
RP Christians Sidebar Compendium

100s - Theory and Understanding

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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. Pleeasssee! 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

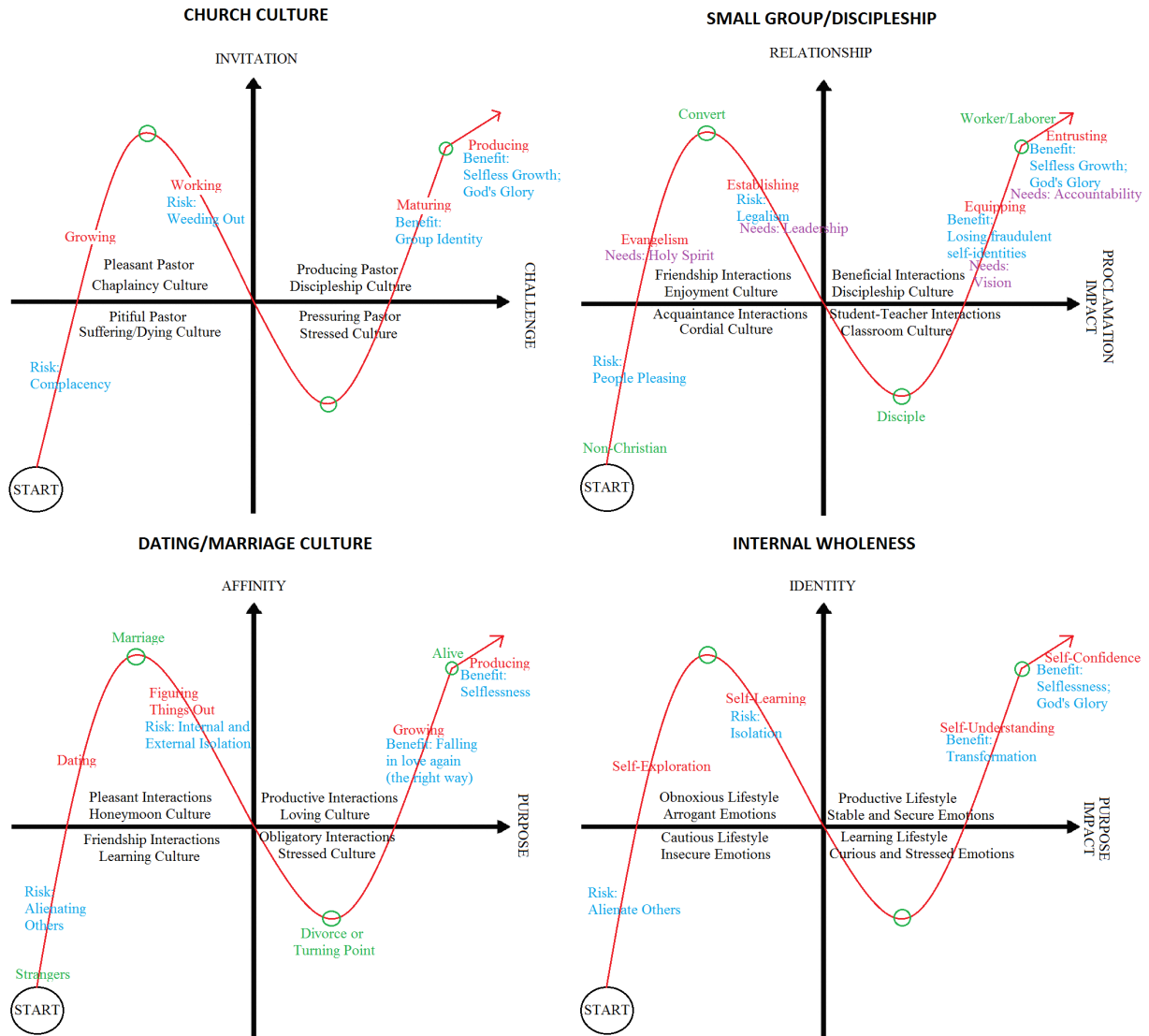


Figure 1: Life Cycle Graphs

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 you're 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 it's 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.

