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Enhancing the Quality of Friendship in Married Couples' Relationships in the Madison, Tennessee Hispanic SDA District

Nathan Delima
Andrews University

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ABSTRACT

ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF FRIENDSHIP IN MARRIED COUPLES’ RELATIONSHIPS IN THE MADISON, TENNESSEE HISPANIC SDA DISTRICT

by

Nathan Delima

Adviser: Richard Sylvester
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF FRIENDSHIP IN MARRIED COUPLES’ RELATIONSHIP IN THE MADISON, TENNESSEE HISPANIC SDA DISTRICT

Name of researcher: Nathan Delima

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Richard Sylvester, DMin

Date completed: July 2015

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to explore the possibility of enhancing the friendship of certain married couples in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Madison, Tennessee Hispanic District.

This project resource should add to the academic field of study by possibly helping pastors, family educators, and church family life leaders to consider using this project to help enrich the relationships of married couples. It will likely provide resource information for those doing projects or working with married couples.
Justification for the Project

There is a need to nurture the friendship of the married couples within the churches of the Madison Hispanic District. If these couples participated in an event with the intentional purpose of enhancing their friendship they might be able to build and maintain a stronger marital bond.

Methodology

Theological reflection was done by reviewing literature dealing with strengthening the marriage relationship. In addition, marriage enrichment seminars were studied.

The three organized churches and a missionary group that form the Madison, Tennessee Hispanic District were to participate in the project.

A set of questionnaires found in part one of the Sound Relationship House by the Gottman Institute was used as the study instrument. A seminar to strengthen friendship in marriage was developed. Before participating in the seminar the couples answered the questionnaires as a pre-test. The seminar was administered during a weekend spiritual retreat. Five follow-up sessions proceeded the retreat. After the follow-up sessions the same questionnaire was given again to the participants. The questionnaires were collected and the data analyzed. The results were analyzed to determine if the couples’ friendship had been enhanced and the impact, if any, that the seminar had on their marital relationships.

This was an exploratory or heuristic study dealing with the friendship experienced in the marriage of the couples, therefore qualitative in nature.
Results

This study was relevant to my academic growth since it allowed me to develop my powers of investigation, enhanced the practice of analyzing data, improved my ability and capacity to develop seminars in the context of marriage, enriched my own relationship as a husband, and increased my skills to work with married couples.

Conclusion

The application of the seminar provided the participants with the knowledge and interaction to experience a deeper friendship in their relationships as couples. The evidence of a positive impact on the relationships of the participants was clear. This was based on the results reflected in the data analyzed and the evaluation of the seminar, done by that the participants.
ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF FRIENDSHIP IN MARRIED COUPLES’ RELATIONSHIPS IN THE MADISON, TENNESSEE HISPANIC SDA DISTRICT

A Project Document
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

by

Nathan Delima

July 2015
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Dedication

This work is dedicated first of all to my wife, Sofia, who supported me unconditionally with her encouragement, prayers, unconditional love and understanding. It is also dedicated to our children; Sharon, Nathali, and Nathan who through their love gave me the motivation to make this dream come true.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Description of the Ministry Context

This project was developed and implemented for the Madison Hispanic District of the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. The district is composed of three organized churches and one missionary group. The churches are located in the cities of Madison, Springfield, and Lebanon; and the missionary group in Bowling Green, Kentucky. The researcher is the Pastor of the district and has been in this professional role since August, 1987. He has pastored this district from June 1, 2013 to date.

Statement of the Problem

Marriage and divorce are both common experiences. According to the American Philological Association (APA) (2000) in Western cultures, more than 90% of people marry by age 50. It also states “healthy marriages are good for couples’ mental and physical health” and also good for children; “growing up in a happy home protects children from mental, physical, educational and social problems.” However, about 50% of married couples in the United States divorce (U. S. Census Bureau, 2004). “For the average couple marrying for the first time in recent year, the lifetime probability of divorce or separation now falls between 40-50 percent” (“National Marriage Project, & Institute, The” 2011, pp. 67, 69) and this increase in divorce has probably elicited more
concern and discussion than any other topic dealing with family-related trends in the US.

The divorce rate for subsequent marriages is even higher as reported by the APA.

One of the major goals of the church is to prevent marriages from ending in divorce and doing everything possible to promote healthy and happy marriages. The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Fundamental Believe # 22 states: “Because marriage is a divine institution, the church has a unique and solemn responsibility both to prevent divorce and, should divorce occur, to heal as far as possible the wounds it causes” (“Ministerial Association,” 2005). The number of books, seminars, websites, professionals, and other recourses among the Christian circle are evidences of this goal.

One way of helping married couples in the church stay together is by enhancing their intra-marital friendship. McGinnis (2004) stated that love relationships start with friendship and that people without friends have a diminished capacity to sustain any kind of love. Kidd (2008) stated that friendship is one of the pillars that support satisfying, long-term, romantic relationships and marriages. Gottman and Silver (1999) mentioned that happy marriages are based on a deep friendship; meaning mutual respect for each other, enjoyment of each other’s company, tend to know each other intimately, have an abiding positive regard for each other and expressing this fondness, they turn towards each other instead of turning away from each other.

One of the major triggers for this research was this quotation:

Though difficulties, perplexities, and discouragements may arise, let neither husband nor wife harbor the thought that their union is a mistake or a disappointment. Determine to be all that it is possible to be to each other. Continue the early attentions. In every way encourage each other in fighting the battles of life. Study to advance the happiness of each other. Let there be mutual love, mutual forbearance. Then marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be as it were the very beginning of love. The warmth of true friendship (italics mine), the love that binds heart to heart, is a foretaste of the joys of heaven.”(White, 1905, p. 360)
Though personal pastoral contacts, observations, conversations, and by leading several “family focused” seminars the researcher of this project has identified some of the couples in Madison Hispanic District as suffering from a lack of a deeper more significant intra-couple friendship or show an inability to enhance the friendship.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project is to enhance the quality of the friendship in the participating couples by having them participate in a weekend spiritual retreat that will focus on friendship in marriage. By enhancing the friendship between the participating spouses they will be better equipped to have a long lasting and meaningful marriage. According to Sybil, Buehlman, Gottman, Ruckstuhl, and Coan (2000), Gottman with other associates have done research identifying the factors that help marriages survive and understanding how these factors influence marital stability. One of these factors is friendship. As a result of their research they designed workshops that focus on strengthening couples friendship, helping them develop a sense of unity, and creating a reservoir of positive regard for each other. So by focusing on strengthening the friendship of the participating couples this project intends that they will also acquire these benefits.

Justification of the Project

There is a need to nurture the friendship of the married couples within the Churches of the Madison Hispanic District. This has been perceived through pastoral care and several seminars that have been presented to them by the researcher. If these couples participated in an event with the intentional purpose of enhancing their friendship they might be able to build and maintain a stronger marital bond.
**Delimitations**

Generalizability is limited to the types of the couples similar to those who participated in the study. The respondent group was 100% Hispanic and from lower to middle class social-economic status. The group was comprised of couples that varied in years of marriage and in years belonging to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Since the purpose of this study was to enhance friendship in marriage of couples within the Madison Hispanic District, non-represented cultures or ethnic groups as well as groups in the higher middle class and above limits the generalizability of the results.

**Limitations**

Two methodological limitations were: First the sample size. Only 29 married couples participated out of 56 that there is in the District; in general a small sample. Second, this project relied on self-reported data collected by questionnaires and therefore difficult to have it independently verified.

Also, two limitations to the researcher were: Firstly, the researcher only studied a single research problem that was constrained to a certain amount of time to investigate and measure change. Secondly, was the lack of fluency in English. Even though the researcher is bilingual (English and Spanish), Spanish is his dominant language.

**Description of the Project Process**

This project contains five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the topic of this research and contains a description of the ministry context, states the problem and the task, as well as the justification for the project, its debilitations and limitations. It ends with a brief definition of terms.
Chapter 2 contains a theological reflection on the biblical foundation for enhancing friendship in marriage. It is presented in four divisions: first the biblical foundation for marriage and its implications for this topic, second it portrays the meaning of friendship in Scriptures, third it describes this concept though several biblical examples, and fourth, personal reflections are shared.

Chapter 3 contains a review of the literature and is divided into four sections. The first is an overview of what marriage enrichment programs are and their effectiveness. The second reviews the literature regarding characteristics and types of friendships. Section three is an overview of literature that specifically addresses the topic of friendship in marriage. The final section gives a description and analysis of two programs with an intentional purpose of enhancing friendship in marriage; one secular (not faith-based), and one created for churches.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology in the development and implementation of the My Spouse and I Unmatchable Friends seminar, and gives an evaluation of the five sections: The first describes the population that participated. The second explains the methodology used. The third describes how the project was developed and implemented and includes a complete outline table of the weekend spiritual retreat with the details of the My Spouse and I Unmatchable Friends seminar. The fourth is a description of the content of the follow-up sessions. The fifth construes on how the project was evaluated. Finally, the sixth is a conclusion by the researcher.

Chapter 5 is divided in three sections. The first presents a summation. The second is the conclusions of this research. The third section makes recommendations.
Definition of Terms

*Enhance* - To raise to a higher degree; intensify; magnify (Retrieved from http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/enhance)

*Friendship in Marriage* - This is defined in three ways (Gottman & Silver, 1999). First: Love maps. Having knowledge of each other’s world, life events, what is important to each other, each other’s goals, worries and hopes? Second: Fondness and admiration. These elements make the person they married feel worthy of honor and respect. Third: Turning towards each other by connecting in everyday communication, turning towards the spouse in the little ways and not getting distracted and start taking each other for granted.
CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Introduction

This theological reflection centers on the biblical foundation for enhancing friendship in marriage and is divided into four sections. The first presents the biblical foundation for marriage and its implications for this topic. The second portrays the meaning of friendship in Scriptures. The third is a description of this concept using several biblical examples that include a portion based on “The Song of Songs” which specifically speaks about friendship in marriage. In the last section, the researcher will share some personal reflection.

Biblical Foundation for Marriage and its Implications for This Topic

The biblical foundation for marriage begins with the creation story in Genesis 1 and 2. It is paramount to take a careful look at the account and the details of creation week in order to have a better understanding of the close relationship between the foundations of marriage to friendship in marriage.

Genesis 1:1-2:3 is a description of God’s original creation. In six consecutive 24-hour days God created this world. This is grounded on the bases that the terminology used in Genesis 1 for these periods of time is “the evening and the morning were the first day, and so forth. Literally “evening was, morning was, day one. This is a description of
an astronomical day, that is, a day of 24 hours of duration (Nichol, 1953a). On the sixth day God created human beings in the form of a man and a woman. Genesis 1:26, 27 affirms: “Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness’ … So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” In the creation account, only humans were made in God’s image.

Genesis 1:26-28 declares that human beings (male and female) were made in the image of God, and were also blessed by Him. According to Gushee (2004), being made in the image of God means being made as relational beings. In other words, we were created for community. The creation story expresses that God’s very nature is relational. Verse 26 uses the plural “us,” which according to Nichol (1953a) was regarded by the early church theologians almost unanimously as designative of the three persons of the deity. They counseled together as they created this world (Nichol, 1953a). Phillips (n.d.) stated that God is relational within Himself. Furthermore, God establishes a personal relationship with Adam and Eve from the beginning by expressing His will and by speaking to them. Even after the fall, God never diminished His desire to relate to humans. This is seen throughout the Bible. For example, He is our Provider (Gen 22:14), our Healer (Exod 15:22-26), our Shepherd (Ps 23). He extends His relational essence to human beings. “God’s ultimate relational pursuit is Jesus” (Phillips, n.d.). Isaiah 7:14 says, “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel which means, God with us.”

Another key element is the blessing given to the human beings, which differs from the blessing given to the animals in verse 22. Aalders (1981) suggested that a new
element is introduced in the execution of God’s purpose and that is the distinction of the human sexes. God blessed the animals and made them fruitful in verse 22, which implies that two sexes were also created among the animals, even though it is not specifically mentioned. The reason for this is the fact that the distinction of the sexes in humanity was to develop into a completely unique relationship, namely, holy marriage. The blessing was only spoken over the animal world but, in the case of humans, it is addressed to them. “God blessed them or marked them as being under His especial protection, and gave them power to propagate and multiply their own kind on the earth” (Clark, 1832).

In Genesis 1:31, God “saw all that He had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning the sixth day.” God’s creation was “very good” and this includes all of it: Earth, sky, and heavens, land, sea, and air; sea creatures and land creatures. Of course, that included marriage, man and woman made in God’s image and commanded to join together in sexual intercourse and bear children.

The second creation story in Genesis 2, verse 18, states that God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Jakes (2003) explains that the word “alone” is the Hebrew word *badow*, only one, meaning, only one of a species. Clark (1832) said, “As man was made a social creature, it was not proper that he should be alone; for to be alone, without a matrimonial companion, was not good.” Genesis 2:18 places full emphasis on the significant position of woman as a life’s companion for man. Aalders (1981) argued that God’s purpose in creating the woman was for companionship, but God first had to awaken in Adam a sense of need. This need was to be satisfied by God’s forming of the woman. This sense of need became reality to
man. God developed within man a longing for social companionship with a being that was his equal in many aspects.

McDonald (1986, p. 4) adds to this thought:

What Adam needed was a helper: someone to come alongside and share the challenge of life. Someone who would feel as he felt, exude joy at discovery, problem-solve with him in a time of puzzlement, create with him offspring who would follow in their steps. There was no one like that in the garden. I’m quite confident that God brought Adam to a complete sense of relational vacuum in order to demonstrate dramatically to him that there was nothing in the world which could meet his human need to have a relationship. He was created to work best under relational conditions.

God said He would make a helpmate or helper suitable for man. Gushee (2004) proposed that helpmate or helper does not denote subservience, but partnership in shared daily living. Besides companionship with God and with animals he would need companionship with his human partner. God’s intention was for them to go through life together in a companionship of love. Adams (1903) explained that making man a helper is in regard to his social and moral nature and also to the fulfilling of God’s purpose of having a companion. Helper means someone that would correspond to him as his counterpart. So at the very core of marriage is the creation of the woman. Clark (1832, p. 43) defined helpmate as follows:

_ ezer kenegdo_, a help, a counterpart of himself, one formed from him, and a perfect resemblance of his person. If the word were rendered scrupulously literally, it signifies one like, or as himself, standing opposite to or before him. And this implies that the woman was to be a perfect resemblance of the man, possessing neither inferiority nor superiority, but being in all things like and equal to himself.

White (1973) affirms, “God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided a help-meet for him, a helper corresponding to him, one fitted to be his companion and who could be one with him in love and sympathy.”
Jones (2002) suggests that the order in creation is unique. By creating man first, then showing him his need of a helper, then creating woman to fill the helper's need, God demonstrated that marriage is an essential organizing principle in the human race.

Man (*ish* in Hebrew) finally had his woman (*ishah*), a true companion at last, taken from the very flesh and bone of man. Genesis 2:23 says that Adam responded by saying, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

Human beings were made for companionship. This is the first purpose indicated for marriage in the biblical record. There are other purposes. Here are some examples: a) Marriage was for sex (which is a dimension of companionship-body-soul unity—another of God’s good gifts in creation). This would be in the context of mutually shared feelings of affection and attachment, and much more. b) Children were also in God’s plan for marriage. Marriage is for the conception, care, nurture, and education of children, who are the miraculous embodiment of marital love (Gushee, 2004).

The creation of the woman was a way God showed His care for man, His concern for his comfort and compassion for his solitude, as well as His resolution to provide society for him. She was brought to man in order that she might relieve his solitude by intelligent companionship and to become his helpmate in the struggles of life, to develop his intellectual thinking, to culture his moral sympathies, to aid him in the daily needs of life, and to join him in worship of God (Excell, 2005). On the other hand, woman was brought to man that she might receive his love, protection, care, and that he might provide a home for her (Buzzard, 2012).
Kynes (2007) mentioned that the creation of the woman from the side of the man brings joy (Gen 2:23) and that the key verse concerning marriage in the Bible is verse 24: “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh” (compare to Matt 19:5; Eph 5:31; also 1 Cor 6:16). The institution of marriage is clearly described here, for Jesus Himself pointed to this as the divine design “from the beginning” (ap’ arché in Greek, Matt 19:4). Therefore, marriage is an institution designed by God and given to all humanity at creation. Before any other institution, there was marriage. Here in verse 24 there is a basic ordinance, which establishes the close binding unity of man and woman in the marriage bond. Marriage is an ordinance of God (Aalders, 1981).

The following verse (2:25) establishes this marriage relationship as a part of God’s good creation by mentioning that they, the man and the woman, were naked and yet without shame. Thus, marriage becomes the central and typical expression of our creation as male and female, especially fit for the most intimate of human personal relationships.

