

The Sacred Union

*God's Plan
for a
Strong Marriage*



Dr. Lee Young

THE SACRED UNION

WORKBOOK

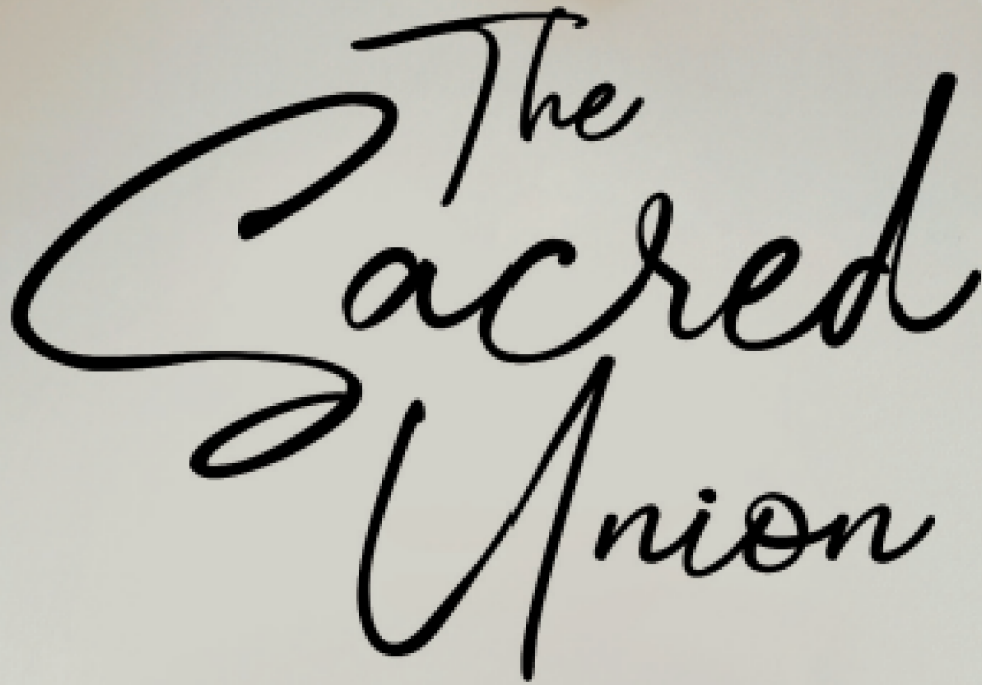
HELLO

The Marriage relationship is like a machine

The marriage relationship is like a machine. A quite simple machine is the ten-speed bicycle. I remember in college riding my bike long distances training with a guy who did triathlons. Hopefully, you have memories of a bike with gears. The front near the pedal would have one gear, but the back would have several. The wires would come from these gears in the back to the handlebar. And with one simple movement of a tiny piece, everything changed. The speed changed, the tension changed, and the wind on our faces changed. The marriage is a system and with consistent, small adjustments, even if from only one person, the whole relationship will change. When you change, the other person cannot stay the same. It doesn't mean they will always change for good, but the hope you have is that your behavior can positively affect them even if they will never step foot into a counseling session. Ok, let's get into it.

Focusing on self-improvement
will change the _____

WHAT WE WILL COVER



The
Sacred
Union

- Defining Love for a Strong Marriage
- God's Purpose in Marriage
- The Problem in Marriage
- The Poison in Marriage
- The Plan in Marriage
- The Parameters in Marriage
- The Promise of Marriage

II

**Marriage offers
the greatest
challenge to
our selfish,
sinful nature,
along with the
greatest
opportunities
to let God teach
you and
transform you
into a better
lover.**

The Sacred Union

What is God saying to you?

THE DIVINE FRUSTRATION



Think about it for a moment. God has given you someone and you have fallen in love with them. And when things are good, they are really good, right? But the more you are around one another and especially after you are married and living with one another, things can get sticky. When we are dating, we want to secure our target so we dress nice, smell nice, never let them see us without make-up, be nice, and ignore those things that are a little irritating. Sometimes, we are so 'in love' that our brain is able to completely put out of our mind those little irritating things. We just let them go. But then we move in together and things are different.

The Sacred Romance

The frustrations in marriage work to push
us to _____

Our ability to love applies to every

THE DIVINE FRUSTRATION

In what ways in your relationship is it hard to love in agape?
What are your frustrations?

How would you change your approach in these areas if you understood God was using
the frustrations to make you a better lover?



**The whole key to this divine frustration is learning to
love better, to love in agape.**

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The Sacred Union

The Sacred Union Challenge

From The Divine Frustration

REFRAME THE FRUSTRATION

Understand God has designed marriage to be frustrating to motivate us to love better

02

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II

**Agape is loving
others by doing
what is best for
them in every
situation even if
it means
personal
suffering.**

The Sacred Union

What is God saying to you?

