

EVALUATING THE INFLUENCE OF RECIPROCITY OF MEETING PARTNER'S
TEMPERAMENT NEEDS IN TERMS OF MARITAL INTIMACY.

by

Jimmie Scott Inman

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Psychology

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ABSTRACT

This proposed narrative qualitative research project evaluated the importance of reciprocity in meeting a partner's temperament needs in terms of marital intimacy. This study investigated the archival data of 12 married couples who received temperament-focused marriage therapy between 2015 and 2022. Throughout therapy sessions, the therapist conducted in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews with each participant individually and with their partner. Interviews and observations provide an immersion into the participant's life story, chronological order of events, and the essence of the participants' experience. The essential principles taught throughout therapy (reciprocity, temperament, spousal needs being met) are thought to influence marital intimacy. A large body of work is examined that supports that needs-met (personal, social, temperament) is essential for an individual's overall health and well-being. Three theories lay the theoretical foundation for this study (1) Maslow's theory of Hierarchy of Needs, (2) Schutz's Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO), and (3) Arno's Temperament Theory. Drawing upon biblical principles, particularly the character of Christ, strengthen support for reciprocity in meeting a partner's temperament needs.

Keywords: temperament, personality, intimacy, marital satisfaction, marriage therapy

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

The topic under investigation is the influence of reciprocity in meeting a partner's temperament needs in terms of marital intimacy. According to the Centers for Disease Control (2020), nearly 40% of all American marriages end in divorce. Relational intimacy is a chief determinate of marital success (Kennedy & Gordon, 2017). Marriage research shows a higher success rate when couples employ effective intimacy interventions (education, training, therapy) (Deylami et al., 2021). The current research explores three factors (reciprocity, importance of meeting needs, and understanding of spousal temperament needs) that are theorized to increase relational intimacy. Without temperament-informed training, the individual's uniqueness could present as a barrier to relational intimacy (Arno, 2012). The current literature supports that an individual's well-being increases when needs are met (Crandall et al., 2020).

This temperament needs-based relational model builds upon the theoretical framework of Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs theory, Schutz's (1957) Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO) theory, and Arnos' (2012) temperament theory. Maslow and Schutz's theories support a spousal met-needs construct for increased relational intimacy. Arno's theory permits an individual's temperament to be assessed, thus allowing temperament needs to be met. An analysis of Scripture shows that man's fleshly needs can be mitigated by their partner but can only be satisfied through spiritual means.

Background

Marital Intimacy

Marital intimacy, as a concept, involves interrelated feelings of closeness, affection, and love (Jamieson, 2007). Couples' intimacy is a critical construct contributing to marital satisfaction, marriage quality, marriage stability, and individual well-being (Lee et al., 2021; Masoumi et al., 2017; Kamali et al., 2021). Many factors influence the intimacy construct, such as communication, conflict resolution (Mozas-Alonso, 2020), physical touch, service, affirmation, quality time, and gifts (Ince, 2020), peace, social support, and emotional understanding (Rashidi, 2022), spiritual guidance and religious agreements (Aman, 2022), grace, patience, and kindness (1 Corinthians 13:4) to mention but a few. Individuals are uniquely designed and have individual needs, wants, and desires distinctive to each person (Wang et al., 2021). These individualistic needs make intimacy factors challenging for researchers to define in universal terms (Arno, 2012; Wang et al., 2021).

Individualism creates perceptual issues for couples as partners attempt to assess intimacy through their interpretation of "love" (Kazim & Rafique, 2021). The philosophical construct of love is individualistic and could significantly differentiate from a partner's perception, such as infatuation, passion, romance, desire, friendship, family, pragmatic relationships, and self-love (Das & Rao, 2022; Swanson, 2017). Although personally distinctive, there is a panoply of shared variables between love and intimacy, such as nurture, compassion, attractiveness, sex, passion, romance, and gentleness (Lasswell & Lasswell, 1976; Nizamaddinovna, 2021). Arguably, philosophical love is too dependent upon individualistic perception to measure in universal terms.

Consequently, marital researchers gauge couples' intimacy by measuring partners' satisfaction. Science, philosophy, interpersonal studies, and theology

interchangeably use terms such as love, intimacy, and marital satisfaction. The background and theoretical foundation studies use such terminology in their efforts to explain intimacy motivations and behaviors and to measure the construct of marital intimacy.

Current Literature on Marital Intimacy

Although this current study focuses on marital intimacy as a construct, the marital satisfaction inventory (MSI) is the marriage researchers' go-to assessment for gauging marital relationships. Researchers use "marital satisfaction" as the measurement; therefore, this study may refer to the MSI. A dual factor is found within the current body of literature on the marital satisfaction construct. The first factors are known as human's "universal factors." Maslow (1951) defines humans' basic universal needs (food, clothing, shelter). Recent research on individual universal needs shows a range of factors such as religion and conflict (Hwang et al., 2019), sex (Cao et al., 2018), and companionship (Lee & McKinnish, 2017), trust, and respect (Hoover & Snyder, 1991).

The second factor of the marital satisfaction construct is gender expectations and roles. Spousal expectations of the male and female roles include factors such as parenting and family values (Kincaid, 2021), household chores (Rodriguez-Stanley et al., 2020), trust, emotions, sex, communication, and conflict resolution (Herrington et al., 2012; Helms et al., 2019; Jibeen, 2019). This research path implies that most males and females have different gender needs. Most gender role research focuses on gender comparisons, i.e., men need more sex and women need more emotional connection (Boerner et al., 2012).