Gushee (2004) affirms, “the God-given creation purposes of marriage are both personal and social; they apply to particular human beings who ‘do’ marriage.” He then adds, “Marriage in this sense functions as a kind of mute witness to God the creator, who is responsible for the very institution of marriage and the powerful yearnings that draw men and women toward the altar, whether they know it or not.” He concluded by stating: Marriage is in essence a structure of creation. That means marriage comes from God. Since marriage precedes sin, its purpose must be understood as being wired into the very constitution of the human person and the created order. Humans are programmed to need what marriage offers. Even though the New Testament teaches celibate singleness is an option, marriage is established for the human ‘mating process’ wherever and whenever humans mate.
According to Jakes (2003), marriage is holy and divine in its very definition and nature. That is because God created the wedding and marriage to be a picture of how Jesus would pursue, commit to, and love His bride (the church) and how His bride should love and cherish Him in return. Marriage is a gift of God and is part of the original plan and purpose for mankind, dating, as we have seen, before the fall, and since companionship is at the core of marriage, friendship should be a vital part of that relationship.

The Meaning of Friendship in Scriptures

The Bible has a lot to say about friendship and its importance. It also mentions how friends should treat each other and what true friendship means. The word friend in Hebrew, as it appears in the Old Testament, is *chaver* for a male singular, *chaverah* for female singular, *chaverim* for male plural, and *chaverot* for female plural (Doniach, 1996).

In the New Testament, the most common term used is *filos-* friend, to be friendly to one, wish him well, a friend, an associate, he who associates familiarly with one, a companion (Trenchard, 2003).

The Bible passages below that specifically mention friendship or are related to the topic will be categorized into two areas: Friendship between humans and friendship with God. The purpose here is to develop a clearer understanding of its meaning and implications. The New Living Translation (NLT) version will be used in this subsection.

1. Characteristics of true friendship with other humans: a) It is sacrificial. Friendship is marked by sacrifice. Jesus demonstrated sacrificial love for friends. “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).
b) It has the intention of making the other person stronger. Friends help each other. “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Prov 27:17). “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work; if one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!” (Eccl 4:9-10). c) It includes loyalty. Loyalty is fundamental, for only loyal friendships can last when tested. “A friend loves at all times” (Prov 17:17). “Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is truly reliable?” (Prov 20:6). d) It can form a bond that can be even stronger than that with relatives. “A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Prov 18:24). e) It is developed with caution. The wrong friends can have a negative influence. “Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared. A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray” (Prov 22:24-25; Prov. 13:26). “He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harms” (Prov 13:20). f) It is reciprocal, in that friends give each other advice, counsel, and even rebuke when necessary. “The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense” (Prov 27:9). Sincere friends will therefore speak the truth in love, even when it hurts. “An open rebuke is better than hidden love! Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy” (Prov 27:5-6). g) It demands confidentiality, respect, and protection. For example, gossip separates best friends. “A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends” (Prov 16:28).

2. Characteristics of friendship with God: a. It begins with God. God is who invites us to befriend Him by taking the initiative of offering His friendship to us. b. It is
the greatest of all friendships. “Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (Jas 4:8). c. It develops based on human response. The Lord is a friend to the godly. “Such wicked people are detestable to the Lord, but he offers his friendship to the godly” (Prov 3:32). d. It gives birth to real joy. Believers who are friends with God have joy and God also experiences that joy. “Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!” (Phil 4:4). “Be glad; rejoice forever in my creation! And look! I will create Jerusalem as a place of happiness. Her people will be a source of joy” (Isa 65:18). e. It is exclusive. Friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God. “You adulterers! Don’t you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: if you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God” (Jas 4:4).

**Biblical Examples of Friendship**

The stories that are narrated in the Scriptures give friendship a deeper meaning than what dictionaries usually offer, or what might be interpreted by Western culture. The Bible portrays a very unique form of friendship. This section presents several examples that will appear in chronological order, except for the Songs of Songs, which is a singular case that particularly talks about friendship in marriage.

**Abraham**

The first person that is mentioned in the Bible being a friend of someone is Abraham and, interestingly, it deals with a friendship developed between him and God. Cross-references give light to the bilateral friendship that is expressed here. The Old Testament recognized Abraham’s friendship towards God. “O our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the
descendants of Abraham your friend?” (2 Chr 20:7). In Isaiah 41:8, God’s friendship towards Abraham is acknowledged: “But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend.” According to Barns (1875), “This was a most honorable appellation; but it is one which, in all cases, will result from true faith and obedience.” Clark (1832) commented:

As among friends everything is in common; so God took Abraham into intimate communion with Himself, and poured out upon him the choicest of his blessings: for as God can never be in want, because He possesses all things; so Abraham his friend could never be destitute, because God was his friend.

A close look at the story of Abraham leaves no doubt about the reality of that friendship. Genesis 18:1, 2 says that when the Lord appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, he was sitting at the tent door when three men stood by him; he ran to meet them, and bowed himself toward the ground. It must be noted that this is the fifth time in Abraham’s journey of faith that the Lord has appeared to him since he came into the land of Canaan. Friends look for each other; they want to spend time together. A much closer look at this part of the story points to the fact that Abraham had no trouble identifying his Friend (Clark, 1832).

The New Testament also gives witness to this friendship. James 2:23 affirm:

“And the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,’ and he was called God’s friend.”

God and Moses

A very profound description of what friendship is or what it is made up of can be portrayed in the divine-human friendship between God and Moses. Lapsley (2004) examined four characteristics that are unique in their relationship: habit, reciprocity, self-assertion, and emotion (assuming intimacy as constitutive of all of them).
He used Exodus 33:11 as the core text in exploring that relationship. He explained that verses 7-11 described not a one-time event, but the repeated, habitual actions of Moses and God. Verse 11 serves as a kind of summary: “Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.” Moses had these face-to-face meetings routinely. Like human friendship, divine friendship is not about a once-in-a-lifetime encounter, or even about casual or occasional meetings. Rather, it entails a commitment to regular encounters that form habitual practice.

The phrase “as one speaks to a friend” implies that the friend will respond in turn; mutuality is assumed in the expression itself. Further evidence beyond grammar is at hand, however. A brief review of the way Moses and God interacted throughout Exodus to this point vividly and intensely attests to the reciprocal nature of their relationship.

Closely related to reciprocity, self-assertion is another feature of divine friendship. As we recall, in his first encounter with God at the burning bush, Moses hid his face, the first and the last time he evidenced any timid tendencies. Moses’ candid self-assertion is evident in most of his interactions with God, but it is especially characteristic of his conversation with God after the golden calf incident. Their prior experience of friendship is a firm foundation on which Moses can assert himself; he is not scared by the inherent inequities of being friends with God. Moses is then found asking God to reconsider the decision not to accompany the people on their journey. Moses does not hesitate to offer his own opinions, “Consider too that this nation is your people,” or assert himself with God whenever the welfare of the people is at stake. Davis (2001) writes, “It must be for his frankness that Moses is so beloved of God.” Moses’ self-assertion is closely related to the reciprocity discussed above. This divine-human friendship is
characterized by an honest exchange of views when everything depends on such self-assertion and mutuality.

Finally, the friendship between them was also an emotional one. We see this, in the way Moses expresses a full palette of emotions to God. Lapsley (2004) suggested that, in his plea for a revelation of the divine glory in Exodus 33:12-23, Moses discloses his passionate desire to know God in an “emotional tone of the highest intensity.” But back in his first conversation with God, Moses repeatedly expresses his self-deprecation, fear, and general anxiety, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?” “But suppose they do not believe me” (3:11; 4:1). Now not frightened at all, Moses continues to tell God what he feels, without fancy words. When the Israelites find themselves, even more oppressed, on account of Moses’ acts to “liberate” them, Moses complains to God and says, “Oh Lord, why have you mistreated this people? Why did you ever send me? Since I first came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has mistreated this people, and you have done nothing at all to deliver your people” (5:22-23). The anger, or perhaps even rage, in this complaint recalls the language of lament psalms, even though Moses’ anger is expressed utterly without apology or qualification insofar as there is no movement from or toward praise. On the other end of the spectrum, Moses’ deep love of God is reflected not only in his carrying out of the divine imperatives, but also in his desire to know God.

In the passage immediately following the one discussed above, Moses makes a rather imperious demand, “Show me your glory” (33:18). Davis (2001) argued persuasively that this stunning request comes not from “Moses the religious-political leader of Israel, but from Moses the mystic, the ardent lover of God.” Moses is not
fundamentally or only motivated by duty, but by love and this is a crucial difference between him and the people he leads.

So, as has been noted, the divine friendship between Moses and God embraces a wide array of emotions, everything from rage to love, and none is seen as inappropriate to, or testing the limits of that friendship. Moses faithfully represents God to the people; his actions are performed less out of duty than as an expression of love, and of the peculiar variety of friendship that is offered by God. The variety and depth of Moses’ “negative” emotions in no way diminish his allegiance, or indeed love for God. On the contrary, the full range of emotions is part of this friendship with God, and in a way that should not be underestimated, since these emotions make that friendship possible.

A close look at God’s position shows that it is equally complex. While God demonstrates steadfast love in delivering the Israelites (hesed in Hebrew; Exod 15:13; 20:6; 34:6-7; Deut 7:7-9), He also becomes enraged with the people at fairly regular intervals, and this rage can even extend to Moses.

Now, there is a very intriguing episode in Exodus 4:24-26, in which God tries to kill Moses. This episode is strange enough to have prompted an unusual number of critical efforts to understand it, yet the meaning of the story itself remains enigmatic. Why is God trying to kill Moses? In the context of what has transpired in chapters 3 and 4, it is not entirely absurd to suggest that God wants to kill Moses since he is failing as a potential leader of the people. In other words, God may be expressing a suppressed rage provoked by Moses’ endless self-deprecation at the burning bush immediately preceding the attempted killing.
After Moses’ fifth attempt to get out of the job: “O my LORD, please send someone else” (Exod 4:13) “the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses” (v. 14). Ten verses later, “The LORD met [Moses] and tried to kill him” (v. 24). Attempted murder is not part of the typical prophetic calling, but this is the first time in the biblical narrative that the Lord has encountered such extreme resistance in one called to serve. Abraham, for example, was considerably more compliant. After this experience with Moses, God seems to have developed a divine resignation toward resistance as a normal prophetic reaction. So God, too, displays the widest possible array of honest emotional expression, all of which are rooted in an abiding mutual love.

Ruth and Naomi

One of the most extraordinary biblical examples of friendship is that of Ruth and Naomi. Ruth is a shortened version of the Hebrew term “retut,’ which means lovely friend, and Naomi means pleasant” (Doniach & Kahane, 1996). The story is about friendship, love, and sacrifice. Ruth’s love for her mother-in-law causes her to make a great sacrifice. Ruth 1:1-5 mentions that Naomi had a husband and two sons. It would appear on the surface that she had a pretty good life. But, while living in the foreign country of Moab, her husband died. Later, her two sons, who had married locally, also died. Chapter 1:6-15 goes on to comment that Naomi decides to return to her homeland and insists that her daughters-in-laws stay with their nationals. Orpah goes back to her people, but Ruth clings to Naomi.

In this story, true friendship is biblically described as something mutual. Tull (2003) wrote, “The extent to which a friendship grows into mutuality depends much upon the stuff of which each friend is made.” He adds that, when Ruth insists on traveling to
Bethlehem with her mother-in-law, nothing is said about the contents of their prior relationship; although we can probably assume Ruth has good reason for her devotion. “She sees her mother-in-law through a difficult passage, until Naomi, hopeful once again, finds a way to reciprocate. Each benefits from the friendship, receiving from the other what they cannot do for themselves.”

A very important element is that Naomi and Ruth became more than relatives; they became friends and the basis of that friendship was Naomi’s faith, which drew Ruth to her. Later, Ruth’s faith drew Boaz to her. In a biblical sense, true friends point the way to God.

Linafelt (1999) defined Ruth’s decision in terms of solidarity and commitment. A commitment where Ruth says: “If anything but death separate us” meaning, even death is not good the only reality strong enough for Ruth. The Seventh-day Adventist Commentary declared that this commitment so profound that she even compromises herself by using the holy name of Jehovah in an oath. She actually asks God to punish her if she allows anything else but death to separate her from Naomi. Knowledge of the true God can unite humans in binds that can be deeper than those with raze of family (Nichol, 1953b).

Jonathan and David

Another descriptive story about friendship is the one on Jonathan and David. Tull (2004) expressed that this story “stands out as the Bible’s lengthiest and most complex narrative reflection on friendship.” He points out, “Far from idealizing the mutuality of their devotion, however, this story invites readers to ponder the human freedom to accept, reject, exploit, or reciprocate the gift of a friend’s loyalty.” One of the most outstanding details that he mentioned is:
Jonathan’s gift of friendship was a gift of pure grace, free to be reciprocated or squandered. The fact that Jonathan, years after his own death, could inspire a degree of loyalty that tempered David’s political drives even somewhat testifies powerfully to the memory of kindness received. David’s story is exceedingly rich with insight into human relationships. Among other things, it cautions readers to recognize and reciprocate the gifts of friendship freely offered.

White (2005) commented that Jonathan knew that by birth, he was heir to the throne, but he also knew that, by divine decree, David was the chosen one. In spite of that, he was to his rival the most tender and faithful of friends, shielding David’s life at the peril of his own. Jonathan is without a doubt a witness to the existence and the power of unselfish love.

White (2005) also declared that one of the most important moments of that friendship was after Saul had slaughtered the priests of the Lord and David received the news. Hunted by the king, David and his men went to the wilderness of Ziph. There he received an unexpected visit from Jonathan, who had found his place of refuge. They shared their varied experiences, and Jonathan then strengthened the heart of David, saying, “Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth.” With these words, the hunted fugitive was greatly encouraged. Jonathan is a powerful example of what true friendship is all about.

Jesus Christ

Friendship was part of the life of Jesus. Mansour and George (2012, p.13) emphasized this by describing how Jesus taught the value of ultimate sacrifice in terms of friendship (John 15:13). He wept over the death of his dear friend Lazarus (John 11:35). He revealed his innermost self to his apostles in order to transform them from servants into friends (John 15:15). He brought Peter, James, and John closer to Himself than the
others (Matt 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28); and He was closest of all to the "beloved disciple," who reclined on His chest at the Last Supper (John 13:23).

The example of Jesus, especially the way it is described in the Gospel of John, is unique. Even though the title “friend” is never used to describe Jesus in the fourth gospel, O’Day (2004) states, “Jesus has been the incarnation of friendship without the explicit appellation.”

When Jesus spoke to His disciples and expressed His expectations for their future lives, Jesus makes a clear connection between His life of love and the conduct of friends. Notice that He calls the disciples His “friends” (philos in Greek), if they obey His commandment to love one another as Jesus has loved them (John 15:12-14), and to lay down their lives for their friends (v. 13). Jesus’ gift of His life for others embodies friendship’s highest attribute and defines the meaning and extent of love. Therefore, the title “friend” becomes something into which Jesus invites His disciples to grow. The name “friend,” and with it the relationship of friendship, is a gift from Jesus to them, just as His life is a gift to them. The disciples begin with the explicit appellation, “friend,” and the challenge for them is to represent and embody friendship as Jesus has done. The disciples know how Jesus has been a friend, and they are called to see what kind of friends they can become. Jesus’ friendship is the model of friendship for the disciples, and it makes any subsequent acts of friendship by them possible because the disciples themselves are already the recipients of Jesus’ acts of friendship (O’Day, 2004).

