

A romantic close-up of a bride and groom about to kiss. The groom is on the left, wearing a dark suit and tie, with his eyes closed and a slight smile. The bride is on the right, wearing a white wedding dress and veil, also with her eyes closed. They are leaning in, their faces just inches apart. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

ANTHONY ABBIN

What I Wish I Knew Before Marriage

A Truth-Filled Guide
for the Heart

COVER PAGE

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By Anthony Abbin

TITLE PAGE

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New King James Version (NKJV). Scripture references marked otherwise will be indicated clearly.

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First Edition.

DEDICATION

To Grace—my wife, my witness, my wonder.

And to everyone still waiting, still healing, or still hoping for a love that glorifies God.

This is for you.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: WHY THIS MESSAGE MATTERS NOW

I didn't write this book because I got everything right. I wrote it because I got enough wrong to finally see what matters.

We prepare for weddings, but not for marriage. We chase feelings, but not formation. And we assume love is enough when love without wisdom is just a wildfire.

This is not a book of regret. It's a book of revelation. Eleven truths I wish I had grasped before I made promises I didn't fully understand. This is for singles, for the engaged, for the struggling, and for the recovering.

If you're looking for easy answers or romantic clichés, this isn't it. But if you want truth that will search you, strengthen you, and help you walk in love that lasts, welcome.

Let's walk through the lessons that can turn heartbreak into wisdom, and fear into preparation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Prepared for the Wedding, Not the Marriage

Chapter 1

Love Is Not Enough — You Need Understanding

Chapter 2

Marriage Will Expose You — Not Just Your Spouse

Chapter 3

You're Not Just Marrying a Person — You're Marrying a Pattern

Chapter 4

Sex Is a Fire — Not a Foundation

Chapter 5

You Must Learn to Forgive Before You Get Married

Chapter 6

You Can't Heal Through Your Spouse — Only Through Christ

Chapter 7

Communication Will Make or Break Intimacy

Chapter 8

God Cares Why You Marry — Not Just Who You Marry

Chapter 9

Without a Shared Vision, You'll Drift Apart

Chapter 10

You're Not Ready for Marriage Until You Know How to Die to Self

Chapter 11

Marriage Is Spiritual Warfare

Conclusion

What I Know Now

Bonus Section

Reflection Prompts and Conversation Starters

About the Author

Call to Action

INTRODUCTION

Prepared for the Wedding, Not the Marriage

We spend months preparing for a one-day event and call it readiness. We stress over colors, venues, photos, and who sits where, but neglect the deeper questions: Can I love someone sacrificially when I don't feel loved back? Do I know how to stay faithful when I feel disappointed? Do I have a vision that outlives my emotions?

I was ready for a wedding. I wasn't ready for a marriage.

Like most people, I assumed sincerity was the same thing as maturity. That good intentions would somehow make up for what I didn't understand. But marriage is not sustained by passion. It is sustained by principle.

This book is not a list of complaints or criticisms. It is a trail of wisdom — lit with fire, tears, and grace. It's what I wish someone had sat me down to say before I made one of the most sacred, lifelong decisions of my life.

Marriage is not for the perfect. It's for the prepared. If you're willing to grow, willing to be honest, and willing to let God form your heart, this book will become more than advice — it will become a foundation.

Let's begin with the first truth I had to learn:

CHAPTER 1

Love Is Not Enough — You Need Understanding

"Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches."

— Proverbs 24:3–4

We all think love is enough — until we wake up one day and realize it isn't.

I loved her. That wasn't the problem. I just didn't know how to handle conflict. I didn't know how to listen without fixing. I didn't know that love without understanding feels like violence to a wounded heart.

The world teaches us that feelings are the foundation. But Scripture says otherwise. Marriage, like any house, is built on wisdom, established by understanding, and filled with richness through knowledge.

Love can light the fire. But it is wisdom that keeps it from burning down the house.

What Understanding Actually Means

Understanding is not agreement. It's not saying, "You're right." It's saying, "I see you."

To understand someone is to study them with humility and care. It's emotional discipleship. It means listening without assuming, validating without defending, and serving without scorekeeping.

You cannot love someone well if you are unwilling to understand their wounds, their history, their silence, or even their defensiveness. What frustrates you may not be rebellion — it may be survival.

Understanding asks, "What shaped you?" instead of "Why are you like this?"

The Danger of Assumed Compatibility

Many people marry chemistry but forget that compatibility is not just similarity — it's adaptability. Can you stretch to meet the other in love when they feel distant? Can you navigate different personalities, trauma layers, and emotional cycles with patience and spiritual sensitivity?

You're not marrying a robot. You're marrying a story. Understanding is how you read that story well.

The Role of the Holy Spirit

Understanding isn't just emotional — it's spiritual. The Holy Spirit gives discernment beyond human intellect. He reveals the hidden reasons, the root issues, and the quiet cries of your spouse's heart.

This is why prayer must be part of your preparation. Not just to pray for a spouse, but to pray to be the kind of person who understands them. Ask the Lord to give you eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart that doesn't just respond — but ministers.

What This Means Practically

- Read books about personality, emotional health, and biblical marriage.
- Watch how your potential spouse handles conflict, not just compliments.
- Ask hard questions about childhood, dreams, fears, and forgiveness.
- Listen more than you talk. Don't just hear — interpret with grace.
- Don't confuse passion for wisdom. Chemistry is not covenant.

Closing Reflection

You can love someone deeply and still hurt them unintentionally. Love that does not grow in understanding becomes reckless. It's like driving fast with no brakes — thrilling at first, but dangerous in the long run.

Ask God to make you a builder — not just a lover.