GOD'S PURPOSE IN MARRIAGE



Because the marriage relationship is the only relationship requiring agape that also includes phileo and eros, it is the only marriage that carries the lessons we need to grasp the love of God. That is an enormous amount of power within this relationship. Once we grasp the concept of agape and that God loves us like this, it draws us to Him. We all desire to be loved like this. We look for it in people, but no one outside of Jesus Christ can do it all the time so Jesus is our only hope for continual agape. But as we draw near to Him, He pours Himself into us, and His agape overflows out of us to those around us.

The Sacred Romance

God's highest aim is _____ with
His creation

The depth of our _____ is
dependent upon the depth of our _____

GOD'S PURPOSE IN MARRIAGE

How is life outside of your marriage being affected by your struggle to love in agape?

What can you do to improve on your communion with God to receive more agape?



**He who finds a wife finds what is good
and receives favor from the Lord.**

Proverbs 18:22

The Sacred Union Challenge

From The Divine Frustration

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From God's Purpose in Marriage

TREASURE MARRIAGE AS THE CONDUIT OF GOD'S POWER

The institution of marriage provides opportunities like no other relationship to empower you for an abundant life

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He is agape. He is unconditional love. Nothing God thinks, does, or says can go against agape. We struggle with God because we don't understand agape.

We struggle in our relationships because we don't know agape. Agape is not natural. It doesn't jive with our human pattern of thought. It makes no sense. Yet, agape is the key to a wonderfully magnificent marriage.

The Sacred Union

What is God saying to you?

THE PROBLEM IN MARRIAGE



One big problem in marriage and love is that the world has defined love for us in a way that is contrary to agape. We have mentioned already this idea of ‘falling in and out of love.’ Love has been defined in our society, maybe more now than ever in history, that love means not doing anything that makes someone feel badly ever. The political correctness of our society right now shines a bright light on this. It is now unloving if we hold people accountable. It is unloving if both teams don’t get a trophy. Love has been defined in a way that it feels wrong to do anything that makes someone feel disappointed, to face the error of their ways, to help them face some issues that are destructive. Parents don’t discipline their children. Teachers can’t hold their students accountable for their bad behavior. Schools are encouraged to pass every kid so they don’t feel bad. Imagine how this thought process hurts your marriage.

The Sacred Romance

We must allow God to _____ love
different from our childhood and the
world

God defines love in the _____ of _____

THE PROBLEM IN MARRIAGE

How has love been defined for you that has been hurtful to your marriage?

In what way do you love conditionally with expectations?



Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

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LOVE WITHOUT EXPECTATIONS

When we stop loving in a moment, we create expectations creating an unsafe place for our spouse

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When we suffer, we are tempted to do things we shouldn't to alleviate our suffering. Of course, the word suffering is relative.

The Sacred Union

What is God saying to you?

THE POISON IN MARRIAGE



The picture we get is the shepherd leading the sheep over rough terrain, over mountains and down into valleys in the presence of predators to bring them to green pastures and quiet waters. This is the Christian walk. We don't like the valleys. We prefer to remain on the mountains. We don't like the effort it takes following the shepherd over this rough terrain to find the good place. We don't like the existence and persistence of those who would want to hurt us whether earthly or spiritual. We want Eden before the sin. It is within this system that the greener grass is found. The best life possible this side of Heaven is found in following the Shepherd wherever He leads whether smooth roads or rocky paths. You are a sheep and you don't know where the green grass is. Trust the Shepherd. Don't look for green grass outside of His process. Don't look for green grass by wandering away from the Shepherd.

The Sacred Romance

Agape consists in the _____ of _____
to fully immerse us in the love of Christ

_____ change as we live more fully
in His _____

THE POISON IN MARRIAGE

What unloving responses do you have when your spouse frustrates you causing suffering?

If you loved through the suffering, how it the outcome be changed?



When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.

Genesis 3:6

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LOVE THROUGH THE SUFFERING

The only way we can see how well we love in agape is when it is not returned

05

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We have a picture of what we want it to be, but we are not good at following the instructions. God has given us the plan for a beautiful marriage, and we need to make sure we follow His plan.

The Sacred Union

What is God saying to you?

THE PLAN OF MARRIAGE



The promise of agape creates the most worry-free relationship there is. Our certainty that no matter what we might do to accidentally hurt our spouse, they are going to work very hard to remain patient, not yell and scream, forgive, be kind, not hold it against us, give us mercy, and keep moving forward sets us free from expectations and pressure to be perfect all the time. This is freedom and without this sense of freedom the relationship can never be what God hopes for you.

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The Sacred Romance

God's plan for marriage is _____ to
accomplish _____ living, _____
companionship, _____ intimacy, and a
_____ from the issues of life

THE PLAN OF MARRIAGE

Considering your behavior in these areas, how well do you trust God's plan for marriage?

