

SPIRITUAL INTIMACY IN MARRIAGE

Our lessons come from the marriage of Abraham and Sarah related to Gen.16. Abraham and Sarah have done things in their marriage over the past ten years that have damaged intimacy in their marriage, such as Pharaoh in Gen.12 and Hagar in Gen.16.

I am not talking about just bedroom intimacy, but intimacy in every area of the home and marriage. I often hear wives say, "my husband just isn't intimate and I have learned to accept it." They are speaking in terms of limitation, feeling of neglect, and without hope for it. This should never be the situation in the lives of two spiritually advancing believers.

This lesson will study <u>4 aspects</u> of how to develop Spiritual Intimacy in Marriage relationship.

1. The English word intimacy is derived from the Latin word intimus.

Intimus is used to describe the deepest and inner most thoughts and feelings of the inner self (YOU).

When one mate says that the other mate is not intimate, they mean that mate is mentally and emotionally unavailable to meet that need in him, or her life.

Some people have "fenced it in" or "walled it out" from something that occurred during childhood and didn't realize it as a problem until they engaged in other intimacy relationships. They recognize the need for it but have difficulty sharing it and don't really know why.

For others it might occur from personal experiences in earlier relationships, disappointment, rejection and "being burned." These people know why, but are reluctant to engage in it again.

I remember reading somewhere this statement, "**The past is very present in all relationships.**"

If this is true in your life, my prayer is that this lesson will provide you with the hope of change through the Lord to your marriage.

2. This was the situation of Abraham and Sarah after ten years on the foreign mission field under the Abrahamic Covenant. Sarah was barren in Mesopotamia and 10 years later still barren in Canaan (Sarah was 65 and Abraham 75).

Even though they were in the Promised Land and experiencing the Promised Blessings, they were still without the Promised Child. "The proverbial clock was ticking down".

But wait a minute Abraham, Sarah!

- Did God give you the Promised Land **by grace**? (YES)
- Did God give you the Promised Blessings **by grace**? (YES)
- Do you believe that God is Faithful? (YES, but-what?) (1 Thess.5:24; 1 Cor.10:13; Heb.10:23)?

Do you believe God will give you the Promised Child by grace? These were the pivotal doctrinal questions they were struggling with in their Walk with their Lord, our Christian Way of Life (CWL).

3. **They were struggling with one of the three Directive Wills of God that was promised - by God - in the Abraham Covenant (Gen.12:1-3). It was the Promise of the Messianic Seed! (Gal.3:16).**

- **Sarah's question:** "Why couldn't God have given this Promised Child first since it is ALL dependent upon biology and MY age?"
 - **NOT TRUE! Did God not Promise you this Child?** – "And being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able to perform." (Rom.4:21)
 - That should have been their answer!

"God may wait, but He is never late!"

Sarah's womb may have been dead, but the promise of God wasn't because God is not dead (**Rom.4:16-21**).

Unfortunately this conflict of faith was driving a wedge in the intimacy of their marriage. This was evident by the Hagar incident (enter a third party).

Over the next 15 years (Sarah turning 90) they experienced a lot of conflict in their marriage relationship – but they survived in spite of the fact that God called a special meeting after Hagar and went over the details of the Abraham Covenant and especially Sarah's role . (Gen.16-20) (Gen.17:15-21).

4. **There is an absolute spiritual solution to the conflict both in their marriage and in the Abraham Covenant. It will require changes that are compatible with the word of God (Eph.6:6).**

Paul called this spiritual solution **spiritual transformation** in Rom.12:1-2.

There are two key doctrines for spiritual transformation to effect change in the spiritual mature believer in **Eph.3:16-17**.

- First key doctrine is the **Indwelling ministry of The Holy Spirit:**

(Eph.3:16) "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be **strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man.** (2 Cor.5:17; 2 Pet.1:3-4, Gal.3:2; 1 Cor.6:19-20; Gal.5:22-23)

- **Spirituality** (walking by means of The Indwelling Holy Spirit (Gal.5:16) is a key to spiritual intimacy in divine relationships (Rom.8:16, 26).

- Second key doctrine is the **faith cycle:**

(Eph.3:17) "So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith (tes pistis); and that you, being **rooted and grounded in love.**"

- **Faith Cycle** (walk by faith) (2 Cor.5:7) is the second key to spiritual intimacy in divine relationships (Rom.12:1-2).

(Heb.4:12) "For the word of God is **living and active and sharper** than any two-edged sword, and **piercing** as far as **the division of soul and spirit**, of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."