Prayer:

Lord, I thank You for the love You've placed in my heart. But I ask You for more than love — give me understanding. Make me patient, discerning, humble, and wise. Teach me how to build, not just feel. Let my love be safe, stable, and rooted in truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Marriage Will Expose You — Not Just Your Spouse

"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

— Genesis 2:25

The beauty of that verse is often lost on us. Adam and Eve were fully exposed — physically, emotionally, spiritually — and yet they stood in that garden with no shame, no hiding, no fear. That is the original picture of marriage: naked and unashamed.

But most of us enter marriage with fig leaves. We've learned to hide — not just from our spouse, but from ourselves.

Marriage Doesn't Just Show You Who They Are. It Shows You Who You Are.

Before I got married, I thought I was patient. Marriage revealed my temper.

I thought I was humble. Marriage exposed my pride.

I thought I knew how to love. Marriage revealed how deeply I still needed to be loved by God.

Your spouse is not your mirror. Your responses are.

Every complaint, every overreaction, every shutdown or withdrawal is a sign — not just of who they are, but of who you are becoming.

Marriage presses on your character like heat to metal. Whatever is hidden in your heart rises to the surface when you live in close proximity with another flawed human being.

It's not a curse. It's mercy.

God uses marriage to disciple you.

What You've Buried Will Get Resurrected

Marriage is a divine excavation. The triggers you thought you had under control... the trauma you assumed was healed... the pride you thought you left behind... it all rises when love becomes daily, not dreamy.

God doesn't expose you to embarrass you. He exposes you to free you.

If you hide from your exposure, you delay your transformation. But if you let the Holy Spirit lead you through your broken places, you won't just be a better spouse — you'll be a more whole person.

Blame Is a Temptation. But Ownership Is a Breakthrough.

It's easy to make your spouse the reason you're angry, distant, or bitter. But growth begins when you ask the harder question: "Why did I react like that?"

You're not responsible for their behavior, but you are responsible for your response.

Maturity means saying, "This isn't just about what they said. It's about what it touched in me."

Marriage Is a Mirror, Not a Stage

Social media has turned relationships into performances. But real marriage is not for likes — it's for legacy. It won't always be pretty. But it will always be revealing.

Stop trying to "look" married and start becoming whole.

The first couple hid behind fig leaves because of sin. We still do that today — but now our fig leaves are silence, sarcasm, busyness, pride, or spiritual language that hides emotional immaturity.

But God's desire has not changed. He still wants you naked and unashamed. Honest. Safe. Whole.

And that means letting Him work on your heart through the uncomfortable moments.

What This Means Practically

- Pay attention to what makes you angry, anxious, or defensive — those are areas to surrender.
- Don't just pray for your spouse to change. Ask God what He wants to change in you.
- Be honest in counseling or mentorship. Healing doesn't come from pretending.
- Take responsibility when you hurt your partner. Don't justify it.
- Learn to apologize fully. Not "I'm sorry you felt that way," but "I'm sorry for what I did."

Closing Reflection

Marriage is not just exposure. It is invitation.

An invitation to grow. To heal. To stop hiding.

And to become the kind of person who doesn't just love well, but lives honestly.

Prayer:

Father, I don't want to hide anymore. Use every part of this relationship to shape me. Search me, try me, break the pride in me, and build the character of Christ in me. Help me to be honest, humble, and whole. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CHAPTER 3

You're Not Just Marrying a Person — You're Marrying a Pattern

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

— Exodus 34:7 (ESV)

You may fall in love with someone's personality, but you live with their patterns.

It's not romantic, but it's real: marriage is not just about who your spouse is today — it's about everything that shaped them before you met.

Their family, their trauma, their beliefs, their habits, their fears — those things don't disappear at the altar. They move in with you.

And so do yours.

Patterns Don't Lie — Even If People Do

You can say "I'll change," but your patterns will prove the truth.

You can say "He's different now," but if his default response to pressure is silence, anger, or manipulation — that's a pattern.

Patterns are deeper than words. They are ingrained responses formed over time. And unless they are brought to light, healed, and replaced, they will repeat — sometimes violently.

You don't just marry their dreams. You marry their defaults.

Bloodline Realities

The Bible does not shy away from generational influence. Whether it's Abraham lying about Sarah, Isaac lying about Rebekah, or Jacob deceiving his father — you see patterns handed down.

That's not coincidence. That's spiritual inheritance.

Many couples struggle, not because they don't love each other, but because they don't recognize the spiritual and emotional baggage they've both brought in. And where there's no awareness, there can be no intentionality.

What runs in the bloodline may try to run in the marriage.

Patterns of:

- Control
- Withdrawal
- Sexual addiction
- Emotional neglect
- Overspending
- Anger or verbal abuse
- Manipulation through religion or silence

These patterns may not be obvious in courtship. But they don't stay hidden in covenant.

Unaddressed Trauma Always Finds a Voice

Many people enter marriage hoping love will heal what therapy, prayer, and repentance have never touched. But hope isn't a healing plan. Love can't erase what only surrender can heal.

If you were never taught how to process pain, you will project pain. If your spouse was raised in chaos, they may unknowingly create chaos just to feel normal.

The past doesn't go away because you're in love. The past only breaks when it's confronted in truth.

You Can Break the Pattern — But Not by Pretending

You don't have to be perfect to be married. But you do have to be honest.

Before marriage, ask questions:

- What's your family like?
- What's your relationship with your parents?
- What were the dominant emotions in your home growing up?
- How did people handle conflict, failure, money, and emotions?

Don't just listen to the answers. Watch the patterns.

If they avoid hard conversations, minimize pain, spiritualize dysfunction, or joke away serious topics — those are signs. Don't ignore them.

Spiritual Discernment Is Critical

This is not about judging someone's past. It's about discerning their path.

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what's hidden in the bloodline. Ask Him for eyes to see patterns that need healing and humility to deal with your own.

Sometimes God delays a relationship, not to punish you, but to protect you from a pattern that will become a prison.