In this passage, Jesus commanded his disciples to “love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12) and elucidated the meaning and implications of this commandment when He added:
No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I do not call you slaves any longer, because the slave does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. (John 15:13-15)

According to Fitzgerald (2007), these statements point to two ideas commonly associated with friendship. The first is that a friend is someone who cares so much for you that she or he is willing to die in your place. In this respect, Jesus' death is a death for His friends. The second is that a friend is someone who is so trustworthy that you may confidently disclose to that individual your most circumspect secrets. In the standard Greco-Roman understanding of friendship, you reveal things about yourself if the friendship is in place, in other words revaluation presupposes friendship. Even today in a normal context no one discloses secrets or sensitive information to casual acquaintances. A confidant is someone who has earned one's confidence, and it is only to trustworthy individuals that full disclosure is made. But in this discourse there is an important shift in the relationship of friendship to full disclosure. The standard logic for disclosure would have been based on the fact that they had spent three year together and Jesus had learned to trust his disciples which was not the case with them, in part because the disciples will immediately demonstrate that they are utterly untrustworthy, with Peter denying Him (John 18:15-18, 25-27) and the others abandoning him (John 16:32). Fitzgerald (2007) concluded:

Instead, He reverses the standard logic: "I have called you friends because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father" (John 15:15). Revelation here creates friendship rather than presupposes it. Jesus discloses everything to the disciples in spite of the fact that they are unreliable. Stated theologically, it is grace (John 1:17) rather than demonstrated merit and reliability on the disciples' part that creates friendship between Jesus and his disciples. By treating his followers as friends, Jesus makes them precisely that. The disciples' continuing friendship with Jesus depends on their willingness to follow His instructions (John
15:14), just as Jesus himself has kept the Father's commandments and thus has abided in his love. (John 15:10)

In John 15:16, the friendship that exists between Jesus and the disciples is defined in a way that differentiates it from any such relationship in the Greek or modern sense. Bultmann (1971) stated that in the Greek or modern sense friendship is a reciprocal relationship, in which each partner stands fundamentally on the same footing as the other, and in which each seeks the friendship of the other. In the friendship between Jesus and His own, which certainly is reciprocal, there is no equality though, because if they are Jesus’ friends that is not because they had sought His friendship, nor does Jesus calls Himself their friend, but only them His friends. Jesus is pointing to the fact that, they are incapable of doing anything without Him; they could not even seek His friendship on the basis of their own importance. Bultmann (1971) concluded that only the Revelation (referring by the context to Jesus revealing Himself to humans and establishing a personal relationship) could free the human being and make him capable of becoming a friend (*philos*).

**The Song of Songs**

The Song of Songs contains what could be the most solid case study in the Bible of friendship in a marriage relationship. While it is not the point of this section to describe who the characters are in this poetic story, there are those who purport that it portrays the marriage of King Solomon with the Shulammite (Davidson, 1989).

The manner in which the author of the Song of Songs uses the term love and its relation to friendship should be noted. Bell (2005) mentions that there are at least three different Hebrew words for our English word “love” in the Song of Solomon. The first word is *Raya* and can be translated literally as “friend” or “companion.” Song of Solomon
4:7 says, “You’re beautiful from head to toe, my dear raya, beautiful beyond compare, absolutely flawless.” The second Hebrew word for love in Song of Solomon is Ahava and is used in a sense of deep affection. Song of Solomon 8:7 says, “Many waters cannot quench ahava; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for ahava, it would be utterly scorned.” He adds that Ahava is a love that leads to commitment and leads the couple to make a decision to join their life to one another. The third Hebrew word for love is dod, translated in English literally means to “carouse,” to “rock,” or to “fondle.” and deals specifically with the physical, sexual, erotic element to a relationship. Song of Solomon 1:2 says, “May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for your dod is better than wine.” Bell (2005) adds that these are three flames that need to burn together. A relationship that only expresses itself physically, through sex, without deep friendship and commitment is not complete. A relationship that has a commitment, but has lost the friendship and sexual passion is not complete either. Bell (2005) concluded: “We were created by God to have friendship, commitment and physical passion bound up together in Love! When we separate the flames, it can never really satisfy.”

On the other hand, this is the only book in the Bible where a married couple directly and explicitly call each other friends. The husband calls the Shulammite “my friend” and uses the feminine singular Hebrew noun with the personal pronoun a total of nine times. While the most accurate rendition is “my friend,” Mitchel (2003) stated that many interpreters and translations prefer “my beloved,” which does have merit, since it connotes a deep and a passionate relationship of love. This term apparently connotes affection and heartfelt companionship. The first instance where she is called “my friend”
seems to allude to her adornment for the wedding ceremony in chapter 1:9, 10: “To a mare among the chariots of Pharaoh I liken you, *my friend*. Comely are your cheeks with bangles, your neck with necklaces”.

Unlike “lover,” which is only used to refer to Solomon or the male protagonist, the term “friend” in the Song is applicable to both spouses, but not with equal frequency. She applies the corresponding masculine form to him just once. She is speaking of his bodily features (5:10-15) to the daughters of Jerusalem as the reason of her adjuration of them (5:8, 9). She concludes this description by calling him both “my lover” and “my friend.” According to Mitchell (2003), the order of those terms, with “my lover” immediately preceding “my friend,” may suggest that his love for her is the primary or initial cause of the friendship and that this fact also enables her to call him “my friend.” In other words, her expression of that friendship is an acceptance of and a response to his love for her.

There is also one passage in which the chorus (might be a reference to the daughters of Jerusalem) make mention of both Solomon and the Shulammite together as friends. The chorus seems to encourage these two friends to express their mutual love toward each other through feasting as a double meaning: “Eat, friends! Drink and be drunk with love” (5:1).

Considering the culture of that time and other social aspects, it can also be concluded that when Solomon calls his bride and wife “friend” in such a liberal way, it was totally unconventional, even countercultural, because it cuts across social barriers in its expression of love. Yes, this is a very unique case, but a very revealing case of
friendship in marriage. It very well could be considered a model for all marriages in all times (Mitchell, 2003).

**Personal Reflection**

The Bible establishes a very strong theology on friendship and the researcher concludes that at creation God introduced friendship as a fundamental aspect of marriage, as was noted at the beginning of this chapter. Eastern culture in Old Testament times gave hierarchy to other aspects as a basis for marriage, for example, financial security, and having descendants. Some cultures do so even today. Yet God’s plan is that companionship be at the core of marriage. Western culture seems to have gone back in time and has emphasized the importance of love and friendship as basic for establishing and maintaining a marriage. While the many important aspects of marriage should not be sacrificed, friendship must be a critical aspect of the very fabric of marriage as intended at creation.

The biblical examples of friendship that were described in this chapter are key in order to understand what friendship is and what principles are involved. In summary a key ingredient in health relationships in general and marriage in particular is the reciprocal experience of being friends.

1. Friends look for each other; they want to spend time together, just like God and Abraham. Married couples could identify so well with each other that people around them could say “this couple are best friends,” which, of course, would be an honorable appellation.

2. Friends complement each other and help each other to grow as individuals. In the case of Ruth and Naomi, each benefited from the friendship, receiving from the
other what they could not do for themselves. Marriages are similar, in that couples complement each other and help each other to grow.

3. In the case of Moses and God, the four characteristics that made up their unique relationship (habit, reciprocity, self-assertion, and emotion) are basic for marriage. Marriages can benefit from developing the habit of meeting together to discuss important issues or just to communicate. Sharing should be reciprocal. Self-assertion plays an important role if they can respect each other. Then, of course, being totally honest with their emotions is a priority. All of this is possible when mutual love is the basis of the relationship.

4. Unselfish love and the giving of friendship as a gift of grace are just a few lessons that can be derived from Jonathan. In marriage, this type of self-denial is truly a gift from God.

5. Jesus is the premier example of a friendship, in that He was willing to give His life for others. Jesus invites His disciples to follow His example of friendship and makes it clear that the development of true friendship is something that can only be possible when a friendship has been established with Him. Here is the spiritual foundation for friendship in marriage. Jesus must be at the center of both husband and wife’s life in order to develop what can be called a biblical friendship.

6. Song of Songs is an invitation to pursue true friendship within marriage and express that friendship in a transparent manner. It must be intentional, planned, and yet spontaneous.
CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first is an overview of what marriage enrichment programs are and their effectiveness. The second reviews literature regarding different types of friendships and their characteristics. Section three deals with literature that specifically addresses the topic of friendship in marriage. The final section is a description and analysis of two programs; one secular (not faith-based), and one created for churches, both with an intentional purpose of enhancing friendship in marriage.

Marriage Enrichment Programs

As part of this project, a marriage enrichment program was developed and given to participating couples at a marriage enrichment, spiritual retreat weekend seminar. A support group for the couples is established for the next two months. Its purpose is to help the couples practice the principles and techniques shared in the retreat in a supervised environment. Research on the effectiveness of marriage enrichment programs is useful to assess whether efforts in this direction are worthwhile.

Barber (1979) studied the possibility of marriage enrichment being achieved as a result of a biblically based course taught in the church. The course was based on the book of Genesis. A total of 23 people participated in the course from beginning to end. A
control group was used to measure the results. The experiment covered 13 weeks. Both experimental and control groups were from the same church. The participants were from middle-income families and ranged in age from the late 30s to 50s. Each participant from both control and experimental groups answered a questionnaire. Those in the experimental group completed additional testing designed to evaluate the effect on their marriages based on the teaching they had received. The tests were subjected to both a one-way and a two-way analysis of variance, first by group and then by sex. Statistical analysis found significant differences between the experimental and control groups, and suggested areas for which additional courses could be useful.

A more recent study (Tobias, 2010) was done with the purpose of exploring the quality of the relationship of certain married couples in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Trinidad and observing the impact that a marriage seminar might have on those families.

The research was conducted as follows: A pre-test was administered to the married couples through a questionnaire that was developed to determine: (a) the quality of their relationship; (b) the strength of their communication; (c) the management of conflicts; (d) how they resolve issues; and (e) the impact of in-laws. The questionnaires were collected and the data analyzed.

A seminar to strengthen the marital relationship was then developed, based on the evaluation of the questionnaires. The seminar covered the five main topics in the questionnaire.

After about four months, the questionnaire was again administered to the participants who attended all of the sessions. The results suggested a significant
improvement in the quality of the participants’ relationship in the areas covered by the
test. A longitudinal study might provide more solid data regarding the long-term impact
of a seminar like this.

Balswick and Balswick (2003) evaluated several marriage enrichment programs
for their quality and research basis on: material presented, adequacy of the leader’s guide,
processing of exercises, user friendliness for teaching and application, view of gender
roles, and degree to which the program is integrated into a biblical/theological
perspective. Balswick and Balswick considered the relative strengths and limitations of
available programs and concluded that different programs are useful at different times in
a couple’s life and that it is important to offer a variety of enrichment programs and
formats to build stronger marriages.

For the evaluation process, the programs were divided into three categories: First,
mariage enrichment workshop formats that include programmed materials for larger
audiences and a focused time period (weekend retreat setting). These materials include
videotape presentations, demonstration of skills, and couple participation exercises.
Second, the usage of small group books and workbooks written for couple’s reflection,
assessment, and assignments in a small group setting. The third category dealt with
materials specifically written for couples to use in the privacy of their home. They
included marriage enrichment programs particularly designed to assist the couple through
practical assessment and skill development. It included some marriage books, though not
explicitly designed for workshop or group formats, but which could easily be adapted for
a married couples’ Sunday school class, or small groups. In this case, a leader would
direct the couples to study a book chapter each week and lead a discussion of the
materials. The couple exercises and assessments could either be done at home or during a
specified time at the weekly meeting (Balswick & Balswick, 2003).

The researchers watched more than 60 hours of video and reviewed over 2,000
pages of books and instruction manuals. Initially, they were only going to evaluate
marital enrichment programs that had a Christian orientation. However, they included
several well-known secular programs, believing these materials could be useful in the
hands of a knowledgeable leader who can bring biblical/theological content to enhance
these materials. They identified materials as Christian or secular in terms of the content
and the author’s orientation.

According to Balswick and Balswick (2003):

1. There is much variation in the marriage enrichment programs that were reviewed.

2. Different delivery styles may be needed to best reach alternative types of marriage
   situations.

3. An advantage of the weekend “marathon” retreat is the concentrated time that
   allows for subsequent sessions to build upon previous ones, resulting in an
   intensity of focus. The marathon retreat may result in a “mountain top”
   experience however and have less long-term benefit than a series of sessions in
   which couples have time to practice and focus on a weekly basis.

4. The benefits of marriage enrichment programs do appear to diminish over time
   and that is where small group interaction over a longer time frame would be
   helpful.

5. The “marathon” weekend retreat could be followed by “booster programs” so
   skill building can continue to take place.
6. There is some evidence that the programs seem to be more effective when they are experiential and involve behavioral rehearsal processes.

7. Some couples do benefit from learning content about marriage through lecture type presentations, especially those who would be reluctant to attend a program that requires participation.

8. Skill building makes content applicable to real-life situations.

9. The broader literature on effective education and learning methods indicates that marriage enrichment programs will be most effective when participants are given a chance to process and practice the content.

10. The common denominator of all these programs is the view that strength-based curriculum and skill development will increase a couple’s satisfaction with their marriage relationship and working on the major areas of stress and conflict in marriage will alleviate a couple’s dissatisfaction. Therefore, learning good communication and conflict resolution is a primary focus. While there is variation in the specific content in the program curriculum, typical problems addressed are children, sex, money, in-laws, religion, roles, and personality differences.

11. Intimacy and connection through religious practices, along with the husband’s emotional investment in these events, were important indicators of marital satisfaction. Incorporating religious meaning through rituals and ceremonies can be a very significant part of a marriage enrichment program. Having a corporate time of worship, prayer, a communion service, and a renewal of vows during marriage retreats can deepen the spiritual connection and marital satisfaction.

12. As Christian researchers, they concluded by stating that, if God is the author of all
knowledge, then it seems that what is most needed is the development of marital enrichment programs that are based on an integration of the best empirical studies on marriage, social science literature, outcome research on program effectiveness, and a comprehensive use of biblical truth as a foundation for marriage.

Burchard (2003) and his colleagues did an empirical research on two marriage enrichment programs: Hope-Focused and Forgiveness and Reconciliation through Experiencing Empathy (FREE). Both programs were shown to have effective skills training strategies in improving overall quality of life and they increased the couples’ well being, therefore, were very helpful in the prevention of many of the problems that lead to marital distress.

These programs addressed: intimacy, positive and negative behaviors, communication, conflict resolution, and the reality of human fallibility as life issues that research has found very important to include in marriage enrichment programs in order to promote marriage stability. This information can be very helpful to churches and counseling centers invested in helping marriages succeed. Another observation was that the two programs required a minimal amount of time and involved the teaching of very simple principles. Biblically relevant, and empirical, research-based concepts and practices are important in developing effective programs.

When a spiritual aspect is integrated into a marriage enrichment program through prayer and the use of the Bible, transformation can be expected. White (2002) wrote:

When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the joy of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul
surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see, creates a new being in the image of God. (pp. 172, 173)

It can be concluded that research supports the fact that enrichment programs can be beneficial if carefully developed with adequate goals, adequate content, good process, and other carefully planned features. They may be used as a preventive measure and could be an excellent resource to promote healthier, happier, and more stable marriages.

**Friendship**

Reviewing the literature about the characteristics of friendship may be helpful towards an understanding of its importance in everyday life. Summers (2009) highlights some characteristics of friendship from the classical era (especially from his analysis of the writings of Augustine and Aquinas):

1. Friendship is built on mutual attraction and requires mutual trust and respect. Most basically, a friend is someone that likes you.

2. Friendship is capable of making sacrifices for the other - it is a relationship of great depth.

3. Friendship is elective - it does not derive from necessity, but from free choice and is, thus, the freest of all relationships.

4. Friendship's primary focus is willing good for the other - it is not self-serving.

5. Equality is important to friendship, as it allows the essential component of reciprocity to be fully expressed.

6. Society is enhanced by friendship, as it forms a framework that indirectly benefits others apart from the friends - it engenders community.

7. The friend is "another self," allowing genuine self-discovery and opening up the possibility for communion at the deepest level.
8. Friendship is inherently good, it is virtuous in modeling the highest that humanity can aspire to. In other words, friendship is part of living the best possible life.

It can be observed that friendship is a larger category than marriage, because people can be friends and have friends long before they are in a position to marry, and indeed whether or not they ever marry (Peterson & Peterson, 2011).

As humans, we are social creatures that interact and develop relationships with others. Jaques (2001) mentions that people in our lives can be divided into three groups. First, acquaintances, these are just people whom we know or have met. Secondly, friends are closer, they are people who care for one another and spend time together. They have similar interests and viewpoints. Thirdly, there are intimate friends. They have all the characteristics of friends, but they also share concerns and personal struggles. He goes on to mention that intimate friends understand each other and experience a level of acceptance and loyalty. They are accountable to one other and it includes an empathy and love that is not present in mere friendship. In marriage, it includes sexuality, but it should not be assumed that all intimacy involves sex.

Horst (1999) made different categorizations of these relationships.

- Acquaintance friends. These are people we know and see often.
- Close friends. These we share our hearts with.
- "Buddy" friends. These are friends we do things with, but we never really talk about the important things in our lives with them.
- Mentor friends. One person mentors or trains the other in some area or role in life.
- Best friends - one step beyond close friendship. These are the people we want to call when something exciting or devastating happens in our lives. They are the
friends we share the deepest desires of our hearts with. We trust them enough to be ourselves with them, knowing that they will still love us and stick by us, no matter what.

Driscol and Driscoll (2012) suggest that the word friend is too often used for relationships that are not friendships, including online “friends” on social networking websites. This word needs to be used carefully. Even though we are to be friendly to everybody, we can only be friends with a few.

For this project, when reference is made to friendship in marriage, it is addressing intimate friendship or best friends.

