

GTO Seeds for Growth

The Tie That Binds *by Harold and Bette Gillogly*

Ecclesiastes 4:12 — ...A
cord of three strands is not
quickly broken

There's a reason we are so passionate about this new book. According to a recent Harvard study, couples who regularly read the Bible together, pray together and attend church together have a dramatically low divorce rate -- 1 out of 1,287. Our goal is to challenge every Christian couple to diligently commit themselves to practice these three habits of bonding. Experiencing Oneness can help you with the first two. It offers a convenient, systematic way to develop the discipline of studying the Bible and praying together. The Harvard study only confirmed what God has said all along -- a cord of three strands (God, your mate and you) is not quickly broken (Ecclesiastes 4:12). The following is an excerpt from the book (Chapter 12 — Spiritual Intimacy). It is oneday's study for you to do with your mate. It will only take about 15 minutes. Read it together, answer the questions together, interact with each other over the teaching, read the Scripture together, and then pray together. This could be the beginning of some beautiful bonding!

Day 2

2. Sharing the WORD and PRAYER

This is probably how most people define spiritual intimacy. It is part of spiritual intimacy. It is just not the whole of it. But as a fundamental element, it is the first priority after making sure you are on the same road together.

Colossians 3:16 — *Let the*
word of Christ dwell in you
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all wisdom

Paul commands in Colossians, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom.... (Colossians 3:16). All this is saying is that we should read God's Word together and talk about it. This is beneficial in any of our relationships, but it is especially beneficial to the relationship between two believing spouses. You can become partners encouraging one another along the road, reminding each other of the reality of God's Word in your lives. Not preaching, mind you, or beating each other around the head and shoulders with Scripture verses. But allowing God's Word, richly living in you, to change you into the image of His Son, and then sharing that change with your partner.

Have you ever been around someone who hits you with a Bible verse for every need in your life? You trip over a rock and lie bleeding in the road. They smile sweetly and quote, "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God concerning you." Doesn't that make you feel better? Doesn't that make you a better person? Doesn't that make you want to ring their neck? If that kind of Biblical slap doesn't help you, what makes you think it will help your mate? You can share what God is doing in your life through His Word, but what your mate chooses to do is between him/her and God.

And prayer! Coming to God together as believers. Holding hands in the throne room. Sharing your fears and hopes and confessions in a three-way conversation.

In Matthew 18:19-20, we read, Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them. We can't explain how this works, we just know it does. In some mysterious way, when the two of you pray together, you are promised power in prayer. In some special way, Jesus is there with you and your partner. What a promise! But what a waste if you two are not praying together!

If you and your life partner have never prayed together, you may feel a little awkward at first. Some of you may even have difficulty praying out loud in front of anyone. That's O.K., but you have to start somewhere. We suggest you begin by holding hands and praying silently. After you pray this way for a few months, it will become easier to pray short prayers aloud together. The benefit you both will receive is worth the little bit of discomfort.

In the book, every time you see four little feet walking across the page like this, you know they will be followed by something for you to do.



Rate your experience of Sharing the Word and Prayer in your relationship on a scale of 1 to 10.

Wife: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (circle one)

Husband: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (circle one)

What specifically could you do to be more regular in spending time reading God's Word and praying together?

Wife: _____

Husband: _____

Discuss your responses together.

There is an opportunity at the end of each day's study for both of you to write your personal application from the study for that day. These daily application sections are bound by an intertwined rope symbolizing couples jointly "tying together" the significance of the study.



REFLECT TOGETHER: Read Hebrews 10:19-25. Do you have to obey verse 23 before you can do verse 24?

PRAY TOGETHER: Oh, Jesus, we want to live in Your Word and let it live in us. Show us ways to encourage one another to grow in You.

The **REFLECT TOGETHER** and **PRAY TOGETHER** sections, found at the end of each day's study, are identified with the cross and anchor symbol, signifying the lasting relationship bond that reading God's Word and praying together can fortify.

We hope you enjoyed this small taste of Experiencing Oneness. If you haven't been reading God's Word and praying together, we hope this is just the beginning of a lifelong habit of love. If you have been spending regular time together praying and reading the Scripture, then we hope this has encouraged you to keep it up. The secret to the phenomenally low divorce rate we mentioned earlier, isn't really a secret at all. God promises us wonderful blessings when we, as a couple, stay closely connected to Him.

Growing Toward Oneness Marriage Ministries

provides webinars, books, articles, Romantic Tips, CD's and other marriage resources and services to enrich your marriage.

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This article is an excerpt from our book **Experiencing Oneness**, A Couple's Study for Growth in Intimacy, published by Joy Publishing Co. and may be purchased in our store at

<http://marriages.net/product/experiencing-oneness/>.

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