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***Relational Theology*** and the ***Ten Relational Needs*** language and philosophy are a product of the life and ministry of Dr. David & Teresa Fergason.

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Most verses taken from the New Living Translation of the Bible.

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# SHARING STRENGTH <sup>AND</sup> GROWTH AREAS

*But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control... GALATIANS 5:22-23*

Check what areas you agree or disagree about most with your partner.

- Select three Strength Areas (most agreement and positive aspects of your relationship)
- Select three Growth Areas (most disagreement and areas you want to improve)

	STRENGTH AREAS	GROWTH AREAS
1. COMMUNICATION <i>We share feelings and understand each other.</i>		
2. CONFLICT RESOLUTION <i>We are able to discuss and resolve differences.</i>		
3. PARTNER STYLE AND HABITS <i>We appreciate each other's personality and habits.</i>		
4. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT <i>We agree on budget and financial matters.</i>		
5. LEISURE ACTIVITIES <i>We have a good balance of activities together and apart.</i>		
6. SEXUALITY AND AFFECTION <i>We are comfortable discussing sexual issues and affection.</i>		
7. FAMILY AND FRIENDS <i>We feel good about our relationships with relatives and friends.</i>		
8. RELATIONSHIP ROLES <i>We agree on how to share decision-making and responsibilities.</i>		
9. CHILDREN AND PARENTING <i>We agree on issues related to having and raising children.</i>		
10. SPIRITUAL BELIEFS <i>We hold similar religious values and beliefs.</i>		

## COUPLE DISCUSSION

1. Take turns sharing what each of you perceives as your relationship's strengths. Verbally share one strength at a time until you each have shared three.
2. Use the same procedure to share and discuss growth areas.
3. Now have a discussion around these questions:
  - Did any of your partner's responses surprise you?
  - In what areas did you mostly agree with your partner?
  - In what areas did you mostly disagree with your partner?

# OBSTACLES TO ONENESS

ROOT	SELF-RELIANCE PRIDE/ANGER	SELF-ISHNESS FEAR	SELF-CONDEMNATION SHAME
LIE(S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» "I've made it this far."</li> <li>» "I am self-sufficient."</li> <li>» "I don't need any help."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» "Though I really need (____)...</li> <li>... I can't trust anyone to help me."</li> <li>... I can get/take what I need through my own efforts."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» "I'm not worth it."</li> <li>» "No one loves me for who I am."</li> <li>» "I don't deserve to have my needs met."</li> </ul>
BELIEFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» "No one has cared for me in the past."</li> <li>» "My painful past isn't safe to explore."</li> <li>» "My value comes from my performance."</li> <li>» "My failures are not my fault."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» "No one will look out for me."</li> <li>» "I won't trust anyone to help."</li> <li>» "Past disappointments mean I have to take."</li> <li>» "I cannot be vulnerable."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» "No one values me."</li> <li>» "My performance proves I have no value."</li> <li>» "I am/My life is shameful."</li> <li>» "Guilt."</li> </ul>
SYMPTOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Little or no compassion</li> <li>» Anger</li> <li>» Judgment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Self becomes priority</li> <li>» Lack of trust or openness</li> <li>» Stingy with time, resources, affection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Critical of others</li> <li>» Defensiveness</li> <li>» Self-condemnation</li> </ul>
ANTIDOTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Practice Gospel identity gratitude - thankfulness</li> <li>» Cultivate humility</li> <li>» Endure with patience and right understanding the training of the Lord</li> <li>» Recognize continual need for your Savior</li> <li>» Express thankfulness</li> <li>» Recognize interdependency with others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Practice Gospel identity gratitude - thankfulness</li> <li>» Cultivate intimacy and affection for Jesus</li> <li>» Seek comfort from God in hurts</li> <li>» Learn to forgive in a biblical manner</li> <li>» Allow your heart to connect to the heart of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Practice Gospel identity gratitude - thankfulness</li> <li>» Let biblical guilt lead to repentance</li> <li>» Understand our significance in Jesus</li> <li>» Develop Jesus-centered confidence</li> <li>» Express thankfulness</li> </ul>
PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Identify why anger seems reasonable</li> <li>» Seek Reconciliation with others</li> <li>» Experiencing Comfort from God</li> <li>» Quietening &amp; Connection Exercises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Experiencing comfort from God in hurts</li> <li>» Identify specific areas where you experience a fear response</li> <li>» Quietening &amp; Connection Exercises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Identify specific beliefs that shape your self view</li> <li>» Experiencing Comfort from God</li> <li>» Quietening &amp; Connection Exercises</li> </ul>