**Friendship in Marriage**

This research does not pretend to put friendship as the only or foremost characteristic for a successful marriage, but to underline its importance and significance as part of the ingredients that help towards a satisfying marriage. I mention this because an incorrect emphasis can take this in another direction, which is not intended.

For example, according to Peterson and Peterson (2011), “most modern Americans including most Christians see marriage, love and friendship as things that ought properly to go together.” A good marriage is seen as a loving marriage, in which spouses are attached to one another as friends. “They like each other, they have fun together, they know each other well, they take pleasure in one another's company.” If there is no friendship, it cannot be a good marriage, in this view. Peterson and Peterson (2011) explain that various historians and sociologist have pointed out that these expectations could be directly related to the equally heightened instability of marriage. The reasoning behind this is that if a married couple aspires to be more than just

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economic partners and the other parent to the children, but also best friends this allows more opportunities for dissatisfaction and unhappiness if these expectations are not met.

They believe that there are Christians who contribute to this destabilizing dynamic by emphasizing the “all-encompassing bliss,” which basically means to laud marriage as the most intimate relationship anyone will ever have, or when young people are counseled first and foremost to "marry your best friend." Husbands and wives might be encouraged to guard the intimacy and privacy of their relationship by looking to each other alone for all fulfillment and happiness. The results of such misguided thinking and behavior are often disappointment and disillusionment with the marriage. Maybe a little more realism concerning the purposes and possibilities of marriage might go a long way toward helping husbands and wives build stable and satisfying relationships with one another.

Peterson and Peterson conclude that in spite of the above, there is a lot to be said for the ideal of friendship within marriage. They raise the question: Who would not prefer to be friends with his or her life partner? Then they suggest that perhaps being more intentional about building friendship both before and within marriage can contribute to the effort of building stable and satisfying marriages.

Friendship in marriage, or giving importance to being friends as spouses, is a topic that has been researched. Brouwer (2001), for example, quotes one of the first serious studied done in 1985, where more than 300 couples that described their marriages as happy and successful participated. Researchers Janet and Robert Lauer asked the couples to rank 39 statements in the order of their importance. The statements covered many aspects of the marriage relationship, from sex and money to goals in life and
attitudes about marriage in general. Men and women responded separately with no knowledge of their partner’s choices. Couples who believed they are in happy marriages in general agree about what makes them happy. In fact, the ranking of the first seven statements about marriage was exactly the same for both men and women. It should be noticed that being friends was ranked first.

1. My spouse is my best friend.
2. I like my spouse as a person.
3. Marriage is a long-term commitment.
4. Marriage is sacred.
5. We agree on the same aims and goals.
6. My spouse has grown more interesting.
7. I want the relationship to succeed.

As early as the decade of the 1970s, many authors, especially Christian authors, made reference to friendship and the importance of friendship in marriage. Wright (1976) wrote,

If you would respond to your spouse as a fellow Christian first, putting into practice the scriptural teaching for this kind of relationship, and then add to it the element of married love, what would that relationship be like?...One of the greatest disasters to hit marriage is thinking of the spouse as a lover and sexual partner without seeing him or her as potentially the greatest friend one could ever have. Marriage is a form of friendship—it is a gift from God. (pp. 16, 17).

Achtemeier (1976), on the other hand, expressed his thoughts as follows:

It has often been said that in order to be true lovers, married persons first of all need to be friends, and that is true. Any two people who intend to live with each other for the rest of their lives had better like each other and enjoy being together. Otherwise they are going to separate rather quickly after the honeymoon is over, or live together as strangers. Yet, even when we know another person as a friend, as well as a sweetheart before marriage, even when we have shared in depth during our courting, communication is a lifelong task which is never done at any period in the marital relation. People change and grow and mature, and it is constantly necessary to get to know the new persons that we become every day of our lives. (p. 135)
Later, in the 80s, we find more literature with this emphasis. For example, Terrien (1985) suggests marriage is about two people who go through the process of growth and change when they begin to realize more and more the personal and relational potential inherent in their relationship. Through the affectionate ties or bonds established within the marital relationship, the couple begins to generate what he calls a “capacity for intimacy and friendship” that releases their potential and inspires them toward psychological maturity and emotional and spiritual health.

Literature seems to get deeper into the concept of friendship as an important ingredient for a successful marriage in the 90s, even among Adventist family specialists and writers. Flowers and Flowers (1992) for example, who gave considerable attention to the Song of Songs, mention that friendship love is one of the aspects of love presented in the poem, including romantic love and committed/covenant love. They wrote: “Solomon and the Shulammite have a relationship of genuine friendship. She calls him her friend and his affectionate name for her, ‘my love,’ used over and over, means ‘my friend’.”

In the first chapter of *10 Great Dates to Revitalize Your Marriage*, in the section on “Commit to Grow Together,” among the paragraphs defining what that means is this one:

It means being each other’s best friend—being that one person the other can always count on. What are you doing to adapt to your mate? Do you share common interests? While you benefit from your differences, you also benefit from shared activities. As you go through your ten dates, you will have opportunities to talk about things you would like to do together. In a growing, healthy marriage, partners are friends and continually seek to understand, adapt, and grow together. (Arp, 1997, p. 26).
In more recent years, the literature has become a little more prolific in regard to
this topic. Flowers and Flowers (2005) again wrote on married friendship expressed in
the Song of Songs.

*Friendships are important.* In the Song, the man and woman are first of all friends.
She calls him ‘my friend’ (Song 5:16) and his term ‘my love’ literally means ‘my
dear friend’ (Song 1:9, 15; 2:2, 10, 13, etc.). They spend time together, enjoying one
another’s minds and offering one another sincere compliments and gestures of love.
They share openly their fears and concerns and treat each other with mutual respect.
Rather than using manipulation or force, they communicate their needs and desires
openly to one another, inviting the other to respond. Good friendship is like that.
There is close connectedness, even as each person values and protects the other’s
freedom to choose and to be himself or herself. (p. 74)

An article entitled “Searching for Love and Intimacy in Marriage,” written by
Craig, in the *General Conference of SDA Family Ministries resource*, (cited in Flowers
& Flowers, 2007) states:

Another important quality for intimate couples is the need to be emotionally available
to each other, willing to mutually share hurts and joys. Being available means being
open to hearing and listening to your partner’s pain; to empathizing with them. It
means being committed to the relationship and willing to spend time building and
supporting a partnership that works and that is based on friendship and
companionship. (p. 90)

Writers have even become more creative as they present the issues that deal with
friendship in marriage. For example, Christian writer Yoder (2007) mentions an
experience he had: “I remember once hearing from a successfully married couple who,
when asked, ‘When did your friendship end and your love begin?’ replied, ‘Ah, but that
is our secret. Our friendship never ended.’” He goes on to say that it is not primarily the
romantic aspect of marriage that gives life to it, but an enduring sense of companionship
and closeness. In his book he develops what he calls a Relationship Pyramid (see Figure
1).
At the base of the pyramid he places daily breads and cereals; which have to do with unconditional commitment, acceptance, respect, and empathy. Other aspects of the marriage are also depicted through this relationship pyramid.

![Relationship pyramid diagram]

**Figure 1.** Relationship pyramid.

As can be observed, the romantic aspect of marriage is like the sweets at the peak of the pyramid, but at its base there is a need for lots of daily bread of God’s great unconditional love. In the middle are the nourishing entrees in the form of regular experiences of partnership, companionship, and friendship, and, according to Yoder (2007), the greatest of these is friendship.
Driscoll and Driscoll (2012) have also come up with a creative way of explaining friendship in marriage.

Marriage often starts out as a journey between friends. It gets off course as friends become business partners trying to pay the bills, parents trying to raise the kids, caregivers trying to tend to aging parents, cab drivers trying to shuttle family members to various events, event planners trying to pull off everything from holidays to birthday parties, and lovers trying to keep the flames of passion hot. Perhaps the key is to always be working on the friendship, because in the end the rest of marriage seems to come together more easily and happily when you are working with your friend. (p. 27)

Below is the author’s summary of Driscoll and Driscoll’s (2012) acronym for what it means to be married F-R-I-E-N-D-S:

**F** = **Fruitful**: Friendship in marriage exists to glorify God and serve His kingdom.

**R** = **Reciprocal**: It only takes one spouse to be friendly, but both spouses to be friends.

**I** = **Intimate**: Since, in general women and men experience non-sexual intimacy differently; couples must be willing to compromise. She engages in what he likes and vice versa.

**E** = **Enjoyable**: Friendship with an enjoyable spouse can make a world of a difference.

**N** = **Needed**: We need God as a friend, but we also need for human friendships. God created that need at creation.

**D** = **Devoted**: Friends are dependable through the varying seasons of life, (Eccl 3:4), (Phil 2:3-4; Rom 12:15).

**S** = **Sanctifying**: In marriage both the man and the woman need to accept that each is married to, a weak, failed, flawed sinner who needs loving help and patient endurance (1 Pet 4:8).

Peterson and Peterson (2011) state that there are obstacles to friendship in marriage: frantic activity, hard time making time for one another, television, electronic modes of communication, porn, etc. Therefore, in order to establish connections, he
recommends things like: spending time together, conversation, friendship talk, sharing feelings on what you want, pleasing and serving your partner, and noticing the things your partner does to please and serve you as well as expressing their appreciation for one another.

Considering what has been mentioned, it can be said that friendship requires a great effort and time must be invested in it in order for it to be and to grow (Horst, 1999).

Gottman and Silver (1999) mention that "at the heart of his program there is a simple truth and that is that happy marriages are based on a deep friendship, meaning mutual respect for and enjoyment of each other’s company." As mentioned earlier in this chapter, these couples tend to know each other intimately. “They have an abiding regard for each other and express this fondness not just in big ways but in little ways day in and day out.” This friendship “fuels the flames of romance because it offers the best protection against feeling adversarial towards your spouse.” They turn towards each other, which enables them to experience what is technically called “positive sentiment override,” which allows them to keep their friendship strong despite the inevitable disagreements and irritations normal to married life (1999).

According to Penner, from the Gottman Institute (D. Penner, personal communication, August 11, 2010), and Gottman and Silver (1999) friendship is basically defined in three ways: First: Love Maps. This means “couples are intimately familiar with each other’s world. They have made plenty of ‘cognitive room’ for their marriage by remembering major events in each other’s history, and updating their information continuously. They know what is important to each other, each other’s goals, worries and hopes.” Gottman and Silver (1999) add that from knowledge springs not only love, but
also the fortitude to weather marital storms. Second: Fondness and Admiration. These are crucial elements in a rewarding and long-lasting romance. These elements make happily married couples feel that the person they married is worthy of honor and respect.

Fondness and admiration can be fragile unless the couple remains aware of how crucial they are to the friendship that is at the core of any good marriage. They are also antidotes for contempt. Even more so, fondness and admiration prevent the couple from being defeated by the four horsemen of Apocalypse: criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling. When a sense of respect is maintained, the couple is less likely to act disgusted with each other when they disagree.

Third: Turning Towards Each Other. Gottman and Silver (1999) explain that, in marriage, there is what he calls “bids” for their partner’s attention, affection, humor, or support. These bids are ways they try to connect, for example, by chatting while they eat lunch or reading the Sunday paper. “People either turn toward one another after these bids or they turn away. Turning toward is the basis of emotional connection, romance, passion, and a good sex life,” (1999). According to Gottman and Silver (1999) the couples create the “couple’s emotional bank account” when the bidding goes well. In other words, when they connect during this bidding process, they create this bank account. Every time they turn towards each other, they are putting emotional currency into the bank. They are building up emotional savings that can be very helpful when times get rough, or when they are faced with a major life stress or conflict. This cushion is not the biggest payoff. The biggest payoff is that, when you turn towards your spouse in the little ways, it is the key to long-lasting romance. Couples often turn away from
each other not out of malice, but out of mindlessness. “They get distracted and start taking each other for granted” (1999).

Chapter 4, explains how each of the definitions for friendship is measured using the Sound Relationship House Questionnaires. In Gottman’s Love Lab measuring a couple’s friendship also includes an observation of them while conducting what is called an “oral history interview” and an “individual relational interview.” The clinicians look at all these sources to form an impression of the various aspects of their friendship.

Friendship forms the basis of sex, romance, and passion in the relationship. In other words, these would be considered outgrowth of a strong friendship.

Driscoll and Driscoll (2012, p. 24), quoting Gottman and Siler (1999), underline why friendship in marriage is so important:

The determining factor in whether wives feel satisfied with the sex, romance, and passion in their marriage is, by 70%, the quality of the couple’s friendship. For men, the determining factor is, by 70%, the quality of the couple’s friendship. So men and women come from the same planet after all.

Driscoll and Driscoll (2012) say, “Husbands and wives who want their marriages to be enduring and endearing must be friends,” adding:

All this talk about spending time together and doing life together, making memories, being a good listener, growing old and taking care of each other, being honest, having the long view of things, repenting and forgiving can be summed up in one word – friendship. (p. 23)

Driscoll and Driscoll (2012) add that marital friendship requires that both husband and wife be willing to invest. Friendship is costly in time, energy, emotion, and sometimes money. It must be reciprocal to prevent abuse, neglect, and unnecessary suffering from the un-reciprocal spouse.
In looking at a good marriage there are so many things to work on: spirituality, communication, scheduling, sex, finances, family of origin issues, and so forth. So where do we start? Driscoll and Driscoll (2012) suggest, “Work on you friendship, the rest of marriage will seem to sort itself out in time. So we would comment to you the goal of devoting the rest of your life to being a better friend to your spouse.”

**Description Analyses of Two Marriage Enrichment Programs**

As mentioned in the beginning this chapter, one program will be secular and the other one created for churches, yet both have an intentional purpose of enhancing friendship in marriage or enriching marriage in particular ways that have a direct relation to the propose of this research.

The secular program is *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* (Gottman & Silver, 1999). This program is basically a guide that couples can use in the privacy of their home, or it can be adapted into a seminar or workshop format. It includes content and couple assessments and exercises. This guide can be divided in three sections. First is an introduction, then the presentation of the seven principles that make marriage work, and the conclusion.

The topics covered in the introduction can be divided as follows: Why save your marriage? The evidence documenting how harmful divorce is, and health reasons to stay married. Also, there are some myths about marriage that are unmasked. For example:

1. Neuroses or personality problems ruin marriages,
2. Affairs are the root cause of divorce, and
3. Men are not biologically “built” for marriage.
The fundamental part of this introduction is that it presents a direct reason for the analysis made in this project. The heart of this program is “the simple truth that happy marriages are based on a deep friendship” (Gottman & Silver, 1999). It goes on to explain that learning the principles will help deepen an understanding of the role of friendship in marriage and help develop skills to retain or retrieve that friendship. It is noted that rediscovering or reinvigorating friendship does not prevent couples from arguing, but gives them a secret weapon that prevents quarrels from getting messy. Friendship will sharpen the skill of “repair attempts,” which refers to any statement or action that prevents negativity from escalating out of control. It also emphasizes that even couples that feel their friendship to be strong might be surprised to find there is room to strengthen it even more.

The second part of the introduction deals with how Gottman and Silver (1999) predict divorce. There are six signs that predict divorce. This is an important part of this program because it is a real eye-opener for couples.

The first sign is what is called “harsh start up to problem solving.” This is where discussion begins with criticism and/or sarcasm, a form of contempt. Ninety-six percent (96%) of the time the outcome of a conversation can be predicted within the first three minutes of a 15-minute interaction.

The second sign has to do with what is referred to as “the four horsemen of Apocalypse.” A brief explanation of these is as follows:

Horseman #1: Criticism. It usually comes as a complaint that addresses a specific action or lack thereof. Criticism is more global and can be seen as attacks with negative words about the partner’s character or personality.
Horseman # 2: Contempt. Some characteristics of contempt are: sarcasm and cynicism, eye-rolling, mockery, sneering, and hostile humor. Contempt is the worst of the four horsemen of Apocalypse; it is more so poisonous to a relationship because it conveys disgust. The goal is to demean and ridicule the other. It is often fueled by long-simmering negative thoughts about the spouse. The other is invalidated by painful put-downs. Belligerence is a close cousin of contempt. It is a form of aggressive anger that contains a threat or provocation. “Well, what are you going to do about it?” It often favors the escalation of a conflict and negative interpretations (when perception is worse than reality).

Horseman # 3: Defensiveness. Since defensiveness is really a way of blaming the spouse, usually the attacking partner does not back down, which only makes matters worse.

Horseman # 4: Stonewalling. This is using the cold shoulder, tuning out, withdrawal, refusing to engage in a fight, but also not fighting for the marriage. A stonewaller does not give the usual cues of attentive listening in a conversation.

