14-DAY COUPLES DEVOTIONAL

WORDS THAT REVEAL, QUESTIONS THAT EXPOSE, AND LOVE THAT REFUSES TO STAY PASSIVE



HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

A JOURNEY TO HELP YOU SLOW DOWN, CREATE SPACE, AND INVITE GOD INTO THE STORY HE IS WRITING IN YOUR MARRIAGE

Marriage is a gift, but it also requires intentionality.
Every relationship has places where we experience connection and places where we experience tension, misunderstanding, or growth. The hope of this 14-day devotional is not to give you a checklist for a "perfect marriage" but to create space for you and your spouse to continue what God began during the Marriage Conference.

Throughout this journey, you will revisit the **7 PRIMAL QUESTIONS** and explore how God is inviting you to grow individually and together. We believe God cares deeply about your marriage, and as you make room for Him, He will reveal places of healing, deeper connection, and greater unity.

> ***"And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."*** ~ COLOSSIANS 3:14

Our prayer is that these 14 days become more than just another thing to complete. We hope this becomes a rhythm of slowing down, listening to God, understanding one another, and allowing Him to continue shaping your marriage.

HOW IT WORKS

DAYS 1–3: START WITH YOURSELF

The first three days are designed for you to spend time individually with God before coming together as a couple.
This is an opportunity to reflect on what you experienced during the Marriage Conference, invite the Holy Spirit to reveal areas He wants to grow in you, and honestly consider how you are showing up in your marriage.

Growth in marriage starts with allowing God to work in our own hearts.

DURING THESE FIRST FEW DAYS, CREATE SPACE TO:
~ Reflect on what God may be revealing.
~ Spend time in His Word.
~ Pray and invite the Holy Spirit to guide you.
~ Identify places where you are growing and places where God may be inviting you deeper.

Each day includes a short devotional, reflection questions, and a prayer to help guide your time. On Day 3, you and your spouse will come together and share what God has been showing you.

This conversation is an opportunity to practice vulnerability, honesty, and grace. We encourage you to approach this time with curiosity not judgment. Create a safe space where both of you can share openly, listen well, and seek to understand one another. After sharing, we invite you to *pray together*. We have provided a prayer, but we encourage you to pray from your own heart as well. When we invite our spouse into what God is doing in us, we allow them to better understand our heart, know how to support us, and partner with us in prayer.

"Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." ~ MATTHEW 18:20

DAYS 4–14: GROW TOGETHER

From this point forward, you will continue the journey ***together*** *as a couple.*
We encourage each of you to spend time reflecting individually first, then come together to share what God is revealing. This rhythm allows both people to process honestly while creating space to listen, learn, and grow together.

THESE CONVERSATIONS ARE AN OPPORTUNITY TO:
~ Discover more about your spouse's heart.
~ Better understand their experiences and perspective.
~ Build trust through vulnerability.
~ Create unity in places where there may be differences.

Remember, the goal is not to win a conversation or fix everything in one moment.
The goal is to continue choosing each other and inviting God into every part of your relationship.

Each day includes a short devotional, reflection questions, and a prayer to help guide your conversations. As you begin, we encourage you to come with open hearts, a willingness to listen, and a desire to see what God wants to do in and through your marriage.

YOUR MARRIAGE IS WORTH INVESTING IN. YOUR STORY IS STILL BEING WRITTEN. AND GOD IS NOT FINISHED.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

As you walk through these 14 days together, remember that this devotional isn't the finish line, *it's an invitation to continue building a marriage that pursues Jesus every day.*

One of the greatest gifts you can give your marriage is choosing to seek Jesus together. As you pray together, spend time in God's Word, and create space for honest conversations, your relationship is strengthened because Christ becomes the foundation you're both building on.

But God never intended for marriages to grow in isolation. We were created for community, and our marriages are stronger when we are surrounded by others who are pursuing Jesus too. We all need people who will encourage us, challenge us, pray with us, and remind us that we aren't walking this journey alone.

That's why we'd love to invite you to continue the journey through Couples Connect, launching at all our Flatirons locations the week of September 28, 2026. You don't have to wait until you finish this devotional. In fact, we encourage you to do both together. Let the conversations you've started here continue in a community of couples who are growing in their faith and investing in their marriages.

Couples Connect is a place where couples can continue growing together as they pursue Jesus and invest in their relationship. **Through biblical teaching, honest conversations, prayer, and authentic community, couples will have the opportunity to build healthy rhythms and be encouraged by others who are on the same journey.**

Whether you're newly married, have been married for decades, or simply desire a stronger, Christ-centered relationship, there is a place for you. Our hope is that Couples Connect would be a space where marriages are strengthened, faith is deepened, and couples are reminded that they don't have to do this alone. Our prayer is that your marriage would continue to grow not just by pursuing Jesus together as a couple, but by walking alongside other couples who are seeking Him too.

We'd love for you to join us for Couples Connect beginning September 28, 2026.

Foster, Mike. *The Seven Primal Questions: Take Control of the Hidden Forces That Drive You*, Five Dates, 2023.
English Standard Version (ESV) *The Holy Bible*, ESV® Text Edition: 2026. Copyright© 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

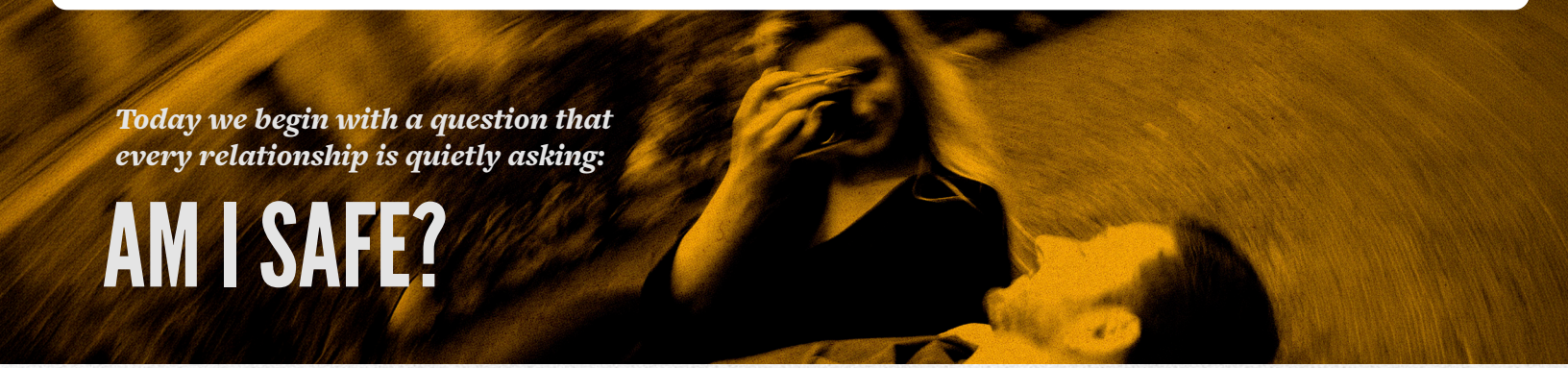
DAY 1

KEY SCRIPTURES: *PROVERBS 18:21 • PROVERBS 12:18 • PROVERBS 15:1*

YOUR WORDS ARE ALREADY DECLARING WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT SAFETY

Over the next fourteen days, our hope is not that you simply read another devotional together. Our prayer is that you would **slow down**, **create space**, and **invite Jesus** into the places of your marriage that often get overlooked in the busyness of everyday life.

Each day, you'll begin by spending time with God individually before coming back together with your spouse. As you do, ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart first. Rather than focusing on what your spouse needs to change, allow God to reveal what He wants to do in you. As He transforms each of your hearts, you'll begin to see that He is also strengthening your marriage.



Today we begin with a question that every relationship is quietly asking:

AM I SAFE?

When we think about words, what comes to mind? Words are how we express our thoughts, our emotions, our frustrations, our love, and even what is happening inside of us. They reveal a piece of where we are and what we are carrying.

The dictionary defines a word as the smallest independent unit of language that carries meaning. But in marriage, words are so much more than a definition. **Words create an environment.** They set the tone and temperature of the space we share with our spouse. Whether words are spoken out loud or left unspoken, they have an impact. They shape how we communicate, how we connect, and how we experience one another. The reality is our words are never neutral. They carry weight. They carry emotion. They communicate something deeper than just the sentence being said.

OUR WORDS ARE CONSTANTLY ANSWERING AN UNDERLYING QUESTION IN OUR MARRIAGE:
"AM I SAFE?"

- *Am I safe to be honest?*
- *Am I safe to share what I'm feeling?*
- *Am I safe to be vulnerable without fear of being dismissed, criticized, or misunderstood?*

> ***"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits."*** ~ PROVERBS 18:21

This verse reminds us that our words have the power to bring life or bring harm. They have the ability to build up our spouse, create connection, and remind them they are loved. But they also have the ability to create distance, make someone feel guarded, and slowly erode trust over time.

> ***"There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."*** ~ PROVERBS 12:18

Sometimes we don't realize the impact our words are having because we are focused on what we meant instead of how they were received.
A comment we thought was small may have landed as criticism. A moment of frustration may have communicated rejection. A defensive response may have made our spouse feel like they needed to protect themselves instead of opening up.

> ***"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."*** ~ PROVERBS 15:1

The way we say something matters just as much as what we say. Our tone, our posture, and our response communicate whether we are creating a safe place for our spouse or creating a place where they feel the need to shut down.

In marriage, it is easy to assume we are a safe place for our spouse because we love them.
But safety is not only built through our intentions; it is built through our interactions. Over time, the way we speak, listen, respond, and handle conflict shapes whether our spouse feels invited into deeper connection or whether they begin to pull away.

