

[00:00:00] Put you guys there and you are looking at a connect sign, connect marriage, okay, we can see it. Well, the, uh, this will be maybe a halfway message between pure theory and, and, and then we work when we get into the real practical application skill pieces. We're going to try to build a bridge between those two things a little bit today and try to get through as many topics as we can.

Um, So the big, the big thing I want to walk through today is this idea that things exist. So if you're thinking about, I'm gonna, I'm gonna train a room filled with people in this. I'm gonna sit with a couple. Nathan was talking about doing some pre marriage counseling. He's, he's, he's got the, you know, I'm, I'm going to step into this [00:01:00] world that, that exists here and, and one of the greatest understandings you're going to have as you're trying to handle this material is that you are not stepping into a vacuum.

You're not stepping into a vacuum as a couple and as individuals, there are patterns that exist that are, that are highly shaping of how people experience relationships. Their fears, their longings, their coping mechanisms, et cetera. We touched on this just a little bit last week. We're going to go a little deeper this time around.

So we looked at this idea that we only have so much emotional capacity. And when that gets pressed on, when that gets filled up, things get, start dumping out that may be more toxic emotions. And so we have to have healthy patterns. Obviously one of those is relational care and, and, and experiencing those things in community, but there's also skill sets.

Where you, we are, we are going to be working in trying to understand the individuals so they can start dealing with their own stuff to [00:02:00] increase their capacity to experience relationship. And there's lots of tools that you can use. This is one of the reasons I, I believe that, that learning the one of two tools.

We use prepare and enrich because it uses some of the vocabulary we've stolen and some of the tools. There's another one at Symbus or Symbus, Tom, I don't remember how you say that. But there's another very similar and they, they actually partner on some projects. There are these two online marriage assessment, relationship assessment tools.

They're, they're very similar in their outcomes. Um, but the, the one we have been historically used and I'm trained to train others in is Prepare and Rich.

Highly recommend it because it gives us more tools when we're sitting in a room and we're training people or we're sitting in a living room with one couple.

It gives us more tools to understand what's going on, what are some of those dynamics. So, so Prepare and Rich is a tool you're going to want to think about to be able to understand what are, how can I see and understand and begin to bring. Ministry or care to [00:03:00] some of those established patterns being established, being proficient in the relational needs is another piece.

The more you understand those and begin to watch people and and wonder and even just spin it around your head. I wonder what their need is and begin to ask questions because it does not take a huge amount of time to begin to become pretty proficient and going. I'll bet they really have a strong need for security.

Based on what I'm seeing or attention or acceptance and we can begin to minister that and talk about that and help them understand it There as we step into those patterns the other part of connect which we're not going to get to it in this this Relational theology webinar series you probably as shepherds as leaders Missionaries wherever you're dealing with people and helping them want to mature in Christ.

You're probably gonna have to develop some tools To help people understand a little [00:04:00] more, go a little deeper beyond the relational needs. That can be a really good tool for, for, for many people, but even if there's a robust understanding of the relational needs, sometimes there are other patterns, beliefs, traumas, coping mechanisms that are just really ground in to the way people see things.

We've settled as, as our primary tool in that, in that, in that. Toolkit to help people. We've settled into the transformational prayer. And at some point we can talk about why that is, but there's, there's many things we can do to help unpack what is going on in there. That's keeping us from responding in faith.

What's keeping us from receiving care from, from, from expressing empathy or empathetic connection with other people. There's all kinds of scars and wounds and things that if you're going to work with couples, these skills will bump you into deeper things. It's likely at some point you'll bump into deeper things and to have a means or a method to walk that out [00:05:00] is going to be pretty important to you, I think.

Okay, so, so we have this idea that we're in these, these patterns of conflict and stuff's fluffing out on all over us. And what, what's going on there is that there

are probably coping mechanisms, most of which, please hold on to this. We as married couples, we look at one another and go, uh, this is, this is, this is your fault.

This is, I'm responding to you. You're making me do something. But many of these patterns are, are deeply ingrained into us well before we get married. And now God tends to put us in marriages because he wants us to not stay stuck in those coping mechanisms. He tends to arrange things so that there are, there are plenty of pressures to keep moving us towards.

