evangelistic efforts over and over again.
- *Plating.* This requires more attention than I can give it here, but suffice it to say you should be working with several people to draw them to Christ. As "serial monogamy" is not often an effective strategy, neither is "serial mono-evangelism." Don't focus on just one. Kick that spiritual ONEitis. Don't take the attitude, "If only my best friend/spouse/kid/person I really look up to would come to Jesus!" That's great. Pursue that person too. But keep your evangelistic options open.
- *Fitness Tests.* Prospects are going to test the crap out of you. They'll ignore you, mock you, laugh at you, argue against you, etc. At the end of the day, as you pass those tests, a respect might develop - just remember to accept the hard no if/when it comes so they don't feel like you're spiritually raping them. Don't be a "bible-thumper," but do be persistent.
- *Abundance Mentality.* Don't get depressed when you're rejected. God has other options out there for you. You literally have eternity at your fingertips. You don't need to be seeing new converts constantly. Your lack of confidence in your own spirituality and insecurity in Christ will not foster confidence and security in a prospective believer. Abundance mentality shows the prospect that what Christ has to offer is something they want - even need in their life.
- *Cocky/Funny.* For that matter, aspects of game like being cocky/funny really helps. Christians get such a negative social view because people think we have sticks up our butts all the time, or we're viewed as so humble that we're weak and can't even understand our own beliefs. A show of rational confidence with humor and charm can go a long way in causing a person to think: "I want what he has!"

The list goes on, but you should get the idea by now.

Relational and Proclamational

Purely relational evangelism comes from the theory that all we need to do is live our lives and be around non-Christians and that somehow our faith will rub off on them and they will magically believe - that being the message is more important than preaching the message. In this model, we find most Christians sitting in their homes watching Netflix all day, maybe getting together with the neighbors every now and then, but keeping the relationship mostly cordial and zero-pressure.

Purely proclamational evangelism comes from the theory that we just need to preach and tell and it doesn't matter how people perceive us in the midst of our preaching - that preaching the message is more important than being the message. In this model, we find most Christians standing on street corners shouting "Turn or Burn!" or debating with hecklers.

In reality, the two models must work in tandem. The only exceptions are when you have little to no capacity to engage in one type. For example, if you're sitting next to someone on an airplane and the Spirit prompts you to share your faith, there's not much room for relationship-building, so go full proclamational. But always be tactful in how you communicate - let your words be "seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6).

Systematic Evangelism

Step 1: *Find a Non-Christian.* Notice I didn't say "Find a Non-Christian Who is Willing to Talk About the Bible With You." Non-Christians are literally everywhere. I'm sick of Christians telling me, "I just don't know any non-Christians." Look around. Do you have a neighbor? Do you go to the gym? Do you play with your kids at the mall? Do you walk down the street? Do you go to church? You just found some non-Christians.

Step 2: *Introduce Yourself to the Non-Christian.* Okay, this is a "no dip, Sherlock!" situation, but seriously ... for some reason this is the stopping point for 99% of Christians. "I'll observe non-Christians, but don't ask me to say 'hi' to them."

Step 3: *Assess and Respond.* This is the meat. Figure out just how far away from Christ the person is and take steps to move them forward. Each "Christian's job" section is a middle-point between the two phases of what usually has to happen to get from one to the next.

Relational Phases

- **Antagonism:** The non-Christian lives in intentional defiance of God, openly insulting Christians. They don't have true relationships with Christians because they despise them.
 - The Christian's job here is simply to engage with new people. If you happen upon one of these people, just be friendly, whether the person knows you're a Christian or not.
 - In game terms, this is your "instigate" phase. This phase lasts approximately 10 seconds.
- **Aware of Messenger:** The non-Christian has some relational connection to a Christian. It may be nothing more than recurring acquaintances, but that's fine.
 - The Christian's job here is to follow-up with the person. Don't overdo it by smothering the person, but don't neglect him either. Try to engage in a one-on-one setting.
 - In game terms, this is your "isolate" phase. This phase can last anywhere from a week to several months.
- **Favorable Attitude Toward Messenger:** Simply put, get the non-Christian to like you. If you're a Bible-thumping, condemning street preacher, you're going to fail here every time. Be witty, charming, and overall a high-value person. As you self-improve, other people will want to be around you and will like you.

- The Christian’s job during this phase to get to the next is to start gradually exposing the non-Christian to your spiritual beliefs. This is best done passively at first. ”Sorry, can’t hang out Tuesday. I have a Bible study. How about Wednesday?” It’s as simple as that. Because they already like you, when they realize you’re a Christian this will begin to challenge their stereotypes about Christians.
- In game terms, this is the start of escalation. This phase typically lasts a few weeks to months.
- **Aware of Messenger’s Spiritual Beliefs:** The non-Christian should now know from passive cues that you are a Christian. Although their respect may initially decline a small bit at that discovery, their relational history with you will be overpowering - especially because you haven’t been reinforcing the negative stereotypes about Christians up to this point.
 - The Christian’s job during this phase is to begin transitioning natural exposure of his beliefs to intention conversation about the non-Christian’s spiritual beliefs and life philosophies.
 - Escalation continues. This phase can last anywhere from weeks to years before hitting the next milestone.

Proclamational Phases

- **Comfortable Discussing Spiritual Things:** The non-Christian now has no problem engaging in regular spiritual conversations and somewhat expects it as part of the friendship. He is fairly transparent about his own views and beliefs and is starting to become curious about the Christian’s thoughts, although he likely doesn’t ask directly because he still thinks he knows what Christians believe.
 - The Christian’s job here is to communicate empathy and sympathy toward the non-Christian with regard to his/her life experiences that have formed the basis of his/her spiritual beliefs.
 - If the relational phases can parallel the IIE model of getting to sex, the proclamational phases are where actual spiritual reproductive acts happen, so on the DEVI plane, this is your E. First, you must develop an emotional connection with God to share in God’s compassion for the lost person standing in front of you. Second, the non-Christian needs to see that you care about him on more than a rote, intellectual level. Once comfort is established, the path to ”positive reaction” is usually pretty short - days to weeks.
- **Positive Reaction to Spiritual Conversations:** This is easier today than it was a few decades ago. ”Sex, politics, and religion” were taboo topics. Most generations after the baby boomers actually enjoy talking about things their parents found to be taboo.
 - The Christian’s job in this phase is to introduce his own views into the conversation naturally, and to be ready to respond to questions in a way that accounts for the non-Christian’s worldview. You don’t have to have actual answers to all of these questions - only know how to explain the reason for your own faith. As with fitness tests, the non-Christian is trying to figure out how strong your own convictions to your faith are more than they are trying to figure out whether or not Christianity itself is rational. All non-Christians intuitively understand that Christianity can fit within a rational, logical framework (although some are in denial); they’re more interested in prodding every different angle about you specifically.
 - In the DEVI system, this is where variety creeps in. First, God has to work in you in a variety of unique ways to inspire you to start and continue these conversations. Second, you have to engage in the conversations with the non-Christian in numerous ways to bolster the fact that you really know and believe what you’re talking about - that you’re skilled and spiritual things aren’t boring. Getting from ”positive reaction” to ”acceptance of possibility” is much longer than the last phase. This can be anywhere from the first good conversation to years.
- **Acceptance of the Possibility the Message is True:** After much conversation, the non-Christian, without actually making a profession of faith himself, acknowledges that he cannot deny your beliefs and that everything in the Bible may actually be true, despite his present rejection. The non-Christian may never verbally admit this, but if you’re perceptive you’ll know when he’s here.

- At this point, the believer’s role is minimal. The believer must be consistent in demonstrating his faith in his own lifestyle. Any inconsistency will set the non-Christian back several phases or reintroduce the negative stereotypes that you had previously broken. The Christian must also continue to be intentional at instigating these conversations in an isolated setting and escalating to the Gospel. The focus of your interactions should shift to a 1 Cor. 2:4-5 mentality: ”My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.”
- In the DEVI system, this is where dominance takes over. First, because God his the husband and he must now dominate the the show from here. You can plant and water, but only God can make it grow. Getting to the next phase is 100% up to God. You cannot force it to happen. You, as the bride, must actually be submissive to God’s initiative at this point. Second, you must dominate spiritual conversations with the non-Christian. Once he accepts the possibility that the Gospel may be true, you must balance your passionate insistence on the importance of his acceptance in Christ with the fact that you’re dealing with someone in a fragile state, whose entire world-view up to the present is slowly crumbling away as he realizes eternity is in the balance and he don’t know what’s real and what’s not anymore. There is no time-frame here. It works at God’s pace.
- **Acceptance That the Message is True:** The the work of the Spirit alone, the gap from ”possibility” to ”actual belief” is crossed. But this intellectual acknowledgment is not enough - ”Even the demons believe that - and shudder!” (James 2). The new-Christian must also now commit his life to following. But this is where the discipleship process begins.
 - The Christian’s job is now to affirm the new-Christian’s beliefs through ongoing conversation about the meaning and applicability of the Gospel to daily life, and get the non-Christian engaged in the 7 basics gradually (see 301).
 - In the DEVI system, this is where immersion happens. First, you are overwhelmed with the Spirit’s work through you that you are immersed in your own relationship with God. Second, thew new-Christian now desires to become immersed in his newfound relationship with Jesus and you’ve got to be there to help him. Don’t leave him as a spiritual orphan.

305 Quiet Times

Everyone knows we should spend daily time with God. Unfortunately, this usually ends up feeling like a chore. Why is that? How can we have a right perception of our time with God that rejuvenates us instead of draining us?

Meditation

Meditation is a substantial part of the RP world. It helps a man focus, process his thoughts, hone in on his vision, and regain a sense of perspective about the world around him, assisting him in holding frame and maintaining an amused mastery and abundance mentality.

Although there is value in general meditation, as Christians we know there is greater value in focused meditation. Joshua 1:8 says, ”This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” That’s right - you want a formula for prosper and success? Meditate on God’s Word and be careful to do everything written in it. That’s the path.

Quiet Time

A Christian’s time in the Word is his life blood. John 1 tells us that Jesus is the Word of God. We also know that the Scriptures are Spirit-inspired. They’re also a record of everything the Father has done. No matter how you look at it, if you want to know and love God, you’ve got to go through His Word to do it.