So, take a moment and reflect:
~ What are my words communicating to my spouse?
~ Are my words creating safety, trust, and openness?
~ Or are they creating distance, defensiveness, and fear?

Because every interaction is building something.
Our words are either creating a place where our spouse feels safe to be fully known, or they are creating a place where they feel the need to hide.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *Where do my words tend to change when I feel misunderstood, ignored, rejected, or threatened?*
- *In those moments, do I tend to become defensive, controlling, distant, silent, or sharp with my spouse?*
- *What am I trying to protect in those moments? My pride? My feelings? My need to be right? My fear of being hurt?*
- *What might my spouse be experiencing from me in those moments?*

LET'S GO DEEPER:
Are my words creating a marriage where my spouse feels safe to be known, honest, and vulnerable, or are they creating a space where they feel the need to guard themselves?

PRAYER

Father, Search my heart today.

Reveal the motives behind my words and show me where pride, fear, or selfishness has shaped the way I respond to my spouse.
Help me not to focus on changing them, but to allow You to change me.

Fill my heart with Your love, so my words bring life, grace, and peace. May my spouse experience safety, kindness, and the love of Christ through me.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 2

KEY SCRIPTURES: *1 JOHN 4:18-19 • ROMANS 8:15 • 2 TIMOTHY 1:7*

THE QUESTION BENEATH THE REACTION
"AM I LOVED?"

Our words have the power to set the tone of our relationship. They can create safety, connection, and understanding or they can create distance and hurt. But before we focus only on the words we say, we have to pay attention to what is happening underneath them.

Because our reactions are rarely random.

Many of the most destructive moments in our relationships are not because we simply want to hurt our spouse. Often, our reactions are protective. They are responses we have learned over time because of experiences, wounds, disappointments, or moments where we felt unseen, rejected, or unsafe.

Throughout our lives, we have all collected stories. Some stories remind us of love, belonging, and safety. Others carry pain, heartbreak, and moments that shaped the way we see ourselves and others. When those painful places are not processed and healed, they can begin to create patterns in the way we communicate, respond, and interpret the actions of the people closest to us.

Patterns are what unexamined pain looks like in motion.

Maybe your reaction is to shut down because somewhere along the way you learned that your feelings did not matter. Maybe your reaction is to become defensive because you learned that being wrong meant being rejected. Maybe your reaction is to criticize because you are trying to protect yourself from feeling disappointed or unseen.



Even when we know our spouse loves us, our past experiences and the lens we are looking through can cause us to question it. We can begin responding to our spouse based on old wounds instead of the reality in front of us.

This is where God invites us into healing.

> ***"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear..."*** ~ 1 JOHN 4:18

God's love is not a love that keeps us guessing, striving, or wondering if we are enough.
His love creates security. His love reminds us that we are known, chosen, and fully loved.

> ***"For you did not receive a spirit of slavery that returns you to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption to sonship, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"*** ~ ROMANS 8:15

WE BELONG. WE ARE SAFE IN THE FATHER'S LOVE.
And when we live from that place, our relationships begin to change.

Instead of reacting out of fear, we can respond out of love. Instead of protecting ourselves, we can pursue understanding. Instead of asking, *"Why are they doing this to me?"* we can begin asking, *"What might be happening beneath this?"*

This does not mean ignoring hurt or excusing unhealthy behavior. It means choosing to see ourselves and our spouse through the lens of grace. It means recognizing that both of us may carry places where we have been wounded and where we have learned to protect ourselves.

But God did not create marriage to be a place where we hide our wounds. He created it to be a place where we grow, heal, and experience love that reflects Him.

> ***"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind"*** ~ 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

Through Him, we can learn a new way of responding.

So, the next time conflict happens, pause and ask:
~ *What am I believing right now?*
~ *What fear is driving my reaction?*
~ *Am I responding from the truth of God's love, or from a wound that still needs healing?*

God's answer has always been:
YOU ARE LOVED.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *Where do I most often feel unloved, unseen, or disconnected in my relationship?*
  When those feelings surface, what is my natural response (interrupting, blaming, shutting down, escalating)?
- *Am I responding to what my spouse is actually doing, or am I reacting to what I believe their actions means to me, my worth, or whether I am loved?*
  What story or belief might I be carrying into this moment?
- *How is God inviting me to receive His perfect love and allow that truth to shape the way I respond to my spouse?*
  What would it look like to respond from a place of love, security, and grace instead of fear or hurt?

LET'S GO DEEPER:
Are my reactions creating a space where my spouse feels loved, understood, and safe to be known—or are they revealing places where fear is leading instead of love?

PRAYER

Jesus,

Thank You for loving us fully and faithfully. Help us recognize the places where fear, hurt, or past experiences are shaping the way we respond to each other.

Teach us to slow down, listen with compassion, and see our spouse through the lens of Your grace. Remind us that we are already known, chosen, and deeply loved by You.

May Your perfect love bring healing to our hearts and help us respond to one another with patience, humility, and love. Amen.

DAY 3

KEY SCRIPTURE: *JOHN 15:9* | FRAMEWORK: PAUSE • SHARE • LISTEN • RESPOND

MOVING FROM SELF-REFLECTION TO CONNECTION

Over the last few days, we have taken time to slow down and sit with Jesus, allowing Him to reveal what is happening beneath the surface of our words, reactions, and patterns.



We have reflected on two important questions:

AM I SAFE?
AM I LOVED?

These questions often shape the way we show up in marriage. They influence how we interpret our spouse's words, how we respond when we feel hurt, and the ways we protect ourselves when something feels vulnerable.

But awareness is only the beginning.

Growth happens when we are willing to take what God has revealed in us and bring it into the relationship. This is where we move from simply understanding ourselves to allowing ourselves to be truly known by our spouse.

Today is an invitation to sit together and share what you have discovered. *This is not a conversation to prove who is right, defend your actions, or point out where your spouse needs to change.*

This is a conversation to understand.
Because underneath many of our reactions is something deeper.
~ A fear we are carrying.
~ A hurt we have not processed.
~ A desire to feel loved, valued, and known.

When we are willing to bring those deeper places into the light, we give our spouse the opportunity to ***meet us with compassion instead of assumptions.***

But remember, communication is happening all the time even before we speak.
It is not just the words we say. It is the way we show up in the moment. Our tone, our body language, and our willingness to stay present when a conversation feels uncomfortable all communicate something.

Our spouse is experiencing whether we are ***safe to be honest with***, whether we are ***truly listening***, and whether we are ***willing to understand their heart.***

So, before you begin this conversation, pause and invite Jesus into it:
Jesus, help me listen with humility. Help me speak with love. Help me create a space where my spouse feels safe to be known.

AS YOU SHARE WHAT GOD HAS REVEALED, USE THIS SIMPLE FRAMEWORK:

- **PAUSE — *slow down before responding***
  - ~ Before we can communicate well, we have to become aware of what is happening inside of us.
  - ~ Ask yourself:
    What am I feeling right now?
    Am I responding from love, or am I reacting from fear?
  - ~ A pause gives us space to choose a response instead of automatically returning to an old pattern.

- **SHARE — *invite your spouse into your heart***
  - ~ The goal is not to make your spouse feel wrong. The goal is to help them understand what is happening beneath the surface.
  - ~ Share what you are experiencing with honesty and humility.
  - ~ Vulnerability says:
    This is what is happening inside of me, and I want you to know me.
  - ~ When we share from a place of openness instead of accusation, we create an opportunity for connection.

- **LISTEN — *choose understanding over being understood***
  - ~ Listening is more than waiting for your turn to speak.
  - ~ It is choosing curiosity and making room for your spouse's experience.
  - ~ Ask:
    Can you help me understand what this felt like for you?
  - ~ You may not always see things the same way, but you can choose to care about what your spouse is carrying.

- **RESPOND — *offer love, not defense***

The way we respond can either build a bridge or create more distance. A loving response does not mean everything is easy or that every perspective is the same. ***It means we choose humility, grace, and a willingness to grow together.***

SOMETIMES HEALING BEGINS WITH SIMPLE WORDS:
~ I hear you.
~ I didn't realize that hurt you.
~ I want to grow in this with you.

This is where repentance and grace meet.

Marriage is not built by two perfect people who never hurt each other. *It is built by two people who are willing to keep turning toward each other and keeping God at the center.* When we begin to recognize our own patterns, we stop seeing our spouse as the problem and begin seeing them as our teammate.

Instead of asking: *Why are they doing this to me?*

WE CAN BEGIN ASKING:
~ What might be happening in their heart?
~ How can I love them well in this moment?
~ How can my words bring life instead of adding to the hurt?

Jesus invites us in John 15 to remain in His love. The more deeply we receive His love, the more we are able to extend that same love to our spouse.

> ***"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love."*** ~ JOHN 15:9

The invitation today is not just to communicate better. ***It is to know and be known more deeply.***

- ***To choose courage over hiding.***
- ***To choose humility over pride.***
- ***To choose love over fear.***

Because a healthy marriage is not built by avoiding difficult conversations.
It is built when two people are willing to step into them together.

BRING IT TOGETHER:

- ***What did I discover about my safety response?***
- ***What did I discover about my love response?***
- ***Where are my words building life—and where are they taking it?***

This is not about perfect speech. *It is about accountable speech.*

PRAYER

Jesus,

We invite you into our marriage. As we being to open up help us to see our spouse as you see them. Allow us to see the things you are revealing and help us to bring light into those places we have been hiding.

As we begin to heal in this union with each other, let us remember the truth that I am loved and I am safe in you, Lord and also with my spouse.

