

Marriage Voyage

*Empower Your Relationship:
Sail into Marital Bliss with Team Power*

Bimbo Ilori

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A toast to the bliss of every marriage navigating the waters, steadying the sails and finding their anchorage.

Acknowledgement

We are but of yesterday.

To everyone that has positively influenced marriages, you are loved and appreciated.

Author's Note

Throughout this book, you'll encounter stories and scenarios designed to reflect the realities of the concepts shared.

Please note that all names used in contemporary illustrations are either entirely fictional or have been altered to preserve privacy. While the lessons are real and inspired by true-to-life patterns, any resemblance to actual persons, living or deceased, is purely coincidental and unintentional.

These examples are used to deepen understanding and offer relatable reflections without compromising anyone's personal journey.

Thank you for reading with empathy and wisdom.

With love and purpose,

Bimbo Ilori

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Introduction

Marriage is a journey, not a destination. Like an adventurous voyage across vast and unpredictable seas, it requires careful preparation, ongoing maintenance, and skilful navigation. A well-built ship may set sail with hope and excitement, but without a capable crew, clear direction, and the right tools to weather the storms, even the strongest vessel can drift off course or, worse, succumb to the waves.

In this book, *Marriage Voyage*, we embark on a transformational journey together, charting a course toward a marriage filled with love, joy, and unwavering partnership. Along the way, we will uncover the hidden “cruise wreck” factors, those silent threats that can weaken the foundations of a relationship if left unaddressed. These dangers may come in the form of poor communication, unresolved conflicts, unrealistic expectations, or neglecting the spiritual and emotional needs of one another.

But this voyage is not just about avoiding shipwreck; it is about thriving on the open seas of married life. As we explore the essential elements of a strong and lasting marriage, we will discover practical

wisdom, faith-based insights, and real-life strategies to help you and your spouse become an unshakable team. With the power of unity, commitment, and God's guidance, you can sail toward deeper intimacy, trust, and fulfillment in your relationship.

Are you ready to navigate the waters of marriage with confidence and purpose? Then let's set sail on this life-changing adventure, because the best journeys are taken together!

To bring these lessons to life, we will follow the journey of Dami and Lami, a couple navigating the highs and lows of married life. Through their story, you will find relatable insights and practical solutions for your own relationship.

With faith as our compass, love as our anchor, and God as our captain, let's embark on this voyage together.

Chapter One

Setting Sail

(Understanding the Marriage Voyage)

Laying the foundation for a fulfilling marital journey

Marriage is often compared to a voyage, a grand adventure across the unpredictable seas of life. It begins with excitement, much like a ship setting sail under clear skies, with gentle waves promising smooth sailing. However, every sailor knows that the sea is unpredictable. Storms will come, winds will shift, and the key to a successful voyage is not in avoiding challenges but in learning how to navigate them together.

Setting Sail

Imagine a young couple, Dami and Lami, standing at the edge of a magnificent cruise ship, ready to embark on a long-awaited journey. The ship is grand, decorated beautifully, with loved ones waving from the shore. Their hearts race with excitement as they gaze at the open waters before them. Everything seems perfect, the sky is clear, and the ocean sparkles under the sun.

This moment mirrors the wedding day. The vows exchanged at the altar are like the ship's launch, a declaration that two individuals have now become one, committed to sailing through life together. In the early days of marriage, love feels effortless. The romance, the shared laughter, and the dreams for the future make the waters seem calm and predictable.

However, just as experienced sailors prepare for unpredictable weather, couples must equip themselves with wisdom, patience, and resilience. The question is not *if* challenges will come, but *when*. Will they be ready to adjust their sails when the winds shift?

The Ship's Compass: Shared Vision and Purpose

A successful voyage is not just about setting sail; it's about knowing where you're headed. Without a compass, even the strongest ship will drift aimlessly. A ship needs a captain, and in marriage, God is the ultimate navigator, guiding couples through every storm and season of life. When couples surrender their journey to Him, they gain clarity, direction, and strength to stay the course.

The Drift: A Story of Lost Direction

Dami and Lami started their marriage full of love and excitement. However, as the years went by, they found themselves constantly arguing, feeling disconnected. It wasn't a sudden storm that wrecked them, it was a gradual drifting. Without a shared vision, they ended up sailing in different directions. Lami wanted to start a family, while Dami was focused on advancing his career. They never discussed their long-term goals, assuming that love alone would guide them.

Just like a ship without a map, a marriage without a shared vision is at risk of getting lost. Couples must sit down and define their course:

- Where do we see ourselves in five, ten, or twenty years?
- What values and beliefs guide our decisions?
- How do we balance our personal goals while staying united?
- What legacy do we want to build together?

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" – Luke 14:28

By aligning your dreams and charting a clear path, couples can avoid the slow drift that leads many marriages to an unintentional shipwreck.

Preparing for the Voyage Ahead

Marriage is not about avoiding storms but about being equipped to handle them together. Love will drive the voyage, as the wind in your sails, trust as your anchor, and your teamwork as a force, you can navigate the highs and lows of married life with confidence.

As we continue this journey, the upcoming chapters will explore essential elements of marital success, safeguarding your relationship against hidden dangers, restoring balance when things go off course, and embracing the adventure of a thriving marriage.

Let's set sail, not just to survive the journey but to thrive in it, making every moment meaningful and fulfilling.

Chapter Two

Anchors of a Secure Voyage

(Safety Measures for Marriage)

Key principles and safeguards for marital stability

Every ship needs safety measures to navigate unpredictable seas, even so, marriage requires safeguards to ensure stability, harmony, and long-term success.

This reminds me of the times I have been on a cruise ship. Immediately after check-in to the cabins/suites, announcements were made for us to be assembled on a specified deck, to listen and learn about the safety measures while on board.

The same applies for airplanes and other long range embarkation.

Similarly, marriage safety measures are first things on the journey.

These measures cover a wide range, providing structures to help navigation. Without which even the strongest relationship can be vulnerable to unexpected storms.

Let's walk through some essential structures below, with our model couple;

- **Marriage Structure**

Lami once felt neglected because Dami spent his free time on his phone. Instead of complaining, she suggested they have an "unplugged" evening once a week, where they focused solely on each other. This small structure helped strengthen their bond.

Spouses need to set aside time specifically for their relationship. This could be a weekly or monthly "marriage meeting" to discuss goals, concerns, and gratitude.

Emotional well-being is crucial in marriage. Couples need to establish emotional safety and connection to keep their bond strong.

Early in their marriage, Lami often felt emotionally distant from Dami. Though they prayed together and managed their finances well, she sometimes felt unheard. At a marriage retreat, they learned the importance of "Emotional Check-ins", a time set

aside to share feelings, thoughts, and concerns without judgment.

Practical Ways to Build Emotional Structure:

- **Regular Check-ins:** Ask each other, “How are you feeling?” and actively listen.
- **Love Language Awareness:** Discover and express love in ways that resonate with your spouse (e.g., words of affirmation, acts of service, quality time, gifts, physical touch).
- **Healthy Boundaries:** Protect your marriage from emotional neglect by prioritizing connection over external distractions.
- **Forgiveness and Grace:** Acknowledge mistakes, apologize sincerely, and extend grace.

- **Team Structure**

Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so? Amos 3:3 (NIV)

No ship sails smoothly with a divided crew, and no marriage thrives without teamwork. Both partners must work together, sharing responsibilities and supporting one another. Effective communication, mutual respect, and a willingness to sacrifice serve as anchors that keep the unity.

A thriving marriage is not about one partner taking full control while the other follows. Instead, it's about cooperation, understanding, and ensuring that both individuals feel valued and heard.

Dami and Lami had been married for three years when they started feeling the strain of daily life. Dami, focused on career growth, often worked late, while Lami juggled household responsibilities alone. Frustration built up, and small disagreements escalated into frequent arguments.

One evening, after another tense conversation, they decided to sit down and reflect. Through prayer and discussion, they realized their issue wasn't love, it was teamwork.

They had been operating as individuals rather than as a united couple.

Together, they established simple but effective routines:

Dami committed to adjusting his schedule to be more present at home.

Lami expressed her needs more clearly rather than assuming Dami would notice.

They scheduled a weekly check-in to discuss challenges and victories.

By making small but intentional changes, they restored harmony in their marriage.

- **Spiritual Structure**

A strong marriage doesn't happen by accident; it is built on intentional structures that provide stability.

A solid spiritual structure is the best Plugin for a marriage.

Set Word & Prayer Times

Having a scheduled time to share God's word and pray together creates opportunities to reflect, realign, and hold each other accountable.

A home should have a designated time for prayer and Bible study. It should not be limited to church gatherings but should be an integral part of family life.

Dami and Lami initially struggled with consistency in this area. They decided to establish a simple routine, praying together before bed and discussing one scripture each morning.

Over time, this habit deepened their spiritual connection and helped them resolve issues more peacefully.

Doggedly heed God's Instructions together. When God gives a directive, it's crucial to pursue it as a team. Delaying obedience can lead to unnecessary hardship.

Regularly evaluating your spiritual walk ensures alignment with God's purpose.

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. 2 Corinthians 13:5

- **Authority Structure**

Having a trusted, godly mentor provides guidance during challenging times. Ensure mentors are people who genuinely care and exhibit wisdom and integrity.

Marriage operates best when there is a clear understanding of decision-making roles. However, if a disagreement arises and one spouse feels uncomfortable, they should defer to an agreed-upon spiritual authority (mentor, pastor, etc.).

Identify and Nurture Mentorship

Couples should jointly and prayerfully agree on mentors who will serve as references in times of need. Investing in these relationships through regular communication and seek godly counsel to strengthen the marriage.

- **Decision Structure**

Recognize and nurture the strengths each partner brings.

Lami had a strong financial sense, while Dami was great at planning long-term. By acknowledging each other's strengths instead of competing, they built a more balanced partnership.

- Couples should determine when to seek outside help:
- When disagreements stem from differences in conviction.
- When repeated counsel within the marriage is ignored.
- When major decisions require wisdom beyond personal understanding.
- Discuss futuristic plans, such as investments, educational savings, and retirement.

- **Health & Wellness Structure**

Physical well-being impacts emotional and spiritual stability. A marriage that prioritizes health and self-care can better withstand life's challenges.

Practical Steps:

Prioritize health together: Exercise, eat well, and get enough rest.

Support each other's wellness: Encourage regular health check-ups and stress management.

Avoid overworking: Balance career ambitions with rest and recreation.

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. 3 John 1:2 (NIV)

- **Financial Structure**

The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty. Proverbs 21:5 (NIV)

Financial disagreements are one of the most common stressors in marriage. Without a solid structure in place, couples may struggle with mismanagement, debt, or unmet expectations.

1. Aligning Financial Priorities

Dami and Lami had different approaches to money. They sat down and established financial principles:

Tithing and Giving – Honoring God first. Proverbs 3:9

Savings and Investments – Preparing for the future.

Emergency Fund – Covering unexpected expenses.

Spending Limits – Agreeing on major purchases.

2. Budgeting Together

Couples should track income, expenses, and savings, ensuring financial security.

3. Managing Debt Wisely

The borrower is servant to the lender. Proverbs 22:7

Avoid unnecessary loans and prioritize debt repayment.

- **Conflict Prevention**

While resolving conflict is crucial, preventing unnecessary disagreements is even better. Couples can cultivate peaceful communication habits to minimize conflicts before they escalate.

