

Where Is Your Focus?

When I (Rick) bought a new camera, I decided to learn how to take pictures using the manual settings. There are a lot of ways you can change how a picture is going to look, and one of those is changing what is in focus. You can adjust the lens and change how much you see and the sharpness of the picture or you can change the aperture (f stop) to change what is in focus in the picture. As I am also learning more about how our heart works, I can see some similarities between a camera and our heart, and one of those is focusing.



The language of the heart is images (it's also the first language a baby has!) and we all have an image maker that converts our five physical senses data and spiritual inputs into images. For example, I can say the word “dog” or you can hear a dog barking and suddenly you will have an image on your image maker. That image could then trigger emotions, feelings, or memories depending what you already have stored in your brain from past events in your life related to dogs. Or Father or the Holy Spirit can put a thought in your brain about someone and instantly you have an image of that person and may pray for them or give them a call.



Just like we can use filters, different lenses, and settings on our camera to alter a picture we are taking, so **our heart can affect the image that we are seeing on our image maker.** One of the principles of how our heart works is, *“We don’t see things the way they really are, we see things the way we are.”* Another equally important principle is, *“What we really believe is what we believe in our heart.”* These two principles are like those lenses on a camera; they can alter what we are seeing on our image maker into something that really isn’t the TRUTH. Jesus said that He was “the TRUTH.” **John 14:6** So everything that is really “true” must align with the Word of God!
John 1:14

When you look at your spouse, what do you see? Where is your focus?



Unfortunately, one of the filters on our heart that was passed on to us from the Garden is the “Knowledge of Good and Evil.” **Gen. 2:6-7** When they ate of its fruit, the eyes of their hearts were open to know good and evil, right and wrong. Our hearts were never meant to know such things for it draws us towards judging everything and only results in sin, death, and every evil work. **As a result of this filter, we have a tendency to focus on what is good or bad, right or wrong, sinful or holy about our spouse and tend to judge them accordingly.** By nature, our focus tends to be towards the negative just like when we look at a single spot on someone’s clothes, or the black dot on a white piece of paper. We have a tendency to focus more on what is “bad” or “wrong” with our spouse too. We can also focus only on what is not right about the marriage and all the mistakes, losses, hurts, disappointments, etc. from the past in the relationship.



I know for me it is real easy to look at Sue and still see all the things that I think are “wrong” with her and wish that she would just change. “Life would be so much more enjoyable if she would just” Or I can still focus on memories of things from our past that would try to bring back negative images, feelings, or emotions and cause me to withdraw or disengage with Sue, especially during some of our “heated” discussions! In those moments I have allowed my focus to shift to the negative and totally forget all of the great times we have had together from our past or all the ways that she has already changed and made our relationship better.



I'm not saying that you need to put on the proverbial "rose-colored glasses" and ignore or deny where things may be at in your marriage or relationship. There may be some abuse, betrayal, dysfunction, or unsafe conditions that need to be addressed and resolved through prayer, Godly counsel, or other actions first. **But I am encouraging you to take another look at your spouse with "God's eyes." Father sees your spouse through the finished work of the cross and the forgiveness of all their sins. "He is risen!" Matt. 28:6** Jesus did rise from the dead victorious over all sin and unrighteousness. That is "the TRUTH" Don't just see the bad or what is wrong, but look for the treasure in your spouse. Try to help draw that treasure out of them so they can see themselves a different way too. Don't allow the deceptions and lies of the enemy to drive a wedge between you and your spouse!

The only way to know the TRUTH is through Love. And Jesus promised us that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all of the TRUTH. Only when you are born again and filled with the Holy Spirit can you expect to experience and know the TRUTH!

"We are guided into all truth as the love of God is increasingly poured out within our hearts. Truth is not the opposite of love; it is a product of love. It is only love which sees the truth and which can apprehend the truth; it is only the love of God which sees everything as it truly is. Fullness of love brings fullness of understanding. As the love of God is poured out within the heart, it will bring an ever-brightening dawn of revelation." Stephen Hill **John - A Prophetic Revelation**

Dialogue Questions

1. What are five enduring qualities I see in you? How Does That Make Me Feel?
2. What are three ways that make me know you have been thinking about me? How Does Each One of Those Make Me Feel?
3. Where do I see our marriage one year from now? What are some ways that might help us get there? How Does That Make Me Feel?

Fun Night Ideas

1. **Practice Joy Smiles!** Look at each other and without words use body language to communicate how excited you are to be in the same room with them. Relax and then repeat several times. Talk about how that made you feel to see your spouse excited to be with you.
2. Ask Father to tell you what He sees when He looks at your spouse. Write down what He says and then share it with your spouse.
3. Make something you both enjoy eating together and then put on some romantic music and take turns feeding each other. It's OK if it gets a little messy! While you are feeding your spouse, express appreciation about the things they are doing to make your marriage fun, enjoyable, exciting, and fulfilling. When you are done, express thanksgiving to Father for how He is guiding and directing you marriage.
4. Several days in advance plan a special fun night activity together. Each day until the date night continue to build the anticipation about doing something fun together. Make sure you save the date!