

THE
Before-You-Marry
BOOK *of* QUESTIONS

BILL & PAM FARREL



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This book contains stories in which the author has changed people's names and some details of their situations in order to protect their privacy.

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*He who finds a wife finds what is good
And receives favor from the LORD.
(Proverbs 18:22)*

*To our daughters-in-love,
Hannah and Caleigh.
We prayed for each of you before you were even conceived.
You are so perfect for each of our sons,
who were wise enough to marry you.
And after raising three sons,
it is so much fun to have two more “Mrs. Farrels” in the clan!*

*To the couples who have given Bill the honor
of performing your wedding ceremony,
thanks for sharing this journey of love.
Other couples will be strengthened
because of the wisdom God imparted in our times together.*

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Are You Ready for Love?

Decide to Be Relationship Ready

*May the most you wish for
Be the least you get.¹*

You picked up this book because you are in love (or you hope to be in love)! Love matters to you. You might also want to read this book because you want the best life has to offer and you know that experiencing real love is a big part of what makes for a happy life. You also might be holding this book because you have been hurt by love and you never want to experience that kind of pain again. Or you might simply have a lot of questions about love:

- How can I tell if I am in love?
- What is healthy love?
- Is there such a thing as love at first sight?
- Can love last a lifetime?
- Can I heal my broken heart and find love again?
- How do I navigate love and move a relationship forward in a positive way?
- How can I get better at falling in love with the right person?

- What are the things that blow love apart and how can I avoid them?
- How do I know that this is “the one”?
- What is the next step in love?
- Should I marry?

We want to help you explore those questions—and more! Love uncovers lots of questions within us because it is a journey of self-discovery driven forward by curiosity. As you read, we are confident we have questions to add you might not even have thought about asking yet.

The Original Love

We often have some unique views on love from childhood, like those from these kids:

“Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other.”—Karl, age 5

“Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your french fries without making them give you any of theirs.”—Chrissy, age 6

“Love is what makes you smile when you’re tired.”—Terri, age 4

“Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK.”—Danny, age 7

“Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My Mommy and Daddy are like that. They look gross when they kiss.”—Emily, age 8

“Love is what’s in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen.”—Bobby, age 7

“Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it every day.”—Noelle, age 7

“Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well.”—Tommy, age 6

“Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken.”—Elaine, age 5

“Love is when Mommy sees Daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than a movie star.”—Chris, age 7

“When you love somebody your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you.”—Karen, age 7²

The View from the One Who Knows Love Best

Let's begin by looking at love by the one who created love—God. How do we know God originated love?

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. *God is love*. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them (1 John 4:16 emphasis added).

We love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19).

When the Bible says, “God is love,” it means that love is the driving force of his character. Everything he does, everything he creates, everything he communicates stems from his love. Out of his desire for us to experience the fullness of life, he “cloned” love, making it available for all the humans he created out of his love. Since he is the creator of love, any time your love for one another aligns with God's principles, it will run smoother, work better, feel richer, be kinder, and have a sweeter influence on others. We can bank on this love. First John 4:16 says we “know” and “rely on” the love God has for us. “Know” means we grasp it with our minds, and “rely on” means we embrace it in our hearts. God's love is intellectually and emotionally faithful.

It Is All Good!

A very interesting word is repeated throughout the creation account in Genesis:

When God created light, “*God saw that the light was good*” (Genesis 1:3-4).

When he created the land and sea, “*God saw that it was good*” (1:9-10).

When he created vegetation, “*God saw that it was good*” (1:11-12).

When he created the sun and moon, “*God saw that it was good*” (1:16-18).

When he created the animals, “*God saw that it was good*” (1:20-25).

After creating Adam and assigning him work, God said, “It is *not good* for the man to be alone” (2:18a). Then he created Eve as a suitable helper (2:18b) and “God saw all that he had made, and *it was very good*” (1:31).