Dami and Lami's Story: Learning to Pause

Dami once had a habit of interrupting Lami whenever she spoke, assuming he already knew what she was going to say. This led to frustration. After a disagreement, they implemented the "Pause & Reflect" rule, whenever emotions ran high, they took a deep breath and prayed before responding.

Practical Steps to Prevent Conflict:

Choose the right timing – Don't discuss serious matters when tired or stressed.

Use "I" Statements – Instead of blaming, express how you feel (e.g., "I feel hurt when you don't consult me" rather than "You never consider me").

Seek understanding before reacting – Ask clarifying questions instead of assuming.

Pray before difficult conversations – Inviting God into discussions reduces tension.

- **Conflict Resolution**
(Navigating Disagreements)

Conflict is inevitable, but how couples handle it determines whether their marriage strengthens or weakens.

My pastors define Love as unconditional acceptance and divine confrontation. They also shared rules for conflict Resolution.

(a). Do Not Sleep Over Unresolved Hurts

Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life. Ephesians 4:26-27 (MSG)

When Dami and Lami had their first major disagreement over finances, Dami wanted to avoid

talking about it, hoping time would heal things. Lami, however, insisted they address it before bed. Their discussion wasn't easy, but they realized that dealing with the issue immediately prevented resentment from taking root.

(b). No matter what happens, God's word is the final authority.

Commit to Settling Disputes Under God's Authority

(a). Be Civil, Gentle, and Kind

Neither raise your voices nor your hands.

(d). Respect should not be compromised, even in disagreement

- **Social Structure**

Surround Yourself with inspiring couples. Who share similar values, provide encouragement and support.

A thriving marriage includes social interactions. Families should create time for outings, gatherings, and shared experiences. Whether it's celebrating birthdays or having game nights, these activities strengthen bonds.

- **Vision & Legacy**

A marriage should not only survive but also thrive with purpose, building a lasting legacy for future generations.

Questions To Reflect On:

What kind of legacy do we want to leave?

How are we modeling godly marriage for our children and those around us?

How can we serve God together as a couple?

Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run that reads it. Habakkuk 2:2 (NKJV)

Marriage is not just about surviving storms but thriving in every season. With teamwork, spiritual structures, and godly wisdom, couples can create a marriage that stands the test of time.

Like Dami and Lami, every couple will face moments of challenge and growth. But with love as the wind in your, trust as your anchor, and God as the captain, you can navigate the seas of marriage with confidence.

Even with the right anchors in place, couples may still experience small shifts in direction. In the next few chapters, we will explore the common

disruptors that can threaten a marriage and how to navigate them before they cause lasting damage.

Are you ready to sail in your marriage? Let's continue this voyage together!

Chapter Three

Internal Storms

(Overcoming Hidden Struggles)

Navigating personal battles that can shake the marriage

(The Battle Within— Ego and Pride, Fear, Resentment, and Unforgiveness)

Every voyage faces internal turbulence—unseen but powerful forces that can destabilize a ship from within. In marriage, these internal storms take the form of fear, ego, pride, resentment, and unforgiveness—each capable of quietly eroding the foundation of love and unity. Just as a ship must withstand fierce winds, couples must recognize and navigate these emotions before they spiral into division. This chapter explores how these hidden struggles manifest in marriage and offers practical ways to calm the storm before it causes lasting damage.

"Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom." – Song of Solomon 2:1

God's word counsels us to catch and take captive the free ranging Foxes in our vineyards. The other side to it requires awareness and intentionality to hunt down these foxes.

There is a need to not only catch these foxes, but also disallow them from entering into our vineyards.

This aim will need us to put in place traps, set up guards and fence up our vineyard roundabout to deter them from gaining entry.

In the next few chapters, we will walk through the modes of access of these foxes, by highlighting the activities that enable their entrance and thereby how to catch and ultimately block them.

They are hidden, unsolicited presence, which we court, unintentionally, nonetheless, give operating permit unknowingly.

Many marriages suffer setbacks because of these disruptors, which sometimes end in wreckages when unabated. It's the primary aim in this context, to avert the downward spiral.

Navigating Through Calm and Stormy Seas

Just as a sailor must navigate both calm waters and raging storms, marriage is a journey filled with highs and lows. Some days, love flows effortlessly—filled with laughter, shared dreams, and unwavering support. Other days, the seas are rough, stirred by misunderstandings, financial strain, external pressures, or personal struggles.

The difference between couples who thrive and those who falter lies in their ability to weather adversity together. Storms will come, but abandoning ship is not an option. Instead, like skilled sailors, strong couples adjust their sails, find solutions, and grow through the challenges.

Though these storms are an unseen enemy that silently works to destroy marriages, not through grand attacks, but through small, unnoticed cracks.

They can be detected through awareness, knowledge and intentional alertness to the conditions on board and readiness to effect a guard or damage control.

Let's start to hunt the foxes, and get rid of the voyage disruptors.

- **Ego & Pride : The Silent Wrecker in Marriage**

Dami & Lami's Story: When Ego Took the Wheel

Dami and Lami had built their marriage on love, faith, and partnership. They made decisions together, supported each other's dreams, and were each other's greatest cheerleaders. However, as time passed, **ego slowly crept into their relationship, eroding their unity.**

Dami, once humble and open to discussions, started believing that his opinions should always carry the most weight. He felt that as the head of the home, his authority should never be questioned.

Meanwhile, Lami, feeling overlooked, began to assert her independence, making major decisions without consulting Dami. She wanted to prove that she didn't always have to rely on him.

Their once seamless communication became filled with **defensiveness, silent treatment, and an unwillingness to compromise.** Rather than working as a team, they began competing with each other.

Ego had taken root, and their marriage was now a battlefield of pride.

Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. Proverbs 13:10 - NIV

What is Ego in Marriage?

Ego is an **exaggerated sense of self-importance** that leads to pride, stubbornness, and an unwillingness to submit or compromise. It creates an atmosphere where both partners focus on being *right* rather than being *united*.

Ego prevents couples from apologizing, from admitting faults, and from listening to each other's perspectives. It turns **discussions into debates, love into resentment, and connection into isolation.**

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18. NIV

Signs of Ego in Marriage

Ego manifests in different ways, often subtly at first but with destructive consequences over time. Here are key signs to watch for:

1. Refusing to Apologize

A person with an inflated ego finds it difficult to say, *"I'm sorry."* They would rather justify their actions than admit wrongdoing.

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Proverbs 28:13. NIV

2. Always Needing to Be Right

Ego-driven individuals find it hard to admit they are wrong. They argue excessively and refuse to acknowledge their spouse's perspective.

Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. Proverbs 3:7 NIV

3. Defensiveness and Justification

Rather than listening with an open heart, an ego-driven spouse immediately becomes defensive, dismissing feedback. Every correction feels like an attack, and instead of self-reflection, they deflect blame.

A fool's way is right in his own eyes, but whoever listens to counsel is wise. Proverbs 12:15. NIV

4. Struggling to Forgive

Ego holds onto offenses, refusing to let go of past hurts. It says, "*Why should I forgive first?*" rather than seeking peace.

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13. NIV

5. Competition Instead of Partnership

In an ego-driven marriage, spouses stop seeing each other as teammates and start competing. They compare successes and keep silent scores instead of celebrating each other.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves. Philippians 2:3

6. Silent Treatment and Withholding Affection

Instead of resolving conflicts, ego responds with withdrawal—refusing to talk, withholding affection, or using intimacy as a weapon.

Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. Ephesians 4:26 NIV

Consequences of Ego in Marriage

1. Emotional Distance

Ego builds walls instead of bridges. Over time, couples become emotionally disconnected, leading to loneliness within the marriage.

2. Frequent Conflicts

When ego rules, every disagreement turns into a battle. Small issues become major problems because neither spouse is willing to back down.

3. Lack of Growth

A marriage where ego thrives lacks growth. Healthy relationships require humility, learning, and a willingness to change.

4. Vulnerability to External Temptations

An ego-driven marriage creates frustration and dissatisfaction, making the relationship vulnerable to outside influences, including infidelity and emotional affairs.

5. A Weak Spiritual Foundation

God calls for humility in marriage. When ego is in control, a couple cannot fully submit to God's will. A

prideful marriage resists the leading of the Holy Spirit.

God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. James 4:6b. NIV

Overcoming Ego in Marriage

1. Embrace Humility

Marriage is not about winning arguments but about strengthening your bond. Choose humility over pride.

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up. James 4:10 NIV

2. Prioritize Love Over Being Right

When conflict arises, ask yourself: *Do I want to be right, or do I want peace in my marriage?*

3. Communicate with Openness

Learn to express your feelings without defensiveness. Instead of saying, *"You never listen to me!"* say, *"I feel unheard, and I'd love for us to work on our communication."*

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1 NIV

4. Be Quick to Apologize and Forgive

Apologizing doesn't make you weak—it makes you wise. Forgiveness is not about who is wrong but about keeping your marriage strong.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Ephesians 4:2. NIV

5. Pray for Each Other

Ask God to help you grow in humility and wisdom. A praying couple can overcome even the toughest battles.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. Ecclesiastes 4:9 NIV

Choose Love Over Ego

Dami and Lami had to make a choice—continue letting **ego** divide them, or choose **love and humility**. They decided to **lay down their pride** and put their marriage above their personal battles.

Marriage thrives when **both partners let go of their egos** and embrace humility, love, and godly

wisdom. Ego may try to rise up, but when couples choose **love over pride, forgiveness over resentment, and unity over self-importance**, their marriage becomes stronger than ever.

Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. 1 Peter 5:5 NIV

A marriage without ego is one that can truly reflect **God's love, grace, and purpose.**

- **Fear: The Silent Storm in Marriage**

Dami & Lami's Story: When Fear Took the Wheel

Dami and Lami had always dreamed of a marriage built on love, trust, and faith. But as time passed, fear crept in subtly, weaving its way into their thoughts and actions.

Lami grew up in a home where her parents' marriage was unstable. She witnessed constant arguments and an eventual divorce, leaving her with a deep-seated fear of abandonment. Even though Dami was loving and committed, she found herself constantly questioning his love and wondering if their marriage would eventually fall apart too.

Dami, on the other hand, had his own fears. He had always carried the pressure of being a provider, and when his business faced financial struggles, fear of failure gripped him. He started withdrawing emotionally, believing he wasn't good enough for Lami. Instead of opening up, he hid his worries, convinced that showing weakness would make him lose respect in her eyes.

Slowly, fear became the invisible force driving their marriage:

Lami's fear of abandonment made her overly suspicious and controlling.

Dami's fear of failure made him distant and defensive.

Their conversations became tense, filled with unspoken anxieties.

Instead of building trust, they were feeding their fears.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7 NIV

Understanding Fear in Marriage

Fear is a natural human emotion, but when it takes control, it becomes destructive. It replaces faith with doubt, love with insecurity, and unity with division.

Fear in marriage can come from different sources:

Fear of rejection – Will my spouse still love me if I fail or change?

Fear of abandonment – What if they leave me?

Fear of being hurt – Can I really trust them with my heart?

Fear of financial instability – What if we can't provide for our family?

Fear of inadequacy – Am I enough for my spouse?

Fear of past mistakes repeating – Will our marriage fail like others I've seen?

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. 1 John 4:18 NIV

Signs of Fear in Marriage

Fear doesn't always show up as obvious panic. Often, it hides behind actions and attitudes that weaken a relationship over time.

1. Lack of Vulnerability – Fear makes you hide your true thoughts and emotions because you worry about being judged, rejected, or misunderstood.

