

Understanding

Chapter 7

Audio Lesson: FAM07



Objective: To examine the importance of understanding our spouse for growth of oneness.



“You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”

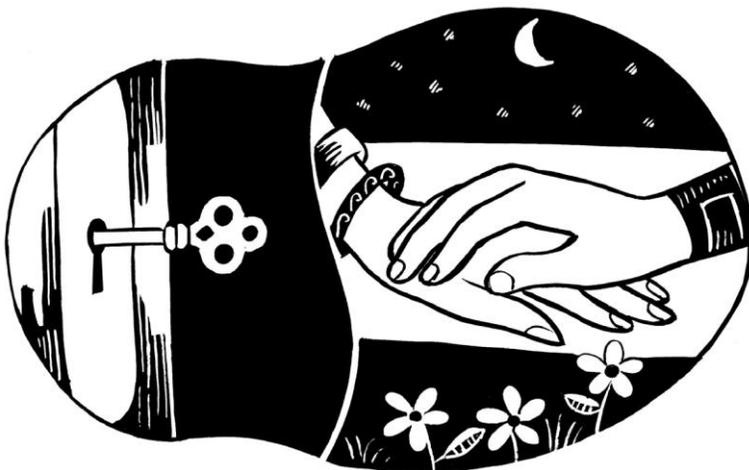
—1 Peter 3:7

“And Jesus said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

—Matthew 19:5-6

If you were wealthy, you could buy everything your spouse does for you—everything except a relationship. We all want to be understood and should want to understand our spouse. And to have a relationship, we must work at understanding our spouse and at being understood. Thus, understanding our spouse is the link that provides for the growth of oneness. We need to understand first of all that men and women are different and these differences are to be celebrated, not resolved.

The value and worth of a man or a woman is based on their function and role as God has created them to be a unique individual. The word “self” in the dictionary is described as “the uniqueness, the individuality of any given person that makes him distinct from every other person.” We must understand the uniqueness of our spouses and the importance of their past. We must learn to listen. To properly love our spouse we must learn to properly love ourselves as God intended.



We must seek God’s help to understand and love as we ought.

*“Lord make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. Oh, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, **to be understood as to understand**, to be loved as to love, for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”*

—Francis of Assisi

1. True or false? Communication is the tool that helps us maintain the oneness in our marriage.
2. True or false? Compatibility of values is not important as evidence of the oneness of a couple.
3. True or false? We can have a good marriage relationship without understanding each other.
4. True or false? We will never understand our spouse, and we should just give up trying.
5. True or false? If your understanding is not growing, your marriage oneness is not growing.
6. True or false? God’s Word tells us we are never to be angry because anger will destroy our marriages.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

7. Why is it important to understand your spouse?
 - a. It is impossible, so we should not even try.
 - b. It is important because it causes oneness to grow.
 - c. It is important so you can get them to do more things for you.
 - d. It is not important to have a happy home.

“In your anger do not sin.” Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

—Ephesians 4:26-27

8. What are some of the differences we need to understand between men and women? (*choose all that apply*)

values	physical
biological	importance
rights	intellectual
worth	spiritual
emotional	roles

9. What are some of the things that we should want to understand about our spouse?
 - a. Their past, the way they were raised, what happened to them
 - b. Their individuality and what make them unique
 - c. The differences of men and women and to celebrate those differences
 - d. All of the above

10. Why is it important to understand the sacredness of our individuality?
 - a. Because we are all part of the divine, we are gods.
 - b. It is not important. We have no value because we will all suffer and die.
 - c. Because God created us unique and different from all others.
 - d. It is not important because God made us all the same.

11. In light of the fact that spouses are so different, what is a good definition for understanding?
 - a. Simply agreeing to disagree
 - b. Finding mutual agreements that resolve differences
 - c. To intellectually accept every difference
 - d. To agree with our spouse about everything

12. What does it mean to be “spouse-centered”?
 - a. To treat your spouse in every way as you want to be treated
 - b. To demand that you are the center and most important
 - c. To understand that providing for the needs of the children is top priority
 - d. To give your spouse whatever he or she desires

13. How can we really listen to our spouse?
 - a. Let them talk all they want.
 - b. Argue with everything they say.
 - c. Wait until it is your turn to talk.
 - d. Hear what they are saying and seek to understand and be understood.

14. In our marriages, what is the opposite of love?
 - a. Hatred
 - b. Indifference
 - c. Anger
 - d. Cruelty



Reread the prayer by Francis of Assisi. What section of this prayer, if applied to your life, would help your marriage the most? Pray the words of that section for your life this week.

What are some of the things that are hindering better understanding in your marriage? What can you do this week to improve understanding?

Paul says, “He who loves his wife loves himself.” Do you understand God’s love for you, which can give you a proper love for yourself? How can you demonstrate God’s love more clearly to your spouse?



Pray the great prayer of Francis of Assisi for your marriage:

*“Lord make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. Oh, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, **to be understood as to understand**, to be loved as to love, for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”*



Going Deeper

1. How well do you know your spouse? And do you understand each other? _____

2. Are you able to spend enough time with your spouse to get to know and understand him/her?
Or, are you both on life's roller-coaster with no time for each other? _____

3. Are any quarrels/misunderstandings in your marriage related to past experiences/hurts that
you do not know about? _____

4. Do you feel like your spouse understands you, your strengths, weaknesses, and feelings?
Explain why or why not. _____

5. Can you be vulnerable enough to discuss these topics with him/her? _____

6. Would you seek to understand your spouse even if he/she makes no effort to understand you?
Why is that so important? _____

7. Do you have a proper love for yourself such that you can love others as you love yourself?
