



*Intimate Encounters* is a time tested, practical guide to discovering the secrets of a really good marriage. The kit provides everything you need to help couples build the caring-connected relationships they desire.

[Click here to learn more.](#)



Download the Great Commandment Network app and work through the Reboot Marriage program



## I. Every human relationship needs an occasional Reboot!

“...in this world we have tribulation...”(John 16:33)—and some of our “tribulation” comes through marriage, families, friendships, neighbors and co-workers!

To *Reboot* is to start again, to reset, to clear certain memory to make it work properly once again—and then proceed.

- Marriages and other relationships need a “Reboot”
  - When we’ve disappointed one another
  - When we’ve forgotten important dates—like birthdays or anniversaries
  - When we’ve lost our temper or been unkind

In marriage, we often need a *Reboot* as we make our way through various stages of marriage:

- When the honeymoon stage subsides, a second honeymoon often helps
- After children come along, a weekend away is recommended
- When the “nest” is empty, a cruise can often be just what you need
- One of the most common relational “disconnects” happens when one person is disappointed or rejected, upset or irritated—and instead of responding with care or compassion, we give facts or reasons, we give “pep talks” or try to “fix it”—or even worse, we communicate how we’re even more hurt or upset!

Husbands, can you identify?

Most of us have had the experience of sharing with someone only to have them say, “you think that was bad—let me tell you what happened to me!”

This *disconnect* in relationships is so common that even super-heroes have difficulty emotionally responding. **Click on the image** and see if you can identify all the wrong responses that Spiderman gives to Mary Jane.

## II. “Serving One Another” is critical to healthy relationships

- Imagine this scene: A wife shows up at her husband’s office to excitedly announce to him “there’s an exhibition basketball event



**M-1** Imparting the gospel and one's very life in daily activities and relationships, vocation and community

## Colossians 3:16 Moments for Pastors

*"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another..."*

*Pause quietly, before teaching and admonishing others.*

- Are you known as a servant among those who know you best?
- Would your spouse, children, friends, and those who work alongside you describe you as a servant?
- Is your life characterized by making sacrifices for those who are closest to you?
- Do you serve your wife or husband, children, and friends?
- Are your loved ones the first to benefit from edifying words and daily expressions of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Ephesians 4:29; Galatians 5:22, 23)?

Listen for the Spirit to speak to your heart about any areas of needed change...and then be prepared to vulnerably share this with your congregation.

*Responding to the Lord this way will help prepare you to lead your people into similar loving response.*

coming to town this Saturday and knowing you would love it, *I'm going to get tickets!*"—to which he responds—*"It's such beautiful weather and knowing you've been wanting to go on a family picnic, I've planned a surprise time at the lake for us."*

*"No, I want to take you to the game."*

*"No, I want to take you on a picnic."*—an argument is about to ensue over who gets to serve the other! This type of problem you can handle!—this is "serving one another in love."

- Teen example: Imagine two teenagers arguing over who gets to give their gift to each other first at Christmas!—this is "serving one another in love."
- Kids example: Imagine two children arguing over who gets to say, "I'm sorry" first!—this is "serving one another in love."

### Encounter Jesus

"I am among you as one who serves..." (Luke 22:27) We are never more like Jesus than when we unselfishly focus on serving. The Holy Spirit within us longs to serve and serve well. Therefore, a devoted follower of Christ will become a humble servant who serves those around him or her. Success will then mean serving more and more people over the course of our life. Imagine the scene of the Last Supper.

**Pause to consider Christ** bowing before His followers in the upper room. Only hours before His own betrayal and torment, Jesus girds Himself with a towel, takes a basin of water, and begins once more to serve those He loves. He concludes this tender time with these words: "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).

### III. "Serving One Another" requires the Spirit's freedom

*"Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." (2 Cor. 3:17)*

#### ■ The Paradox of Freedom

We can easily miss the biblical paradox of freedom. Christ often spoke of the paradoxical nature of His kingdom—lose your life and find it (Matt. 16:25), love those who despise you (Matt. 5:44), die in order to bear fruit (John 12:24). Perhaps the greatest biblical paradox concerns "freedom." The paradoxical message is presented in various settings and uses a variety of analogies, but the message seems clear: surrender to God's Spirit, God's son, and God's love and you'll experience true freedom. "When the Son sets you free, you're free indeed" (John 8:36).

