SECTION I

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN MARRIAGE
I

**Finding the Rock**

*For they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them,*

*and that rock was Christ.*

1 Corinthians 10:4, NIV

*On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said*  
in a loud voice, *“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.  
Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of*  
living water will flow from within him.*

John 7:37-38, NIV

*Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go*  
hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”

John 6:35, NIV

The most important Scriptures you will read in this book are those above. At first glance, they may not seem pertinent for a couple searching for answers in their marriage or for a lonely single person seeking that special lifetime relationship; but, actually, they are invaluable for these very people.

The most important information you will ever read in this book—or in any other book—concerning success and fulfillment in marriage is found in this chapter. Sound pretty sure of ourselves, do we? Well, you be the judge of whether we’re right or wrong. Just do us and yourself a favor: If you don’t read anything else or remember anything else in this book, please read and remember the information in this chapter.

Let us begin by asking you a question, and we want you to think about your answer and be honest: *Who meets your deepest needs? In other*
words, on a daily basis, on whom do you rely the most and to whom do you go first to get your deepest needs met?

Before you answer, let us define “deepest needs” and give you a list of the most common sources for the meeting of those needs. Then it will be easier for you to understand what we want you to see.

Although each person has particular areas of desire or certain preferences that are important to him or her and may not be to someone else, all of us have certain needs in common. Those common needs are your “deepest needs.” We’re not talking about physical needs, such as food, oxygen or sleep. Rather, we’re talking about needs that transcend the physical, going deep into one’s heart and soul. Each person’s craving for those things is every bit as real as the built-in appetite for food.

The four basic needs that all human beings are instinctively motivated to satisfy all of their lives are:

1. **Acceptance:** knowing you are loved and needed by others
2. **Identity:** knowing you are individually significant and special
3. **Security:** knowing you are well protected and provided for
4. **Purpose:** knowing you have a reason for living. In the case of Christians, this means knowing that God has a special plan for your life.

Whether you have consciously realized it or not, these needs have been motivating you throughout your life. All of us are driven in some significant way to find an avenue in life to satisfy these needs. We are as strongly driven emotionally to satisfy them as we are to find the right food for our stomachs when we are hungry.

These needs are *deep needs, not wants.*

Now, let us give you the list of the most common resources people seek for the fulfillment of their deepest needs, although these are not in the same order for everyone:

1. Yourself
2. Spouses
3. Friends
4. Children
5. Employers and/or work, jobs or careers
6. Churches and pastors
7. Parents
8. God
9. Money/material possessions
10. A combination of two or more of the above

After you have read this list carefully and have thought seriously about these things, try to answer honestly the question we asked earlier.

Who Meets Your Deepest Needs?

In your everyday life, whom or what do you seek first and most to fulfill your needs for acceptance, identity, security and purpose?

You may have realized that the correct answer is something like, “I seek God first and more than anyone else or anything to meet my deepest needs.”

The fact is that most people cannot honestly give that answer, and that is the root of their problems.

The reason for this is simple. Most people never come to Jesus to get their deepest needs met, so they never find what they so desperately seek in life or marriage. The Scriptures at the beginning of this chapter tell us that Jesus has the ability to give us spiritual drink and food to satisfy our inner longings. He invites us to come to Him for true fulfillment. He promises us complete satisfaction if we do that.

As a matter of fact, when God created humans in His image, He built in a “Jesus-sized” hole from which all of those deepest needs stem. Because of that, no human being or anything else on Earth can satisfy those needs but Jesus. Those needs were designed to draw you to the One whom God intended to fulfill you as a person.

Unfortunately, most people choose to seek inner satisfaction through a “quicker and surer method.” They get married and expect their spouses to do for them what only Jesus can do. Or, perhaps, children have grown up being trained to look to their parents for everything. Sometimes, teenagers—especially girls—deliberately have babies, thinking that then they will have someone to love them. Others move from
job to job or place to place, seeking possible fulfillment, but these are only diversions. They never satisfy.

The first thing you need to understand in order for your marriage to work is this simple truth: No human being can meet your deepest needs. Only God can. Of course, if you are operating in God’s will, you can find someone who will encourage you, or who will be God’s vessel to help you experience love in a real way. However, even the most spiritual person on Earth is very mortal and, therefore, quite limited. When you put too much hope in a person, you always are headed for disappointment and, sometimes, even for disaster!

Many marriages end in disillusionment or, even worse, divorce because the parties involved enter the relationship with unrealistic expectations, not because they are evil or even irresponsible. Each expects the other to meet his or her deepest needs. When they realize this is not happening, the real trouble begins.