The most basic method of having a quiet time involves three steps. (1) Pray that God opens your heart to love Him and receive what He wants to show you. (2) Read a passage. (3) Prayerfully reflect on the passage and how it can help you be more like Jesus in very practical ways. A quiet time shouldn't be an in-depth research session. Put down the commentaries, concordances, internet references, and study notes. Just read casually and absorb what God has to offer. Then meditate on what the Spirit is trying to do in your heart through the passage - or maybe even through something else entirely that has been weighing on you, and the passage is merely a vehicle to orient your gaze back toward Christ. The reflecting should resemble the phrase, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

If you lack anything else in your faith - make this one thing a priority above all else. I believe you will find that emphasis on a daily quiet time will develop in you a compulsion for all other areas of the faith, and thus all other aspects of our walk with Christ cannot appropriately grow if one isn't spending daily time in the Word.

Relationship and Rest

The most often missed aspects of quiet times are the ways it's meant to be intensely relational and restful. Most people see quiet times as a chore - something they have to do to keep learning new things about the Scriptures. This is not God's design.

Relationship

Imagine being on a date with your wife. You ask, "Tell me about your childhood." She obliges with a 5 minute story. You follow up with, "Okay, now tell me about your trip to Europe as a teenager." She answers. You continue, "Okay, now tell me about your favorite concert," and this is how the date goes. You get home and how's she going to respond?

If it's all about the information, you'll never get to sex. You need kino, flirting, teasing, isolation, escalation, etc. What's the point of the date if it's not leading anywhere? If you just wanted to gather information about your spouse (or her about you), couldn't you have done that at home? Or couldn't you have sent her a questionnaire from your office desk? The point of the date is to build the relationship.

Now, try going the next 3 months with no alone time with your spouse except maybe 15 seconds before eating a meal and see how well the relationship flourishes and how revitalized your bedroom gets. [Hint: It won't work!] Have you spent some alone time with God yet today?

Initiate, Isolate, Escalate. God's trying to initiate with you all the time - are you willing to follow him into isolation and let him escalate within your spirit? Can you take what God's trying to do with you and implement those same tactics on your wife?

- Or let me get to the point: maybe your wife isn't responding to your initiate because you're rejecting God the same way she's rejecting you. She's just following your lead. **Show her how she should act with you by modeling that behavior with how you react to God's initiation.** That's how you'll lead her.

Rest

I can't write about QTs without touching on this subject. Everyone complains, "I don't have enough time!" or "I'm just not motivated ..." Boo hoo. *Man up and get it done* is what I used to say. Now I realize that there's a fundamental psychological problem that causes these types of attitude: we see it as *work* and not *rest*. It's a chore that must be checked off our list, and it's always more fun to procrastinate work. "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Do you *Netflix and chill* at the end of a hard day? I can't count the number of people I meet who say, "I don't have enough time," but somehow manage to have 20 minutes for a TV show. "That's not fair," they

say, "you want me to give up my only down time during the week to do another *thing?*"

Therein lies the problem. Human brain chemistry has been so warped by the addictive noise we receive through our 5 senses that we dread the thought of giving it up for stimulation in our 6th sense - our spirit. Consider:

- **Touch/physical stimulation:** working out, sex, "self-gratification," massages, chiropractors, back scratching, long baths/showers, drugs
- **Taste:** food, wine, pop/soda, beer, candy, ice cream, drugs
- **Smell:** candles, cooking, camp fires, nature
- **Hear:** music, nature sounds, interpersonal conversations, OD-ing on sermons, books on tape, radio advertisements
- **See:** porn, Netflix/Hulu, movies, billboards posters, video games

Be still and know that I am God. (Psalm 46:10)

It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord ... Let him sit alone in silence, for the Lord has laid it on him. (Lamentations 3:25-28)

Conclusion

It's easier said than done, but if you can learn to weed out the noise in life that fills your 5 senses, you will find your greatest rest in basking in what God has to stimulate your 6th sense - not the intellectual curiosity of what the Bible has to teach you, but the Spirit-filled peace that comes from letting your spirit rest.

Intellectual comprehension of Scripture is a good thing, but it is often the greatest enemy of our spiritual ability to escalate in our relationship with God, rest in His strength, and re-center our focus through meditating on His Word.

Similarly, if we employ quiet times with God in response to His initiation, which is ever present, I have found in my own life that my wife tends to follow my lead and is more responsive to my initiation, to resting in my strength, and to re-centering her focus away from the noise in her hamster and toward the focused path I am laying out for our family. She is a reflection of you.

306 Scripture Memory

I'm amazed at how little the church endorses and teaches this fundamental discipline. If God's Word is what sustains us, we'd better know it inside and out. Memorization and meditation are the way we do that best.

Scripture memory is probably the most overlooked of all the basics. It is an essential part of the Christian way of life that somehow gets lost on the masses and isn't preached from the pulpit. Why?

- "It's too hard"
- "My mind doesn't work like that"
- "I can barely remember where I put my keys"
- "I can always just look it up on my phone"
- "It's enough to just know the gist of a passage"

Biblical Imperative

What does the Bible say? This blows me away every single time. What is the greatest command? Deuteronomy 6:5 - "Love the Lord your god with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

What is the very next verse after the greatest command? Another command: "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts" (v6). Why is this the very next verse? Because the best way to obey God's Word is to memorize God's Word! David says the same thing: "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your Word ... I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:9-11).

Song of Songs 3:8 also says of the mighty men of Israel: "All of them wearing the sword, all experienced in battle, each with his sword at his side, prepared for the terrors of the night." The Word is our sword (Ephesians 6:17). Who charges the front lines with his sword still in its sheath? Or who tells the enemy, "Hold on, I know I've got a weapon for this somewhere, just let me find it"?

For some reasons, most pastors just don't talk about this. Looking for sermons on YouTube, John Piper is about the only one who has any appreciable content on the subject. Let me link you to one of my favorite sermons on the subject, if you're interested: [here](#)⁶. Don't know where to start? Here's where I began⁷.

How To

References

First and foremost: memorize the references. Why?

- If you ever forget the verse, you know where to find it again.
- Lots of people will have trouble buying into the "trust me, it's in the Bible somewhere" excuse
- When you share it with someone, they may need to look it up for context, like the Bereans of Acts 17

Meditation

Regarding methodology, I like to use what I call "piecemeal meditation." Break the verse down into several components and let each one seep into your mind gradually. So, if I were memorizing 1 Samuel 12:23, I would say ...

- "As for me," and then ponder what that means
- "As for me, far be it from me" and then try to meditate on what might cause a person to say something like that
- "As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord," and then meditate on the aspects of why we shouldn't sin against the Lord and how the "far be it from me" attitude factors into that.
- "As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you" - how does failing to pray fit into the rest of the concept and how often do I make that mistake?
- "As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you; and I will teach you the way that is good and right" - what does teaching people have to do with prayer? Ask all kinds of other questions about the passage.
- Add the reference at the end every time.

By doing things this way, you're not just memorizing words, but meaning and application as well. You're meditating on Scripture in a way that commits it to memory with a purpose. Then repeat it several times.

⁶<http://turret2.discipleshiplibrary.com/AA032.mp3>

⁷<https://www.navigators.org/resource/topical-memory-system/>

Organization

In fact, Dawson Trotman suggests a verse isn't truly memorized until you've reviewed it every day for 49 days after the day you learned it. To help keep verses organized, I use what's called a verse pack, which can fit in your pocket to be pulled out whenever it's convenient - most easily used between sets or while doing cardio at the gym.

My discipler has one of the most impressive systems I have seen on Scripture memory. As a result, he has a verse for virtually every single scenario I have ever brought to his attention. His system?

- In the front pouch of the verse pack, keep verses you're currently trying to memorize. Review those multiple times a day.
- In the opening of the pack, keep verses you memorized within the last month that you still need to keep reviewing. Those should be reviewed once a day.
- The pouch on the other flap on the inside is for long-term verses (over a month) that either need to be reviewed or honed. He would also review these once a day.
- All of his back-logged verses were divided into 30 groups and a new group entered that back pouch every day so that every verse he knows was reviewed at least once a month. If he had trouble, it went into the other middle pouch for closer review.

Bulk Memorization

I have developed my own niche in Scripture memory through working on longer passages. I find that by doing successive verses, it's easier to maintain a flow from one topic to the next. This also helps me understand and meditate on verses because I don't need to open my Bible to get the context - it's already stored in my heart and head, making application that much easier.

Again, the gym/cardio is a great time to get this done. Record yourself reading the passage and play that sucker on a loop, pressing the "restart" button every time you begin to falter.

If you want a verse pack, let me know and I'll PM you a number where you can order one ... or several - I like to hand them out to people I disciple after they get their first 5-10 verses down as a motivator.

Why Does Any Of This Matter?

Because part of being a man is being disciplined. We shouldn't just discipline ourselves on matters that affect our outward appearance, like lifting and dieting. Much of MRP content is about developing emotional and mental discipline as well, such as passing tests, abundance mentality, amused mastery, stoicism, etc.

As Christians, developing spiritual discipline is even more important than all of the above. Sure, Scripture memory has a mental component, but the spiritual benefits are undeniable.

Most notably, John 1 references Jesus as the Word of God. The Bible is literally an expression of everything Jesus has to say to us as God's voice to the world. By internalizing the Word, we are asking Christ Himself to dwell within us. Think on that as you pick out your first verse to get started with.

307 Assurance of Salvation

One of the most often-asked questions in Christianity is, "How do I know if I'm actually saved?" Jesus gave us a clear test to filter the faithful from the frauds: "By their fruit you will recognize them." What does this mean and how can we find the assurance we need?

Looking back at the 7 basics, you might notice that the first one is actually "The Gospel/AoS," but since

401 addressed the Gospel, I'll not re-hash that.

"I Never Knew You"

Assurance of salvation is the first thing I teach to every new believer. I don't do it from a standpoint of trying to convince them of something that might not be true. God forbid I give someone false assurances! No, I'm more concerned with the paralysis that a new believer often experiences in doubting the sincerity of their faith and wondering if they're really "saved" at all. So, they need a direction to be pointed in.

The thing is, as 1 Samuel 16:7 notes, "man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." This is a great sentiment to say, but is often not helpful because we don't have the ability to see the heart - even our own!

In Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus talks of **MANY** people who will say to him, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" How many of you have prophesied and cast out demons? How many of you have enough mighty works under your belt that you'd have the gall to boast about them to Jesus? How many of you were so certain of your faith that you'd be so bold as to argue with the all-knowing God on Judgment day like this?

But Jesus' answer to them is: "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness." Wait - so prophesying in Jesus' name and casting out demons in Jesus' name is sin? Sure, if your heart isn't in the right place. That's why it's so important to remember that God looks at the heart, not our outward behaviors.