# RELATIONAL NEEDS GLOSSARY

RELATIONAL NEED	DEFINITION	EMOTION EXAMPLES	
<b>Acceptance</b> <i>"Our relationship is safe"</i>	» Unconditionally accepting someone as a person regardless of behavior or performance. » Safety and commitment in spite of differences or failures.	» Judged » Offended » Insecure » Afraid	» Need to prove something
<b>Affection</b> <i>"I delight in you"</i>	» Expressing love, care and closeness through physical touch. » Sharing words of devotion and commitment.	» Undesirable » Disconnected	» Unsafe » Distant
<b>Appreciation</b> <i>"I am grateful for what you did"</i>	» Expressing thanks, praise or commendation. » Recognizing accomplishment or efforts made.	» Unappreciated » Isolated » Unwanted	» Jealous » Worthless
<b>Approval (Blessing)</b> <i>"I like who you are!"</i>	» Building up or affirming another for who they are. » Expressing the fact and the importance of a relationship.	» Worthless » Unsafe in a relationship	» Judged » Insecure
<b>Attention</b> <i>"I know you and care about you"</i>	» Entering into a person's world. » Taking a genuine interest in their life, uniqueness and concerns. » Being mindful of another.	» Desperate » Disconnected	» Lonely » Frustrated
<b>Comfort</b> <i>"I join you in your pain"</i>	» Responding to a hurting person with words, feelings and touch. » Hurting with and for another's grief or pain. » Empathizing deeply with another.	» Bitter » Discouraged » Depressed	» Confused » Grieving » Gloomy
<b>Encouragement</b> <i>"You can do it"</i>	» Urging another to persist and persevere toward a goal. » Stimulating someone toward love and good deeds. » Bringing words of hope to a weary person.	» Despairing » Weary » Hopeless	» Isolated » Discouraged » Sullen
<b>Respect</b> <i>"I value your personhood"</i>	» Valuing and regarding one another highly. » Treating one another as important. » Honoring one another.	» Valueless » Unimportant	» Unwanted » Angry
<b>Security (Peace)</b> <i>"I will help you feel safe"</i>	» Relational harmony is present, even in conflict. » Sense of trust and safety. » Providing freedom from fear, harm or loss of relationship.	» Anxious » Distrustful	» Uncertain » Worrisome
<b>Support</b> <i>"I will help you with your burdens"</i>	» Coming alongside and helping with problems or struggles. » Providing appropriate assistance.	» Weary » Desperate » Frustrated	» Abandoned » Stressed

# COMMUNICATION: Oneness Responding

*Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. ROMANS 12:15*

## PERSONAL APPLICATION RESPONSES

### ***“Rejoice with those who rejoice!”***

Take turns sharing with your partner:

*“When I think about my growing-up years,  
I remember a time when \_\_\_\_\_.”*

Share with your partner about this exciting or pleasant experience! Share how it made you feel. Rejoice together!

### **PRODUCTIVE RESPONSES:**

Productive responses always include understanding, gentleness, empathy and reassurance.

Examples:

- *“I am so glad that you had that experience.”*
- *“I am very happy with you that you were able to hear those things.”*
- *“I am so happy you shared that wonderful story with me.”*
- *“I am so excited with you that you were honored in that way.”*
- *“I am so proud of you and I hope you feel very proud, too.”*

### ***“Mourn with those who mourn.”***

Take turns sharing with your partner:

*“When I think about my growing-up years,  
I really missed \_\_\_\_\_,  
and it left me feeling \_\_\_\_\_.”*

Respond with comfort:

- *“I’m sad that happened...”*
- *“It hurts me that you were hurt like that because I care for you and I love you.”*
- *Take time to grieve together.*

### **PRODUCTIVE RESPONSES:**

Productive responses always include understanding, gentleness, empathy and reassurance.