The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27:1 NIV

2. Controlling Behavior – A spouse afraid of abandonment may try to control their partner's actions, constantly checking in or setting unrealistic expectations.

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and He will act. Psalm 37:5 NIV

3. Avoiding Difficult Conversations – Fear of conflict or rejection makes couples sweep issues under the rug rather than address them openly and honestly.

Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up. Proverbs 12:25 NIV

4. Insecurity and Constant Reassurance-Seeking – A fearful spouse may need constant validation to feel loved, which can put pressure on the other partner.

When I am afraid, I put my trust in You. Psalm 56:3
NIV

5. Emotional Distance – Some people respond to fear by shutting down emotionally, avoiding deep connections to protect themselves from potential hurt.

Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7 NIV

6. Doubting Your Spouse's Intentions – Fear makes you assume the worst instead of giving your spouse the benefit of the doubt.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5 NIV

Consequences of Fear in Marriage

1. Strained Communication – Fear prevents honest conversations, leading to misunderstandings, assumptions, and unnecessary conflicts.

2. Lack of Intimacy – When fear dominates, true emotional and physical intimacy suffers. Spouses may become distant or avoid closeness

3. Increased Stress and Anxiety – Living in fear makes the marriage feel like a burden rather than a blessing. The home becomes a place of tension instead of peace.

4. Spiritual and Emotional Separation – Fear erodes trust, making it hard to pray, plan, and dream together. Instead of moving as one, couples start living separate emotional lives.

5. Opening Doors for External Temptation - A marriage ruled by fear becomes vulnerable to outside influences, be it external advice, friendships, or unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe. Proverbs 29:25 NIV.

Overcoming Fear in Marriage

1. Recognize and Address It – The first step to defeating fear is acknowledging it. Be honest about what you're afraid of and discuss it with your spouse.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Philippians 4:6 NIV

2. Build Trust Through Open Communication – Fear thrives in secrecy. Talk openly with your spouse about your fears and work together to strengthen your trust.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. Ecclesiastes 4:9 NIV

3. Replace Fear with Faith – Trust that God is the foundation of your marriage. Let faith guide your actions instead of fear.

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Deuteronomy 31:6 NIV

4. Pray Together – Prayer invites God into your fears. Couples who pray together build a spiritual connection that fear cannot break.

Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you. Psalm 55:22 NIV

5. Encourage and Uplift Each Other – Instead of feeding fear, be your spouse's encourager. Remind each other of God's promises.

Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV

6. Seek Godly Wisdom – Sometimes, overcoming fear requires seeking counsel from mentors, books, or Christian counseling.

The wise store up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool invites ruin. Proverbs 10:14 NIV

Choosing Faith Over Fear

Dami and Lami eventually realized that fear was not from God—it was a tool of the enemy to divide them. Instead of allowing fear to drive their actions, they chose to trust each other, communicate openly, and place their marriage in God’s hands.

A marriage built on faith, love, and trust in God will always outlast fear. When couples refuse to let fear take control, they create a home filled with peace, security, and unwavering love.

I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears. Psalm 34:4 NIV

A marriage free from fear is a marriage where love thrives, trust deepens, and God's presence remains. Choose faith over fear, love over doubt, and trust over anxiety.

- **Resentment: The Silent Poison in Marriage**

Dami & Lami's Story: When Unspoken Hurts Build Walls

Dami and Lami had a strong foundation of love and friendship. In the early years of their marriage, they communicated well, shared responsibilities, and supported each other's dreams. But over time, resentment began to creep in.

Lami felt that Dami didn't appreciate the sacrifices she made—the long nights taking care of their children, the career opportunities she let go of, and the emotional support she constantly gave. She started to feel invisible, unheard, and undervalued.

Dami, on the other hand, believed Lami didn't respect his efforts to provide. He felt pressure to succeed but never received the encouragement he longed for. Whenever he tried to share his struggles, Lami seemed too busy or dismissive.

At first, these emotions were minor—small disappointments they didn't talk about. But as time passed, their unspoken hurts piled up like bricks in a wall between them.

Lami withdrew emotionally, speaking less and expecting Dami to "figure it out."

Dami became defensive, frustrated that nothing he did seemed enough.

They began keeping score—mentally tracking each other's failures rather than celebrating each other's strengths.

Small arguments turned into explosive fights, filled with old grievances from years past.

What started as little disappointments turned into deep resentment, eroding their love.

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.
Ephesians 4:26-27 NIV

Understanding Resentment in Marriage

Resentment is like a slow poison—it doesn't destroy a marriage overnight, but it gradually weakens the bond between spouses. It arises when:

Unmet expectations turn into bitterness.

Unresolved conflicts lead to silent grudges.

One or both spouses feel unappreciated or misunderstood.

Past hurts are not forgiven but stored up.

Resentment is one of the enemy's most dangerous tools because it doesn't just cause arguments—it creates emotional distance.

A brother wronged is more unyielding than a fortified city; disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel.
Proverbs 18:19 NIV

Signs of Resentment in Marriage

Resentment doesn't always show itself in loud fights—it often hides behind small, everyday actions that drain love from the marriage.

1. Keeping Score

Instead of forgiving, you mentally track every offense, failure, or mistake.

Love keeps no record of wrongs. 1 Corinthians 13:5
NIV

2. Passive-Aggressive Behavior

Rather than addressing the issue, resentment leads to sarcasm, silent treatments, or subtle jabs.

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1 ESV

3. Emotional Withdrawal

A resentful spouse may stop sharing their thoughts, feelings, and dreams, feeling that their efforts are unappreciated.

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13 NIV

4. Increased Criticism

Instead of seeing the good in your spouse, resentment makes you focus only on their flaws.

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? Matthew 7:3 NIV

5. Avoidance

Some spouses avoid spending time together because unresolved resentment makes their presence feel heavy instead of joyful.

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! Psalm 133:1 NIV

6. Loss of Affection and Intimacy

Physical and emotional connection suffers when the heart is filled with unspoken grievances.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Ephesians 4:31 ESV

Consequences of Resentment in Marriage

1. Destruction of Trust

A marriage built on resentment instead of grace will eventually lose its foundation of trust.

2. Erosion of Love

Resentment chokes love—what once felt warm and intimate now feels distant and cold.

3. Constant Conflict or Silent Suffering

Some couples fight all the time, while others stop talking altogether. Both are signs of deep resentment.

4. Increased Vulnerability to Temptation

A resentful spouse may seek emotional connection elsewhere, creating cracks that the enemy can exploit.

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Proverbs 4:23 NIV

Overcoming Resentment in Marriage

1. Acknowledge and Accept It

Recognize and accept your feelings of resentment.

Dami acknowledges his resentment toward Lami and accepts that it's a valid feeling.

2. Identify the Source

Understand the root cause of your resentment.

Lami realizes that her resentment toward Dami stems from unmet expectations and a lack of communication.

3. Communicate Effectively

Express your feelings and concerns to your spouse in a healthy way.

Dami and Lami schedule a conversation to discuss their feelings and concerns.

4. Practice Forgiveness

Work toward forgiveness—not just for your spouse, but for yourself.

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32 NIV

Dami decides to forgive Lami and let go of his resentment. He realizes that holding onto resentment is affecting his mental health and relationship.

5. Seek Support If Needed

If resentment persists, reach out to trusted friends, mentors, or professionals for help.

Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety. Proverbs 11:14 ESV

Dami and Lami decide to seek pastoral counseling to work through their unresolved feelings and find healing.

Resentment is a dangerous toxin in marriage, but it can be overcome with intentional communication, forgiveness, and love. Rather than allowing silent hurts to build walls, choose to break them down and restore intimacy.

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8 NIV

- **Unforgiveness in Marriage: The Silent Poison**

Dami & Lami's Story: A Love Strained by the Past

Dami and Lami were once inseparable. They laughed together, prayed together, and faced life as a team. But one day, Dami made a hurtful remark

about Lami's family in a heated argument. Though he apologized, Lami never truly let it go.

At first, it seemed like she had moved on, but over time, her heart hardened. Small disagreements triggered deep resentment. She became distant, bringing up past offenses during conflicts. Dami, feeling unappreciated, also withdrew emotionally.

Their marriage, once a safe space, had become cold and distant—all because of one unhealed wound.

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13 NIV

Unforgiveness is a silent poison. It doesn't destroy a marriage overnight—it works slowly, creating emotional barriers until love, joy, and intimacy are gone.

Understanding Unforgiveness in Marriage

Unforgiveness is not just about refusing to say "I forgive you." It's a deep-seated refusal to release the pain caused by past offenses.

Marriage involves two imperfect people. Hurts will come, but if left unresolved, unforgiveness leads to:

Love keeps no record of wrongs. 1 Corinthians 13:5
NIV

Signs of Unforgiveness in Marriage

1. Repeatedly Bringing Up Past Offenses

Unforgiveness keeps a mental record of wrongs. Even minor arguments trigger old wounds that should have been healed.

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.
Isaiah 43:18 NIV

2. Emotional Walls & Distance

A spouse holding onto hurt may withdraw emotionally or physically, creating a cold atmosphere in the home.

A brother wronged is more unyielding than a fortified city. Proverbs 18:19 NIV

3. Desire for Revenge or Punishment

Instead of working toward healing, unforgiveness makes a spouse subtly (or openly) punish the other through:

Silent treatment

Withholding affection

Passive-aggressive behavior

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing. 1 Peter 3:9 NIV

4. Difficulty Showing Love and Affection

When unforgiveness is present, it chokes love. Acts of kindness feel forced, and moments of intimacy become rare.

Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs. Proverbs 10:12 NIV

The Consequences of Unforgiveness in Marriage

1. A Hardened Heart

A heart filled with unforgiveness rejects reconciliation. Over time, even sincere apologies lose their effect.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Matthew 5:7 NIV

2. Open Door to the Enemy

Unforgiveness invites the enemy to plant more division, leading to deeper strife and even infidelity, separation, or divorce.

In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Ephesians 4:26-27 NIV

3. Health Issues

Studies show that holding onto bitterness can lead to stress, anxiety, and even health problems like high blood pressure.

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. Proverbs 14:30 NIV

4. Hindered Prayers

God calls couples to walk in love and unity. When unforgiveness remains, even prayers can be hindered.

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives... so that nothing will hinder your prayers. 1 Peter 3:7 NIV

Healing Through Forgiveness in Marriage

1. Acknowledge the Hurt

Healing starts when the pain is recognized rather than suppressed.

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18 NIV

2. Choose to Forgive (Even When It's Hard)

Forgiveness is not a feeling—it's a decision. It doesn't mean forgetting the offense but choosing not to let it control your heart.

Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Luke 6:37 NIV

3. Communicate with Grace

Instead of accusing or blaming, talk through the hurt with honesty and love.

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1 NIV

4. Let Go of the Past

Move forward instead of replaying past mistakes. Love grows when couples focus on the future rather than past failures.

For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more. Hebrews 8:12 NIV

5. Seek God's Help and Healing

Forgiveness is hard, but with God's grace, it is possible. Pray together, surrender the pain to God, and ask for strength.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28 NIV

Choosing Forgiveness Over Bitterness

Dami and Lami finally realized that their love was worth more than their pride. Instead of allowing unforgiveness to destroy their joy, they made a choice:

Forgiveness doesn't mean ignoring the pain—it means choosing love over resentment. It is a gift you give to your spouse, your marriage, and yourself.

Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Colossians 3:13 NIV

Every marriage will face offenses, misunderstandings, and disappointments. But those who choose forgiveness over bitterness will experience a marriage that is strong, joyful, and deeply fulfilling.