The Test

But if we can't see the heart, how can we ever have assurance in our salvation? Good thing Jesus gave us the answer immediately before that passage I just cited. In Matthew 7:15-20 he sets the stage by warning people of false prophets who think they are and appear to be genuine believers, but who actually aren't saved at all. To figure out who these people are he gives a clear test: "**By their fruit you will recognize them.**" Let me go on quoting him:

*So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. **Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.** Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.*

I highlighted that section in bold simply to note this: it's not enough to declare, "*I didn't produce any bad fruit!*" A tree that fails to produce good fruit is also cut down and thrown into the fire. So, no one can argue, "But God, look at how much sin I avoided!" No, God will say to that tree, "I don't care about all the bad fruit *you didn't produce* - I want to see the good fruit *you did produce.*"

Interestingly, Luke 13 adds some clarity on this saying. Jesus tells a parable of a tree that isn't producing fruit and suggests it be cut down. Another man says, "Hold on, let me try to protect it and fertilize it first, and if it does produce fruit, great; but if it doesn't after a year, then go ahead and cut it down." The implication I get from this is that if you aren't making any effort to grow in your faith, you'll just be cut down; but if you're in a position where growth is happening, God will give you some more time to start producing your fruit, but he won't wait forever.

What Is The Fruit?

What it isn't ...

This is the part where most people falter.

- **Good Works:** Most people assume the fruit is "good works." But remember: IMMEDIATELY after giving this test Jesus talks of people who did great and mighty works - things that many of us have not even done - and yet says that they're still going to be cast away. So, I'm going to nix this idea.
- **Fruit of the Spirit:** Other people like to assume Jesus is referencing Galatians 5. I always found this suggestion somewhat absurd, given that Galatians hadn't been written yet (56AD) and Jesus never talked about "fruit of the Spirit" in that way on his own (30-ish AD). I can't imagine Jesus saying, "I'm going to say something and reference a concept that you'll have no idea what I'm talking about for another two and a half decades ... but just let me say it anyway." The notion that Jesus may have talked about the fruit of the Spirit on his own and the Gospels just didn't record it calls into question the sufficiency of Scripture in its ability to interpret itself, and it is also inconsistent with the fact that Paul typically cites his sources when making a reference.
- **A Heart Directed Toward God:** I've heard some people argue this. It makes no sense to me. The whole point of Jesus giving the test in the first place is so that other people can discern from their observations of a person whether or not someone is truly "in Christ." Going back to an internal, unobservable test would defeat the point of what he's trying to convey and make that passage practically worthless.

What It Is ...

Instead, let's back up one more section. In Matthew 7:12-14 Jesus lays out the golden rule: "whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also for them." He follows this immediately with, "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

Translation: "If you want to walk down the narrow gate and wish others would help steer you in that direction, you should be helping others do the same." That's your fruit: your disciples.

Oh, by the way, this is perfectly aligned with the other time Jesus talked about fruit and plants. Here are a few examples:

- In the parable of the sower, we are the soil. The Gospel is the plant that springs up in us. The fruit is what blossoms from the Gospel springing up in us, which contains more seed to "produce a crop 30, 60, even 100 times its yield." In other words, the "fruit" is the multiplication of the Gospel in us into other soil. We also see that the soil is condemned even when the plant springs up. The only soil that is praised is the one that yields a larger crop - the one that was actually able to produce a fruit that can start that crop forming.
- In the parable of the growing seed (Mark 4:26-29) the seed is planted in the soil and springs up - and eventually "when the grain is ripe" (i.e. has its fruit) "at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." What is Jesus usually talking about when he references a "harvest" when describing the Kingdom of God? That's right: new believers.
- Jesus says in John 12 that "unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." He's talking about how his death will save many. But he's also noting the nature of a seed falling from a plant to produce new life. What part of a plant has seeds in it? The fruit. The point of the fruit is to bear the seed that, when finally separating on its own into new soil, will produce new life to be cultivated into producing new fruit and so on. We call this evangelism and discipleship.

Also, feel free to reference the parable of the minas, parable of the talents, Jesus cursing the fig tree, the parable of the two sons, the parable of the tenants, and pretty much all of John 13-17 (which is the last supper - Jesus' parting words and compulsion toward discipleship before his crucifixion), and 1 John 3-5 (or really, the whole book). All of these things affirm that a person's fruit is that which grows out of the Gospel within him to spread more seed, yielding a crop beyond himself which must be harvested. In short, the fruit is evangelism and discipleship.

What I Did Not Say

Now, I did NOT say that the "fruit" is necessary for salvation. On that point I am undecided, but tend to lean against such a claim. All I am saying is that if one wants to be secure in his salvation, he must ask himself: *Where is my fruit?* Or if you want to test the salvation of someone else with observable evidence, ask: *Where is his fruit?* Is this a perfect test? No. A perfect test would be if we could see into a person's heart and soul. We can't do that. So, Jesus said, "With what you can observe, here's the test I'm going to give you: *By their fruit you will recognize them.*"

What I Do Say

If you haven't built a lifestyle of evangelism and/or discipleship and you can't name anyone who is following Jesus today because of your life, you might be saved ... but you'd also be right to question whether or not the opposite might be true instead. You'll never have assurance of your salvation.

If, however, you have a long line of good fruit - a harvest of people who are following Jesus today because of your life - you have observable evidence to give you security in the fact that God is doing through your life what you could not accomplish without him, therefore you must be in Him

308 Prayer

Everyone understands the value of communication in intergender relational dynamics, but what about the spiritual dynamic in our relationship with God? How can we communicate with him effectively? What's the point of prayer in the first place?

It's time to introduce the last of the basics for this series, though there's no particularity in the order in which I wrote these.

Conversation Artistry

I take it as a given that everyone here knows how to pray. If you know how to talk to a person, you know how to pray. It's really that simple.

That said, RP talks about being conversational artists, and this is a concept I've been employing in my faith since long before RP, which only makes more sense now. Consider: there are some who are great conversationalists and some who aren't. Some who inspire with their words, others who make people laugh, others who help people understand, and others who evoke curiosity. What are you doing with your words in your conversations with God?

- If everyone else knows you as the "funny man," have you ever tried to make God laugh? He already knows the punchline, but I still love re-hearing old jokes.
- If you're the constant encourager, have you communicated encouraging thoughts toward God? Sure, he already knows what will unfold, but sometimes people like hearing it anyway.
- If people know you for talking about complex ideas, are you sharing thoughts thoughts with God and brainstorming together? Obviously he already knows more than you could ever tell him, but how can you learn if you don't share your brilliant theories with the one who knows how to take them to the next level or to fine-tune an otherwise rough-shod idea?

Prayerful Attraction

Let me add one more to the above non-exclusive list:

- Are you great at picking up girls with one-liners? When was the last time you tried to use prayer to enhance God's attraction to you?

You see, we're usually so concerned about our emotional passion and connection to God that we often forget we need to make ourselves desirable to him as well - to enhance his emotional passion for us.

In a conversation with the rich young man, despite that it ended poorly for him, when the man said, "Teacher ... I have kept all these [commands] from my youth," Jesus' response is unusual in all of Scripture. Before Jesus proves his point, we see the Scriptures say: "Jesus looked at him and loved him." Why? Jesus obviously knew the character of his heart. He knew the man's obedience wasn't genuine. He knew the man would turn away at the challenge to sell everything. Nevertheless, the man's words inspired love in Christ for him.

Matthew 15:8

Now, everyone's going to jump down my throat: *What about Matthew 15:8?!?* Sure: honoring God with your mouth and not your heart has little value. It doesn't do much for the relationship. That's like my wife dressing up in her sexiest lingerie and whispering dirty things in my ear, then acting like I'm crazy when I try to take her right then and there.

You see, even if she had no intent to follow-through, her words still affected me. They still aroused me. How horrible it is when they're hollow, yet even better when they're true!

So it is with your prayers to God. Are you saying the things that will cause him to love you? To enhance his passion for you? As His bride, are you talking about all the ways you're going to please him and tickle that spiritually reproductive bone in his spiritual body?

- Note: If you're not aware by now, I equate physical reproductive acts (i.e. sex) with spiritually reproductive acts (i.e. evangelism) as a biblical parallel God intended to establish, just as I do physical child-rearing (parenting) with spiritual child-rearing (discipleship).

Structure

A lot of people like to use the ACTS acronym: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication/Stuff. Sadly, this misses the single most important aspect of prayer itself: that prayer is first and foremost about relating with our God. You would have a pretty sucky relationship with your wife or LTR if you never communicated with one another.

I know, RP talks a lot about "let her speak more" and just STFU and the 2/3 rule and all that ... and God models this pretty darn well with his bride. But the fact is that most conversations between spouses shouldn't be purely logistical, they should be relationship building. Our conversations should be enhancing attraction and deepening intimacy, and if they're not doing this then we start to feel like business partners rather than horny lovers.

To that end, I rework the acronym into REACT.

- **Relate:** Tell God how your day was; ask him about his; make him laugh and let him make you laugh; share something you learned; practice every aspect of your conversational artistry.
- **Entrust** - Lift up to him those things which are important to you and ask that His will be done. Trust him with what's concerning you, but also let him know how you'd like it all to be worked out ;) This is a better replacement for "supplication/stuff," in my view.
- **Adore** - Praise him for the great things he has done and for who he is - because he deserves it!
- **Confess** - Acknowledge your sins, faults, etc. and ask forgiveness.
- **Thank** - For what he has done, for forgiveness, for grace, etc.

Pray That Means

With regard to making requests of God, another thing that has been quite helpful to me is to pray the means, not the end. Most people want to skip to the end because that's easier, but that also requires very little faith. Saying, "God, please help my friend come to faith" is one thing, but saying, "God, please give me the words to say to help my friend come to faith" is an entirely different monster. The same is true for, "God, please cause it to stop raining for three and a half years ... **SO THAT** your people will return to you" (see James 5:17).

Paul prays this type of prayer often and we should follow in his model. Consider:

- Ephesians 1:17 - He prays for "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation [means] **SO THAT** you may know Him better [result]."
- Ephesians 1:18-19 - "the eyes of your heart may be enlightened [cause] ... **IN ORDER THAT** you may know the hope ... his glorious inheritance and his incomparably great power [result]"
- Ephesians 3:18-19 - "may have power together with all the Saints, to grasp ... the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge [cause] **THAT** you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God [result]."
- Philippians 1:9-10 - "that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight [cause] **SO THAT** you may be able to discern what is best and be pure and blameless [result]."
- Colossians 1:9-10 - "asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding [cause] **SO AS TO** walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him [result]"

This list could go on indefinitely and gets really interesting, not just with things like Elijah's prayer for it to stop raining, but with Elisha, who didn't pray, "God, please save me from my enemies," but instead said, "God, Strike this army with blindness" (2 Kings 6:18).