Although many studies support universal and gender needs, there is very little research on gender-enmeshed needs, personality needs, or temperament needs. Thus, there is a gap in the research that supports reciprocally meeting spousal temperament needs.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow (1954) popularized the needs-based concept by introducing the Hierarchy of Needs theory. In his early research, Maslow (1950) theorized that there was a correlation between an individual's basic needs (shelter, food, clothes) and overall health and well-being (Crandall et al., 2020). Further research expansion led to the "Motivation Model," in which Maslow theorized that humans are intrinsically motivated by their needs (Maslow, 1970). Visualized by a pyramid, the lower levels represent basic needs and are psychological, safety, belonging and love, and esteem (Maslow, 1954). Although the levels are divided, there is considerable overlap (Crandall et al., 2020). Basic needs are those that sustain life. Safety needs involve feeling protected from danger. Belonging and Love describe the human need to give and receive love and feel connected. Esteem needs are one's capability and internal control (Maslow, 1954). The beforementioned self-esteem needs (lower-level needs) must be met before transitioning to one's higher transcendence needs (Decker & Cangemi, 2018).

Growth needs (higher levels) consist of cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence (Maslow, 1970). Cognitive needs are those involving creativity, planning, and meaningfulness. After cognitive needs are met, aesthetic needs (appreciating the beauty in the world) can be approached.

Once mastery of all levels is accomplished, one can realize self and self's full potential, which involves the motivation, confidence, and power to succeed. Maslow's most significant level, the transcendence needs level, represents an achievement of success for the very highest of all human consciousness. Later in his research, Maslow dubbed the depicted pyramid topper as the level of spirituality. Maslow emphasized that at the transcendence level, there is a need to give of oneself to something bigger than oneself, like spirituality and altruism (Deckers & Lambert, 2018).

Maslow's theory is highly recognized and accepted by professionals in the field of psychology (Crandall et al., 2020; Deckers & Lambert, 2018; McLaughlin et al., 2012; Zebrack et al., 2014). Previous research demonstrates a correlation between unmet needs and mental illness (McLaughlin et al., 2012). Humans are at risk for mental health disorders (depression, anxiety) when needs (self-actualization, transcendence) go unmet (Weiss et al., 2016). Alternatively, it could be stated that individuals suffer when their marital needs are unmet (Poduska, 1992).

Schutz's Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation

Building upon Maslow's basic needs-met theory is the social needs-met theory of Schutz's (1957) Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO). The FIRO-B is a measurement scale for a person's needs during social interactions and specific interpersonal activities (leadership, responsibility, and intimate relationships) (Furnham, 2008). The FIRO theory reveals social needs by engaging an individual's interpersonal relationships (Macrosson & Semple, 2001). Uniquely, Schutz's (1957) FIRO divides traits into three categories (inclusion, control, affection), and an expressed and wanted score is assigned to each category. This inventory is famed for assessing one's career

abilities (Youngs, 2013). There were significant findings when applying FIRO to the psychology of personality traits, cognitive ability, leadership, and critical thinking assessments (Carson et al., 2012).

Arno's Theory of Temperament

The theory of temperament and the accompanying assessment is the keystone to defining marital intimacy as a construct for this current study. Richard Arno (2012), the founder of temperament theory, takes an intrinsic Jeremiah 1:5 theological perspective stating that while in the womb, all humans are created by God, designed for a specific purpose, and blessed with specific inborn traits. These God designed specific inborn traits are what Arno (2012) terms as a person's "temperament." The temperament theory lays the foundation for a temperament assessment called the Arno Profile System (APS). The APS is built upon Shcutz's (1957) Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO) theoretical framework. The APS measures one's temperament across the same FIRO social need areas (inclusion, control, affection). Like FIRO, each area has an expressed, and a wanted score. The significant difference between the two assessments is that the APS measures five temperament types (melancholy, sanguine, choleric, supine, phlegmatic). In contrast, FIRO measures low to high social areas (inclusion, control, affection) (Arno & Arno, 2012). The APS uses the same algorithmic system as FIRO but assigns a temperament type to the varied outcome ranges.

This current study states four scriptural attributes (reciprocity, temperament needs met, altruism, and Christ-like character) that influence marital intimacy. There are three biblical principles that represent the foundation for this current study: 1) God's design for marriage, 2) the biblical encouragement to be social, and 3) clear social and cultural

behavior directives found in Scripture. First there is acknowledgement of God's creation of marital intimacy (Genesis 2:18). Scripture's depiction of marriage strengthens the scientific research concerning the need for intimacy. Secondly, people are created to be social (Acts 2:46). Scripture commands Christians to "gather together" (Hebrews 10:25). Thirdly, through God's salvation, man can turn from his sinful nature and display godly characteristics (John 14:26). Ultimately, Christ-followers are called to have his character and to display the fruits of the spirit (Romans 8:9, Galatians 5:22-23). A prominent biblical theme is to "love your neighbor" (Mark 12:31). Through a Christ-like character, people can love as the apostle Paul defines love, "love is patient and kind" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). God has called Christians to encourage and build up (1 Thessalonians 5:11), act in humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing one another in love (Ephesians 4:2), bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), give grace to all (Ephesians 4:29), love as Christ has loved (John 13:34), and many more. Scripture defines a Christ-like character such as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

Problem Statement

Couples' intimacy has gained significant attention in the current literature and is a critical construct contributing to marital satisfaction, marriage quality, marriage stability, and individual well-being (Lee et al., 2021; Masoumi et al., 2017; Kamali et al., 2021). A large body of literature review shows that the focus of most studies is on one or two variables of marriage satisfaction constructs, such as conflict resolution, reciprocity respect, sex, communication, and gender roles (Langhinrichsen-Rohling; 1998; Masoumi et al., 2017; Papaioannou, 2020; Yoo et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2021).

There is significant research on an individual's well-being in correlation to a needs met factor (Fleury et al., 2021; Hoendervanger, 2018; Maslow, 1950). Most relational studies assume reciprocity (putting forth equal effort in relational factors (love, servitude, nurture, compassion) in relational research but does not receive its deserving emphasis in research (Farooq & Fatima, 2018; Whitechurch et al., 1993). Therefore, the current body of intimacy research has two critical missing components 1) the importance of reciprocity, or partners meeting each other's needs, on intimacy (Carson et al., 2012; Furnham et al., 2012; Macrosson et al., 2001) and 2) a spouse's unique temperament needs. Spousal needs and expectations could be misinterpreted and unmet due to the factors of individualism and temperament.