The third sign is called flooding. Flooding is when one spouse’s negativity, whether in the form of criticism, contempt, or even defensiveness, becomes so overwhelming and so sudden that it leaves the other shell-shocked. This partner feels so defenseless against these attacks that he or she learns to do anything to avoid a replay, even stonewalling. The partner becomes hyper-vigilant about cues that give the message that the spouse is about to “blow” again. Flooding makes people protect themselves from future assaults and disengage from the relationship.
The fourth sign is body language, like an increase in pulse (heart rate), blood pressure, and also hormonal changes. When the body goes into overdrive, it’s almost impossible to have a productive, problem-solving conversation. The ability to process information decreases, meaning it is harder to pay attention to what your partner is saying. The person attacked will either fight or flee. There are differences between males and females. Men, for example, stonewall more than women. When this happens, his cardiovascular system remains more reactive than the female and slower to recover from stress. Women, on the other hand, self-soothe more easily than men. Men are more easily overwhelmed by marital conflict than women.

The fifth sign is failed repair attempts. Repair attempts are efforts couples make to de-escalate the tension during a touchy discussion. In other words, to put on the brakes so that flooding does not occur. “Let’s take a break,” “Wait, I need to calm down.” It is an attempt to decrease the emotional tension. Gottman and Silver (1999) in the research, has been able to predict divorce with 82% accuracy when the four horsemen of Apocalypse are present, but if failed repair attempts are added, the accuracy rate reaches into the 90s.

The sixth sign is bad memories. Most couples have positive memories of their history together and they draw strength from the adversity they have experienced together. But when a marriage is not going well, history gets rewritten for the worse.

This part of the program gives an explanation of what is called “the death knell of marriage,” which, summarized, is when the following steps set in:

1. The couple sees their marriage problems as severe.
2. Talking things over seems useless and they try solving problems on their own.
3. They start leading parallel lives.
4. Loneliness sets in.

This is when an affair by one or both partners can take place, but an affair is usually a symptom of a dying marriage. What could have predicted the end is what the couples say to each other, the failure of repair attempts, physiological reactions (flooding), and penetrative negative thoughts about their marriage.

This part of the program ends with a word of hope by stating that marriages can be saved with the right kind of help, even if the picture is bleak.

In the main section of the program, each of the seven principles are exposed, with several exercises to help develop these principles.

Principle 1: Enhancing love maps. Love maps are explained as the place in the brain where relevant information about the life of one’s partner is stored. It has to do with how emotionally intelligent couples are intimately familiar with each other’s world. This is more than knowing their favorite color, food, etc., but is “knowing” them, their thoughts and feelings, their longings and fears, their passions and challenges. These love maps are protective of marriage during times of stress and upheaval.

Principle 2: Nurturing fondness and admiration. It is important to focus on the positive history of the marriage relationship. This requires couples to be intentional about expressing fondness and admiration, since this is the greatest antidote to contempt. Some of the exercises suggest each spouse tell their partner 10 things that they appreciate about each other. They are invited to think of actual incidents that illustrate positive characteristics of their partner by reviewing the details of their history together, focusing on the positive elements. Also by discussing their philosophy of marriage; why they
think some marriages work while others do not; to share about their parents’ marriages and how theirs is similar or different; or make a chart of the history of their marriage.

Principle 3: Turn toward each other instead of away. This principle emphasizes the bidding process that was explained earlier in this chapter. It is about connecting on a day-to-day basis in the simple conversations about ordinary things in life. To know if the couple is turning toward each other, some of the areas examined in the exercises are: spending time together, considering their spouse as their best friend, that the couple love just talking with each other, and having fun together. Couples are reminded that, most of the time, when they ignore each other’s emotional needs; it is out of mindlessness, not malice. It stresses the importance of building an “emotional bank account” by keeping track of the things that you intentionally do to turn toward (or serve) each other. Another topic covered is how to have a “stress-reducing conversation.” This is done by:

- Taking turns to process your day.
- Not giving unsolicited advice.
- Showing genuine interest.
- Communicating your understanding.
- Taking your spouse’s side.
- Expressing a “we against others” attitude.
- Expressing affection.
- Validating emotions.

Principle 4: Let your partner influence you. It is important for men to be willing to share power with their wives because this is a way of conveying honor and respect. At the same time, the wives of men who accept their influence are far less likely to be harsh
with their husbands when broaching a difficult marital topic. Choosing “we” over “me” in the little things that present themselves each day is a powerful way to influence each other, and yielding also is.

Principle 5: Solve your solvable problems. Some problems are solvable and some are perpetual. This principle promotes that each spouse accepts the things that cannot change and love the other as they are. Some principles that work to resolve conflict in a loving relationship are:

- Soften your startup by: complaining but not blaming, making statements that start with “I” instead of “you,” describing what is happening without being judgmental, being clear, polite, appreciative, and not storing things up.

Other suggested strategies are:

- Learn to make and receive repair attempts
- Sooth yourself and each other (helps to manage flooding)
- Compromise (find common ground)
- Be tolerant of each other’s faults

Some common solvable problems in marriage involve: work stress, conflicts with in-laws, money, sex, housework, and a new baby.

Principle 6: Overcome gridlock. This is making sure the relationship does not get stuck or blocked. If it does, know how to move forward. Now, the goal of ending gridlock is not to solve the problem, but rather to move from gridlock to dialogue without hurting each other. Gridlock can be a sign that the couple is not addressing or respecting each other dreams. Sometimes these dreams are rooted in childhood memories, either attempting to create positive ones or working to avoid negative ones. Each spouse will
have different dreams that should be respected. Another way to overcome gridlock is for the couple to keep working on their apparently irresolvable conflicts. They should not give up hope easily. In the long run, a more satisfying relationship can result.

Principle 7: Create shared meaning. Marriage is more than just about raising kids, splitting chores, and making love. It can have a rich spiritual dimension with symbols and rituals that lead to a deeper understanding of what it means to be part of a family.

A crucial goal of any marriage is to create an atmosphere that encourages each person to talk honestly about his or her convictions. The more this is done, it helps blend their sense of meaning. In the exercises, some things that are suggested is for the spouses to share their stories with one another; to develop couple or family rituals that help connect; explore roles, goals, and symbols that are important to each one; discuss what home means, philosophies of love, values about possessions, power sharing, and personal freedom, even what they may want in retirement.

The analysis of this program focuses on two areas. First, is its intentionality of enhancing friendship in marriage. Second, the finding in its approach, content, and practicality.

This program is very intentional in the purpose of enhancing friendship in marriage. It is based on the simple truth that a deep friendship in marriage is the foundation for happy marriages. The purpose of the seven principles is to deepen an understanding of the role of friendship in marriage and to help develop skills that retain or retrieve that friendship. It specifically mentions that, even though friendship can be rediscovered or reinvigorated, it does not prevent couples from arguing, but it gives them a secret weapon that prevents quarrels from getting messy. Friendship will sharpen
certain skills that will help prevent negativity from escalating out of control. It also establishes that couples that might feel their friendship to be strong can find there is room to strengthen it even more.

The researcher found a very positive approach to the program, while at the same time it presents the principles after putting things into prospective and becoming “real” by sharing the six signs that predict divorce. Being honest about this may help the participants to actually evaluate their marriage and see if there are any danger signs, or at least may help as preventive medicine.

The content concentrates strongly on communication skills and conflict resolution, but in a unique way exposes concepts or skills that can be practiced which Gottman and his colleagues (date), developed based on years of research and practice. The combination of content with exercises, questions, and other assignments seems to make it practical. These are also based on years of experience and research and are original.

The faith-based program chosen is *The Value of Friendship in Marriage Seminar* (Qualls & Qualls, 2006). This program is a weekend seminar developed by Mike and Becky Qualls (Firm Foundations Ministries located in Lee’s Summit, MO).

This seminar is focused specifically on the value of friendship in marriage. The purpose is to equip the couples attending with the tools for strengthening their friendship and also give them an opportunity to develop a plan for their own personalized friendship time. The Qualls recognize that, at times, lives are lived at warp speed and that often in marriage friendship and time set aside to enjoy one another gets crowded out. So the
intention of this seminar is for couples to get a refresher course in friendship looking at the following aspects:

1. The benefits of being married to one’s best friend,
2. How to set aside and protect time to enjoy each other,
3. How friends treat each other, and

In each session there is what they call “Meeting of the minds and hearts,” which is a time set aside for couples to develop a personalized plan to put what they have learned into action.

The seminar is typically set up to include a Friday evening and Saturday morning, divided into four sessions, two sessions on Friday and two on Saturday.

In session 1, the topic is: Understanding the value of friendship in marriage and is divided into four sections. Why do we need our spouse to be our friend? How does friendship benefit your marriage? Strengthening friendship in marriage. It ends with the “meeting of the minds and heart.” The first section includes a brief introduction to motivate the couples. There is an icebreaker survey and dynamic at the tables that deals with our busy lives, followed by the “juggle game.” This is used to illustrate how our many life activities and events are like trying to keep all the balloons airborne. It also includes a short biblical presentation on the creation of marriage, its priority in our time and relationships, and a discussion session based on the previous exercise; the purpose being to establish the value of friendship in the marriage relationship. The second section that deals with the benefits of friendship in marriage covers six benefits.

1. We enjoy each other’s company and seek each other out.
2. Enjoying each other also shapes our family identity.

3. Discernment as another product of friendship. If we feel valued by our spouse, we can differentiate between what is important and what needs to be let go of.

4. Friendship also produces hope.

5. Friendship makes the trials of life more bearable

6. Friendship fuels the fire of passion. Passion requires a context. Passion can thrive in the context of friendship and commitment.

The third section basically emphasizes how important it is to strengthen friendship in marriage. The session is a short conclusion.

The second session deals with the topic of developing a friendship time and is divided in two sections: Finding the time (What’s on your calendar?), ending with the “meeting of the minds and hearts.” There is a brief introduction on how important it is to make time for friendship, where three key times are explained.

1. Reconnecting time (the first five minutes). This is the time when we first get together at the end of our workday.

2. The second key time to plan for is date night.

3. The third key time we need to plan for each day is something called friendship time. Friendship time still must be planned and practiced on purpose.

Then there is a presentation on how to identify barriers in taking time to develop friendship. The Bible passage used is Song of Solomon 2:15, where it talks about the little foxes. One of the “little foxes” to avoid is labeling: “Planning our friendship time.” Labeling it “friendship time” may not be too romantic. Another is the habit of avoidance. A purposeful friendship is the opposite of avoidance. This section includes a
short discussion about what determines what makes it into our lives and what does not. How did we get the balloon (in reference to the juggle game)? The discussion evolves around the following three reasons for so many “balloons.” First, we fill our lives with things that sound like a good opportunity, that sound fun, interesting, and entertaining. We say yes to good things without counting the cost. Second, we respond to the demands and needs of others. In other words, we sometimes allow others to set our priorities. And third, we live in a competitive society and we fall victim to peer and/or status pressure.

At this point, we present how to make time to live our priorities by making sacrifices. The basis of this is to have a “vision.” It is explained how, without vision, we do not know what to sacrifice. Families can perish from bad sacrifices. What is a bad sacrifice? Choosing something that is good over something that was better. The outcome of a bad sacrifice is regret.

The third session discusses how to develop friendship time and is divided into three sections: What do friends do? The value of playing together, ending with another moment for “meeting of the minds and hearts.” After an introductory story to motivate the session, this section talks about the value of planning. Several points are stressed here. For example, when you know what to expect and can prepare yourself to invest. Another value of planning ahead is that we can be more creative. At this moment, couples are asked to stop and fill out a list of 10 things that they enjoy and also talk about date night. What happens when there is a lack of planning/being in a routine?

After this exercise, there is more talk about the “little foxes” or barriers that spoil our friendship. These internal little foxes can affect our ability to be fully present for our friendship time; for example, those that love the idea of planning but struggle with having
fun. Another could be when certain people have a hard time leaving work at work; instead they carry it around mentally when they are home. Conflict with play style is another “little fox.”

The unwillingness to enter into each other’s lives and interests or habitual parallel play where everyone is playing, but no one is playing together, are also to be considered. A few suggestions are given out to help the couples confront this situation are things like: focusing those things that are mutually enjoyable, investing in interests that are very important to the spouse, and developing new things that are uniquely theirs when they are together. At the end of the session, they are given the task of working on their calendar.

The last session shows how to develop friendship time and the topics covered are: How do friends talk? Keeping the lines of communication open. Finally, “meeting of the minds and hearts.” At the introduction of this session, it is emphasized that humans were created for more than neutral discussions. We were created for intimacy, to know and to be known by our spouse. Two rules are set in place if friendship time is to be developed: No business talk and no problem talk, even though there are other moments when these talks are appropriate as part of the friendship. Then there is a focus on two questions: So, how do we talk during friendship time? What do friends connect around? These are answered by explaining the three levels where people try to connect: space, information, and heart. Sharing space is simply being together, but not talking. Sharing information is sharing knowledge, what you know, what you think, things that interest you. Lastly, sharing our heart is sharing a window into who we are. Here is what friends do. Friends have access to all three.
Firm Foundation provides pre-formatted, personalized brochures and posters (in electronic format) that include the dates and times specific to the event that can be printed and distributed or posted.

Here’s what participants have to say about *The Value of Friendship in Marriage Seminar*: “Watching you interact with each other shines a light on how it should be and how it can be.” “It helped us to see what steps we need to take to make time for each other, so our kids will be able to see the importance of our relationship with each other and how our family works better when our relationship is good.” “We so appreciated your insight on the structured friendship time. We loved everything about the weekend - you put in a great balance of teaching and fun.” “This weekend definitely re-energized me to make my friendship with my wife the most important thing after God.” “The role-playing is great. It really helped us to be able to see what you’re talking about in action.”

An analysis of this faith-based seminar in regards to this study is that the balance of spiritual material, such as the use of the Bible throughout the seminar and the use of stories, role-playing, and time provided in each session to articulate thoughts and feelings is very well organized. The scientific or researched-based material brought a great equilibrium to the seminar. The exercises to bring understanding to the concepts make it easy to learn and practice the lessons. The dynamics throughout the whole seminar seems very well planned. The researcher believes it is very professional and the testimonials give witness to the effectiveness of this seminar.
CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF POPULATION, METHODOLOGY,
IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the process of this research and it is divided into the following sections: The first describes the population that participated and how the sample was selected; the second explains the methodology used; the third delineates and presents how the project was developed and implemented and includes a complete outline table of the weekend spiritual retreat with the details of the My Spouse and I Unmatchable Friends Seminar; the fourth a description of the content of the follow-up sessions; the fifth construes on how the project was evaluated; and the sixth is a conclusion by the researcher.

Description of the Population and Sample Selection

This research was carried out among the married couples of the three organized Hispanic churches and one missionary group that are part of the Madison District. Each of the church boards approved to participate in the project. The geographic location of the three churches is as follows: Madison, Springfield, and Lebanon, Tennessee, and the missionary group is in Bowling Green, Kentucky. They all belong to the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in the North American Division. The
Conference was also informed of the project for approval though the Ministerial Department.

The participants for this project were recruited and registered using six different processes: First, the researcher visited each church and announced his intention to conduct this project and explained its purpose and process. He explained that it would take place during a spiritual retreat on a specific weekend and also talked about the follow-up sessions; second the researcher made personal contact to encourage couples. This was done mostly during church meetings or services. Third, once the date, place and cost were established, then public announcements were made in each church as well as the missionary group, and posters were placed in each location; fourth, a texting service using an App as well as making telephone called was established; fifth, church leaders (elders and family life directors) were given registration forms to give out to the couples with interest; and sixth, financial help was offered to couples that needed it. This financial support was decided by the church boards and the researcher also got some donations from personal friends. The money was distributed depending on the number of coupled that needed the financial support. In each of these processes the nature of the project was clearly stated.

Once recruited, the couples filled out a registration form, which allowed them to not only give their contact information but also their commitment to participate in and complete the program designed for this project. A total of 29 of 56 couples were recruited and participated this represented 51.78% (see Figure 2).
All three churches and the missionary group were represented (see Figure 3). Twelve couples from the Madison Hispanic Church (41%), nine couples from the Springfield Hispanic Church (31%), four couples from the Lebanon Hispanic Church (14%), and four couples from the Bowling Green Hispanic Missionary Group (14%). The participants were immigrants from several Central and South American countries, as well as Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba.
Methodology

Type of Research

This was an exploratory or heuristic study dealing with the friendship experienced in the marriage of the couples, therefore qualitative in nature. Since the research was descriptive and not predictive, no hypotheses were designed. The emphasis was not on the statistical results, but on the application of the program.

Data Collection

The instrument used consisted of the three questionnaires found in part one of the *Sound Relationship House* by the Gottman Institute (2001-2011) used by permission. The questionnaires considered the three levels that deal with the relationship’s friendship. First there are: Love Maps, (see Table 1) which show how well couples know each other’s inner psychological world, history, worries, stresses, joys, and hopes. Couples need to be intimately familiar with each other’s world; they have to make plenty of ‘cognitive room’ for their marriage by remembering major events in each other’s history, and updating their information continuously. From this knowledge springs not only love, but also the fortitude to weather marital storms (Gottman & Silver, 1999).