Healing or connection or reconciliation or whatever it might be. And I want to go just a little deeper dive. And this, I apologize, this is not, this is not going to be a very effective [00:06:00] slide. Hopefully you'll be able to see it. Um, I'm in the process of reworking a few of these slides so they're a little more readable.

But the, the, the three big families, and this is an important tool to hang on to. You're going to have the fear, or the, the anger pride family. Where people just throw up walls and go get away from me, I'm sufficient. And you'll see that and that's going to be really common coping mechanism. And as, as I don't remember if we've talked about this or not, I, as, as we work on those deeper issues with, with men and women, um, in, in hundreds of cases, uh, among it, it's not gender specific, but I would say men often, this is, this is their primary one because it's something, some way.

In our culture, anger is an acceptable emotion, frustration is an acceptable emotion, and a lot of other emotions men are never really taught to, to how to process or be okay with, and so it's a, it's pretty low hanging fruit. The Bible has a lot to say about anger, [00:07:00] but it's pretty common. There's also the fear based family and all, a lot of the anxiety and, and, and, uh, those people who are trying to control things often are in a, in operating in a fear mode.

The way they see the world is I need to protect myself from something. And then, obviously, there's self condemnation and that shame narrative that many people deal with. Where it's just, I am not worthy of love. I'm not worthy of being loved. And those, those are, these will manifest themselves. Whatever, whatever patterns you exhibited when you were, in your growing up years, they're going to show up in your marriage relationship and Cindy and my relationship.

We see these patterns that keep coming up. Some of them, we still haven't figured out what it is and how to stay out of those loops. Many of them we have

and we can, we can begin going that direction and start to back away from going and I'm getting in that space again. [00:08:00] And, and, and for me, I mentioned this, that I tend to be very angry, short.

force things. If you didn't hear me the first time when I said it, I'll say it louder, stronger. That'd be the way I would cope if I feel like I'm not, if I'm not being respected or I'm not being heard or people are rejecting relationship with me, I'll either say it louder or I'll just declare them, I don't care.

And so I shut off my heart and you'll see those patterns in people and you'll watch them and they're talking. You'll see one of them, just this little flash, this little burst in their non verbals and then they, and they just go total stonewall. Um, and they go, Nope, not going anymore. Um, then there's the, the fear family of things.

And this is where Cindy would tend to live. That she's just, even in our long term conversations, I'll ask her a question. And this rhythm from childhood that's been there forever, she'll respond with fear. Like I'm, she needs to give me a right answer. And I'm, I'm legitimately just asking [00:09:00] for, you know, a simple conversation.

But it's so present in her that sometimes that fear just jumps up. And then for me, I mentioned I occasionally can go into that shame narrative where it's, it's just not, I'm not, um, I'm not worth loving, I'm not worth knowing, I'm not, I can't, I'm not a blessing. Um, so, everything, everybody would just be better off if I wasn't around.

So that, that narrative can float around in my head. And so when we go to those in this, these slides are probably so small, you can barely see them, but this, this really is a helpful process. There are places here where we plug in transformational prayer or quieting exercises or seeking God's comfort or the discipline of thanksgiving.

There's, there's kind of, this is a really, really practical tool when you see people establishing, established in those, in those, um, patterns for them to start [00:10:00] identifying what is it they believe. And so, some of the lies, this is where you're going to get to, and these are very, very common lies. We're not all that creative as human beings.

We, we tend to believe the same 20 or 25 lies, uh, lies about things. Um, so in that self reliance box, we get, we, we have this trigger, and, and we see relationship, and, and, and the reason we can punt it. Would be, you know, I've

made it this far. I'm self sufficient. I don't need any help. I can do it. I'll just do it by myself.

Okay, and that's kind of our, the lies are kind of our conclusions. Does that make sense? So the lies are how are we going to act? How are we going to walk it out? The beliefs are why we're going to step into that. And some of the things that inform that self reliance pride is past hurts. No one's cared for me.

I'm terrified. I don't want to look at my painful past. Things that have hurt me, uh, a lot of behavior based [00:11:00] acceptance can flow into anger. We can be angry at ourselves to motivate ourselves to do better and, and to be really just to beat ourselves up with this anger one. Um, and then always looking for someone to blame if we do fail.

