

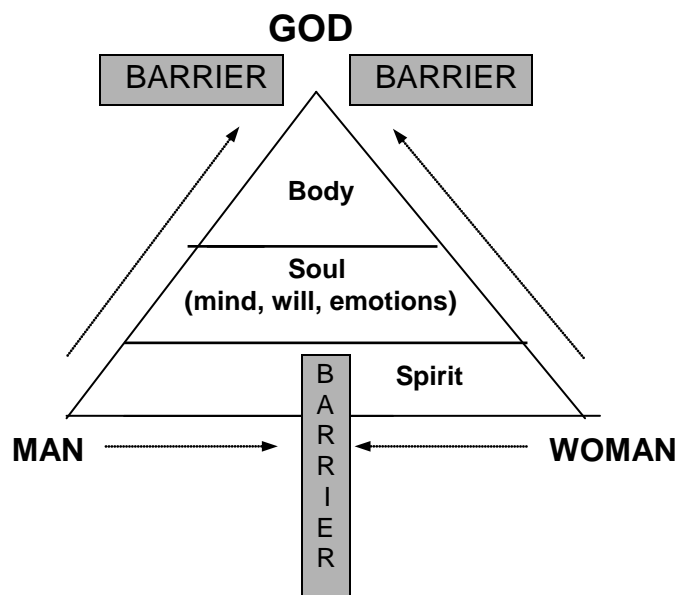
Introduction - "A Problem Clearly Defined is 50% Solved"

Premise #1 - We all have legitimate needs/longings.

Premise #2 - God originally designed our spouse to be a major tool in His hands to meet those needs/longings.

Premise #3 - The "Fall" (sin, Genesis 3) short-circuited man's relationship with God, his mate, and his world.

Premise #4 - What was once the most natural relational response (other-centered, grace-giving) is now the most unnatural of responses, requiring supernatural enablement and hard work to achieve.



Four Barriers to Intimacy

◆ Spiritual Barriers = Sin, Shame, Selfishness (Genesis 3)

- **Differences** - Originally designed to compliment and complete one another; have become sources of friction, confusion, and competition.
- **Sharing** - Has turned to shame.
- **Givers** - Have become takers and manipulators.
- **Builders** - Have become blamers.
- **Openness** - Has given way to hiding.

The Answer = _____

Resource: The Bible; *New Believers Kit with CD*, Living on the Edge;

◆ Psychological Barriers = Personality Differences

- Introvert vs. Extrovert
- Assertive vs. Easy Going
- Factual vs. Abstract
- Systematic vs. Spontaneous

The Answer = _____

Resource: *The Intimacy Factor* by David and Jan Stoops

◆ Gender Barriers = Male / Female Differences

| Males Tend to Be... | Females Tend to Be... |
|--|--|
| More achievement focused | More relationally focused |
| More theoretical and generalist | More specific and detail oriented |
| More information oriented in communication | More emotion oriented in communication |
| More action oriented | More verbal oriented |
| More facts oriented | More intuitively oriented |
| More goal oriented | More supportive and nurturing oriented |

(Above taken from *To Understand Each Other* by Paul Tournier)

The Answer = _____

Resources: *His Needs Her Needs* by Willard F. Harley, Jr.
Men Are From Mars, Women are From Venus by John Gray

◆ Historical Barriers = "Our Baggage" from the Past

- Family Upbringing
- Traumatic Events
- False Beliefs / "Games We Play"
- Rejection and Past Relationships

The Answer = _____

Resources: *The Search for Significance* by Robert S. McGee;
How to Overcome the Pain in Your Past, Living on the Edge

Summary

The Result: We knowingly and unknowingly put up “protective walls” that keep us from being deeply touched and loved in ways we are desperate to experience.

- **Women** focus on _____, struggle with loneliness, and fear abandonment.
- A **woman's** wrong strategy centers around _____.
- **Men** focus on _____, struggle with futility, and fear failure.
- A **man's** wrong strategy centers around _____.

God's Solution: Honest, grace-filled, understanding, **communication**, to lovingly “pull down” the walls, risk vulnerability, and restore intimacy.

Discussion Questions (Married & Single)

1. What new insight did you gain about **BARRIERS** in your marriage? In your relationships (singles)?
2. How does understanding these barriers adjust your **EXPECTATIONS** in marriage? In your most significant relationships (singles)?
3. What specific step do you discern God would have you take to begin “pulling-down” the walls in your marriage? In your most meaningful relationships (singles)?