The word translated “good” is the Hebrew word *tôb*, which means “beautiful or functioning the way God intended.” “Good,” in this context, describes the ability of God’s creation to function in the way he intended it to operate. The modifier “very” applies words such as *abundantly*, *exceedingly*, *immensely*, or *intensely* to the functionality of what God created. So marriage, the uniting of a man and a woman in love, is abundantly, exceedingly, utterly, immensely beautiful!

As a result, many synonyms are used to describe goodness in relationships:

<i>Desirable</i>	<i>Favorable</i>
<i>Beautiful</i>	<i>Precious</i>
<i>Moral</i>	<i>Pure</i>
<i>Happy</i>	<i>Right</i>
<i>Delightful</i>	<i>Worthy</i>

These same words are often used to describe how we feel when we are in love and about the one we love. One of the main questions, therefore, that helps evaluate whether a relationship has what it takes

for a lifetime of love is, “Does our relationship function the way God intended to the point that it can be called good?”

To say the least, God has a very high (on the highest end of any scale) view of love and marriage. Therefore, to keep things *tôb* or beautiful in a love relationship, it is wise to listen to God’s opinions on how relationship, love, marriage, sex, and intimacy work.

The Beautiful Life

We have always encouraged people to build a life worthy of inviting someone into. When you build your own life to be *tôb* or beautiful, you will attract others who also want life and love to be *tôb* or beautiful. Quality attracts quality. Healthy attracts healthy.

We recommend you take some time right now to work through the following self-evaluation exercise. In each area of your life listed below, place an *X* on the line to indicate how *tôb* (how beautiful, healthy, right, good) you think you are in this area. No one will be “very *tôb*” in every area. Notice the last question is to rate how honest you have been in your answers. In relationships, honesty is very *tôb*.

Emotional: Are you stable psychologically and socially? Do people, especially leaders and peers, see you as a stable, loving, caring, and well-adjusted person?

NOT TÔB

VERY TÔB

GOAL: Change I would like to make to become more *tôb* (beautiful/excellent) in this area:

Intellectual: Are you willing to grow in your knowledge about how relationships work and the skills that lead to lifelong, healthy love?

NOT TÔB

VERY TÔB

GOAL: Change I would like to make to become more *tôb* (beautiful/excellent) in this area:

Vocational: Is your work and career life on track? (If you are in college or receiving training, can you see the end in sight and have a career direction in mind?)

NOT TÔB

VERY TÔB

GOAL: Change I would like to make to become more *tôb* (beautiful/excellent) in this area:

Relational: Have you dealt with any past ghosts from your family of origin or past relationships? Is your heart healed, soft, and positive toward love and relationship?

NOT TÔB

VERY TÔB

GOAL: Change I would like to make to become more *tôb* (beautiful/excellent) in this area:

Spiritual: Are you seeking answers to your spiritual questions? Are you growing in your love and knowledge of God? Are you connected to people who can help you learn more about God and how he views love and relationships?

NOT TÔB

VERY TÔB

GOAL: Change I would like to make to become more *tôb* (beautiful/excellent) in this area:

Physical: Are you fit and healthy (or working at being this way), and do you care about your appearance?

NOT TÔB

VERY TÔB

GOAL: Change I would like to make to become more *tôb* (beautiful/excellent) in this area:

Inspirational: Do you serve God, church, nonprofits, your community, neighbors? How other-centered are you?

NOT TÔB

VERY TÔB

GOAL: Change I would like to make to become more *tôb* (beautiful/excellent) in this area:

Financial: Are you earning, saving, and spending money in a way to stabilize and provide for your life today and prepare well for tomorrow?

NOT TÔB

VERY TÔB

GOAL: Change I would like to make to become more *tôb* (beautiful/excellent) in this area:

Truthful: How honest, straightforward, and authentic have you been in your answers?

NOT TÔB

VERY TÔB

GOAL: Change I would like to make to become more *tôb* (beautiful/excellent) in this area:

Relationship Ready?