What behaviors do you need to work on to trust God's plan for marriage?



However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Ephesians 5:33

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From The Plan of Marriage

STICK TO GOD'S PLAN NOT YOUR OWN

God designed marriage and He alone knows how to make it work

06

07



**He knows the limit of what
we can handle without Him,
but He also knows just how
far our faith can stretch,
and when we have already
been bruised badly, He will
not let us break.**

The Sacred Union

What is God saying to you?

THE PARAMETERS OF MARRIAGE



Because agape is God's unique to each person according to their needs, it is messy at times. This passage is a great example of this. Jesus is teaching us that we should not give the best part of ourselves, our pearls, to those who do not acknowledge our value and trample all over us. Throw the most expensive set of pearls into a pigpen and the pigs could care less one way or the other. They are unable to comprehend the value. I want to be very careful here because we are discussing a nuance of agape that is difficult and we need prayer and wisdom from God. If your spouse hurts you, the Lord would call upon you to forgive them, to hold no record of wrongs, to let it go, and let mercy give the relationship a reset. Jesus did say that we are to forgive not seven times when someone hurts us but seventy times seven. This is a spiritual number indicating we should always forgive. But what does this look like in a marriage with repeat offenders?

The Sacred Romance

Agape requires _____ when the
others continually engage in actions
_____to _____

To set _____boundaries, a person must
be willing to _____their spouse

THE PARAMETERS OF MARRIAGE

Where have you tried to set boundaries to curb hurtful patterns from your spouse?

Think of a boundary you need to set.
Write down how you might communicate this in a loving way?



“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Matthew 7:6

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SET HEALTHY BOUNDARIES IN AGAPE

Boundaries must not be set for protection by for the other's good

07



**As we love others with
agape, doing what is best
for them and saying what is
best for them to help them
find the best life possible,
we see how God has been
doing this all the time. Once
our eyes are open, our
appreciation turns to
devotion. We love God
deeper as we understand
His agape has been with us
all the time.**

The Sacred Union

What is God saying to you?

THE PROMISE OF MARRIAGE



Marriage offers the greatest challenge to our selfish, sinful nature, along with the greatest opportunities to let God teach you and transform you into a better lover. I do not mean sexually. That would be a different kind of book. I am saying that you will be a better lover of their soul, the deepest part of them. You will embrace your spouse in a way they may have never been embraced. You will love your children in a way that will reveal their value so that they will not settle later in life for someone who treats them as if they are less than wonderfully made. Becoming a better lover shines the light of God into a dark world. We need better lovers. This is God's greatest purpose in your marriage. Let the love you share with your spouse or soon-to-be spouse take you into the agape of God. Love them like this and see if your marriage is not transformed, not to mention each of your hearts. See if this will not allow you not only to have the best marriage possible but the best life possible.

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The Sacred Romance

God will use the _____relationship to
give you the most _____life

We must trust the power of _____in

THE PROMISE OF MARRIAGE

Write a short letter to your spouse to let them know what you have learned you need to do different and what you hope to see your marriage become.



I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge —that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:16-19

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PURSUE THE FULL MEASURE OF GOD