Second is the Fondness and Admiration System questionnaire, which focuses on the amount of affection and respect there is within the relationship (see Table 2).
Table 1

*Love Maps*

Read each statement and fill in the appropriate TRUE or FALSE bubble.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I can name my partners best friends.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I can tell you the stresses my partner is currently facing.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know some of the names of the people who have been irritating in my partner’s current life.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I can tell you some of my partner’s life dreams.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am very familiar with my partner’s religious beliefs and ideas.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I can tell you about my partner’s basic philosophy of life.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I can list the relatives my partner likes the least.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I know my partner’s favorite music.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I can list my partner’s three favorite movies.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My partner is familiar with what are my current stresses.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1

*Love Maps* (continued)

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>11.</strong> I know the three times that have been more special in my partner’s life.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12.</strong> I can tell you the most stressful thing that happened in my partner as a child.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.</strong> I can list my partner’s major aspirations and hopes in life.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14.</strong> I know my partner’s major current worries.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15.</strong> My partner knows who my best friends are.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16.</strong> I know what my partner would want to do if he suddenly won the lottery.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17.</strong> I can tell you, in detail, my first impressions of my partner</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18.</strong> Periodically, I update my knowledge of my partner’s world</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19.</strong> I feel that my partner knows me pretty well</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20.</strong> My partner is familiar with my own hopes and aspirations</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

**Fondness and Admiration System**

Read each statement and fill in the appropriate TRUE or FALSE bubble.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I can easily list the three things I most admire about my partner.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When we are apart, I often think fondly of my partner.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I will often find some way to tell my partner, “I love you.”</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I often touch or kiss my partner affectionately.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My partner really respects me.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I fell loved and cared for in this relationship.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel accepted and liked by my partner.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My partner finds me sexy and attractive.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My partner turns me on sexually.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. There is fire and passion in this relationship.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Romance is something our relationship definitely still has in it.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fondness and admiration can be fragile unless the couple remains aware of how crucial they are to the friendship that is at the core of any good marriage. They are also antidotes for contempt. Fondness and admiration prevent the couple from being defeated by the four horsemen: criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling (1999).

Table 2

*Fondness and Admiration System* (continued).

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. I am really proud of my partner.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. My partner really enjoys my achievements and accomplishments.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I can easily tell you why I go into a relationship with my partner.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. If I had it to do do all over again, I would parent the the same persona.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. We rarely go to sleep without some show of love or affection.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. At the end of a day my partner is glad to see my</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. My partner appreciates the things I do in this relationship</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. My partner generally likes my personality.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Our sex life is generally satisfying.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Third is the Turning Towards or Away questionnaire, (see Table 3). This covers being aware of what is called bids for connection and turning towards them. When there is a connection (turning towards) during this bidding process an emotional bank account is created, building up emotional savings that can be very helpful when times get rough, or when they are faced with a major life stress or conflict. Emphasis is on the small moments of everyday life as the building blocks of relationship (Gottman & Silver, 1999).

Table 3

*Turning Towards or Away*

Read each statement and fill in the appropriate TRUE or FALSE bubble.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. We enjoy doing even the smallest things together, like folding laundry or watching TV.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I look forward to spending my free time with my partner.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. At the end of a day my partner is glad to see me.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My partner is usually interested in hearing my views on things.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I really enjoy discussing things with my partner</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My partner is one of my best friends.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

*Turning Towards or Away* (continued).

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I think my partner would consider me a very close friend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>We love just talking to each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>When we go out, the time very quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>We always have a lot to say to each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>When we go out, the time very quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>We always have a lot to say to each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>We have a lot of fun together in our everyday lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>We are spiritually compatible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>We tend to share the same basic values in life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>We like to spend time together in similar ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>We really have a lot of interest in common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>We have many of the same dreams and life goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Even though our interests are somewhat different, I enjoy my partner's interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Whatever we do together we usually tend to have a good time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the beginning of the weekend event, the questionnaires were given to the couples as a pre-test. The importance of filling each statement was stressed to every participant. Once the questionnaires were filled out they were immediately returned. The seminar imparted during the retreat had the intentional purpose of enhancing friendship in marriage. During the following two months after the event, follow-up sessions were set in place in each of the churches and also in the missionary group with the purpose of practicing the skills learned during the retreat and sharing further information about friendship in marriage. The post-test consisting of the same questionnaires was administered at the end of the two-month period during the final follow-up session or personally to those who were not able to attend.

**Development and Implementation of the Project**

The project was designed to be in a seminar format for a weekend spiritual retreat for married couples of all ages. The title of the seminar was: My Spouse and I Unmatchable Friends Seminar.

The participants were notified about the spiritual retreat in advance and had to register for the event with the acknowledgment that they were participating in a doctoral project. They were asked to sign a commitment to attend the retreat and also to the follow-up sessions.

The project was implemented at the spiritual retreat on the date and place planned and the curriculum and sessions were delivered. The curriculum and sessions had the following format in order to assure access to knowledge, interaction and practice:
1. Short talks using PowerPoint presentations and a workbook that contained fill in the plank spaces while listening to the presentations. The topics shared were a combination of researched and Biblical or faith based material.

2. Free access to ask questions at any time or share comments.

3. Dynamics exercises or tests to discover the usefulness of the knowledge shared and to interact with the content.

4. Direct participation of couples in sharing or practicing the skills learned.

5. Different activities with the intention of enhancing friendship within the couples. These activities included nature hikes, romantic dinner, camp fire, and others.

6. Ice Breakers to get the participants to laugh, relax and at the same time these were directed towards the topic of friendship in marriage.

On Friday night two sessions were delivered. The program began with an ice breaker titled “Sweetie Pie.” Every participant had been asked to fill out a name tag with the name used at home to refer to their partner. Each couple was asked to present themselves using those names, along with some other information about themselves.

The first session was an introduction to the event. The short talk included statistics on divorce:

The divorce rate is high between the years 1-7 of marriage, being the pick at 5.2 years; and between the years 16-20 of marriage, being the pick at 16.4 years (Gottman, Murray, C. Swanson, Tyson, & Swanson, 2003).

Early divorce is predictable if there exists a high level of negative communication during conflicts, especially if the four horsemen are present (Gottman & Silver, 1999). These were explained.
Later divorce is predictable if there exist a low level of positive communication during moments of conflict or non-conflict, emotional distance (or a lack of good emotions), lack of affirmation or admiration, little laughter, very little connections while communicating (the bidding process is introduced but not explained to keep the expectation high) (Gottmam & Silver, 1999).

The first session ended with a positive tone sharing a study that dealt with how to make marriage last and pin-pointed friendship as one of the most important ingredients (Brouwer, 2001). At this point, becoming best friends was stressed.

At the end of this introductory presentation the pre-test was handed out and returned.

The second session was a small talk with the purpose of sharing knowledge on what the Bible and Ellen White’s say about friendship, especially friendship in marriage. This had the purpose of giving the intervention plan a spiritual and theological foundation.

The Bible texts selected on friendship that were commented were: Proverbs 19:9; 17:7; 18:24. The ones selected on friendship in marriage were Song of Songs 5:10-16; 1:9, 15; 2:2, 10 and 4:1-7. The couples read this out loud to each other respectively.

This quotation from White was read to the group:

Though difficulties, perplexities, and discouragements may arise, let neither husband nor wife harbor the thought that their union is a mistake or a disappointment. Determine to be all that it is possible to be to each other. Continue the early attentions. In every way encourage each other in fighting the battles of life. Study to advance the happiness of each other. Let there be mutual love, mutual forbearance. Then marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be as it were the very beginning of love. The warmth of true friendship (italics mine), the love that binds heart to heart, is a foretaste of the joys of heaven. (1905, p. 360)
The couples read the quote silently a couple of times, afterwards they were asked to discuss the sentence that was more appealing to them. Some couples had a chance to share with the group.

The evening sessions ended by showing how the Bible and science both stress the importance of friendship in marriage. The couples prayed together for their friendship and relationship.

Saturday early morning there was a hike and activity. This “Lover’s walk” consisted of a climb to a small mountain. Once on the top each couple was asked to make, using only things found in nature, a representation of their marriage, with their initials, and including Christ in the design.

Saturday morning ice breaker was titled “let’s care for our friendship” and had the purpose of establishing the reality that most of the time life events and stages absorb us and we unconsciously stop giving priority to the friendship we are to care for. Inflated balloons with different life events or stages written on them were given one by one to the couples and they had to try and keep them all in the air at the same time. These life events or stages included things like pregnancy, new job, buying a house, birth of first child, change of job, etc. (Qualls & Qualls, 2006).

Two sessions were delivered in the morning that would cover two-thirds of the topic “Recipe for friendship,” These were interactive. Each ingredient was explained briefly but thoroughly and then put into practice by a variety of exercises and activities.

Ingredients discussed in the first and second presentations were:

1. Do you know your spouse? The points emphasized were: The more you know about your spouse, the better; importance of knowing what causes your
partner stress; what are the things of interest, their values, and personal goals. It was also mentioned that for men because of their nature and tendency in being objective it might be more critical to share and know their spouse. Every couple did a Love Maps (adapted from Gottman & DeClaire, 2001) that consisted of 32 questions (see Table 4). At the end of the exercise one couple was asked to share their answers through a game. For each correct answer of either the husband or the wife they would take a step forward to see by the end how close they could get to each other.

Table 4

**Love Maps Exercise**

Instructions: Answer the following questionnaire as your spouse would. Try to answer all the questions. If either of you has trouble with particular questions, circle those items. Then, when you’re done with the questionnaire, ask one another about the items you could not answer. You will probably have lots of items to discuss, which is a good thing. Fostering communication is a good thing.

| 1. | Favorite meal: |
| 2. | Special hobbies and interests: |
| 3. | Two closest friends: |
| 4. | Worst enemy or rival: |
| 5. | Two people most admired: |
| 6. | Favorite movie: |
| 7. | Favorite TV show: |
| 8. | Favorite kind of animal: |
| 9. | Ideal vacation destination: |
Table 4

*Love Maps Exercise (continued).*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Favorite sports to watch and follow:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Favorite meal:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Special hobbies and interests:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Two closest friends:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Worst enemy or rival:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Two people most admired:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Favorite movie:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Favorite TV show:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Favorite kind of animal:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Ideal vacation destination:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Favorite sports to watch and follow:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>First thing this person would buy if he or she won the lottery:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>One thing this person would like to change about you:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>One thing you could do to improve your relationship with this person:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Favorite types of clothes to wear:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Least favorite relative:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Favorite relative:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Favorite holiday:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

*Love Maps Exercise (continued).*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Least favorite holiday:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Ideal job:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Favorite way to spend evenings at home:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Favorite kind of books:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Favorite musical group, composer, or instrument:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Favorite ways to spend weekends:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Toughest problem this person has faced:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Favorite restaurants:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Favorite magazine:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Places or events this person would find most uncomfortable:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Most comforting pastime when sick:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Saddest life event:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Worst life event:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Happiest life event:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Favorite way to exercise:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Affirmation.** This affirmation has to be real. It was explained that it must be physical and verbal. When there is no affirmation or too little it is an indicator that the relationship is deteriorating. To put this ingredient into practice an exercise called “You’re an awesome person” was played out by each person.
They were asked to write on a sheet of paper all the good qualities of their spouse. They were given two minutes to make their list. Once they had finished they read the list to their spouse. A few couples volunteered to share their list with the group.

3. The bidding process. A short presentation was given to explain this ingredient. The knowledge the participants received was:

a. While doing everyday activities we do bidding through our conversation. This means “throwing” any topic that comes to mind expecting to get something back that is connected to what has been “thrown.”

b. We try to call attention, but normally in an indirect manner.

c. When this bidding is ignored it affects the whole process of communication.

d. The happier marriages do a lot of bidding that connects. If the bid gets an answer from the four horsemen then there is a serious problem.

e. It is important to learn the abilities of bidding in order to have a better communication.

After the explanation each couple practice the bidding process by sharing 10 things that just “popped” into their head and receiving as an answer something that was not related at all. After that exercise, they did it again, but this time receiving a response that was connected. Then where was a chance to share with the group how they had felt in both exercises. This was with the objective to appreciate the bidding and to learn how to bid.
Positive communication. Knowledge shared was a brief explanation on how to move beyond the obstacles and how much easier it is to do so if the marriage is going in the right direction. The participants were taught how to answer positively a negative remark or comment. To learn and practice some of the skills three exercises were fulfilled (Gottman & DeClaire, 2001). Tips for difficult conversations (see Table 5), positive complaining (see Table 6), and how emotional philosophy influences connections (see Table 7).

Saturday afternoon three sessions were delivered. The last part of “Recipe for friendship” and the topic of “Friendship in bed” divided into two parts. Last part of “Recipe for Friendship” was a short talk on Conflict Resolution and the TaDA theory on how to repair damage (Gottman & Silver, 1999). The participants learned that when a marriage is directed towards the positive there exists a greater capacity for the couple to repair the damage, also how important is as soon as one is aware of a damage to repair it as soon as possible (active repair), and what will determine how well things will get repaired is the quality of the relationship. In these sessions as part of the TaDa theory the 5 to 1 ratio was also considered; for every negative comment there has to be five positive ones to repair the damage. The participants practiced this by saying something negative and having to come up with five positive comments. This session ended by a short explanation on the emotional bank account.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tips for soft starts</th>
<th>Don’t start like this:</th>
<th>Start like this instead:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begin with something positive.</td>
<td>“We never have fun together anymore. Why don’t we ever do anything adventurous?”</td>
<td>“Look at this article about a couple who hiked the Pacific Crest Trail. It reminds me of how much fun it is to have adventures with you. Let’s plan something now.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I’m fed up with this job. I feel like you expect me to perform miracles and it’s not going to happen.”</td>
<td>“Remember when we talked about my performance goals last month? That was really helpful. Can we discuss them again?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express appreciation and gratitude.</td>
<td>“I never hear from anybody anymore. The only time the family contacts me is when someone dies.”</td>
<td>“It was great to be invited to Uncle Henry’s surprise party last year. I’d love to know when the family plans another get-together.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Why do I have to ask to see these reports? They should have sent me a copy of this.”</td>
<td>“Thanks for letting me see this report. Then information really helps. Who can I contact to get a copy for myself next time?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start with “I” instead of “You.”</td>
<td>“You could have called. You made me stay up all night worrying about you.”</td>
<td>“I was so worried when you didn’t call that it kept me up all night.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You’re not keeping me informed about the project. From now on, we need to meet every Wednesday morning.”</td>
<td>“I want to stay more informed about this project. How about if we meet every Wednesday morning?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t stockpile complaints.</td>
<td>“I didn’t want to say anything, but I can’t take it anymore. You haven’t asked for sex in over six months, and I feel like you don’t love me anymore.”</td>
<td>“I like it when you make the first move, but it’s been a while. Can we talk about it?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You haven’t spent any time with your little brother in ages, your grades have been slipping since October, and you haven’t helped me with chores in six weeks.”</td>
<td>“I’m worried about your report card. You’ve dropped a grade in every subject.”(Address the other issues one at a time as they come up.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

Positive Complaining

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tips for good complaining</th>
<th>Criticism</th>
<th>Complaint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State your needs without attacking or blaming the other person.</td>
<td>“What’s the matter with you? All you ever think about is golf. You never think about me and the kids.”</td>
<td>“I need your help with the kids on the weekends. But for the past three Saturdays you’ve been playing golf.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You never call me. You’d never think to send me a card or anything.</td>
<td>“I wish that you’d call me more often. When I don’t hear from you, I feel like you don’t care about me.”</td>
<td>“I’m irritated because you changed the procedure without asking my opinion. I know the process better than anyone else.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on specific behaviors, not global judgments.</td>
<td>“You’re always cold toward me.”</td>
<td>“At night, when I try to snuggle with you, I feel your body get tense.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe your side as your perception, not “the absolute truth.”</td>
<td>“People who don’t respond to their e-mails are not team players. Everybody knows you should treat e-mail like a phone call.”</td>
<td>“When you don’t respond to my e-mail, I feel like you don’t care about our project.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If you don’t tell me that you’ve got too much work, how will I know? You don’t have to play the martyr, you know.”</td>
<td>“If you don’t tell me that you’ve got too much work, how will I know? I don’t want you to have to work such long hours.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

*How Emotional Philosophy Influences Connections*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Philosophy</th>
<th>What this philosophy sounds like</th>
<th>How it affects bidding</th>
<th>How those with this philosophy respond to bidding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotion-dismissing</td>
<td>“You’ll get over it.” “Cheer up.”</td>
<td>Leads to less bidding.</td>
<td>Turning away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion-disapproving</td>
<td>“You shouldn’t feel that way.” “You’d better change your attitude.”</td>
<td>Leads to less bidding.</td>
<td>Turning against.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez-faire</td>
<td>“I understand how you feel.”</td>
<td>May or may not lead to more bidding.</td>
<td>Turning toward, but without offering guidance for coping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion-coaching</td>
<td>“I understand how you feel. Let me help you.”</td>
<td>Leads to more bidding.</td>
<td>Turning toward with guidance for coping.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Friendship in bed” a topic on sexuality was incorporated into the program with an emphasis on the theology and ethics of human sexuality with practical ideas and how to have a richer sexual life with their spouse. A great sex life in marriage is an outcome of a strong friendship, just as is passion and romance. Several biblical passages are analyzed and principles on sexuality shared with the participants.