Will you choose forgiveness today? Your marriage depends on it.

4

Chapter Four

Avoiding Icebergs

(Relationship Threats You Can't Ignore)

External pressures and dangers that can sink a marriage

(Silent Threats - Lack of Communication, Emotional Affairs, Lack of Intimacy, external pressures)

Ships rarely sink because of the waves they see; instead, it's the hidden icebergs beneath the surface that cause destruction. Many marriages suffer not from explosive fights but from subtle, unspoken issues—a growing distance, a lack of intimacy, or an emotional bond forming outside the marriage. These silent threats, if left unchecked, can cause

deep fractures. This chapter reveals how lack of communication, emotional affairs, and intimacy struggles become dangerous icebergs, threatening to sink a marriage slowly and silently.

- **Poor Communication in the Marriage**

Poor Communication in Marriage: The Silent Divider

Dami & Lami's Story: A Marriage Strained by Poor Communication

Dami and Lami began their journey together with love and shared dreams. However, as time progressed, subtle issues in their communication began to surface.

Dami often assumed Lami understood his needs without expressing them, while Lami hesitated to voice her concerns, fearing conflict. This lack of open dialogue led to misunderstandings and growing emotional distance.

Instead of addressing their issues, they both retreated into silence, hoping problems would resolve on their own. Over time, their home, once filled with laughter, became a space of unspoken grievances and unmet expectations.

Their marriage wasn't deteriorating due to external challenges; it was weakening from within due to poor communication.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Ephesians 4:29 - NIV

Understanding Poor Communication in Marriage

Poor communication is characterized by:

Assumptions: Believing your partner knows your thoughts without expressing them.

Avoidance: Shying away from discussing sensitive topics.

Passive-Aggressiveness: Indirectly expressing dissatisfaction instead of addressing issues openly.

While occasional misunderstandings are natural, consistent poor communication erodes trust, intimacy, and connection in a marriage.

Signs of Poor Communication in Marriage

1. Frequent Misunderstandings

Misinterpretations become common, leading to unnecessary conflicts.

2. Avoidance of Difficult Topics

Both partners steer clear of discussions that might lead to disagreements, resulting in unresolved issues.

*Better is open rebuke than hidden love.
Proverbs 27:5 ESV*

3. The Silent Treatment

Withdrawing from interaction as a form of punishment, leading to further alienation.

Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment. Proverbs 18:1 ESV

4. Constant Interruptions

Not allowing your partner to finish speaking, indicating a lack of respect and understanding.

*Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.
James 1:19 ESV*

5. Defensiveness

Responding to feedback with excuses or counterattacks instead of understanding.

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 16:18 ESV

6. Lack of Active Listening

Being physically present but mentally absent during conversations.

He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, It is folly and shame unto him.

Proverbs 18:13 KJV

7. Emotional Withdrawal

Detaching emotionally to avoid confrontation, leading to isolation.

8. Blaming and Criticizing

Focusing on your partner's faults rather than seeking solutions together, because you really don't get their hearts and intentions right.

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Matthew 7:3 ESV

9. Feeling Unheard or Unimportant

One or both partners feel their opinions and feelings are disregarded.

Consequences of Poor Communication in Marriage

1. Emotional Disconnection

Without open dialogue, couples drift apart, losing intimacy and affection.

2. Increased Conflict

Misunderstandings escalate into frequent arguments, creating a hostile environment.

3. Resentment and Bitterness

Unresolved issues fester, leading to deep-seated resentment.

4. Decreased Trust

Lack of transparency fosters suspicion and doubt.

5. Permanent Damage

Continual poor communication can lead couples to feel incompatible, risking the marriage's dissolution.

Healing a Marriage from Poor Communication

1. Prioritize Open Dialogue

Set aside regular time to discuss feelings, concerns, and aspirations.

2. Practice Active Listening

Fully engage when your partner speaks, showing empathy and understanding.

3. Seek Constructive Feedback

Encourage and provide feedback without assigning blame.

4. Engage in Couples Counseling

Professional guidance can offer tools to improve communication and resolve underlying issues.

Where no counsel is, the people fall: But in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

Proverbs 11:14 KJV

5. Pray Together

Seeking spiritual connection can strengthen bonds and provide clarity.

Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them. Matthew 18:19 ESV

Choose Connection Over Silence

Dami and Lami realized that their challenges stemmed not from a lack of love but from a lack of communication. By acknowledging their shortcomings and committing to open dialogue, they rebuilt their bond.

Poor communication seeks to divide, but intentional dialogue fosters unity. A thriving marriage isn't devoid of challenges but is sustained by partners willing to communicate openly, listen actively, and love unconditionally.

Let all that you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:14 ESV

Will you choose connection over silence today?
Your marriage's strength depends on it.

- **Emotional Affairs: The Silent Threat to Marriages**

An emotional affair occurs when a person forms a deep emotional connection with someone outside their marriage, often crossing boundaries of intimacy and secrecy. While there may be no physical involvement, emotional affairs can be just as damaging as physical ones, eroding trust and weakening the marital bond.

Signs of an Emotional Affair

1. Increased Secrecy – Hiding messages, calls, or interactions with the other person.

2. Emotional Distance from Spouse – Becoming less engaged in conversations or intimacy at home.

3. Frequent Thoughts About the Other Person – Daydreaming or seeking emotional comfort outside the marriage.

4. Comparing Your Spouse Unfavorably – Viewing the other person as more understanding or exciting.

5. Defensiveness – Becoming irritated when asked about the friendship or downplaying its significance.

Why Emotional Affairs Happen

Unmet Emotional Needs – When a spouse feels unheard, unappreciated, or disconnected, they may seek validation elsewhere.

Lack of Boundaries – Friendships that become too personal or involve sharing intimate details about the marriage can lead to emotional attachment.

Escapism – Using the emotional connection as a distraction from personal struggles or marital challenges.

How to Prevent Emotional Affairs

1. Prioritize Open Communication – Discuss emotions, needs, and struggles with your spouse instead of an outsider.

2. Set Healthy Boundaries – Avoid confiding deeply in someone of the opposite sex or spending excessive time alone with them.

3. Invest in Your Marriage – Regularly nurture your connection through quality time, shared goals, and emotional support.

4. Recognize the Danger Signs – If a relationship is becoming emotionally significant, acknowledge it and take steps to refocus on your marriage.

5. Seek Accountability – Confide in a trusted mentor, counselor, or spiritual advisor if you find yourself emotionally entangled with someone else.

Healing from an Emotional Affair

If an emotional affair has already occurred, restoration is possible through:

Honest Conversations – Both partners must acknowledge the impact of the affair and express their feelings.

Rebuilding Trust – Transparency and consistent effort to regain trust are crucial.

Counseling or Coaching – Professional guidance can help couples navigate emotional wounds and restore intimacy.

Renewed Commitment – Setting new relationship goals and actively working on rekindling love and connection.

Emotional affairs can start subtly but have the power to deeply wound a marriage. The key to safeguarding your relationship is intentional effort, mutual accountability, and an unwavering commitment to each other.

- **Lack of Intimacy in Marriage: Recognizing and Rebuilding Connection**

Dami & Lami's Story: A Marriage Facing Intimacy Challenges

Dami and Lami entered marriage with deep affection and shared aspirations. However, as years passed, the demands of careers, parenting, and daily routines began to overshadow their relationship. They found themselves drifting apart, with fewer moments of closeness and understanding. Their conversations became transactional, focusing on tasks rather than emotions, leading to a palpable distance between them.

Their marriage was quietly eroding due to a lack of intimacy.

Understanding Intimacy in Marriage

Intimacy in marriage encompasses more than just physical closeness; it includes emotional, intellectual, and experiential connections. It's the

profound bond that allows couples to share their deepest thoughts, fears, dreams, and desires. When intimacy wanes, couples may feel isolated, misunderstood, or unappreciated.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Ephesians 5:25 NIV

Signs of a Lack of Intimacy in Marriage

1. Emotional Distance

Conversations become superficial, avoiding personal feelings or thoughts. This emotional gap can lead to feelings of loneliness within the marriage.

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Proverbs 17:17 NIV

2. Decreased Physical Affection

A noticeable decline in physical touch, such as hugging, kissing, or holding hands, can signal diminishing intimacy.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is more delightful than wine. Song of Solomon 1:2 NIV

3. Lack of Shared Activities

Couples no longer engage in activities they once enjoyed together, leading separate lives under the same roof.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. Ecclesiastes 4:9 NIV

4. Increased Conflicts

Frequent unresolved arguments can indicate deeper emotional disconnections.

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1 NIV

5. Seeking Fulfillment Elsewhere

One or both partners may turn to friends, work, or hobbies to fill the void left by the lack of connection in the marriage.

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Proverbs 4:23 NIV

Consequences of a Lack of Intimacy in Marriage

1. Feelings of Loneliness – Without a deep connection, individuals may feel isolated, even when together.

2. Decreased Self-Esteem – Feeling undesired or unappreciated can lead to self-doubt and diminished confidence.

3. Resentment – Unaddressed feelings can build up, causing bitterness toward one another.

4. Infidelity – The absence of intimacy may lead some to seek connection outside the marriage.

5. Potential Separation or Divorce – Continued disconnection can result in the dissolution of the marriage.

Rebuilding Intimacy in Marriage

1. Open Communication

Discuss feelings, needs, and concerns honestly and without judgment.

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. Ephesians 4:25 NIV

2. Prioritize Quality Time

Engage in activities together that foster closeness and understanding.

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! Psalm 133:1 NIV

3. Physical Affection

Reintroduce simple touches, like holding hands or hugging, to reconnect physically.

Let him lead me to the banquet hall, and let his banner over me be love. Song of Solomon 2:4 NIV

4. Seek Professional Help

Marriage counseling can provide tools and guidance to navigate challenges.

Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety. Proverbs 11:14 NIV

5. Spiritual Connection

Praying or reading scripture together can deepen your bond and provide mutual support. For example, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter maintained their connection by reading the Bible together every night throughout their marriage.

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them. Matthew 18:20 NIV

Choosing Connection Over Distance

Dami and Lami recognized that their drifting apart was not due to a lack of love but a lack of intentional connection. By acknowledging the signs and consequences of their diminishing intimacy, they took proactive steps to rebuild their bond:

Engaging in heartfelt conversations

Rekindling physical affection

Participating in shared activities

Lack of intimacy seeks to divide, but with effort and commitment, couples can restore and even deepen their connection. A thriving marriage is built not on perfection but on two individuals willing to grow, communicate, and love unconditionally.

And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Colossians 3:14
NIV

Will you choose to reconnect and strengthen your bond today? Your marriage's depth and resilience depend on it.

- **External Pressures**

Envy Toward Others

When partners have unresolved issues, they tend to make decisions from a place of weakness. Making family decisions from this standpoint affects everyone. For instance, if a partner struggles with envy toward a third party, this emotion can subtly influence their actions and choices.

It's essential for couples to work together as a team to examine their driving motives and align their principles with God's Word. The foundation should always be love.

Consider envy as a destructive force—much like a fox that subtly threatens a marriage. If a spouse harbors envy toward a third party, they may resist discussions about that person, make excuses, or even manipulate schedules to avoid interactions with them. If the root cause of this behavior isn't recognized as envy, it may initially go unnoticed.

However, if a couple has agreed that love will be their guiding principle, it may still be appropriate to miss an event involving that third party. The real test comes in what follows. A healthy response would be to bring it up with one's spouse afterward:

"Even though we couldn't attend, let's reach out, apologize for our absence, and perhaps send a token of goodwill."