Are you bold enough to pray for specifics, or are you hiding behind vague generalities, hoping that your faith in the power of prayer will not be shaken if you avoid asking for anything too specific? Are you so insecure of God saying "no" or that he'll choose to fulfill your request a different way? It's been said a million times that men are overt and women are covert. Don't we as men wish our wives would communicate a little more overtly when they actually want something done and it's not just about sharing feelings? Being that we actually are men, despite being Christ's bride, should we not do him this favor in how we pray and make requests?

309 The Discipleship Process

You've heard me say it a million times by now: God called us all to be disciple-makers. Once we're spiritually mature enough to follow God on our own, how can we start leading others to do the same? And how can we teach others to do the same for even more others?

Introduction

I do a lot of talking on this sub about the mission to make disciples, but I have yet actually to explain what I mean when I say that. As you probably know by now, I firmly believe that a person cannot be satisfied on this earth - sexually, relationally, spiritually, monetarily, etc. - if he is not living out the reason for which he was put here. 404's Circles Illustration should illustrate this and the temporal nature of the satisfaction we find in the things of this world.

But it's not just about emotional stability and internal satisfaction in Christ that makes us godly men. It is the fact that we live on mission. It is that we have a purpose that matters and we can call others to join alongside us. For 7 years, including my dead bedroom, I did not understand why my wife was so unhappy when I was doing all I could to please her. It was only after I stopped trying to please her and invited her

along a mission outside the home that our relationship started getting back on track.

Just as I could not be satisfied in Christ without living out my purpose in Christ to make disciples, she could not be satisfied in me without living out her purpose to be a helper to me. When I had no purpose, she could not help. Or when my purpose was something lame, like making money and having a cush life, she knew that her help toward me was (1) really a pursuit of her own selfish interests and not my mission, and (2) a vain pursuit that rendered her position as my helper meaningless and fruitless. There is no satisfaction in that or any joy in following a leader who lives like that.

What Is Discipleship?

Most people want to use dictionary definitions. "A disciple is a follower." "Discipleship is anything that helps people follow Jesus." With these types of generalities, we see churches assume that Sunday morning sermons are "discipleship" because it gives people something to follow. But this is not what Jesus modeled. Jesus did model preaching, but that's not what he meant when he called the 12 his disciples and invited them into something more.

My definition is based on a look at what Jesus did with the 12, which they then modeled with others: *Purposeful, intentional relationships that provide a model for someone to become more like Christ in spirit and purpose.* Let's break that down.

- Purposeful: It's not just "let's just hang and whatever happens will happen." You go in with an agenda, just like Jesus had an agenda when training his 12. Having an agenda does not undermine the integrity of the relationship; it only directs it.
 - Intentional: No learning by osmosis or passive expectation. You have a plan. You might deviate from that plan frequently, but you know that on the whole the relationship should be moving from point A to point B, and if it's not you know how to start it in that direction again.
 - Relationships: This isn't just some student-teacher session. It is a bond of love and koinonia oneness that you're trying to foster. Like Elijah to Elisha, the person you're working with should be longing for a portion of your spirit to be left behind with him, just as Jesus gave us his. This only happens from an intense depth of love for one another.
 - Model: There's no room for "do as I say, not as I do." People don't follow hypocrites. The discipler must live out what he preaches and show the disciple what it looks like. In Matthew 10:24 Jesus makes it clear that you can't lead someone farther than you are yourself. See also 208 for more info on this.
 - Christlike: The goal of any man - or any Christian in general - should be to live as Christ would live in our shoes. Contextually things change, but we want to be transformed into the image of Christ.
 - In Spirit: That our internal character would reflect Christ and take after his image.
 - In Purpose: That our purpose for living and all of our actions would be oriented around the same goal Jesus modeled for us: reaching the nations with the Gospel through spiritual generations of disciplers living and laboring among the lost.
-

The Path

Here it is. This is what I use to gauge: (1) where a person is on their spiritual journey, and (2) what needs to happen to take them the next step forward.

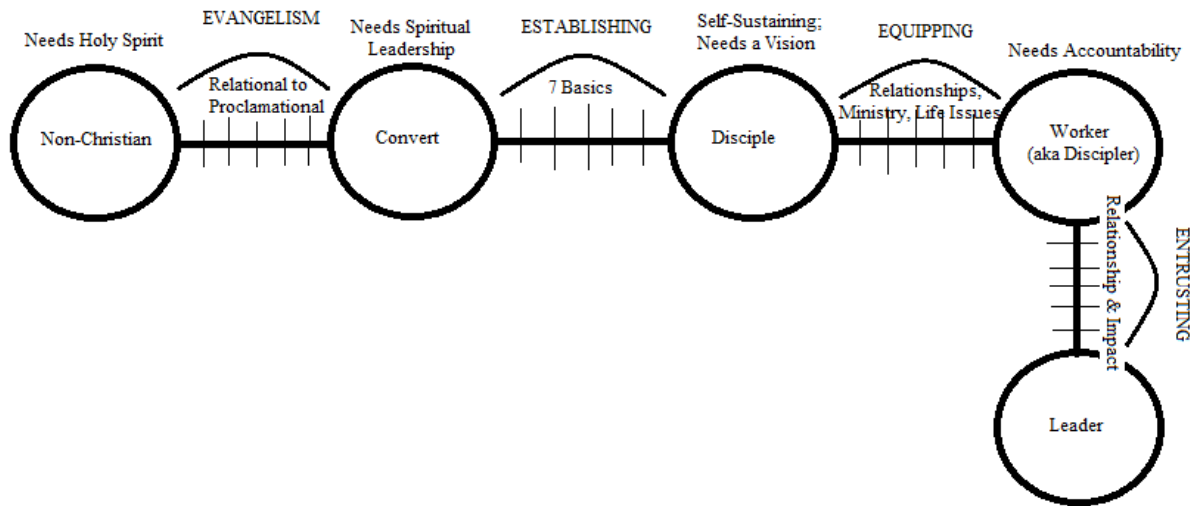


Figure 3: The Path

Non-Christian

The Bible is clear that we're all born into sin and start here. No one is excluded. No one is born saved. As much as we'd like to say otherwise, we cannot save anyone. Only Jesus can save a person, which happens through the drawing influence of the Holy Spirit. Non-Christians need the Holy Spirit. But the Bible is also clear that the Spirit works through the existing body of believers. That's you. You must work together alongside the Spirit, who will use your effort to reach the non-Christian.

This "effort" is called evangelism, which is a systematic (albeit sometimes unintentionally so) and sometimes organic process for leading someone into a relationship with Christ who is not otherwise already in such a relationship. This process typically starts with building a relationship or rapport with the non-believer and leveraging that trust for the sake of the Gospel by verbally communicating Christ with a non-believer at some point.

Convert

This is someone who is freshly saved and often hungry to grow and learn. In the absence of spiritual leadership, the convert becomes complacent and either remains as a convert or back-pedals away from the faith altogether (or in the Calvinist view, was never really a true convert to begin with). Most Christians never advance past the convert stage.

The spiritual leader's job is to establish the convert in disciplines by which he can continue growing in his faith indefinitely without the need for indefinite spiritual leadership, just as a parent's job is to raise their kids such that they can survive on their own as adults without their parents' indefinite provision. Those disciplines have already been covered in 301-308 as the 7 basics, but I leave room for tweaking and adjustment. Again, this "path" is not a step-by-step GPS directive; it's an atlas with countless roads that will get from point A to point B. Some paths will be more efficient than others, but sometimes it's fun to

take detours along the way at the expense of efficiency.

Disciple

The disciple is self-sustaining. You could throw him in the middle of a third-world country where Christians are being persecuted with no church in sight and he'd still be practicing and growing in his faith. He knows how to read the Word, pray, share his faith, etc. But he lacks a vision for his role in the greater work that God is doing. That vision is the ministry of discipleship that Jesus started, which when caught will enable him to see this process as a whole, where he fits in it, where others are in this process, and he will have the internal compulsion to help people move forward, including himself.

In order to aid him in this process, he must be equipped with several tools to help him. Those tools might be additional disciplines beyond the basics. It might be theological understanding. It might be a strong familiarity with the Word. It could be practical life skills, like charisma, passion, humility, etc. It could be practical things in one's life that help him connect with others, like his good looks, having a respectable family, house, and car, etc. All of these tools can usually be summarized in three categories: things that foster (1) relationship-building, (2) ministry skills and understanding, and (3) character development.

Worker/Discipler

Where the disciple is self-sustaining, the discipler is others-sustaining. He is no longer pursuing his own spiritual growth; he takes on responsibility for the spiritual growth of others, through the help of the Spirit and on the authority of Christ. He sees fruit from his ministry in the form of those who are following Jesus today because of his life - not just that they said a prayer or had an emotional experience, but in that they are continuing to live for Christ. The worker should also see that those he influences are not just becoming disciples themselves, but are also becoming workers and leading new generations. If the worker/discipler is only seeing *disciples* produced and not *disciplers*, he may actually only be a disciple who needs to re-catch the vision for generational ministry.

His greatest need is accountability. It is not always easy living on mission for Christ, but through the fellowship of other workers and leaders it can be done. At first that accountability will be small because he will have very few people who share his vision. This is because the church is often weak and waters down its concept of discipleship from what Jesus modeled. But as he disciplines others, they will become his peers. He will watch as they even surpass him in maturity, and rejoice with their growth, as John said, "I have no greater joy than seeing that my children are walking in the truth."

Leader

The leader is a Worker/Discipler who not only engages in his own personal ministry, but who oversees other workers/disciplers. He helps them organize and coordinate. These might be people he has personally disciplined or their disciples, as the generations flowing from his life grow, but it could also be other people he has not disciplined who are ready to live on mission for the Gospel in the manner Christ modeled. On the path the worker and leader are vertically aligned with no horizontal progression because there is no inherent spiritual maturity distinction between them. I have known workers more mature than leaders or vice versa, but each hold their position because of the nature and quality of their gifts. That said, all people regardless of their spiritual gifts are called to be at least workers, though only a few will take on the added responsibility of being leaders.

Because of the peer mentality between them and the importance of the koinonia bond of oneness between them, and Paul's compulsion that we be one in "spirit and in purpose," an immense amount of trust must exist between workers and leaders. If the leader has disciplined the worker himself, this should be natural. But the balance of relationship and impact (see 103 for more on all this) is met in that when we are of one "spirit" that is our relational bond and when we are of one "purpose" that is toward the impact the Spirit would have us commit on our world through the purpose Christ gave us of disciple-making.