The biblical passages were as follows:
1. Genesis 1:26-28. Three principles were presented:
   - The whole being was created by God including the genitals, erogenous zones, reproductive organs, and all of these were created perfectly.
   - Humans are sexual beings.
   - God blesses Adam and Eve, meaning he blessed their sexuality and sexual relations.

2. Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:6; 2 Corinthians 6:15, 16. Three principles shared:
   - God created sex for marriage therefor blessed.
   - If it is blessed then it is not dirty, unclean, common, or only human, but clean, holy, sacred, and also divine.
   - One flesh meaning a multidimensional unity; physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

3. Proverbs 5:15-19. Ten principles given:
   - Sexual relations are exclusive.
   - They are excluding
   - Have been blessed and are a blessing.
   - They should be a joyous experience.
   - Rituals are important (danger of falling in certain routines).
   - Sex in based on a relationship where love already exists.
   - The whole body is holy and can participate in the encounter; therefore mouth to genital contact is part of the experience.
   - It can be considered a healthy recreational activity.
   - It is the celebration of love; with sex we do not “make love” we celebrate love.
• Timing is not necessarily regulated.

4. 1 Corinthians 7:3-5. Five principles were presented:

• To Sexual satisfy the spouse is a mutual duty.
• Both, wife and husband have the right to be sexually satisfied.
• Sex gives marriage a since of belonging.
• A spouse should not abstain of sexual relations in order to punish
• Sexual satisfaction is an aid against temptation. At this point some of the physiological gender differences were explained so that the couples could be reminded on how these differences if considered and respected can lead to a better and more satisfying sex life (Martinborough & Martinborough, (2003), (see Table 8).

Table 8

Gender Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is like a gas stove</td>
<td>Is like an electric stove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lights up fast</td>
<td>Lights up slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turns of fast</td>
<td>Turns of slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He should foreplay</td>
<td>She needs foreplay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He should use affection</td>
<td>She needs time and preparation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other gender differences on satisfaction and desire based on age were also mentioned (see Table 9).

Table 9

Satisfaction/Desire and Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Her</th>
<th>Him</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early years of marriage</td>
<td>Usually satisfied sexually</td>
<td>Usually satisfied sexually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menopause</td>
<td>Sexual desire diminishes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature years for him</td>
<td></td>
<td>Less capacity at times but more desire. If requirements are rejected this could lead to an extra-marital affair.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Song of Songs 4:16; 5:1. Five principles developed:
   - Even though the initiative is usually his it is not exclusively his.
   - The environment should be pleasing.
   - Hygiene is important.
   - It can be considered a feast.
   - The bed is not the only place (Privacy is always a must).

6. Revelation 21:2. One main principle was shared from this text:
   - Wife should be very careful with her dress and appearance, especially since men get excited though their sight.
7. Ephesians 5:31, 32. One main principle was discussed:

- Sexual intercourse is compared in the Bible as a relation so close as is the one that Christ sustains with the believer (big mystery).

The second part of the topic on sexuality was a question and answer session. Some participants made their questions anonymous, while others did them out loud. This gave a chance to clarify and deepen in respect to the topic.

Saturday late afternoon there was a surprise activity titled: “If my life would end” adapted from a hand out on marriage exercises to strengthen marriage in Family Dynamics class. Each couple was asked to stand face to face with their eyes closed and to imagine they had just been told that they have a limited amount of time in their marriage before one of them would die. How would that make them feel? What changes will they make in their present schedule and life-style in order to use the remaining time for the most important things? After a few minutes they were asked to open their eyes and share their experience with their partner. They were asked if they experienced depressing or anxious feelings, these can be constructive pain, the pain of facing our finitude. Facing the fact that all of us have a limited amount of time to live our lives can make our lives together more precious. The purpose of this activity was to strengthen their friendship and help them decide to spend more time together and less on the treadmill.

Sabbath evening Romantic Dinner had the intentional objective of friendship in mind. It started with a short talk on the word “PACTO” (Covenant in Spanish) as an acrostic). Each letter stood for a key word. The “P” was for “Palabras Amables” (nice words). The information had to do with being courteous and about using those magical words like, “thank you,” “please,” “excuse me,” and so on. Here we had a contest of
“Piropos” (flirtatious remarks or pickup line in a positive sense). The “A” for “Acciones de Bondad” (kind actions). Some examples given were things like helping with the chores, helping pay bills, etc. The couples had a contest on changing roles. Some husbands had to fry an egg, wives had to nail and paint a board, and so on. The “C” was for “Cariacías” (physical demonstration of love). Here the information shared was on the importance of kisses and holding hands among other things. There was a contest where we blindfolded several of the men and they could only touch the hand of a group of wives and try to guess which hand was his wife’s hand. The “T” was for “Tiempo” (time). The points stressed dealt with how time together has to be more intentional and planned. Each couple received a sheet to plan for the next six months at least one date night or activity per month together. They were to consider things like date, place, cost, and babysitting. The “O” was for “Oración” (prayer). Points shared had to do with the power of prayer; praying for and with the spouse. The couples prayed together.

During the dinner time we showed funny videos of wedding bloopers, the some instructional but humorous videos, and also gave them time to relax and socialize.

We ended the day with free time for a campfire or to just have the couples take time for each other.

Sunday morning exercise was called a Pentathlon of Best Friends (some ideas taken from handout given in Family Dynamics Class by Dr. Rene Drumm). The activities were:

1. Trust jogging. Take turns leading each other for ten minutes each, with the one who is led being blindfolded; include at least two minutes of jogging. Discuss what you learned about trusting each other.
2. Clearing the air. Minor annoyances, hurt feelings, and conflicts can grow into major problems; bring them out and articulate them.

3. My little secret. It is time to share a little secret about yourself or something you have done that your spouse is not aware of. It can be something positive or negative. As far as possible something that will help your friendship to grow.

4. What I enjoy most. While you are pleasuring or “celebrating love” try what sounds, words, gestures, caresses, smells, motions, positions, or love-play, that when you are ready to climax you find most stimulating. It is very much to each person’s advantage to guide the other in maximizing pleasuring!

5. Ultimatum. Think about something that is pending. It could be a problem that was not totally resolved, or a plan not accomplished and share that together. Try and resolve once and for all that specific issue.

This was done in different sites and at the end of the exercise everyone gathered for the closing session. Some couples shared their experience.

The closing session consisted first of reminding them of the commitment to attend the follow-up session and the dates were handed out. A gift was given to each couple, words of thanks, and the evaluation sheet was filled out. To end the event we had each couple stand face to face, hand in hand and did something like a vow renewal called “the Reset button” where they forgave each other’s shortcomings and promised to love and cherish each other.

The whole implementation can be outlined as seen in Table 10.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>HOUR</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DYNAMICS</th>
<th>OBSERVATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday afternoon</td>
<td>12-5:30</td>
<td>Registration and accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hand out the program materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday evening</td>
<td>5:30-6:30</td>
<td>Getting ready</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday evening</td>
<td>6:30-7:30</td>
<td>Introduction to event.</td>
<td>Ice breaker: Sweety Pie</td>
<td>Each couple will present themselves and tell us the special name used at home to refer to their partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday evening</td>
<td>7:30-8.30</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday night</td>
<td>8:30-9:15</td>
<td>Short talk on what the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy say about friendship to give the intervention plan a spiritual and theological foundation</td>
<td>They will dialogue on a quotation from the Spirit of Prophecy and pray together</td>
<td>It is very important to show how the Bible and science both stress the importance of friendship in marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday night</td>
<td>9:15</td>
<td>Time to rest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath morning</td>
<td>7:30-8:30</td>
<td>Time to get up and get ready</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath morning</td>
<td>8:30-9:30</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath morning</td>
<td>9:30-10:30</td>
<td>Lover´s walk – Climb the mountain</td>
<td>Each couple will make, with things found in nature, a representation of their marriage, with their initials and a topic which will include Jesus</td>
<td>We will give a prize to the best in creativity, beauty, theme, etc. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 *Complete Outline Table of Implementation* (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sabbath morning</th>
<th>10:30-10:45</th>
<th>10:45-11:30</th>
<th>Ice breaker - Lets care for our friendship</th>
<th>Balloons with the different stages or life events written on them were given to couples in intervals and they had to try and keep all of them in the air.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 min. break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Each ingredient will be presented by a short talk and then followed by an activity to practice what has been shared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12.45</td>
<td>1. Do you know your spouse?</td>
<td>Love Map</td>
<td>Activity to see how well they know each other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Affirmation</td>
<td>You’re an awesome person</td>
<td>Exercises on how to affirm your spouse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. The bidding process</td>
<td>Going once, going twice, going three times</td>
<td>Exercises on bidding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Positive communica-tion</td>
<td>Tips for Difficult Conversations</td>
<td>These sections will be interactive, with the couples helping with the examples and the resolutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath midday</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath afternoon</td>
<td>Time to rest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath afternoon</td>
<td>Finish the Recipe for Friendship with a short talk on Conflict Resolution and the TaDA theory on how to repair damage. First part of topic: Friendship in the Bed</td>
<td>5 to 1</td>
<td>Practicing the 5 to 1 ratio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath afternoon</td>
<td>15 min. break</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath afternoon</td>
<td>4:45-5:45</td>
<td>Second part of topic Friendship in the Bed</td>
<td>Ask me and, if I can, I will answer</td>
<td>This is an open section for questions and observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath afternoon</td>
<td>5:45-6:30</td>
<td>Surprise Activity</td>
<td>If my life would end. (Idea taken from handout …)</td>
<td>In the parking lot each couple will face each other and then will imagine that, because of an illness, life will be cut short. Then share what they feel and what they would do different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30-7:30</td>
<td>Time to get ready for Romantic Dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30-9:00</td>
<td>Romantic Dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30-9:00</td>
<td>Short talk on the word: PACTO (Covenant in Spanish) as an acrostic</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-10:30</td>
<td>Free time for going out. Camp fire</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Time to rest</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30-8:30</td>
<td>Wake up time and get ready for activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30-9:30</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30-10:30</td>
<td>Pentathlon of Best Friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td>Closing program</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment to support groups and dates</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give gift to each couple, thanks, and evaluation sheet is to be filled out</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>End the event with the Reset button where they forgive the shortcomings and promise to love and cherish each other.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This activity is like a vow renewal</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Activities:
1. Funny videos
2. Two brains video
3. Games
4. Dinner

The idea here is to have a great time with different activities, such as having some of the men do some cooking and some of the ladies do some house fixing and other games.
Description of Follow-up Sessions

The follow-up sessions were held in each of the churches and missionary group as well as in the homes. Each session had a format that allowed knowledge, interaction and either practice or homework. The outline of this session is as follows (for details go to appendix):

1. Session one:
   - Creating a Love Map
   - Exercise on appreciation
   - Home work on fondness and admiration

2. Session two:
   - Reflection on the importance of spending time together
   - Special moments to invest time with our spouse
   - Challenges when you want to plan time together
   - Homework based on the knowledge imparted

3. Session three:
   - Fill out the turning towards or away questionnaire and discuss it together
   - How to have conversations that reduce stress
   - Exercise on three things I would like to do with my partner and then plan together. Putting these things into action would be the homework.

4. Session four:
   - Exercise on team work in marriage
   - Friendship in bed questionnaire

5. Session five:
• Knee to Knee exercise (Practicing skills on communication)
• Post-test questionnaires
• Evaluation and election of District Marriage Club leaders
• Reflection on the ten commandments for a happy marriage
• Closing remarks

**Evaluation**

An evaluation sheet was given to the participants. Twelve aspects were considered:

1. Promotion for the Event
2. The Place of the Event
3. Introductory Topic
4. Topic “Friendship in the Bible”
5. Seminar: Recipe for Friendship
6. Topic on Sexuality
7. How Would You Evaluate the Dynamics
8. The Program in General
9. The Food
10. The Romantic Dinner
11. Dominion of the Topics by the Presenter
12. How Would You Evaluate the Whole Event

Answers were given using a five-point scale:

1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = regular, 4 = good, 5 = very good

**Conclusion**

As I implemented this project I must acknowledge three import outcomes:

1. I was personally blessed as a husband. I came to realize how importance friendship is within my marriage. I decided to practice what I preach and the result my marriage has grown and gotten stronger.
2. I witnessed to the power of God in the couples that participated. Some of them had gone to the retreat as a last chance to save their marriage and personally told me that they had made a decision to stay together. Others said they were greatly enriched. I saw many tears, laughs and emotions during the event.

3. I believe this project can be a blessing in other churches and places and will share it for others to benefit.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first presents a summation. The second is the conclusions of this research. The third section makes recommendations.

Summary

On the basis of the analysis of the implementation of this project, the findings from the theological reflection and literary research the summations are as follows:

Marriages are in crisis with 50% of all first time marriages ending in divorce (U. S. Census Bureau, 2004). The risk of divorce increases each time a person remarries (American Philological Association, n.d.). Marriages must be cared for and strengthened continually in the endeavor of preventing divorce. Empirical research has proven that there are workshops and seminars that are improving the quality of the marriage relationship between couples. Couples attending these seminars and workshops can have a life changing experience. These events can improve the overall quality of life and increase the couples’ well being and are very helpful in the prevention of many of the problems that often lead to marital distress (Burchard, 2003).

One way of helping married couples in the church stay together is by enhancing their intra-marital friendship. Love relationships start with friendship (McGinnis, 2004) and friendship is one of the pillars that support satisfying, long-term, romantic
relationships and marriages (Kidd, 2008). Scholars sustain that happy marriages are based on a deep friendship (Gottman & Silver, 1999). Fundamental to the Christian believe is that God created marriage for companionship as one of its core purposes (White, 1973).

**Conclusion**

I conclude this Project manuscript with my opening sentiments. As pastors, family life leaders in our churches, or other professionals in family, we have to not only face the fact that divorce is a serious issue in our society, but also that the consequences of divorce are devastating resulting in shattered families and many social problems. As a church we believe marriage to be a divine institution, therefore, the church has a unique and solemn responsibility both to prevent divorce and, should divorce occur, to heal as far as possible the wounds it causes (“Ministerial Association,” 2005).

My intervention had the intentional purpose of enhancing intra-marital friendship with the objective of nurturing the couples that participated as preventive medicine. The data for this study was collected from the 58 participants (29 couples) during the weekend spiritual retreat. The instruments used were the three questionnaires found in part one of the *Sound Relationship House* by the Gottman Institute (2001-2011, used by permission). The questionnaires considered the three levels that deal with the relationship’s friendship.

First is the Love Maps: This is to show how well the participating couples know each other’s inner psychological world, history, worries, stresses, joys, and hopes. The couple needs to be intimately familiar with each other’s world, for example, remembering major events in each other’s history, and updating their information continuously. This
knowledge helps develop the fortitude to weather marital storms (Gottman & Silver, 1999). Secondly, the Fondness and Admiration System: It focuses on the amount of affection and respect there is within the relationship. The couple needs to be aware of how critically important is the quality of their friendship, which is at the core of any good marriage. Fondness and admiration prevent the couple from being defeated by the four horsemen: criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling (Gottman & Silver, 1999). Thirdly is, Turning Towards or Away: This deals with being aware of bids for connection and turning towards them in order to create an emotional bank account. Building up emotional savings that can be very helpful when times get rough, or when they are faced with a major life stress or conflict. Emphasis is on the small moments of everyday life as the building blocks of relationship (Gottman & Silver, 1999).

At the beginning of the weekend event the questionnaires were given to the couples as a pre-test. Instructions on the importance of answering all items and how to fill in the circles was clarified. There were asked not to make any comment to their spouse or anybody else while answering the questionnaires. The questionnaires were filled out and immediately returned and codified for processing. The seminar offered during the retreat had the intentional purpose of enhancing friendship in marriage. All participants were asked to attend all sessions and activities of the retreat. At the end of the retreat the participants were given the dates for the follow-up sessions and reminded about their commitment to attend this meeting. During the following two months after the event, follow-up sessions were set in place in each of the churches and also the missionary group in order to practice the skills learned during the retreat. The post-test consisting of the same questionnaires was administered at the end of the two-month period during the
final follow-up session or personally to those who were not able to attend. They were also codified for processing. All respondents returned both the Pre-test and Post-test Questionnaires.

