Introduction: “A Problem Clearly Defined is 50% Solved”

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

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

Premise #3: The “Fall” (sin, Genesis 3) short-circuited man’s relationship with God, his mate, and his world.

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

◆ **Spiritual Barriers = Sin, Shame, Selfishness**

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

The Answer = ____________

Resource: *The Bible*; Genesis 3

◆ **Psychological Barriers = Personality Differences**

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

The Answer = ____________

Resource: *The Intimacy Factor* by David and Jan Stoops
Gender Barriers = Male / Female Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Males Tend to Be...</th>
<th>Females Tend to Be...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More achievement focused</td>
<td>More relationally focused</td>
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<tr>
<td>More theoretical and generalist</td>
<td>More specific and detail oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More information oriented in communication</td>
<td>More emotion oriented in communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>More action oriented</td>
<td>More verbal oriented</td>
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<tr>
<td>More facts oriented</td>
<td>More intuitively oriented</td>
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<tr>
<td>More goal oriented</td>
<td>More supportive and nurturing oriented</td>
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</tbody>
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(Above taken from To Understand Each Other by Paul Tournier)

The Answer = _____________

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

Historical Barriers = “Our Baggage” from the Past

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

The Answer = _____________

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

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

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

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

Discussion Questions (Married & Single):

1. What new insight did you gain about **BARRIERS** in your marriage? In your relationships (singles)?

2. How does understanding these barriers adjust your **EXPECTATIONS** in marriage? In your most significant relationships (singles)?

3. What specific step do you discern God would have you take to begin “pulling-down” the walls in your marriage? In your most meaningful relationships (singles)?