Amen.

DAY 4

KEY SCRIPTURES: *EPHESIANS 1:4 • ISAIAH 43:1-4 • ISAIAH 49:15-16 • DEUTERONOMY 7:6 • DEUTERONOMY 31:6*

AM I WANTED?
THE BATTLE FOR PRESENCE

As we step into Day 4, take time to sit with Jesus on your own before sitting down with your spouse.



Invite Him to search your heart as you wrestle with today's primal question:

AM I WANTED?

If we're honest, every one of us has asked this question in one way or another.

We may not say the words out loud, but we feel them. We wonder if we're still chosen. Still pursued. Still, someone our spouse enjoys being with, not just someone they share responsibilities with.

Life has a way of pulling us in a hundred different directions. Between work, kids, schedules, responsibilities, and the everyday demands of life, it's easy for the most important relationship in our lives to slowly take a back seat. Most of the time, it's not intentional. We assume they'll understand. We justify our distraction. We tell ourselves we'll reconnect later.

But over time, distance can begin to whisper a lie.

The enemy loves to use those moments of disconnection to plant seeds of doubt. He twists delayed conversations into rejection, busyness into indifference, and silence into, "I guess I'm not wanted anymore." *Before long, we begin believing a story that was never true.*

That's why it's so important to recognize what's really happening.
At the core of this question is a longing God placed inside every human heart.

We were created by a relational God, in His image, and for relationship.

Author and speaker John Eldredge reminds us that because we are created in the image of a relational God who continually pursues His people, **it's no surprise that we long to be pursued, chosen, and wanted ourselves.** In *Wild at Heart*, Eldredge quotes A. W. Tozer, who writes, *"God waits to be wanted."* What a profound reminder that the God who pursues us also desires relationship with us. As His image bearers, He created us with that same ***longing for relationship: to be pursued, chosen, and wanted.***
That longing isn't weakness or insecurity, it's part of how God designed us.

The problem is that we often look to our spouse to answer a question only God can settle first.

Before your spouse can remind you that you're wanted, ***allow your heavenly Father to remind you of what has always been true.*** **Before the foundation of the world, He chose you** (*Ephesians 1:4*).

> ***"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight…"*** ~ EPHESIANS 1:4

Your life was never an accident or an afterthought. **God has always known you, called you by name, and claimed you as His own** (*Isaiah 43:1*).

> ***"But now, this is what the Lord says - he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: 'Do no fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine...'"*** ~ ISAIAH 43:1

Scripture tells us that you are **His treasured possession** (*Deuteronomy 7:6*) and that **you are precious and honored in His sight** (*Isaiah 43:4*).

> ***"For you are a holy people holy to the Lord your God...[who has] chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession."*** ~ DEUT. 7:6

Even when you question your value or wonder if you've been forgotten, **God declares that He will never forget you because you are engraved on the palms of His hands** (*Isaiah 49:15–16*).

> ***"See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me."*** ~ ISAIAH 49:16

The gospel isn't just that God loved you enough to save you; it's that **He saved you because He wanted you.** ***Long before you ever reached for Him, He had already reached for you. His pursuit did not begin at the cross; it began before the foundation of the world when He chose you to be His own. Through Jesus, He demonstrated once and for all that you are worth pursuing not because you've earned it, but because His love has never stopped reaching toward you.***

There will be seasons when you don't always feel God's nearness. There may be moments when His presence seems distant and the promise that He is with you feels difficult to believe. **Yet God has promised that He will never leave you or forsake you** (*Deuteronomy 31:6*).

> ***"Be strong and courageous. Do no be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."*** ~ DEUT. 31:6

Our feelings may change, but His presence never does.
Faith often means *trusting what God has promised* even when our emotions struggle to catch up.

The same God who chose you continues to walk with you, even in the moments when you cannot see or feel Him.

When that truth settles deep in your heart, you're free to turn toward your spouse, not demanding reassurance but inviting deeper connection.

As you talk together today, resist the urge to defend yourself or correct one another. Instead, become curious about your spouse's heart. Take time to listen carefully, ask thoughtful questions, and seek to understand what they are really communicating before thinking about how you want to respond.

The goal isn't to prove a point or fix a problem, it's to know and understand the person God has entrusted to you. As you create space for one another to be seen, heard, and understood, you begin reflecting the kind of relationship God has always desired with His people.

Sometimes disconnection isn't the result of someone pulling away. Sometimes it's simply two people expressing love differently and unintentionally missing one another. What feels like rejection may simply be a difference in how each of you give and receive love. Today is an invitation to move toward one another again. Not because you have to earn each other's love, but because **you have already been fully loved by Christ.** ***As you rest in that truth, you become free to pursue your spouse with the same grace, intentionality, and presence that God has continually shown you.***

The deepest answer to the question, **"AM I WANTED?"** isn't ultimately found in how perfectly your spouse pursues you.
It is found in the God who pursued you first, chose you before the foundation of the world, and continues to pursue you every day.
Healthy marriages become a living picture of that same pursuit.

When two people choose to move toward one another with humility, grace, and intentional love, *they reflect the heart of a God who has never stopped pursuing His people.*

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

- *Where have I recently questioned whether I'm wanted, pursued, or chosen? What circumstances or thoughts led me there?*
- *What lies have I been tempted to believe about myself or my spouse when I feel overlooked? How does the truth of God's pursuit challenge those lies?*
- *Before looking to my spouse for reassurance, how is Jesus inviting me to rest in the truth that I am already fully known, deeply loved, and intentionally pursued by Him?*

TOGETHER:

- *When do you feel the most pursued, appreciated, and wanted by me? What helps you experience my love in those moments?*
- *Have there been times recently when my busyness, distractions, or assumptions unintentionally communicated that you weren't wanted? What did that feel like for you?*
- *What's one intentional way we can pursue one another this week—not out of obligation, but as a reflection of how Christ pursues us?*

LET'S GO DEEPER:

Are my words creating a marriage where my spouse feels safe to be known, honest, and vulnerable, or are they creating a space where they feel the need to guard themselves?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

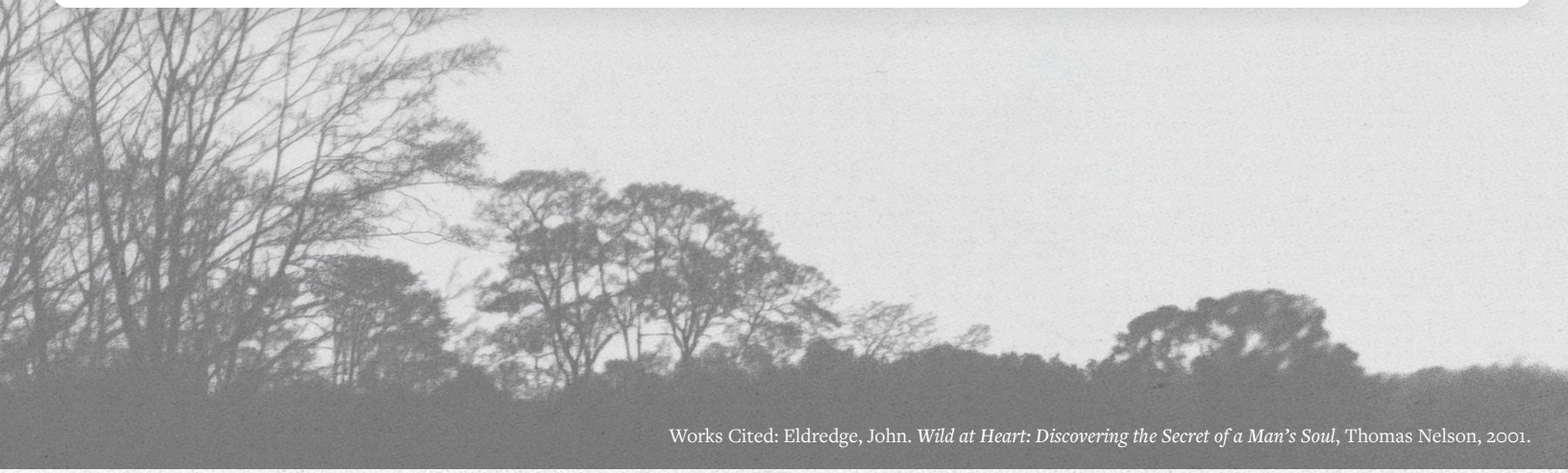
Thank You for choosing us long before we ever chose You. Thank You that our worth has never been determined by our performance or by how perfectly we are loved by another person. Our identity is secure because You have called us by name, claimed us as Your own, and continue to pursue us with unfailing love.

Forgive us for the times we have looked to our spouse to answer questions that only You can truly satisfy. Remind us that we are Your treasured possession, precious and honored in Your sight, and that nothing can separate us from Your presence.

Teach us to pursue one another with the same grace, patience, and intentional love that You have shown us. Help us create a marriage where each of us feels safe, known, valued, and wanted—not because we are perfect, but because we are learning to love as You have loved us.

May our relationship become a reflection of the way You have continually pursued Your people.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



Works Cited: Eldredge, John. *Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul*, Thomas Nelson, 2001.

DAY 5

KEY SCRIPTURE: *EPHESIANS 3:16-19*

AM I SECURE?
STOP ASSUMING YOU'RE UNDERSTOOD



As we dive into Day 5, take time to reflect on today's primal question:

AM I SECURE?

For many of us, our security comes from something outside of ourselves. It can be our job, our finances, our accomplishments, our reputation, or even the way we are received and affirmed by others. We often look to these things to tell us that we are okay, that we are valued, and that we are enough.

