

Intimacy is a gift yet a mystery - a picture of Christ's love for His church (Ephesians 5). Especially in marriage, intimacy first must reflect a *spiritual* sacrificial giving of ourselves to the other (v.25). Next, it is sensible enough to meet our spouse' *physical* needs. We know how to care for our own body! (v.28) Third, it meets *emotional* needs by cherishing/nourishing our spouse (v.29). Practically it means setting aside time for meaningful conversation. Esteeming the other better than ourselves and showing empathy by listening to or serving the other when needed.

Intimacy mirrors ways Jesus loves us. It will result in a God-intended *sexual* intimacy. After all, love begets love. As each of us draw near to God, He will draw near to us and guess what? We will be drawn closer to each other. Now that's *intimacy: loving the other as we have been loved!*

DEEP LOVE ~ ENJOYING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Intimacy

Dr. Chris Gnanakan

INTRODUCTION

- A. No one wants a shallow relationship, right? We want to sink the roots of our relationship deep into love. Deeper conversations and bonding. Deeper intimacy and passion. And that's exactly what the *Deep Love* relationship series can do for you. It's for couples and individuals who want to move from broken to better as well as those moving from good to great.

"Above all, love each other deeply"

I Peter 4:8

- B. This series will help you learn how to enjoy strong relationships and make your relationships everything you want them to be.

Feb 12	Personality
Feb 19	Communication
Feb 26	Conflict
TODAY	Intimacy
Mar 12	Adaptability
Mar 19	Harmony

Are You Enjoying Deep Love Through Intimacy?

"Above all, love each other deeply"

I Peter 4:8

- C. **TEXT:** Mark 12:30-31 (Pew Bible/Pg. 995/New Testament)

HOW TO ENJOY DEEP LOVE THROUGH INTIMACY

I. VERTICAL INTIMACY - *LOVING GOD*

Judaism is more about ethics than theology. Rabbis often discussed the gravity of their many laws as to which is greater or “the most important”. Jesus’ answer links both mandates to love God and others (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18. PS: we already love ourselves!) This central confession of Israel’s monotheistic faith was indeed *exclusive* and *whole-hearted*. The scribe approves then adds biblical basis to this “royal law” (I Samuel 15:22; Psalm 40:6; Hosea 6:6; James 2:8). Jesus not only rivets the two, He demonstrated their correlation as an evidence of his kingdom and made it foundational for our faith and Christian ethics (John 13:34-35; Romans 13:8; Galatians 5:14).

Such intimacy is not without *involvement* - an intentional, practical lifetime commitment. It is a *mystery* yet a sure *sign* of Jesus’ kingdom come. It requires a new *life* ‘in Christ’. We can only enter and express such kingdom living and *loving* by means of a new *birth*. This required Jesus’ *death* and resurrection (John 3:3, 14-16). Yes, we can intimately love God because He first loved us. We know what love looks like because God ‘in Christ’ gave Himself for us (I John 3:16; 4:16). Having been created *imago Dei*, we have the capacity to love others as we have been loved. So, we must reciprocate God’s love especially to the one near/dear to us - the love of our life!

II. RECIPROCAL INTIMACY - *LOVING OTHERS*

Do you think God will be *loveless* if we did not love Him? The answer is: no! Being Trinity, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit relate to each other in perfect love! Within this *unity* there is *intimacy* for God is love. This same love has been poured into the believer’s hearts by the Spirit who is given to us (John 17:3; Romans 5:5). We live in a broken, divided and cruel world. Yet, with this love in us and in the light of Jesus’ return, we can: “above all, love each other deeply” (I Peter 4:8). Marriage is the most intimate human relationship to where two become one flesh! There’s a strong link between *spirituality* and *sexuality* which is a divine gift. Romance for both the Christian husband and wife is gratifying since “together” they are heirs of this grace of life (I Peter 3:7)!