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AUTHORS

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Barbara graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a degree in deaf education. She has taught many years at Faith Christian School. She has been on full time staff with Campus Crusade for Christ for ten years. Together, they have seven children and six grandchildren.

Jim

My first wife, Julie, and I would have been married for twenty years, missing our anniversary by only seven days. We were blessed with four wonderful children and were serving the Lord full time.

During my final year at seminary, Julie was diagnosed with breast cancer. She fought valiantly through seven years of chemotherapy, radiation, hair loss, eight surgeries, a bone marrow transplant, and five unsuccessful trips to the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland. When the disease spread to her lungs, the time came when she could no longer breathe. The Lord took her home.

As our family lived through those very painful years, our faith in God grew. We learned to keep our eyes on Christ who is our life.

Tim, my good friend and prayer/accountability partner, woke up one night and sensed clearly from God that he should encourage me to call Barbara, whom I had never met. I did! God is gracious and faithful.

Barbara

My first husband and I were both Christians before we married in 1974. After eight years of marriage, my husband slowly began to turn away from the Lord and set his heart on worldly success and all of its alluring deceptions.

After the birth of our third child, he disclosed to me the adulterous affair he was having. Shortly thereafter, he served me with divorce papers. Wanting to save our marriage, I tried to change his mind by striving to be more pleasing to him, and I also went to a Christian Marriage Counselor.

All efforts failed. The Lord prompted me to eventually let him go into His hands. I simply obeyed. I felt like I was ripped in half; my life's dreams died. A number of friends no longer approved of me. The church did not know what to do with me.

Through this terrible time, I made the decision to cling to God and God alone. I was a single parent for eleven years, choosing not to search for a mate but entrusting all of my needs to my Lord. I decided never to marry again unless God brought to me a faithful man who would want our marriage to glorify and serve Him.

The Lord is faithful and good! I received a phone call out of the blue one day from Jim. We talked for two hours. It soon became evident that God had a plan for us beyond our dreams! With kindred spirits and seven children between us, we were married. God is restoring the years the locusts have eaten (Joel 2:25).

INTRODUCTION

Home to Home: Passing on Five Cornerstones of Christian Marriage is a six week "couple to couple" Bible study and discipleship tool that helps develop strong, caring relationships built upon the Rock—the Lord Jesus Christ.

In our churches we are fighting a spiritual war of immense proportions. Too many homes are built upon the shifting sands of our godless culture. Over 50% of all marriages are destroyed by divorce. Children are left to pick up the pieces.

Godly homes produce godly children, who are to grow and be sent out to reach the world for Christ. The hate, shame, isolation, and despair that divorce causes often neutralizes people, stunting their spiritual growth and fruitfulness. Satan will do whatever he can to thwart the advance of the Gospel.

We want to serve you and your church. Like you, we know that your church is only as strong as her families. If marriages continue to be destroyed, the enemy will have done much to hinder men and women in our churches from being equipped for effective ministry and from shining Christ's love and Gospel to others.

Our passion is: *To help marriages, families, and individuals find lasting hope and a future in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Our prayer is that **Home to Home** will be used as a reproductive discipling tool where one married couple, the **Host Couple** (leaders), will meet with one other couple, the **Guest Couple**, for six weeks to:

1. Become strong in the Lord and His Word by developing hearts for God.
2. Develop healthy, supportive relationships that are genuine and encouraging.
3. Grasp the importance of evangelism and discipleship and be actively involved in reaching new couples for Christ.
4. Capture and promote the vision of being used of God to reach the world for Christ through their marriages, families, and churches.
5. Equip and train that Guest Couple to fulfill the role as Host Couple with a new Guest Couple.

Our relationship in marriage is to mirror God's gracious, loving relationship with each of us.

We pray that these Five Cornerstones of Christian Marriage (Loving Faithfulness, Reverence, Understanding, Purpose, and Nurturing) will help accomplish that.

Please note that the Host Couple's Guidelines and the Guest Couple's Introduction are in the back.

Home to Home is not to take the place of professional counseling, psychotherapy, medical care, or appropriate psychiatric outpatient or inpatient care.

Jim and Barbara Grunseth

Home To Home



Passing on Five Cornerstones of Christian Marriage

Cornerstone #1

LOVING FAITHFULNESS

◆ *Think about this:*

If the Lord Jesus Christ is first in your life, then your mate will be treasured in your heart.

◆ *Memory Verses*

Deuteronomy 31:8

Please print or write this verse and be prepared to share it from memory when you meet with your Home to Home Host Couple.