Scientific and biblical research support that each person is created with natural inborn traits (temperament), which drive unique individual wants, needs, and desires (Arno, 2012; Jeremiah 1:5; Wang et al., 2021). A person's individualistic temperament construct will determine their temperament needs. Those temperament needs are the variables that influence intimacy in terms of interpersonal relationships (Arno, 2012; Herrington et al., 2008; Helweg-Larsen, et al., 2011). Understanding the temperament factor could assist couples in negotiating these (un)met needs obstacles. The theoretical underpinning of this current study relies on three "needs met" based theories (Maslow's theory of Hierarchy of Needs, Schutz's Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO), and Arno's Temperament Theory) and biblical social perspective and initiatives.

There are four foundational constructs of intimacy developed from Scripture: 1) people have social needs (Genesis 2:24, Hebrews 10:25, Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 7), 2) individuals are uniquely created and have individualistic needs (Jeremiah 1:5, Psalms

139:13), 3) Christians are called to serve others and possess godly characteristics (Luke 11:13, Romans 8:9, Galatians 5:22-23, 1 Corinthians 6:19,), and 4) to be truly satisfied, every person needs salvation (John 3, John 14:6, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Philippians 4:19).

Maslow's (1954) theory provides a needs-met construct for intimacy. His theory supports that an individual's desire to meet their needs will motivate behavior and influence well-being (Carson et al., 2012; Furnham et al., 2012; Maslow, 1954). Significant in relational intimacy, Shcutz's (1957) research supports that people have different expectations, behaviors, and needs that are dependent on a specific relationship (spouse, parent, friend). Related social research offers a significant correlation between a person's individual met needs and social met needs with well-being (Herrington et al., 2008; Helweg-Larsen et al., 2011). Temperament theory indicates that each person is created explicitly with inborn traits. These temperament traits are designed with specific strengths, weaknesses, desires, wants, and needs.

Research supports that people have unique needs, and well-being is affected by meeting those needs. According to the findings, no other studies have combined the elements (biblical principles, reciprocity, and spousal temperament needs) of this investigated theoretical intimacy construct. By connecting these factors, a significantly new marital intimacy construct emerges. The lack of temperament influence on intimacy research, limited analysis on reciprocity influence, and limited research capturing the perspectives of intimate couples highlight the necessity for this research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative narrative research study was to understand participants' experience and perception of temperament-focused marriage therapy.

Furthermore, how couples describe the impact of this therapy on marital intimacy and its related components (reciprocity principle, temperament understanding, and meeting partner's individualistic needs) was examined.

Research Questions

RQ 1: How do participants describe their experience with marital intimacy before and after temperament-focused marriage therapy?

RQ 2: How do participants describe their experience with marital intimacy who do

(not) practice the principle of reciprocity?

RQ 3: How do participants who do (not) fully meet each other's temperament (individualistic) needs describe their experience with marital intimacy?

RQ 4: How do participants whose spouse does (not) display the character of Christ

describe their experience with marital intimacy?

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The significant challenges facing this study was sorting through a large amount of captured data (field notes, couples' diaries, interview notes), correctly interpreting the data, the limited number of participants, participant demographic, and accurately interpreting participant's perceptions of changes in marital intimacy. Data were collected through interviews, and observation during the face-to-face sessions; therefore, making valuable determinations depends upon sorting through a great deal of data for the interpreting process. This intimacy study may inspire other researchers to overcome the limited number of participants by duplicating the study on a larger scale utilizing a more

diverse demographic (unmarried couples and parent and child) and an increased number of participants.

There were three criteria for the acceptable archived data for this current study. All participants must be married, both spouses must be willing to participate in the study, and each participant must be a Christian with a fundamental understanding of the faith's biblical beliefs. Although these demographic criteria limit participants, they were specifically chosen for this study due to the Christian faith's natural built-in components that seamlessly align with temperament-focused marriage therapy. Two major aligning themes were 1) marriage is the highest form of achievable relational intimacy, and 2) there is a fundamental understanding of Christ-like character.

This study had a unique challenge in measuring the perception of a couple's intimacy. Most marital studies use scales such as satisfaction or quality to measure a couple's closeness. They are limited to one or two variables (sex, communication, parenting styles, attachment) as focal points. A new temperament-needs-based model is being used to explore this marital intimacy phenomenon. This new temperament-focused therapy model can allow for intimacy measurement, this study could benefit from exploring a broader scope of spousal needs factors believed to influence marital intimacy.

There is ample research regarding marital satisfaction concerning one or two variables (communication, conflict, sex, gender roles). Still, there is a gap in marital research that illustrates influential factors of reciprocity and meeting of spousal temperament needs in marital intimacy.

Theoretical Foundations of the Study

The focus of this study is to investigate if the construct of marital intimacy is influenced by the reciprocal meeting of the spousal's temperament needs. The theoretical foundation for this current study builds from three empirically researched theories: 1) Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs theory, 2) Schutz's (1957) Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO) theory, and 3) Arnos' (2012) temperament theory. The scientific research of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Shultz's Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO) support that meeting individual and social needs influence overall health and well-being. The Arno Profile System (APS) is a temperament assessment developed from the FIRO. Like a personality test, the APS explicitly assesses a person's specific temperament type. The APS results can inform individuals on their specific temperament type and temperament needs. Biblical research offers theologically sound evidence of temperament and offer a rich understanding of an intimate marriage.

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of definitions of terms that are used in this study.

Intimacy – Marital intimacy, as a concept, involves interrelated feelings of closeness, affection, and love (Jamieson, 2007).

Reciprocity – Putting forth equal effort in relational factors (love, servitude, nurture, compassion) (Farooq & Fatima, 2018).

Temperament – God designed specific inborn traits (Arno, 2012).

