

Lifebyte 48

Marriage As A Covenant Lifestyle (Part 2)

Living Righteously In The Days of Chastisement



*Jesus must remain in heaven
until the time comes for God to restore everything,
as He promised long ago through His holy prophets.* (Acts 3:21)



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Dear Friends,

In Lifebyte 47 we discussed the *four levels of needs* that all human beings are driven to satisfy (see diagram below). These needs have been put in us by our loving Creator.

We hope you and your spouse have taken the time to discuss at which level you are on the diagram, and have helped each other begin to move up the diagram as covenant partners.

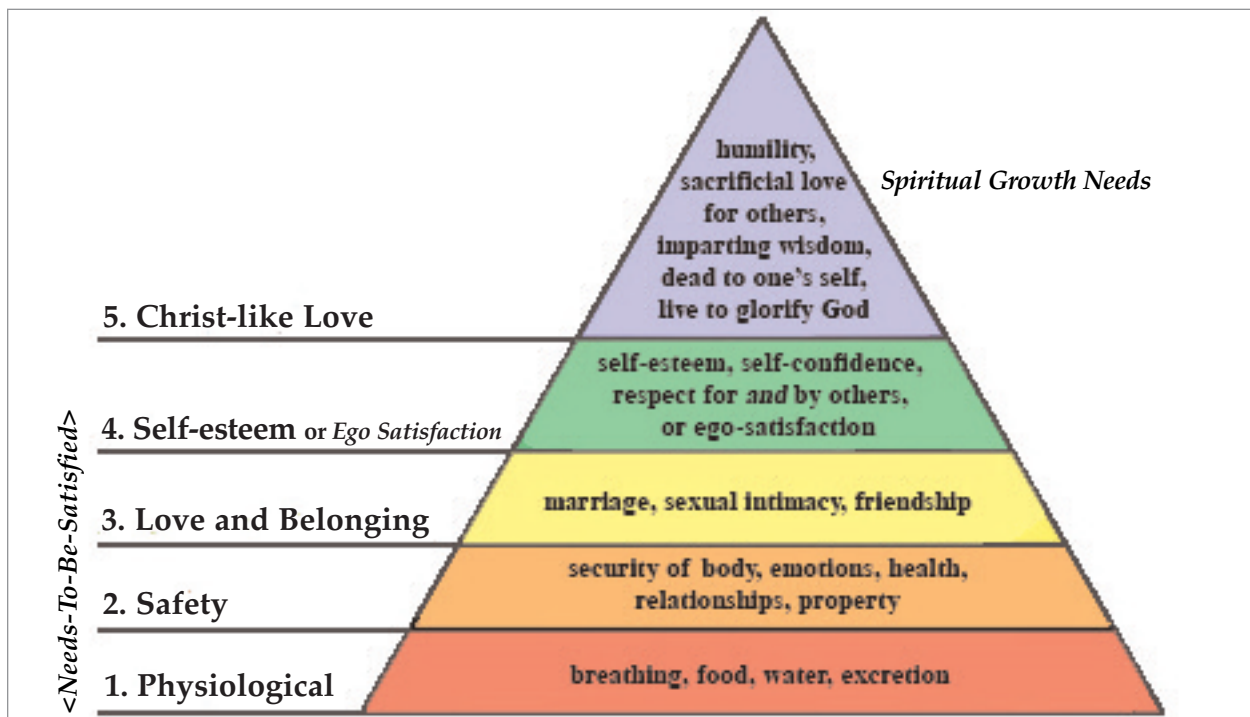
In the 30 years we've been sharing the truths represented in this diagram, we've discovered that many Christian marriages have at least one partner stuck on the *need for safety*. Quite often, both the husband and wife are mired in self-focus, neither one knowing how to proceed upward. A key reason for this inability or unwillingness to press on? They can't entrust to each other their innermost heart feelings.

As we shared in Lifebyte 47, many people, both men and women, are *fearful* that they'll never experience love and belonging. So they jump from safety

needs to a perceived need for *ego satisfaction*. They search for and find some measure of recognition and acclaim through all kinds of systems: corporate America, mega-churches, even certain Christian ministries such as Promise Keepers that need warm bodies to keep the system running and applaud those in leadership.

