God's Blueprint for Courtship, Healing & Healthy Relationships
with Leon and Precious Whitener

https://youtu.be/8kKsjn_g4LI



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Let me go find someone else. Get in a relationship. This woman looks nothing like the last woman. But her behaviors, her mindset, the way she carried herself, it was often the same.

So, I found myself in the same relationship again and again and again, and it wasn't working. And I'm not blaming them for who they were, but I have to look at my choices. And what we tell people is, I don't care how crazy you say a person is or how toxic the relationship was, at the end of the day, that person was your choice. Because most people want to hurry up and jump into something, want to go down the road very quickly. But you have to start with, let's assess ourselves. What happened? What was going on with you that attracted that situation? Or what's going on with you now?

When we're making choices from unhealthy places, we get unhealthy outcomes. Everyone wants healthy outcomes, thinks they're going to fall out of the sky, but they're not. When you don't choose from healthy and whole, you choose from desperation, you choose from insecurities. If I choose from drama and toxicity and pain, I have to stay there. And most people don't realize that. I can be right. You can be right, or we can choose to be together. Because when you are really, because sometimes a person wants to be right more than they want to be together. I just want to be right. And in the process of just wanting to be right, you can lose your person. You wrote, I medicated my last relationship with the next relationship. How does someone know they're doing that before it's too late?

Because we don't take the time to go, am I healthy? And if I'm not, why? And then even further, what do I got to do? And even further, honey, do you want to do it with me? Right? So let's talk

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about this so we can help them. What if there's more to the Bible than what you see on the surface? For centuries, we've learned to read Scripture through a modern Western lens. But it's time to go deeper, discover connections you've never seen before, and experience the Bible through the world of those who wrote it. Every week, Jim Staley takes you verse by verse through Scripture, uncovering its history, culture and Hebraic context. Join us every Saturday at 11 a.m. Central Standard Time on our YouTube channel.

Open your Bible and get ready, because the next discovery could change everything! Hello everyone, Jim Staley, Passion for Truth Podcast. Welcome to this week's episode. This is an incredible episode. If you are in a relationship, if you're not in a relationship, if you wanna be in a relationship, which pretty much covers everybody, this is going to be an episode for you. You are going to learn so much about how to find the right spouse, what happens if there's something that happens inside of your relationship, from infidelity to betrayal, how to get back on track, If you've been divorced, if you're single, if you're looking, this is going to be for you. And with all kidding aside, I truly believe this is one of the best podcasts I've ever done so far.

And I believe this is going to be life transforming for somebody that's out there that's listening to this today. Before we begin, if you are interested in these type of podcasts, these type of content, where we go back and learn how to do Bible things in Bible ways through exciting guests who are experts in their field, whether it be theology, whether it be relationships, whether it be marriage, whether it be owning your own business. This is the podcast for you.

Would you do me a favor? Would you hit subscribe right now? And if you listen to this podcast and you say, man, I know someone that needs to listen to this, share it with them. It's the best compliment that you can get. All right. In the meantime, I'm going to introduce you to our guests right now. We have in studio with us live Precious and Leon Whitener. You guys are not only amazing people, you're personal amazing friends of mine. And I've known you for so many years and I'm so grateful. And I'm honored because I have a friend who is an author, a professional author. And not only that, an Amazon bestseller in five categories. Ladies and gentlemen, this is not just any book that a married couple decided to make.

This book has already gone to the top of the charts and it is making waves. And so I'm blessed and honored to have you guys on the podcast. Welcome. Thank you so much. We appreciate you. We appreciate you. Thank you for having us here. Thank you for everything that you're doing. And we're excited. We're excited about the impact that the book will have. We're excited for you and your podcast and the reach that it's also having. Yeah, listen, since you are mentioning the reach and the impact, before I even start the conversation, what, give me a testimony of somebody, something like that read your book.

I love testimony. So, I know I'm putting you on the spot, but like if you have, let's just, what's the impact been already? So, before our book even reached the masses, obviously we had to share the book with our editor. And she took the book, as she was positioning the book and going through the editing process, she was in a relationship and realized that the steps that we had spelled out in the book, she had not applied them to her own life.

And she was in a relationship that was not going anywhere. And before she even finished the book, she realized the relationship she was in was not the one for her. She got out of it. She then

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applied the practical steps inside of the book to her own life. And now she's in a relationship that is thriving. So that was before the book even reached the masses. And once the book reached the masses, we've just had testimony after testimony. And that's what this book is for.

It is for people who are hurting, people who are lost, for God's people. You know, it's easy for us to love God, but not do well in our own love life and in our relationships and not do well in marriage. We can love the Lord with all our heart and soul but still struggle in those areas. So this book is a book to get people on track in those areas of their life. I can only imagine the amount of testimonies that are going to come out of this book and that have already started. So let's start at the beginning. Why did you even write this book? Like where did it come from?

Okay. I'll let my wife answer that. Yeah. So during the pandemic, we, obviously we came together during the pandemic and while our testimony started to form, we said, how about we go to the world, do live videos and talk about the journey of starting over, getting back up, you know, giving love another try. Everyone wants to figure out, how do I get this thing right? To the point Leigh-Anne made earlier. So we started doing live videos and we said, where do we start? Anytime you want to start over, you got to start with recovery. And so we started doing the first video shoot was the recovery process. And we just started walking through why recovery? Because most people want to hurry up and jump into something, want to go down the road very quickly, but you have to start with, let's assess ourselves.

What happened? What was going on with you that attracted that situation? Or what's going on with you now? And speak from not a victim place, but also from a place of ownership. Now, you have your own journey that you're actually talking about. This isn't just like, hey, let's do a thing on recovery. Yeah. You've lived recovery. Oh, absolutely. Talk to me about that a little bit. Yeah. Why does that mean so much to you?

I mean, it means so much to me because personal ownership is extremely important. There's a lot of people that want to give a lot of people advice that they've not walked yet. And I'm a firm believer you can't take people places you haven't been. And so for me, it's important to be vulnerable. It's important to be transparent and say, hey, I walked this. I see you. I've been there. And this is why recovery is important, because what happens to you on the other side, who you become in the process of recovery, who you get to be to other people in the process of recovery, and the difference and the change that it has in your life when you decide it's time to recover. I can't keep, I can't stay on repeat. You know the song you play over, let me go back to the track 351, 351. We do that with our cycles.

Let me go back to that same cycle and you realize I can't, something's got to change. I can't keep going like this. Do you feel like, um, that we talk about the track? I love that analogy. Do you think that people consciously go back to the track or is it on automatic because they don't really audit what's going on? And when they go from relationship to relationship, Nobody ever blames themselves. It's always the other person's fault. But then they end up in the same cycle. Talk about that. Yeah, absolutely. I think it's a mixed bag. I think you have the people who know what it feels like to go back to that part of the track.

Like, I want that feeling. I want whatever that made me feel like, whatever that caused, I want that again. And then the auto is like, I'm just in default. This is vicarious. This is in the back of my head.

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And I don't even know that I'm using this as my default setting. That's the person that needs deliverance. But the person who continues to go back, they are well-informed. They know why they're going back, because they're looking for the fix. They're looking for the feeling. They're looking for, if I can get that again. When in reality, they can get it again.

They just have to overcome that. And so it's a mixed bag as to why. So my daughter just came to me yesterday, and she's working at a pool as a lifeguard. And the three other lifeguards that are there, they were, it was raining one day when she was telling me this and they were underneath the pavilion and they just were having girl talk. And the other three girls were talking about going to the bar and going partying. And one girl pipes up and says, yeah. You know, my boyfriend, you know, I don't even really think he's that cute. And I don't think he really thinks I'm all that.

Uh, but you know, we're just using each other honestly for sex. And, um, you know, we're both kind of getting something out of it. I don't really know if I want to stay in it, but at the same time, like this, is this normal prevalent out there? Like people using each other because they're getting something, but they don't even know what they're looking for. It seems. Yeah, and I'll let Leon speak to it too. In the book, we talk about occupiers. Sometimes people just have an occupier. This is filling the sex void. This is filling the money void. This is filling the time void. Whatever the void is, it's an occupier. So, most people say, I'll just let this sit here, this void filler here, until I'm ready for whatever. I want to decide to do something different. What would you say? Yeah, absolutely.

To your point, Jim, a lot of times people are making choices that are familiar and are not making choices that are necessary. So what we want to focus on is leading people into making choices that are necessary so it's not going to look like the choices that you've made previously. And in society, in this Western culture that we live in, the advancement or the celebratory nature of living your life, living your truth, and doing what makes you feel good, it is obviously damaging to your soul. And you're carrying a lot of baggage, and we talk about that in the book.

I myself, before I was saved, dated a lot, and I carried that baggage from relationship to relationship to relationship not really understanding the effect that the previous relationship was having on my current relationship. And I carried that baggage. And that's what a lot of society is doing today.

They think that there is no harm in, hey, I'm just dating and having fun. No, when you finally meet that person that you think you want to be with, that baggage is going to get in the way. Do you feel like young, especially young people think about that at the moment, at the time that this concept of baggage, like I feel like in today's world in general, we just do things and then we expect that tomorrow we'll take care of tomorrow and yesterday doesn't come with us.

Yeah, I don't think they're thinking about baggage. I think they're having fun. And then the baggage comes and it's like, whoa, I didn't plan for that, right? The older you get and the more you mature, then you understand that's baggage.

But at 18, 19, 20, 21, you're not thinking about baggage. You're thinking about a good time. It's better to be with than be without. Better to have something than to have nothing. Better to be with anything than to be with nothing. That's kind of how young people operate. Right. Right.

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You know, Leon, you said something in the book that made me laugh. But it's crazy true. You said, being out of alignment with God led me to the same woman, but just with a different face. Yeah, absolutely.

Absolutely. Everyone laughs at that. Why do people keep repeating the same relationship over and over? Explain that.

What do you mean by that? Because I laughed out loud when I read that. I'm like, that's really funny. But it's so true.