Christ-like Character – Possessing characteristics that resemble Jesus Christ.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that temperament-focused marriage therapy awareness could influence the research literature on marital intimacy. Practitioners could use temperament-focused marriage therapy to restructure partners' perceptions so that they see their spouses and how God created them to be. A new understanding should allow for grace while partners work to move into their strengths and away from their weaknesses. Hopefully, accessing a fresh, unique, and lasting partner perception will significantly impact marital intimacy, consequently creating a closer relationship and strengthening the marriage. Ultimately, increased marital intimacy is hoped to reduce the risk of divorce, consequently making less pain for couples and their family. This research could demonstrate how people can meet needs through healthy coping mechanisms and strategies.

Summary

This narrative qualitative research study evaluated the importance of reciprocity in meeting a partner's temperament needs in terms of marital intimacy. Researchers invested in this study were interested in specific factors (reciprocity, temperament, meeting needs) that previous theories (Hierarchy of Needs, FIRO) show evidence that these factors influence marital intimacy. Schutz (1957), inspired by the motivational needs movement, developed a social theory named FIRO. Maslow (1950) established the hierarchy of needs theory and theorized that humans are motivated by their needs and that these motivations influence all human behavior. Furthermore, Maslow believed that all humans have specific needs and must meet those needs to achieve humanity's milestones (self-actualization, transcendence). Additionally, Schutz's theory focuses on the social

side of human motivation and claims that behaviors are motivated according to one's relational roles, such as child to parent, student to teacher, spouse, friend, or colleague.

The Arno Profile System (an assessment for temperament) was influenced heavily by Maslow's (Hierarchy of Needs) and Schutz's (FIRO) theories. Schutz's theory stemmed from Maslow's groundwork; Arno's temperament assessment was built on the theoretical framework of Schutz's social theory. Temperament separates from its founding fathers in a few ways. Temperament is a need based on one's inborn traits, i.e., the need to be social or the need to be analytical. Temperament theory is biblically founded and states that humans are designed by God and blessed with specific inborn traits.

The Bible categorizes human needs very differently than Maslow and Schutz. Through biblical characteristics (love, service, altruism, etc.), God defines man's basic needs as salvation from the slavery of sin. A human's first need is to love God and the second need is to love others. By meeting these biblical needs, a person can be truly fulfilled.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In review of a large body of literature on marital intimacy, researchers use universal factors to measure marital satisfaction to represent the variables that influence couple's intimacy. Universal factors (communication, love, respect, parenthood, partnership) can be defined universally and are suggested by researchers to have the most influence on marital satisfaction. The aim of this study is to determine influential factors on marital intimacy, most literature utilized a marital satisfaction inventory to measure the effect of influencing factors. Although there are innumerable influences on marital (dis)satisfaction, the reviewed literature focuses on major themes and factors. Partner's selfish expectations of needs met will retain a large role on the influence of satisfaction.

A biblical review of the topic revealed a counterculture perspective on the influencing factors of marital intimacy. As an influence increaser of intimacy, Scripture presents a self-sacrificing of needs, wants, and desires and a serving spirit toward others. Interestingly, research on altruism, serving, and gratitude shows that people have increased well-being when they lead a life of service. The Bible lays out a plan for marriage, reveals people's desire for being social, and rules for each type (spousal, parental, family, ministerial, career) of social engagement.

Description of Search Strategy

The literature search strategy for this current research study was primarily conducted utilizing the online resources of the Jerry Falwell Library. Keywords for marital intimacy (marriage, marital satisfaction, couple's satisfaction, marital satisfaction inventory (MSI) intimacy, temperament, personality, relational reciprocity), for Maslow's

(1950) theory (Maslow, Hierarchy of Needs), Schutz's (1957) theory (Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation [FIRO], social needs), and Arnos' (2012) theory (temperament theory, personality, personality needs, choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, supine, melancholy) were used. The biblical research strategy was to use online Bible resources to search for specific keywords (marriage, love, intimacy, character). The primary biblical online resource was through the website openbible.info.

Review of Literature

The topic under investigation was the influence of reciprocity in meeting a partner's temperament needs in terms of marital intimacy. Marital intimacy, as a concept, involves interrelated feelings of closeness, affection, and love (Jamieson, 2007). Couples' intimacy is a critical construct contributing to marital satisfaction, marriage quality, marriage stability, and individual well-being (Lee et al., 2021; Masoumi et al., 2017; Kamali et al., 2021). Many factors influence the intimacy construct, such as communication, conflict resolution (Mozas-Alonso, 2020), physical touch, service, affirmation, quality time, and gifts (Ince, 2020), peace, social support, and emotional understanding (Rashidi, 2022), spiritual guidance and religious agreements (Aman, 2022), grace, patience, and kindness (1 Corinthians 13:4) to mention but a few.

Measuring Marital Intimacy

This current study gauged intimacy as a construct in marriage. Individuals are uniquely designed and have individual needs, wants, and desires distinctive to each person (Wang et al., 2021). These individualistic needs make intimacy factors challenging for researchers to define in universal terms, i.e., everyone needs hugs to feel intimacy (Arno, 2012; Wang et al., 2021). Most researchers measure marital success by

utilizing a variety of marital satisfaction inventories (MSI). This current study translated the MSI results, from relevant studies, as influencing factors of intimacy. MSI results are used to measure influences for many factors, much of which has repetitive studies with an additive variable, i.e., sexual performance for blindness on marital satisfaction and sexual performance for aging on marital satisfaction. Popular MSI, or similar inventory, use studies are partner forgiveness (Brudek & Kaleta, 2021), parenting styles (Yoo et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022), sexual satisfaction (Cao et al., 2016), stages of marriage (premarital to 60-years married) (Peters et al., 2021), aging couples (Lee & McKinnish, 2018), positive and negative exchanges (Cazzell et al., 2022), communication of commitment (Hou et al., 2019), conflict resolution styles (Ünal & Akgün, 2022; Yu et al., 2021), family-in-law dynamics (Choi et al., 2019), gender roles and family work conflict (Yoo et al., 2020), attachment styles (Muetzelfeld et al., 2020), personality styles (Günaydin, 2022), partner's expectations (Darolia & Rathee, 2021), and religious oneness (Hwang et al., 2021) to name a few.