◆ LESSON OVERVIEW

A. What is Loving Faithfulness?

1. Unconditional love.
2. Passionate, unwavering loyalty.
3. Sincere desires to uphold, protect, and complete another. These desires are continually acted upon so that the recipient is secure in and assured of a safe, treasured, and blessed status.

B. Loving Faithfulness toward whom?

1. God's loving faithfulness toward us.

Jesus Christ, our Lord—the Almighty, Sovereign, All-Powerful God of the Universe—Maker and Ruler of Heaven and Earth loves you so much that He is faithful to enter into and maintain an everlasting and loving Father-child relationship with you. He never fails. He keeps and blesses you, His beloved, forever!

2. Your loving faithfulness toward your mate.

Your mate is God's **wonderful provision for you**. You are to show him/her the same loving faithfulness God shows you. You are to model God's loving faithfulness for the world to see.

Note: Your mate's strengths and weaknesses compliment yours. Focus on the Provider—not the provision. Your mate sins and is in need of grace, mercy, and forgiveness just like you.

Placing judgmental focus on your mate will surely lead you to subtly or overtly reject him/her. When you are feeling judgmental, choose to lean on God's authority, integrity, and ability. This, of course, requires

TRUST

In **Genesis 2:20-25**, Adam was lonely and in need of a suitable companion. Hippos, birds, frogs...were nice, but none of them would do. God knew Adam inside and out. He knew exactly what he needed.

After making Eve, the woman, from Adam's rib, he brought her to the man (verse 22). Adam gladly welcomed and received her with open arms.

He knew God. He knew God did not make mistakes. He trusted God.

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.... **Ephesians 5:22-25**

This is a central verse dealing with the absolute requirement and need for loving faithfulness in your marriage.

Husbands, you are to love your wives by **laying down your life** for her. Changes may need to be made in your career, your ministry schedule, your travel, your hobbies, and especially in your attitude toward your wife. Do you see her as a **burden** or a **blessing**?

Wives, the principles from this passage are vital if you desire to model before your husband God's loving faithfulness **toward you and your family**. You are to **model** to your children and to the world what it means to mercifully love and faithfully submit to your husband.

Husbands and Wives, your mate is designed to be blessed by your:

- Servant's heart.
- Tender attentiveness.
- Focused attention.
- Comforting, affirming countenance.
- Godly integrity, especially when alone. Wisdom is learning to trust yourself less and less, and to trust God more and more. Allow a godly person of the same gender to hold you accountable.
- Consistent quiet time with God in His Word and in prayer.
- Right priorities. Do not sacrifice your mate's needs on the alter of work, ministry or hobbies.
- Fulfilling your marital vows.

C. Why is Loving Faithfulness so important?

1. Because the Lord is lovingly faithful toward you, His child!
 - a. He created you in His image.
 - b. He died for you.
 - c. He loves you with an eternal love that will never diminish in its intensity or depth.
 - d. He will not fail. Even when you are unloving and unfaithful, He will remain loving and faithful. His loving faithfulness toward you is **not dependent** on your ability to earn it or maintain it.
2. Because without Christ and His loving faithfulness you are in a hopeless condition.

The Bible says:

*...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. **Romans 3:23***

Apart from Christ, you would remain lost and in spiritual darkness forever. You would spend an eternity in hell, spiritually dead—never being able to experience the joy and peace of being in the presence of a loving God.

God chose to do something drastic to save you, knowing that you could do absolutely nothing to save yourself. Remember: A corpse can do nothing to give itself life.

**ONLY THE LORD JESUS CAN GIVE A
SPIRITUALLY DEAD CORPSE NEW LIFE.**

For the wages of sin is death.... (spiritual separation from God)

Romans 6:23

Your own passive indifference or your willful rebellion against God will condemn you to hell.

Jesus says:

*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. **John 14:6***

Jesus is your only hope for your eternally fatal condition.

The Bible says:

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. **John 3:16***

Jesus saves you not by your **attempt** to earn or perform your way into Heaven, but by His sacrificial demonstration of love on the Cross.

PUT YOUR TRUST IN JESUS.

If you, like many people, are trying to become acceptable to God based on your own merit, performance, or good deeds, God wants you to know that:

*... all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.... **Isaiah 64:6***

God does not want you to trust in your effort, your obedience, or how active you are in your church.

He wants you to trust only in Jesus and His ability to forgive you and save you. He alone can "make" you righteous. You can't try hard to become righteous. You are "**made**" righteous **by Him (II Corinthians 5:21).**

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. **Ephesians 2:8,9***

To know these truths is not enough. You must individually receive Christ.