Notes On Using The Path

1. Anyone in any phase can lead someone as far as they are. A convert can make more converts. A disciple can make more disciples. A discipler can make more disciplers. A leader can train more leaders.
2. No one can lead anyone further than they are. A convert cannot train someone to be a disciple or worker or leader. A non-Christian cannot disciple someone. A worker cannot train a leader. This is not only a biblical mandate (reference above), but a practical reality.
3. People constantly fluctuate forward and backward in this process. I have seen countless workers get lazy and return to "disciple" mode, where they stop reproducing their lives. This is a decline in spiritual maturity - a falling away. I have also seen leaders who step down and focus on their own personal disciple-making ministry rather than trying to coordinate others'. This is not a spiritual maturity falling away, hence the vertical representation on the path.
4. You can be between two points. These 5 circles are not representative of where someone is; rather they are mile-markers along the journey as a whole. "I'm somewhere between convert and disciple" is a perfectly legitimate place to put yourself or to evaluate someone else in where you believe they are.
5. Very little of this progression depends on how much you know. I have known workers and leaders who could not articulate the difference between something as theologically front-lined as Calvinism and Arminianism. I have also known people who are PhD level scholars who have never passed the convert stage because they have not mastered the disciples or are not otherwise living for Christ other than their intellectual pursuits. For that matter, I've known non-Christians who have more theological understanding than many workers and leaders.
6. The primary function of this path is not to label people, but to give an evaluative process for understanding what someone else's next step might be in their journey toward living out the calling Christ gave us to make disciples. The person utilizing this path should become reasonably proficient in evaluating quickly where a person is, as this will assist him in helping that person move forward. This applies even in a contact-ministry sense where you only have a short time with one person.

Where To Begin

If you don't know who to disciple, for many of you the answer will be obvious: **YOUR WIFE**. To be clear, you shouldn't go in with pre-fabricated assumptions about what "discipleship" looks like and try scheduling a weekly session for you to teach her things. For some of you that might work, but for many it won't.

Instead, remember the definition of discipleship: *Purposeful, intentional relationships that provide a model for someone to become more like Christ in spirit and purpose*. Note that it doesn't mean a weekly meeting session or a time of teaching, nor does it mandate joint prayer together. All of these things might be part of how you, specifically, implement discipleship based on your gifts, personality, and character traits. But they are not necessarily universal principles for all.

What I do recommend is discerning what your specific gifts, personality, and characteristics are, and then leveraging those toward your discipleship efforts. So, if you're a very structured teacher-type, you might want to meet with someone one-on-one in a coffee shop with a pen and paper. If you're a more casual, hospitable person who likes to laugh, it'd probably look more like inviting a friend over for dinner and asking him personal questions during that time. If your gift is one of mercy and you tend to enjoy helping people in difficult times, then you might find most of your discipleship relationships beginning by helping meet a unique need the person you're discipling experiences, and then leveraging that act of mercy and service toward the person's spiritual growth.

So, when starting with your wife, look back at the process image I linked to above and evaluate where you believe she is, then evaluate where you are. If you're behind her in the process, you've got to work on yourself first. If you're ahead of her (as you should be), then look toward what the next step for her might

be. If she's part way between convert and disciple, figure out which of the basics she's lacking and find a relationally potent way of leading her into developing that aspect of her faith. If she's not having quiet times, how can you get her to start? If she's never shared her faith with a co-worker, what can you do/say to help lead her in that process, and how can you model that for her to see in your own life so that she can follow you in doing it? If she's already fluent on the basics and a disciple and you've got the vision, how can you impart that to her in a way that she will receive it? In all of this, 205 becomes immensely helpful, as that's going to give you different methods of communicate beyond just a rote teaching session that many of you might otherwise be drawn into based on social stigma of what you think discipleship is supposed to look like.

Whatever context you want to create for discipleship, regardless of how formal or informal it might look, make sure you're remaining conscious of the mile-markers. If you've been discipling someone for a year and you've never had a conversation about their quiet times or prayer life, you're doing something wrong (yes, there are WRONG ways of discipling someone). But if you don't hit those points in the first 2-3 months, depending on the context that might be perfectly appropriate. But if you're meeting with a non-believer, for example, you probably shouldn't be doing much in the way of vision-casting, and if you've got someone who's a new convert, trying to evangelize won't be helpful when he really needs the basics. Again, this isn't a step-by-step GPS coordinate directive; it's an atlas with many different roads to get to the same destination, but you will always cross different longitudinal mile-markers regardless of whether you're in Canada when you cross it or South America.

Final Thoughts

Because we have already addressed the fundamentals of evangelism and the relational/proclamational paths in 304 I won't rehash that any further, although I do invite further discussion on evangelism as a process itself and how it fits into the greater scheme of discipleship. That's where it all starts, after all.

I also already addressed the 7 basics in great detail in 301-308, and thus will not be re-hasing the establishing process. That said, if there are lingering questions not on what the basics are or why they are important to impart to others, but on how to teach them to other people, that's another conversation that would be worth having, but I won't initiate it without a demand to do so.

Instead, the rest of the 300 series will be focused on the ins and outs of the equipping and entrusting processes. I will have posts offering tools and illustrations to address some of most common issues that arise when people start to catch the vision for disciple-making and want to be all-in.

RP Christians Sidebar Compendium

400s - The Internally Whole Man

Author(s): u/Red-Curious

compiled by u/RPChristof - please direct typos or updates to my inbox

401 The Gospel

The Gospel is the foundation of all things. It is the core of God's plan from the beginning to the end, and it is also what defines us in our inner-most being. We'd better understand what it is first.

This is going to seem overly basic for a 400-level post to anyone who has been in the church for any length of time. But the 400-series is all about being transformed by the Gospel into the men God wants us to be. Where 100 was about intellectual inspiration and 200/300 about being physically/emotionally motivated toward living and experiencing life differently, the 400s will be about transformation itself, and the Gospel is at the core of that.

This conversation will be useful not only for men themselves (just because you're a man doesn't mean you're perfect!), but also for men to understand how to lead their wives to overcome significant internal problems that are holding them back from living as right wives/women in the order of how God designed them. After all, Ephesians 5:25-27 says this is your responsibility as her husband.

So, I don't think I could proceed without a clear, definitive outline of the whole of the Gospel message. Yeah, there are ways to shorten and summarize this or explain in greater detail, but here's what I believe covers all of the necessary components to utilize the Gospel as I intend to use it in this 400-series.

Creation and The Fall

Why did God create the world? The Bible says it's because he wants a relationship with us. Acts 17:26-27 specifically says that throughout all of time and all of space in the order of creation, God determined where and when each of us should live. Why? "That they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us."

In Eden, Adam and Eve were already with him in that relationship, but they sinned, which separated them and us from God (Isaiah 59:2; Romans 5:12-21). Romans 6:23 says that the result is also death - not just a physical death, but a spiritual death (i.e. hell). Romans 3:23 says that this is the natural fate of all people because all people are imperfect and sin.

Human Effort

Since the dawn of time, humanity has tried numerous things to address the problem of sin, which is what separates us from God. All of these ways usually boil down to one of three categories:

- *Morals*: If we can be "good people" and avoid doing bad things, that will be enough to get rid of our sin.
- *Good works*: If we do enough good things, it will outweigh our bad things and God will love us for it.
- *Religion*: If we do enough religious practices and show our devotion to God, God will reward our effort with heaven, escaping hell.

Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." As to each ...

- Hebrews 11:6 says that without faith it is impossible to please God, so we can never be "morally good" on our own by God's standard.
- Matthew 5:48 demands perfection, so it's not a matter of good works outweighing the bad. A baseball player who strikes out once and gets on base every other time for the rest of his career will still not have a "perfect" record.
- Although sacrifice was the primary religious ritual for salvation in the old testament (where religion reigned supreme as compared to today), God was clear in Hosea 6:6, "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." Religious practices are not the answer.

To refrain Proverbs 14:12, anything we try on our own will still only get us to hell.

Salvation

If left to ourselves, this would be a hopeless predicament. God didn't have to give us a solution. He could send everyone to hell and be totally just in doing so. But by grace he chose to give us a way.

1 Peter 3:18 says, "For Christ suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God; he was put to death in the body, but made alive in the Spirit." John 3:16 clarifies that it is those who "believe in him" who will be saved and have eternal life. Because of all of this, Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For it is by grace you are saved through faith, and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God so no one can boast."

Faith

So, what exactly is faith? Imagine you receive a note under your door in the middle of the night saying, "I am going to kill you and everyone you love tonight at midnight." How would you respond? There are three likely responses:

- You can choose not to believe the note. You have no faith in the genuineness in the threat, so you ignore it. At the end of the day, you and everyone you love are murdered.
- You can choose to believe it, but not to care. Suppose you're fine with letting yourself and all those other people die. Well, this probably means you didn't really love them, but it also means that your belief won't save you - you'll die too. (see James 2:17 - "So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead"). At the end of the day, you and everyone you love are murdered.
- You can choose to believe the note and take some action to protect your family and yourself. Ideally, rather than running away (assume he'll find you) or getting yourself killed hunting him down on your own (or otherwise committing a crime that would equally ruin your life), you call the cops and let them save and protect you and your loved ones. At the end of the day, this is the only option that will save everyone.

In the same way, a mere intellectual acknowledgment of the truth is not enough. For it to actually save a person, it must be internalized within the person. Jesus describes this saying, "Remain in me, as I also remain in you" (John 15:4). If you don't internalize the faith in a manner that compels you toward action, it's not genuine faith. Note that the actions themselves are not what saves us in the case of Christ - it is the faith itself. But the actions are the automatic byproduct of genuine faith.

Reconciliation

Because of Christ and our faith in him, we have a *reconciled* relationship with God (2 Cor. 5:18) and it is our job to continue reconciling the world to Him (id). Because of the Gospel we are now able to experience with God what sin had stolen from us. We are able to be eternally and perfectly content. Satisfied. At peace. Joyful. Everything that we struggle through in this world can be satisfied by God because we are reconciled to Him by Christ to live life as we were always intended to experience it.

Now, not everyone, even after salvation, is willing and able to receive the benefits of this. We still live in sinful bodies. We still forget that we are free. We still fail to open our hand when God tries to give us what now belongs to us by right as his adopted children. But the option is there and the rest of this series will be about understanding how to utilize the Gospel to take it.

Continuing Obligation

From here it is important to recognize that salvation is not the end-point, it is only the beginning. Philippians 2:12 says, "Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling." That "fear and trembling" bit comes because the Bible talks a lot about the need to be concerned with the genuineness of our salvation.