BUT TODAY, TAKE A MOMENT AND ASK YOURSELF:
"AM I SECURE IN WHO I AM?"

The truth is many of us are looking to things outside of ourselves to answer a question only God can answer.

Our security comes from one source and one source only: Jesus.

Before we can experience true security in our marriage, we have to first understand where our security comes from. Paul reminds us that our foundation is not found in how well others understand us, how successful we are, or how comfortable life feels.
Our security comes from being rooted and established in the love of Christ.

> ***"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power... to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."***
> ~ EPHESIANS 3:16-19

When we know we are fully loved by Him, we can enter conversations with our spouse from a place of security instead of fear.

When Christ chose the cross, He secured our place with Him forever. He declared that we are loved, forgiven, chosen, and held by Him. Our security was not something we achieved; it was something He gave.
But when we forget that truth, insecurity begins to take over.

And insecurity has a way of showing up in our closest relationships.

It can look like becoming defensive when our spouse shares something difficult. It can look like assuming we already know what they meant before we take time to listen. It can look like preparing our response instead of seeking to understand their heart.

Many conflicts in marriage aren't actually disagreements, they are miscommunication pretending to be clarity.
We believe we know what the other person meant. We fill in the gaps. We assume their tone, their motives, and their heart before we have even asked the question.

But assumptions create distance.

When we are secure in Christ, we no longer have to approach conversations as if we are fighting to be right, protecting ourselves, or proving that our perspective matters more. *Instead, we can approach our spouse with humility and curiosity.*

SECURITY ALLOWS US TO SAY:
~ Help me understand what you mean.
~ Can I repeat back what I heard to make sure I understand you correctly?
~ I want to know your heart, not just respond to your words.

True security is not the absence of hard conversations. It is the ability to stay connected through them.

Today, practice slowing down.

BEFORE RESPONDING, ASK YOURSELF:
Am I listening to understand, or am I listening to defend?

BEFORE ASSUMING YOUR SPOUSE UNDERSTANDS YOU, ASK:
Have I clearly communicated what I am feeling, needing, or experiencing?

And before assuming you know what your spouse means, take the time to ask.

Because your spouse is not someone to compete with, they are someone you are called to complete alongside.

A QUESTION WORTH REFLECTING ON IS:
Where are we COMPETING instead of COMPLETING?

Are there areas where you are trying to prove your point, win the argument, or protect your own perspective instead of moving toward unity? Marriage was never designed to be two people fighting for the top position.

It was designed to be two people becoming one, each bringing their unique strengths, perspectives, and experiences to reflect the image of God more fully together.

Security is not emotional comfort.

Security is knowing who you are in Christ so deeply that you can enter difficult conversations with humility, grace, and love.

The question isn't whether you will ever feel insecure.

THE QUESTION IS:
Where will you go when insecurity shows up?

Today, return to the One who has already secured you.

BECAUSE WHEN YOUR IDENTITY IS SECURE IN HIM, YOU ARE FREE TO LISTEN, UNDERSTAND, APOLOGIZE, FORGIVE, AND LOVE YOUR SPOUSE WITHOUT FEAR.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

- *Where do I feel most emotionally unsafe or vulnerable in conversations with my spouse? What do I tend to do in those moments?*
- *How quickly do I assume I already know what my spouse means before taking the time to listen and understand?*
- *Where am I looking outside of Jesus to find my security, worth, or identity?*

TOGETHER:

- *When conflict happens, what helps you feel safe enough to share honestly and openly with me?*
- *What is one assumption I tend to make about you that may not always be true?*
- *Where do you see us competing instead of completing, and how can we move toward greater unity in that area?*

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for reminding us that our security is found in You alone.
Thank You for loving us, choosing us, and securing us through the finished work of Jesus.

Forgive us for the times insecurity has shaped the way we speak, listen, and respond to one another. Reveal the places where fear has caused us to become defensive, make assumptions, or seek to be right instead of seeking to understand.

Teach us to listen with humble hearts, extend grace freely, and communicate with honesty and love. Root us deeply in Your love so that our identity is secure in You and our marriage reflects Your heart.

Help us walk together in unity, trusting You to continue transforming us into the husband and wife You have called us to be.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 6

KEY SCRIPTURE: *JAMES 1:19*

WORDS ARE FORMING THE ATMOSPHERE OF YOUR MARRIAGE

As we continue this journey of looking beneath the surface of our marriage...

...today we are going to focus on something that is easy to overlook:

THE ATMOSPHERE WE CREATE IN OUR HOME.

Every marriage has an atmosphere. It is shaped over time through the way we communicate, the way we respond to one another, and the way we handle both the ordinary moments and the difficult ones.

The atmosphere of a marriage is not created through one conversation or one interaction.
It is formed through the patterns that begin to shape the way we experience one another over time.

The way we speak to each other, the way we respond when we are frustrated, and the way we handle disappointment or conflict all contribute to the kind of environment we create together.

This is why our communication matters so deeply.

Our words are not just about exchanging information; they are part of how we build the kind of marriage we desire to have.

> ***"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."*** ~ JAMES 1:19

James is not simply giving us advice for having better conversations. He is inviting us into a different posture with one another.
He is reminding us that ***healthy communication requires humility:*** *the willingness to slow down, listen well, and create space for our spouse's thoughts, feelings, and experiences instead of immediately assuming we know what they mean or preparing our response before they have finished sharing.*

In marriage, it is easy to become focused on making sure our perspective is understood or proving why we feel the way we do. But when both people are focused primarily on being heard, connection can slowly begin to fade.

A healthy marriage requires more than simply expressing ourselves.
It requires creating space where our spouse feels seen, valued, and understood.

This is where the atmosphere of our marriage begins to take shape. The small moments we often overlook become the moments that shape how we experience one another. The way we respond when things do not go our way, how we handle misunderstandings, and whether we make room for our spouse's thoughts and feelings all communicate something about the kind of relationship we are building together.

The reality is that every couple will have moments where emotions rise, patience runs thin, and communication does not go the way they hoped. There will be times when we respond too quickly, misunderstand one another, or allow frustration to shape the way we engage.

But those moments do not have to define the atmosphere of your marriage.

WHAT MATTERS IS HOW WE RESPOND WHEN WE RECOGNIZE THOSE MOMENTS.
~ Are we willing to move toward repair?
~ Are we willing to take ownership of our part?
~ Are we willing to seek understanding instead of simply trying to prove our point?
~ Are we willing to invite Jesus into the places where our natural reactions reveal areas that still need His transformation?

Because every day, we are contributing to the kind of environment we live in together. Through our communication, we are creating a place where our spouse can feel known, valued, and loved, or we are creating a place where they begin to protect themselves.

This does not mean you will always get it right. There will be moments when exhaustion affects your patience, when stress impacts your response, or when hurt influences the way you communicate. But growth begins when we become aware of what is happening within us before it shapes the way we respond to the person we love most.

The invitation is not to create a marriage where conflict never happens.

The invitation is to become a couple who knows how to return to one another when conflict does happen.

Because the atmosphere of your marriage is being formed every day.

And as Jesus continues transforming our hearts, He begins transforming the way we communicate, connect, and care for one another.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

- *What patterns in my communication have become normal in our marriage, and are they creating the kind of relationship I desire?*
- *When tension rises or I feel misunderstood, how do I typically contribute to the atmosphere of our marriage?*
- *What is one area where Jesus is inviting me to respond differently?*

TOGETHER:

- *How would we describe the current atmosphere of our home and our marriage?*
- *What is something we already do that creates connection, encouragement, and safety between us?*
- *What is one intentional change we can make together to create a healthier atmosphere in our home?*

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the gift of marriage and for the opportunity to continue growing together. Help us become aware of the atmosphere we are creating in our home and the ways our choices impact one another.

Show us where our patterns, reactions, or communication have created distance. Give us humility to recognize where we need to grow and the courage to allow You to transform us.

Teach us to listen well, respond with wisdom, and create a marriage where Your love is reflected in the way we care for one another.
May our home become a place where we both feel known, valued, and encouraged as we continue walking with You together.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 7

KEY SCRIPTURE: *PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4*

STOP PERFORMING CONVERSATION. START PRACTICING UNDERSTANDING.

As we step into Day 7, we want to take time to reflect on the way we approach conversations with our spouse.



Today's truth is:

HEALTHY COMMUNICATION *IS LEARNING HOW TO TRULY UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER.*

Healthy communication is not just about having conversations. It is about learning how to truly understand one another.

For many of us, we know how to talk, but **we are still learning how to listen.**

We can have conversations every day and still miss what is happening beneath the surface of the person sitting across from us. Sometimes we enter conversations already carrying our own perspective, our own frustrations, or our own assumptions. We are thinking about what we want to say next, how we want to explain ourselves, or how we can help our spouse see things the way we see them. And before we realize it, we are no longer seeking understanding. We are seeking to be understood.

The problem is not that our thoughts, feelings, or experiences do not matter. God created each of us uniquely, and our perspective is part of the story He is writing in us.

The problem is when we become so focused on making sure our spouse understands us that we stop taking the time to understand them. ***Before we can truly understand our spouse, we have to first examine our posture.***

> ***"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."*** ~ PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

This is not saying that our thoughts, feelings, or experiences do not matter. It is not saying that we should ignore our needs or avoid sharing what is happening in our hearts.

But humility invites us to recognize that our perspective is not the only perspective.
It invites us to slow down and make room for the heart of the person in front of us.

Because sometimes the greatest barrier to understanding is not a lack of communication. It is our desire to be right, to be heard, or to make sure our spouse sees things the way we see them.

When we are secure in Christ, we no longer have to fight for our place in the conversation.
We can choose curiosity over assumption and connection over proving our point.