Well, as people, obviously, we have a nature. We just have a nature. Like I say, when we're not in alignment with God, we're going to be led by our carnal nature. And our carnal nature is going to be attracted to the same thing over and over again. It's just going to be what we know. So, I found myself, oh, this one didn't work. This relationship didn't work. Let me go find someone else. Get in a relationship. This woman looks nothing like the last woman. But her behaviours, her mindset, the way she carried herself, it was often the same. So, I found myself in the same relationship again and again and again and it wasn't working.

And I'm not blaming them for who they were, but I have to look at my choices. And what we tell people is, I don't care how crazy you say a person is or how toxic the relationship was, at the end of the day, that person was your choice. So we have to get you in a place where you evaluate. At the end of the day, everybody wants to complain.

You know, and then our only-cop out is they changed. But the truth is no, you chose this person. They, they didn't change. Like you just didn't look deep enough.

Absolutely. Absolutely. So either you said yes to that relationship or you said I do to marriage. So when it fails, you can not look at that person, but you have to look at yourself, uh, be reflective of, okay, who was I in that moment?

Who was I in that season when I made that choice? And that's what we talk about. So let's back up for a second. And I want to just mention to the audience that we're going to be all over the map here as far as whether it's young people we're talking about, single people, dating people, courting people, or married couples.

Even married couples are being inspired by this book in extraordinary ways. As a matter of fact, I read everything from a pastor, teacher perspective, so I can't help it. But I think people need to get out of their bubbles and go, this book doesn't apply to me because I'm married, but you know someone that's not. So why would you not want to be equipped to minister to someone with the principles that are in this book?

Absolutely. And so, when I read this book, I thought, this is helping equip me to help others. Because I can say, you know what, here's a chapter for you, or here's a concept that maybe you haven't thought about. Have you ever heard of the occupier?

Yeah, absolutely. Nobody wants to, that word almost feels offensive, you know. Space filler, boy filler. I don't want anybody to occupy it. Nobody says, hey, meet my occupy, I mean, my girlfriend,

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you know. But that's what's happening in our life. So as we walk through here, I just want our audience to know that there are so many concepts that we're going to talk about that are so real. And I'm going to bring some of them into marriage and how they impacted me to make me think and go, well, some of these concepts flow right through marriage to prevent problems.

Absolutely. Absolutely. Because most of us wait till it's too late. Exactly.

Yeah. You know, and again, and even in my own marriage, I came to a place where I'm like, well, it's all her fault. Clearly, because I look myself in the mirror and I'm like, I like that guy. It's not my fault. If she just understood me, you know, I didn't know that she's on the other mirror saying the same thing. If he just understood me. So, who's right, who's wrong? It's not about who's right and who's wrong.

That's right. Yeah. So, I feel like at the end of the day, all of these principles apply and they're right out of God's word. Absolutely.

You make a good point here. We just had our book signing and someone asked me recently, what do you think was the most powerful thing about the book signing? I said, it was people coming in line, standing in the gap for other relationships. Can I get one, two, three, four, five for this person, for this marriage, for this relationship?

Standing in the gap for other people. So, to validate or affirm what you're saying, that's exactly what's been transpiring when we talk about reaching impact. People are like, I don't want to see them lose. I don't want to see them give up.

I don't want to see them hurting. I want them to believe in love again. Several things. One lady said, let my mom know that it's okay to start over. That love stills for her. I'm like, what? We witnessed it left and right, people standing in the gap for other people. You know why though?

And that's so beautiful because everybody knows somebody. And pastoring for so long that I have been doing in full-time ministry, been in ministry for so long, I have seen one thing, 95% of marriages are miserable. And I'll say like, including mine, like ministers at the top of the list, we don't have anywhere to go, you know, like, who are we going to talk to? You tell anybody that, you know, hey, me and my wife are having, you know, you know, difficulty like everybody else.

They're going to, Oh, you're disqualified from ministry or I can't talk to you or whatever. Like, so you. So, ministers really could use this, because all I see is a guideline. This is a guidebook.

This is like a highway to say, hey, these are some road signs of what to look out for and how to help somebody else. You wrote I medicated my last relationship with the next relationship. How does someone know they're doing that before it's too late? I think that you will know that you're medicating yourself from the last relationship with the next relationship when you are not taking time to really reflect on what happened with the past relationship.

When you're like bouncing. Okay I was here on Monday and in the following week I've met somebody else and I'm just going to the next relationship. You're not taking time to process what

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happened in the past relationship. So basically you're medicating what happened previously with what you're doing now because you don't want to be alone.

And it's a very dangerous process; it's a very slippery slope because you haven't taken the time to analyze or reflect. Everything that was wrong in your past relationship, you're going to carry into the next relationship without even knowing it. And when you get there, you're going to encounter a lot of the same issues, even though this is a totally different person. It's not about that person, it's about what you bring to the table.

So, what you're bringing to the table is still going to manifest itself in the next relationship because you've never dealt with it previously. How does somebody know what they're even bringing into the next relationship? I feel like most people are completely blind to their own issues because we live under grace. We give ourselves far more grace than we ever give anybody else.

I know in my own marriage, my largest problem, well, I have a lot of large problems. My wife would be good at telling you which one is the largest one. But I would say in my top 10, I would give myself grace, but I wouldn't give her grace for the same thing. But you can't see it. Like, you cannot see it. But the point is, is we give each other a lot of grace. So how do you know even audit? Like, someone says, hey, Leon, I get this. I buy it right off the bat, man. I'm 10 minutes into this podcast. I get it. How do I do that?

Time with the Lord. For me, I had to go into my prayer closet, spend time with the Father, and understand the amount of times I've been forgiven, the amount of grace that I've been given, the amount of mercy that I've been given, and really ask the Lord, okay, Father, what is it that's going on with me? And I had to go back to my childhood, how I seen my mother and father's marriage, transpire, how, you know, everything I experienced as a child.

And I'm not saying I had a bad childhood, but obviously they didn't, their marriage was not the example. And we have to be honest with what we see and understand that maybe my childhood wasn't terrible, but the marriage wasn't the example. You know, their priorities in the household were not the example. So, for me, I had to really go back and reflect on all of that, spend time in prayer, analyze all of that so that I could show up well.

You don't get a woman like Precious if you're not well. So I knew that I had to be well. And I want your audience to know, whatever you're going through, whatever you're experiencing, it's not too late. Just spend time with the father and just really be honest about what you're dealing with. I am twice divorced before I met her. I'm married, young, new believer, and thought that just both of us being in church was going to be enough. It wasn't, because we're still dealing with our demons.

There's still a deliverance ministry that needs to take place. Okay, I got to stop you right there, because I feel like you're saying some stuff that I want to slow down, because it's so good. You said just now, you thought that just because you were in church, it was enough. I want you to unpack that a little bit because I really feel like most of Christian world operates with this mentality as if like, I had a glass of water last week, it should be enough for the rest of the week.

Absolutely. So like, talk about that. Yeah, a lot of times when we come to the faith and we're in church and we're in ministry, we want to come in and do things that are right, and if you're single,

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you're thinking, okay, I don't want to burn with lust. So you meet somebody that's also in church, and you feel like, hey, we're both in church, whether you're just attending church or serving in ministry, you think the right thing to do is to date a little while, and then get married without any type of premarital counseling, without really knowing who each other, who you are as a person, without understanding that you're bringing baggage into this relationship, not knowing it. Because when you're dating, I tell people this all the time, dating is a fun process. Courting is an intentional process. And where a lot of people make the state of the mistake.

That is so good. Can I drop this? That is so good. I mean, I'm a major, I got six daughters, as you know. Two are married, all right, so I'm down to four. And I'm moving into the most intense personalities of the six that I have, right? The most passionate, right? They should have been attorneys. Okay. I don't know where they get it from. And half the time when I want to discipline them, I'm like, I can't, because I am that. I know where they're getting it from. But I love this concept that dating is fun. Is that what you said? Yes. Courting is intentional.

Yeah, absolutely. Intent for what? The dating process is a process where, hey, let's go do this, whether it's let's go bowling, let's go to Top golf, let's do all these activities. That's great, you can have fun, you can laugh, and you can do those things. Courting is, let me show you where we're going. So there's a difference. So with courting, there's the intentionality of, I care about you. I want you to know where we're going. I want you to know what you can expect. I want you to know who I am, and I want to know who you are. Dating doesn't always reveal that. First of all, all my daughters will be watching.

Like, without a doubt. Sometimes hearing it from somebody else makes it way more powerful. I love what you're saying because what you're doing, dating and courtship sometimes can be ambiguous terms that are like unclear. And in teaching courtship for 20 years, I've never made it that clear. Like, this is so clear. If you're going and doing just fun things, you're dating. But if you are intentionally having conversations, you can go have fun, thanks. But the outcome of that is to answer a question. Exactly, where are we going? Where are we going? And I know one of my daughters in the middle of her liking a particular person realized that there's some major doctrinal differences. And they could have easily just ignored this because they have so much fun together. But she knows this is going to be a problem if we pursue this. So we better talk about it now. And so that's intention out. Is that that's what you're talking about?

Absolutely. Absolutely. Cause that could break it. That could break things down the road.

I think Leon said something when we got married, he was saying like, if I need healing and I don't have a partner that believes in healing, I'm in trouble. So, if you don't believe in healing and you don't have a partner that believes in healing, that's not on the same page, right? So, we got to know what's your vantage point and lens on healing. I believe in healing.

So if you're in a spot where we need to be believing the Lord for healing, you can count on me to believe in that. But if you got a spouse that's like... doesn't believe in healing, yeah, that's a problem. And that's key because you can have people that love the same God, praise the same God, worship the same God, but theologically they're in two different spaces.

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Well, yeah, and this young man, his exact response was, we both believe in Jesus. Like, what else is there? And my daughter was like, yeah, you don't know what I believe. What happens if I believe in the spiritual gifts? That's a real thing. How you walk out your belief in Christ is hugely different. There's a Catholic that believes in Jesus, and then there's a charismatic Pentecostal that believes in Jesus. How they love that and walk it out is going to be totally different.