What This Means Practically

- Journal your own upbringing and what it taught you about love, control, pain, and conflict.
- Get premarital counseling from a trusted, Spirit-led mentor who will ask the hard questions.
- Watch how your partner reacts under pressure — not just how they behave during peace.
- Study your bloodline. Ask questions. Identify trends.
- Pray prayers of deliverance and cleansing over your future home.

Closing Reflection

You're not just building a marriage. You're breaking cycles.

And that takes more than love. It takes truth, humility, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer:

Father, open my eyes to the patterns in me that don't honor You. Help me not to enter marriage blind. Expose what needs to be healed in my life and lineage.

Break every cycle that fights love, joy, peace, and covenant. I choose to be a cycle-breaker — not just a spouse. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Sex Is a Fire — Not a Foundation

"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

— Hebrews 13:4 (NKJV)

Sex is powerful. But it was never meant to be primary.

In marriage, sex is a gift. Outside of marriage, it's a wildfire. It feels good in the moment, but it destroys what it touches when it's not under covenant.

Many people walk into marriage thinking that great sex means great connection. But sex is not the glue of a marriage. It is the expression of the glue. When it becomes the foundation, everything else begins to crack under pressure.

God Created Sex — But Not to Save Your Marriage

Sex was God's idea. He's not embarrassed by it, and He didn't make it just for reproduction. He made it for intimacy, pleasure, and deep covenantal bonding.

But sex is not a savior. It can't fix broken trust. It can't erase emotional neglect. It can't silence wounds that haven't been healed.

Many couples use sex to bypass real issues. They argue, disconnect, and then reconcile physically without ever addressing the root problem. That's not intimacy. That's avoidance.

Sex Is Spiritual Before It's Physical

The world teaches us that sex is just chemistry. Just pleasure. Just need.

But the Bible reveals sex as covenantal, prophetic, and spiritual. It's a soul-binding act. Every time it happens, something is exchanged — not just in bodies, but in spirits.

That's why sexual sin leaves such deep scars. It's not just what you did — it's what you gave. And what you took.

This is why purity before marriage matters. Not just because it's a rule, but because it protects you from premature bonding, emotional confusion, and spiritual warfare you're not prepared for.

Marriage Doesn't Heal Lust — Only God Does

Getting married won't fix a porn addiction. It won't deliver you from fantasy. It won't end the cycle of objectifying people in your mind.

Marriage gives you access. But only surrender gives you freedom.

If lust has been your pattern, take it to God — not your spouse. Your spouse is not a rehab center. They are not responsible for managing your desires.

Sexual discipline is spiritual warfare. And victory starts before the bedroom, not inside it.

When Passion Is Present but Intimacy Is Absent

Many couples are sexually active but emotionally distant. They touch each other but don't truly know each other.

True intimacy is not just skin-to-skin. It is soul-to-soul. It is emotional safety, spiritual alignment, and deep friendship.

If you only connect physically, your marriage will become hollow. And eventually, someone will go searching for depth elsewhere.

Don't idolize passion. Prioritize intimacy. It lasts longer.

Sex Is a Temperature Gauge — Not a Thermostat

Sex tells you where your relationship is, but it doesn't control where it goes. If your sex life is broken, it often points to deeper issues:

- Unforgiveness
- Bitterness
- Stress and busyness
- Insecurity or unspoken fears
- Lack of prayer and spiritual unity

Instead of trying to fix sex, fix the root.

When your hearts are right, your bodies will follow.

What This Means Practically

- Have conversations about sexual expectations, needs, and fears before marriage.
- If you've had past sexual trauma or sin, get healing. Don't carry shame into covenant.
- Guard your purity. What you cultivate before marriage shows up after it.
- Don't use sex to avoid hard conversations. If something's broken, talk about it.
- Pray with your spouse. Spiritual intimacy feeds every other form of intimacy.

Closing Reflection

Sex is not the foundation. Love is not even the foundation. Christ is.

Build your marriage on His truth, His grace, and His wisdom. Then enjoy sex as the fire within the fireplace — not the flame that burns the house down.

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for creating sex as a beautiful and powerful gift. Help me to honor it. Heal me from every misuse, memory, and mindset that distorts it. Purify my heart and prepare me for covenant. Let my intimacy be holy, my passion be safe, and my foundation be strong in You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CHAPTER 5

You Must Learn to Forgive Before You Get Married

"Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."

— **Colossians 3:13 (NKJV)**

You're not ready for marriage if you're not ready to forgive.

Marriage is not built on perfect behavior. It's built on redemptive love. No matter how spiritual, attractive, or mature your spouse is, they will hurt you. They will misunderstand you. They will disappoint you — sometimes unintentionally, sometimes deeply.

And you will do the same.

Forgiveness isn't optional in marriage. It is oxygen. Without it, the relationship will suffocate.

The Illusion of Fairness

Before marriage, many people carry an unconscious scorecard: *"If I do this, I deserve that. If I'm faithful, I should be rewarded. If I give love, I should get love."*

But marriage will confront that illusion.

You will give more than you receive at times. You will apologize first when you weren't completely wrong. You will carry weight your spouse doesn't yet see.

This is not imbalance. It is sacrifice. And it requires a heart that knows how to release, not resent.

Forgiveness Is Not Forgetting. It's Releasing the Right to Retaliate.

Forgiveness doesn't mean you pretend it didn't happen. It means you let go of the need to punish, prove, or punish emotionally.

Some people say "I've forgiven," but still use silence, sarcasm, or spiritual pride to make their spouse pay. That's not forgiveness. That's pride dressed up in religion.

True forgiveness says, "You owe me nothing — not even the feeling of guilt."

That's not weakness. That's power.

Marriage Magnifies Old Offenses

If you haven't dealt with your past, marriage will become a mirror for it.

You'll hear your father's voice in your husband's tone.

You'll feel your mother's coldness in your wife's silence.