Examples:

- *“I can really see that you’re hurting.”*
- *“It saddens me to see you so fearful.”*
- *“I care about you and don’t like to see you so discouraged.”*
- *“I’m committed to go through this with you.”*

# COMMUNICATION: *Oneness Responding*

## Past Experiences to Share

THINGS TO CELEBRATE:	THINGS TO MOURN:
<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An award or honor you received</li> <li>• A time you felt secure</li> <li>• Someone speaking highly of you</li> <li>• A success you achieved</li> <li>• A good grade you weren't expecting</li> <li>• A time you felt warm and safe</li> <li>• A time you felt important to others</li> <li>• Being publicly honored by a coach or mentor</li> <li>• A special gift you received</li> <li>• A special Christmas or birthday memory</li> <li>• An adventure you had with someone</li> <li>• A special surprise event or decision</li> <li>• The fun of meeting someone famous</li> <li>• A favorite vacation you took</li> <li>• A time celebrating with others</li> </ul>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A time you were misunderstood</li> <li>• A time you were bullied</li> <li>• A time when someone embarrassed you</li> <li>• A time when you were betrayed</li> <li>• A time someone gossiped about you</li> <li>• Suffering injustice from a person of authority</li> <li>• The death of a family member or friend</li> <li>• The death or disappearance of a pet</li> <li>• The loss of an important possession</li> <li>• A time someone cheated you</li> <li>• Suffering a loss in an important event or contest</li> <li>• A sickness or injury that was particularly painful</li> <li>• The loss of a special relationship</li> <li>• Getting cut from a team</li> <li>• A time of sharing grief with others</li> </ul>

# COMMUNICATION: *Understanding Your Relational Needs*

## Relational Needs Questionnaire

While we all have the same relational needs, the priority of our needs varies. Your greatest need may be for affection, while your partner's greatest need may be security. One child may have an acute need for comfort, but another sibling's greatest need may be encouragement. An important aspect of learning to love others is taking the time to know them and discover what their priority needs are. This questionnaire will help you assess your most important relational needs. Answer the questions, then score the questionnaire to identify the needs you perceive as most important. Have each person complete the questionnaire and then discuss the results.

**Instructions:** Respond to the following questions by placing the appropriate number beside each item:

Strongly Disagree (-2)

Disagree (-1)

Neutral (0)

Agree (+1)