Focused Literature Review

This current research study suggests that a person's temperament consists of innate traits and does not change over time. Temperament is one of the few constants throughout a person's entire life. However, ever-changing environmental factors (parenting, mentors, peers, culture) will influence one's perception of identity, affecting well-being. Therefore, accessing one's temperament could healthily shape that person's perception of identity. Arno's (2012) theory of temperament says God created each person with a temperament, and each temperament, in itself, is neither good nor bad. However, each temperament has strengths and weaknesses, and a person feels better

when operating in the fullness of their strengths (Arno, 2012). To stay relevant, professionals in the field of marital satisfaction research must adapt to the constant shifting of modern cultural norms. Temperament marriage therapy could offer a constant lifetime solution to marital intimacy.

Recent studies on marital intimacy focus on environmental and perceptual influences that illustrate the role of personal responsibility between couples. There is an exploration of a person taking responsibility for their individualistic influence within the construct of marriage. A review of the research suggests that cultural perspectives (expectations, rules, boundaries, roles) on marriage and satisfaction influences are ever-changing. There is a constant change from traditional gender roles to the current societal gender role that shapes the partner's attitudes and expectations, impacting the marital relationship. A prominent production of studies covers the many facets of factorial influences. Two highlighted research areas (environmental and perceptual influences and gender roles) receive credit as significant contributors to influencing marital satisfaction. For this current study on impactful marital intimacy influences, it is necessary to focus on the beforementioned areas and to examine a partner's religious synchronization more profoundly.

Environmental and Perceptual Influences

A large body of theoretical approaches to understanding marriage concedes that relational conflicts affect evaluations of relationships (Jacobson & Margolin, 1979; Stuart, 1969; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Inserting social learning theory into these studies illustrate that an individual has reciprocal influence and contributions to these relationships' (un)success (Bandura, 1978). Bandura's (1978) social learning theory

emphasizes a reciprocal influence between a person's individualism (identity, responses, assumptions) and their environment. There is a bidirectional association between perceived marital satisfaction and marital issues (Lavner et al., 2017).

Recent studies suggest that mental health symptoms (anxiety, depression) are present when one is experiencing interpersonal conflicts (communication, relational satisfaction) (Lavner et al., 2017). Social learning theory suggests a reciprocal social influence between partners on marital intimacy. One social influence factor is the expectation to be loved (accepted, nurtured, appreciated) by one's partner. Applying Bandura's theory suggests that a person's expectations will influence the relationship. Consequently, love expectations and other contributing factors influence behaviors (conflict, communication, encouragement).

A large body of literature suggests that marital satisfaction perception is based on personal based influencing (feelings of safety or conflict) factors (e.g., "my marriage is one which I feel safe, or I feel in conflict") (Karney, 2015). For example, researchers use day-to-day diaries to show a correlation between reported marital satisfaction and daily events (Karney et al., 2015). This diary research suggests that couples have more negative input about the relationship when stress or conflict is present. Likewise, the couple reports more satisfaction when there are loving interactions. Perception and assumptions are the personal interpretations of a person's environment (Bandura, 1978). A person's interpretation and perception are developed from their own experiences (Kendal et al., 2004); therefore, marital satisfaction could depend on a (un)true belief system gathered from personal experiences.

Gender Roles

Recent research shows a societal departure from traditional gender roles (i.e., men are the breadwinners and women are the homemakers). Gender role perceptions are subject to modern social influences and the couple's dynamics (Helms et al., 2019). Although most couples have preconceived gender role notions, the research suggests that the ever-changing gender role perception will significantly influence marital satisfaction. Until recently, Mexican gender roles were thought to be ingrained culturally, but the latest research shows that social and personal influences outweigh traditional cultural roles (Helms et al., 2019).

An opposing gender role argument, Peplau's (1983) model of gendered family roles takes an inside-out approach. Roles, according to Peplau, "are an individual's daily interactions with relationships that build a significant profile of expectations" (Peplau, 1983, p. 223). His model exchanges external social pressure as expectations of gender roles for the family's daily internal interactions. Marital gender role attitudes, marital processes, and marital satisfaction are developed from these daily behaviors (Peplau, 1982). Peplau's model suggests that family roles will vary depending on family dynamics.

Religious Influences

A large body of literature suggests a direct correlation between marital satisfaction and the degree of shared religious beliefs and practices (Ellison et al., 2010; Schramm et al., 2010; Wright et al., 2018). Relationships with the same religious worldview, denomination, practices, and religious morals and values report higher marital satisfaction (Hwang et al., 2019). Lower divorce rates and higher marital quality

are empirically shown among couples who openly enjoy religious harmony in their relationship.

An impactful influence on marital satisfaction and religion is the boundaries and safety found in one's religion (Lambert & Dollahite, 2006). Through diligently studying the Bible, those who practice the Christian religion have a God-inspired manuscript on marital intimacy. Other religious benefits are shared social life (attendance at assemblies), shared experiences are bonding experiences, and social acceptance (Ellison et al., 2010). Shared religious couples can enter conflict with the tools and appropriate strategy, complete with reconciliation measures, to create feelings of comfort and safety throughout difficult life circumstances (Schramm et al., 2010).

Biblical Foundations of the Study

Scripture discusses marriage in terms of God's design for man and woman and how it reveals our need for another, our need for salvation, and a means to display the character of Christ. Scripture illustrates a clear depiction of an intimate marriage. Scripture says that God created an intimate covenant between husband and wife when He made "two flesh become one" (Matthew 19:4-6). God instructs man to become vulnerable and dependent on him by leaving his parents for his wife (Genesis 2:24). Research states that there is more marital satisfaction when couples are vulnerable and depend on one another (Louis & Louis, 2022). Marital satisfaction research shows increased partner intimacy during feelings of closeness (Papaioannou, 2020). Paul lays out rules for marriage, such as having one wife, having sexual relations only with his wife, having reciprocal authority over each other, that they love, devoting themselves to each other, and praying over one another (1 Corinthians 7). Studies show an increase in

satisfaction when illustrations of variables such as spousal loyalty (Purwar et al., 2018), partner monogamy (Andersson, 2020), equal power among spouses (Hall, 2019), and spiritual connection (Klausli, 2020) are possessed. God's prime example of marriage is that Christ loved so much that he made the ultimate sacrifice of his life to save the church (Ephesians 5). Research supports that couples who sacrifice, serve, and support one another significantly increase marital satisfaction (Ross et al., 2019).