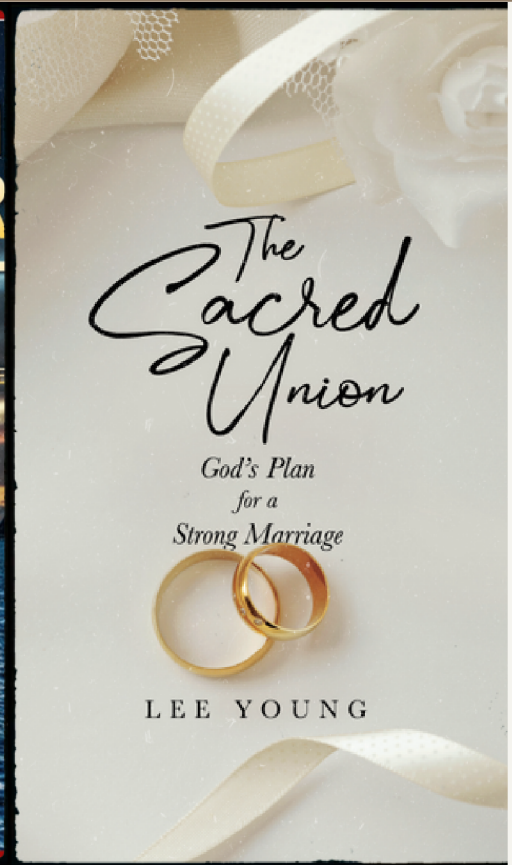
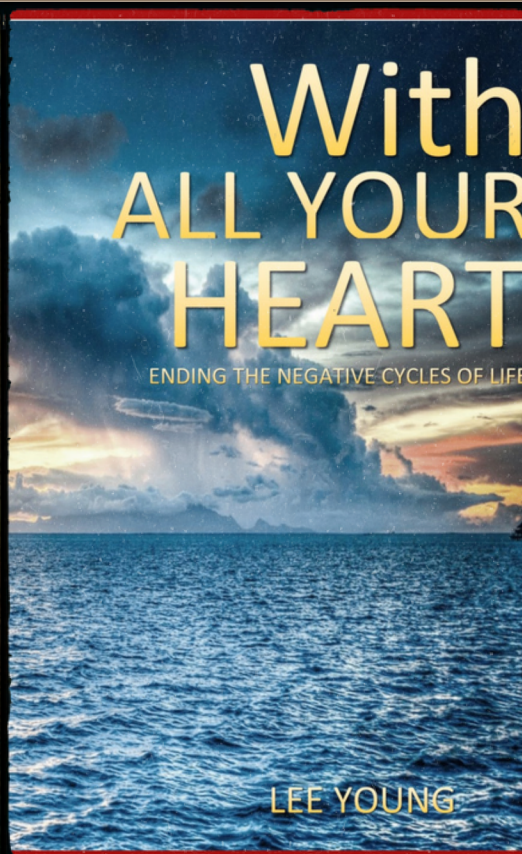
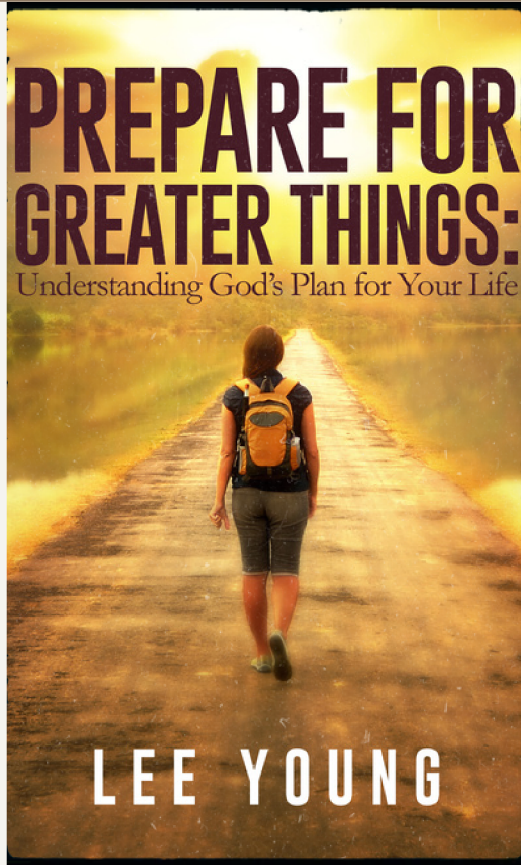
Let the dark nights and bright mornings of marriage move in you to live in the fullness of God

Husband's Signature

Wife's Signature

ASSESSMENT

		YES	NO
1	Do you feel that you learned valuable information?	☐	☐
2	Would you be interested in more marriage workshops?	☐	☐
3	Would you recommend this workshop to others?	☐	☐
4	Would you recommend this seminar to others	☐	☐
5	What was not offered that would have been a great help to your marriage?		



OTHER RESOURCES FROM PASTOR LEE

Pastor Lee's ministry focuses on Biblical transformation to overcome anxiety, depression, fear, self-esteem issues, addictions, and relationship issues to help people find God's plan for love, joy, faith, and inner-peace. I pray you will find these resources helpful as you pursue God's plan for your life.

www.pastorlee.net

INSTRUCTOR



DR. LEE YOUNG

*Lead Pastor, CrossRoads
Community Church*

Dr. Young “Pastor Lee” is the Lead Pastor of CrossRoads Community Church. He has been the Lead Pastor overseeing the church, private school, and learning center for 22 years. Two years ago, the Lord gave him a vision for starting ten campuses in ten years.

Pastor Lee and his wife, Amy were married 12/31/2001. They have three sons, Zach, Austin, and Jaden, who are all involved in the ministry at CrossRoads. Pastor Lee and Amy just became grandparents of Micah, the son of Zach and his wife, Shelbi. They consider Shelbi to be their first daughter.

His unique blend of experiences enables him to reach his community with the message of love and God’s plan for all to live out the abundant life available to them through the Biblical Principles of Faith. He has written two books focused on ending the negative cycles in life and how to respond to negative circumstances to see God’s power. His new book, “The Sacred Union” teaches the principle of Agape for stronger marriages. He has his Master’s degree in Christian Counseling from Grand Canyon University and his Doctorate of Ministry from Nazarene Theological Seminary with an emphasis on Spiritual Formation. His doctoral dissertation is focused on “Recapturing Millennials and Gen-Z to the Evangelical church.”