- Matthew 7 references people who thought they were saved and were doing great things, but to whom Jesus says, "Away from me, I never knew you."
- Hebrews 10:26-31 talks about those who continue in sin intentionally even after alleged salvation and that their fate is "a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries."
- 2 Peter 2:20 says that if a person knows Christ and has escaped sin, but is again entangled in it, "the last state has become worse for them than the first."

Instead, we see Paul saying in Romans 1:16 that he is "obligated" both to Jews and Gentiles. We see Jesus and the apostles not preaching obedience not merely for the sake of showing the impossibility of perfection without Christ, but because of a genuine post-salvation obligation to follow what was commanded. Both Paul and Jesus' last recorded words centered around sharing our faith and making disciples.

If you want to prove your salvation, you must bear good fruit (Matthew 7:15-20) - and that fruit, by comparison with every other time Jesus talks about plants, fruit, seed, etc., is when your faith spreads so the Gospel can spring up and grow in others. If you don't have proof of your salvation, what good is it to argue that you're saved on a technicality? Didn't Jesus come to abolish technicalities of the law as a means of judging the saved from the unsaved?

So, I forever refrain: adopt the mission of disciple-making as the cornerstone of your frame. Build on it from there, but let everything else rest on that principle. This is how the Gospel will be taken to the nations. Like the parable of the minas/talents, the Gospel is wasted if given to you and you don't do anything with it - and we all know how it turned out for that guy ...

Summary

To shorten this whole message, if someone asks me, "I just want to know how to get saved. What's the simplest answer you know how to give?" To that, I recite the ABCs:

- Admit you're a sinner, can't be perfect on your own, and need a savior.
- Believe that Jesus died and rose again to be that savior.
- Commit in your heart to living out of love for him, proving this love by your fruit.

402 The Impact Of The Cross

There are many theories on how the Gospel actually functions to save us and reconcile us to God. What are these theories and how do they affect our perception of the world and our internal state of being through daily life and struggles?

In 401 I explained the essential components of the Gospel itself. Most people get saved and leave the Gospel at the door. They will acknowledge it has value, but usually limit that value to things like:

- *Reminding ourselves of the Gospel makes us thankful to God.*
- *Jesus' sacrifice is an inspiration.*
- *We need to master our understanding of the Gospel to share it with others.*
- *We need to know where our journey started to know where we're going.*

These are good reasons. But they're also pretty nominal in comparison to the true impact the Gospel has on us today. Your very identity is defined by the Gospel itself. More to the point of this post: the way you experience life is controlled by what you believe about the cross.

Theories of the Cross

The primary operative function of the Gospel is to restore us into a right relationship with God. That's what was lost in Eden. That's what Jesus was trying to fix. There are several ways the cross functions to address the problem of sin, imperfection, and our broken relationship with God. Here are nine.

1. **Ransom Theory:** In God's justice, the consequence of our sin is that it gave us over to Satan. God loved us so much that he sent his son to die as the ransom price for our sin. Mark 10:45; 1 Timothy 2:5-6.
2. **Reverse Ransom Theory:** Our sin was against God, creating a debt we could never repay. Jesus was perfect for us, paying the debt on our behalf. Satan is not a factor at all. Matthew 6:12, 18:21-35; Colossians 2:14.
3. **Wrath Theory:** God hates sin and must exert his wrath against those who sin. When Jesus bore our sins on the cross and died, God put his full wrath on Jesus instead of us. Romans 1:18, 5:9; 1 John 4:18.
4. **Recapitulation Theory:** Adam and Eve brought sin into the world, which spread to all of their physical descendants. Jesus lived, died, and rose in parallel to undo what Adam did. Romans 5:12-21.
5. **Atonement Theory:** God preordained that the blood of a sacrifice would wash away sins. The animal sacrifices were a symbol, but Jesus' blood washes us clean once and for all. Leviticus 17:11; John 1:29; 1 John 1:7.
6. **Penal Substitution Theory:** The wages of sin is death. We sinned, we deserve death. Jesus died in our place, taking the punishment instead of us so we are free to live. Romans 6:23; Isaiah 53:5; 2 Cor. 5:14-15.
7. **Moral Example Theory:** Jesus' life modeled how mankind should live. His death was designed as the ultimate example of the extent of the love we must have for one another. Matthew 5:48; John 13:34-35.
8. **Vicarious Repentance Theory:** Because mankind is imperfect, we can't repent perfectly. Jesus bore our sins and in his perfection he repented of them for us. Matthew 3:11, 15-16; Luke 23:34.
9. **Spiritual Warfare Theory:** There is a battle in the spiritual realm. Death was the enemy's greatest weapon. Jesus died and rose to defeat death so it has no power over us. Ephesians 6:12; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 1:18.

All of these theories are grounded in Scripture and true, working in harmony with one another. There are others I'm sure we could add as well, but these are the most common ones I see that impact people's lives.

What You Believe Matters

I have found that everyone tends to resonate with one or two of these very closely, while inherently having an aversion to another one or two (or at least to recognize them less than the others). The aspects of the Gospel that resonate with you or which you shy away from are quite telling as to how most people experience life. Let me give some examples from my own observations.

ME: The wrath theory is the one I most closely identify with. I don't know why, but it just clicks with me. As a result, I experience no shame in life. I have no worry or fear that my actions will disappoint God. I know that any wrath God would have against me was expressed on Christ in my place. That doesn't free me to keep on sinning, but it does mean I don't go through what most others do who claim to struggle with feelings of guilt, shame, and depression at their sinfulness. I am free from these things. That said, I naturally reject the ransom theory. Ever since reading C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, the ransom theory has not sit well with me. As a result, I don't emotionally experience the vast depth of love that God expresses toward me - that he would pay any price for me. I just don't experience that the same way others do.

MY WIFE: My wife closely identifies with the atonement theory. In knowing that she has been washed clean once and for all by Christ, she has great security in her salvation and has a deep conviction of the purity that God is leading her into. But she really struggles with the spiritual warfare theory, seeing that as more of an ancillary component to all of this. Result? She lacks any perception of what's going on in the spiritual realm in her daily life and struggles to see the value in prayer.

FRIEND 1: A guy I discipled was very, very strongly aligned with the moral example theory. This view of the cross created a compulsion in him to live as a generous, humble servant. He lived out Christ's good-will to the world as the vessel by which it would be carried out. But he was weak in the wrath theory. Consequently, he struggled with a constant feeling that he was a disappointment to God, which was only magnified by the moral example theory compelling him to try to measure up to Christ's life and sacrifice.

FRIEND 2: Another guy I discipled connected with the recapitulation theory. It was an amazing intellectual concept to him - the pattern from beginning to end that Christ was fulfilling. He had a keen sense of his place in this pattern that let him feel confident in the fact that God could and would use him as an ongoing expression of the reversal of the curse, namely through redeeming as much in this world to God as he could (i.e. social campaigns, service projects, ministry to the poor, etc.). But he really struggled with penal substitution. As a result, he constantly felt like God was going to punish him if he sinned, or he would often crumble under the weight of the fact that he doesn't deserve to be saved.

Conclusion

I could go on and on with different combinations and patterns - and they are all unique and fascinating to explore. I encourage you to think through some of these theories and process what you can learn about how your beliefs about the Gospel have affected your life - positively or negatively. Praise God for the positives that he has given you through the Gospel, and pray for repentance at those aspects of Jesus' sacrifice you inherently reject and the distance that rejection may have caused in your ability to relate with God.

As you strive to be a more complete, full man, living in light of how God intended you, remember that the Gospel is at the core of this. You cannot live to be the man God created you to be if you are not reconciled to God through Christ's death and resurrection - but also that *what you believe about the Gospel affects the terms of how your reconciled relationship with God will play out in your daily life*. Explore new ways of connecting with God by embracing different aspects of the Gospel that you previously had not considered. Then consider how those previously ignored theories were affecting your internal well-being and daily living patterns and start experiencing and living life the way God intended instead!

403 The Lens

403.1 The Hopeless Cycle

All men start in a cycle of hopelessness apart from Christ. There are measures we can do to understand our problems, but can we ever really escape them? This post explores the fallacy in traditional thinking about internal problem-solving.

Several men have come here suggesting that they've been screw-ups most of their lives. Some come to me with mental health problems, a history of abuse, serious anger issues, addictions to alcohol, drugs, or pornography, or any number of problems. RP claims to fix the man, but there are limits to what can be done apart from Christ. This series will cross those boundaries into the realm of secular impossibility.

Your Image: You're Not Perfect

Accept this as a fact. Even if you think you're an awesome guy and have nothing to learn from this series, dig deeper. Romans 3:23 says all have sinned and fall short of God's glory. Romans 6:23 says that the wages of that sin is death - a spiritual death. That isn't just eternal hell later on, but starts internally in our spirits today. Even apart from hell, Ephesians 2:1 makes clear that this "death" is something we experience in the

present on earth. In Romans 7 Paul affirms his ongoing sinful nature and references himself as having a "body of death."

What is it that's killing you inside? **Identify the issue.** Start with something bite-sized and work your way up. If you've been molested as a kid, shelf that for now and work on "I get mad when my wife denies me sexually," and get to the bigger issues when you're ready to wrap your mind and spirit around it wholly. Smaller issues at first.

For this series I'm going to use three common issues all the way through to demonstrate the application of this process in varying contexts:

- A: struggles with loneliness/depression
- B: struggles with pornography addiction
- C: struggles with fear of rejection

First Lens: Re-Focus Your Self-Perception

Most people's struggles are foggy and vague. Like a pair of glasses, you need to correct your vision to see your struggle for what it is.

Whatever negative in your life you're struggling with, re-frame it as a lost positive. Focusing on negatives is dangerous and leads to a vicious cycle if we don't see the good that they are rooted in. Specifically, we know that God is good (Matthew 19:16-17) and everything he creates is good (1 Timothy 4:4) and if there is anything good, it came from God (James 1:17). In the beginning was God and nothing else (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1). We were made in God's image (Genesis 1:27). Isaiah 59:2 says that sin is what separates us from God and walking in His image alongside Him. So, anything "bad" in your life is not of substance itself - it is defined by its being an inversion or absence of the goodness we were created in and from.

That said, let's apply this to our three examples. Bear in mind that there are many possible directions this can go, so I'm just going to pick one for each and run with it. Your "positive" might be different from what I describe here.

- A: The negative of loneliness is rooted in the positive of fellowship - specifically in the sense of the true oneness *koinonia* bond I referenced in 103. Similarly, depression is the negative of joy as a positive. So, rather than saying "I'm lonely and depressed," A would do better to understand, "I don't experience fellowship or joy."
- B: Pornography addiction could come from a multitude of places, and the feelings surrounding it are often their own beast that we won't tackle here. For now, let's just assume B does it because he likes the physical sensation and that's it. The negative of his behavior is rooted in the positive desire for physical pleasure.
- C: The fear of rejection is rooted in the desire for acceptance.