If the spouse resists even this simple act of kindness, it may indicate a deeper issue that needs to be confronted. This is particularly crucial if such behavior becomes a recurring pattern. Envy is not just a personal issue—it is a spirit. A spouse who operates in envy toward a third party is also capable of directing envy toward their own partner.

This may manifest in ways such as constantly putting their spouse down, wanting to appear superior, shutting them down in conversations, devaluing their achievements, and being quick to argue instead of affirming or complementing them.

One elderly spouse once recounted how her partner frequently prayed that God would elevate him far above his wife—not for the family's welfare but simply to shine and dominate. This attitude activities prevented them from functioning as a team. Eventually, their home became marked by constant conflict, resembling a classic Tom and Jerry dynamic.

This is a dangerous situation, as it creates an opening for the enemy to attack the union.

Marriage should be governed by love and divine confrontation—the willingness to lovingly call out and correct each other. One of the greatest safeguards in a marriage is establishing that God's Word is the final authority.

When a couple acknowledges an issue and agrees to work on it together, they are on the path to deliverance. This process requires mutual accountability: the ability to say, "No, we are off course," or "Yes, this is the right way," while remaining prayerful.

Failing to address envy opens the door wider for the enemy to establish a foothold in the marriage, blocking the couple's breakthroughs and hindering their potential. The enemy's agenda remains the same: to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).

The late Rev. Kenneth E. Hagin once shared a story about a man who harbored strife. He fell gravely ill and was advised to apologize and make amends before being prayed for. He refused and ultimately died. This illustrates how spiritual breaches, like envy and strife can have fatal consequences. (For more on this topic, get my book, *Covenant Core*.)

Inherited Enemies

A more dangerous scenario is when a spouse deliberately isolates their partner from people they deem unworthy of a relationship, as a result of personal beefs. This is a tactic straight from the pit of hell.

The real question is: Why are you at odds with this third party in the first place?

Marriage is a privilege born out of grace, not an entitlement. A controlling spouse who enforces a “no me, nobody” stance is adopting a lordship mindset that is not of God.

The truth is, marriage is about God, not about personal control. Scripture teaches us:

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Matthew 5:9

If a person is in conflict with God’s Word, they should be corrected and restored with love:

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Galatians 6:1 (NIV)

However, if a spouse intentionally stirs up strife and drags their partner into it, they are leading the home

into spiritual vulnerability. Strife is not from God. Our marital covenant must align with God's covenant with us, which supersedes any agreement between husband and wife.

A manipulative spouse who demands alignment with their personal preferences instead of God's Word is dangerous. Couples must unite spiritually by praying together and seeking divine guidance. True unity is found in aligning with God's Word and character; otherwise, the marriage is in rebellion, not agreement.

One of the greatest tragedies in any home is dysfunctional priesthood. It leads to loss, first in leadership and direction, followed in other aspects of life. When a couple lacks spiritual unity, it is only a matter of time before other forms of loss appear.

In-Laws

While family is a blessing, in-law relationships can cause tension in a marriage if not managed wisely.

*A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
Genesis 2:24*

This means that while parents remain important, the primary commitment shifts to the spouse.

For example, Dami's mother frequently compared Lami's cooking to her own, making Lami feel inadequate. Initially, Dami dismissed these comments, but over time, Lami began to feel resentful. Similarly, Lami's father often questioned Dami's financial decisions, making him feel disrespected.

When spouses fail to set healthy boundaries, they allow external influences to create division rather than fostering love. A couple must decide together how to navigate family dynamics while still honoring their parents.

Societal Expectations and Cultural Pressures

Culture and societal norms often place unrealistic demands on couples, pressuring them to have children at a certain time, meet financial expectations, or conform to extended family traditions. If not handled wisely, these pressures can become burdens that strain the marriage.

For instance, Dami and Lami's extended family frequently pressured them to host elaborate gatherings, despite financial strain. Wanting to maintain peace, Dami agreed, but Lami grew frustrated as their expenses piled up, causing tension between them.

However, marriage should be guided by God's wisdom, not societal expectations:

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Romans 12:2

A couple must align their choices with God's will rather than cultural pressures.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Matthew 5:9

The enemy seeks to divide marriages because a united couple is a threat to his plans. When a husband and wife stand together, pray together, and love each other unconditionally, they become a fortress against his schemes.

This version enhances readability, improves flow, and refines sentence structure while keeping the essence of your message intact. Let me know if you'd like any further adjustments!

Chapter Five

Navigating Toxic Waters

(Overcoming Destructive Patterns)

Addressing harmful behaviors and emotional toxins in marriage, where Conflict Runs Deep with Strife, Selfishness, Envy:

Some waters appear calm on the surface but carry dangerous undercurrents beneath. Marriages often encounter these unseen forces in the form of strife, envy, and selfishness—poisonous attitudes that pull partners apart, creating resentment and hostility. Just as sailors must learn to recognize and resist dangerous currents, couples must identify and combat these destructive patterns before they take control. This chapter dives into the deep waters of conflict, showing how to navigate through them without being swept away.

- **Strife in the Marriage**

One of the most dangerous disruptors of the Marriage Voyage is strife.

Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so? Amos 3:3 - NIV

A marriage cannot flourish where division exists. Strife breeds disunity, and disunity weakens the foundation of any relationship.

Dami & Lami's Story: A Marriage at War With Itself

Dami and Lami had a beautiful marriage. They were best friends, business partners, and prayer warriors together. But over time, subtle tensions crept in.

Dami began feeling insecure about Lami's career success, fearing she would outshine him.

Lami felt unappreciated, believing Dami didn't recognize her sacrifices.

Instead of addressing these concerns, they let them fester.

What started as unspoken frustrations soon grew into resentment. Resentment turned into persistent conflict. Before long, the couple found themselves arguing over the smallest things. They were still married, but no longer truly united.

Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.

Only by pride cometh contention: But with the well advised is wisdom. Proverbs 13:10

Pride kept them from addressing their pain. Strife took root, and their once-harmonious marriage became a battlefield.

The Silent Attack of Strife

Strife is one of the enemy's most effective tools against marriage. It rarely announces itself with loud clashes; instead, it creeps in through silent resentments, unspoken hurts, and unresolved conflicts.

A marriage infected by strife will display these symptoms:

- Assuming the worst about your spouse's intentions
- Withholding support and sacrifice
- Making decisions in isolation instead of unity
- Secrecy, keeping details, even minor ones, from each other
- Seeing your spouse as a competitor instead of a teammate
- Jealousy and comparison, leading to rivalry rather than partnership

Strife doesn't just cause arguments, it chokes love, drains joy, and opens doors for division.

For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. James 3:16
- NIV

A home ruled by strife invites confusion and destruction.

The effects of strife include:

Loss of Salt

Such couples lose out on being role models for younger couples, because they have no integrity or confidence to do so.

Impassioned

The marriage loses passion, excitement and flavour of any form.

Cohabitation

The partners become co-habitants.

Disrespect

They tend to relate with arrogance and disrespect each other.

Third Party Preference

These couples tend to be averse towards each other and even lack the zeal to defend one another against a third party.

A hurting spouse will come home and accuse the partner, based on what “they said” or that he/she heard outside the home, because of the strain and distrust between them.

This opens the marriage to stuff that the enemy offers.

The Fate of a Strife-Infested Marriage

Many couples look happy on the outside but are silently crumbling within. They post anniversary pictures, attend social events, and maintain the appearance of unity. But beneath the surface, their marriage is eroding, worn down by unresolved conflicts, emotional distance, and ongoing battles for superiority.

A marriage consumed by strife eventually reaches a breaking point. Without intervention, humility, and surrender to the Holy Spirit, it will continue to fester.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3 - NIV

The good news? Healing is possible. But it requires both partners to recognize the enemy at work, choose unity over division, and commit to uprooting strife before it destroys what was once beautiful.

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8 - NIV

A marriage built on love, humility, and God's wisdom can overcome even the fiercest storms.

- **Selfishness: A Marriage Disruptor**

In the voyage of marriage, selfishness is like a captain who prioritizes their own comfort over the

safety and well-being of the entire crew. It disrupts the journey by shifting the focus from "we" to "me," causing resentment, emotional distance, and a breakdown in unity.

Understanding Selfishness in Marriage

Selfishness in marriage manifests in different ways, prioritizing personal desires over shared goals, neglecting a spouse's emotional needs, or refusing to compromise. When one or both partners consistently put themselves first, it erodes trust and creates an imbalance in the relationship.

Dami and Lami, in their marriage voyage, once faced this challenge. Dami often made financial decisions without consulting Lami, assuming his choices were best. Lami, in turn, withdrew emotionally, feeling unheard and undervalued. Over time, this selfish approach led to tension and unmet expectations.

It wasn't until they recognized selfishness as a "Home Wrecker" that they began making decisions with mutual respect and consideration.

How Selfishness Affects a Marriage Voyage

1. **Weakens Communication** – When one partner is self-focused, open dialogue is replaced by defensiveness and disregard for the other's perspective.

2. Breeds Resentment – A marriage where one person takes and the other gives without reciprocation creates emotional exhaustion and frustration.

3. Damages Trust – Consistently prioritizing self-interest over the marriage covenant weakens the foundation of trust.

4. Hinders Teamwork – A healthy marriage requires collaboration, but selfishness leads to isolation and individualism.

Overcoming Selfishness in Marriage

1. Adopt a Servant's Heart – True love is selfless.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. Philippians 2:3-4 - NIV

2. Practice Active Listening – Make an effort to hear and understand your spouse's needs, not just respond to them.

3. Compromise for Unity – Marriage thrives when both partners are willing to sacrifice for the greater good of their union.

4. Choose Love Daily – Selflessness isn't a one-time act but a daily decision to prioritize your spouse's well-being.

Dami and Lami learned to replace selfishness with selflessness by making decisions together and prioritizing each other's happiness. This shift transformed their marriage from a battleground of personal interests to a unified, thriving partnership.

A selfish captain cannot steer a ship safely through storms. Likewise, a selfish spouse will struggle to navigate the tides of marriage successfully. By choosing selflessness, couples can safeguard their voyage and reach their destination together, stronger than ever.

- **Envy: The Silent Storm That Sinks Marriages**

Dami and Lami had always been a strong team, supporting each other's dreams and celebrating each other's victories. But when Lami's business began to flourish while Dami faced challenges in his career, a silent storm started brewing.

At first, Dami was genuinely happy for Lami's success. He praised her hard work and even helped her strategize. But as months passed and his own career stagnated, he began to feel uneasy. He noticed how people praised Lami, how she seemed to attract new opportunities, and how she became

more confident. Instead of seeing her success as theirs, he started feeling left behind.

Lami sensed the shift. Dami became quieter, avoided discussions about her business, and seemed irritated when she shared exciting news. What once bonded them, dreaming together, was now creating distance.

Recognizing the Threat of Envy

Envy in marriage often starts subtly. It isn't always loud or confrontational, it can be a quiet resentment, a feeling of inadequacy, or an unspoken competition.

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. Proverbs 14:30 NIV

Unchecked, envy can lead to bitterness, emotional detachment, and even passive-aggressive behaviors that damage intimacy.

How Dami and Lami Overcame It

1. Dami Acknowledged His Feelings – Instead of suppressing his emotions, he admitted to himself and to Lami that he was struggling with envy.

2. Lami Reassured Dami – She reminded him that his worth was not tied to financial success and that they were a team, not competitors.