In *Not Another Dating Book: A Devotional Guide to All Your Relationships*, Renee Fisher gives some good common-sense advice:

Honesty is so crucial to strong relationships. And not just honesty about the “big stuff” like past relationships. Be honest about your future. Be honest about your weaknesses. Be honest about your hopes, your regrets, and your fears. Honesty up front will prevent heartbreak later.³

To be honest with another, you first need to be honest with yourself. Take time to look at how ready you are for a future relationship by how healed you are from any past ones. Renee continues,

How can you offer your whole self to a person if your heart still belongs to someone else? How can you fully embrace and rejoice in a new relationship if you are still licking old wounds? It is not fair to you or to the new person in your life.⁴

In *Single Men Are Like Waffles, Single Women Are Like Spaghetti*, we have an entire chapter devoted to help people become more relationship ready, but here is a quick checklist. Do a quick inventory and see just how ready you might be for a more serious relationship that is leading to marriage:

Are You Ready?

- Have you been on your own? (Are you paying for your own housing, food, personal items, car, phone, insurance? Are you responsible for your own personal decisions, schedule, life plan?)
- Are you out of debt or have you implemented a plan to consistently reduce your debt and pay off loans?
- Do you have a strong plan and direction for your life?
- Do you have a job and career and have you seen any success in this, or do you have a clear path to college or grad school graduation?
- Do you have a dependable, authentic group of friends you can confide in and trust their opinions and counsel?
- Do you have a healthy relationship with your parents, grandparents, and extended family—or have you sought to have one from your side of the relationship?
- Have you dealt with your family-of-origin issues? Did either of your parents have addictions, abandon you, abuse you, and so on? Have you pursued counseling or mentoring to overcome those hurts?

- Have you acknowledged and forgiven any hurts from past relationships?
- Have you dealt with any of your demons (drugs, drinking, pornography, sexual promiscuity, gambling, or shopping addictions)?
- Have you finished and closed the doors on all past relationships? (You are not seeing a person from your past or carrying romantic feelings for him or her.)
- If you were previously married, have you completed all details of that relationship? Is the divorce *final* (you're not just separated)? If children are involved, has a custody settlement been agreed upon? Have you divided property?
- If you were in a serious dating relationship, a previous engagement, or marriage, have you given yourself time to regroup and readjust to life as a solo person? (One healthy time gauge would be *at least* one month off *all* dating relationships for each year you were with a person. For example, if you dated for two years, were engaged a year, and then broke it off, you should not go on any kind of date for at least three months. Most people require double this (so six-months breathing room). If you lived with someone or a marriage ended, you should double this again. So if you dated two years, were engaged one, and married for three, at minimum give yourself a year or even two to recover or regroup.)
- If you have children, are they at a place they can handle change or a new person entering your life? (Kids are *not* as resilient as you might want them to be. It is wise to consult a licensed counselor who specializes in children before exposing your children to romantic relationships. Use the wisdom of those who have a proven track record of helping children and families to add to your own wisdom before making life-altering decisions.)

- Do you have a growing relationship with God in a way that you can sense when God is leading and guiding your life?

You should have been able to mark off all the items on this list, and if you were not, then those are areas you will want to make forward movement on before jumping into a serious dating relationship, engagement, or marriage. A healthy person is not afraid of self-assessment and self-improvement because they see the value of becoming their best for the sake of all those they love, including the one they will marry. Things do not need to be perfect, but from your side of any and all relationships, have you tried to make things right?

Time to Reflect



Perspective

Looking at your list of how *tôb* your life is and the goals you've laid out to live more as God intended, how ready are you for marriage? Is there any area you need to refine, any skeletons in the closet you need to address, or any areas you need some time to work on so that your life is a stronger one to invite someone you love into? Take time to write down your thoughts and feelings as you reflect on this list of life responsibilities on your journey toward *tôb* or the "beautiful life" God has in mind for you.