You'll respond to your spouse like they're the one who wounded you — when really, they just touched a scar.

This is why pre-marriage healing is not optional. If you don't forgive your past, you will bleed on someone who didn't cut you.

You Can't Forgive Without First Receiving Forgiveness

If you don't deeply know that Christ has forgiven you, you'll demand payment from your spouse.

You'll hold mistakes over their head. You'll become emotionally manipulative.

You'll bring up the past in every argument. Why? Because you haven't rested in the finished work of Jesus over your own life.

The cross is not just where you were forgiven — it's where you were empowered to forgive.

The Cost of Bitterness

Bitterness feels justified, but it's always destructive. It poisons your tone, stiffens your heart, and invites the enemy into your home.

Unforgiveness is not a personality trait. It is a spiritual toxin.

If you make peace with bitterness, you will lose your marriage — not always through divorce, but through disconnection.

What This Means Practically

- Identify who you still haven't forgiven — parent, ex, sibling, former leader, or even yourself.
- Speak forgiveness out loud. Declare, "I release them. I cancel the debt. They owe me nothing."
- Stop rehearsing offense. Starve the replay. Feed your healing.
- Apologize quickly when you're wrong. Don't justify. Just repent.
- Ask God to reveal hidden bitterness. Bitterness always disguises itself as self-protection.

Forgiveness Doesn't Always Fix, But It Always Frees

It may not restore the relationship. It may not erase the pain. But it frees your soul to love without suspicion and serve without strings.

A marriage filled with forgiveness is a marriage filled with peace.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I thank You for forgiving me fully, freely, and forever. Teach me to forgive like You do. I release every person I've held in my heart. I renounce bitterness, self-pity, and resentment. Prepare me to love deeply by helping me release fully. Let forgiveness be the culture of my life — and the foundation of my marriage. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CHAPTER 6

You Can't Heal Through Your Spouse — Only Through Christ

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."

— Isaiah 53:5 (NKJV)

Your spouse can love you. But they can't fix you.

That's the hard truth. And many people don't discover it until they're deep into marriage — frustrated, disappointed, or silently resentful because the one they married isn't doing what only Christ can.

You may think marriage will complete you, but if you enter it broken and unhealed, you will bleed into the very place you hoped would make you whole.

Marriage Is a Mirror, Not a Hospital

Your spouse can reflect what's broken. But they can't repair it.

Many people unconsciously place their spouse in the role of therapist, deliverer, or parent — expecting comfort where there's been trauma, affirmation where there's been rejection, and validation where there's been shame.

This creates a subtle but toxic dependence: *"I need you to make me feel safe. I need you to undo what others did. I need you to be the healing I never received."*

That kind of weight breaks marriages.

The Danger of Emotional Substitution

When you don't pursue healing from God, you will demand comfort from people. And when your spouse fails to meet that deep inner need, bitterness and blame creep in.

This turns your marriage into a battlefield of unmet expectations:

- Why don't you affirm me more?
- Why do you make me feel like my father did?
- Why can't you love me the way I imagined?

What starts as longing becomes accusation. And what could've been a place of grace becomes a site of warfare.

Your Spouse Is Not Your Savior

Christ did not die so your spouse could take His place.

Only Jesus can:

- Rebuild your identity
- Cleanse you from shame
- Fill your emotional voids
- Silence your inner critic
- Heal your childhood wounds

No human, no matter how godly or loving, can do what the cross alone was designed to accomplish.

When you shift your expectation from them back to Him, you release your marriage from pressure and invite real partnership.

Heal Before, Grow During

You don't have to be flawless to marry — but you should be healing.

Bring your wounds to Christ, not your spouse's doorstep.

Go to counseling.

Fast and pray.

Let the Word renew your mind.

Healing is not selfish. It's stewardship.

You don't just owe it to yourself — you owe it to the future home you want to build.

When Two Wounded People Marry Without Healing

When healing is not pursued, pain becomes the language of the home.

You hurt each other without trying.

You shut down to survive.

You misread intentions through the lens of old pain.

But when both individuals pursue wholeness in Christ, the marriage becomes a garden — not a battleground.

You water each other, not drain each other.

What This Means Practically

- Identify areas where you expect your spouse to heal what only God can.
- Spend time in God's presence daily, asking Him to make you whole.
- Pursue inner healing and deliverance before marriage.
- Get counseling for any unresolved trauma, abuse, or identity wounds.
- Communicate to your spouse that you love them, not need them to complete you.

Closing Reflection

The greatest gift you can give your marriage is your personal healing.

Don't make your spouse your crutch.

Let Christ be your cornerstone.

Prayer:

Jesus, I confess I've looked to people for what only You can give. Forgive me for placing burdens on others that belong at the foot of Your cross. Heal me where I'm broken. Make me whole where I've been fractured. Prepare me to love from overflow, not emptiness. Be my Healer, my Anchor, and my Wholeness. In Your name, Amen.

CHAPTER 7

Communication Will Make or Break Intimacy

"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

— James 1:19 (NKJV)

Marriage doesn't fall apart because people stop loving each other. It falls apart because they stop understanding each other — and at the center of that collapse is broken communication.

You can live in the same house and be miles apart emotionally. You can share a bed and feel like strangers. You can be legally married and still silently separated — all because communication has withered, warped, or died.

You Cannot Love What You Do Not Understand

And you cannot understand without communication.

Communication is not just about talking. It's about connection. It's about creating a safe space for honesty, pain, celebration, correction, and vulnerability.

When communication breaks down:

- Intimacy breaks down.
- Trust weakens.
- Resentment grows.

The Way You Communicate Matters More Than What You Say

You can be right — and still be rude.

You can be truthful — and still be harsh.

You can be honest — and still be emotionally unsafe.

Tone matters. Timing matters. Body language matters.

God doesn't just care *what* we say. He cares *how* we say it.