UNDERSTANDING BEGINS WHEN WE ARE WILLING TO LAY DOWN OUR NEED TO WIN AND CHOOSE TO LOVE. Healthy communication is not a one-time moment where we finally figure each other out. It is a discipline we practice over and over again. It requires us to slow down enough to let our spouse fully share what is on their heart without feeling like they need to defend, explain, or rush through their thoughts. It requires us to listen with the desire to understand, not simply to respond.

Sometimes that means reflecting back what we heard before moving forward, not because we are following a formula, but because we are reminding our spouse that their heart matters and that we genuinely want to understand their experience. When we do this, something begins to change. We start to recognize where we have been assuming instead of listening and we begin to notice patterns that keep us disconnected.

And we create space for honesty, authenticity, and deeper connection.

The reality is this: We are not trying to win conversations anymore. WE ARE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND REALITY ACCURATELY.
Because winning an argument may prove a point, but it does not always build connection.

Understanding creates a space where both people can be known. As you spend time with Jesus today, ask Him to reveal where you may have been assuming instead of listening, or where you have been more focused on being understood than seeking to understand.

TAKE TIME TO REFLECT ON THE MOMENTS WHEN YOU HAVE FELT TRULY KNOWN AND HEARD BY YOUR SPOUSE.
~ What made those moments meaningful, and how can you create more space for that kind of connection in your marriage?

Marriage is not built through perfect conversations. It is built through two people who continually choose humility, honesty, and grace. The invitation today is not to become perfect communicators. *The invitation is to become students of one another.* To continue learning who God created your spouse to be and to love them with the same patience and grace that Jesus has shown you.

Because your spouse is not someone to figure out. *They are someone to know.*

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

- *When my spouse is sharing something difficult, what is my natural response?*
  Do I tend to listen to understand, defend myself, fix the problem, or prepare my response?
- *Where do I tend to assume I already know what my spouse means instead of taking time to truly listen?*
- *What is one way Jesus is inviting me to grow in humility and become a better listener?*

TOGETHER:

- *When do you feel most understood by me? What happens in those moments that helps you feel known?*
- *Where do we tend to miss each other in conversations, and how can we create more space to understand one another?*
- *What communication pattern do we want to surrender to Jesus and allow Him to reshape in our marriage?*

PRAYER

Jesus,

We invite You into our conversations and into the places where we struggle to understand one another. Reveal the places where pride, defensiveness, or fear cause us to focus more on being heard than truly listening.

Teach us to approach each other with humility and to value each other's hearts above our own need to be right. Help us slow down and truly see one another. Give us patience to listen, wisdom to respond, and grace to create a marriage where we both feel known and loved. Strip ego from our conversations and rebuild honesty, trust, and connection in our marriage.

Continue shaping our hearts to look more like Yours. Help us love one another with the patience, kindness, and grace that You have shown us. Amen.

Friendly reminder! **Couples Connect starts Sept. 28 at all Flatirons locations.**

DAY 8

KEY SCRIPTURE: *GALATIANS 5:22-23*

AM I SUCCESSFUL? WHEN WORTH BECOMES PERFORMANCE

As we begin this next section of the devotional, we are going to spend the next few days looking beneath the surface of our relationships. **Better communication often reveals something deeper that is happening within us.** *It exposes what we believe about ourselves, where we find our identity, and what we are allowing to define our worth.*



Today's question is:

AM I SUCCESSFUL?

When we hear the word success, this is what comes to mind for most of us: success is the accomplishment of a desired goal or the pursuit of a meaningful life where our choices, relationships, work, and priorities align with what we value most. There is nothing wrong with setting goals or wanting to grow.

God has created each of us with gifts, purpose, and the desire to steward them well. *The question we have to ask ourselves is, what is defining success?*

In marriage, we can easily create a false sense of success because we begin using the world's definition to measure something that can only be defined by God's design.

Without realizing it, we start placing expectations on ourselves, our spouse, and even our marriage that were never meant to carry the weight we give them. *We begin believing that if we do enough, accomplish enough, or meet enough expectations, then we are successful.* Over time, those expectations begin creating pressure that slowly grows beneath the surface. *It may not be obvious at first, but eventually it begins to shape the way we think, the way we respond, and the way we love.*

The reason this happens is because we have unknowingly attached value to performance. We create an invisible standard: a bar that we or our spouse must continue reaching in order to feel successful. When that becomes our measure, it doesn't just affect our expectations; *it begins affecting the health of our relationship.*

Instead of living from a place of grace, we begin living from a place of striving. **Instead of receiving love as a gift, love can begin to feel like something that has to be earned.** When that happens, we slowly move away from the freedom God intended for marriage and begin operating from pressure rather than peace.

As we lean in today, I want to invite you to consider a different definition of success.
What if success wasn't measured by everything you accomplish, but by the work God is accomplishing within you?

Paul reminds us in Galatians that the evidence of a life surrendered to Christ is the fruit of the Spirit:

> ***"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."***
> ~ GALATIANS 5:22-23

These are not qualities we manufacture through harder work or greater effort.
They are the overflow of a life that is abiding in Christ and allowing His Spirit to transform us from the inside out.

~ How would your perspective of yourself change if this became your definition of success?
~ How would your perspective of your spouse change?
~ What would happen if, instead of measuring success by what each of you produces, you began celebrating what God is producing in each of you?

When our identity is rooted in Christ, we are free to stop striving for worth and begin living from the security of knowing we are already loved. *That changes the way we see ourselves, the way we see our spouse, and ultimately the way we experience marriage.*

As you spend time with Jesus today, ask Him to reveal where you may have allowed performance to become the measure of your value. Invite Him to show you where pressure has replaced peace and where He is calling you to exchange striving for the freedom that is found in Him.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

- *Where do I find myself trying to prove my value in my marriage?*
- *What does being a "good spouse" actually mean to me, and where did those expectations come from?*
- *How is Jesus inviting me to redefine success through the work of His Spirit rather than my own performance?*

TOGETHER:

- *When you think about being a successful spouse, what comes to mind? How are our definitions similar or different?*
- *Where have we unintentionally placed expectations on ourselves or each other that God never intended us to carry?*
- *How can we begin celebrating the fruit God is producing in one another instead of measuring success by performance?*

PRAYER

Jesus,

Thank You that our worth has never been determined by our performance, our accomplishments, or our ability to get everything right. Reveal the places where we have allowed pressure and expectations to shape the way we see ourselves and one another.

Help us recognize where we have measured success by the world's standards instead of Yours.

Teach us to live from the security of Your love and to celebrate the work Your Spirit is doing within us. May our marriage reflect the fruit of Your presence more than the pressure of our performance.

Continue transforming us from the inside out so that our love for one another flows from Your grace, Your truth, and the life You are producing in us.

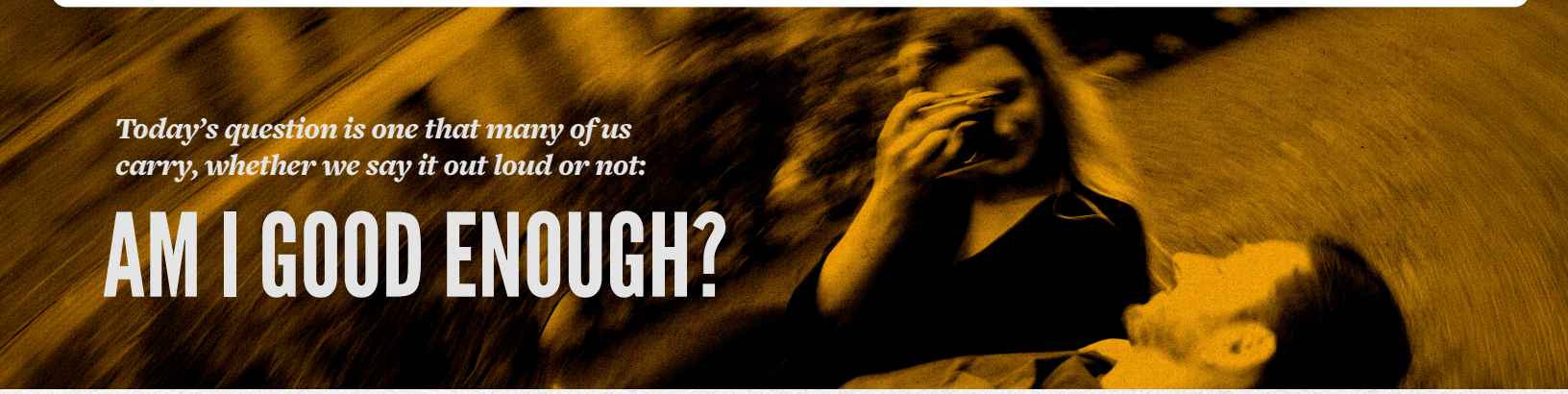
Amen.

DAY 9

KEY SCRIPTURE: *ROMANS 8:1*

AM I GOOD ENOUGH? THE HIDDEN ENGINE OF SHAME

As we continue this journey, we are moving a little deeper into the places we often keep hidden.



Today's question is one that many of us carry, whether we say it out loud or not:

AM I GOOD ENOUGH?

Our culture is constantly telling us we need to become someone else. Whether it is through social media, the news, the expectations we feel from those around us, or simply trying to keep up with everyone else's highlight reel, we are continually being told that who we are today is somehow not enough.

The challenge is that these messages rarely stay on the outside. Over time, they begin shaping the way we see ourselves.