People who are intent on climbing the ladder of personal recognition know that satisfying their ego along the way is an acceptable outcome, even a goal: to climb higher and higher no matter how it affects loved ones...

People whose egos are stroked within Christian organizations are being deceived. Mega-churches and many ministries thrive on welcoming and spurring on younger men in particular who are still in the Phallic or Warrior Stage of male development. (See Lifebyte 4. *Blazing A Trail*, for more on life stages of men.) These young men hustle to succeed in ministry using the world's methods and goals. They may even sacrifice their marriages, believing they're



serving God in their energetic endeavors “for the Kingdom”. But tragically, too late they discover they were only serving their own ego.

Over the years we’ve observed that for every 200 couples who encounter the Hebraic foundations, only 1 couple will experience a marriage that embodies the love of Jesus. Desperate pursuit of “ego satisfaction” rather than a legitimate need for “love and belonging” hinders the other 199.

Sadly, for reasons we described in Lifebyte 47, many contemporary women have become trapped in the same ego pursuit that once snared mostly men. Fortunately, a number are coming under conviction by the Spirit, discovering what God means when He says,

“Nevertheless she will be saved in child-bearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control” (1 Timothy 2:15).

The singular “she” in this verse refers to the legacy of Eve, who was deceived and fell into transgression by willful disobedience of God’s command (see 1 Tim. 2:12-14). However, God’s grace was reflected in His promise that a future Seed would be birthed Who would crush the serpent’s head.

God’s specific role of bearing children was gifted to women — *gifted* because of the impact that mothers have on their kids. Think of the wonderful influence of moms who keep imbuing in their children a trust in God and love for Him, as well as modeling a life of holiness that specifically sets each one apart for God’s purposes. As a mother intentionally limits her freedom of ego pursuit in order to love and serve her Lord, she’s exercising the work of the

Spirit Who is guiding her along in her pilgrimage to salvation. How’s that for fulfilling a need for love and belonging!

Exercises To Reveal Your Inner Person

Many who long to experience either love and belonging or the dignity of self-esteem find themselves hindered because they still have intense, unmet “safety needs”. We have two more tools to help you get to know the inner motivations of people close to you so you can serve them.

Johari Window

Look closely at the four panes in the Johari Window (below). Each pane describes your interaction with other people. The two key features that affect which pane you’re in are the *feedback* given to you by others, and your *disclo-*

Johari Window (modified)

<p style="text-align: center;">Pane #1 <u>Hidden Potential</u> (Life With Little Change) “What I <i>don’t know</i> about me is what others <i>don’t know</i> about me”</p> <p>When others don’t give you appropriate feedback, and you don’t disclose your innermost feelings and motivations.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pane #2 <u>Bull-in-a-China Shop</u> (Blind to Self) “What I <i>don’t know</i> about me is what others <i>know</i> about me”</p> <p>When others don’t give you appropriate feedback about things in you that you’re unaware of.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Pane #3 <u>Aloof</u> (Keeps Hidden Secrets) “What I <i>know</i> about me is what others <i>don’t know</i> about me”</p> <p>You keep your innermost feelings and motivations from others so that they don’t really know you.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pane #4 <u>Transparent Life</u> (Character Of Jesus) “What I <i>know</i> about me is what others <i>know</i> about me”</p> <p>Fruit of receiving feedback from others and disclosing your innermost feelings and motivations to them.</p>

sure as you reveal your inner feelings and motivations.

For discussion's sake, let's change the size of the different panes to get a better understanding of the window.

Pane #1 is someone who has neither received adequate feedback about how they come across *nor* revealed much of their inner self. However, they aren't necessarily hermits!

In Christendom they're in fellowships of any size as long as no one holds them accountable. They don't want any feedback to let them know where they fall short of Christ's



character, nor any input of those who want to be true brothers and sisters in spirit. And, they certainly don't want to be put in situations of vulnerability where they may have to reveal anything about who they are on the inside!