No, I was going to say this. I shared the book with one of my co-workers. He's a young firefighter, just graduated the fire academy and I was working with him about three weeks ago. And we were sitting at the dinner table and I was talking to the guys about the book and he sent the book to his fiancé. No context, just sent her the link to the book on Amazon. We caught a couple runs at the firehouse, came back, so he gave her more context. And he said, hey, I just want to share with you that I'm working with the guy that wrote the book. She said, oh, I already purchased it on Kindle. I'm 30 minutes into it. I love it. And that's, I mean, and she, 30 minutes in, she already loved it. But I reached out to him about a week later. I said, hey, what did your fiancé think about the book? He said she thought it was amazing. But he said, even more important than that, provoked a two-hour conversation that we never had. And for that, I'm thankful. She said we were able to talk about things we didn't even think to talk about. And he said, for that, I'm thankful. So that's what we're doing with this book is we want to bring thought and clarity to the process. When you go camping or go on a trip, you know, the first thing you do is like get a checklist, you know, like I want to make sure I don't forget the tent, you know.

And I feel like in relationships, people don't do a checklist, you know, and so they get to marriage and they don't even know they forgot the tent. So nobody's even discussing the essentials because they're in love, they're compatible because they have fun. I've been married for almost 30 years this year, and sometimes marriage is not fun. It's work to have a relationship. Full-time job. There is a hill of fun, but when you get to the top of it and go down the other side, there's another hill, and it's not called fun. It's called growth. Exactly.

Mature. Yeah. Totally. It's a full-time job being healthy. No one talks about that. It's a full-time job being toxic. It's a full-time job being healthy. Which one you want? Which one can you afford? And I can afford to be healthy, but it's work. It's work, full-time job having necessary conversations, candid conversations, unpacking who you are, unpacking what you need, what they need. That has to happen in order for you to see healthy.

And most of the time, people are like, we're just unhealthy. Well, what are you eating? What are you eating? What are your eyes eating? You know, what are you looking at? What are they looking at? What are you consuming? Healthy is a benefit. Sometimes we don't think it serves us. It doesn't serve me to eat broccoli because I don't want to eat broccoli today. It doesn't serve me to eat my vegetables. Well, it does serve us and it pays later.

We want everything to pay now, but healthy pays later. Because of the growth and who you get to become in the process. And so for him, it was, okay, let me see how this is gonna benefit me. And we think, oh, healthy is boring.

Only certain people do that. When in reality, no, this is what we're called to do. We're called to be healthy so that we can be alive. You started off talking about even ministers, it's not them having this flashy life, right?

Having a flashy marriage. Their marriage is sometimes a heart. Well, it's because of the assignment being called to holiness. Holiness is a journey. Becoming is a journey. Oneness is a journey. And everyone wants an overnight experience. And the Father wants us to continue to look like Him. Healthy requires us to look like Him. And it's easy to wake up and say, flesh is winning today. Flesh, you got time today, go win. Or you can say, you know what, I'm going to let the Lord's way win.

I'm going to let the word win. I'm going to let healthy win. And you know what I love when this other part of your book, when you talk about the cost of pain, no matter what you choose, there's pain. Absolutely.

There is. It's going to cost you. It's going to cost you. And although this wasn't in your book, I heard this in my spirit when I was reading this, is the cost of pain, there's pain on both sides, but you get to choose your pain.

I want you to talk about what the pain is costing us and how we can choose it. Because at the end of the day, like in the gym and in health, we say if you don't use it, you lose it. I don't think people are using pain the right way. So they lose the relationship and they don't know that the pain that they're feeling right now.

And I feel like if you're listening to this, listen carefully, because I think this might be the most important part of their book. The pain that you're experiencing right now is the check engine light. If you don't interpret that pain properly, you will lose everything that you ever want. Can you talk about that?

Absolutely. Real quick. I just shared with my wife last week, I spend a lot of time in the gym, my profession requires me to. So I just told her last week, I said, I go to the gym, I said, running doesn't feel good.

It hurts. But I'd rather experience that kind of pain as opposed to experiencing sore joints, high blood pressure, diabetes, you know, experience all the other stuff that comes with it. There's other pain that I would have to deal with if I was not taking care of myself. So to your point, When people are carrying pain, a lot of times they don't understand that they're carrying, they could be carrying pain from their childhood, words that were said to them by their father, words that were said to them by their mother, or the fact that a parent never, a parent wasn't there. Maybe a father wasn't there, never acknowledged them, wasn't the cheerleader they needed that parent to be. And because of that, as an adult, they can carry that pain from their childhood, not really assess it as an issue, but then reciprocate that pain in their current relationship and not understanding why they're having, well, I don't understand why I'm having these issues in my relationship or these issues in my marriage, but they don't realize they're regurgitating pain that they experienced as a child, things that they experienced or as an adolescent or adult trauma.

We call it, you have childhood trauma and you have adult trauma. And sometimes people can experience adult trauma and carry that into their marriage and relationships as well and not understand that that pain is costing you, like we say, a healthy marriage. You're not thriving in love. You're just barely surviving.

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You're barely holding on because of the pain that you're carrying. That pain is costing you issues in your workplace. Your social life is not what it should be because of the issues and the pain that you're carrying and the baggage that you're carrying, your children may not be responding to you the way they should be because of the pain that you're carrying that you don't really know that you're carrying.

Do you feel like that those childhood traumas are really writing the script for how we get triggered, how we respond, and how we relate to one another in relationships today? Oh, absolutely. I think about growing up. I come from a single-parent household.

I come from a two-headed household. But as you heard him say, it wasn't the example, right? But for me, the things that I witnessed, I said, well, I don't want to be married. I don't want to have kids. All I see is single-headed households. I don't see a man around. Either they've gotten incarcerated or they are dead. So for me, I'm like, well, the man isn't around. So there's not going to be a man around. So let me not even want those things. So that went all the way up into my 20s. That carried me. I'll pass on anything love-related. Then I got love, and then it hurt. And then I was like, I don't want to go in the 30s with that. Same thing.

But it also had to address the narrative. So I had to reframe and say, that may have happened, but that doesn't have to keep happening. It ran into my life until it got to me, right? Until now, God, to this point, now Lord reshaped me and help me to see how this is informing my decision-making for the man that I choose, for the relationships that I go into, for the friendships that I acquire, to the things that I do. Oftentimes, we don't realize that it's not even just writing a narrative. It is the facilitator by way you enter to life and decide and do and be, right? For better or for worse, right?

For some of it, you don't know. It's just informed who you are. And you can go so far to the extreme and say, I don't want to be like, and then it's pride. And then it's like, then you can go to the other extreme and be like, and then it's destructive.

Neither one, right, on the pendulum, for better or for worse. It's just how life has fashioned you. And so you get to people who are healthy, and then you say something's different. Healthy, not because they're perfect, but because of framing, because of how they handle things, because they say, you know, you don't have to throw a tantrum all the time, Precious.

It's like, I said, Oh you know, that's not that, you know, you don't, that don't have to be your way that you get what you want. You know, you know, you don't, that doesn't have to be your response. And it's like. Oh, so there's a pushback and challenge.

So when you talk about the pain it's costing me, the ability to now have healthy relationships, the ability to be able to enter into a conversation and have a healthy dialog, the ability to come into a situation and not be dysregulated. I can come in with ease and it doesn't have to work against me, but it can work for me and I don't have to be riled up to prove a point. And so for me, all I saw was everybody just blew up. So I'm blowing up and then I wonder, hey, why is everyone responding to the explosion?

Hey, this is what happens when you blow up. Yeah. And then when you blow up, someone responds to that explosion. Yeah. You're not going to like their response. And then our innate

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response is to get in their face about their response that you caused. Exactly. So I'm mad that I'm getting this reaction out of you.

And it's like, hey, Now it's like, I'm getting their reaction because of what I facilitated or what I put in the air. And so how do I repackage? How do I reframe? And running into healthy people who've addressed, who've not only done the work, but doing the work, because I don't think healthy is a one-time thing.

It's doing the work. It helped me to say, okay, Precious, We don't want to keep responding like this. This is not even getting you closer to your goals. It's not the results you want. You don't want all your relationships to dissolve. And can I add something to that? You don't want all your relationships to dissolve and just be right. Yes, yes.

And I find that this was a toxic part of my own belief system. Come on. Is that because I'm a Bible nerd and an academic and I'm all about apologetics and getting to the word of God, I want to know the truth. I carry that positive side.

Flip the quarter and it becomes negative in a relationship where your only concern, even subconsciously, is being right. You'd be right. You might be right, but you no longer have a relationship. That's one of the things I said to my wife when we first got together, just kind of going through some points.

I said, babe, we can, I can be right. You can be right. Or we can choose to be together. Because sometimes a person wants to be right more than they want to be together. I just want to be right. And in the process of just wanting to be right, you can lose your person. And a lot of times it's a thing where if I'm okay with my wife taking all the losses, what does that say about me? So I can't be okay with being right all the time and my wife taking all the losses. That's problematic. That's something I need to analyze. And vice versa, because at the end of the day, it's us. It's about us.

And people get in a bad situation because they say, it's about me today. It's about me today. I don't care how you feel. It's about me today. But he said something so powerful one time. He was like, when we're communicating, it can't be that you just aired all that out, Jim, and I'm left in this state. Communication has to serve both parties. So most people walk on their prideful horse like, I got it out and you getting it today?

And this is just how I feel. But what state did you leave your person in? So when we're communicating, let's make sure it's served both parties and not just you, because you got that off your chest and you're good, but I'm not. Jim, I want to go back to something you spoke about when you talked about childhood pain and how we carry that.

So I want to go back to my childhood real quick. Like I say, my parents, they were great parents. Loved them. Loved my mom, loved my dad, still love them. But like I say, their merits wasn't the example. There was a lot of infidelity on my father's part. He was a great provider, great dad. And my mother dealt with that, and my mother did everything she could to hold her family together. But at the same time, you know, a lot of outbursts, tantrums, and things of that nature. So witnessing that as a child. When I got into my 20s, I just didn't do well in relationships. Anything

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that didn't feel good, I was gone. I was done. I'm not dealing with this. I'm out. Because of what I experienced and witnessed as a child.