Listen to the comforting and assuring Word of God:

*Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. **John 1:12***

*And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. **Acts 2:21***

**RECEIVE (GLADLY WELCOME) JESUS CHRIST INTO
YOUR LIFE AS YOUR SAVIOR AND LORD.**

Have you already received Him? Yes No

Right now, if you are not His, will you receive (welcome) Jesus as your personal Savior and Lord?

Please pray this prayer:

Lord Jesus,

I need You. I confess I am a sinner and without Your forgiveness and new life I will remain forever lost and separated from You by my sin. Right now, I choose to receive You into my life. Come in, Lord Jesus. Thank You for forgiving all my sin—past, present, and future. Make me the kind of person you want me to be. Thank you, Lord.

date

signature

Note: If you have already received Christ in the past, please go ahead and **sign your name above** as well. Try to write the approximate month and year you believe you became a Christian. If there has been any doubt, let your decision to sign your name today clear up all doubt.

If you chose with sincerity to sign your name, you can trust with **certainty** that Jesus has saved you and has given you Eternal Life. He is a God of His Word. You cannot lose your salvation. You are His forever!

Because you belong to Him, He will never leave you nor forsake you. He will **never break His promise** to love you faithfully even when your love and faith fail at times.

As one who was called, chosen, saved, forgiven, reborn, and redeemed, God entered into a "forever" covenant with you. Rest! Rejoice! You are **eternally secure** as a child of God. You are forever a citizen of Heaven.

Nothing can separate you from His love once you are His!

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38,39

Because of this wonderful promise, love and receive your mate unconditionally. He/she should never feel that the security of your marital relationship is **threatened** in any way. Not even the hint of it should be present. By the way, going to bed with unresolved anger or a buried argument is such a hint.

When you live by faith and by the Word of God, He enables you to love your mate unconditionally.

◆ INDIVIDUAL PREWORK

LOVING FAITHFULNESS: The first Cornerstone of marriage.

* **You and your mate are to do sections A and B separately**

A. Depend on God

Please read the following **Psalm 119:20, 29-35** (Amplified):

My heart is breaking with longing that it has for Your ordinances and judgments at all times. Remove from me the way of falsehood and unfaithfulness (to You), and graciously impart Your law to me. I have chosen the way of truth and faithfulness; Your ordinances have I set before me. I cleave to Your testimonies; O Lord, put me not to shame! I will (not merely walk, but) run the way of Your commandments, when You give me a heart that is willing. Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, and I will keep it to the end. (steadfastly). Give me understanding, that I may keep Your law; yes, I will observe it with my whole heart. Make me go in the path of Your commandments, for in them do I delight.

Underline a phrase from the passage above that best expresses the prayer desire of your heart. Please share why.

God is searching for the **broken** heart. He longs for the heart that is needy and hungry, placing no hope in itself. He yearns for the heart that is fed up with man's wisdom, self-reliance, and independence. He desires for you to continually depend on Him. He rejoices when, daily, you forsake your own way and willingly abandon the rights to your life to Him.

He desires for you to **humbly** cast yourself at His feet. He wants you to **depend** only on His Spirit directing you through what is revealed in His written Word, the Bible. **Give up** trusting in yourself. Then your Heavenly Father will begin to work mightily within you.

Lean fully on His Spirit to enable you. **Cling** moment by moment to the guidance and comfort provided by His Word. **Hide** the Scriptures in your heart. **Treasure** them. **Trust** what they tell you regardless of your experience, feelings, and pain. **Obey** the Lord Jesus at all cost.

If you want a godly, fruitful marriage, there is just no other way.

B. Demonstrate Loving Faithfulness toward your mate.

It is not enough to know God is faithful and loving toward you. This, by itself, will not enable you to demonstrate loving faithfulness toward your mate.

Please look up the following verses and write down what must happen in order for you to **demonstrate** loving faithfulness toward your mate.

Psalm 119:9 _____

Psalm 119:10 _____

Psalm 119:11 _____

Mark 8:34-35 _____

Mark 10:7-9 _____

Galatians 5:13 _____

Circle the passage from above that meant the most to you and share why.

Now please look up **Malachi 2:15-16**.

What is God saying to you through these verses?

Read **Galatians 5:16-26**.

What are the **results** (fruit) of daily choosing by faith to surrender your will to be filled, controlled, and empowered by God's Holy Spirit? (This is what happens when you want what God wants more than what you want.)

Without God's loving, empowering Spirit, do you personally have the capability to remain faithful and loving toward your mate?