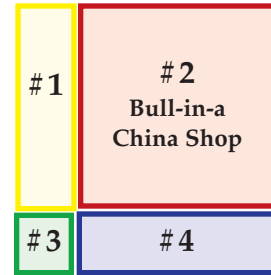
Many of those with hidden potential are extremely knowledgeable about the Bible, but they have experienced little or no Spirit transformation into the character of Jesus. Their "walk" and their "talk" have little in common.

They're "Christian" in name only, with no desire to become more like Jesus. By their life choices they *discredit His Name* as did their predecessors grievously noted in Matthew 25:25-30 and Luke 13:6-9.

Pane #2 depicts a person who has not been given appropriate corrective feedback by others concerning their attitudes, actions or behavior. Often this silence is because those who *should* speak up are fearful to confront.

But those who are reluctant to give

feedback will instead talk behind the person's back, whispering, "Doesn't so-and-so *know....?*" No, they don't — unless you tell them. Your gossip and slander only help to isolate that individual more. And, your talking about them behind their back is *sin on your part*. Is that what you really want?



If you're following Jesus and want to continue to be transformed into His likeness, you need to tell the "bull in a china shop" what they need to hear (Matthew 7:12; Proverbs 17:10, 25:26) — remembering to do it with the love motive that you'd want someone to speak to *you*.

Pane #3 is someone who fears disclosing their inner person for one reason or another because they don't feel safe. In social situations they often *appear* aloof, outside the concerns of others — even if they really aren't that way.

The Aloof person may be quiet, fearing to open their mouth because they think they'll be rejected if they reveal their inner thoughts and feelings. To forestall having to disclose anything personal, they may take the initiative by *asking others* questions about themselves. This way they aren't put into a position of having to expose their motivations, dreams and goals.



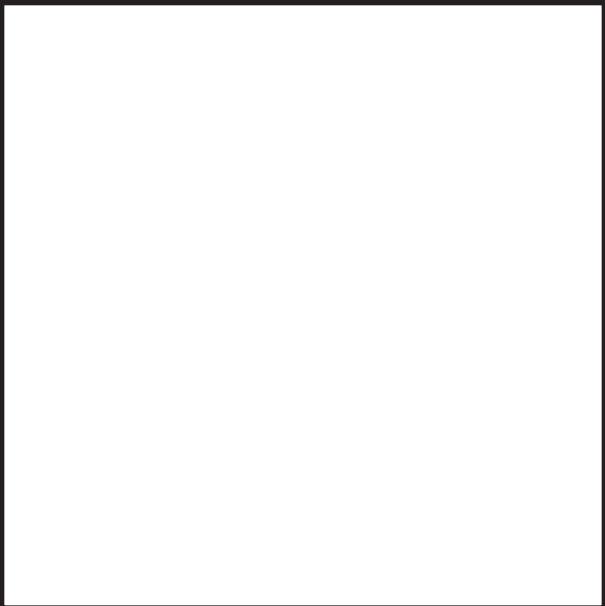
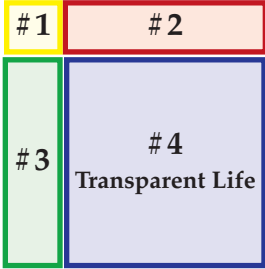
If you're following Jesus, you can't remain hidden in a cave of secrets! You need to disclose your feelings and motivations as part of your Kingdom one-anothering. Then others can help you see

how your inner person lines up with the character of Jesus (Proverbs 16:2; James 4:3). Your silent fortress is sin because you're hindering the mutual responsibility you have to the body life of others who are in fellowship with you.

Pane #4 shows the healthy transparency of someone who has had adequate feedback and disclosure from those who know him/her well. This person is confident in God's love for them and doesn't fear the corrective input of others. They're assured that when they confess their sins, our Father promises to forgive and cleanse (1 John 1:9).