Whenever a Christian does not allow God to meet his or her deepest needs, that person automatically transfers the expectation for fulfillment to the closest person or resource, the one in whom the most hope has been placed. For most people, that person is a spouse. When the expectation of having deep needs met is transferred to anyone or anything other than God, three main problems are created:

1. You always will be disappointed with the results, no matter how well things go.

2. You will lack the inner resources you need to love others the way you should and to confront life successfully.

3. You almost always will be hurt and offended eventually by the one in whom you invested all your trust, because that one cannot possibly meet your deepest needs.

Sometimes the reaction to these problems is an underlying frustration that is manageable. More often, it is an outward anger that is
destructive. God’s Word tells us what we can expect if we fall into the trap of trusting anyone or anything but Him to satisfy those needs He placed within us to point us to Him.

He who trusts in his own heart is a fool (Prov. 28:26).

Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength (Jer. 17:5).

He who trusts in his riches will fall (Prov. 11:28).

Compare those warnings with the promises made to those who trust in God:

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is in the Lord. For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit (Jer. 17:7-8).

Those who trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever (Ps. 125:1).

He who trusts in the Lord will be exalted (Prov. 29:25).

In distinguishing among trusting in people, things or God to meet our deepest needs, there are some insurmountable differences. The contrasts are very clear and unmistakable.

Results of Trusting People or Things, or God

When you trust in people or things:

- Your inner security is dependent upon someone or something you cannot predict or control and whose resources to meet your needs are limited.
• Your ability to give is dependent upon your ability to get from others.

• Your life is filled with an atmosphere of disappointment and frustration.

• Your unrealistic expectations of others create a negative atmosphere of tension in your relationships, if not a compelling force field of pressure that drives other people away from you.

When you trust in God, these are the results:

• Your inner security and strength are dependent upon Him who is totally faithful and who has unlimited resources.

• Your ability to give flows from an inner resource available to you at all times—the Holy Spirit. When others are not giving to you, still you can love them generously, thus endearing yourself to them and strengthening your relationships.

• Your life will be filled with an atmosphere of blessing, satisfaction and optimism.

• Your realistic expectations of others draw you closer together with them as you love and give to them of yourself.

When I (Jimmy) married Karen, I did not realize I was expecting things of her that only God could do for me, but I was doing exactly that. She also expected me to give beyond my ability. The beginning of God’s being able to heal our marriage came when we both realized that only Jesus was capable of meeting our deepest needs.

We repented to God and to each other for the sin of rejecting Him as our greatest resource and for placing unrealistic expectations on one another. The result was a transformed marriage generated in the lives of two people plugged into the life-giving power of Jesus.

Throughout our marriage since that crossroads evening, we have found that although the Bible was written years ago, its words are still
true, because they were inspired by a living God who does not change. When you come to Jesus for a drink of water or a piece of bread, He truly will satisfy you just as the Bible says. Your entire life will change as a result of trusting Jesus daily to meet all your needs, the small ones as well as the deepest ones.

Jesus loves you, and He is the best friend you will ever have. Even as you read this, He is with you, ready to give eternal spiritual bread and water to satisfy your hungry soul. As you pray and read the Word of God daily, you will experience the reality of His presence in your life.

If you will transfer your expectations to Jesus, you will not be disappointed, because He is faithful. He loves you more than you love yourself or anyone else. He wants to meet your needs more than you want them met. There is not a detail of your life He does not know—yet He still loves you.

For the sake of your life and the lives of those around you, trust Jesus to meet your needs. Only a person who trusts in Jesus to this depth can truly have a successful marriage. Once Jesus is working in your life, then everything else can work. When Jesus is not with you, success is impossible.

Have you become disillusioned with life in general or with your spouse in particular?

Are you regularly disappointed because you don’t experience the inner joy and fulfillment you desire?

Have you reached the point where you wonder if your marriage can ever work again?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you have been looking to someone besides Jesus to meet your deepest needs. When you are ready to admit your mistake and come to Him, He is ready to pour out His love and grace in your life.

The source of fulfillment of our deepest needs is the most important factor in marriage. I hope you have made the decision to let Jesus be your Rock and your Source and to allow God to cultivate your heart and build your marriage upon His Word.¹

Note

¹ For more information on how to have a personal relationship with Jesus, refer to Appendix I. For more information on how to have your deepest needs met by the Lord on a daily basis, refer to Appendix II.