#### ■ Held Captive By Something

*"For the love of Christ constrains us..." (2 Cor. 5:14)*

Pastors, share your own Col. 3:16 reflection: "I recall recently when I could have \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_" then invite your congregation to have their own moment to listen for the Spirit to speak.

*i.e. I could have apologized after I was impatient with the family, but I got busy with my projects and tried to ignore what happened.*



L-2 Listening to and hearing God for direction and discernment

**The Greek word *sunecho* used in 2 Corinthians 5:14 to describe the *captivating, constraining love of Christ* is also used to describe being held captive by fear (Luke 8:37), by the crowd (Luke 8:45), and by enemies (Luke 19:43).**



L-3 Experiencing God as He really is through deepened intimacy with Him



**Click here** to take the Relational Needs Inventory

### Experience Scripture

**Pause now**, asking the Holy Spirit to speak as clearly as He did for young Samuel, “*Speak Lord, your servant is listening.*” (1 Samuel 3:8-9)

In the quietness of this moment, speak to me Lord about a recent time when I missed the opportunity to serve.

- I could have listened more but missed it
- I could have apologized, but didn't
- I could have helped more, but...
- I could have shared more appreciation, but...

As the Holy Spirit speaks, “serve the Lord” with a humble and yielded heart: “Lord, make me a better servant; I ask you Holy Spirit to bring freedom from *myself* in order to better serve others in love.”

Scripture is filled with references to the pervasiveness of our captivity. As non-believers we once “Walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). The Greek word *sunecho* used in 2 Corinthians 5:14 to describe the *captivating, constraining love of Christ* is also used to describe being held captive by fear (Luke 8:37), by the crowd (Luke 8:45), and by enemies (Luke 19:43). Paul uses the same word to describe being “hard pressed from both directions” as he shares the dilemma of wanting to be with Christ yet remaining with the Philippians (Phil. 1:23). It seems that *captivity* is inevitable! But by God’s grace we can choose our master! Will it be fear, the crowd, enemies, the course of this world, or will it be the constraining love of Christ?

### Encountering Jesus: Choose Love!

**Pause and reflect** on the Spirit’s prompting first to *choose against*:

- Fears—what fears might too often prompt anxieties and uncertainties?
- The “crowd”—what unhelpful relationships might hinder your full expression of His love?
- Enemies—like anger or selfishness, busyness or pride and then embrace His grace to choose love.

Meditate quietly on Calvary and the choice of Jesus to choose love, to choose love towards YOU!

Now consider praying a prayer of yieldedness: “Lord Jesus, free me from anything that binds me other than your love; liberate me from fears or even relationships that hinder expressing your love; free me from all bondage that I can better express your life and love.”

To continue your journey in His love, be sure to download the gifted *Reboot Marriage App*. It provides Date Night ideas and conversations using assessments and video clips. You can take a 50 question *Relational Needs Inventory*, learn one another’s Top 3 Relational Needs and then increase “serving one another in love.”

And secondly, each of us know couples who are struggling, couples who need Jesus—so let’s plan a *Double Date* with one of these couples this Valentine’s season.

## IV. Serving One Another is empowered by His love

*“God has poured out His love into our hearts.” (Rom. 5:5)*

### ■ Experiences of Captivating Love

It's *His* love that is constraining, motivating and empowering. Therefore, we should find evidences of this divine love lived out in our lives and marriages.