A transparent person presses forward in the Spirit into all the grace our Lord has in store for them. They can redemptively and victoriously share the experiences and lessons they've learned from their past in order to encourage others. Because they've repented and been forgiven, their past mistakes and sins no longer "sting" when they're brought up. Rather, others can take hope themselves in the loving forgiveness of our Father (2 Corinthians 1:3,4).

Those who have tasted the wonderful mercy of our God are grateful. They want to live consistently in an upright way to please our Father and bring Him praise. Such transparent availability for our Lord's use produces a loving boldness (Proverbs 28:1). They can both openly and discerningly reveal themselves to others as well as humbly provide the Godly feedback others close to them need in order to grow in the character of Jesus.



- Using the above square, draw four panes that show the window of *your* life. Use the *size* of each pane to depict how you view yourself according the preceding descriptions.

Describe why you drew your window as you did, and discuss it with those who know you well. Do they agree with your self-evaluation?

In what ways do you need to be changed to be more in the character of Jesus? In what specific ways could those who are close to you help as instruments in the Spirit's hand?

Three Primary Sources of Interpersonal Apprehension and Tension

Did you ever wonder why you're very comfortable around others while your spouse would rather spend more time alone? Partly that's because we're all wired differently to some degree or another. Many years ago a prominent study detected three potential sources of interpersonal discomfort in relationships: (1) The matter of being around other people, referred to as "**inclusion**". (2) The issue of leading and following, called "**control**". (3) The heart expression of belonging to others, termed "**affection**".

This personal evaluation survey can help you as a couple to discover what's behind some of your frustration. Read each statement below and **circle the number** that best describes you. **0** means **not at all**, while **9-out-of-9** times the statement applies to you. Don't try to analyze the question. Instead, ask the Holy Spirit to give you a number that indicates your current perception.

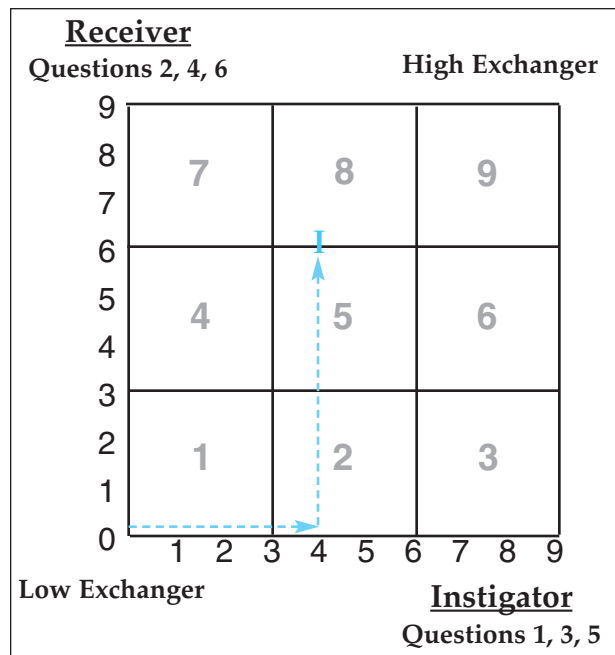
- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. How much do you enjoy including others in what you are doing? | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 |
| 2. How much do you enjoy being included by others? | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 |
| 3. How much do you enjoy being in charge of others? | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 |
| 4. How much do you enjoy being directed by others? | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 |
| 5. How much do you enjoy instigating affection toward others? | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 |
| 6. How much do you enjoy receiving affection from others? | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 |

Now we're going to diagram your answers to see where you are compatible and where you may have tension with others. Notice that questions 1, 3, and 5 are "**instigator**" statements. They describe your actions *toward others*. You'll graph your answers to these questions on the **horizontal axis** below.

Questions 2, 4, and 6 are "**receiver**" statements. They indicate the actions of others *toward you*. Your answers to these questions will be put on the **vertical axis**.

For example: Let's say for questions 1 and 2 above you circled numbers 4 and 6, respectively. To indicate this on the diagram, go horizontally to the "4" and then go up to the "6". There you would place an "I" for inclusion (see blue dotted line). Do the same thing for questions 3 and 4, placing a "C" for control. Then for questions 5 and 6, placing an "A" for affection.