So those are things that I'm talking about that we have to kind of think, okay, why am I responding this way? What's causing me to respond this way? And a lot of times we have to go back. And kind of be honest about what we witnessed and what we experienced as children. Not only that, I'll tell you something else that helped me out. I was talking to a pastor friend of mine years ago and expressing to him like, just me just dating up, just dating different women and not wanting to settle down. And he asked me, he said, so where do you think that's coming from? He said, is it, is it, he said, he told me, he said, we have natural DNA and we also have spiritual DNA.

So what is your spiritual DNA? And I had to really think about my dad, my uncles, other family members, both men and women, and think about their spiritual DNA, their habits, their behaviors, and how that may have affected me or came down through the family line to me. And I'll tell you this, Jim, when I thought about that and took that to the Father and said, Lord, cut this off at the root. Cut this off at the root. I see what it is. I know what it is. It will be no more. I didn't deal with those issues anymore after that. That's called deliverance. That's called healing. God said, hey, it's time for you to be healed. Yesterday the guy was blind and today he's not. How did he do it? I don't know. Don't care. I just know that I was blind and now I see.

I feel like for most people, they really would love to be healed, but I don't think they even know that they're broken. And I have experienced in my own ministry that most all problems and traumas revolve around a lie. And so spiritual DNA of, hey, I don't want to be with this woman. She made one bad comment. I'm cutting her off. If you dial it down, it's a belief system. Some trauma happened. It created a belief system from a lie. They're holding on to that lie. Because when I went through your book, what I really pulled out a lot was you're telling people there is another way. There's another belief system. You can do this. Basically, you're telling everyone you've been lied to in all these different areas. There is a truth. But until we stop and say, Is there a lie? That's what you did.

And it took someone challenging you to go back and say, why do I do this? And is it me? And I think, and by the way, this was a huge breaking point for me in my own walk with God and relationship with my wife, was saying, is it me, doesn't mean I'm the problem. It means, is there something I believe that the enemy fed me that's a lie?

Yeah, absolutely. And I think he paralyzes us because we don't want it to be me. Well, it doesn't have to be you. It could simply just be you were lied to. Talk to me a little bit about that, this concept of believing a lie, being set free, and how all of this relates to good relationships. Yeah. Like for me, the lie of that you just have to be a strong woman. That being a soft woman or a feminine woman is a problem.

You're going to get walked over. You're going to be a doormat. And so for me, I led with the be strong, be brave, be courageous, get your point across. And it don't work with a man like this. I'll fire you. I'll put you over here. It's like, hold up. I don't think it works with any man that's healthy, if I'm being honest.

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But for me, it was this badge, brave heart, don't let anybody see you sweat. But I was, my mom said, don't let anybody see you sweat. Don't let anybody see you shed a tear. So I moved out in life with this S on my chest, and I'll deal with my tears behind the scenes, right? Where I was like, that's just, vulnerability isn't a problem. I had to learn that through the years that it's okay for me to be, have a softer edge to myself. And this fighting through life doesn't have to be the narrative. But again, she gave me what was given to her.

So the lie, the generational lie was, go out there, be strong, don't let anyone see you sweat, and you'll make it. No, people saw me sweating, right? And so when I think about having to overcome being the strong person or having to overcome just the mindset of like, you don't need a man. Sometimes that was the narrative, like, you don't need a man, go out there, all that. And so when you walk around like that, it'll be like, okay, let them go anyway. They can leave anyway. I don't need them anyway. I'm going to make it without them anyway.mAnd every one of those statements are just lies. Yeah, they are. They keep us in bondage. They do, yeah.

I think for a lot of men, too, we can hear the lie that providing is enough. And we can provide to the point of being absent. And in reality, to have a healthy marriage and a healthy family, it's not just about provision, it's about being present. And we can buy into that cultural lie that, hey, I've gotta provide, I've gotta provide, I've gotta provide. But at the same time, my wife is a quality person type. If I'm just working all the time and I'm not spending time with her, her love tank is like getting real low. And because I know Precious, you're going to know it. Absolutely, absolutely.

Yeah, your tank just doesn't have a needle, right? It's got like an AI voice. When you get certain low, pull the car over if you know what's good for you. Absolutely. So I think it's important that we don't conform to the cultural lies, but understand the voice of our spouse and have a sensitive ear to our spouse's voice and to the voice of our children as well. Yeah, and don't take the stance, this is just who I am. So you talked about the lie that informs how we show up, right? Some people go, well, this is just who I am.

Everybody in my family functions like this. This is who I am. Well, you don't wear brokenness as a badge of honor. Everybody says that, though. And people, this is just who I am. There's a personality to who you are, and then there's the flaws. Then there's the toxicity, and then there's the pain, and then there's the insecurities, and then those things you bring with you and you say, well, you're just going to deal with who I am. You can't accept me for who I am, then that's a problem. You should never have anyone just accept your flaws. And if you carry that as a badge of honor, I do think that also becomes a problem in a relationship. They know I'm like this.

Well, then you're asking them to endorse the negative versions of you that don't keep you from being the best version of yourself. And I'd rather him endorse the best versions of me by calling that out and saying, you can be better in that area or that doesn't serve you. And I want to tell you that that doesn't serve you or help with your image and who God is calling you to be. Right?And so some people live with that. This is who I am. And I think sometimes too, we have to take that off as well, because when you carry that, it keeps you from being who Guy has called and intended for you to be. Absolutely.

I think one of the things that helped me out quite a bit, to your point, is that we can say this is just who I am based on our social experiences, whether it's family, friends, whatever, and we can carry

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that negative version of ourselves through life and it's not going to serve us well. Or we can look at that and say, okay, these are some character traits that I have that are causing these issues. Let me present them to God and say, Lord, okay, what's the better version of me without this? And that's, I think that's huge. That's paramount. It all goes back to spending time with the Father. You've got to spend time with the Lord.

Yeah, because mine was keeping records of wrong. I was like, listen, I got in this walk and they told me I need to start forgiving. When I got saved, I was like, I don't know what that looks like, right? So I better start keeping track. What do I need to forgive? Yeah, right? History. You know how you got family history? You go to the doctor. History of holding grudges. We got it. And so for me, it was the love keeps no record of wrong. And I was like, no, you got to keep records of wrong so it doesn't happen again. But that's just what I was taught. So for me, it was like, no, key records are wrong, so no one plays you again. So no one does that to you again. So no one mishandles you again. Well, the Lord had to check me with that. He's like, well, you're keeping score so that you can use it for your benefit. But I don't do that to you. Right? So I'm not saying give pass, but I am telling you to pass it to me. And when you give it to me, then I will show you how to handle offense and grudges and anger. And I'm like, no, I felt justified.

Like, no, no. And he said, no, you can't keep records of wrong. I was like, God. It felt kind of good to keep a record because then it kept the guard up. It kept me from being vulnerable. It kept me from being open. It kept me from being able to really share what was going on behind the scenes. But now, it's like, no, you have to be open about it.

This book has become, in my mind, the starting place for people to even look at their life and even see it. In some ways, it becomes a mirror. It is. One of the married couples I know, she goes, I'm taking this to therapy. This is a whole mirror. I got things to talk about. Yeah, it's so good. But look, Scripture is the mirror.

When they had the brazen labve in the tabernacle courtyard, the priests would go up to it. It's all water. And they look at themselves in there. They can see, because it's polished brass below it, they can see the dirt on it. And that's why they washed their hands and they understood this is the water of the Word. Christians didn't make that up. Yeah, yeah, yeah. All the way back to the priesthood.

What you did was you took really some of the most powerful principles out of the Word of God, you put it in print, and then on top of that, to me, the glue is you took your personal experiences to say, hey, this works, this doesn't work, this is how we need to audit our life and begin to retrain ourself. And that starts with asking the question, to me, it's, what if this is me? You know, I just today, I love being real and raw.

I got into a discussion with my wife and my daughter, and it was two against one. And it wasn't me and my wife against my daughter. I'll just tell you that. I was on the minority. All right. And both of them were saying the same thing. And it was a negative thing about how I was reacting. I was so convinced that I'm right. And I still think I'm right. But the way I was responding was not right. But I didn't see it in the moment, right? Because my passion overtook the reality of how I was coming across. And it wasn't until a few minutes later I went over and I talked to the Lord and said, okay God, let's redo this. What's their perspective? Am I wrong here? I didn't used to always do that.

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And I feel like this self-talk of giving the opportunity for the other person to be right and maybe I'm wrong, that creates self-growth. And I think that's part of your book and what you're asking people to do. Yeah. Absolutely.

It's all about reflection of self. If you feel as though you're having issues in a relationship or just with connecting with people in marriage, Nine times out of 10, you need to hold the mirror up and look at yourself, okay? And just really ask yourself, okay, what's going on with me? Now, in any situation, based on perspectives, there can be two rights. You may feel like you're absolutely right, and they're gonna feel as though they're absolutely right. It's just perspective. Now, how do we come together with my right and your right? That's where we have to be mature enough to be pliable to say, you know what? I feel like I'm right. And in your perspective, you feel like you're right. Now, how do we come together for an understanding to where we're both still being respectful and understanding each other's right? I feel like Precious and I, she can speak to this, have very good communication. I'm very respectful of her feelings in any situation, her thought process. I don't just make decisions without her. I get her input. I want to make sure that she's okay with the decision. I want to make sure she's okay with the direction. And she also does the same. And whether I'm right or wrong, we're going to have a discussion. Yeah, I agree with that.

I think that's what keeps things healthy. Yeah, you know, one of my big problems, and I kind of saw this in your book a little bit in my past, is I remember having a conversation with Cheryl where it was over text, and we both started using chat GPT, you know what I mean? Because we're like, all right, I need to bring in the big guns, you know what I mean? Copy, paste, chat, tell me where she's wrong, you know, like that. Write me a good response, you know what I mean? And now we're in a courtroom. And I think a lot of, kidding aside, a lot of marriages end up in a courtroom over who's right and who's wrong, right? So in this process, I realized, because God had retrained my brain, that I didn't want to be that guy again. And I don't want to be the prosecutor of my wife. And so I dropped the whole thing. I walked in the house. I came over to her and she didn't want to look at me, right? Like it was one of those type of things. I turned her around and I put my hands on her shoulders and I looked her in the eye and I said, you know what? I'm sorry for the way I made you feel. I know that the way I responded initially was too aggressive. And I know that that set you off. Will you please forgive me? And she melted in my arms. Makes me emotional just thinking about it. And we gave her a big hug. And it was over. It was over. That's huge. It wasn't about right. Her dialog, trying to prove her point, was a smokescreen for the hurt feeling. And once I addressed the hurt feeling, nobody cared about the content. Yeah, absolutely.