Strongly Agree (+2)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ___ 1. It's important that people receive me for who I am, even if I'm a little "different."                   | ___ 27. When facing something difficult, I usually sense that I need other people's input and help.                        |
| ___ 2. It's important to me that my financial world be in order.   | ___ 28. Written notes and calls expressing sympathy after a serious loss or difficulty are (or would be) meaningful to me. |
| ___ 3. I sometimes grow tired of doing the right thing.  | ___ 29. I feel good when someone close to me shows satisfaction with the way I am.   |
| ___ 4. It's vital to me that others ask me my opinion.   | ___ 30. I enjoy being spoken well of or mentioned in front of other people.  |
| ___ 5. It's important that I receive physical hugs, warm embraces, etc.  | ___ 31. I would be described as a person who likes hugs and/or other caring touches.                                       |
| ___ 6. I feel good when people express interest in my world.   | ___ 32. When a decision is going to affect me, it's important to me that I am involved in the decision.                    |
| ___ 7. It's important for me to know "where I stand" with those who are in authority over me.                  | ___ 33. I am blessed when someone shows interest in what I'm working on.   |
| ___ 8. It is meaningful when someone notices that I need help and then they offer to get involved.             | ___ 34. I appreciate trophies, plaques or special gifts as permanent reminders of something significant I have done.       |
| ___ 9. If I feel overwhelmed, I want someone to come alongside me and help.                                    | ___ 35. I sometimes worry about the future.  |
| ___ 10. I feel blessed when someone recognizes and shows concern for how I'm feeling.                          | ___ 36. When I'm introduced into a new environment, I typically try to connect with a group or individual.                 |
| ___ 11. I like that "who I am" is of value and is meaningful to others.  | ___ 37. The thought of change (moving, new job, etc.) produces anxiety for me.   |
| ___ 12. It is important to me to express myself—what I think, feel, etc.—to those around me.                   | ___ 38. It bothers me when people are prejudiced against someone just because they dress or act differently.               |
| ___ 13. It means a lot to me for loved ones to initiate saying to me, "I love you."                            | ___ 39. I want to be close to friends and loved ones who will be there "through thick and thin."                           |
| ___ 14. I resist being seen only as a part of a large group—my individuality is important.                     | ___ 40. I am blessed by written notes and other specific expressions of gratitude.   |
| ___ 15. I am blessed when a friend calls to listen and encourage me.   | ___ 41. To know that someone is praying for me is meaningful to me.  |
| ___ 16. It's important to me that people acknowledge me not just for what I do but for who I am.               | ___ 42. I am bothered by "controlling" people.   |
| ___ 17. I feel best when my world is orderly and somewhat predictable.   | ___ 43. I am blessed when I receive unmerited and spontaneous expressions of love.   |
| ___ 18. When I've worked hard on something, I am pleased when others express gratitude.                        | ___ 44. I am blessed when someone carefully listens to me.   |
| ___ 19. When I "blow it," it's important to me to be reassured that I'm still loved.                           | ___ 45. I am blessed when people commend me for a godly characteristic I exhibit.  |
| ___ 20. It's encouraging to me that others notice my effort or accomplishments.                                | ___ 46. I typically don't want to be alone when experiencing hurt and trouble.   |
| ___ 21. I sometimes feel overwhelmed with all I have to do.  | ___ 47. I don't enjoy working on a project by myself; I prefer to have a partner.  |
| ___ 22. I want to be treated with kindness and equality by all regardless of my race, gender, looks or status. | ___ 48. It's important for me to feel a "part of the group."   |
| ___ 23. I like to be greeted with a handshake or other appropriate friendly touch.                             | ___ 49. I respond to someone who tries to understand me and who shows me loving concern.                                   |
| ___ 24. I like it when someone wants to spend time with me.  | ___ 50. I would rather work with a team of people than by myself.  |
| ___ 25. I am blessed when a "superior" says, "Good job."   |  |
| ___ 26. It's important to me for someone to express care for me after I've had a hard day.                     |  |

***To score the questionnaire, see the next page.***



# RELATIONAL NEEDS QUESTIONNAIRE: *Scoring*

1. Add up your responses (-2, -1, 0, +1, +2) to items:

1 \_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_ 36 \_\_\_\_ 38 \_\_\_\_ 48 \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_

These responses relate to the need for **ACCEPTANCE**.

2. Add up your responses to items:

5 \_\_\_\_ 13 \_\_\_\_ 23 \_\_\_\_ 31 \_\_\_\_ 43 \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_

These responses relate to the need for **AFFECTION**.

3. Add up your responses to items:

18 \_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_ 25 \_\_\_\_ 34 \_\_\_\_ 40 \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_

These responses relate to the need for **APPRECIATION**.

4. Add up your responses to items:

7 \_\_\_\_ 11 \_\_\_\_ 16 \_\_\_\_ 29 \_\_\_\_ 45 \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_

These responses relate to the need for **APPROVAL**.

5. Add up your responses to items:

6 \_\_\_\_ 12 \_\_\_\_ 24 \_\_\_\_ 30 \_\_\_\_ 44 \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_

These responses relate to the need for **ATTENTION**.

6. Add up your responses to items:

10 \_\_\_\_ 26 \_\_\_\_ 28 \_\_\_\_ 46 \_\_\_\_ 49 \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_

These responses relate to the need for **COMFORT**.