First Focal Point: Our Effort

The focal point is the conclusion you reached in the last section, but the question then becomes: How do you satisfy this positive that you now understand you're lacking? Most often we reassess through a secular reflective mirror. We take a good look at ourselves, assess strategies for solving the problem, and then take action.

- A: A can create a plan for meeting new people and seek joy through those relationships. He decides to join a local community softball team, gets more involved in his church, makes a point to call his friends more regularly, etc.

- B: He puts up porn blockers on his computer, puts sticky notes all over his desk with verse reminders, gets an accountability partner, tries to re-initiate with his wife, etc.
- C: He reads self-help books, practices reciting confidence-building phrases, works out to "become the prize," etc.

All of these things are good things. They're steps in the right direction. But if we look to them as THE answer, they will fail us. A's going to meet some people who laugh him out of the group. B's going to see a hot girl on the street and jack off afterward. C may actually act on the approach and experience the rejection he feared. All of them have made positive life changes, but have not yet addressed the core of the issue plaguing them.

Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." In other words: if we go with secular ideas for solving all our problems, somewhere along the line we're just going to keep returning to critical failures. Ephesians 2:8-9 makes it clear that we are saved by grace through faith, "this not of yourselves, not by works." Galatians 3:3 says, "Are you so foolish? After beginning by the Spirit are you now trying to be perfect by human effort?" Putting these two together, we understand that if salvation was by the Spirit and not our works, then solving the ongoing effects of sin in our life must also be by the Spirit and not by our works.

The result is that if left to our own devices, we will always reflect on our problems, create an action plan, follow through, see things get better for a time, then return to another critical failure, and repeat the cycle. It is endless. It is vicious.

In part 2 we will address the answer to the problem, which is found in the Gospel and how something that happened 2,000 years ago still helps us today.

403.2 The Empty-Full Dynamic

As believers in Christ we have access to a source of eternal abundance. Do we experience that? Or do we look for our satisfaction in other things? This post explores the patterns that both Christians and non-Christians alike follow which ultimately interfere with our ability to find satisfaction from the only person who can truly and eternally give it: God.

Before solving the problem addressed in part 1, I think I must bring forth another illustration that I always share alongside The Lens. For lack of a better name, I call it "The Circles Illustration" and it comes from Dr. Larry Crabb's book, Understanding People.

Here's the picture so you can follow along.

The Premise

Imagine a circle that represents the maximum fullness, abundance, joy, etc. you can possibly experience in this life. Now imagine another smaller circle just inside of that one, which represents the degree of fullness you're actually experiencing. If these circles were exclusively about sexual fulfillment, that'd be one thing, but the point of this sub is to address the whole of the man and not only his sexual satisfaction, so let's look at this as being from the whole of your life.

The size of that inner-circle is constantly fluctuating. Sometimes it's really big - almost as big as the outer circle, but other times it's really small, and other times in the middle. That's because our experience of life is constantly changing.

The gap between the inner-circle and the outer circle is the degree of dissatisfaction we experience in life. It's all of those negatives you're pondering from Part 1.

Then there's the differentiation between how we are feeling from how we should be feeling. At any given

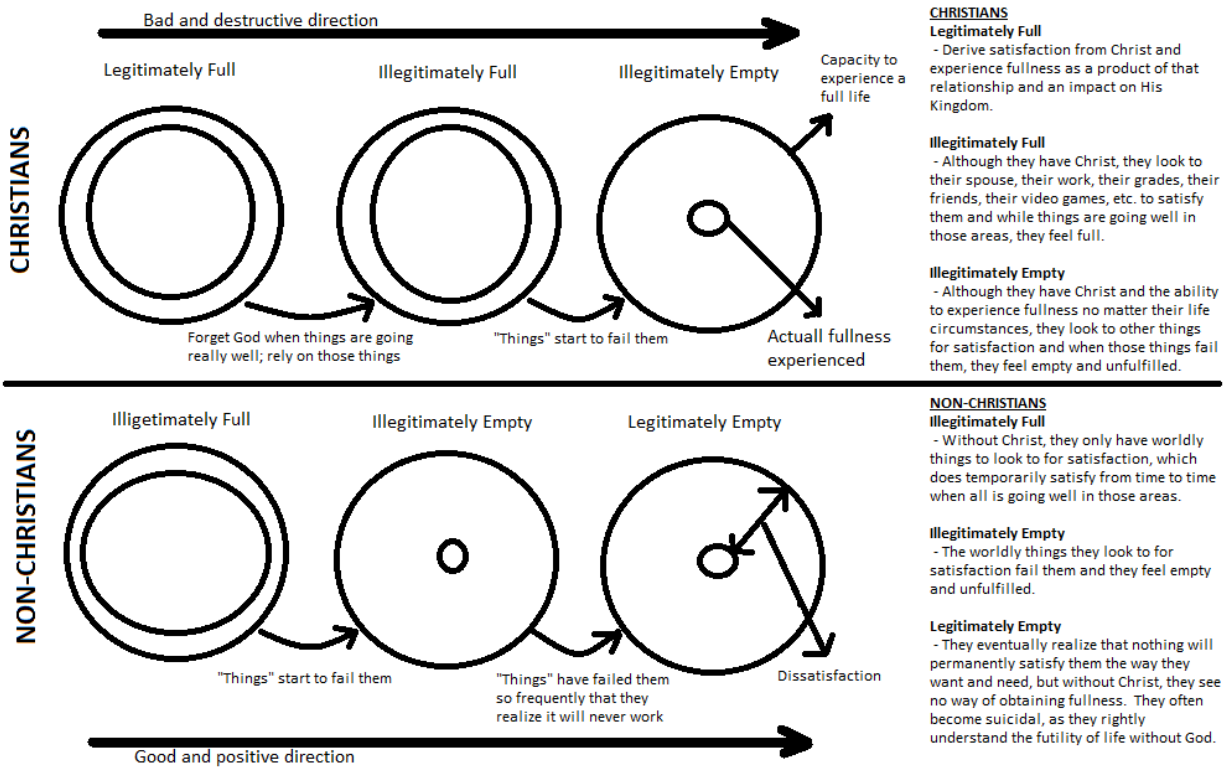


Figure 4: The Circles Illustration

time, our fullness might be legitimate and from the right sources, or it could be a product of relying on the wrong things. Likewise, we might feel empty without cause, or otherwise have good reason to feel that way.

Non-Christian Satisfaction Cycle

For non-Christians, they tend to waver between two positions: illegitimately full and illegitimately empty. They don't have Jesus, so their fullness is only a hollow shell of what God intends for them, or as Hebrews 8/9 says, it's based off of "copies and shadows" of the truer heavenly things. Examples include:

- Alex got a promotion at work and feels great about it.
- Brahbrah's dog just got miraculously cured from epilepsy
- Carl's wife just gave him a BJ for the first time

These are all great things and good reasons to be happy. But if they are the reason the circle is full, each of them are in for a rude awakening. Alex's boss might resign and the new boss fire him. Brahbrah's dog might get hit by a car. Carl's wife might decide that was gross and say she'll never do it again.

Now Alex, Brahbrah and Carl are all feeling pretty empty because the thing that made them full let them down. But again, this is a legitimate emptiness because God has a true source of satisfaction that they could draw from, but they're looking elsewhere instead.

At some point, Alex will probably get a new job, Brahbrah will get a new dog, and Carl will find another sexual adventure to try and they'll be right back to their "illegitimately full" circle ... until Alex's new job has some annoying co-workers, Brahbrah's new dog keeps pooping on the floor, and Carl's wife starts getting a series of conspicuously timed headaches. The cycle repeats itself over and over.

Eventually Alex, Brahmah, and Carl realize that these short-lived victories are hollow. Life is a series of ups and downs and it's making them seasick. They realize that nothing in this world will permanently satisfy them. Life is meaningless. If God isn't real, suicide is a legitimate option. They finally identify with Solomon's book of Ecclesiastes. Their emptiness is now legitimate because they're not blaming the wrong things; they're finally realizing the truth of the world. And that's what RP is at its core - an acceptance of the truth, which is why secular RP will always be limited in nature.

To that end, secular RP compels you to live in that "illegitimately full" circle indefinitely - to do whatever it takes to keep yourself there, and even when you're not there to pretend that you're there anyway and to maintain the same mentality as when you are there. But what if you could *actually* be full all the time? Enter ...

The Christian Satisfaction Cycle

Many non-Christians never reach the third "legitimately empty" circle, so their cycle is a constant shuffle between the first two circles. Christians, on the other hand, regularly use all three.

When we first connect with Christ, we feel the abundance that comes with the Spirit of God. It's beautiful. Everything in life is a blessing, even the bad things - because we have an eternal perspective about the good that will result from the bad. Nothing can get you down when you're legitimately full.

Instead, we see all of these wonderful things and we stay up. But the reason for our fullness shifts off of God and onto all of the blessings he's given us. David was at first full on God, but eventually received so many blessings that he had to take a census so he could feel good about the mighty kingdom he was ruling, or look out a window to feel good at the fact that he could have whatever girl he wanted. Rather than experiencing the blessings as a byproduct of our fullness in God, we shift away from God to the happiness that those blessings bring us and enter the realm of illegitimate fullness.

It's possible but rare for a person to go from an illegitimate fullness back to a legitimate fullness. More often what happens is that those blessings wane (including by the fact that God has less incentive to bless people when those very blessings are pulling them away from him) and ultimately the Christian feels empty. But there is no legitimacy to this emptiness. Because the Christian has the Spirit in him, there is no reason he should ever have to experience that emptiness, even through troubled times. He can always be full and abundant in Christ.

Soon enough, someone will remind him of this and he will rely on God once more and regain a legitimate sense of fullness until the cycle repeats. Sometimes the Christian has to bobble between the illegitimately full and illegitimately empty circles several times before he remembers the true source of his satisfaction.

Connecting To The Lens

Part 1 references the hopeless cycle - that constant bobble between illegitimate fullness and illegitimate emptiness. When a non-Christian is legitimately empty, this is when he is most receptive to the Gospel, which is the mirror that will be the focal point of Part 3. The Gospel is also the mechanism that allows legitimate fullness in the first place.