Yes **No**

Will you **choose daily** by faith to allow the Lord Jesus Christ to lead, prompt and enable you to demonstrate loving faithfulness to your mate?

Yes **No**

* **Complete section C together**

C. Compare and discuss your answers from sections A and B of the Individual Prework with your mate.

1. As a result of going over your individual homework together, what truth or principle concerning God's loving faithfulness stands out as being the most helpful or important to you both as it now applies to your marriage?

2. As a couple, how do you think your **praying** out loud together—not only for God's loving faithfulness to take root in your marriage but also for God to protect and bless each of you—serves to **strengthen** and **enrich** your marriage? (**Note:** One study showed that less than one in a thousand marriages breaks up that pray openly and regularly together.)

3. If you both sincerely want your Heavenly Father to build His supernatural loving faithfulness into your relationship, then please pray **out loud** before each other and the Lord the following prayers:

Husband's Prayer

Dear Lord,

I humbly admit I am unable to demonstrate Your loving faithfulness by myself. I need Your help every day. Please enable me to love You and my precious wife with Your loving faithfulness. Help me to bless and serve her and honor You from this day forward.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Wife's Prayer

Dear Lord,

I also humbly confess I am unable to show Your loving faithfulness by myself. I also need Your help every day. Please enable me to love You and my beloved husband with Your loving faithfulness. Help me to respect and encourage him and honor You from this day forward.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Husband's signature

Wife's signature



*Passing on Five Cornerstones
of Christian Marriage*

Cornerstone #2
REVERENCE

◆ *Think about this*

Reverence is a quality foreign to our culture of demanding, unsatisfied, and shallow people. Don't you think it's time we brought this precious quality back to our lives and culture?

◆ *Memory Verses*

HUSBAND — *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and carefully protects and cherishes it, as Christ does the church.*

Ephesians 5:25,28,29 (Amplified)

WIFE — *....and let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband—that she notices him, . . .honors him, prefers him, . . .and admires him exceedingly.*

Ephesians 5:33 (Amplified)

◆ LESSON OVERVIEW

A. What is Reverence?

1. Worshiping God with adoration and awe.
2. Holding in high regard.
3. Honoring and highly esteeming.
4. Regarding with great devotion; cherishing.

B. Reverence toward whom?

1. **Toward the Lord.** Reverencing Him is our privilege and joy. He is worthy of all praise and worship.
2. **Toward your mate.** Because we reverence God, we **choose by faith** (a decision of the will) to reverence our mate. Reverencing our mate will be a living example of how others observing us are to cherish their mates and honor God.

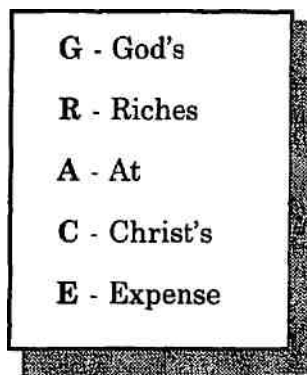
C. Why is Reverence important?

1. God is God and we are His handiwork. With reverence in your heart, gratefully acknowledge Him as your Creator and Sustainer.
2. God sent His only Son, Jesus, to live, die, and rise again for us. Through Christ, our sins are forgiven (past, present, and future), and our guilt and condemnation washed away forever (if we are his child through faith). Be grateful for all God has done. **Gratitude is the backbone of reverence.**
3. God is honored when you reverence your mate with an attitude of thankfulness.
4. Your children will learn from your example and will be an example to their children some day.
5. Reverencing God and your mate might just become contagious to others in your church, neighborhood, and community!

D. God's grace is the key to our gratitude and reverence.

1. Receive God's grace.

*Even when we were dead (slain) by (our own) shortcomings and trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ. He gave us the very life of Christ Himself, the same new life with which He quickened Him. For it is by **grace—by His favor and mercy which you did not deserve**—that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation). **Ephesians 2:5** (Amplified)*



- a. You are **put right** with God because Christ became sin for you.

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. II Corinthians 5:21

Since you are put right with God, rejoice over the grace He continually bestows upon you and begin to think and behave like the favored and privileged child of God you are!

- b. You **can't earn** this standing with God. To receive His saving grace:

- You don't have to measure up.
- You don't have to perform.
- You don't have to earn approval.
- You don't have to do more or be better.

. . . He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. Titus 3:5a

- c. Your position **in Christ** is secure because of what He has done, not by anything you have done.

*For it is by **grace** you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the **gift** of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8,9*

- d. God **continually** pours out His grace on His children. All of His wonderful resources are available to you.

*And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the **incomparable riches of his grace**, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:6,7*