The truth is none of us enters marriage without a story. We all carry experiences, wounds, disappointments, and words that have helped shape our identity. *Some of those experiences have reminded us of who God says we are. Others have created narratives that quietly convince us we are not enough.*

When those negative narratives take root, shame begins to grow.
Shame has a way of convincing us that if people really knew us, they would see us differently. It whispers that we need to hide our weaknesses, overcompensate for our shortcomings, or work harder so no one notices where we feel inadequate.

Without realizing it, we begin bringing that same mindset into our marriage.
We hide parts of ourselves because we are afraid, they won't be accepted. *We perform because we think we have to earn love.*
We carry disappointments in silence because we assume our spouse couldn't understand them anyway.
Sometimes those fears come from our own past. Other times they come from conversations, expectations, or experiences within our marriage that have reinforced those insecurities. Whether they are real or perceived, if they remain hidden, they continue shaping the way we relate to one another.

The problem with shame is that it always invites us to hide.
From the very beginning, after Adam and Eve sinned, their first response was not to run toward God; it was to hide from Him.
Shame still has the same goal today. It convinces us that hiding is safer than being known.

But intimacy has never been built through hiding.

It grows where honesty is met with grace.

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." ~ ROMANS 8:1

Jesus did not come to shame us into becoming someone different. **He came to free us from shame so we could live as the people He created us to be.**

As we experience His grace, we become people who can extend that same grace to our spouse.

~ Instead of managing our shame, we can begin naming it.
~ Instead of pretending everything is fine, we can begin inviting one another into the places that still need healing.

THIS KIND OF AUTHENTICITY IS NOT EASY.
~ It requires trust.
~ It requires humility.

Most of all, it requires believing that being fully known is not something to fear because we are already fully loved by Christ.

As you spend time with Jesus today, ask Him to reveal the places where shame has been shaping the way you see yourself. Invite Him to uncover the narratives you have believed about your identity and replace them with His truth.

As you prepare to talk with your spouse, remember that your goal is not to fix one another.
It is simply to create a space where each of you can be honest, known, and reminded that you are not carrying these struggles alone.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

- *Are there parts of my story, my struggles, or my fears that I tend to hide because I am afraid, they will change the way my spouse sees me?*
- *When I feel like I am not enough, how do I usually respond? Do I hide, overcompensate, withdraw, or try harder?*
- *What truth about my identity is Jesus inviting me to believe instead of the shame I have been carrying?*

TOGETHER:

- *What helps you feel safe enough to be completely honest with me?*
- *Are there places where shame has made it difficult for either of us to be fully known in our marriage?*
- *How can we become a place of grace for one another instead of a place where we feel like we have to hide?*

PRAYER

Jesus,

Thank You that You know every part of us and still choose to love us completely.
Reveal the places where shame has shaped our identity and affected the way we relate to one another. Give us the courage to stop hiding and the humility to trust You with the parts of our story we have kept in the dark.

Help us create a marriage where honesty is met with grace, where authenticity is welcomed, and where we continually remind one another of the freedom that is found in You.

Teach us to see ourselves and our spouse through Your eyes, not through the lens of shame.

Amen.

DAY 10

KEY SCRIPTURES: *JOHN 15:5 • 1 JOHN 4:19 • PSALM 127:1*

PRAYER:
WHEN MARRIAGE STOPS BEING SELF-MANAGED

As we continue digging deeper into the *thing beneath the thing* in our marriage...



...we have to remember a simple truth:

WE LOVE BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US.

Marriage was never meant to be something we simply manage.
Your spouse is not another responsibility to carry, a problem to solve, or a project to improve.

They are a gift God has entrusted to you: a person to love, learn from, grow with, and pursue God's Kingdom purposes alongside.

The challenge is that many of us try to build our marriage through our own strength. We rely on our experience, our communication skills, our personality, or our ability to figure things out. While those things have value, they were never intended to carry the weight of sustaining a healthy marriage.

Eventually, every couple reaches a point where they realize they can't do this on their own. There will be conversations they don't know how to navigate, hurts they don't know how to heal, and moments where they simply need wisdom beyond themselves. Those are often the moments when *God gently reminds us that He was never meant to be our last resort.* ***He has always wanted to be our first response.*** Jesus speaks directly to this reality in John 15:5 when He says,

> ***"Apart from Me you can do nothing."*** ~ JOHN 15:5

Prayer is our acknowledgment that we need God.
It is the recognition that we were never meant to carry our marriage on our own.

When God is absent from our communication, our communication eventually becomes self-protection. We become more focused on defending ourselves than understanding one another. We rely on our own wisdom instead of inviting God's wisdom into the conversation. *Instead of creating space for connection, we begin protecting ourselves from being hurt, misunderstood, or disappointed.*

But when we invite God into our marriage, not just during moments of crisis, but in the everyday moments of life, something begins to change.

Prayer changes the way we approach marriage.
It reminds us that our relationship is more than something to maintain; it is something God has invited us to steward alongside Him. As we spend time in His presence, our hearts begin aligning with His. We stop seeing our spouse through the lens of frustration or expectation and begin seeing them through the lens of grace.

This is the shift from obligation to devotion.

We begin loving our spouse not because we are trying to fulfill a role or meet a standard, but because we are responding to the love we have already received from God.

> ***"We love because He first loved us."*** ~ 1 JOHN 4:19

Our love for one another was never meant to come from an empty place of trying harder.
It was always meant to flow from the overflow of God's love working within us.

As we create rhythms that draw us closer to God, we begin to know His character more deeply. ***We experience His patience, His grace, His forgiveness, and His faithfulness toward us. Over time, that relationship begins to overflow into our marriage.***

As God continues transforming our hearts, it begins changing the way we love. We become more patient in our conversations, more generous with grace, and more intentional about seeing and serving our spouse the way Christ sees and loves us. We begin noticing the small details of who God created our spouse to be. We become more aware of their needs, their hopes, their struggles, and the ways God is continuing to work in their life.

This is where marriage becomes more than something we manage. ***It becomes something we surrender.***

> ***"Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain."*** ~ PSALM 127:1

The goal of prayer is not simply to improve your marriage. ***The goal is to invite God to build it.***
When we surrender our performance, our expectations, and our desire to control the outcome, we make room for God to transform our hearts, our minds, our souls, and our relationship.

Marriage becomes a journey with God rather than something we are trying to figure out on our own.
This is where marriage stops being MANAGED and starts being SURRENDERED.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

- *Where have I been relying on my own strength, wisdom, or ability to manage my marriage instead of inviting God into it?*
- *How have my prayers for my marriage been shaped more by moments of crisis than by a daily desire to walk with God?*
- *What is one area of my marriage where God may be inviting me to surrender control and trust Him more fully?*

TOGETHER:

- *What role has prayer played in our marriage? How have we seen God work through the moments we have invited Him in?*
- *Are there areas where we have been trying to manage or fix something that God is asking us to surrender to Him?*
- *What is one simple rhythm we can create together that helps us intentionally invite God into our relationship?*

PRAYER

Father,

Thank You for the gift of marriage and for reminding us that we were never meant to build it apart from You. Forgive us for the moments when we have relied on our own strength, our own understanding, or our own ability to control the outcome. Teach us to surrender our relationship to You and trust that You are the One who transforms hearts.

Help us invite You into our conversations, our decisions, our conflicts, and our everyday moments. Shape us into people who love with the same grace, patience, humility, and forgiveness that You have shown us.

Continue building our marriage on a foundation that is centered on You. May our relationship reflect Your love and become a place where You continue to grow and transform us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 11

KEY SCRIPTURES: *JEREMIAH 17:9 • PSALM 139:23-24 • ROMANS 12:2 • 2 TIMOTHY 1:7*

AM I SECURE?
WHY YOU KEEP AVOIDING HARD THINGS.

Today we are looking at something that shows up in many marriages but often goes unnoticed: **the ways we avoid the hard things.**



Continue reflecting on the question:

AM I SECURE?

For many couples, conflict is not difficult because they don't love each other.
It is difficult because conflict often reveals places in us that still need healing. When we think about our marriages, many of us can identify areas where communication breaks down or patterns, we seem to repeat over and over again.

WE MAY FIND OURSELVES ASKING:
~ *Why do we always struggle with this?*
~ *Why does this conversation keep going the same direction?*
The answer is often deeper than the moment in front of us.

As we have talked about throughout this devotional, we all bring things into our marriage. We bring our experiences, our past hurts, our fears, our expectations, and the ways we have learned to protect ourselves. Some of these things were shaped by beautiful moments in our lives, and some were shaped by moments where we experienced hurt, disappointment, rejection, or misunderstanding.

And without realizing it, those experiences can begin influencing how we respond to our spouse today. Avoidance is not simply a personality trait. It is something that can be formed over time.

Maybe you learned that staying quiet kept the peace. Or you learned that expressing your emotions was not safe. And now you disconnect because it felt easier than facing conflict and you avoid hard conversations because you fear what might happen if you opened yourself up.

The problem is that what once helped us navigate difficult moments can eventually become something that prevents us from experiencing deeper connection in our marriage.

The past has a way of participating in our present reactions.
This is why Scripture invites us to look deeper.

> ***"The heart is deceitful above all things..."*** ~ JEREMIAH 17:9

This does not mean we cannot trust God or that our hearts are hopeless. It reminds us that we do not always see ourselves clearly.
There are places within us that only God can reveal and heal.

Psalm 139 gives us a beautiful invitation:

> ***"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*** ~ PSALM 139: 23-24

This is the posture we need to bring into our marriage.
Not shame. Not self-condemnation. But surrender.

God is not revealing these places in us to make us feel broken.
He reveals them because He loves us and desires freedom for us.