7. Add up your responses to items:

3 \_\_\_\_ 15 \_\_\_\_ 21 \_\_\_\_ 33 \_\_\_\_ 41 \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_

These responses relate to the need for **ENCOURAGEMENT**.

8. Add up your responses to items:

4 \_\_\_\_ 14 \_\_\_\_ 22 \_\_\_\_ 32 \_\_\_\_ 42 \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_

These responses relate to the need for **RESPECT**.

9. Add up your responses to items:

2 \_\_\_\_ 17 \_\_\_\_ 35 \_\_\_\_ 37 \_\_\_\_ 39 \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_

These responses relate to the need for **SECURITY**.

10. Add up your responses to items:

8 \_\_\_\_ 9 \_\_\_\_ 27 \_\_\_\_ 47 \_\_\_\_ 50 \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_

These responses relate to the need for **SUPPORT**.

## REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What were your three highest totals? Which needs do they represent?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Talk through each of your highest relational need totals with your partner.

3. Ask one another how you can help meet those needs in proactive ways.

# COMMUNICATION: Assertiveness <sup>and</sup> Active Listening

## HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

**Assertiveness:** *The skill of expressing your needs and what is important to you in a safe and respectful way. Not Demanding!*

**Active Listening:** *Choosing to care about the persons needs and restating their request in order to know them. Not Defensive!*

Assertiveness is a valuable communication skill. In successful couples, both individuals tend to feel safe and secure to “assert” their desires and feelings. Presumption brings strife, so presuming our spouse knows what is important to us or how we feel will often lead to feelings of isolation or anger. It will lead to a greater experience of oneness when we have the wisdom and skill to share how we feel and ask clearly and directly what we are requesting.

Assertive individuals take responsibility for their messages by using “I” statements. They avoid “you” statements. In making constructive requests, they are positive and respectful in their communication. They use polite phrases such as “please” and “thank you.” They share how they feel and communicate clearly, directly and gently.

In order to give the communication, the best chance of being heard, it is often wise to make sure your communication is at a good time when your partner is in a good frame of mind to give them the best chance to respond with understanding and faith. Before you share something from your heart or a desire/wish, consider asking your partner the following question:

***“Is this a good time to share my heart with you?”***

If your partner needs some time to unplug from a task or activity, set another time in the very near future to share your thought. It is important to make eye contact whenever possible in this process.

### EXAMPLES OF ASSERTIVE STATEMENTS:

*“It would help meet my relational need for attention if we could find some time after dinner to take a walk or other quiet activity before we engaged in our evening activities.”*

*“It would help me to feel respected and appreciated if we could spend some time talking over financial decisions before we commit to any expenses that are not currently in our budget.”*

Good communication depends first on maintaining care and connection. There are two parts to effective Active Listening first, choosing to care that the speaker's needs are important to you. Second, to carefully listen to another person and seek to know and understand. Active listening involves listening attentively without interruption and then restating what was heard. It is important to acknowledge the content AND the feelings of the speaker. The active listening process lets the sender know whether or not the message sent was clearly understood because the listener restates what they heard.

### EXAMPLES OF ACTIVE LISTENING:

*“I heard you say that it would help meet your relational need for attention if we could find some time after dinner to take a walk or other quiet activity before we engaged in our evening activities. Is that right?”*

*“If I understand what you said, you would feel more respected and appreciated if we talked over financial decisions before we commit to spending for things not in our budget. Did I hear your heart?”*

# COMMUNICATION: *Sharing from the heart*

*May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you,  
O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. PSALM 19:14*

## *Exercise* | Creating a Wish List

In this exercise, you will each individually make a Wish List of things you would like to see more of or less of in your relationship. Next, you will take turns sharing your Wish Lists with each other.

**Assertiveness:** The skill of expressing your needs and what is important to you in a safe and respectful way. It is an act of vulnerability, not a demand.

**Active Listening:** Choosing to care about the persons needs and restating their request in order to know them. Not defensive!

While sharing your Wish List with your partner, practice your Assertiveness skills. In giving feedback to your partner about their Wish List, you will be practicing your Active Listening skills.