Because there's two different things happening when both people are communicating. One has a different motive, another has a different motive. So his intent to communicate may be to just be heard and respected, and mine might be for a completely different thing, understanding something else. And so we miss those things scarfing each other down, because it's like, I just wanted to be heard. No, I need you to respect my opinion. Like two different needs in one conversation. And oftentimes we don't realize the needs and stop and pause. What does Cheryl need right now?

What does Leon need right now? Versus, argh, and scarfing each other down. And I don't think that's talked about enough. There are two different needs at stake in communication at one time. And I feel like in relationships, in marriage especially, because marriage is going to pull out of you

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every wrong thing that's inside of you that you didn't even know was there, right? That marriage is designed to kill you. Every single day. It's designed to kill the flesh.

Yeah. When you get offended, it should be just like, oh, I'm alive in that area. Because if I was dead, that wouldn't hurt me. And here's a big thing that God's been teaching me. If you're dead, the only thing that you care about is other people. You're dead to yourself. So when she's upset, when Cheryl's upset with me, I'm trying to figure out how to help her. Because I'm dead, which you say can't hurt me.

So because I'm dead and I can't get offended, I need to figure out how to help you because you're going through it. And the truth is, I would do that for one of my kids. Oh, that is so good. All day long. I'm not getting offended at my kids. I'm trying to help them. That's so good. So why can't we do that with our spouse?

Yeah, and I think a lot of times what we see as, we can see our children as our seed, and sometimes the spouse is seen as an outsider or a choice. And we address them or deal with them in that manner, like, okay, you're my spouse. I had children with you. Sometimes if we're honest in marriages, you can honor your children more than you honor your marriage. And that's out of order. That is 100% out of order. I've heard so many people say, well, I've got to be there for my children. I've got to be there for my children.

I see women who are single right now with children who want to prioritize their children over a potential spouse. It's not going to work or their spouse. I literally just had a wife. Tell me a few weeks ago that told her husband, uh, they live in two different places and it's a mess. But she said, I'm not leaving my 21 year old that lives here alone to come live with you. And he's like, you're my wife. So this is a thing, like parents are prioritizing their children, and in the process, telling the spouse you're second rate. You're not important.

Yeah, we're not prioritizing order. And that's just not going to work. We have to prioritize order. When Precious and I got together, I talked to my two boys, and I told them, she's a priority. I love both of you, but I'm with her. You're going to respect her, and you're going to honor her. And if you're out of order, we're going to have an issue. We're going to have to deal with that.

i want you to talk about that a little bit because I feel like second relationships marriages can be challenging or you know third marriages whatever because the kids were there all along i think there's almost a subconscious thing that they are the priority yeah and so the the new spouse by default feels that even if it if it's never said How important do you think it is for a husband or a wife to sit down with one, their self and two, their children and actually make that statement as if this is your first marriage? Because if it's your first marriage, you would never put the kids first. Absolutely.

But I feel like this is almost expected that by the second, third, fourth marriage, kids are first, you're along for the ride. How important it is to set that straight? Oh, absolutely. You have got to have a very intentional conversation with your children about where you are in your marriage and who's a part of the covenant. You love your children. Okay, but if your children love you, they're gonna honor the decision that you've made to proceed in another marriage. And for Precious and

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I, we were blessed, and God, the Father just really blessed us with this. Precious knew my children before we got married because we coached them together as track coaches.

So they had a relationship with Precious before Precious came into the picture. Five, what? Four, yeah, about five years before she came into the picture. So they were familiar with her, but when she came into the picture, I let them know, like, hey, I'm getting married, and I expect you to be respectful of her, our marriage, and if there's ever any issues with that, then we're gonna have to address that.

And also, you know, just making sure Precious knew where we were in our marriage, and if there were any issues that she was having, bring them to me, and we'll sit down and talk about it. Because obviously you want balance. You don't want your children to feel dismissed. It's like, you know, like my mom or my dad, they stopped loving me when their husband or wife came along.

So there has to be a healthy balance. That's why I was intentional about spending time with my kids alone and spending time with them as a family together. So we did a lot together as a family, but I also had to spend time with my children one-on-one or with both of them at the same time. You're on a watercraft, whether that's a raft, canoe, or a boat. You have no motor, you have no paddle, and you have no sail. Your life is at the mercy of the winds and the tide. You have no direction. So intentionality is the motor, it's the paddle, and the sail. It's going to guide you and propel you to the direction and the vision that you have for yourself and for your family. Without that, without intentionality, you're at the mercy of the winds and the tides, and life is just going to blow you wherever it wants to blow you, and everybody's going to feel it. Everybody's going to feel lost. You're going to feel lost, even though you might not verbalize it. Your spouse is going to feel lost, and they may verbalize it, and your children are going to feel lost because there is no intentionality on a destination, what we're doing or where we're going. It's just life. Sometimes, like they say, life be lifin'. It's like, I'm working, I'm paying the bills, I'm coming home every day.

But what is the intention of your life? Because this life is not as long as we would like to think it is. And the quality of our life is not as long as we think it is, because there's going to come a point where we're going to get older and we're going to slow down. So with the strength that we have in our younger age, what are we going to do with it? We've got purpose, intentionality, destiny, vision, submission, obviously, is the first thing. Submission to the Father. What do you want me to do? Where do you want me to go? Where am I leading my family? As he told Moses, he gave Moses direction. This is where you're leading my people. As spouses, we need to know what God has said to us and where he wants us to lead.

And as husbands, sometimes we can feel that God is only speaking to me and he's not speaking to my wife. But when you have a wife like I got, that spends time in that prayer closet, when she comes to me and says, hey, I think this is what the Lord is leading us. I think this is what we need to do. Yeah, you better have your own closet.

Oh, yeah. You listen. Oh, yeah, I listen. Yeah, I listen.

You know, I like what you said about these words keep highlighting that you're saying, but being lost. I feel like marriages get stuck on the arguing and the bickering and the anger and no one

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stops because the enemy wants you to point finger. No one ever stops and goes, maybe we're just lost. That's so good.

Have you ever seen that show, Lost and Afraid, where they do the scavenger hunts and people are going all over the world doing scavenging hunts, looking for certain items that have been placed here and there and they win these prizes? The arguing in those shows takes place when they're lost. When somebody knows where they're going, they don't argue. They only argue when both of them realize they're lost.

When somebody realizes, hey, you're lost and you're not telling me that you're lost. But we don't even know that we're lost. You're totally right. When we know where we're going, we're lockstep, baby.Come on, girl. We're having a great time. But when we're bickering, when we're arguing, we're just lost. And I think in the moment, the answer is to admit it. Honey, I think we're lost right now. Can we go to the Father through prayer? One of the biggest transformations in my marriage was I had an 83-year-old man who coached me, who had been in marriage counseling for 54 years, born in a different country on a mission trip as a missionary. His parents were missionaries.

And this advice changed my life. He said, the moment you begin to get activated, just call, he called it activated. I call it aggravated. He was more cultured than I was. He said, when you get activated, and everybody knows when you're getting activated, call a timeout and just stop. Breathe three times real deep, and then just invite Jesus into the conversation. The moment you do that, it changes the atmosphere. It changes the whole vibe and frequency because it slowed me down. It forced me to do the one thing that nobody wants to do when you're activated, and that's pray. You know what I mean? Honestly, like, you can call yourself a Christian. Invite Jesus, invite Yeshua into that argument, and that'll determine your level of spirituality.

If you can stop and pray, you're high level. If you can't, you're being dictated and moved by the enemy, because he don't want you to pray. And when that happened, it shut down the flesh in my life that I didn't realize was so activated. Because what's happening, I'm lost, and I'm getting activated. But I don't know I'm lost. But if we know we're lost, then I can talk to my GPS, God, Holy Spirit, and say, Lord, guide me here, man. Where am I at? That's what your book is doing.

That's good. That is really good. Absolutely. So many people are lost. They're lost in their purpose. They're lost in their identity. And because they're lost in purpose and identity, they get lost in their marriage. And they're struggling in marriage and they don't know why. And a lot of times if you really dig into it, it's because they don't have purpose and they don't have identity. So it's very important for each person to stand in a mirror and ask themselves, who am I? Who am I? And that's every single day. Every single day. And we forget that the partner that God has given us is designed to be a helpmeet. He said, I'm going to give you a helper, someone that's suitable, a helpmeet. They're here to help meet your needs spiritually by pushing you closer to the Father.

Help meet your needs emotionally by helping you to stay grounded. Helpmeet can be unpacked in so many ways, but we don't talk about being a helpmeet. Because a helpmeet essentially is helping, bringing you out the best that God has put on the inside of you. So what? If God put me in Leon's life here to be a helpmate, I should be helping meet all kinds of areas in his life. I take that totally different. When God says he brings a woman and she's the helpmate, by default that means I need help. Yeah, that's what I'm saying. I mean, that's a big statement. Yeah, I'm saying

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the same thing. I'm here to help meet. Yeah, that means I have a gap. I can't do this on my own. So when my wife says, honey, this is what I feel like you need to do, she's seeing something in my life I can't see. Yeah, but we get to don't be my dad. Don't be my mom. We take it personal. Exactly. And I'm not being a mom. We're not being a dad.

See, we are going back to the childhood. We have to address where the story is coming from. Who's talking to you right now? What's in your ear right now? What have you digested? Why is it precious? Why are you responding, I don't need a dad? Do you feel like it's interpretation? Because you can give something to Leon and say, man, honey, I feel like you need to do this, or I'm seeing this. And he takes it all personal. But really, you're trying to help him. You're trying to do your job as a helpmate. And you felt like you did it with gentleness and respect, but he's interpreting it. as an attack. Why do we do that? I think approach matters too.

Yeah. Because the message and the messenger matter. Yeah, say that again. The message and the messenger matters.