JESUS DOESN'T JUST WANT TO IMPROVE OUR MARRIAGES; HE WANTS TO TRANSFORM THE PEOPLE INSIDE OF THEM.

That transformation begins when we are willing to allow Him into the deeper places of our hearts; the places where our fears, our wounds, and our patterns have been formed. He is not asking us to ignore those things or pretend they do not exist.
He is inviting us to bring them into His presence so He can heal what has been wounded and reshape what has been formed.

Healing begins when we stop pretending our reactions are only about what is happening right now.

Sometimes the intensity of our response is connected to something much deeper. Sometimes the conversation we are having today is carrying the weight of something we experienced years ago.

But the good news is that God does not leave us stuck in old patterns.

> ***"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."*** ~ ROMANS 12:2

Through Jesus, we are not trapped by the ways we have always responded.
God is able to transform the patterns that have been formed in us and teach us a new way of living, communicating, and loving.

THAT TRANSFORMATION REQUIRES HONESTY AND IT REQUIRES US TO BE WILLING TO ASK:
"What is really happening inside of me?" instead of only focusing on what our spouse did wrong.

And often, what keeps us from facing these things is FEAR. We worry about what might happen if we are honest, vulnerable, or willing to sit in the discomfort of a difficult conversation. We may carry a fear of being rejected, misunderstood, hurt again, or discovering that we are not enough. *Instead of moving toward connection, we can find ourselves protecting our hearts and avoiding the very conversations that could bring healing and deeper understanding.*

But God does not invite us into hard conversations to shame us.
He invites us into them because love creates a place where healing can happen.

When we allow Him into the places we have avoided, *He begins to replace fear with* ***trust*** *and defensiveness with* ***openness.***

> ***"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."*** ~ 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

WHEN WE ARE SECURE IN CHRIST, WE NO LONGER HAVE TO AVOID HARD THINGS TO PROTECT OURSELVES.
We can begin facing them with humility, grace, and courage because our identity is already secure in Him.

TODAY, TAKE TIME TO ASK JESUS:
~ Where do I tend to shut down, withdraw, or disengage?
~ What am I afraid will happen if I truly open up?
~ What might God be revealing about the deeper places beneath my reactions?

The goal is not to find someone to blame. ***The goal is to understand.***
When we can recognize the patterns we bring into marriage, we create space for God to heal what has been wounded and transform what has been formed.

And that is where deeper connection begins.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

- *When conflict happens, what is my usual response? Do I tend to withdraw, defend, avoid, control, or shut down?*
- *What am I most afraid might happen when I face hard conversations?*
- *Is there something from my past that may be influencing how I respond to my spouse today?*

TOGETHER:

- *What patterns do we notice that tend to create distance between us during conflict?*
- *What helps each of us feel safe enough to stay connected during difficult conversations?*
- *How can we approach our differences with curiosity and grace instead of blame?*

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for loving us enough to reveal the places in our hearts that need healing. Help us recognize the patterns, fears, and wounds we carry into our marriage and give us the courage to bring them before You.

Forgive us for the times we have protected ourselves instead of moving toward connection. Teach us to respond from the security we have in Christ rather than from fear, defensiveness, or past experiences.

Continue transforming us from the inside out. Help us extend grace to ourselves and to one another as You do Your healing work in us. May our marriage become a place where honesty, vulnerability, and love can grow because we are anchored in You.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 12

KEY SCRIPTURES: *GENESIS 1:27-28 • GENESIS 2:18 • EPHESIANS 5:25-32 • ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12*

DO I HAVE A PURPOSE?
MARRIAGE IS NOT MAINTENANCE

As we continue walking through these deeper questions, we eventually arrive at...



...a question that touches every area of our lives:

DO I HAVE A PURPOSE?

After spending time looking at our identity, our insecurities, our communication, and the places where God is inviting us into deeper healing, this question begins to surface because every person longs to know that their life matters.

~ We want to know that we are valuable.
~ We want to know that we are making a difference.
~ We want to know that what we do has meaning.
~ But sometimes, especially in marriage, we can begin attaching our value to the roles we carry.

We may start believing our worth comes from being the provider, the homemaker, the one who takes care of the finances, or the one who keeps everything running.bThose things are important. They are ways we serve and love one another.

But they were never meant to define our identity.

Your purpose is not something you achieve. *It is something God has already placed within you.*

Before you were a spouse, a parent, a professional, or any other role you carry, ***you were created in the image of God and called to live according to His purposes.***

Genesis 1:27–28 tells us that God created humanity in His image and gave them a shared calling to reflect Him, cultivate what He had created, and participate in His work in the world.

> ***"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"*** ~ GENESIS 1:27-28

Purpose was never meant to be lived out alone.
From the beginning, God created marriage as a ***partnership.***

> ***"The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone...'"*** ~ GENESIS 2:18

Marriage was not created simply as a way to have companionship. *It was created as a* ***partnership*** *where two people could walk together in the calling and purpose God had placed before them.*

THIS CHANGES THE WAY WE VIEW MARRIAGE.

Marriage is not simply about managing a home, dividing responsibilities, or making life run more efficiently. Those things are part of marriage, but they are not the ultimate purpose of marriage.

MARRIAGE IS ABOUT TWO PEOPLE COMING TOGETHER AND ASKING:
~ What is God building through us?

When we lose sight of purpose, marriage can slowly become about maintenance. We begin focusing only on schedules, responsibilities, tasks, and everything that needs to get done. Without realizing it, we can move from being partners on mission to simply being people managing a life together.

But God created marriage for more than survival.
He created it for partnership, growth, and to reflect His love and His heart to the world around us.

Ephesians 5 describes marriage as a picture of Christ and the Church.
The love Christ has for His people is not passive or self-focused.
IT IS SACRIFICIAL, INTENTIONAL, AND CENTERED ON GIVING OF HIMSELF FOR THE GOOD OF ANOTHER.

> ***"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.'" This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church."*** ~ EPHESIANS 5:25-32

This is the kind of love we are called to reflect in our marriage.

The question is not simply: *Are we compatible?*
The deeper question is: *Are we aligned with what God is doing in and through our lives?*

Compatibility may bring two people together, but PURPOSE is what teaches them how to walk together.

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 reminds us that two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor, and a cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

> ***"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."*** ~ ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12

When God is at the center of a marriage, the relationship becomes more than two people trying to build a good life together.
It becomes two people surrendering their lives to something greater than themselves.

LIVING WITH PURPOSE MEANS WE STOP SEEING OUR MARRIAGE AS A LIST OF THINGS WE HAVE TO ACCOMPLISH AND BEGIN SEEING IT AS SOMETHING WE GET TO PARTICIPATE IN WITH GOD AND WITH ONE ANOTHER.

This requires us to ask different questions.
Instead of only asking: *What needs to get done?*
We begin asking: *What is God inviting us into?*

Instead of only managing responsibilities, we begin building a shared mission.
Instead of simply existing alongside each other, we begin intentionally walking together.

Today, take time to reflect on what God has called you to individually and what He may be inviting you into together.

Because your marriage is not just about creating a comfortable life.
It is about creating a faithful life.

A life where two people are continually being shaped by Jesus and using their gifts, experiences, and relationship to reflect His Kingdom.
Marriage is not maintenance. MARRIAGE IS A MISSION.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

- *What have I allowed to define my value outside of my identity in Christ?*
- *How has marriage revealed areas where God is growing, refining, or challenging me?*
- *What do I believe God has called me to be and do with the life He has given me?*

TOGETHER:

- *What do we believe God may be building through our marriage?*
- *Are we more focused on managing our responsibilities or living with a shared purpose?*
- *What is one way we can intentionally align our marriage more with God's mission?*

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for creating us with purpose and inviting us into the work You are doing in the world. Help us remember that our value is not found in what we accomplish, the roles we carry, or what we are able to provide. Our identity is found in You.

Teach us to see our marriage as more than a relationship we manage. Help us recognize it as a gift and a calling that You have entrusted to us. Show us where we have become focused on simply getting through life instead of intentionally walking through it with You and with each other.

Give us wisdom to understand how You are shaping us individually and how You desire to work through us together. Help us become more aligned with Your heart, Your purposes, and Your mission.

May our marriage reflect Your love, bring glory to You, and become a place where we encourage one another to become who You created us to be.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



DAY 13

KEY SCRIPTURES: *JAMES 1:22 • MATTHEW 7:24-25 • JAMES 2:17*

INSIGHT WITHOUT ACTION IS JUST AWARENESS YOU IGNORE

As we come to the end of this journey, we have spent time allowing God to reveal what is happening beneath the surface of our marriage.

WE HAVE ASKED DIFFICULT QUESTIONS:
~ Am I safe?
~ Am I wanted?
~ Am I secure?
~ Do I have purpose?

We have looked at the places where we communicate, where we struggle, where we hide, and where we have allowed things outside of God to shape how we see ourselves and our spouse.

But revelation is only the beginning.



At some point, we have to ask a different question:

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH WHAT GOD HAS SHOWN US?

Because insight without action simply becomes awareness that we choose not to respond to.

God does not reveal things in our hearts just so we can recognize them. **He reveals them because He desires to TRANSFORM them.**

> ***"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."*** ~ JAMES 1:22

James reminds us that there is a difference between knowing something and allowing it to change us. It is possible to understand what God is teaching us, recognize areas where we need to grow, and still continue living the same way.

Awareness alone does not create transformation. **PRACTICE DOES.**

This is true in our relationship with God, and it is true in our marriage.

We may recognize that our communication needs to change but simply knowing that isn't enough.

Growth begins when we intentionally practice listening with humility, responding with patience, and choosing connection even when it feels difficult.

The same is true in every area of our marriage.