That's why James tells us to be "quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger." Not because silence is always better, but because humility listens before it lectures.

Poor Communication Is a Breeding Ground for Assumption

Where there is silence, the mind fills the gap.

If you shut down, your spouse will start assuming:

- “They don’t care.”
- “They’re angry at me.”
- “They don’t love me like before.”

And those assumptions become emotional facts — even if they’re false.

Unspoken wounds are still wounds. Unheard hearts are still breaking.

If you love them, talk to them. If you’re hurt, say it in love. If you’re confused, ask.

If you’re sorry, mean it.

Listening Is More Loving Than Talking

One of the most underrated relationship skills is active, Spirit-led listening. Not listening to respond. Listening to understand. To feel. To discern.

When you interrupt, deflect, correct, or minimize someone’s pain, you shut the door of their heart.

But when you listen — really listen — walls come down. Healing begins.

Jesus was a master listener. He didn’t just answer questions. He heard the cry behind the question. The pain behind the posture.

Marriage demands that same level of attentiveness.

Emotional Safety Makes Communication Flourish

People don't open up in atmospheres of criticism. They shut down.

If your spouse is afraid to be honest with you, you don't have intimacy. You have fear management.

Emotional safety means:

- No mocking or dismissing
- No weaponizing their vulnerability
- No interrupting their process
- No comparing them to someone else

When your spouse knows that their words won't be used against them, they will speak with more freedom, not less.

What This Means Practically

- Set time to talk intentionally — not just in reaction to problems.
- Use "I feel" instead of "You always." Speak from your heart, not their faults.
- Reflect back what you heard before responding.
- Put your phone down. Look into their eyes. Be present.
- Ask God for the grace to speak truth in love — not pride in anger.

A Silent Home Is Not Always a Peaceful One

Some couples confuse silence for peace. But silence can be a cold war. It can be buried pain, resentment, or disconnection.

Healthy marriages aren't silent — they are safely vocal. Not noisy, but honest. Not loud, but alive.

Closing Reflection

Your words create your world.

Speak life. Speak healing. Speak truth. Speak often.

Don't let assumption take the place of affection. Don't let silence become your language. Communication is the bloodstream of your marriage — keep it flowing.

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, teach me how to speak with grace, listen with patience, and create a home where words bring healing. Break every pattern of silence, sarcasm, or strife. Fill my mouth with wisdom. Teach me to build connection, not conflict. Let my heart be humble and my tongue be kind. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CHAPTER 8

God Cares Why You Marry — Not Just Who You Marry

"But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth."

— **Malachi 2:15 (NKJV)**

We spend so much time asking, *"Who should I marry?"* that we often forget the deeper question: *"Why am I marrying at all?"*

God is not just interested in compatibility. He is concerned with **purpose**. He doesn't just want two people to fall in love. He wants two lives that will fulfill divine assignment together.

Marriage is not random. It is sacred strategy.

Marriage Is a Calling, Not Just a Season

We treat marriage like it's a relationship milestone — the natural next step after dating, courting, and engagement. But marriage is not just the *next thing*. It's a *God thing*.

God created marriage for:

- Reflecting His covenant love (Ephesians 5:25–33)
- Raising and discipling godly offspring (Malachi 2:15)
- Advancing Kingdom purposes together (Ecclesiastes 4:9–12)

If your “why” is wrong, your “who” may never satisfy you.

Wrong Reasons to Marry

1. **Pressure** — “Everyone else is married.”
2. **Loneliness** — “I just need someone to be there.”
3. **Sexual desire** — “I’m struggling with lust, so I need to marry.”
4. **Financial security** — “They have money. I’ll be stable.”
5. **Escape** — “I need to get out of my parent’s house or current life.”

These may be *real* reasons — but they are not *righteous* reasons.

They place your personal comfort above divine calling. And when comfort is your foundation, covenant becomes a burden.

Purpose Gives Your Marriage Endurance

When hardship comes — and it will — it's purpose that keeps you standing.

Looks will fade. Passion will fluctuate. Finances will shift. But purpose endures.

Purpose reminds you:

- We're not just together to enjoy life. We're here to impact it.
- We're not just here to love each other. We're here to glorify God.

A marriage without purpose is just a partnership. But a marriage built on purpose becomes a Kingdom instrument.

God Assigns People Based on Purpose, Not Preference Alone

Yes, God wants you to love your spouse. Yes, attraction and joy matter.

But God's ultimate design is not just chemistry — it's alignment.

Can you build together? Pray together? Raise legacy together?

When God brought Eve to Adam, it was because he had a *mission* in the garden.

The help God sent was shaped by the assignment God gave.

God still works that way.

If You Marry for the Wrong Reason, You'll Misinterpret the Right Seasons

When trials come, you'll feel cheated — as if you made a mistake. But often, you didn't miss God. You just never asked Him "why" to begin with.

Purpose gives context to struggle. It gives meaning to sacrifice. It gives weight to obedience.

A marriage that knows its “why” can endure storms with clarity.

What This Means Practically

- Seek God about the “why” before the “who.”
- Write out the vision God has given you for your life.
- Ask whether a potential spouse strengthens or suffocates that vision.
- Pay attention to alignment in values, direction, and spiritual hunger.
- Don’t rush past red flags just to fulfill a timeline. Purpose is not in a hurry.

Closing Reflection

God doesn’t just want you married. He wants you **sent** — sent to build, sent to raise, sent to shine.

Marriage is not about completing you. It’s about committing to what God wants to complete through you.

Prayer:

Lord, give me eyes to see purpose — not just people. Help me not to settle out of pressure, fear, or fantasy. Align my desires with Your design. Prepare me not just for a spouse, but for a calling. May my marriage glorify You, raise legacy, and fulfill divine assignment. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

CHAPTER 9

Without a Shared Vision, You'll Drift Apart

"Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?"