Okay. So I can spend a whole lot of time thinking I said it well, but how it lands is important too. So they got their responsible part, he has his part, but I also have a responsibility to package it differently. I've been repackaging things a lot to make sure that they are heard right. Because just because you delivered something don't necessarily mean it was delivered well. And so for many people, they find themselves in this, well, I told him. She just know I told her. How did you tell them? Because a soft answer turns away wrath according to the scripture. So you could have said it all day, but it didn't turn away wrath. They didn't hear it. And so I'm learning we got to be mindful of how we package things because the delivery is going to inform the receiving, how a person receives.

When somebody does what you're talking about, well, I told him, I told him, and then he don't listen to me. And then the next thing that they do is they're training themselves, well, I just need to tell him louder. Yeah. I need to be louder. I need to come up higher because he doesn't listen to me unless I do that. But maybe it could literally be the delivery system the entire time. Because what happens is if you raise the tone, all I'm listening to now is the tone. I don't hear the words behind the tone. I just, I'm responding now because you're frustrated, but I never heard you. And so the next time I respond, I'm always going to respond from your frustration and not your feeling, not what you really need. And we have to rewire ourselves to respond to need as opposed to its leaves on the tree. We treat a lot of symptoms, not calls. What's going on? Don't respond. Don't respond. Don't respond. But we got to react. And what's crazy is normally people react to the same decibel level as the partner that's bringing it to them. So we're not responding to the content. We're responding to the tone.

I also think with that, Jim, too, when we have someone that's asking us to do something or saying, I need you to do this, I need you to do that, I think there's also an unspoken pride there that a lot of people don't want to admit. And what that looks like is your spouse is asking you to do something and you're not doing it, it's not because you don't want to do it, you don't want to tell them, you don't know how to do it. Okay, so a lot of times it's not getting done because you're thinking, I don't know how to do that, but I don't want to tell her I don't know how to do that. Because I don't want to look like I'm failing as a leader. I don't want to look like I'm failing as a spouse. That's for

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husbands and for wives. They can be in this position where the husband is asking a wife for something and she doesn't want to tell her husband, I don't know how to do that because it's going to make me look like I'm less than a wife. Give me an example on that. Give me an example that we can give the audience that will make that drive it home.

Okay. Let's just drive it home like this. If a wife comes to a husband and says, hey, we really need to work on our financial portfolio. Okay? And she keeps asking him to do this. He's never budgeted. He doesn't know what a financial portfolio looks like. So he says, he could tell her for the next five years, yeah babe, we're gonna get to it, we're gonna get to it. But he doesn't know how to do it. So instead of saying he doesn't know how to do it, he just avoids it. Wow.

Wow, man. That's powerful. I feel like this is the same concept, such a great example, analogy. But we do this on the love level, too, is that wives, I think, do it more than husbands. Maybe not, but maybe I'm biased as a man. But I do feel like females do this more, where they expect the husband to know how to love. But he may not. He may not have come from a background where he's seen what this looks like. She wants him to read his mind. But oftentimes, I think it's just helpful for a wife to train the husband. This is what it would look like. I get to give an example.

I remember Cheryl telling me something, and we were late night, and we were kind of praying in bed and just kind of talking. And she had mentioned something, and God had shown me, I think it was actually through a podcast or something, to follow it up and just ask a question. Like, honey, what does that look like to you? Instead of me assuming, what do you want? Like, what do you want me to do that makes this look like this for you? And I was shocked that it wasn't what I thought. And I'm like, I'm really glad I asked the question because I could do that. And that would be my interpretation of love in this angle. But then you would have got frustrated because it wasn't your definition of love. And I think a lot of my problems over the years, decades, have been assumptions. Absolutely. Absolutely.

I have some friends that were born in Nazareth. And in their culture, when the families are intentional about healthy marriages, prior to marriage, they will take the woman that's going to become the spouse and show her what the husband is used to. How to cook the meals, what he's used to eating, how he's been raised, what he's used to. So now she's coming into it as a wife with information instead of a wife that has to learn the hard way.

She's coming into it with the information that the family gives her. She can get up on that honeymoon morning and make eggs and bacon and toast and all of it and find out he hates eggs. He gets upset she's crying it's the first morning they wake up and this was like bacon best, you know, basic 101. Absolutely. I think with a lot of times with families when people get married they want to get married obviously to one another and a lot of times they're excluding everyone that has a part of that person's growth process.

And it's important when you're about to marry someone to understand where they came from, what kind of relationship they had with their mother or their father, their siblings. So you understand what you're getting into and what they're bringing into the marriage on both sides. Okay, what is Precious used to? What is she like? What is Leon used to? What is Leon like? I don't like my eggs over easy. I like them scrambled.

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You know what I mean? Now she could, now that's never happened, but she could get up and make eggs over easy and think she's just killed it. And I'm looking at the plate like, what is that? So it's very important for us to know who we're marrying prior to marriage, not just based on our time with them, but based on our time with the people who are around them who know them, who are willing to articulate to us who they are.

You know, I remember when my daughter was interested, one of my daughters was interested in a young man and it moved into the courtship arena where this was intentional. Okay. So now the parents were involved and I said, okay, here's a couple of questions we're going to ask each other. What is your son's top three weaknesses that drive you crazy? Yeah, that's good. I want to know. I'll tell you my daughter's five for your son's three. This is the barter system. And they were kind of shocked, but it was so valuable. Now it was hard because nobody wants to throw their kid under the bus, but it wasn't like that. It was like, here's my daughter's weaknesses that I know. Your son's going to have to deal with, right? So let's talk about this so we can help them. So they're not like shocked by the weakness. And I think that's what you're talking about. Like be intentional, know what you're getting into, and don't just revolve on the hype of the moment of the fun.

I love the fact that you were willing to speak to your daughter's weaknesses and then also engage them to where they could speak to their son's weaknesses so that you were going to know what your daughter was going to be dealing with, they knew what their son was going to be dealing with, and then both of them could know collectively what they were going to be dealing with in each other in those areas of weaknesses and also how to prepare for that and strengthen those areas of weakness. Yeah, because I think so many times people think it's going to be a problem. Our second date together, we were with each other for like eight hours past the gym.

And we talked about politics, spirituality, love life, things we would have done differently in previous situations, what we've learned, our biggest lessons. And oftentimes people think they're uncovering those things, they're going to create a problem, when in reality it's helping you to be informed about the person's path, about what they've overcome, about how God has led them and guided them and what's been anchoring them up until this point. But when you don't have that dialog, you're left to leave it up in the air, then now you're frustrated. You didn't tell me that. Oh, you didn't tell me that. Well, you didn't tell me that. Well, why you didn't tell me that? And then we say, you're not the person I married. No, no, I'm not the person you thought I was. That's the truth. Because we don't take the time intentionally to do that because look, me and you love hunting. Like, so we go deer hunting together.

If the only thing we ever did was we spent time with each other hunting, okay, that's one segment of a relationship. But I've had you over for dinner, right? And Bible study. And game night. And game night. So, like, we've learned a more well-rounded of who we are. Yeah. You get to see the empathetic side. You get to see compassion. You get to see competition. You get to see frustration, right? But if you are only in a relationship where all you're doing is dating, going on dates, you're seeing the best of me and you're seeing the funnest part of me.

Absolutely. Absolutely. But light switches go both ways. You know, so like that turns me on but there's things that turn me off and you may not like it when I switch when you switch and I get

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triggered and go I'm turning that off and now you're in the dark. How are you going to respond? How am I going to respond? Because that's real life. Yeah, right there.

And that's where people should work on themselves, right? Oh, now, come on. I got to throw your quote in here. You just said it.

You make this statement, choose from a healthy place, not from loneliness, desperation, or fear. That's powerful. I want you to unpack that. When we are making choices from unhealthy places, we get unhealthy outcomes.

Everyone wants healthy outcomes, think they're going to fall out of the sky, but they're not healthy. Going back to that word intentionality, when you don't choose from healthy and whole, you choose from desperation, you choose from insecurities. You choose from, well, I don't want to be lonely. You choose from, well, everybody else has it.

Why come I can't have it? You choose from, it is just the best it's going to get. And if you choose that way, then you are, one, telling God that He doesn't know what He has in store for you, or He doesn't know what's best. Two, when you choose from that place, you've already decided that you know what's your purpose better than God knows your purpose.

Three, when you choose from that place, you have to operate from that place. Any place you choose from, you have to continue on in that. And so, if I choose to stay outside of God's will, all my choices got to stay outside of God's will. If I find somebody in the bar, that's the foundation of our relationship. That's the foundation. Now, can relationships evolve and grow from the bar? Absolutely. That's not my experience, so I can't speak to it.

But anyone listening, they might say, yeah, well, I met him at the bar and we're all right. However you didn't stay there. You didn't stay, exactly, exactly. So you have to ask yourself, if I choose from desperation, I gotta continue in desperation. If I choose from drama and toxicity and anger, I have to stay there. And most people don't realize that. So earlier you had asked, well, most people don't even know that they're broken. They don't until you gotta put in a situation where it comes out of you. So when I choose from desperation, I'm gonna be choosing from that place and it's gonna come out of me. Why don't you see me? Why don't you love me? Why don't you?

I'm always choosing from desperation because I'm asking them to answer questions I should have answers for. You're trying to fill a void you can't fill. Exactly. Only one person can do that. So I chose you out of desperation because my dad wasn't there. I chose you out of desperation because my mom never said, I'm choosing you out of desperation because no one ever even chooses me. Yeah. So if you choose me, then that validates that I should be chosen. And now I'm always going to be chosen. And that's why you said in your book, without God, we go back to what we know. We go back to what we know. Even if we don't like it. Even if we don't like it. And that's the saddest part. That's scripture. That's Bible.

That's Bible. We go back, the dog returns to its vomit. Children in Israel cried and begged to come out of Egypt only for them to cry and beg to go back. How many times have we done that?

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Why in the world a dog would go back to his vomit? You know why? Because it's so hungry. It will eat even that.

And people stay in that cycle. Even people in the church, Jim, are doing the same thing in the book of Galatians. It tells us that after you have been known by God or Have you come to know God or have you been known by God? How is it that you return to your weak and beggarly ways?