If someone else, if it was someone else's fault, that can be a challenge. Okay, so that's the lies and beliefs. The symptoms are interesting because if you look for something and I go, Oh man, this is, this is so totally the way. Um, before I did a lot of soul care work, it's just that little or no compassion for anyone.

It's just like, well, I guess, I guess you just made a mess. Sucks to be you kind of attitude. Just, just a real lack of compassion. Um, easy anger, even, even if you don't express it. By the way, there's, there, you can be a really angry person and never say a word or never raise your voice. you can still be really, really angry.

Um, that's not possible for me because I'm, I'm very verbal at, at the same time I can [00:12:00] express a lot of anger. And then it results in a lot of judgment. You look at other people and, and you bring judgment to them. Okay? So the selfishness fear column, um, you can kind of understand that I, I do have need, I do want something, I need something that based on how you've interpreted past experiences, whatever it might be, I can't trust anyone to help me.

So I need to take control. I can't, I can get, take what I need through my own efforts. So I can build this system or whatever I need to feel safe. This is, and I'm going to be, all my decisions are going to be based on what I want, what I need, what feels important to me. And that the beliefs that there is no one else is going to look out for me, I won't, can't trust anyone to help all the, again, there's lots of past hurt here that shapes these lies and beliefs, and I cannot be vulnerable.

I can't let anyone, I can't open a crack where I could be at risk. And so this self becomes priority, [00:13:00] tend to push away any kind of risk or trust or openness or vulnerability. And you end up kind of being stingy. You're kind of

always counting the costs. For this person that walks in fear. Well, yeah, I don't know.

That might cost me more than I'm willing to pay. And so that, that then moves you away from relationship. So that's, these are all in the context of how does this, how do these patterns impact our ability to connect? And as you're sitting with a couple, you begin to recognize, Oh, okay, I can see where this is.

And it may, may give you help in how to, to move them along or to shape them, uh, help them form some different beliefs. And then that last column, the self condemnation, the kind of conclusions, I'm not worth it, no one loves me for who I am, I'm not good enough, I don't deserve to have my needs met, I'm just, I'm not worthy of being loved, um, and what comes out of that, the history, the things that you believed about through trauma in the past, whatever it might be, no one values me, my performance is [00:14:00] proves I have no value, I am, I am personally, or my life is shameful, I Oftentimes, this can have a real strong guilt, shame impact on it where we, we, I am so guilty as I did something bad, shame as I am something bad, and that often comes out with that shame.

This is, this is also a place where, uh, the symptoms can be, you can see everybody is broken and, and because you long to connect but you, you don't feel like you can take that risk, you'll be critical of others, make, make excuses why that won't happen, uh, a little bit of defensiveness, and then lots and lots of self condemnation.

Occasionally in this one, you'll see people self deprecate, um, before anyone else can find a flaw. So they'll, if they have a real strong shame narrative, they'll, they'll explain why or, or, or try to avoid being blamed for something before anybody was even thinking about blaming them. It's just they want to stay out of that, that sense of [00:15:00] being, being wrong.

So, as you go down through, we're not going to read all of these, but this page is, is, is going to be, is going to be shared with you. I just ordered a bunch more of the, uh, the notebook, or the little, uh, skills workbooks. Uh, I'm, I'm hoping to get one of those into your hands physically. Um, the Parker folks, I'm going to be down in, um, down in LA and we can get some to you guys, some of the, some of the new books, but to just know, here's some things that you can, can, what, how do you get over that stuff?

And, and this is where being in a relational place, some of it is the skill and learning to care, but some of it is also helping people be disciples. And so in this process, the left and the right brain both have to be engaged. And so having

people engaging in the truth and being refreshed in the truth and, and, and worshipping and being grateful and, and, uh, claiming gospel [00:16:00] identity promises fundamentally what we're trying to do in all healthy human relationships, the great commandment, living the great commandment in the body or in couples.

If you can think of the really simple mission is we are going to reinforce each other's gospel identity of being loved, delighted in, safe, secure, accepted, delight, delighted in who you are. All of those things that God says are true of us in the gospel and the safety, the acceptance that fundamentally acceptance is the, is the judicial thing is you are not guilty anymore.