Perspective

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Marriage as God Intended

When God created Adam, he connected earth to heaven vertically. When he created the first marriage, he connected a man and a woman in a horizontal relationship (one that many describe as "heaven on earth").

Let's look at what we can learn about love, marriage, sex, and relationships from the creation story in Genesis 2:

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. Then the LORD God formed a man

from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A river watering the garden flowed from Eden...

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;

she shall be called ‘woman,’
for she was taken out of man.”

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame (Genesis 2:4-25).

This is the account of the creation of the first man and woman and of their marriage as God intended, before they decided they had a better plan than God. It has been said there is a reason life in the garden was so perfect: Adam and Eve had the perfect marriage because he didn't have to hear about all the men she could have married, and she didn't have to hear about the way his mother cooked!

Okay, joking aside, God's original plan and intent for marriage was pretty amazing, as we see demonstrated in the following five principles.

Principle 1: Man and Woman Were Made for Loyalty

God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and that is what turned Adam into a living being. Dirt (made by God) + God's breath = Life. Yes, we'd say we can trace human life back to some God "DNA." We are an authentic reflection of the divine. In Genesis 1:27, remember, it was clearly stated,

God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

Because we were all made as a likeness, model, or replica of God's heart and character, we have intrinsic value. When you are loyal to another, you look for ways to recognize, applaud, and promote this value. When loyalty is a conviction in your heart, traits such as respect, honor, taking the high road, integrity, honesty, and truthfulness will become pervasive aspects of your interaction with the opposite sex.

This is countercultural in today's world. Music, movies, and modern art are just a few of the places where infidelity, fornication, and

illicit sex are elevated. We have nicknames for the sexually experienced that have evolved into compliments from the scandalous definitions your parents or grandparents understood them to be. The media tosses out “player” and “playboy” as some kind of sought after title or trophy. The Urban Dictionary allows people to add their own definitions of words, and some of these are closer to reality when describing a “playa” as a guy who:

- Doesn't understand the meaning of relationship.
- Is in full reproductive mode.
- Is very good at making girls think he is into them (and very proficient at breaking said girls' hearts).
- Is maintaining supposedly exclusive relationships with multiple girls simultaneously.
- Lies often, not only about his other relationships, but about himself, his daily life, and false promises. He will try to manage several relationships, but is basically only in them to get some sort of sexual pleasure.

Urban slang calls a female “playa” a slut. One definition included, “She probably is not in a relationship, and she equalizes herself to guys by treating sex the same way they do.” It would not be alarming if these descriptions acted as a warning to people to avoid unhealthy relationships. Instead, the trend is toward friends with benefits, casual sex despite the rise of sexually transmitted diseases, and cohabitation without commitment. Rather than promoting the limitless value of each other, culture is spiraling down to the lowest common denominator as it sets people up for all kinds of hurt and pain when it comes to “love.”

However, because you picked up this book, you likely have the foresight to see that selfish, shortsighted relationship choices lead only to disappointment, broken hearts, and self-defeating habits.

We have definitely lost our way as a society when it comes to trivializing and devaluing sexuality as a gift, intended by God for marriage. One girl in Norway had a male friend who was interested in her

romantically—he wanted to have sex with her—but she thought of him as “just a friend” and said, “Only if you can get one million ‘Likes’ on Facebook—then I’d have sex with you.” Well, he posted a photo with the bet on his Facebook page asking people to “like him.” People around the world responded and sent it to friends. More than one million responded! He told his local press that having achieved his goal, the two of them have decided to “keep what we promised.”⁵ Really? Sex as a game? A bet? A Facebook post? How extremely shallow and devoid of meaning.

God calls us to take a higher road than this. He protects the heart, provides a future, and pumps power into our character so we can live out a love much more meaningful, virtuous, and real. God offers simple insights that make all relationships work, and one of the goals of this book is to help you be a hero in love and create an epic love story—one that will be passed down from generation to generation and build strength into your family tree.