— Amos 3:3 (NKJV)

Every relationship begins with connection, but only vision keeps it aligned.

Without shared vision, marriage becomes a tug-of-war — one person dreaming east, the other pulling west. You might still share a bed, bills, and birthdays, but over time your souls begin to drift. Not because you stopped loving each other, but because you stopped walking in the same direction.

Agreement Is Not Just About Peace — It's About Purpose

Many couples think agreement just means "we don't fight." But agreement in marriage is deeper than silence or surface harmony. It means:

- We want the same things.
- We value the same priorities.
- We serve the same Lord.
- We're headed the same direction — spiritually, emotionally, financially, and missionally.

If your goals contradict, your unity will collapse.

Drifting Doesn't Happen Loudly — It Happens Slowly

No one wakes up one day and says, "We've become strangers."

It happens little by little:

- One stops dreaming.
- The other stops listening.
- Plans no longer include each other.
- Conversations become logistical, not visionary.
- The future is no longer “ours” — it’s “yours” and “mine.”

This is why vision must be revisited often. Refined together. Prayed through. Dreamed aloud.

Without vision, passion fades. And when passion fades, temptation whispers.

Marriage Without Direction Breeds Division

Division doesn’t always start with disagreement. It starts with **disconnection from shared direction**.

The enemy doesn’t need to destroy your love. He only needs to divide your vision. Once your eyes are no longer focused on the same horizon, your hearts will begin to follow suit.

This is why even Christian marriages fail — not because of infidelity or scandal, but because the couple never built a shared vision worth fighting for.

God Gave You Each Other for More Than Survival

Marriage is not about making it to old age together with minimal damage. It’s about thriving in purpose — advancing God’s Kingdom through your union.

Ask yourselves:

- What are we building?
- Who are we becoming?
- How is our love impacting others?

Godly marriage doesn't just grow you. It grows others. It multiplies influence, legacy, and light.

Vision Is What Pulls You Through Seasons of Pain

There will be seasons where feelings fade. Where misunderstandings erupt. Where exhaustion sets in.

Vision is what says: *"This pain has purpose. This struggle has an end. This journey is taking us somewhere holy."*

Couples without vision get stuck in pain. Couples with vision grow through it.

What This Means Practically

- Schedule regular "vision check-ins." Ask: Where are we going? What's working? What needs clarity?
- Dream together. Pray together. Write out shared goals — spiritual, financial, family, and missional.
- Don't marry someone who shrinks your vision. Marry someone who fuels it.
- Guard your time. Distractions steal direction.
- Stay submitted to God's bigger picture. His plan for your marriage is greater than your personal comfort.

Closing Reflection

Vision is not optional. It is essential.

Without it, love drifts.

With it, love deepens, multiplies, and matures.

Don't just love each other. Lead each other — toward a future built in God, by God, and for God.

Prayer:

Father, give us eyes to see beyond the moment. Unite our hearts in holy direction. Let every plan, every dream, and every step be guided by Your Spirit. Make our marriage a movement, not just a memory. Align our vision so that our legacy echoes Your Kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CHAPTER 10

You're Not Ready for Marriage Until You Know How to Die to Self

"Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'"

— **Luke 9:23 (NKJV)**

The most essential skill in marriage isn't communication, sex, or money management — it's dying.

Not a one-time death, but a daily one.

Not the death of your personality, but the death of your pride.

You will never experience the fullness of covenant love until you embrace the daily crucifixion of your ego, your need to always be right, your silent scorekeeping, and your addiction to convenience.

Love Without Death Is Just a Performance

Anyone can post pretty pictures.

Anyone can say “I love you.”

Anyone can give gifts or go on dates.

But it takes a crucified heart to:

- Choose gentleness when you feel provoked
- Forgive when you want to punish
- Serve when you feel tired
- Stay when you feel justified to leave

That’s not weakness. That’s the power of the cross at work.

Jesus didn’t just say, “I love you.” He proved it through the agony of surrender.

That is what real love looks like — not romance, but sacrifice.

Marriage Is Not a Place to Be Served — It’s a Place to Serve

Most people enter marriage thinking, “*What can I get?*” The Kingdom model is different: “*What can I give?*”

The world tells you to marry someone who makes you happy. Scripture teaches you to become someone who makes others holy.

That means washing feet when you feel neglected.

It means going low when your flesh wants to rise.

It means losing arguments to win intimacy.

You don't need more passion. You need more crucifixion.

Selfishness Is the Silent Killer of Covenant

It's not usually adultery or abuse that ends most marriages. It's the slow poison of selfishness.

- "Why should I be the one to apologize?"
- "What about my needs?"
- "Why do I have to be the bigger person every time?"

These are not innocent questions. They are smoke signals for a heart that has stopped dying daily.

You cannot serve two masters — your ego and your spouse. One will be crucified. Choose wisely.

Maturity Is Measured in Self-Denial, Not Just Self-Control

Self-control can help you hold your tongue. But self-denial helps you humble your heart.

Self-denial is what makes you say:

- "I won't use my pain as a weapon."
- "I'll give when I don't feel like it."
- "I'll wait without punishing."

This is what it means to “take up your cross daily.”

Not because your spouse deserves it — but because Jesus commands it.

You Are Not the Center of Your Marriage — Christ Is

When you make your comfort the goal, every inconvenience feels like oppression.

But when Christ is at the center, you begin to see sacrifice as worship.

This mindset changes everything:

- You stop measuring how much you’re giving.
- You stop keeping record of who’s doing more.
- You stop seeing marriage as a fairness competition.

You start seeing it as a daily altar.

A place where love is proven not by convenience, but by covenant.

What This Means Practically

- Practice apologizing quickly — not when you’re convinced, but when the Spirit convicts.
- Serve your spouse without needing applause or return.
- Don’t keep silent tallies of how much you’ve given. That’s resentment in disguise.
- Fast regularly to train your flesh to submit.
- Ask yourself daily: “Where do I need to die today?”