- **His love initiates**—it moves first, never waiting around to be asked or invited! “None seek after God, no not one!” (Romans 3:11), but rather, “he came to seek and save” (Luke 19:10). Initiate, initiate, initiate toward those God has called you to love—beginning with your spouse!
  - Initiate apologies when you've messed up!
  - Initiate appreciation for even little things.
  - Initiate “just thinking of you” messages regularly.
  - Initiate support around the house and with the kids.
- **His love sacrifices**—it's free but it's not cheap; it cost His Son. “God so loved that He gave” (John 3:16). “As Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25). Sacrifice a little of your time, convenience, self-interest in communication of His love toward others—beginning with your spouse.
- **His love rejoices**—it gives with gladness, thrilled at the opportunity to care for others. “And when he has found the lost sheep, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing” (Luke 15:5). “And were sharing with all, as anyone might have need, and day by day continuing with one mind with gladness” (Acts 2:45-46). Rejoice often over the privilege of giving. Reflect often on the wonder of having anything of eternal significance to share.
- **His love knows no boundaries**—After Jesus confirms the imperative of the Greatest Commandment and prepares to share His illustration from the Good Samaritan, He's confronted with the age old question, ..“who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:39) The question is in essence, “What are the limits of such love?” And Christ's answer challenges us to see people the way God sees them so we can love them the way God loves them. Each and every human bears the “Imago Dei”—the image of God, and therefore have a worth, value, and dignity declared by Him. (Gen. 1:26) They may be—as we once were—being held captive by the prince of the power of the air, but they've not lost the image of God; fallen in nature, separated from the life of God, they still, as humans, bear his image (see Gen. 9:16; James 3:8-9). Thus, even as He “demonstrated love while we were yet sinners...” (Rom. 5:8)—we're called and empowered to demonstrate this same wondrous love—freely we have received it, freely we give it!
- Before we close our time together with a final meditation, let's consider again the opportunity we have to pray for, care for, and share with another couple who could benefit from His love; two soon to be released movies provide excellent opportunities to continue your double dating:

For Prayer-Care-Share ideas, visit [www.Love2020.com](http://www.Love2020.com)

- *“Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me...”* (Matt. 11:29-30)

In one of the most insightful passages on this paradox of freedom, we find Christ sharing the truth of finding true “rest.” *Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me* “(Matt. 11:29-30). Submitting to His yoke brings blessing! Somehow our *yielding* brings liberty as His yoke is easy and light. Captivity brings true freedom.

- Take my Yoke Upon You—A Meditation  
Or share the image along with your own meditation



[Click Here for a Matt. 11:29-30 meditation](#)

### **Encounter Jesus**

Let's consider together for a moment the invitation of Jesus in Matthew chapter 11. That we can take His yoke upon us and learn of Him. The image He portrays in the text is of Christ standing before us but He stands in a yoke and the other side of the yoke is empty. Imagine that Christ stands before you as the one who is love and invites you to come and take the other side of the yoke.

For a few moments, let's meditate together on the truth of this text. Maybe bow our heads together in prayer and if you're close enough, maybe hold hands with your partner, and let's just allow the Holy Spirit to take the truth of scripture deeply into our hearts and spirits as we meditate. Would you picture Christ, however you imagine Him, sandaled feet or flowing robes or bearded face, maybe even the resurrected Christ who stands before you, and yet as you look closer, He stands before you in a yoke and the other side of the yoke is empty.

Imagine now the whispered words of Jesus, maybe first to husbands, as the Lord would say to you, “I’m often times thinking of her, taking thought of her, encouraging her, affirming her, but a great deal of the time I do it without you. Husbands would you come and take the other side of this yoke and together, let’s love her well.”

Wives in a similar way, maybe as you imagine Christ standing before you in His side of the yoke. He says to you, “Would you come now ma’am and take the other side of this yoke? Because I am often times supporting and comforting and affirming your husband. But a great deal of the time maybe I do it without you, I do it alone.”

Would you come now and take the other side of the yoke that you might learn of Him, learn what He knows about your husband; learn what he knows about your wife, that together you might co-labor with Christ to love this other person well? Would you now allow the Holy Spirit to take a new image deeply into your hearts and spirits that it might radically change our co-laboring with Christ? Would you picture now yourself coming and standing beside Christ in the other side of the yoke? That together with Christ you might love this one person well to the glory of Jesus we ask. Amen.