

## The Road to Intimacy . . .

Driving through a foreign country, especially when you have to depend on strange highway markings, is confusing and often quite fearful. This is especially true when the road signs are written in unfamiliar language. Similarly, for many travelers, the road to intimacy is just as foreign . . . threatening and intimidating territory! Nevertheless, it is the only route on which you eventually learn the real “language of love.”

Illusions of Intimacy . . .  
Fact or Fiction?

- **Illusion:** “Intimacy is sexual involvement with another person.”<sup>1</sup>  
**Fact:** Sexual involvement is not intimacy.
- **Illusion:** “Marriage will naturally produce intimacy.”<sup>2</sup>  
**Fact:** In many marriages intimacy never develops.
- **Illusion:** “Intimacy is a feeling of closeness.”<sup>3</sup>  
**Fact:** Intimacy is a decision of commitment.
- **Illusion:** “Once you have developed intimacy you’ll always have it.”<sup>4</sup>  
**Fact:** Intimacy has to be nurtured. It is an ongoing process of growth.

*“O LORD, you have searched me and known me!  
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from afar.”  
(Psalm 139:1–2)*

## Husbands—Learn to Speak the Language of Love by Meeting Your Wife’s Need for Security<sup>5</sup>

A wife needs **affection**.

- Speak affirming and complimentary words.
- Give cards, flowers, and gifts.

A wife needs intimate **conversation**.

- Talk on the feeling level.
- Listen with concern and interest.

A wife needs **honesty**.

- Commit to always being truthful.
- Share your thoughts and feelings with eye contact.

A wife needs **financial security**.

- Shoulder the responsibility for finances.
- Plan adequately for the future.

A wife needs **commitment**.<sup>6</sup>

- Place your wife and family as your highest earthly priority.
- Verbalize reassurances of your commitment.

*“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”  
(Ephesians 5:25)*

## Wives—Learn to Speak the Language of Love by Meeting Your Husband’s Need for Significance<sup>7</sup>

A husband needs **admiration**.

- Communicate understanding of his values and achievements.
- Give reassurance of his capabilities.

A husband needs **domestic support**.

- Create a peaceful home atmosphere.
- Manage the home efficiently.

A husband needs **sexual fulfillment**.

- Be a responsive partner.
- Communicate assurance that he is sexually adequate.

A husband needs a mate with a **pleasing appearance**.

- Keep physically fit with diet and exercise.
- Dress appropriately with a feminine look.

A husband needs **recreational companionship**.

- Develop mutual interests.
- Become proficient in activities that he likes.

*“The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.”  
(Proverbs 31:11–12)*

## Roadblocks to Intimacy<sup>8</sup>

**Fearing** vulnerability

- fearing the loss of reciprocal love
- fearing the loss of independence
- fearing the loss of control

**Evading** personal disclosure

- unwilling to reveal past failures
- unwilling to reveal weakness
- unwilling to reveal the “real me”

**Avoiding** risk

- negative messages from parents
- negative behavior of significant others
- negative personal behavior

**Remembering** past rejection

- rejection from family members
- rejection in a significant love relationship
- rejection of self

## Key Verses to Memorize

*“If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.”  
(Philippians 2:1–2)*

## Key Passage to Read and Reread

**Ephesians 5:25–28**

## Sentence Starters for Deeper Dialogue

- An asset you have that I really value is . . . .
- I feel your greatest character quality is . . . .
- If I could have the gift of one day to spend any way I wanted, I would . . . .
- If I could change one thing about the way I was raised, it would be . . . .
- An important change I would like to see in myself is . . . .
- I feel depressed when . . . .
- I feel loved when . . . .
- I am most concerned about . . . .
- A personal goal of mine is . . . .
- If I could relive one day, it would be . . . .
- The three things I value most about our relationship are . . . .
- My deepest prayer is . . . .

## Related Topics . . .

- Codependency:  
*Moving from Bondage to Balance*
- Dating:  
*The Waiting Game*
- Friendship:  
*Iron Sharpening Iron*
- Marriage:  
*To Have and to Hold*
- Premarital Counseling:  
*Are You Fit to Be Tied?*
- Sexual Integrity:  
*Balancing Your Passion with Purity*

1. Terry Hershey, *Intimacy: The Longing of Every Human Heart* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1984), 12, 93. Terry Hershey, *Go Away, Come Closer: When What You Need the Most Is What You Fear the Most* (Dallas: Word, 1990), 35.
2. Hershey, *Intimacy*, 12, 109. David Ferguson and Don McMinn, *Top 10 Intimacy Needs*, Intimacy Monograph Series: A Collection of Study Guides Dealing with Key Relationship Issues (Austin, TX: Intimacy, 1994), 17.
3. Hershey, *Intimacy*, 162.
4. Ferguson and McMinn, *Top 10 Intimacy Needs*, 8.
5. For this section see Willard F. Harley, Jr., *His Needs, Her Needs: Building an Affair-Proof Marriage*, 15th Anniversary ed. (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2001), 93, 121.
6. Gary Chapman, *The Five Love Languages* (Chicago: Northfield, 1992), 56.
7. For this section see Henry Cloud, *When Your World Makes No Sense* (Nashville: Oliver-Nelson, 1990), 236; Harley, *His Needs, Her Needs*, 80, 105, 108, 156.
8. For this section see Hershey, *Intimacy*, 24; Janet G. Woititz, *Struggle for Intimacy* (Deerfield Beach, Fla: Health Communications, 1985), 73.

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### **Intimacy:**

*Learning the Language of Love.*

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