Closing Reflection

Marriage isn't for the faint of heart. It's for the surrendered heart.

And the more you die to self, the more room you make for resurrection life — in your home, your love, your unity, and your legacy.

Prayer:

Lord, crucify my pride. Strip away every part of me that seeks self above service. Teach me to love like You — not with conditions, but with covenant. I lay down my rights, my ego, and my need to win. Let my love be sacrificial, not transactional. Make my heart a cross-shaped altar. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CHAPTER 11

Marriage Is Spiritual Warfare

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age..."

— **Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV)**

Marriage is not just emotional. It is spiritual.

You are not just building a home. You are building a fortress.

You are not just choosing a spouse. You are stepping onto a battlefield.

And the enemy doesn't wait for your wedding day to attack — he targets your heart long before the vows and keeps fighting long after the honeymoon.

Because marriage, at its core, is a prophetic picture of Christ and His Church. And anything that reflects Heaven will be opposed by Hell.

The Battle Isn't Always Between You — But It Will Always Come Against You

That sudden wave of offense? That miscommunication that spirals? That bitterness that lingers days too long?

Yes, some of it is your flesh.

But much of it is warfare.

Satan's strategy isn't always to destroy your marriage overnight — it's to drain it slowly:

- Division disguised as distance
- Anger masked as apathy
- Silence dressed up as peace
- Sexual disconnection presented as exhaustion

He knows how to exploit your patterns and provoke your partner.

He doesn't need new weapons. He just needs old wounds left untreated.

You Must Learn to Fight in the Spirit, Not Just in the Flesh

Yelling louder doesn't fix it.

Walking away doesn't solve it.

Blaming your spouse doesn't break it.

You must pray.

You must worship.

You must fast.

You must speak the Word.

You must guard your agreement with the shield of faith and the sword of truth.

Spiritual battles cannot be won with emotional tools.

Unity Is a Weapon — Use It

When a husband and wife agree in prayer, in obedience, and in purpose — Hell trembles.

That's why the enemy fights your unity. Because unity births power.

Jesus said, "If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done..." (Matthew 18:19).

Agreement is not a soft thing. It is a Kingdom key.

So when your unity is under attack:

- Pause and pray together
- Speak Scripture aloud over your home
- Rebuke every spirit of confusion, strife, lust, and fear
- Invite the Holy Spirit into your conflict

There Are Spirits Assigned to Break Marriages

You may feel like it's "just stress," but it's not.

That sudden flirtation at work. That resentment you can't explain. That spiritual coldness in your house.

These are not coincidences. They are coordinated.

If the enemy can't keep you from marrying the right person, he'll try to keep you from becoming the right partner.

Marriage doesn't remove spiritual warfare. It *intensifies* it.

But we don't fear that. We prepare for it.

You Don't Fight Your Spouse — You Fight for Them

You are not enemies.

You are allies.

So when conflict arises, stop asking "What's wrong with them?" and start asking "What's trying to divide us?"

Your prayer life must mature beyond "Lord, fix them."

You must learn to say:

"Lord, give me discernment."

"Lord, show me where the enemy is creeping in."

"Lord, use me to cover, protect, and war for my home."

What This Means Practically

- Establish regular prayer times as a couple — even if it's 10 minutes a day.
- Anoint your home and speak blessings aloud.
- Set spiritual boundaries: no pornography, no occult media, no secret sin.
- Fast together for your marriage at least once a quarter.
- Stay submitted to spiritual authority — don't isolate from godly counsel.

Closing Reflection

Marriage is not a playground. It's a frontline.

But you are not without weapons.

You have the Spirit of God.

You have the blood of Jesus.

You have the name that breaks every chain.

So fight for your marriage. Cover it. Guard it. Anoint it.

And never forget — your spouse is not the enemy. The enemy is the enemy.

Prayer:

Lord, open my eyes to the warfare against my home. Teach me to fight with faith, not flesh. Let my marriage be a testimony of Your glory and a weapon in Your hands. Guard our unity. Strengthen our covenant. Raise us as watchmen over what You've joined together. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CONCLUSION

What I Know Now

If I could go back and sit with my younger self — full of hope, full of dreams, full of assumptions — I wouldn't try to scare him. I wouldn't crush his excitement. I'd just look him in the eye and say, "There's more to love than what you feel. And there's more to marriage than what you see."

I'd tell him:

- You're going to be stretched.
- You're going to be surprised.
- You're going to be confronted by things in yourself you didn't know existed.
- But you'll also grow, if you're humble.
- And you'll heal, if you stay surrendered.

Because marriage isn't about finding someone perfect. It's about becoming someone faithful.

What I Know Now Is This:

Love without understanding will wear thin.

Romance without healing will run dry.

Passion without purpose will feel aimless.

Attraction without alignment will turn to frustration.

But when Christ becomes your center — not just in theory, but in practice — marriage becomes something holy. Something powerful. Something beautiful in the middle of the mess.

You stop fighting for dominance and start fighting for unity.

You stop chasing control and start choosing surrender.

You stop trying to change your spouse and start inviting the Spirit to change you both.

To the One Still Waiting

Let God prepare your heart. Don't rush His process.

Singleness is not a punishment. It's a season of sharpening.

Let Him teach you how to love, not just feel.

Let Him break every idol, every fantasy, every assumption.

Let Him make you whole so you don't turn your future spouse into your rehab.

Wait well. Heal deeply. Love from overflow, not emptiness.

To the One Already Married

Don't give up. God is still writing your story.

Yes, it's hard. Yes, it's frustrating. Yes, it can feel lonely.

But the same God who brought you together can restore what's been broken — if you're both willing to yield.

Pray together again. Apologize again. Hope again.

Choose each other again.

God doesn't call us to easy marriages. He calls us to holy ones.