3. They Shifted from Competition to Collaboration – They redefined success as “our win” instead of “my win.” Lami started including Dami more in her business decisions, valuing his insights.

4. Dami Focused on His Unique Purpose – Rather than feeling threatened, he used this as an opportunity to re-evaluate his own goals and trust in God’s timing.

5. They Strengthened Their Communication and Prayed Together – Prayer helped them realign their hearts, as Philippians 2:3 (NIV) says;

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.

Anchoring Your Marriage Against Envy

If envy begins to creep in:

Celebrate each other’s victories as a shared success.

Speak openly about feelings instead of letting resentment grow.

Remember that your marriage is a partnership, not a competition.

Pray for contentment and trust in God's unique plan for each of you.

Dami and Lami chose to turn their challenge into an opportunity to strengthen their bond. Instead of letting envy wreck their voyage, they navigated through it together anchored in love, humility, and faith.

Chapter Six

Course Corrections

(Recognizing and Fixing Navigational Errors)

How Misaligned Priorities, Dishonesty and Division lead marriages astray.

A successful voyage requires careful navigation. When sailors lose sight of their destination, they drift aimlessly or crash into unforeseen dangers. In marriage, misaligned priorities and dishonesty act as navigational errors, subtle but devastating mistakes that cause couples to lose their shared vision. Whether it's the pursuit of individual success over the marriage or the erosion of trust through dishonesty, these missteps can lead a couple far from where they intended to be. This chapter explores how to recalibrate and realign before the marriage veers off course.

- **Misaligned Priorities in Marriage: Drifting Apart Without Realizing It**

Dami & Lami's Story: A Love Pulled in Different Directions

Dami and Lami started their marriage with dreams of building a life together. They envisioned a home filled with love, shared goals, and unity. But as the years went by, their priorities began to shift.

Dami was focused on advancing his career, putting in long hours at work to provide financial security. Lami, on the other hand, longed for quality time and deeper emotional connection. She felt like their marriage was taking a backseat to Dami's ambitions.

When they did talk, it often ended in frustration. Lami accused Dami of neglecting their relationship, while Dami felt unappreciated for his efforts to secure their future. They were both working hard—but in different directions.

Slowly, emotional distance crept in. Their conversations became shallow, their disagreements frequent, and their connection weak.

Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?
Amos 3:3 NIV

The Reality of Misaligned Priorities in Marriage

Every couple enters marriage with expectations and dreams. However, as life unfolds, careers, children, personal ambitions, and external demands can begin to take center stage. When spouses do not intentionally align their priorities, they may find themselves growing apart rather than growing together.

Misaligned priorities do not always mean one spouse is wrong—it often means they are not on the same page. One may prioritize career growth, while the other values quality time. One may focus on financial security, while the other longs for emotional connection. Without alignment, these differences create tension, resentment, and emotional distance.

Signs That Priorities Are Misaligned

1. **One Spouse Feels Neglected** – When one person constantly feels unheard, unseen, or unimportant, resentment can build.
2. **Frequent Misunderstandings** – Conversations often lead to frustration because both partners have different expectations.

3. Lack of Quality Time Together – There is little to no intentional time spent connecting as a couple.

4. Conflicting Goals – One spouse may desire financial investments, while the other wants to focus on experiences and relationships.

5. Emotional Distance – When priorities are not aligned, emotional intimacy weakens, leading to feelings of loneliness.

How to Re-align Priorities in Marriage

1. Have Honest Conversations – Openly discuss your goals, expectations, and what matters most to each of you.

2. Understand Each Other's Needs – Marriage thrives when both partners feel valued and understood.

*Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others.
Philippians 2:4 NIV*

3. Create Shared Goals – Align your ambitions, whether in finances, parenting, spiritual growth, or personal development.

4. Prioritize Time Together – Set aside time to reconnect, whether through date nights, shared hobbies, or deep conversations.

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! Psalm 133:1 NIV

5. Pray and Seek God's Guidance – God should be at the center of your marriage, guiding your priorities and decisions.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5 NIV

Dami and Lami eventually realized that their marriage was not struggling because of lack of love but because they were not aligned in their priorities. Instead of working against each other, they made a conscious decision to work together.

They started communicating openly, setting shared goals, and making time for each other. As they aligned their priorities, their connection was restored, and their marriage became a partnership once again.

A thriving marriage is not about having identical priorities but about ensuring that both partners walk in the same direction. When couples intentionally align their goals, values, and time, their marriage becomes stronger, more fulfilling, and deeply united.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Ephesians 4:2 NIV

Dami and Lami eventually realized that they were not enemies—they were a team. Instead of allowing misaligned priorities to tear them apart, they made a conscious choice:

A strong marriage requires intentional effort. Priorities may shift, but love, unity, and shared vision must remain constant.

Misaligned priorities don't have to destroy a marriage. With mutual understanding, commitment, and faith, couples can build a fulfilling and purpose-driven life together.

Will you take a step today to realign your priorities and strengthen your marriage?

- **Dishonesty: A Marriage Disruptor**

In the voyage of marriage, dishonesty is like a hidden leak in a ship—small at first, but if left unchecked, it can sink the entire vessel. When truth is compromised, trust erodes, leaving the marriage vulnerable to storms of doubt, insecurity, and distance.

Understanding Dishonesty in Marriage

Dishonesty isn't just about outright lies; it includes deception, half-truths, secrecy, and a lack of transparency. Whether it's hiding financial matters, withholding emotions, or breaking promises, dishonesty creates cracks in the foundation of a marriage.

Dami and Lami encountered this challenge when Lami discovered that Dami had been making financial decisions without informing her. Though Dami didn't see it as dishonesty, since he believed he was acting in their best interest Lami felt betrayed. The secrecy made her question what else he might be hiding, causing a strain in their trust. It was only when Dami chose to be fully transparent that they began to rebuild their unity.

How Dishonesty Affects a Marriage Voyage

1. Erodes Trust – A single act of dishonesty can plant seeds of doubt, making a spouse question other areas of the relationship.
2. Creates Emotional Distance – When trust is broken, couples often withdraw emotionally, fearing further deception.

3. Invites Conflict – Lies, when exposed, lead to misunderstandings and unresolved issues, escalating into major conflicts.

4. Weakens Intimacy – Transparency strengthens connection, but dishonesty creates barriers, preventing genuine closeness.

Overcoming Dishonesty in Marriage

1. Commit to Transparency – Make honesty a non-negotiable value in your marriage, even in small matters.

2. Confess and Seek Forgiveness – If dishonesty has occurred, acknowledge it, apologize sincerely, and work toward rebuilding trust.

3. Speak the Truth in Love –

*Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.” Truth should always be communicated with kindness and wisdom.
Ephesians 4:25 NIV*

4. Build Accountability – Having open discussions about finances, emotions, and personal struggles fosters a culture of honesty.

Dami and Lami learned that dishonesty no matter how small, had the power to damage their journey together. By embracing truth, they transformed their marriage from one of suspicion to a safe space of openness and trust.

A ship with hidden leaks is at risk of sinking. Likewise, a marriage built on dishonesty will struggle to withstand life's storms. Couples who prioritize truthfulness ensure that their journey remains steady, navigating toward a future filled with trust, security, and love.

Division in Marriage: The Ultimate Outcome of the Disruptors

Dami & Lami's Story: A Love Drifting Apart

Dami and Lami started their marriage deeply in love and united in vision. They prayed together, planned together, and fought life's battles as one. But over time, small cracks began to form.

It wasn't one big event that caused their drift—it was a series of subtle attacks.

Ego made them fight for control rather than serve each other.

Envy made them compare rather than celebrate one another.

Fear made them doubt each other's intentions.

Resentment made them hold onto past wounds instead of healing together.

Strife turned small disagreements into cold wars.

Pride made apologies difficult and hardened their hearts.

Selfishness made their personal needs more important than the marriage.

Distractions shifted their focus from their relationship to other priorities.

Each fox chipped away at their foundation until they found themselves living parallel lives instead of an intertwined one. They still lived under the same roof, but their hearts were miles apart.

They had unknowingly fallen into the greatest attack on marriage—division.

If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. Mark 3:25 NIV.

Understanding Division in Marriage

Marriage was designed by God to be a covenant of unity, but the enemy's strategy has always been to divide and conquer.

Division doesn't always look like separation or divorce; it often starts as:

Living as roommates instead of soulmates.

Making individual decisions instead of shared ones.

Losing emotional, spiritual, and physical intimacy.

Withholding love, affection, or support out of hurt or pride.

Allowing external voices (family, society, culture) to redefine the marriage.

Every time a couple stops fighting for unity, love, and oneness, they unknowingly allow division to take root.

Signs of Division in Marriage

1. Lack of Shared Vision

A divided marriage often lacks a common direction. Instead of working toward shared goals, both spouses pursue individual agendas.

*Can two walk together unless they are agreed?
Amos 3:3 KJV*

2. Constant Misunderstandings

When unity is absent, even small disagreements turn into major conflicts. Assumptions replace communication, and frustration replaces patience.

*Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight
in airing their own opinions. Proverbs 18:2 NIV*

3. Emotional and Physical Distance

A divided couple may still live together but lack emotional connection. Hugs become rare, laughter fades, and conversations feel forced.

4. Making Decisions Independently

Instead of functioning as a team, spouses begin making major life decisions without consulting one another. This breeds distrust and resentment.

5. Seeking Comfort Elsewhere

When division grows, one or both spouses may seek emotional validation, advice, or intimacy outside the marriage. This weakens trust and invites temptation.

The Consequences of Division in Marriage

1. A Weakened Spiritual Covering—

A divided marriage is more vulnerable to attacks because unity strengthens a couple's spiritual authority.

Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. Matthew 18:19 NIV

2. Increased Vulnerability to Temptation

When intimacy, appreciation, and communication are lacking, temptation can appear more appealing than commitment.

Each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. James 1:14 NIV

3. Strained Family and Finances

Division affects everything—parenting, financial decisions, friendships, and even careers.

Every city or house divided against itself will not stand. Matthew 12:25 KJV

4. Emotional and Mental Drain

Marriages marked by division often bring stress, loneliness, and emotional fatigue. The home, which should be a place of peace, becomes a place of tension.

5. It can lead to third parties bypassing either partner to reach one of them in situations where both partners should ideally be involved or consulted.

This becomes even more likely when division has already been openly registered in the home through the actions of either party.

Such scenarios may seem trivial or be dismissed as insignificant, but they often reflect the enemy's attempt to have his way.

This applies to any decision where either partner is dishonored or disregarded.

If a third party can obtain something that should require mutual consent—without consulting the other spouse—you are fostering division and creating a gap.

The more often you come together to make decisions, the more you cultivate unity and strengthen oneness. Conversely, the more you act independently, the more you reinforce division.

Restoring Unity in a Divided Marriage

1. Acknowledge the Division

The first step to healing is recognizing the problem rather than ignoring it.

Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord. Lamentations 3:40 NIV

2. Humble Yourselves Before God

Pride fuels division, but humility invites healing.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves. Philippians 2:3 NIV

3. Prioritize Communication and Understanding

A united marriage thrives on open, honest, and grace-filled conversations.

4. Pray Together and for Each Other

Spiritual unity is the foundation of marital unity. When couples pray together, the enemy loses ground.

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them. Matthew 18:20 NIV

5. Rebuild Trust and Shared Purpose

Make a conscious decision to work as a team rather than as competitors.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Ephesians 4:2 NIV

6. Seek Godly Counsel when necessary.

Sometimes, overcoming division requires seeking wisdom from trusted mentors or counselors.

Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed. Proverbs 15:22 ESV.

Choosing Unity Over Division

Dami and Lami realized that division wasn't just about fights or misunderstandings, it was an attack on their oneness, purpose, and future.

Instead of letting leakages in their vessel, they chose to fight for their marriage by:

- Communicating instead of assuming
- Forgiving instead of keeping score
- Praying instead of blaming
- Valuing each other instead of competing

Every couple will face challenges, but those who stay united will weather many storm.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3 NIV

Marriage is not just about staying together; it's about growing together. The enemy seeks to divide, but God's design is for unity, love, and strength.

Will you choose division or unity? The future of your marriage depends on it.

Chapter Seven

Sailing Through the Tides

(Thriving Through Life's Seasons)

How couples can remain strong through the Contrary Tides

Moments or seasons of difficulty require faith, and courage. Just as skilled sailors don't abandon ship at the first sign of rough waters, couples committed to their union must learn how to navigate these challenges with wisdom, patience, and determination.

This chapter is about taking intentional steps to steady your marriage when it feels like it's drifting. It's about recognizing that while both internal and external forces may push against your relationship, your response determines whether you sink or sail.

Sailing through the tides requires effort from both partners. It may mean revisiting past hurts, adjusting expectations, or making sacrifices to restore harmony. But it also calls for faith—believing that your marriage can survive and thrive beyond the struggles of the moment. Whether your ship is slightly off course or battling heavy storms, this chapter will equip you with the tools to salvage, strengthen, and sustain your union.

Every well-equipped ship carries lifeboats, essential tools for survival or to stay afloat during turbulent times.

Keep your life jackets on through the tides with these 5-Ds;

1. Dedication
2. Determination
3. Discernment
4. Devotion
5. Defense

- **Dedication: Anchoring Your Love.**

Dedication is commitment, choosing to love each other, even when emotions waver. It's about staying anchored in the vows made on the wedding day and continuously working towards a deeper, more fulfilling connection.

Dedication is the anchor that holds your marriage steady. It's the commitment to prioritize your relationship, to work through challenges, and to maintain a deep emotional connection. A dedicated

partner is willing to make sacrifices, to listen actively, and to support each other's goals and dreams.

- **Determination: Navigating Life's Challenges**

Determination is the compass that guides you through life's turbulent waters. It's the resilience to face obstacles, to overcome setbacks, and to keep moving forward together. A determined partner is proactive, resourceful, and willing to adapt to changing circumstances.

Determination is your staying power that gives the perseverance to weather storms together, learning from mistakes, and emerging stronger on the other side. Couples who build resilience don't see challenges as threats but as opportunities for growth.

- **Discernment: Charting a Wise Course**

Discernment is the map that helps you chart a wise course through life's complexities. It's the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, to make informed decisions, and to avoid harmful patterns. A discerning partner is thoughtful, reflective, and willing to seek guidance when needed.

- **Devotion: Sustain a Deep Connection by Faith.**

Devotion is the fuel that sustains a deep emotional connection. It's the cultivation of intimacy, affection, and spiritual connection. A devoted partner is attentive, affectionate, and willing to nurture the relationship through life's joys and challenges.

- Defense: Protecting Your Relationship

Defense is the shield that protects your relationship from external threats. It's the willingness to stand up for each other, to set healthy boundaries, and to maintain a sense of unity. A defensive partner is vigilant, loyal, and committed to safeguarding the relationship.

Defense of what you have will prompt you to praise, pray and war.

When you have a warfare challenge, find your ally. Being in a marriage does not necessarily mean you have got an ally in your partner, though it ought to be so.

In the previous chapter, we highlighted division as an enemy's stealth operation when you are not aware.

Divergence can be a result of preference, principle, interpretation, perception, manipulation, or outright ignorance, all of which would be oblivious to one or both of the parties.

However, when you can identify the tell tale signs of strife and division, that should inform you if you have found an ally in the home, or you need one. It is ignorance to these facts and factors that could make one to be presumptuous, but you are better informed now.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. Hosea 4:6

When you have any situation to tackle and your partner is uncooperative, take the following Measures;

- * Take Decisions by the Spirit
So, if you need to make decisions in the face of marital conflicts, ask the Lord for direction, because, even if you take the decision as a married partner, you are still alone in the pursuit and consequence of the decision, when unity is compromised.

- * Disunity in warfare (when one partner is in a contrary space or position), one must strive to be on God's side, seek possibilities to attain the requirement to the best of his/her abilities, while praying for God's intervention in their spouse. This is so important given that at the end of a failed outcome you both shall bear the brunt, especially where the decision is family based, and not personal.

- * Stay within boundaries of protection as overstepping can expose you and make you more vulnerable and highly invasive.

* Execute Instructions

The instructions given to you from the place of Fellowship or Communion with God even if they are instructions for the family should not be immediately relayed to your spouse for execution.

You have to process it and see yourself as a primary executor of the instructions because your spouse might not perceive or see things the same way and therefore not as driven to implement it the way you are driven.

* Seek counsel: Seeking wise counsel, mentorship, and godly friendships that uplift your marriage.

- **Standing For The Marriage (Navigating Lonely Paths)**

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. [4] In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. Hebrews 12:3-4 NIV

Handling a Conflict When Your Spouse is Uncooperative

If one partner resists unity, the other must take the right approach:

- Seek God's Direction First

Before making a decision, pray for guidance. Even as a married person, certain choices must be handled alone if unity is compromised.

- Stand on God's Side

If your spouse is in disagreement about a spiritual or moral matter, ensure you align with God's will while praying for their heart to soften. At the end of a failed decision, both partners bear the consequences.

- Stay Within Protective Boundaries

Overstepping or forcing a resolution can cause more harm. Let wisdom and patience guide your actions.

- Execute Instructions with Wisdom

When God gives you a directive, it is not always meant to be immediately shared with your spouse. Sometimes, the first step is implementing it personally and allowing your actions to speak louder than words.

Dealing with Disunity in Warfare

While spouses in a marital relationship should share ideas, insights, instructions, and counsel submitting to one another there is an exception when faced with persistent opposition or resistance from a spouse.

In such situations, when an instruction requires urgent attention, it may not always be possible to submit it to your spouse. If submission is necessary, consider seeking guidance from a trusted authority over both of you—someone who can be involved and offer counsel.

However, if circumstances do not allow for third-party intervention, you must act wisely under God's direction. For instance, if there is an urgent situation while driving and one spouse resists or argues despite imminent danger, the other should take immediate action, such as pulling the handbrake, without hesitation.

Dealing with Issues in the Spirit

- Subject unclear impressions to sustained prayers, especially when unclear.
- Seek further prayer and scriptural interpretation when dealing with passages

that have multidimensional meanings, ensuring clarity and confirmation.

- Resolve to seek divine confirmation beyond personal or mutual understanding whenever there is an internal check or disagreement. These subtle nudges from the Holy Spirit can be easily overlooked without established guiding principles.
- The enemy exploits weaknesses in how a home is run, particularly when there is a lack of godly pursuit. Without intentional communication and a commitment to growth, division can slowly take root, becoming a ticking time bomb.

Just as a well-equipped lifeboat can navigate the roughest seas, a marriage anchored in **Dedication, Determination, Discernment, Devotion, and Defense** can withstand life's storms with confidence, hope, and love.

When Submission Becomes a Challenge

While marriage encourages mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21), there are times when one spouse persistently opposes a necessary action. In such cases:

- If an urgent decision is required (e.g., avoiding immediate danger), act wisely without unnecessary confrontation.
- Strive for unity by finding common ground whenever possible.
- Seek counsel from a trusted spiritual mentor.

The Cost of Unfinished Battles

If spiritual battles remain unresolved, they become generational struggles. Parents must be intentional about confronting these challenges to prevent them from becoming burdens for their children.

A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: And the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just. Proverbs 13:22a

When families unite in faith, win their battles, and pass on spiritual strength, they establish a legacy of victory.

A marriage rooted in **Dedication, Determination, Discernment, Devotion, and Defense** can withstand any storm to emerge victorious.

Chapter Eight

Restoring a Broken Voyage

(Recovery for a Damaged Marriage)

**Healing, rebuilding trust, and reigniting love
after setbacks**

A ship that has endured storms, crashes, or leaks needs repair to keep sailing. In the same way, marriages go through rough waters, betrayal, misunderstandings, emotional distance, or even deep wounds. But just as a skilled shipwright can restore a damaged vessel, a marriage can also be renewed with intentional effort, grace, and faith.

1. Recognizing Relationship Struggles

Many marriages struggle, not because of a single catastrophic event, but because of gradual damage, small issues left unresolved, communication breakdowns, and emotional neglect.

2. Healing Comes Through Forgiveness and Grace.

Forgiveness is like repairing a leak in a ship, it prevents further damage and allows the vessel to function properly again. Many marriages suffer not because of the offense itself, but because of unforgiveness and bitterness that take root afterward.

Dami once made a hurtful comment in frustration, and though he apologized, Lami held onto the pain. Over time, her resentment made her withdraw from him emotionally. When she finally chose to forgive, it wasn't just for Dami, it freed her heart to love again.

Steps to Forgiveness in Marriage:

1. Acknowledge the hurt – Denying pain only allows it to fester.

2. Seek understanding – Was the offense intentional? Is there a deeper issue?

3. Communicate openly – Express your feelings without attacking your spouse.
4. Release the hurt – Choose to let go of resentment, even if emotions take time to heal.
5. Commit to grace – Forgiveness is not just about forgetting; it's about extending grace even when it's undeserved.

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13

Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. When we extend grace, we mirror God's love and create space for healing.

3. Strengthening Weak Foundations

A ship with a weak foundation is vulnerable to every storm. Likewise, marriages built on shaky foundations, poor communication, unmet expectations, lack of spiritual alignment will struggle under pressure.

Dami and Lami realized they had been operating more as roommates than partners. Their love hadn't

vanished, but the foundation of intentional connection had weakened.

Ways to Strengthen a Marriage Foundation:

Prioritize communication – Make time for deep, honest conversations.

Address unmet needs – Don't assume your spouse knows what you need; express it.

Revisit shared values and vision – What brought you together? What dreams do you share?

Pray together – A marriage that invites God into its foundation is unshakable.

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24

When couples take time to reinforce their foundation, they create a marriage that can weather any storm.

4. Restoring Intimacy and Rekindling Love

Just as a ship's engine needs regular maintenance to keep running smoothly, intimacy in marriage requires intentional effort to remain strong.

Over time, many couples drift into a routine where passion and closeness fade. But intimacy is not just about physical connection—it includes emotional, spiritual, and relational closeness as well.

Dami and Lami struggled with this too. Between work, parenting, and life's pressures, they found themselves living parallel lives. But when they intentionally made time to reconnect, their love was rekindled.

Ways to Restore Intimacy:

1. Schedule uninterrupted time together – Date nights, walks, or even simple conversations matter.
2. Express love daily – Small gestures, words of affirmation, and acts of service make a difference.
3. Be physically affectionate – Hold hands, hug, and express love in meaningful ways.
4. Share spiritual intimacy – Praying together deepens connection.
5. Laugh and have fun – Playfulness and shared joy strengthen bonds.

Passion may fade, but love can always be rekindled when both partners make an effort to reconnect.

A Marriage Restored

Just as a damaged ship can be repaired and set sail again, any marriage can be restored with humility, effort, and faith. No matter how broken things may seem, healing is possible.