Perspective

When I (Bill) was a kid, I wanted to be a superhero. I looked up to Batman, Superman, Aquaman, the Flash, the Green Hornet, and other “marvel” wonders. I wanted to be heroic like they were. There seemed to be something almost Herculean about rescuing a damsel in distress or overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds in the name of love. But then I heard about Jesus and read his words, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life...” (John 15:13).

Take time to write some bullet points or a paragraph or two that describe what you consider “heroic love.” What does it look like? What would a hero do for the love of his life? Heroes often protect from harm or rescue from evil, so what would that look like to you in daily life, in a relationship with someone you say you love?



Perspective

Some women in history are seen as heroines: Deborah in the Bible rode into battle next to the general to ensure victory (see Judges 4 and 5). In legend, perhaps a warrior-princess like Xena, fighting for the greater good, would be a heroine to you. In literature, maybe Katniss of *The Hunger Games* comes to mind because of her willingness to give her life in place of another.

Or maybe someone like Clara Barton is where your mind goes. She was the nurse who risked her life on the front lines to bandage the wounded during the Civil War and who launched the American Red Cross. Or perhaps a leader of the people like Golda Meir of Israel or Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, women who rose in power by looking out for the needs of the people, is how you would picture heroic.

What does it mean to be a heroine in a love relationship? Write down some thoughts in a paragraph or two and describe a heroic love.

♥ Love Chat ♥

If you are in an exclusive dating relationship, set a time to read your descriptions of heroic love to each other. After your date has read their journal entry, tell them how you feel about their images of what is heroic in love. Each of you take time to complete these sentences:

When I think of couples who had "heroic love," people that come to mind are _____

In my own family or friendship circle, people that I think love heroically are _____

because _____

Before I met you, the time in my life that I most needed a hero was

I think what I was looking for or needed was _____

The part of your description of being a hero in love that most resonated with me or that meant the most to me was _____

because _____

If you have been dating a while and are headed toward engagement or are already engaged, then add in this sentence:

A time I felt heroic love from you was _____

and it made me feel _____

Principle 2: Man and Woman Were Made for Harmony

Marriage was made *before* the fall. The garden was a good environment. “You complete me” has become a popular love line and, in a sense, this is biblically accurate. Genesis 2:18 says, “The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’”

God says it is *not tób*—not good, beautiful, or as God intended—for man to be “alone,” to be in solitude, separated, apart, isolated, and curtained off. It is pretty clear that, for the vast majority, God intended man to live with woman in a committed, monogamous, love relationship.

The exceptions are those who have been given a gift of singleness. As Paul says to the church in Corinth, “But each of you has your own gift from God. . . Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good

for them to stay unmarried, as I do. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion” (1 Corinthians 7:7-9). Singleness is a gift that enables a person to focus fully on service to God and not have to balance work, marriage, and family. You probably got this book because singleness is not a gift God gave you, and that is not surprising since he designed the majority of us for marriage.

The term translated as “suitable” in Genesis 2:18 is a unique term. It literally means “according to the opposite of him,” and is variously translated as “suitable,” “fit,” “just right,” and “corresponding.” In context it is the complete picture of God making all the animals, parading the animals past Adam, and Adam realizing he is alone (and that is not *tôb*). As Adam saw each animal with its partner, he became aware that his partner was missing.

God then removed one of Adam’s ribs and made Eve for Adam. We have a fond affection for this term *make*. It is much more than make cookies or make dinner or make a date. *Make* (*banah*) is a much more personal term here. It means God built Eve. He planned out her design. He assembled her characteristics in precise order. He carefully put the finishing touches on her so she was exactly matched to her purpose. *Make* can also mean “to accomplish, appoint, or bring forth.” So God didn’t just dream about Eve; he accomplished the dream.