Next, mark on the graph the number location for the answers of your spouse or other person doing this with you, using a different color pen. Now you can see where you're compatible and where you may have tension between you in certain areas. Again, this is a *discussion tool* to



help you get to know each other better. Your goal is *not* to judge each other or try to make them change!

The two of us first took this survey over 30 years ago. At that time Mike was an up-and-coming Navy officer and Sue was an active and involved Navy wife. On the diagram to the right you can see where we were then in these areas.

<u>Mike</u>	<u>Sue</u>
I=8,8	I=3,4
C=9,0	C=3,3
A=3,8	A=1,5

At that time over 500,000 others had completed the survey nationally. You can graph their results and compare them with your own:

Inclusion = 2,2
 Control = 4,5
 Affection = 3,8

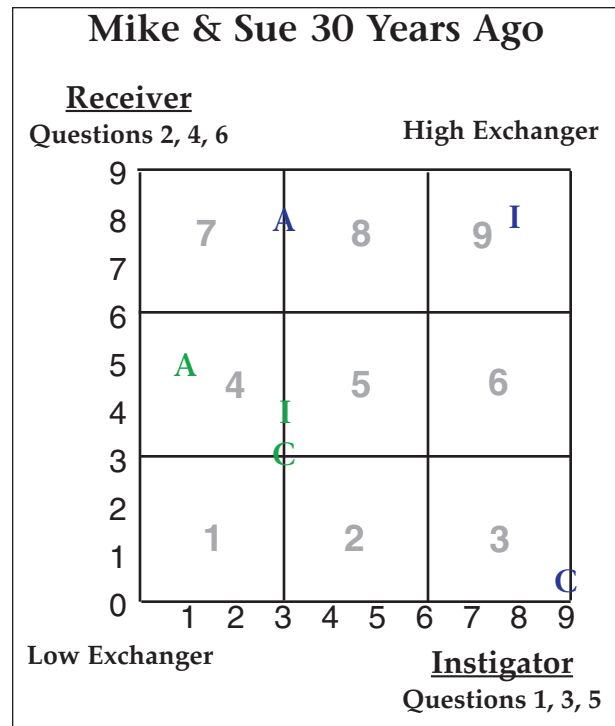
We'll use our own results from 30 years ago to illustrate how our differences affected our marriage back then.

Inclusion

Mike was a “**high exchanger**” and always enjoyed being around other people. Sue was more of a “**low exchanger**” and preferred far more time alone. This created tension!

When it came to doing things as a couple, Sue really wanted to share that time only with Mike. When he'd suggest something like, “Why don't we go to the beach this weekend”, he'd add “and invite so-and-so and so-and-so to come too!” That second part would produce immediate apprehension on Sue's part.

As you weigh Inclusion, there's compatibility among **high exchangers** — they like being together! **Low exchangers** are also compatible with each other



in a sense. They can be around one another as long as they *don't intrude* on each other.

Look again at the results of the 500,000 people who took the test before we did: **Inclusion** = 2,2. Basically, the population at large is saying, “You leave me alone, and I'll leave you alone.” Don't you think that has increased with the advent of Internet isolation and iPod fixation? Has this self-imposed seclusion impacted your own marriage or other relationships?

Control

Mike was 9,0 in the area of being in charge. As a young military professional with three deployments to Vietnam behind him, he felt most comfortable when he had control of things around him. And, it was no surprise that he felt most compatible with people who wanted input and direction.

After taking the survey, he became frightened about himself as a person. A popular song back then asked, “*Have you*

ever been mellow? Have you ever let someone else be strong?" Everywhere he went, whether flying a helicopter or driving the car, this lyric blared on the radio.

He realized it was time to yield the need to always be in charge. Through Sue's help and that of close friends, Mike began to give up his grip on control.

Sue was easygoing and content when others took the lead in the many organizations in which she participated. While she often found herself in charge of different committees and activities, she *wasn't comfortable* in this role. You might have called her a "reluctant leader". She wasn't the first to volunteer when leadership was needed, but neither would she refuse if no one else came forward.