Even people in the church have these powerful experiences with God, but without continuing to keep God the main thing and keep God the focus, somebody comes along, and guess what? They pull you away from God, and the next thing you know, you're back in this weak and burglary environment, dating, not courting, dating, and then you're getting married out of dating and not courting, and here you are back in another marriage that is not working. Is this a fair statement? Dating is founded in selfishness.

Courtship is founded in God, the intentionality. That's really good, yeah. Because dating is all about me feeling something. Getting something, courtship seems to be about, I want to please God.

This is about God in my relationship. I want to be intentional that if I'm going to move forward in this person, in their life, and they're going to be partners with me for life, this is way more serious. I don't need to go to the movies. We need to have a conversation before we go to the movies. Is that fair? Absolutely. I think it's fair. We're talking about Dating in the sense of kingdom dating, right?

It's two different things. You got the culture says dating should look like this. So you got those people, because there's going to be a lot of people watching this. So I want to make sure it's clear. Dating, some people tell you, well, date, date, date. You're free to date because you're not married yet. Okay, yes. Dating fun meets your fleshly pleasures. Date. Courtship is the intentionality of literally saying, God, I want to do it your way. Dating is, I want to do it culture's way. Courtship is, God, I want to do it your way.

Now, there's multiple definitions out there of what dating can be, and it's very relative. But what we're talking about when we say dating is you not going to the next person, the next thing, the next thing, the next thing, situation ship after situation ship. We're talking about courtship in a manner that says, this is who I want to be in tension with. I believe God has purpose here.

We didn't date, we courted with the intent to marry. Now, I went on interview dates is what Leon calls them. And I was asking, do you feel called to ministry? You can interview.

Interview to get your data. Come on, that's intention. Dating in kingdom is getting data. Not sleeping around, fumbling around, playing around to hurt your heart because you can reopen.

Scripture talks about not awakening love before it's time. You can awaken yourself in ways and then have this extra baggage unnecessarily. And no one comes along and talks about that all the time. We need to talk about, you don't get the data information, but don't put your feelings to every person that comes along.

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Because you put your feelings at risk and you put them in so many different people, your emotions are in eight different directions and you wonder why he's on your mind, she's on your mind, he's on your mind, she's on your mind, because you've opened yourself up to too many people. So when you're collecting data, it's for you to be informed that this isn't something that God has for me. Right?

It shouldn't intrigue you. It should reinforce that's not what God has for me. Where courting is that this is what God has for me. He came along and said, I'm here.

God sent me here to nurture the grounds. We're going to be intentional. So with us, Jim, there was no kissing. There was no touching.

There was none of that for us. Now everyone has their own story, but for us, we already crossed the path. We know what it's like to kiss. We know what it's like to have been in the sheets.

We've done this. Let's see what we have. Courtship says, let's see what we have without all of the extra to see if there's something really here. Man, that's so good because you can deceive yourself and your feelings will say there's something here, but it's just responding to the dopamine drop.

Exactly. Because if we got caught up in all the flesh in the kitchen and the touching, then that's going to inform how we move. Now we need the touching to feel close. I didn't have to touch to feel close.

We communicated to feel close. We prayed to feel close. We read books to be close. We got a community to be close.

We dated collectively. And then it's like, oh, we have something here that's special. So then now we saved our kiss to the altar. That was our story and journey.

And it's possible because we've seen it happen with other people around us, too. And so when you talk about alignment, dating, culture says, get as many, have all your experience, do all that, and you'll know. No, that might be in the way of God's best for you. Whereas courtship says, you know what, get your data, get aligned with somebody, get aligned with yourself first.

I'm going to start third passage because we're talking about relationship, but becoming and getting up and begin again is you get up with yourself, get up and begin again mentally, emotionally, spiritually, do what you need to do internally before you expect this external episode in your life. And when you do that, then God can say, now you're ready for it. Now Leon, now Jim, now Precious, now because you have matured to bring that along, right? But in courtship is not what culture says, it is what the Bible says.

And is there a definition in there that says this is what the relationship should look like? No, we have stories in the Bible about it. But we also have enough foundation of the word of the fruit and what we should look for, right? Because some people say, well, there is no scripture in there that talks about dating.

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Well, we know he tells us to flee the temptation and the evil desires of our youth. He tells us where we should operate, but we get so, well, he doesn't tell us one-on-one on dating. Well, we can look at the scripture and get an idea of what it looks like to court well, right? We don't have to be all over each other slobbing in order for us to be successful in a relationship. And most people have, the culture has told us, if you're not all over each other, you're not going to be all over each other. Yeah, you got to make sure you're compatible. Yeah, you got to make sure you like this.

You got to try everything on the buffet. No, you don't. That's going to bring a lot of spiritual baggage. It's like they speak about soul ties.

You know, you're going to bring soul ties from these other relationships if you continue to move that way. And I'll say this, you know, in the courtship process, because a lot of people can be, they can be fooled in the courtship process because it says that the enemy masquerades as an angel of light. There will be people that come across your path that will be able to speak scripture, and they will say things that may sound like the voice of God, but you have to have discernment to understand if it really aligns with what God wants for you and for your purpose in marriage.

If someone says, hey, I want to do a Bible study, can I come over by 11 o'clock this evening? You know that is not... Yeah, that's not Bible study. Never got a Bible study.

That's not Bible study. That's not Bible study. So I just want to encourage people because they can feel like, well, you know, this person goes to church and they do this and they do that. I understand that.

But you need to observe their walk. Can I ask a question? Did you guys have anybody? Close to you that was observing too that said hey, I think this precious is like I think she's the one like did you guys have anybody in your lives?

I can share this with you. So the top of 2020 um. My divorce was finalized in, I think, late 2017. I dated a little bit. It just wasn't working.

So at the top of 2020, I mean at the top, the New Year, I said, I'm just focusing on the Lord. I don't want to see anybody. I don't want to be involved with anybody. I'm all in on God.

So about July, one of the parents whose kids that we co-subtract, he's a pastor, he has his own church, and him and I developed a relationship. It was crazy because I was gonna call him that day. I hadn't talked to him because COVID shut everything down. So we weren't talking to people that much or weren't seeing people that much, track season had shut down.

So I was gonna call him and he called me that day and he said, man, how you doing? I said, I'm doing good. And he said, what have you been doing? I said, man, I'm just all in on the Lord, man, just focused on ministry.

And we talked for a while and he said, Leon, I think you need to start praying for a kingdom life. I really think you need to start praying for a kingdom life." So I did that. And in October, Precious and I connected, and he called me again in like early November. He said, what have you been doing?

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And I said, well, I've, you know, seen some one recording without any context. He said, does her name start with a P? And here's the thing, when people found out that we were courting, everyone around us said, I saw that coming. I saw that coming.

How important do you think that is? People out there, because you heard the saying, you can't see the forest for the trees, right? There can be like five people around you that are mature, and they're like, nah, this is not okay. But they're so convinced, and I prayed, and I put my finger in the Bible, and it said, thou shalt be married.

This must be the one. Talk to me about how important that is. Not that everybody has to agree, but I think there's something to that. Yeah, I think it's important to listen to the voices around you, and I'm not talking about, everyone that speaks to you, but understanding the voices of wisdom that are around you.

Yeah, so when you have voices of wisdom around you, people that you know are submitted before the Lord, when they speak to you like, hey, you know what, I think this is the one for you, or that one is not the one for you, it would behoove you and be in your best interest to really— Put some gravity on that. Yeah, yeah. Take that into your prayer closet and think, okay, yeah, let me see if I see what they're seeing and really put this before the Lord and pray about this.

Yeah. And if you're going to be asking God to open your eyes, you better be ready to see. Yeah. Right?

Because for me, I'm like, I opened my eyes, but I was still looking over here. And there are people on the track team who will be like, you and Coach Leon, y'all got this thing. I used to be like, no, we do not. What thing?

You're like, oh, y'all got it. Y'all eating sunflower seeds together and eating Twizzlers together. Y'all got this thing. We can just tell y'all prayed it.

I'm like, that's Coach Leon. That's my boy. He's great. But my eyes are over here.

But everyone kept telling me, that's no good. And they're great. They're great people. They in the Lord.

But that wasn't for you. You're chasing that. That's not for you. And it's like, oh, you sure?

And so I had to listen to the voices to say, don't look over there. But also the voices, I couldn't see this until I was healed enough to see it. Because the unhealed versions of me was chasing the wrong things. And so you could be chasing the wrong things as someone who is in a place where they're desiring love, or the person who's listening might be in a place where you're like, I know I want it.

And like you said, I put my finger on the God, is he the one? Everyone in the church isn't your husband. Everyone in the church isn't your wife. And it's important to be yielded enough that if you say, I think it might be something here, to be like, all right, Lord, let me see.

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Let me see. You probably are trying to reveal something to me. And to his point, as soon as it happened, I just knew it. I always saw that.

Because I think sometimes we chase the familiar. Oh, it was very familiar. It was very familiar. Yeah, it's comfortable.

It was comfortable. Yeah, we go after things that are familiar, not things that are necessary. Yeah. But one of the things that I shared with when Precious and I, after we were engaged, a friend of mine at church asked me, well, how did you know she was the one?

And my response was, if you're going to be praying for something, you need to know what it looks like when it shows up. So if I'm praying for a kingdom woman, a wife, I need to know what a wife looks like. If you're praying for a husband, a man of God, you need to know what it looks like. A lot of times we can, because when you start praying for something from God, believe me, the enemy is going to start sending imitations.

So you need to know who the imitations are and who the real person is that God has for you. Because the moment that the enemy sends anything and your emotions get involved, it's cloudy. It just clouds it. So if you don't already know, and I think you find that in the dark.

You keep talking about prayer. So I want to end it with this. You make this statement. It's phenomenal.

It says, coming into alignment with God means coming out of agreement with anything he doesn't agree with. Wow. Like that's a self-audit, like talk to me, like how important is that? Because I feel like sometimes we're already connected and rooted and we got like cords going into this computer and this computer and we're receiving data from here and there.

And God might say, look, I don't agree with that. But so you might have an addiction or you're doing this, you're praying for a godly wife while you're addicted to porn. So like, how do you, this is what I tell my kids, you receive what you're qualified for. So if you want a prince, you better be a princess.