The three relevant findings after analyzing the data were the following:

1. The pooled post-test scores of all the scales applied increased significantly in the study population by the end of the intervention. Love Maps scale increased in 41 of the 58 participants representing 71%. Fondness and Admiration System scale increased in 27 participants representing 47%. And the Turning Towards or Turning Against scale increased in 28 participants representing 48%. The couples that increase in Love Maps scale were 12 or 41%. In the Fondness and Admiration System scale seven couples increased or 24%. And the couples that showed an increase in the Turning Towards or Against scale were seven or 24%.

2. Males and females increased their scores in a similar fashion in this intervention. In the Love Maps scale males that increased were 22 or 76% and females 19 or 66%. In the Fondness and Admiration System scale males that increased were 13 or 45% and females 15 or 52%. And the Turning Towards or Turning Against scale males that increased were 12 or 41% and 14 females or 48%.

3. The third and final finding that relevant to this research was that no significant correlation was found between the results of the post-test and the attendance to the follow-up sessions. This finding obligated the researcher to ask several questions.

Would this result suggest that the follow-up sessions must be evaluated in order to see if these should have been set up in another manner, or maybe a different curriculum should have been used? After a closer look at the way the follow up sessions were set up
including the flexibility in reference to the time of these meeting and the dates scheduled, the researcher believes that they were set up in a very efficient manner. An assessment of the curriculum suggests that the material was appropriate and in accordance with the objectives that has been established.

Could the lack of attendance to all of the follow-up session by all or a large percentage of the participants be reflected in this finding? The attendance record showed that: 25 or 43% of the 58 participants attended all five of the sessions. Seven or 12% attended four sessions. Eleven or 19% attended three sessions. Five or 9% attended two sessions. Four or 7% attended one session. Six or 10% did not attend any of the sessions. The inconsistency in the attendance might be partially responsible for this finding, or maybe only reflecting the growth that had already occurred during the retreat.

This result could also suggest that the intervention during the weekend spiritual retreat had such an impact that the support groups were not necessary or did not make a significant difference.

In order to find answers to these questions, the evaluation sheets that had been returned were analyzed. Fifty-five of the 58 participants returned the evaluation sheet representing 95%. Twelve items were considered and answers were given using a five-point Likert scale: 1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = regular, 4 = good, 5 = very good. These aspects were:

1. Promotion for the Event
2. The Place of the Event
3. Introductory Topic
4. Topic “Friendship in the Bible”
5. Seminar: Recipe for Friendship
6. Topic on Sexuality
7. How Would You Evaluate the Dynamics
8. The Program in General
The first analysis of the evaluation was done, by averaging the answers on the questionnaires the participants returned. The averages are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Average</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotion for the Event</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Place of the Event</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Topic</td>
<td>4.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic “Friendship in the Bible”</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar: Recipe for Friendship</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic on Sexuality</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Would You Evaluate the Dynamics</td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Program in General</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Food</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Romantic Dinner</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion of the Topics by the Presenter</td>
<td>4.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Would You Evaluate the Whole Event</td>
<td>4.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first 11 items, which dealt with the different parts and activities of the events, yield an overall averaged score of 4.60. Item twelve, where the respondents graded the event in general yield an average score 4.87. In either case, the average was high.

A second analysis of the evaluation was done, by averaging the answers of the seven items that were directly related to the intervention. The following are the results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Topic</td>
<td>4.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic “Friendship in the Bible”</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar: Recipe for Friendship</td>
<td>4.64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic on Sexuality</td>
<td>4.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>How Would You Evaluate the Dynamics</td>
<td>4.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Program in General</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion of the Topics by the Presenter</td>
<td>4.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These seven items have an average of 4.69.
The average shows that the event had a very strong impact, which could have influenced the poor correlation with the post-test and the attendance at the follow up sessions. This would also suggest that the program was well prepared and presented.

This research had a huge impact on the researcher’s marriage. It has blessed the quality of my own marriage and enhanced the friendship I share with my wife. All through the process, whether it was the research process or the implementation itself, our relationship was deeply nurtured. I am aware that my own marriage is stronger and we can use the skills we have learned to keep growing.

Recommendations

Several recommendations are now put forward to pastors, family life leaders in church ministries and other professionals working with married couples.

Hispanic Pastors, family life leaders in our churches and other professionals that work with marriages should use this research as a resource to strengthen marriages through seminars and workshops.

Further research in the area of intra-marital friendship should be done building on the work of this research.

This research should be translated into English so as to address a different culture-context and used in marriage seminars and workshops.
APPENDIX

Seminar: My spouse and I; Unmatchable Friends
Temas Uno

¡QUE VIVA LA AMISTAD!
TU CONUYE - TU MEJOR AMIGO(A)

El divorcio
• Tasa de divorcio alto entre los 1-7 años (+alto 5.2) y entre los 16-20 años (+alto 16.4)
• Divorcio temprano predecible si existe un alto nivel de comunicación negativa durante los conflictos (4 jinetes)
• Divorcio tardío predecible si existe bajo nivel de comunicación positiva durante los conflictos o en momentos de no-conflictos

Los cuatro jinetes apocalípticos del matrimonio
• La crítica
• El desprecio
• Estar siempre al defensor
• La indiferencia y el silencio

Divorcio tardío
• Distancia o alejamiento emocional (pocas emociones buenas)
• Ya no hay afirmación o admiración
• Poca risa
• Pocas conexiones en la comunicación (no se aprovechan los regalos)

MI CONUGE Y YO, AMIGOS INIGUALABLES

Logrónd matrimonios duraderos
• Incrementar la comunicación positiva en términos generales
• Bajar la comunicación negativa en medio de una discusión de un conflicto
• Incrementar la comunicación positiva en medio de una discusión de un conflicto
• Cambios en la conducta no es suficiente
• Escuchar activamente no es suficiente
• Entrenar para una buena comunicación para la solución de problemas no es suficiente
• Como negociar, compartir y comprometerse con la relación
• Entrenamiento en el manejo de estrés y sobre todo stress spillover
• Manejo y aceptación de emociones
• Buena administración del dinero
• Relaciones sexuales satisfactorias
• Luchar por ser los mejores amigos

LO QUE LA BIBLIA Y EL ESPIRITU DE PROFECIA DICEN

Mi esposo y mejor amigo
• Prov. 17:9 El que cubre la falta busca amistad, Mas el que divulga, aparta al amigo.
• Prov. 17:17 En todo tiempo ama el amigo, Y es como un hermano en tiempo de angustia.
• Prov. 18:24 El hombre que tiene amigos ha de mostrarse amigo, Y amigo hay más unido que un hermano.
• Cantares 5:10-16 Mi amado es blanco y rubio, Señalado entre diez mil. Su cabeza como oro finísimo; Sus cabellos resplandecientes, negros como el cuervo. Sus ojos, como palomas junto a los arroyos de las aguas, Que se...
Página 4

lavan con leche, y a la perfección colo-
cados. Sus mejillas, como una rara
especie aromática, como fragantes flores; Sus labios, como líneas
que destiñen mirra fragante. Sus manos, como anillos de oro en-
gastados de jaspe. Su cuerpo, como claro marfil cubierto de zafí-
ros. Sus piernas, como columnas de mármol fundadas sobre bases
de oro fino; Su aspecto como el Libano, escogido como los cedros.
Su paladar, dulcísimo, y todo él codiciable. Tal es mi amado, tal es
mi amigo. Oh doncelles de Jerusalén.

Mi esposa y mejor amiga

* Cantares 1:9 A yegua de los carros de Faraón te he comparado,
amiga mía.
* Cantares 1:15 He aquí que tú eres hermosa, amiga mía; He aquí
eres bella; tus ojos son como palomas.
* Cantares 2:2 He aquí que tú eres hermosa, amiga mía
* Cantares 2:10 Mi amado habló, y me dijo: Levántate, oh amiga
mía, hermosa mía, y ven.

Mi esposa y mejor amiga

* Cantares 4:1.7 He aquí que tú eres hermosa, amiga mía; he aquí
que tú eres hermosa; Tus ojos entre tus guedejas como de paloma;
Tus cabellos como manadas de cabras que se recuestan en las la-
deras de Galaad. Tus dientes como manadas de ovejas trasgúlar-
das, que suben del lavadero, todas con crías gemelas, Y ninguna
entre ellas estéll. Tus labios como hilo de grana, y tu hable hermo-
sa; tus mejillas, como coches de granado detrás de tu vela. Tu cue-
lo, como la torre de David, edificada para amosía. Mil escudos
están colgados en ella, todos escudos de valientes. Tus dos pe-
chos, como gemelos de gacela, que se apacientan entre lírios.
Hasta que apunte el día y huyan las sombras, me iré al monte de la
mirra, y al collado del incenso. Toda tú eres hermosa, amiga mía,
y en ti no hay mancha.

Consejo de una amiga

*Aunque se susciten dificultades, congojas y dolencias, no abri-
guen jamás ni el miedo ni la muer del pensamiento de que su unión
es un error o una decepción. Resuélvelos cada uno de ellos a ser
para el otro cuanto le sea posible. Sigan teniendo uno para con

otro los miramientos que se tenían al
principio. Allíntense uno a otro en las
luchas de la vida. Procuro cada uno favorecer la felicidad del otro.
Haya entre ellos amor mutuo y soportense uno a otro. Entonces el
casamiento, en vez de ser la terminación del amor, será más bien
su verdadero comienzo. El calor de la verdadera amistad, el amor
que une un corazón al otro, es sabor anticipado de los gozos del
cielo. Hagar Cristiano cap. 16

UNA RECETAS DE AMISTAD

Tema 2 y 3

Mapa de amor

*Cuento más conoces acerca de tu pareja mejor, es fundamental
*Qué le causa estrés, cuáles son sus intereses, valores, metas
personales, etc.
*Este punto es más crítico para los hombres

CREANDO UN MAPA DE AMISTAD

Instrucciones: Primero toma un tiempo para contestar a solas este cuestiona-
rio. Luego con su pareja consiga las respuestas. Si tienen problemas para conces-
tar algo en particular subrayelo y luego platican un poco más acerca de los
puntos pendientes. Si tienen varios puntos que tratar eso es bueno, favorece la
comunicación.

1. Comida favorita
2. Preferencias o intereses especiales
3. Dos mejores amigos
4. Pasatiempo o ritual
5. Las dos personas más admiradas
6. Película favorita
7. Programa de televisión favorito
8. Animal favorito
9. Lugar ideal para tomar unas vacaciones
10. Deporte favorito para ir y jugar
11. Primera casa que compraste o si ganaste la lotería
12. Una cosa que le gustaría cambiar de tu persona

106
Regulador los conflictos
• Cuando la relación marcha en dirección a lo positivo existe la capacidad de permitir a la pareja que sea ha equivocado de reparar el daño.

Reparando el daño
Teoría Td-Da (Gottman)
• Lo más pronto que nos demos cuenta de un daño, más fácil será repararlo. (Reparación activa) Tomar acción cuanto antes.
• Lo que hará que funcione bien la reparación es la calidad de la relación.
• Cocierto 5 a 1, por cada comentario negativo debe haber 5 positivos.
• Tienes que tener ahorros en el banco de las emociones.

Permitir que los sueños se hagan realidad
• Cada uno tiene un sueño que emerge del matrimonio.
• Cuando el matrimonio es seguro, ambos sueños pueden ser realidad.

Tema Cuatro

Amistad en la cama

“ASÍ ESTÁ ESCRITO”
Una mirada a los principios Bíblicos de la sexualidad

Nuestro origen
Génesis 1:26-28
• Todo el ser fue creado por Dios inclusive nuestros genitales, zonas erógenas, aparato reproductor. (PERFECTOS)
• Somos seres sexualizados.
• Dios bendijo a la pareja incluyendo su sexualidad y las relaciones sexuales.

Génesis 2:24
Las relaciones sexuales son santas, limpias, sagradas y divinas.

Mi conquiste y yo, amigos inigualables

Grandes Pasajes
Proverbios 5:15-19
1. Exclusivo
2. Excluyente
3. Bendito y una bendición
4. Debe proporcionar gozo
5. Los rituales son importantes (cuidado con la rutina)
6. Basada en una relación de amor
7. Todo el cuerpo es santo y participa en el encuentro íntimo
8. Contacto buco-genital es parte de la experiencia
9. Es una sana recreación, es la celebración del amor
10. Tiempo no regulado

Cantares 4:16, 5:1
• Iniciativa generalmente del hombre pero no exclusivo de el.
• Ambiente agradable
• Higiene
• Fiesta
• Cama no el único lugar (privacidad)

1 Corintios 7:3-5
• Deber Mutuo, ambos tienen el derecho de la satisfacción, pertenencia, no castigar o privar, satisfacción auxilios en contra de la tentación

Apo. 21:2 “Cómo una esposa ataviada para su esposo”
• Cuidado en el arreglo personal
• El Hombre se excita por la vista

Efesios 5:31, 32
• En encuentro íntimo se compara con la relación del creyente con Cristo
• Un gran misterio

Retiro de matrimonios
### TEST DE FUNCIONAMIENTO

**Instrucciones:** Pon un círculo alrededor del número 1 al 4 según indicas que tan de acuerdo o desacuerdo estés. Favor de colocar un solo círculo en cada declaración.

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<th>Totalmente de acuerdo</th>
<th>De acuerdo</th>
<th>En desacuerdo</th>
<th>Totalmente desacuerdo</th>
<th>Calificación</th>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### TEMA 5
**INVIRTIENDO EN LA AMISTAD**

**PENTATLÓN DINAMICO**
1. TROTANDO CON CONFIANZA
2. SECRETO DE AMOR
3. ULTIMATUM
4. AMISTAD EN LA CAMA
5. LIMPIANDO EL AIRE

**TICK TACK TICK TACK**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VIERNES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay que empezar</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panza llena corazón...</td>
<td>7:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comran al seminario</td>
<td>8:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A descansar o que!</td>
<td>9:45 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SABADO</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ya cantó el gallo</td>
<td>7:30 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pónganse guapos</td>
<td>7:35 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¡A desssaaaayyyyymaaaaar!</td>
<td>8:30 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camina de enamorados</td>
<td>9:30 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materia gris en acción</td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La quebradita, perdón break</td>
<td>11:30 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoremos juntos a Dios</td>
<td>11:45 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¡¡¡Amen!! y al plato</td>
<td>12:45 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pueden descansar o...</td>
<td>1:45 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SÁBADO PM CONT.
A revolucionar las neuronas 3:00
Un pequeño respiro 4:30
Esas neuronas quieren acción 4:45
¡Waw!, ¡Actividad sorpresa! 5:45
Ya viene la cena romántica 6:30
M M M ya llegó la cena 7:30
¡Yes, tiempo libre! 9:00
Dulces sueños o lo que sea 10:30

DOMINGO
Estas son las mañanitas... 7:30
Bañaditos y listos para el día 7:35
Pa que ya no ruga el estómago 8:30
Pentatlón de enamorados 9:30
Pues ni modo...clausura 10:30

Felicitades por participar y muchas bendiciones.

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RETIRO DE MATRIMONIOS

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REFERENCE LIST


VITA

Name: Nathan Delima
Email: nathndelima@msn.com

Background: Date of Birth: December 22, 1965
Spouse: Sofia Delima
Children: Sharon, Nathali, and Nathan

Employment History:

District Pastor Kentucky Tennessee, Conference 2013-
District Pastor Chicago, Lake Region Conference 2010-2013
Associate Pastor Eagle Pass, Texas District 2009-2010
Academy Chaplain and Associate Pastor McAllen, Texas 2008-2009
District Pastor Tula, Hidalgo, Mexico 2007-2008
District Pastor Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico 2005-2007
District Pastor Tuxpan, Veracruz, Mexico 2003-2005
Department Conference Director Central Mision, Mexico 2001-2003
District Pastor Toluca, Mexico 1998-2001
District pastor Circunvalacion District, Guadalajara, Mexico 1996-1997
Department Conference Director West Mission Mexico 1992-1996
District Pastor Tepic, Nayarit, Mexico 1988-1992
District Pastor Tepic, Nayarit, Mexico 1988-1992
Associate Pastor West Mission, Mexico 1987

Education:

Andrews University: 2007-2015, DMin Family
Montemorelos University: 1991-2001, M. A. in Family
Montemorelos University: 1983-1987, B. A. in Theology

Interest:

Family Life Educator
Pastoral Ministry