In our marriage, Sue was generally satisfied if Mike led the way, although at times she'd voice disagreement or resist in certain areas. There was *potential* for tension

Now look at the results of the general population who took the test before we did: **4,5 in Control**. Basically, people want to blend in with each other and are fearful to stand out. But they also bristle when others try to direct them!

In the area of control, *opposites* are compatible with each other. If everyone is in square 3, high on wanting to control, you'll have a lot of conflict. If everyone is in square 7, decision making is difficult: "What do *you* think we should do?" "I don't know, what do *you* think?" Chaos and discouragement result from that approach.

So, how compatible are you and your spouse in the area of control and direction? Are there areas in which you're willing to yield agreeably so that you'll have more peace between you in your home?

Affection

This was the area in which our marriage was suffering the most. First, Mike was a 3,8, meaning that he was looking for more affection than he was willing to give. And, Sue at 1,5, was even more deficient in extending affectionate expression. (Notice also that the population was a **3,8 in Affection**.) We were like the majority of people, wanting *others* to lovingly show care even if we didn't extend it ourselves.

When we realized this, we knew we had to change. We took part in a Marriage Encounter weekend to learn how to share our feelings. This was the beginning of a whole new way of communicating with each other!

One thing that we noticed both in ourselves and in others who needed more affection than they were willing to give was this: **we were all busy with activities**. If we were honest with ourselves, however, we would have admitted we'd substituted *recognition* to fill the gap of not experiencing affection. We all needed "love and belonging" yet we instead jumped to seeking "ego satisfaction" through our activities.

Keep this in mind:

No matter whether child or adult, if someone isn't experiencing affection, they WILL get recognition, even if it takes a tantrum!

Remember this important note:

Over the years of using this survey with thousands of people, we've discerned a certain progression that occurs with people who *are* able to extend Christ-like love. This may not apply to everyone, but the sequence was very common.

Most would initially find themselves indeed needing more affection than

they were willing to give. But if they developed close supportive relationships, they moved into square 9 where they shared mutual and reciprocal affection. They became “high exchangers” as they affectionately cared for each other — and this is good, as long as people don’t stop here (Luke 14:12,13).

As we used this survey, we started to see a type of person emerge who was in square 3 on affection. *They enjoyed giving even more affection than they needed to receive.* At first it seemed strange to us. But we asked these people about themselves.

We found that each had gone through great trials in life— hurt, betrayal, loss, severe illness. Out of these painful experiences, *Christ-like love* became their motivator. As we talked with these people, it became clear that events occurred in their life where they could choose to be bitter, *or* they could trust God and grow in the love of Jesus. These people chose the latter, as did the two of us by God’s grace many years ago.

Their decision to *wholly trust God* and *grow in the love of Jesus* is analogous to the obedience of Much-Afraid in *Hinds’ Feet On High Places*. She jumped into the mist-filled chasm so that the Shepherd could remove her desperate yearning for human love. It was at that point that she could love without being concerned whether she was loved in return, and ultimately be renamed “Grace and Glory”.

When you think about it, it takes people who truly are filled with the love of Jesus to most effectively represent Him to others. This is why it’s so critical that you get past only having your four basic needs met. With *earnest hearts* you need to help each other in the **Spiritual Growth** need — to be collectively more like Jesus.