Scripture discusses a dichotomous perspective in terms of our need for another (Genesis 2:18) and our need for salvation (Philippians 4:19). Through godly love and sacrificial service, God commands humans to be social (Hebrews 10:25). After God created Adam, he said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Genesis 2:18). In other social Scripture, Paul encourages the church to gather (Hebrews 10:25). Humans' need for socialization is found throughout Scripture (Acts 20:28, Psalm 122:1, Romans 12:5, Matthew 18:20).

Next, Scripture unveils our need for God's salvation which can only be found through the life, sacrifice, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus said that through him, we can have eternal life and that his sacrifice has cleansed us from our sins (John 3). He also included that he is "the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Through the Holy Spirit, humans gain access to the Helper, the Counselor, the Peacemaker (John 14:26). It is through salvation and the gift of the spirit that man can indeed be righteous (1 Corinthians 6:19). Through Christ, with the power of the Holy Spirit, humans can genuinely love, serve, sacrifice, and be intimate with one another (Luke 11:13).

There are far more biblical references to social behaviors and personal character than man's social needs. There are many commands concerning godly characteristics, the central theme being to "love your neighbor" (Mark 12:31). God has called Christians to encourage and build up (1 Thessalonians 5:11), act in humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing one another in Love (Ephesians 4:2), bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), give grace to all (Ephesians 4:29), love as Christ has loved (John 13:34), and many more. Scripture defines *biblical character* as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

This biblical foundation illustrated that marital intimacy is God-created (Genesis 2:18). Scripture's depiction of marriage strengthens the scientific research concerning the need for intimacy. Secondly, people are created to be social (Acts 2:46). Not everyone has much social energy. However, the Scripture commands Christians to "gather together" (Hebrews 10:25). Thirdly, through God's salvation, man can turn from his sinful nature and display godly character (John 14:26). Ultimately, Christ-followers are called to have his character and to display the fruits of the spirit (Romans 8:9, Galatians 5:22-23).

Biblical Significance

Ministry leaders could use temperament-based research to teach that a significant part of increased marital intimacy comes through a Christ-like character. A prominent biblical theme is "love your neighbor" (Mark 12:31). God has called Christians to encourage and build up (1 Thessalonians 5:11), act in humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing one another in Love (Ephesians 4:2), bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), give grace to all (Ephesians 4:29), love as Christ has loved (John 13:34), and many more.

Scripture defines *biblical character* as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

Summary

There is a large body of research to illustrate that there are a vast number of universal and personal factors that go into creating a satisfying marriage. The diversity of individualistic factors, such as intellectual connection, communication, parenting, the ever-changing gender role expectations, sexual satisfaction, and emotional support, illustrates the difficulty in presenting a one size fits all marital intimacy study. Each person uses their personal experience to make interpersonal relational predictions and assumptions. The social learning theory illustrates that each person has influence over and responsibility for their relational satisfaction. Seemingly contradictorily, there is a dependence upon self, perception, assumptions, and a dependence upon a person's spouse. Although there has been a large body of work on marital satisfaction due to the individualistic factor, much more is still to be discovered.

In many cases, the Bible and scientific research have slightly different approaches to marital intimacy. Scripture commands Christ's followers to love, serve, and sacrifice their own needs, wants, and desires for others. Researchers study factors that satisfy the individual; Scripture teaches us to study factors that please God. Scientific research illustrates scientific strategies to resolve people's problems. The Bible promises that those who possess the Holy Spirit will bear good fruit and have Christ-like character. Through this fruit and renewed character, Scripture promotes health and well-being. Contrary to marital research, studies on altruism (to serve others with no intent of reward) align with biblical research.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative narrative research study was to understand participants' experience and perception of temperament-focused marriage therapy. Furthermore, how couples describe the impact of this therapy on marital intimacy and its related components (reciprocity principle, temperament understanding, and meeting partner's individualistic needs) were examined.

Research Questions

RQ 1: How do participants describe their experience with marital intimacy before and after temperament-focused marriage therapy?

RQ 2: How do participants describe their experience with marital intimacy who do (not) practice the principle of reciprocity?

RQ 3: How do participants who do (not) fully meet each other's temperament (individualistic) needs describe their experience with marital intimacy?

RQ 4: How do participants whose spouse does (not) display the character of Christ describe their experience with marital intimacy?

Research Design

This narrative qualitative research study used archival data collected during marriage therapy sessions conducted between 2015 and 2022. The therapists administering sessions used a specialized temperament-focused marital treatment plan emphasizing three intimate influencing principles (reciprocity, temperament

understanding, and meeting partner's individualistic needs). Throughout the therapeutic process, participants were analyzed and interviewed separately as an individual and together as a married couple. Each participant reported as an individual and collaboratively with their spouse. The researcher used the archival data recorded throughout the therapeutic process to capture participants' experiences and perceptions gained from the impact of temperament-focused marriage therapy on marital intimacy and its related components (reciprocity principle, temperament understanding, and meeting partners' individualistic needs).

Therapy patients entered a typical two-phase therapeutic process, and for this study, there is an additional third proposed research phase. The three phases are 1) patient intake session and intake process (background and intake paperwork and administering the Arno Profile System (APS) assessment), 2) initial intake interviewing, exploring each person's APS, face-to-face temperament-focused couples' session, and patient discharge interview, and the additional research phase, 3) data collection completion, and analyzing, interpreting, and reporting the data.