I'm going to, I'm going to accept you. I'm going to bring you in. Um,

that's all part of working with human relationship, is helping people walk, walk out some of those gospel identity things. A grateful heart, being thankful for your mate, praying for your mate, accepting the gift of your mate. All [00:17:00] those are practices you can help shepherd people through that are just, just normal.

Be a disciple, love your brother, love your sister kind of thing. And a lot of those anecdotes are there, as well as some of those, uh, some of those skill things of actually how do you, how do you walk through forgiveness in a biblical manner? How do you let go of anger or hurt or experience God's comfort?

So some of those are more the right brain kind of things that can really unpack some of those beliefs people walk in. So to hang on to that, um, this, this is, this is a helpful tool. It doesn't give you all the details. But it'll remind you and help people see, Oh yeah, that's where I am. And then you can, that you can let help that let's shape your, your ministry and care for them.

Maybe you'd want to step into something like healing prayer. Maybe you'd want to step into something more related to exploring, uh, some of the, the, the hurts from your past and seeking God's comfort in those things. And so you can begin, maybe it's victory over the darkness kind of stuff [00:18:00] or steps to freedom.

Maybe you should repent of some of those. Areas in your life where you may have given the devil a stronghold. So all of those things are on the table to get people out of those patterns, okay? So the more you learn about how people

cope and how to get them out of it, the more equipped you're going to be to help couples successfully overcome.

What I discovered was, here's my story. I am intuitively romantic. I am, I am, I am lazy enough that I don't want to do anything stupid that'll make my life harder later. Okay. And so loving my wife early in marriage, a part of that was I can either not hurt her and my life will be better, or I can hurt her and my life will be harder.

I'm just selfish enough to go, I don't think I'll hurt her because I don't want my life to be hard. So very pragmatic, unromantic, unknowable motivations for how I wanted to love my wife. But in that process, I didn't say or do a lot [00:19:00] of things that created lots of scars.

I tried to help couples early in ministry, even before I was a pastor. And for me, it was like, well, just love your wife and, and be romantic. That was, that was, that was the sum total of my advice. Um, you know, be romantic and love your wife. What more do you need? And so all of these skills, all of these tools are, are, are designed to put handles on those two concepts.

Love your wife, love your wife. Don't hurt your wife, love your wife, care for her, know her. And there's a real blessing in that. And then delight in her. Give her what she needs as the feminine to be delighted in, to know that she matters and create that safety, that relational safety. So that's, that's what those pages cover there.[00:20:00]

There we go. So the next piece, as you are convincing your own heart and presenting this to other people, especially those who are already churchied, And have biases about what is necessary for maturity and discipleship. I just want to go through this pretty quickly. Because there's a, there's an expectation in some circles in some worlds that if it doesn't explicitly say it in the scripture, then you either shouldn't do it or you can't do it.

And, and, and, and so we just need to understand that. Part of what we're trying to do when we create a construct like budgets or schedules or time management or, or four fields training or, you know, gospel training or, or relational things is we're trying to take [00:21:00] what is true and put it into practical skill sets.

Okay. That's, that's the big idea of, of giving this, instead of just saying here's what's true, you're commanded to love your wife, which was fine for me, I could figure it out. Here's some really practical things you can do to express

love for your wife, and know your wife, and understand your wife, and care for your wife, or your husband.

You can go both directions, okay? This is where it gets from this, this truth concept.

This may not be super readable, but I just want to, um, help, help understand what we're trying to accomplish with this construct. And it's important for you, as you teach this, to be able to give a defense. Why do we need this construct? Okay? So, here's the statement of truth, or the, the, the hypothesis.

Secure and satisfying relationships empower joyful obedience. When we feel connected and cared for, we feel safe. [00:22:00] When the oxytocin is firing and we feel connected, it is way easier to make good choices and to express love than if we're in a place of relational need or lack or feeling disconnected or feeling hurt, feeling unknown.

Much easier to get grabby and sinful, to go out and get it. So there's a great value in that same idea, guard the heart, guard the life. So as you're walking through this, we have to understand there is knowledge, there's truth. That we build things on. The only absolute in, in my worldview and the way we teach it, the only completely pure truth is what God spoke the first time he spoke it into the scripture.

