

# THE WALK OF INTIMACY

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I have been working with couples, families, and individuals for 20 years. Watching couples is something that I have been captivated by since I was very young. I loved hearing their stories of how they met and feel in love. What I enjoyed the most was the happy beginning. In my innocence I thought of it as the happy ending. After maturing, of course, I realized life is not all happiness and joy. I watched people argue, relationships end in pain and divorce, and at times, saw reconciliation efforts succeed. My longing was to know what it was that kept couples and families from living the “happily ever after”.

Ralph Earl in his book “Come Here, Go Away” states the dilemma beautifully. “Far too many of us are missing one or more of the essential ingredients for genuine intimacy. We do not like ourselves or trust other people and as a result, we cannot share our real selves with them. We have a low threshold for conflict and ambiguity. Expecting everything to go smoothly all the time and suppressing our anger or frustration when it does not, filling the air between ourselves and others with tension. We retreat to our separate corners to hide...behind some protective shield. And, of course, in one way or another, all of us have been hurt or disappointed in childhood or adult relationships. Our lives revolve around our determination to not be hurt again.”

This is the paradox of intimacy. How to be intimate yet not get hurt. I know many of you will recognize the fact that we search for people to be close with yet when we find them, we begin to worry about when they will prove themselves untrustable or move into controlling behaviors. Sounds familiar doesn't it?

Let's face it - we need intimacy. Experiencing intimacy is core to our ability to that may help:

## Know Your Role Models

Allow yourself to picture yourself approximately at age 8. You are watching your parents interact with one another. They are not aware that you are watching them. Please complete the following sentences with the first response that comes to your mind.

Love is \_\_\_\_\_  
Men Are \_\_\_\_\_  
Women are \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationships are \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationships should be \_\_\_\_\_

Studies centered around touch and interaction with infants have shown that without loving touch, intimate soothing tones, etc. infants literally die. This is how important this

issue is. It is also why our relationship with Jesus Christ becomes paramount in the development of our relationships with our spouse, family members and siblings in the family of God.

When we stay in an active relationship with Jesus Christ, we are choosing to allow ourselves to become shaped, healed, corrected, and raised up in the image of Him who has given His life for us. The culture of our families and this world has not always taught us how to think, feel, and act in ways that promote a healthy balance of intimacy and individuality.

First Peter 1:13-18 states “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition, from your fathers but with the precious blood of Christ...” You may be thinking, “Brenda, not all things are bad that our families have taught us. There are some very positive things they have given me.” This is true. My point is to hold loosely the things that we have carried with us. God the Father is very interested in bringing balance to our lives. Psalm 45, known as a song of love, states “...Forget your own people also, and your father’s house; So the King will greatly desire your beauty; Because He is your Lord, worship Him.” (v. 10-11)

Desiring this kind of relationship is why He came, in the form of a babe, to begin with. Psalm 45 addresses the heart desire of the King to be worshiped. The passage suggests that this kind of worship begins to take place when we let go or “forget” what has been modeled for us.

As this year comes to a close and a new year is birthed, it is my hope and desire for each of you that you can allow yourself to experience the love of the Master in ways that bring peace to your spirits. As loving or as difficult as our families may be, God is the greatest lover of our souls. He proved it when He came.

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