

## How to Fall In Love All Over Again

### **She Lost that Loving Feeling, then Remembered Where She Originally Found it**

The concepts that we discuss in this study, specifically using your mind to visualize truth in action as a necessary part of application, can be applied to every area of the Christian life, not only marriage. By using the concepts taught in the bible, we can bring our marriage back to be a relationship we enjoy and celebrate. If you knew how to be “in love” with your partner again, would you do what is required to have that kind of relationship?

This 1<sup>st</sup> study is about the Spirit guided mental mechanics of interpreting our life events, especially in our marriage.

#### **Feeling of being “in love” – infatuation**

**Biochemistry of Infatuation:** When infatuated we experience a surge of dopamine that rushes through the brain causing us to feel good. Norepinephrine flows through the brain stimulating production of adrenaline (pounding heart). Phenylethylamine (found in chocolate) creates a feeling of bliss. Irrational romantic sentiments may be caused by oxytocin, a primary sexual arousal hormone that signals orgasm and feelings of emotional attachment. Together these chemicals sometimes override the brain activity that governs logic.

**Quote from a man in love:** "I've just fallen in love with a wonderful person. I scarcely can think about anything else. My sweetheart is unbelievably perfect, of indescribable beauty, flawless character, & incredible intelligence. There is nothing I wouldn't do for her."

#### **1. The state of “falling in love” is caused by using our imagination to exaggerate & magnify the positive qualities of the object of love.**

Before we really know our mate, we imagine them to be better than they really are. We use our imagination to magnify their good qualities and diminish their negative qualities. We also magnify their feelings toward us and believe they will love us unselfishly. This image creates the production of the chemicals discussed above resulting in feelings of well being.

**Before marriage:** We “feel in love”! We use our imagination to magnify a person’s virtues. We choose to imagine an exaggerated image of our beloved that exceeds any possible semblance to reality – we imagine them as far more than they are.

- We Imagine this magnified image connected to our deepest needs and desires
- We Imagine this exaggerated person being absolutely devoted to meeting our deepest needs
- We Create an euphoric state of emotion that we mistake for unconditional love

**Honeymoon:** Our first hint & moment of disappointment – disillusionment

- Conflict – exposes our selfishness, flaws, failures, manipulations & devices

**After Marriage:** We “feel imprisoned”; we use our imagination to exaggerate all the negatives

- Unresolved conflict leads to a state of frustration & hopelessness
- Your Imagine partner has betrayed you by not meeting your needs

When your mate’s flaws & failures are exposed, when they are exposed to the point where our capacity to forgive them is overcome, we begin to keep score. As the score mounts up over time, the feelings of delight we once knew become a distant memory.

**2. Our natural tendency is to allow events, situations & circumstances to dominate & determine our viewpoint & feelings about our mate.**

(2Cor 5:7) “walk by faith not sight” Sight = human logic based on what we see with our eyes or can explain with scientific data

- We base our viewpoint on the events that happen day to day
- We ‘see’ our partner’s bad behavior, flaws, failures and we use them to determine our attitude
- Most of us begin marriage hoping for and expecting the best from our partners, based on the way they have behaved toward us.
- Most of us become discouraged about our marriage as we experience the natural conflicts that come with any permanent relationship
- Conflict exposes our (and our mate’s) selfishness and areas of weakness
- Faced with reality, we build a new viewpoint of our mate based on their flawed behaviors.

**3. Marriage, in the flesh depends upon the acceptable behavior of your mate.**

**Willard Harley: The Love Bank**

Each positive expression makes a deposit and each negative expression makes a withdrawal. To build any feelings of romantic love, it is required that you make more deposits than withdrawals. You must say and do more positive things than negative things. If this occurs, you will build more positive than negative feelings.

In fact, because of our tendency to exaggerate the negatives, three times more positives are required than negatives to break even.

- a. The flesh operates on human logic and uses “give and take” models of relating.
- b. Marriage (in the flesh) requires more giving than taking for positive feelings.
- c. Life (in the flesh) decides positive feelings based on positive events that contribute to our human goals of pleasure and ease.
- d. Marriage (in the flesh) visualizes desirable & acceptable behavior from our mate and builds an exaggerated case against them when unacceptable behavior occurs.
- e. Marriage (in the flesh) is based on mutual pleasure, compatibility & commonality.
- f. Most of us operate under marriage (in the flesh) even though we claim to be faithful Christians who learn and apply God’s Word.
- g. Marriage (in the flesh) renders us incapable of fulfilling God’s Plan for marriage.
- h. God requires we subordinate the flesh to God, The Holy Spirit (GHS) and operate under the principle of **hegeomai** and to guide our minds into emphasizing our partner’s worthiness in Christ and see all of their undesirable behavior as forgiven by Christ’s work on the Cross.