God may reveal what needs to change, but transformation happens as we trust Him enough to put those truths into practice each day.

Jesus described this in Matthew 7 when He talked about two people who heard His words. One built his house on the rock because he not only heard what Jesus said ***but put it into practice***. The other heard the same words ***but did not act on them, and his foundation could not withstand the storm.***

The difference was not what they knew. ***The difference was what they practiced.*** **Marriage is no different.**

Over the past several days, you have invited God into places that may have gone untouched for a long time. Perhaps He has revealed patterns in your communication, brought attention to wounds you have been carrying, or gently uncovered areas where He is inviting you to grow. Maybe He has prompted conversations you've been avoiding or shown you where taking responsibility is the next step toward healing.

Whatever God has been revealing, don't allow it to stop at awareness.

His desire is not simply to help you recognize what needs to change, but to invite you into the transformation that comes through walking in OBEDIENCE.

THAT KIND OF RESPONSE REQUIRES BOTH **HONESTY** AND **HUMILITY.**

It means being willing to trust that God's way leads to the freedom and deeper connection He has always desired for your marriage. ***It requires both individuals in a marriage being willing to look at their own heart before focusing on what their spouse needs to change.***

Today, take time together to identify **what needs to become different in your marriage, not just what you understand differently.**

ASK:
~ What is something God is inviting me to take personal responsibility for?
~ What is something we need to work on together?
~ Where have we gained awareness but avoided action?

Because change rarely happens through intention alone.
It happens when intention becomes PRACTICE.
This is where honesty becomes visible.

One way to make that visible is to write down commitments to one another. These are not meant to be perfect promises or emotional statements made in a moment of inspiration.

They are intentional reminders of the kind of marriage you desire to build with ***God at the center.***

WRITE COMMITMENTS THAT REFLECT REALITY.
~ Name what you want to grow in.
~ Name what you want to protect.
~ Name how you want to love one another moving forward.

BECAUSE WHAT WE PRACTICE SHAPES WHO WE BECOME.

The goal is not to create a perfect marriage.

The goal is to become two people who continually surrender themselves to Jesus and allow Him to shape the way they love, serve, and walk with one another.

Insight opens our eyes.
But obedience is what moves us forward.

TOGETHER REFLECTION:

- *What is something God has revealed to us during this devotional that we do not want to ignore?*
- *Where do we need to move from simply understanding something to actually practicing something different?*
- *What commitments do we want to make to one another as we continue building the marriage God has called us to?*

PRACTICE: WRITE YOUR COMMITMENTS

- *Take time together to write a few commitments that reflect the marriage you desire to build.*

CONSIDER

~ How do we want to communicate with one another?
~ How do we want to handle conflict?
~ How do we want to pursue one another?
~ How do we want to keep God at the center of our marriage?

Let these commitments be a reflection of where God is leading you, not just where you hope to be someday.

DAY 14

KEY SCRIPTURES: *HEBREWS 10:24-25 • PHILIPPIANS 1:6*

RHYTHM OR REGRESSION: YOU DON'T STAY HERE BY ACCIDENT

As you come to the end of these fourteen days, remember this isn't the finish line. *It is the beginning of a new chapter that God is inviting you into.*

Over the past two weeks, you've spent time asking hard questions, inviting Jesus into places that may have gone untouched for years, and allowing Him to reveal areas where He wants to bring healing, freedom, and deeper connection.

That work doesn't end today. **In many ways, today is where it truly begins.**

Yesterday, you spent time identifying the kind of marriage you believe God is calling you toward. You reflected on what He has been teaching you, wrote down commitments, and began putting words around the marriage you want to *build together.*



Today, take your commitments and...

CREATE NEW RHYTHMS TOGETHER.

Today is about taking those commitments and creating rhythms that will help you continue walking in them.

Because healthy marriages don't happen by accident.
They are built through intentional choices made over time.

The reality is that every marriage is moving in a direction. None of us wake up one morning hoping to feel disconnected from our spouse, yet without intentionality, that can slowly become our reality. The demands of work, raising a family, responsibilities around the home, and the pace of everyday life have a way of filling our calendars while quietly pulling us away from the relationship we value most. Before long, we can find ourselves simply managing life together instead of intentionally growing together.

That is why healthy rhythms matter.
They create space to slow down, reconnect, invite God into the everyday moments of marriage, and continue becoming the husband and wife He is shaping us to be.

Throughout Scripture we see that God often worked through **rhythms**. *He invited His people to remember, to gather, to pray, to worship, and to continually return to Him.* Those rhythms weren't about checking a box.

They were about keeping their hearts aligned with Him. ***Marriage is no different.***

IF WE WANT TO CONTINUE GROWING, WE NEED TO INTENTIONALLY CREATE SPACE FOR GOD TO KEEP SHAPING US.

TAKE TIME TODAY TO TALK ABOUT THE RHYTHMS YOU WANT TO BUILD INTO YOUR MARRIAGE.

- *When will you intentionally check in with one another?*
- *How will you handle conflict when it comes?*
- *How will you repair moments when one of you falls short?*
- *What will accountability look like so that neither of you carries the responsibility of growth alone?*

Hebrews 10:24–25 reminds us to encourage one another and not neglect meeting together.

> ***"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another..."*** ~ HEBREWS 10:24-25

Healthy relationships grow when we intentionally create space to remain connected.

These rhythms are not about perfection. **They are about creating consistent opportunities to invite God into your marriage and choosing one another again and again.**

The goal is not to make sure you never struggle.

THE GOAL IS TO CONTINUE TURNING TOWARD ONE ANOTHER AND TOWARD JESUS, TRUSTING THAT HE WILL KEEP DOING THE WORK HE HAS BEGUN IN BOTH OF YOU.

As you close this devotional, spend time looking back over what God has done. Reflect on the conversations you had, the honesty you shared, the moments where healing began, and the ways your perspective of one another may have changed. There may still be areas where growth is needed, but don't miss the opportunity to thank God for what He has already begun.

Gratitude is not pretending everything is perfect.
It is recognizing God's faithfulness in the middle of the journey and trusting Him with what is still ahead.

> ***"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*** ~ PHILIPPIANS 1:6

That promise is true for each of you individually, and it is true for your marriage.

This devotional was never about becoming the perfect husband or wife.

IT WAS ABOUT LEARNING TO BECOME TWO PEOPLE WHO CONTINUALLY SURRENDER THEMSELVES TO JESUS AND ALLOW HIM TO TRANSFORM THE WAY THEY LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

Jesus doesn't just want to improve your marriage; He wants to ***transform*** *the people inside of it.*

As you continue moving forward, don't lose sight of the covenant God has entrusted to you.
Continue choosing one another, extending grace to one another, and inviting God into every conversation, every challenge, every celebration, and every ordinary moment.

The marriage God is building isn't sustained by one emotional experience or fourteen days of reflection.

It is built through a lifetime of faithfully saying "yes" to Him and "yes" to one another.

May these fourteen days simply be the BEGINNING of all that God desires to do in and through your marriage.

TOGETHER REFLECTION:

- *What rhythms do we want to establish that will help us continue growing spiritually and relationally together?*
- *When life becomes busy or conflict creates distance, how will we intentionally reconnect with one another and with God?*
- *Looking back over these past fourteen days, what are we most grateful that God has begun doing in us and in our marriage?*

CREATE YOUR MARRIAGE RHYTHMS:

Take time together to write down a few intentional rhythms you want to protect as you move forward.

CONSIDER DISCUSSING:

~ How often will we intentionally check in with one another?
~ What will our plan be for repairing conflict when it happens?
~ How will we continue praying together and pursuing spiritual growth?
~ Who can lovingly encourage and hold us accountable as we continue growing?
~ How will we make space to celebrate what God is doing in our marriage?

The goal isn't to create another checklist.
The goal is to create intentional rhythms that keep your hearts connected to one another and aligned with the One who is continuing to transform you.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

Before we close this journey together, we want to leave you with one final invitation.
Healthy marriages are not built in isolation. Throughout these past fourteen days, you've experienced what can happen when you intentionally create space to invite God into your marriage. But this journey was never meant to end here.

Growth happens as we continue walking with Jesus, and often He uses community to encourage us, challenge us, and remind us that we are not alone.

If you have been looking for a place to continue growing in your marriage, we would love to invite you to join us for ***Couples Connect.*** ***Couples Connect*** is a community of couples who are pursuing the same thing you are: a Kingdom marriage that honors God and reflects His love. It is a place where you and your spouse can meet other couples who are on their own journey of building a Kingdom marriage while continuing to grow in understanding how you can fulfill your purpose as individuals and as a couple for His purpose. This is a space to have meaningful conversations, learn alongside other couples, encourage one another, and continue discovering what it looks like to build a marriage centered on Jesus.

Couples Connect kicks off on September 28th, 2026.

For more details about gathering days, times, and how to get connected, visit **Flatirons Church**.
NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE IN YOUR JOURNEY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WALK IT ALONE.
We would be honored to continue walking alongside you as together we pursue the marriage God designed us to have.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for meeting us throughout these past fourteen days. Thank You for the ways You have encouraged us, challenged us, and reminded us of Your love for us and for our marriage. As we move forward, help us remain faithful to what You have been teaching us. Give us the wisdom to build healthy rhythms that keep our hearts aligned with You and connected to one another.

When we stumble, remind us to return to You quickly. When life becomes busy, help us protect what matters most. Continue transforming us into the husband and wife You created us to be, and may our marriage become a reflection of Your faithfulness, Your grace, and Your love.
Thank You for reminding us that this is not the end of the journey, but the beginning of a lifetime of walking with You together.

In Jesus' name, Amen.