**Make a Wish List of three things you would like more of or less of, AND what Relational Need it would meet or how it would make you feel:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## COUPLE DISCUSSION

Take turns sharing your Wish List with each other.  
A great resource for important things to share is your relational needs sheet.

### **SPEAKER'S JOB:**

1. Speak for yourself:  
"I would feel," "I wish..." etc.
2. Communicate what need would be met or how you would feel if your desires were acted on.

### **LISTENER'S JOB:**

1. Stop and affirm that you care that your partners need would be met.
2. Repeat and/or summarize what you have heard, restating the wish and how your partner would feel if the desires were acted on.
3. Ask your partner if you understood them correctly.

After completing the Wish List exercise, discuss the following questions:

1. Did the speaker feel heard and understood?
2. Was the listener able to care without becoming defensive?

# PERSONAL STRESS PROFILE

*Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls." MATTHEW 11:28-29*

## Do you control stress in your life or does stress control you?

Stressors are events that cause an emotional and/or physical reaction. Stress can be positive (wedding, job promotion) or negative (loss of job, car accident, major illness). But what is important is how you manage the many stressors in your life.

One way to manage stress is to prioritize the issues that are most important to you. Another is to decide what issues can be changed or resolved and which ones cannot. This exercise will help you focus on the high-priority issues and those that can be changed (Box 1).

### *Exercise* | Identifying Most Critical Issues

1. You will each select four issues that are the most stressful for you from the P-E Report or discussion.
2. Review each issue and put it into one of the four cells below.
3. Box 1 contains the "Most Critical Issues."

	Able to Change	Difficult to Change
HIGH PRIORITY	Box 1: Most Critical Issues	Box 2
	<i>What changes can you each make?</i>	<i>How do you plan to cope?</i>
LOW PRIORITY	Box 3	Box 4: Least Critical Issues
	<i>Are you spending too much time on low-priority issues?</i>	<i>Can you accept or forget about these issues?</i>

## COUPLE DISCUSSION

Select one issue from Box 1 that you will work on together as a couple. Work together as a team to achieve your goals.

1. Write down a sentence with a desired stress-reducing goal or outcome you both agree on.
2. Use the problem-solving worksheet to develop some action steps to help reduce stress.

# CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

## *Confession* <sup>and</sup> *Forgiveness*

### A PATH TO RECONCILIATION & HARMONY

*Live in harmony with one another... Do not be haughty,... Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, never avenge yourselves, ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. ROMANS 12:16-21*

#### Suggested Format for Experiencing Confession with God and Others

##### 1. CONFESSION:

*Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. PROVERBS 28:13*

*One of the ways I have hurt you is \_\_\_\_\_ (State specifically what you did or didn't do.)*

*I was wrong to treat you this way because...*

*("I was wrong" is better than "I'm sorry" It's also good to express more about why it was wrong. Not all Hurt and wrong is sin.)*

##### 2. CARE, CONNECTION & GODLY SORROW:

*You must have felt...*

*(Express your understanding of how your wrong affected the other person; this is empathy—tuning into the other's feelings.)*

*And I feel \_\_\_\_\_ for you.*

*(See the Oneness responding responses for examples of appropriate sorrow. This is comfort and Godly sorrow!)*

*Godly sorrow brings repentance... but worldly sorrow brings death. 2 CORINTHIANS 7:10*

*I really want to make sure that I understand how I have hurt you.  
Is there anything else you would like to tell me about how I hurt you?  
(Respond with comfort.)*

##### 3. CANCELLING THE DEBT:

*Will you forgive me?*

*(As the listener is understood and cared for and this request is presented, the listener should entrust the offense to Jesus' care, and offer forgiveness fully.)*

# CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

## *Problem Solving/Conflict Resolution*

### Ten Steps for Resolving Conflict

All couples have differences and disagreements. Studies show that the amount of disagreements are not related to marital happiness as much as how they are handled. Happy couples do not avoid disagreements; they resolve them while remaining respectful to each other, thereby strengthening their relationship. This Ten-Step Model is a simple but effective way to resolve conflict while avoiding common and destructive patterns. Use this model with an ongoing issue in your relationship, as well as for future issues.