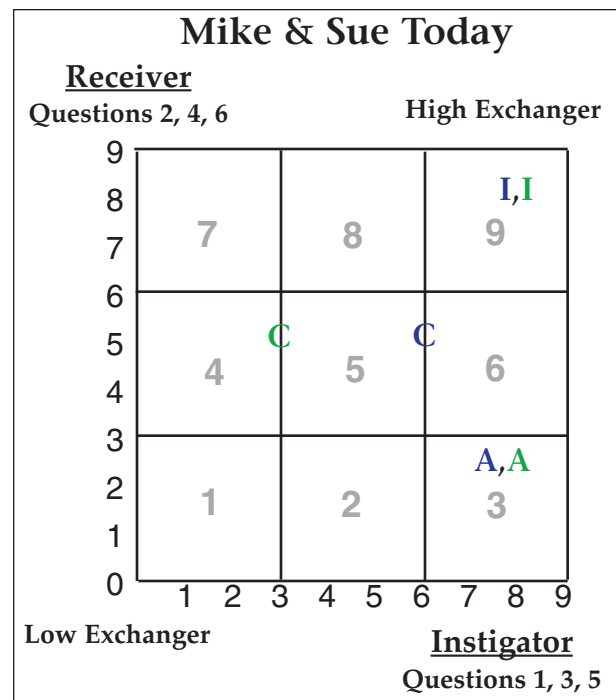
Mike and Sue Today

<u>Mike</u>	<u>Sue</u>
I=8,8	I=8,8
C=6,5	C=3,5
A=8,2	A=8,2

As you can see in the diagram below, we’ve been changed considerably! Most of the transformation occurred after we came back from Israel in 1994. By His grace we began to *cooperate together* so that our marriage could better reflect Jesus in our midst. The Hebraic foundations were key for this to happen.

We both knew that we needed transformation! And that process is precisely what the Holy Spirit has done in us as we’ve applied the Hebraic foundations to ourselves and our marriage.

Please understand, this wasn’t an easy process! Before going to Israel we were on the verge of divorce. The wounding from years of ministry and failing to learn how to truly “love and belong” to each other had taken its toll on us. We’d gotten to the point where



we'd given up all hope — except in our devotion to our Lord and King Jesus.

This is precisely the humble, broken place our Father wanted us — no longer willing or able to trust in our own independent strengths. As we were to realize during our time in Jerusalem, He needed us to be *desperately dependent on Him* and personally prepared *together* for what He was going to reveal to us.

Do you see? *Before* the transformational work He was going to do within us in Israel, we were unable to get to square 3. Without the Hebraic foundations we *couldn't embrace* the hurts and betrayals we'd both experienced — especially at the hands of each other.

In Israel, our Father vibrantly made clear to us this important, life-giving truth:

Your marriage covenant must be the physical representation of your Covenant with your Father in Jesus.

If people want to know your love for Jesus, they must see it in your love for each other.

You have no idea how much we wept when we fully grasped these two crucial realities. We'd often say afterward, "We could have floated Israel on our tears!" We'd spent 24 years of marriage having pained one another so much, and yet had counseled and taught thousands of people at the same time.

How our hearts grieved as we realized how wrong we'd been in neglecting our marriage! Our God's goal and purpose for our marriage was to *minister together* as a covenant union in Him, not scramble to teach independently as "married singles".

As we mentioned in Lifebyte 47:

It was in Jerusalem on our 24th wedding anniversary that we renewed our vows to live in

covenant union and to use our marriage to physically represent our Lord Jesus to others.

We'll be celebrating 14 years of covenant living in February, 2008. The first 24 years together allowed us to experience the frailties of self-interest and "married singleness" as parallel train tracks. These past 14 years, however, have joyfully matured our appreciation for each other in a whole new way.

We're profoundly grateful to our Father that the "scars" of the past can be instruments of healing testimony in the lives of other couples, with no sting as we recount those earlier years. It's out of a covenant union that keeps pressing onward and deepening that we hope to increasingly represent Jesus to others.

Deep in your innermost being you need to realize that the Hebraic foundations are God's gift to you, as they are to us. We are now enjoying the fruit of Christ-like love between us. You too must make God's priorities and precepts a way of life for yourselves if you're ever to experience His deep love for you. All your past hurts *can be transformed* into life-giving encouragement to bless others.

Where would you put Jesus?

One Sunday in the early 1980's Mike was asked to preach. He surveyed the entire congregation with the six questions we asked you. After they filled in their answers, Mike used an overhead projector to graph the congregation's responses. Most were very similar! In fact, their combined responses paralleled those of the 500,000 surveyed nationally—most of whom had been *nonbelievers*.

Interestingly, few in the pew felt bad that their answers were no different from people who made no claim to be Christian. They were content that their answers were similar to everyone else in the congregation.