Dami and Lami chose restoration over resignation. They recognized the cracks, forgave, rebuilt their foundation, and rekindled their love. Their marriage became stronger—not because they never had problems, but because they faced them together with God at the center.

And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

[26] And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.

[27] And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. Joel 2:25-27 KJV

If your marriage feels damaged, remember:

God is the ultimate restorer

Small, consistent efforts lead to big changes

Forgiveness and grace create space for healing

Love, when nurtured, always grows again

No matter how rough the waters have been, your marriage can sail again—stronger, steadier, and full of love.

Embracing the Journey

Every couple will face storms, but not every couple will sink. The difference lies in preparation, resilience, and unity.

Stay close to God and each other.

Face problems as a team, not as opponents.

Remember that storms are temporary—love is permanent.

No matter how fierce the waves may seem, when you ride over the tides together, your marriage will not only survive, it will thrive.

The Unending Voyage of Love and Growth

Marriage is not a one-time destination—it is a continuous journey. The vows exchanged on the wedding day were not just promises for a season but commitments for a lifetime. Like a ship navigating the vast ocean, marriage requires constant adjustments, intentional effort, and unwavering faith to stay on course.

Dami and Lami had weathered storms, celebrated victories, and grown in ways they never imagined. They learned that love was not just about feelings—it was about choice, commitment, and growth. Every challenge they faced refined their bond, making them stronger, wiser, and more deeply connected.

This journey of marriage is an unending voyage, one that demands love, patience, faith, and resilience. And just like any great voyage, the key is to keep moving forward—together.

Staying the Course: Keeping Marriage Strong for a Lifetime

A long-lasting marriage doesn't happen by accident; it is built intentionally.

1. Continue to Choose Each Other

Love is a daily decision. Even when emotions waver, when conflicts arise, or when life gets overwhelming, choosing to love, respect, and cherish your spouse makes all the difference.

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8

2. Keep Growing Together

Stagnation is dangerous in marriage. Couples must keep learning, adapting, and growing spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually.

Read and learn together – Invest in books, conferences, and mentorship.

Try new things – Explore hobbies, travel, and shared interests.

Set spiritual and personal goals – Grow in faith and purpose.

Proverbs 4:7: “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.”

3. Prioritize Your Faith and Spiritual Foundation

Every marriage needs a strong spiritual anchor. Without God at the center, the winds of life can easily cause drift.

Pray together daily

Study the Word as a couple

Surround yourselves with a godly community

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Psalm 127:1

4. Never Stop Communicating and Connecting

Communication is the lifeline of any relationship. Couples who talk openly, share their hearts, and truly listen to each other build unshakable trust.

Speak with love, patience, and kindness

Express appreciation and gratitude daily

Make quality time a priority

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. Colossians 4:6

Dami and Lami discovered that marriage was never about reaching a perfect state—it was about embracing the process of becoming better together.

To every couple embarking on this voyage:

Commit to love, even when it's hard.

Fight for your marriage, not in your marriage.

Trust God's plan, even when the journey is uncertain.

Keep growing, keep learning, and never stop cherishing each other.

No ship sails without challenges, but with faith as your anchor, love as your sail, and God as your Captain, your marriage will not just survive—it will thrive.

Now, it's your turn.

Take what you've learned, apply it to your marriage, and embark on the unending voyage of love and growth.

"The best is yet to come."

Conclusion

Building a Marriage That Lasts

(Charting a Successful Course)

The Captain's Final Map: Reviewing the Journey

As we draw the curtains on this book, it's important to pause and reflect on the journey so far. Just as a captain continuously evaluates the course of a voyage, marriage requires ongoing reflection and intentionality. Throughout *Marriage Voyage*, we have explored the essential elements of a thriving relationship: securing a sturdy ship, setting a clear course, steering with wisdom, and overcoming turbulent waters together. Now, as you move forward, the question is—how will you continue to chart a successful course?

Fine-Tuning Your Compass: Keeping Vision and Purpose Alive

No ship can navigate effectively without a reliable compass. In marriage, your compass is the shared vision and purpose that guide your decisions, priorities, and direction. Without it, it's easy to drift aimlessly or be swayed by external pressures.

To ensure you stay aligned:

Regularly revisit and refine your marital goals. What do you want your relationship to stand for?

Establish rituals of connection—whether through annual vision-setting retreats, date nights, or shared devotionals.

Adjust your compass as life changes. Seasons will shift, but your commitment to sailing together must remain steadfast.

Maintaining a Sturdy Ship: Long-Term Relationship Investments

A well-maintained ship is prepared for both calm and stormy waters. Marriage thrives when nurtured with consistent care, trust, and mutual investment. Here are key areas to prioritize:

Financial, emotional, and spiritual resilience: Make joint financial decisions, cultivate emotional intelligence, and prioritize spiritual growth together.

Personal growth and development: A marriage is only as strong as the individuals in it. Keep evolving, learning, and pursuing purpose.

Intimacy and companionship: Beyond responsibilities, keep the friendship alive. Love is sustained in the small, daily acts of care.

Managing Unexpected Storms: Preparing for the Unknown

Even the most well-prepared voyage encounters unexpected storms. The true test of a marriage is not in avoiding challenges but in how a couple navigates them.

Have a crisis plan: Financial setbacks, health struggles, or external pressures should be handled as a team, not in isolation.

Communicate with transparency: Fear and silence can create distance; open conversations strengthen unity.

Anchor in faith: God is the ultimate stabilizer in times of uncertainty. Trust Him and trust each other.

5. Navigating with Faith and Teamwork

A successful voyage is not determined by the absence of storms but by the strength of the crew. Faith and teamwork are two anchors that keep your marriage steady.

But I'll take the hand of those who don't know the way, who can't see where they're going. I'll be a personal guide to them, directing them through unknown country. I'll be right there to show them what roads to take, make sure they don't fall into the ditch. These are the things I'll be doing for them—sticking with them, not leaving them for a minute. Isaiah 42:16 MSG

Faith fuels perseverance: Couples who trust God's guidance find strength beyond their own capacity.

Teamwork fosters unity: When both partners commit to rowing in the same direction, the marriage remains strong against external pressures.

The Lighthouse of Legacy: What Will Your Marriage Stand For?

Beyond the present, every marriage leaves a legacy. What story will your relationship tell?

Will it be one of love, resilience, and faith?

Will your children, family, and community be inspired by the way you navigated life together?

A lighthouse guides ships safely to shore. Your marriage can serve as a lighthouse for others—shining as a testament of God's grace, wisdom, and enduring love.

Keep Sailing Forward

Marriage is not a one-time destination but a continuous voyage. There will be smooth waters and stormy seas, but with commitment, faith, and teamwork, you can sail successfully into marital bliss.

Declaration:

"We commit to navigating this voyage together, with love as our anchor, faith as our guide, and unity as our strength. No matter the tides, we choose to sail forward—stronger, wiser, and together. Our marriage will stand as a beacon of grace, resilience, and purpose."

Now, it's time to chart your course and sail boldly into the future!

It's a wrap

I always round up my books by giving opportunities to readers to make a life-transforming decision, which I did some decades back, and has helped me this far, by simply taking the prayers below;

Prayer for Salvation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Heavenly Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus. Your word says, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). I am calling on You. I pray and ask Jesus to come into my heart and be the Lord over my life according to (Romans 10: 9-10): "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation". I do that now. I confess that Jesus is the LORD, and I believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead.

I am now reborn! I am a Christian—a child of Almighty God! I am saved! You also said in your word;

(Luke 11:13) - If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall [your] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Therefore, I ask you to fill me with the Holy Spirit.

I believe I shall forthwith, speak in new tongues, according to your word in;

(Acts 2:4) And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Begin to praise God for filling you with the Holy Spirit. Speak those words and syllables you receive not in your language but in the language that was given to you by the Holy Spirit. You have to use your voice. God will not force you to speak; don't be concerned with how it sounds; it is a heavenly language. Continue with the blessings God has given you and pray in the spirit every day.

You are a born-again, Spirit-filled believer. You will never be the same.

Find a good Church that boldly preaches God's Word and obeys it. Become part of a church family who will love and care for you, as you love and care for them.

We need to be connected. It increases our strength in God, and it is God's plan for us.

Make it a habit to communicate with God daily, through prayers, and read your bible to grow.

You are most welcome to contact us via our contact details provided.

Congratulations!

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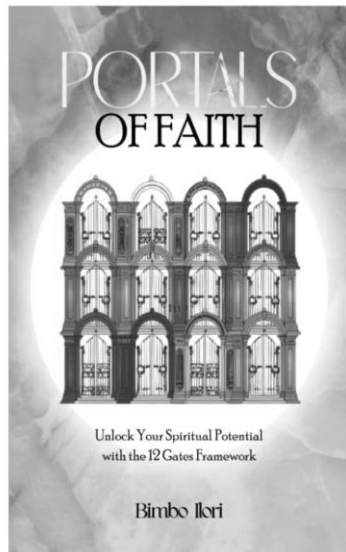
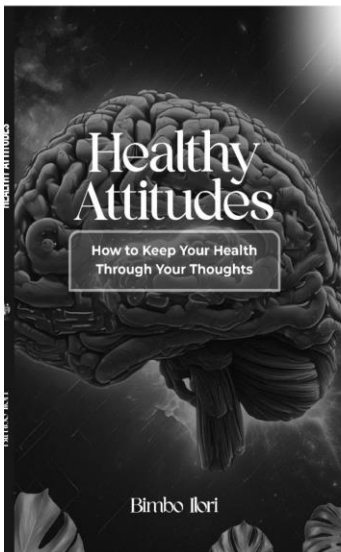
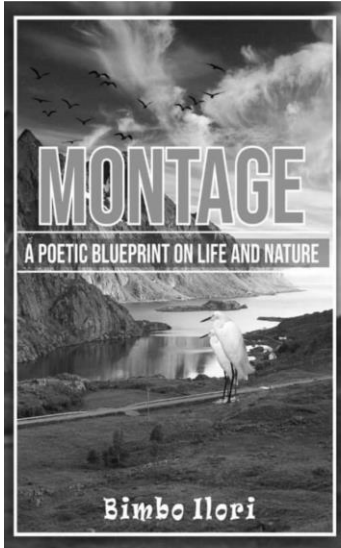
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Other Books By The Author



Marriage Voyage

Marriage Voyage is not just another book on marriage, it's your personal guide to navigating the waters of love, commitment, and partnership. Whether you're newlyweds setting sail or a seasoned couple weathering storms, this faith-based book offers deep, practical insights to help you chart a course toward a thriving, lasting relationship. Through the relatable journey of Dami and Lami, you'll see how real couples face both calm seas and unexpected tempests, making this voyage feel like your own.

Imagine having a compass to steer your marriage in the right direction—one that helps you establish core values, communicate effectively, and avoid hidden "Cruise Wreckers" that can sink even the strongest relationships. With biblical wisdom and actionable strategies, Marriage Voyage equips you to sail through life's challenges with faith, unity, and purpose. Ready to embark on a journey that transforms your marriage? Let's set sail!

About the Author



Bimbo Ilori is an author with a purposive drive in her context. She has written over 35 books including bestsellers.

She is a master's holder in Administration, a fellow, the chartered administrators professional, and a certified life and purpose coach.

She teaches, writes and speaks about her passion, which includes Administration, a purpose-led life, and giving perspectives on the essentials of life.

She is married to Bisi Ilori and they are blessed with children.



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