And holiness has a cost. But it also carries glory.

To the One Who Feels They've Failed

There is grace. Not just to start over — but to start better.

God restores. God heals. God rebuilds.

Don't drown in shame.

Don't let divorce, betrayal, or mistakes define you.

Let the blood of Jesus speak a better word.

You are not disqualified.

You are still seen, still loved, still useful.

Let this book not be a burden, but an invitation — to learn, to grow, and to become the kind of person who builds love that lasts.

Final Charge

Build wisely.

Love truthfully.

Forgive relentlessly.

Pray continuously.

Submit joyfully.

Die daily.

And glorify God with the way you love.

That's what I know now.

And I pray you don't have to learn it the hard way.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for every lesson, every scar, and every reminder of Your faithfulness. Seal these truths in our hearts. Let Your Spirit guide us in love, humility, and wisdom. Make our relationships a reflection of Your covenant. And may our marriages echo the beauty of Christ and His Church. In Jesus' name, Amen.

BONUS SECTION

Reflection Prompts and Conversation Starters

This section is designed to help you internalize the truths from this book and apply them in your personal walk, your healing journey, and your current or future marriage. Use these prompts for personal journaling, quiet time with God, or deep conversations with your partner.

REFLECTION PROMPTS (For Personal Healing and Growth)

1. Love and Understanding

In what areas do I still equate love with emotional highs instead of patient understanding? Where do I need to grow in how I see and serve others?

2. Exposure and Growth

What part of me is being exposed by God in this season? Am I resisting correction, or receiving it as part of His love?

3. Patterns and History

What generational patterns or emotional habits have I seen in my family that could affect how I love? Have I brought them to the cross?

4. Sexual Purity and Truth

Have I placed too much weight on sexual attraction? Am I viewing sex through a biblical or cultural lens?

5. Forgiveness and Release

Who do I still need to forgive from my past? Am I holding anyone emotionally hostage in my heart?

6. Wholeness in Christ

Am I trying to find healing through people instead of Jesus? What wounds do I still need to bring to the Healer?

7. Communication and Safety

Am I a safe place for others to share their heart? How can I grow in listening without judgment or defensiveness?

8. Purpose and Alignment

Why do I want to be married? What's driving me — pressure or purpose?

9. Shared Vision and Direction

Do I have a clear sense of God's direction for my life? Would I recognize someone who aligns with it?

10. Self-Denial and Maturity

What areas of selfishness do I still need to crucify? Am I willing to lose arguments to win intimacy?

11. Spiritual Warfare and Covering

How spiritually alert am I about relationships? Do I pray over my heart, my future (or current) spouse, and our home?

CONVERSATION STARTERS (For Couples or Serious Courtship)

1. What does love mean to you?

How do you experience love most deeply — words, actions, time, touch, or service?

2. How was conflict handled in your home growing up?

How has that shaped the way you respond under pressure?

3. What scares you most about marriage?

What are your hidden fears or reservations about covenant?

4. What are your dreams — both individual and shared?

How do our callings align or diverge?

5. What do you believe is the purpose of marriage?

Is your vision romantic, functional, spiritual, or Kingdom-driven?

6. How do you handle stress, offense, or failure?

What do you need from me when you feel overwhelmed or misunderstood?

7. What's one area of personal growth you're actively working on?

How can I support your growth without pressuring you?

8. What's your relationship with God like when no one is watching?

What helps you stay grounded spiritually?

9. What does emotional safety look like to you?

How can we cultivate a home where it's safe to be seen and heard?

10. How do you define forgiveness?

What makes it hard for you to forgive, and how can we grow together in this area?

11. How can we spiritually guard our relationship together?

What specific prayers, habits, or disciplines should we build into our foundation?

Let these questions guide you into truth, not tension. Into healing, not hiding. Into wisdom, not assumption. And most of all — into Christ.

Whether you're single, dating, engaged, or already married, these prompts are not just preparation tools. They're transformation tools.

Use them prayerfully. Answer them honestly. Grow through them daily.

And remember — you're not building for today. You're building for legacy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anthony Abbin is a Christian author, pastor, and speaker passionate about building godly relationships, healing emotional wounds, and helping believers walk in truth.

He runs **Kairos Hour Global**, a global platform equipping people through prayer, teaching, and discipleship. His writing blends biblical depth with practical clarity, helping readers grow in purpose, purity, and spiritual maturity.

Anthony is married to Grace and they are blessed with children. He writes to glorify God, strengthen hearts, and help others build lasting, Christ-centered lives.

Other Books by Anthony Abbin:

Sons of Issachar: How to Discern the Times and Know What to Do

The Prayer Compass: A 30-Day Prayer Manual for Victory

Yokes, Curses & Bloodlines: How Generational Bondages Form and How to Break Them

How to Stop Overthinking Everything

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Before You Say “I Do,” Read This

What if marriage didn't break you — it just exposed what was already buried? In this heartfelt, Spirit-filled guide, Anthony Abbin shares 11 life-altering lessons he wishes someone had told him before he got married. No fluff. No clichés. Just biblical truth, emotional depth, and the kind of honesty that brings healing. Whether you're single and discerning, engaged and hopeful, or married and trying to breathe again — this book will meet you right where you are. Inside, you'll learn: * Why love is not enough without understanding * How to recognize patterns before they become problems * Why sex is a fire, not a foundation * How to forgive fully — and stop making your spouse your healer * What spiritual warfare really looks like in marriage Each chapter is anchored in Scripture, written with warmth, and filled with wisdom to help you grow in love, walk in purpose, and build a Christ-centered covenant that lasts. This isn't a book about marriage problems. It's a book about marriage preparation — for your heart, your healing, and your future.** Anthony Abbin writes not as a perfect husband, but as a growing man of God. His words are honest, bold, and soaked in grace.

Read it before you marry. Revisit it if you already have. Share it with someone you love.