Therefore, we ought to:

- Re-think our interpretation of behavior that has been driving you nuts
- Imagine new responses to what we have used as an excuse to be angry
- Imagine our marital conflicts as challenges that help us grow.

**4. God has given believers the capacity to interpret life events based on the good intentions of God who is in control of all the events of our life.**

(James 1:2-4) “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

(Vs 2) “consider” – **hegeomai** – to guide the mind; to lead one’s imagination

**Compound word:** Strong, strengthened form of **ago** = to lead, to guide; **oiomai** = expect, think, imagine; to lead, guide your own imagination

- James tells us to guide our imagination using specific principles of doctrine
- Under adversity, we usually use the adverse event to guide our imagination – we imagine many other difficulties occurring because of the event at issue.
- James says to reject our tendency to “awfulize” when adversity happens
- He tells us to use our imagination to visualize all the good that God intends to bring out of this adversity especially related to our growth.
- He says to visualize God’s good to the point that we are totally joyful in anticipation of what He will bring out of this event.

**(Eph 1:16-20) Paul’s prayer:** (vs.17) “God might give us a spirit of wisdom & revelation by means of knowledge of Him (vs.18) (means of receiving this gift) “the eyes of your heart having been enlightened that you may know (oida) [see with the mind] The Hope of His calling; riches of His inheritance; greatness of His power to us”

- Our future hope, our future riches, His power used on our behalf are all benefits of our relationship with Christ that God enables us to see (envision, imagine, visualize) with the eyes of our hearts through ministry of GHS
- Envisioning these eternal benefits is accomplished by **hegeomai**
- “When GHS opens the eyes / heart, one will be able to see all these great truths” A.T. Robertson

**(Heb 11:24-27) Moses chooses Christ instead of Egypt** (vs.26) “considered (hegeomai) disgrace for Christ to be more valuable than treasures of Egypt – looking away (apoblepo) to the reward (vs.27) “left Egypt, no fear of Pharaoh’s wrath, endured as if seeing the unseen One”.

- Moses **guided his imagination** (hegeomai) to visualize a comparison of eternal rewards cp treasures of Egypt – kept looking away at the reward
  - Moses **imagined** his rewards; looked away from Egypt; kept looking at the image in his mind of his rewards
  - Moses **persevered** as if he could see God who can only be seen with eyes/heart
- a. God has empowered believers to interpret life events using God’s goodness and all the good He desires for us as the logic guiding our imagination.
  - b. Imagination is the mental faculty that enables us to envision biblical concepts.
  - c. God has empowered us to choose how we will think about our lives in spite of our tendency to allow events to influence us negatively
  - d. God has empowered us to think about our marriage in a way that brings us joy in spite of the flaws & failures we endure from one another.
    - We are able to change how we interpret our mate’s questionable behavior
    - Our tendency is to exaggerate our mate’s negatives; which results in believing yourself to be stuck in a difficult marriage; resulting in feelings of despair
    - We are able to exaggerate our mate’s positives & diminish their negatives; results in forgiveness, sense of humor and feelings of affection

#### **Exceptions:**

- Extreme abusive behavior that puts you in danger;
- Don’t want to imagine away negative feelings that indicate wrong thinking that God wants to change through transformation.

**5. Christians married to one another have an obligation to view and treat one another based on our position in Christ.**

**Absolutes:**

(Col 4:12) chosen of God; holy – positional sanctification; beloved of God; permanently forgiven by God; reconciled & at peace with God; Indwelt by GHS – temple of God; co-heirs of grace of life; partners in ministry of marriage

- Christian marriage (managed by the flesh) is contrary to the will of God.
- Christian couples are co-equal partners in the Lord's ministry to the world

**6. Christians married to one another have the freedom / opportunity to view / treat one another in a way that makes you joyful / grateful about your partner.**

**Relative:** personality compatibility; personal preferences; communication styles; personal goals & human priorities; etc.

Ex: Man married to a woman who likes to argue & debate

- **Christian marriage** & the roles required of its participants create an image of Christ & the church and is a critical part of credibility for God's ministry/world.
- **Christian marriage** is also for the personal benefit of the partners – to have a companion to go through life; to have a sex partner to fulfill the God given desires He gave us; to have someone to laugh with; parent with; eat with; fight with; entertain with; etc
- **Christian marriage** provides the God given capacity to use your imagination to interpret your mate's life & behavior so that he / she brings you joy is a wonderful gift!

**Use It Generously!**