**1.** Set a time and place for discussion.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Place: \_\_\_\_\_

**2.** Define the problem—be specific.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3.** List the ways you each contribute to the problem.

Partner 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Partner 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4.** List past attempts to resolve the issue that were not successful.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_

**5.** Brainstorm—Pool your new ideas and try to list 10 possible solutions to the problem. Do not judge or criticize any of the suggestions at this point.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

**5.** Brainstorm (continued)

- 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) \_\_\_\_\_

**6.** Discuss and evaluate each of these possible solutions. Be as objective as possible. Talk about how useful and appropriate each suggestion feels for resolving your issue.

**7.** Agree on a solution to try.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**8.** Agree how you will each work toward this solution. Be as specific as possible.

Partner 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Partner 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**9.** Set up a meeting to discuss your progress.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Place: \_\_\_\_\_

**10.** Encourage each other as you see effort being made toward progress. Express appreciation for those efforts.

# RELATIONAL NEEDS *From Your Family Origin*

When you were a child, you had relational needs. Consider for a moment how well your biological parent met your relational needs in your early years, from Birth up to about age twelve.

As you consider the definition of each need, ask yourself, “Did my mother take initiative to meet this need adequately, lovingly and consistently?”

Can you describe specific memories related to each need? If so, mark the appropriate box with a half circle.

Next, ask yourself the same question about your father. If he took initiative to meet the need adequately, lovingly and consistently, mark the box with a half circle. If they both met the need, you will have a full circle “O”.

If you are unable to think of specific examples of this need being met by either parent, mark the box with an “X”.

Be truthful about your perceptions and feelings.

Do not minimize them. At the same time, recognize that your parents could have sincerely loved you while still inadvertently neglecting some of your relational needs. The aim of this exercise is simply to identify unmet needs, not to cast blame or judgment.

## EXAMPLES OF NEEDS MET:

*I remember the many times my mother would read to me as a child.*

*I remember that my dad made it a priority to be at all my basketball games. And I remember him patiently helping me with my math homework.*

*I remember mom simply holding me while I cried after my best friend moved away.*

## Example:

RELATIONAL NEED	FATHER/MOTHER
Acceptance	C
Affection	)
Appreciation	O
Attention	X

RELATIONAL NEED	FATHER/MOTHER
Acceptance	
Affection	
Appreciation	
Approval	
Attention	
Comfort	
Encouragement	
Respect	
Security	
Support	

# ACCEPTING GOD'S GENESIS MANDATE

*And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ... Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone;*

*I will make him a helper fit for him." ... "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and they were not ashamed. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. **GENESIS 1-2***

**To build your marriage on the foundation God wants you to have, you must:**

KNOW	BE KNOWN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Receive your mate as God's sovereign and good gift to you personally, not as a fortuitous life circumstance.</li> <li>2. Be a Student of your mate's relational/aloneness needs.</li> <li>3. Accept individual differences as part of God's specific plan for your marriage.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pay attention to, and seek to understand your own aloneness needs.</li> <li>2. Acknowledge your mate as God's primary resource to meet your specific relational/aloneness needs.</li> <li>3. Reveal your "heart" to them by growing in vulnerability.</li> </ol>
CARE	ACT
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take personal responsibility from God to care for your mate's heart and his or her relational/aloneness needs.</li> <li>2. Practice the discipline of keeping your love and affection in a healthy place.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regularly make proactive deposits to care for your mate's Relational Needs.</li> <li>2. Commit to a rhythm of relational investments to know, hear, care for, and reconcile with your mate.</li> </ol>

## ACTION STEP

Have a ceremony in a memorable time, place and way, and accept God's mandate to care for one another's aloneness needs and to strive toward oneness. Be specific about the details. Celebrate and express gratitude to God and to one another.

- Commit to the process toward "oneness."
- Share vows of commitment and openness.
- Pray for your future together.