What was the issue that you thought of in Part 1? Ponder that in the context of these circles. Which circle are you in? Are you truly looking to God for your source of satisfaction? Or are you thinking, "If I could just deal with this one part of my life everything would be fine?" That's the hallmark of someone who is in one of the illegitimate circles - whether full or empty. That "one thing" is not going to satisfy you unless it's your relationship with Jesus. Period. I make no exceptions here.

- Alex might be thinking, "If I could just not have to worry about providing for my family, everything would be fine." This might be while he's unemployed. But he might also have this thought while he's

crushing it at work ... but secretly knows that the tides could change very quickly, so he never stops looking to his financial success even while he is very successful. His worry about provision is probably rooted in a positive desire for security, and Part 1 starts to connect with him.

- Brahbrah might be thinking, "I just want a companion in life," and be meditating on that both when her dogs are alive and when they're dying or having epileptic fits or pooping on the floor. Her desire for companionship is the direct good she needs as the subject of Part 1.
- Carl might be thinking, "I can't take it when my wife rejects me," and even when she says yes he takes it not for what it is, but in the context of thinking, "Thank goodness she didn't reject me this time!" And even after 50 yeses in a row, he may still think that. His desire for intimacy is where he connects with Part 1.

RP Praxeology

Now, it should go without saying that all of this is tied to several core RP traits, but opens the door wide on how they can be experienced and practiced.

The most notable is the abundance mentality. Our abundance comes from Christ, not how many plates we can spin or how much money we make or how much sex we're getting from our spouses. If you want the true abundance mentality, one that transcends the physical abundance preached in secular RP circles that only lead to an "illegitimate fullness," you have to be legitimately full in Christ.

The second is amused mastery. One who can see the circles for what they are and spot at a whim which circle he's in at any given moment can easily and even without thinking return to the legitimately full circle. He realizes that it's like the board game of "life." You roll the dice and crap happens - good or bad. But in the legitimately full circle, it doesn't matter whether your house burns down or you have another kid - it's all still just a game. You enjoy the good things in the context of thanking your good, good Father. You see the bad things and know you're still loved and protected under his care. You remain unphased because you have an eternal perspective about the world, knowing that it will all pass away. You've watched Francis Chan's Rope Illustration and think to yourself, "I totally get it now!"

The third is frame. When you are bobbling between circles, you have no frame. Your experience of the world is dictated by what happens to you. When you are legitimately full, nothing the world throws at you can shake you because you have a divine source of strength. You live under God's frame and have adopted it as your own. And when you live out that frame, others are drawn in and want its protection as well. Because of the Spirit's power exuding from you, you're the one to shape the world around you, not them shaping you - and all to the good of the Kingdom.

I'll let you all add to this list.

Application

So, I ask you now - and imagine yourself in a dimly lit auditorium, worship band slowly playing in the background, dozens of people praying and crying out to God all around you ... whatever gets you in the mood to think seriously and critically about your life: *which circle are you in and why are you living there?*

What is it going to take to get you in the legitimately full circle?

What's it going to take to keep you there?

What are the constant hang-ups that draw you back into illegitimacy?

Have you ever been legitimately full even once in your life yet?

Do you know people who are legitimately empty?

Do you know people who are caught in a vicious cycle - whether as Christians or non-Christians - who desperately need pulled out?

What can God do through you to bring yourself and others into His frame so that you can all be a beacon of light to the rest of the world?

403.3 The Gospel Is The Answer

Once we determine not to look to the wrong places for our satisfaction, how can we be legitimately full in Christ? When we reflect on the Gospel and the way it speaks to the very specific issues in our lives, as opposed to the general way the Church often views the Gospel, we see that God intended a power behind the cross that most people in the church never come to realize. That power is what can make us whole, healing all of our brokenness and bringing light to our darkest places.

As a recap:

- 401 laid out the essential elements of the Gospel.
- 402 showed that the way we view the Gospel affects our internal sense of identity and emotional dispositions.
- 403.1 began the "lens illustration" by showing that our negative experiences are rooted in a positive desire that is lacking and how it's futile to believe anything on this earth could satisfy those desires with any permanency.
- 403.2 utilized the "circles illustration" to demonstrate this impermanent satisfaction through worldly solution, but that we have the capacity to find legitimate fulfillment in Christ.

The purpose in addressing this is that many people come here from dark, broken places. Several men have disclosed either publicly or privately that they struggle with things like pornography, rage, depression, guilt, shame, or the like - or that their wives may struggle through one of these things as well - and that this affects their sexual and relational satisfaction. For single men, it also affects their framework for living in general, often compelling them to seek a wife as the means of curing these internal ailments. If we cannot discern through Scripture a solution to these problems, we will be left to the chaos of the world, which is too harsh an environment for the male heart to survive in.

If you want a right sex life, ministry, marriage, etc., you must be a right man. If you want a right wife, you must sanctify and cleanse her the same way Christ did: through the Gospel (Ephesians 5:25-27). That is why the Gospel as a solution is distinctively important for all men on this sub, above and beyond the technical strategies we may employ. If we are not made whole by the Gospel, all our efforts at sexual strategy will be worthless, and in Christian marriages, they will most likely fail.

God May Crush Your Desires

In 403.1 I referenced the general self-reflection that people do in an effort to find answers to the problems that ail them. This is why psychology often fails to do much more than give a temporary mood boost. Its solution is for a person to look inside themselves for the answer. In reality we must look to Christ for the answer. I referenced three people: A, B, and C, who struggle with loneliness/depression, pornography addiction, and fear of rejection, respectively. We also discussed the ways they expected their desires to be met: A wants friends, B wants physical pleasure, and C wants people to love and accept him. But the harsh reality of the Bible is that God doesn't promise any of these things:

- A: We constantly see Scriptural examples of people who were isolated from human contact. Jeremiah, Elijah, Isaiah, David ... even Jesus was abandoned by the 12 before the crucifixion. God never promised

the Christian life wouldn't be lonely. If anything, the Bible narrative proves that this might be a real challenge for many.

- B: Again, the Bible never promises physical pleasure. In fact, for centuries people believed the Bible specifically condemned physical pleasures. Although I disagree with that interpretation, that alone should emphasize the point. More specifically, Jesus did promise we would suffer and be persecuted. The Bible also doesn't promise that everyone will get sex. Many people will die under God's will without ever having had sex.
- C: Jesus said point blank that the world would reject us. He never promised acceptance.

The Gospel As A Mirror

If meeting our positive desires our way isn't guaranteed by God, what are we to do? I present that we should not self-reflect, but that we should reflect on the Gospel to find our answers. Galatians 3:3 is actually pretty explicit about this: "Are you so foolish? After beginning by the Spirit, are you now trying to become perfect through human effort?" That "beginning" is when they were first saved and "by the Spirit" references the Spirit drawing them to the Gospel and transforming them through the Gospel. Yet for some reason we all want to jump on the "self-reflection" band-wagon, rejecting what the Spirit can do through the Word of Truth, which is the Gospel, and who is Jesus Christ.

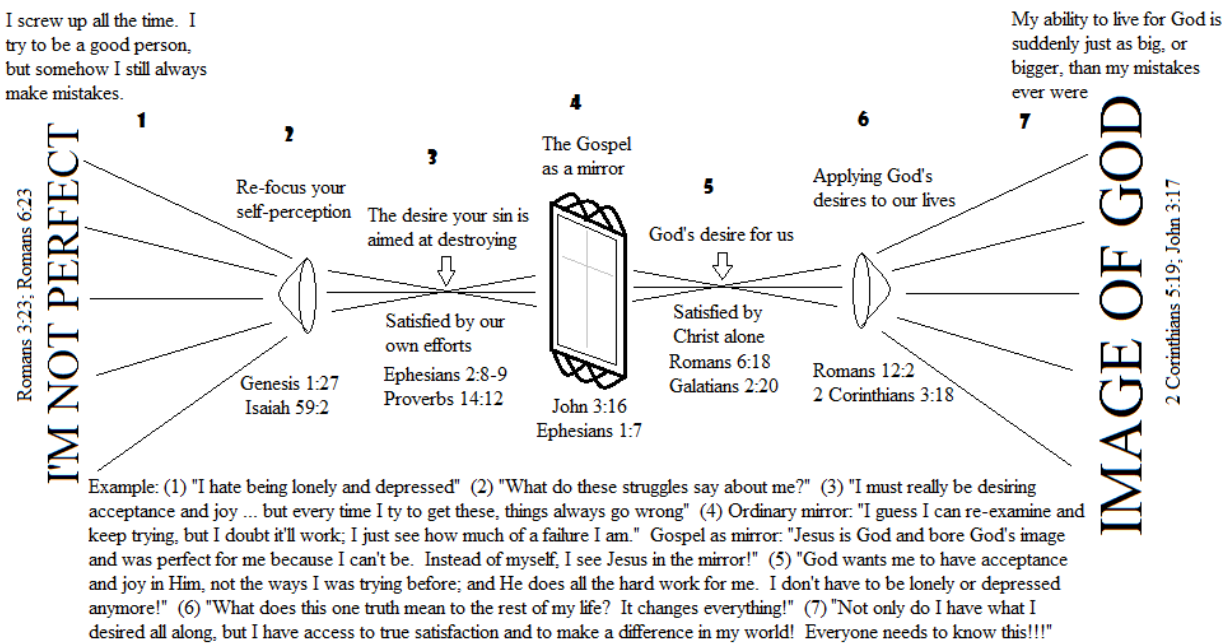


Figure 5: The Lens Illustration

Here is the lens illustration. You will note the pattern we have followed thus far: (1) acknowledging our imperfection, (2) reframing it as a positive desire that we are lacking, (3) acknowledging that we are powerless to find permanent satisfaction - and that no amount of self-reflection can break the cycle, and God might not actually want us to get our desires met on our terms.

Now I add (4) that the Gospel gives us an answer. As I noted in 401, the prime function of the Gospel is to reconcile us to God. The crucifixion and resurrection are the means by which Jesus did this (as explored deeper in 402). Sometimes people get so hung up on Jesus bearing our sin on the cross that we forget the reason why he did it: to restore our relationship with God.

When we reflect on the Gospel we find that the pattern of viewing our ailment works almost the exact same way, but in the reverse ... kind of like a *reflection* (hence a mirror).

- We had pinpointed our actual desire on our terms, the Gospel shows us that exact same desire, but on God's terms
- What didn't satisfy us on earth now does satisfy us through Christ.
- Once we have that desire and satisfaction, rather than the lens taking things from our lives and focusing them into a concentrated point, that one nugget of truth we receive from the Gospel refracts to change multiple areas of our lives.
- Instead of being an image of imperfection, we reflect the image of God.

In Part 4 I will break down in more detail how the other side of the Gospel-mirror functions, including with reference to the examples given.