Participants

This study used archival data from the researcher's patient roster. Each participant is a patient of Jimmie Scott Inman, M.A., a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) at My Life Counsel. Mr. Inman is the founder of this 501c3 not-for-profit and serves as the Executive Director. It should be noted that the researcher, Jimmie Inman, is also the facilitating therapist for temperament-focused marriage therapy. The participants are couples who have experienced temperament-focused marriage therapy between 2015 and 2022. Due to the nature of archival data research, participants were not recruited but

were actively looking for marriage counseling. Each couple found therapy by following a referral (family, friend, pastor, medical doctor, psychiatrist) or using a search engine (Google) for information on marriage therapy. Patients include a diverse demographic of ethnicity, age, remarried, newlyweds, and years of marriage. Couples must meet three criteria: 1) Christian, 2) heterosexual, and 3) married. All participants were directed to the website that provides details about temperament-focused therapy and online sign-up availability. Once patients initiate therapy, they undergo an intake process assessing marital details, availability for treatment, and assessment taking. Patient program acceptance, informed consent signing, and payment procedures filed initiated phase two.

Study Procedures

Phase two includes the patient's initial intake interview, exploring each person's Arno Profile System (APS), face-to-face temperament-focused couples' session, and patient discharge interview. Each couple had the opportunity to choose session dates to take their assessment and review the results with the therapist in a face-to-face session. Throughout sessions, partners were taught how to apply temperament-focused therapy to their marital life. All participants completed the temperament-focused factorial (reciprocity, temperament, meetings of needs) therapy within an approximate 8-week time frame. After discharge, the majority of patients complete three sessions (one per month for three consistent months) and one session approximately six months after the discharge date as relational maintenance and check-up. Throughout phase two, the researcher has taken detailed field notes and conducted in-depth interviews in the form of therapy sessions.

Phase three includes the final discharge interviewing process. Couples completed a conclusive in-depth face-to-face discharge interview. This interview aimed to collect data on how they perceived the therapy and if they perceived any changes to their relationship as a result of the overall training and information. Through the use of open-ended questions, the researcher has notated indicators of reciprocity and practiced temperament-informed strategies. This final interview signifies therapy completion. After discharge, all patient data were collected and safely locked in a secure location. The collected data permitted the researcher to ascertain the couples' application of taught principles (reciprocity, temperament, spousal needs being met) to their relationship.

The researcher reviewed the archived data and narrowed the patient list to 50 prospective couples for the research. The criteria for the chosen 50 patients are 1) diversity in marital years and remarriage, 2) diversity in APS results, 3) diversity in couples who did (not) follow the provided strategies of reciprocity and temperament-focused therapy, and 4) agree to participate in the study by signing the research consent forms. Each participant on the tapered list received a personal phone call from the researcher to obtain data use permission. Each participant was given complete autonomy in accepting or declining participation. For a couple to be promoted into the study, the husband and wife completely agreed to participate. Participants were notified that all necessary precautions were taken to protect their identity. To simplify data reporting and interpretation outputs (necessary examples, charts, and assessments), only 12 couples were selected as the focus of this current study. These 12 met the criteria for the first chosen 50 and represent the collective group.

Instruments and Measurements

The Arno Profile System (APS) is the temperament assessment given to each participant. The APS is only available to members of the National Christian Counseling Association (NCCA), and administrators must be certified temperament therapists; the researcher meets all necessary qualifications. Therapy signed consent forms that were used to note demographics, patient history, and background. Microsoft Word and Excel documents were utilized for digital notation and coding.

Data Analysis

The researcher collected data from the therapist's detailed notes during all in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews that used open-ended questions. Interviews were conducted both individually and together as a married couple. During interviews, observation delineates body language, tone, demeanor, attitude, and other relevant expressions. The researcher used a mobile device like an iPad to take field notes during interviews, courses, and face-to-face temperament-focused therapy sessions. Couples utilize a handwritten diary to record behavior awareness, specifically detailing variables of the needs-met construct such as spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical, and sexual.

The diary contained a detailed chronological order. Here is an entry example: "(April 13, 2022, at 5 PM) Today, I noticed that she put effort toward intimately connecting with me spiritually. She requested that we read a marital devotion together, which meets spiritual and emotional needs."

For this narrative qualitative research, the archival data for analysis consisted of interviews, written observations, and field notes. The focus of seven years' worth of archival data was narrowed to 50 couples who, collectively, is representative of a diverse body of work that pair with the focus of this current study. Each participating couple

completed the intake paperwork, had detailed session notes, had APS results, written observations, and had signed research consent forms.

A brief preliminary and conceptual patient list scan revealed that many couples have similar therapeutic results. These therapeutic results answer the research question within these 4 categories: 1) do (not) practice reciprocity in meeting partner's needs, 2) do (not) practice temperament-focused therapy, and 3) husband and wife's difference in temperament, 4) do (not) possess Christ-like characteristics. To reduce result duplications, the 50 couples were narrowed to 12 couples who significantly represent the major themes of the 7 years of archival data and provide clarity to the research questions.

As this proposed research project is a narrative qualitative research analysis of archival data, the researcher closely attended to the chronological unfolding of events. There is a specificity to the design and delivery of temperament-focused marriage therapy sessions. For example, week one introduces the concept of temperament and each person's temperament type. Therefore, the researcher used memos to notate temperament-needs-met behavior after this session. Participants received interviews and assigned diaries that were dated for chronological analysis.

Analyzing narrative research data requires a curious and exploratory attitude while paying close attention to the details of the participant's story. The researcher did a thorough analysis by immersing himself in the details by reading and reflecting on the data several times. Memos capture, organize and prioritize significant phrases, key concepts, and emergent ideas. Following a detailed preliminary reading of the collective database, emerging ideas received notable flagging for further coding. Once the reading,

reflection, and memoing were completed, the next step was to describe and classify codes into themes and present them on a spreadsheet.

Categories or codes are a representation of meaningful qualitative data analysis. Codes were condensed, reduced, and delineated into themes. Suspected themes include reciprocity, temperament, meeting needs, and marital intimacy. For brevity purposes, code names were created for themes. The analysis included definitions for all themes and code names. Examples of text are included with each presented theme.