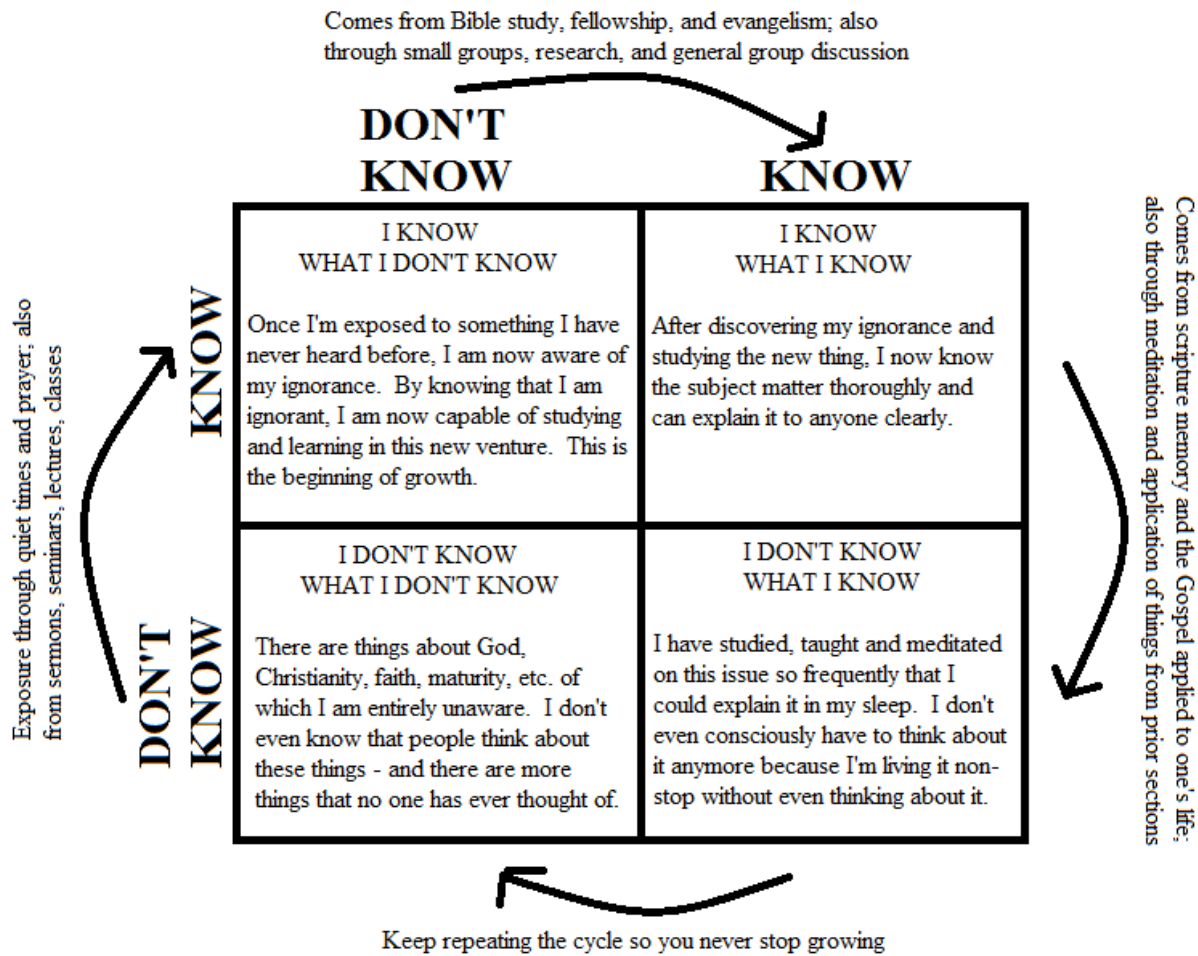
For You

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.