You are certainly free to decide on your own who you want to marry, but it is good to remember that you have a powerful advocate in your pursuit. God knows who has the characteristics that best complement your life. In his love and creativity, he has created someone who fits in your life and will help you become a better person. When you discover another who was designed for you by God, life feels more complete and your relationship is infused with a strong sense of honor.

I (Pam) remember holding the face of my daughter-in-law framed by her wedding veil, looking in her eyes and saying, “I prayed for my son’s future wife since before he was even born. I asked God to bring him the perfect woman who was made just right for him. I also asked God to prepare my son so he would be just right for her. God answered my prayers! But even more, God answered my son’s prayers when God

formed you. The Bible says you are wonderfully and beautifully made. I thank God because you are a gift to my son and you are a gift to our family.”

As I was praying with the bride, her mother was telling my son the same thing! Be assured, God is a personal God. If you listen, walk closely with him, and follow his lead, he will faithfully lead you to the mate he fashioned for you.

Principle 3: Man and Woman Were Made for Synergy

Here’s a news flash: we were designed to *work* together in marriage even though so much of dating is playing, fun, and celebration. Real love thrives in real life so it is important to learn how to work as a team in the days after you say, “I do.” God clearly explained that Adam was to work by tending the garden. The work was large, so God made a helper designed to assist, serve, strengthen, and support in a way that they could accomplish more together than they could as individuals.

One of our favorite sections in most of the wedding ceremonies we have been involved with reads:

Woman was not taken from man’s head to rule over him, nor from his feet to be trampled upon by him, but from his side that she might be his equal, from under his arm that she might receive his protection, and from near his heart that she might own and command his love.

Beautiful sentiment, right? It’s poetic and profound as it calls all of us to a life of teamwork. The wife was not made to be a servant like a maid. Rather she was to be a vital teammate with her husband to create a legacy in their family and to invest in their community.

We believe every marriage is a unique creation of God in the same way that every individual is unique. This uniqueness includes the way you interact with each other and how you treat each other, but it also extends to the purpose that brought you together. You may be able to clearly state that purpose or it may be a mystery to you, but part of what brought you together is a shared sense of the direction you are supposed to be heading in life. This can be one of the best ways to know

if a potential spouse is “right for you.” If you sense you can give God greater glory as a united team, and that your love will influence more people than your individual efforts, your confidence level can rise in moving forward in the relationship. To help you clarify your ability to pursue a common purpose, write your response to the following:

My purpose in life, as I understand it today, is: _____

Evidence I see that my romantic interest shares this purpose includes:

I have the following strengths: _____

These strengths complement my romantic interest in the following ways: _____

My romantic interest has the following strengths: _____

These strengths compensate for the weaknesses in my life in the following ways: _____

Principle 4: Man and Woman Were Made for Monogamy

God designed marriage as a covenant relationship between one man and one woman. Look at the pattern in Genesis. God made a man and created a woman for him. He planted within them both the potential

to multiply. The sperm or seed in the man was designed to be united with an egg from the woman God designed for him. Holy matrimony is like a creative textual equation: 1 man + 1 woman 2gether 4 Life = gr8 marriage. Look around the garden. There were no other men or women. One man and one woman united to become one flesh. In a sense, God performed the first wedding ceremony when he created these two, introduced them, and then gave them a vision for their life and future.

When God formed Eve, he first took a rib from Adam and then closed him back up. He didn't keep creating women. He gave Adam one wife. He gave Eve one husband. Before sin entered, when Eve and Adam rebelled against God's plan, monogamy for a lifetime was God's intention. Think of it. God designed Adam and Eve to be skilled lovers who could encourage and support each other for a lifetime. Their choice to ignore God's plan complicated everything for all of us, but it doesn't change the fact that one of life's great accomplishments is to become skilled lovers who can encourage and support each other throughout our earthly journey. Monogamy is *tôb* because it is beautiful as God intended.