There might be minor, small little things now that are different than that. I think it's still completely sufficient for all we need for life and godliness. But I would not hold up a Bible and say, this is absolutely perfect. I, I can't say that 'cause I don't know, but I know what [00:23:00] God gave us originally.

was absolutely perfect. It's God. And that describes his God's design. God's position possessions. It is God's intention. It's God's person. God's action. That's what the scripture gives us. And his promises and his intentions for the planet and how he wants to redeem all things. Now, when I think about, okay, so in that scripture as evangelicals who believe that Jesus is coming back and he wants us to be working to fulfill his kingdom mandate.

To, to make disciples of all the nations, we have this kingdom theology. We have this understanding that God wants us to build a place on earth where if he stepped in, he would be ruling and reigning in the hearts of people. Okay? So in kingdom theology, that begins to shape what is marriage for. What are our kids for?

How do we think about how we lead and guide and train and release our children? And, and what's the emphasis of our family? All [00:24:00] those things become shaped by this, this theological understanding of a kingdom. Why that's important. Somebody can believe the scriptures are true, but not really think in terms of, of kingdom thinking.

So I'm saved, I know God was, He's ticked and He's not now because Jesus died for me, I'm good, I'm going to heaven, and I'm going to live my life. Well, that's not really kingdom theology. Okay? So that's true. That, that's going to shape what we're doing. The other thing you have to be able to tell people is there are things that are about your personal history that are true.

There's things about your personal humanity. The way God made you in gender, or your gifting, or your temperament. All of those things are nuggets of truth. They do not compete with the scripture. But they inform and they help us shape how we operate. And so, some of the relational needs understanding, that relational theology, is a function of understanding humanity.

And, and what brings us life and [00:25:00] health. Now, it's reinforced in the scriptures that we're supposed to love and create those love caring relationships. But the construct flows from watching what God made. Just like a biologist watches what is living and begins to understand things that are true. They're not true in the same way the scriptures are true, but they're true and they're trustworthy and we can, we can walk in those things.

So that's knowledge. That's truth. The next thing we have to do is take that truth and put some practical things together. And I believe that's the definition of wisdom. It's truth skillfully applied. Because you can know wearing a seatbelt will save your life. Wisdom says I'm going to do it. I'm going to develop a habit.

And that's true in so many of life's skills. Where we can take what's true and develop skills that are wise and reflect that truth. But life skills like money, time, um, you know, having a personal vision, the way we communicate using wise [00:26:00] speech when we communicate, sharing and listening and care, um, the way we resolve conflict is a, is a wisdom kind of idea.

The whole picture of intimacy, of this awareness of and developing habits to be responsive to human beings, to be present. To be connected with them. All of the one another intimacy stuff. Everything we're gonna teach is, is, is a function of these skills that are formed from the truth and represented by wisdom.

And then the goal, and this is where, and so many good tools out there, so many good books. I am not aware of anyone except the folks at Intimate Life or relationalvalues.org. It's all the same thing. It's the Great Commandment Ministries is how they started. That was their, that's their header, um, header web domain name.

The goal is not being good at relationship. It's not first being holy. It's not [00:27:00] first reaching the world. It's first To bear the image of God well in relationship. And that's oneness. An experience of satisfying relationship. Intimacy, oneness, connection. All those words used interchangeably, okay? And that's where we begin to, to define that with the relational needs.

Well, how does this fit biblically? This is an important concept. Well, why don't we just love our wives? Well, because there's so many things that depend on where you grew up. So many, okay, we're going to handle our money biblically. Well, there is no biblical mandate for a budget. Or dollar cost averaging, or investing, or any of those things that we would sell.

That's just wise. And it is. But it's not biblical. Biblical is don't spend more than you make, be generous, and try to have some left over for your kids. That's, don't be greedy. [00:28:00] Don't desire it more than other things. That's about all the Bible has to say about money, in terms of truth. Wisdom, there's all kinds of things we can apply.

So knowing the difference in those, what's the target, what part is wisdom of what we're doing, and what is the truth, the pillar, the column that supports these structures we're trying to build. So, that's pretty significant.