And I'll tell you why. Because if he's a true godly prince, he's praying for a Queen Esther. So every decision you make right now is determining whether or not you fit his prayer. Yeah, yeah.

I had to be that person that I was praying for. Yeah. I had to be that person that was submitted and committed to the Lord. I had to be that person that was going to be sexually disciplined, because those are the things that I was praying for.

I can't expect to receive that if I'm not that. Exactly. So the things that I was praying for is what I got. And like I said, we have to come out of agreement with anything that the Lord does not agree with.

Culture will tell you to try it and test it before marriage. It is not necessary. I am so glad that Precious and I waited. Just waiting to even kiss at the altar, it was magical.

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But culture will tell people, hey, it's good. No, the enemy is going to tell you it's good. The Lord is not going to tell you to jump into these sheets prior to marriage. He's never going to tell you that.

It goes against his nature. God is never going to tell you to sin. I don't care what you, how you try to justify it, he's never gonna tell you to sin. But do you feel like, I mean, that when we say, when people, the culture says, hey, you gotta try this to know, what we're really saying is God doesn't know.

Yeah. Yeah. I gotta know. And everything else gives us a sample.

You go into Sam's, you get a sample, Costco's, you get a sample. They let you test drive a car? Yeah, right? We just went to Costco in three seconds.

You know? Everything else gives us a sample. And I get why. Psychologically, it trains us to think, I have to test this out.

We need to live together first. All these things. And I'm not saying people, situations have not turned around. However, we're saying we want to grow more holiness, do things right, do things by Bible things, Bible ways, do what God is telling us to do.

We have to die to our agendas, die to our ideations, die to what we think is going to be right and say, God, show me the way. Show me the way. I've done it my way. It don't work.

Right? And we don't want to take that route because we think it slows us down. Somehow my process is going to slow down. Somehow I won't get there quicker.

So let me help God get there quicker. Let me help God by letting me get married quicker or get to the altar quicker, whatever that might be. And here's the thing, if you find yourself in a waiting season, just like Israel found themselves in a waiting season, it's because God is still trying to get something out of you. Because if he's going to give you what you're praying for, which is his best, he has to make sure you're at your best so that he can bring you both together.

So if you're waiting, don't get discouraged. There's something that he's working on getting out of you, and there's something that he's working on getting out of them. So that when your paths do cross, you have cohesion. What do the words say?

He said, I humbled Israel all these years to test them to see what was in them. That's what it was. It was love. He said, I humbled them and tested them to see what was in them.

And most of the time, that's what he's doing. What's in you? What will have you leave me? What would you choose over me?

Because we all would do it. We all have the propensity to choose something over the Lord. So he's like, I humble you to test you to see, do you want that relationship more than me? Do you want this more than my presence?

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Do you want this more than my word? Because when this show up, this shit push you more towards me. But he said, I humbled them and test them to see what was in them. And to Leon's point, it might be that God is just seeing what's still in you, right?

Because when he's, when they show that they were faithful, then he's like, yeah, they still going to get the promise. So you'll still get there. But then how much do you want him to have to get out of you to get there? Or do you just let them deal with you and let them get it out?

And then I went seven years saying, I'm going to be single simply because I didn't want to come into a situation with the same stuff. So I was like, I told people, I looked them in their eyes and said, I'm not sending you to somebody hurting. I don't know who you on your way to. So I refuse to play with you.

I know I'm going to play with you. That self-awareness matters. People refuse to be self-aware. You know you're playing.

You know it's a space filly. You know it's a void filly. You know it's an occupier. So I'm not going to waste my, I want you to go.

And they're married now. Hey, look, I can't. I can't. Several people came along to Leon's point.

People are going to come out of the woodworks. And they're well-meaning people, but that don't necessarily mean you all good. Good people don't always mean you're going to be good together. And I feel like the only place that you can really, really count on to begin all of this is in the dark.

It's with the Lord, man. My whole life changed when I realized that even as a pastor, Bible teacher, getting in the Bible, it does not replace getting in His lap. There's a difference, you know, and I know the Bible backwards and forwards, but getting in his lap is a different thing. It's like, it's like, you know, your, your iPhone, it gets down to like 1% and we know to plug it in.

Inherently, there's nothing that you can see that's happening when it's plugged in. There's no like sparks. But you come back 10 minutes later, it's at 70%. And I feel like in our walk with God, this is the power source.

When you sit in God's lap, you don't even have to pray. Your intention just is, Abba, I want to sit in your presence. Charge me. Yes.

Take me where I need to be. And then automatically like amazing things happen in your life where that young, you meet someone and you just know. But if you weren't charged, your emotions were charged. Now you don't know, but God is the only one that regulates all of that.

So I feel like ending in a place of alignment, there's no way you can truly know if you're a godly man or a godly woman, who is right for you, or even if you're married, how to make your marriage even better if you're not in the dark. Because if you're not in the dark, you're in the dark. You're lost. You're lost.

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No flashlight, no lantern. You don't even get the light on your cell phone. It's gone. Like you are in the dark and we're all stumbling around like Israelites for 40 years wondering in the dark and we miss our destiny of the Promised Land.

And we'll misinterpret the dark as abandonment when in reality, guys, if you make your bed in hell, I am with you. And we think the dark is such a bad place when in reality, it's equipping. The dark is an equipment place. There is a strengthening place.

It's a preparation place. When that phone goes off, they turn the phone off on the subject of the iPhone. In order for it to give you the update, they say not only it needs to be at a certain percentage, but they turn the phone off in order to give this update. And it says it's got to be plugged in.

And it says it has to be plugged in. I can only imagine that there are spiritual updates happening when we plug in and when we allow God to turn the dark off and then all of a sudden we got new features on our lives, new features in us. Now I'm a better wife.

Now I'm a better professional. Now I got these updates. And I just told him recently, it's some updates in our phone. I was like, I didn't even know some of those updates are in that phone.

They doing what? You can schedule, you can all these different things because you allowed the manufacturer to do what it needs to do. And I think sometimes we don't allow our marriages to get what they need to be, our businesses to get what they need to be, our relationships to get what they need to be, our families get what they need to be because we despise the update. And I don't want to despise the updates because the updates are for my business.

I might have to remove some storage. The baggage of pain, the insecurities, the anger, the resentment, the bitterness, whatever might be there that needs to create room and space. Every time my phone say I'm out of space, it's a video I didn't even need. It's a video I didn't even need.

Are you with me? And some of us have things in our lives we don't even need. And if we would just allow God to do the update, we can get rid of stuff in there that we don't even need in the first place. It's just space, taking up space.

And what about the videos that we have in our life that we replay in our head? That are negative videos, and all they're doing is impacting us to continually make more videos like that. Delete the videos. And then go to the deleted videos.

Go to the deleted. I recovered one something one day, I was like, why did I recover this? This was crazy. And so don't even recover it.

Yeah. If you must recover, recover well. Don't recover for the sake of putting yourself back through pain so that you can revisit all of the negative stories and the negative narratives and the pain that that last season cost you. Yeah.

Well, let's talk about the darkness real quick, Jim. I want to share this with you. As a hunter, you'll understand what I'm saying. And even as a believer, anyone can understand this.

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A lot of times we're afraid of the darkness, but we're only afraid of the darkness when we haven't seen it in the light. Actually, I was going to recover a deer at night with my son when he was very young, and I did not utilize a flashlight. And when we got to where we were going, I could see my son's eyes in the dark and I could tell he was scared. I said, are you okay?

He said, how do you know where you're going? I said, because I've seen it in the light. I don't need the... So the darkness doesn't scare me.

So when we know the goodness of the Father, and He's shown us who He is, who His character is, how He's cared for us, who He's been to us, when we're in those seasons of darkness, there's no reason to be afraid because we've already seen what it looks like in the light. Man, that will preach. That will preach.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have to stop there because that is a fantastic place to stop. Know what it looks like in the light. And the irony in the oxymoron is you can only know what it looks like when you're in the dark first. Their book is called Get Up and Begin Again.

Ladies and gentlemen, get up right now. I feel like the Holy Spirit is speaking to every single person out there. Some of you honestly need to start this whole podcast over again. Get a notebook out and begin to take notes because I believe there's parts in here that are really dedicated for you.

This isn't about relationships. This is about one relationship that matters. And when you get that in alignment, every other relationship comes into alignment. Trust me, I'm a personal believer and testimony that it is about you and God.

Go on Amazon, get this book and buy one for someone else and give it to them. Tell them you're not going to be friends with them unless they read it. I do believe that this is one of the most powerful books I have ever read, and I have read dozens and dozens of marriage books, and this is at the top, my top five, without a doubt. And I'm talking about Gary Smalley, all of them.

This is a top five that you need to get. And I'm not just saying that. I think the content alone that we've talked about here in this broadcast proves that. And so not only I believe that can this book begin to give you a chance to start over again, I just want to speak into your life right now and say it doesn't matter the mistakes that you've made.

It doesn't matter how big you think your sin is, I want to tell you how your Messiah looks at you. When He showed up at the well, and there was a woman there that had five husbands and that was living in fornication in that moment, not one time did He condemn her. Not one time did He say, I can't believe that you're doing that. All He did was He said, get up, you can do this, go and sin no more.

And you always know when it's really Yeshua and when it's the enemy because she walked away and felt excited to start over. She felt excited. She never felt condemned. Nobody's condemning you, but you and the enemy that's lying to you. So speak the truth into your life. Get up and begin again. If you're going to fall, fall forward.

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And I believe this book is the instruction manual to help you do that. Guys, thank you so much. For being in the studio today, this has been a blessing. I think this is going to be a very eye-opening and popular episode.

It's going to bless a lot of people and send them your way. And would you do us a favor? If this book ministers to you, would you just send us an email at info at passionfortruth.com, and we'll send them along that testimony.

We would love to hear how this book has impacted you, or even in this broadcast, if this has impacted you. Please put your comments right below. Hit the like button, hit subscribe, and more importantly, pray for us and send this to somebody else because you know they need it. All right, my friends, thank you so much for this time that you've given us.

I'm Jim Staley with Passion for Truth Ministries, and we'll see you in the next video.

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