Principle 5: Man and Woman Were Made for Intimacy

After the author of Genesis describes the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam, he concludes, "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Ever since, a husband and wife form one family, establish one system for raising kids, become known as one unit, and become one physically through sexual intercourse. The result is they end up sharing all of life with each other.

In our book *Red-Hot Monogamy*, we explain that to truly be intimate, you have to seek to be on the same page with your spouse in eight important areas:

- Social
- Financial
- Recreational
- Vocational
- Parental
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Sexual

This does not mean you are clones of each other, but it does mean you share a common value system when it comes to these vital life components. If one of you believes money should be earned by hard work and the other thinks the government should take care of you, then there will be discord. If one of you believes in being consistent with parental discipline while the other believes the child should call the shots, there will be discord. Where there is discord, there is not a lot of “red-hot monogamy.” Where there is discord, your marriage is not a very bright light, not an accurate reflection of God’s love and commitment to reach the heart of people. This is why God challenges us, “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14 NASB). God wants to protect people’s marriages from discord, frustration, and disharmony so we can enjoy consistent intimacy in the vital areas of life.

If you have romantic feelings for someone who is not a believer and follower of Christ, we hope you will stop and ask yourself, *Why do I want to connect my heart to someone who does not share my faith?* It is not that you are better because you believe in Jesus, but it does mean you are following different life paths. If you stay on this path of entwining your lives, you will eventually face a fork in the road that will break your heart. Your value systems will come in conflict on some of your most important decisions. Your influence on your kids will be at odds with each other in some of the most sensitive issues. Your love for Jesus will be challenged, and you will be tempted to compromise your faith for the sake of reducing conflict. God is not trying to make your life harder. Rather, he is trying to guide you away from disappointment, heartache, and frustration.

It’s the same way in love. If you want a sex life that is red-hot, you have to be able to trust each other. You can ignore almost anything early in a relationship, but as time passes your ability to trust one another will determine the quality of your sex life. If you agree on decisions regarding finances, social commitments, parental strategies, you will conclude you have chosen well and have a great team. In this atmosphere, sexual intimacy is consistently desirable. When you disagree

and argue over the areas of life that are closest to your heart, sexual intimacy begins to feel more like a responsibility than a journey.

You marry who you date, so when you begin a friendship with someone, have your faith-and-values conversation early in your relationship. If the other person does not share your faith, they can remain in your friendship circle but not as a romantic partner, unless they too decide to move under God's umbrella of blessing and begin a personal relationship with the God who created them.

In the garden, the two were to be "one flesh." They were naked and not ashamed, and we can be also. We think every couple should have the goal of being unified in such a way that they have great sex for the rest of their lives.

DATE *to* DISCOVER

In each chapter we will give you a date idea that will lead you toward deeper discovery of the person you are dating. It is our hope and prayer that these will also help you decide if the other person is the partner God created for you to spend the rest of your life with so you can give God the greatest glory together.

I (Pam) grew up as a country girl, so nature screams beauty to my heart. For Bill to truly know me, he needed to experience the farm, the country, and nature with me. Bill was an architect major when I met him. In his heart is a desire to build beauty. For me to really value and appreciate Bill, I needed to see his drawings and go to some of the buildings and structures he thought were beautiful.

This chapter has talked a lot about things that are beautiful in love and life. For this "date to discover," each of you pick something or some place that captures what you see as beautiful and share it with each other. Allow the other person to take in your gift of beauty. Then take time to express why you wanted him or her to experience this with you. Ask how they feel about your chosen *tôb* symbol and what they learned about you because you shared this piece of who you are with them.

A Little Adam & Eve Humor

Little Johnny's Sunday school class was learning how God created everything, including human beings. Johnny seemed especially intent when his teachers told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs.

Later in the week, his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill, and said, "Johnny, what is the matter?"

"I have a pain in my side," Johnny said. "I think I'm going to have a wife."