A culmination of the developed themes was analyzed and further assessed for data interpretation. The researcher explored any possible findings that could influence intimacy in marriage. However, interpretation provides a clear and concise portrait of the qualitative research findings. The findings are represented through analysis description and appropriate visual representation (sketches, diagrams, charts, word clouds).

All files were carefully transferred to a digital document (Microsoft Word/Excel). In the researcher's sole possession, all digital files were kept in a password-protected folder on a secure computer. Each couple share a folder that categorizes variables such as temperament needs and couple's dynamics. Each participant's collected data were paired with his/her spouse during the analysis process. Each couple have their digital files in a single document folder under their married name. The researcher's digital field notes for each participant were kept together in the beforementioned couple's documented folder. Each couple's files were coded for themes on a separate document entitled "last name themes." The couple's coded themes were copied and pasted to a collective spreadsheet entitled "All Themes." Therefore, a copy of the couple's themes stated inside their folder, and the data was copied and pasted to the collective "All Themes" spreadsheet.

Potential Limitations and Challenges of the Study

The significant challenges facing this study were sorting through a large amount of captured data (field notes, couples' diaries, interview notes), correctly interpreting the data, the limited number of participants, participant demographic, and accurately interpreting participant's perceptions of changes in marital intimacy. Data were collected through interviews, and observation during the face-to-face sessions; therefore, making valuable determinations depended upon sorting through a great deal of data for the interpreting process. The study may inspire other researchers to overcome the limited number of participants by duplicating the study on a larger scale utilizing a more diverse demographic and an increased number of participants.

There were three criteria for the acceptable archived data for this current study. All participants were married or engaged to be married, both spouses were willing to participate in the study, and each participant was a Christian with a fundamental understanding of the faith's biblical beliefs. Although these demographic criteria limit participants, they were specifically chosen for this study due to the Christian faith's natural built-in components that seamlessly align with temperament-focused marriage therapy. Two major aligning themes are 1) marriage is the highest form of achievable relational intimacy, and 2) there is a fundamental understanding of Christ-like character.

This study had a unique challenge in measuring the perception of a couple's intimacy. Most marital studies use scales such as satisfaction or quality to measure a couple's closeness. They are limited to one or two variables (sex, communication, parenting styles, attachment) as focal points. A new temperament-needs-based model is being used to explore this marital intimacy phenomenon. Although it is unknown if this

new temperament-focused model allows for intimacy measurement, this study could benefit from exploring a broader scope of spousal needs factors believed to influence marital intimacy.

There is ample research regarding marital satisfaction concerning one or two variables (communication, conflict, sex, gender roles). Still, there is a gap in marital research that illustrates influential factors of reciprocity and meeting of spousal temperament needs in marital intimacy.

Summary

This narrative qualitative research study evaluated the importance of reciprocity in meeting a partner's temperament needs in terms of marital intimacy. Researchers invested in this study were interested in specific factors (reciprocity, temperament, meeting needs) that previous theories (Hierarchy of Needs, FIRO) show evidence that these factors influence marital intimacy. Schutz (1957), inspired by the motivational needs movement, developed a social theory named FIRO. Maslow (1950) established the hierarchy of needs theory and theorized that humans are motivated by their needs and that these motivations influence all human behavior. Furthermore, Maslow believed that all humans have specific needs and must meet those needs to achieve humanity's milestones (self-actualization, transcendence). All needs must be met in the order of Maslow's (1970) motivational model. Additionally, Schutz's theory focuses on the social side of human motivation and claims that behaviors are motivated according to one's relational roles, such as child to parent, student to teacher, spouse, friend, or colleague.

Temperament development was foundationally built upon personality theories that stem thousands of years. The Arno Profile System (an assessment for temperament)

was influenced heavily by Maslow's (Hierarchy of Needs) and Schutz's (FIRO) theories. Schutz's theory stemmed from Maslow's groundwork; Arno's temperament assessment was built on the theoretical framework of Schutz's social theory. Temperament separates from its founding fathers in a few ways. Temperament does not follow a hierarchy of needs; instead, it is a need based on one's inborn traits, i.e., the need to be social or the need to be analytical. Temperament theory is biblically founded and states that humans are designed by God and blessed with specific inborn traits. Like FIRO, temperament has different areas of life, but those areas are defined by inborn traits. Most importantly, temperament theory is biblically founded and states that humans are designed by God and created with specific inborn characteristics.

This current study examined Scripture and found abundant biblical support for reciprocity, temperament, and the importance of meeting a partner's needs. However, the Bible categorizes human needs very differently than Maslow and Schutz. Through biblical characteristics (love, service, altruism, etc.), God defines man's basic needs as salvation from the slavery of sin. A human's first need is to love God and the second need is to love others. By meeting these biblical needs, a person can be truly fulfilled.

All participants were Christian, heterosexual, and married couples who were diverse in age, race, number of marriages, years married, and number of children. Participants took a temperament assessment to understand and meet temperament needs (Arno Profile System). A licensed marriage therapist certified in temperament therapy reviewed results with each couple and administered a four-week training focusing on reciprocity, temperament, and the importance of meeting temperament needs. The data collection process included interviews, observations, and field notes that were digitally

captured and uniformly organized for efficiency and ease of access. Creating and utilizing a proficient filing system makes sorting a large amount of in-depth and detailed data more productive for the analysis process.

The narrative research analysis process reflects, organizes, and prioritizes data into memos. Memos were used to discover emerging ideas that were described and coded. By classifying codes, data can be categorized into themes. All coding, code names, and themes are clearly defined. Organized themes allow the researcher to develop and assess the data interpretation. The findings of the qualitative narrative research study is represented in an in-depth detailed text and visual (table, figures, charts) description found in the study results.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Overview

This narrative qualitative research project aims to evaluate the importance of reciprocity in meeting a partner's temperament needs in terms of marital intimacy. This research investigated the archival data of 12 married couples who received temperament-focused marriage therapy between 2015 and 2022. Throughout therapy sessions, the therapist collected data by conducting in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews with each participant individually and with their partner. Interviews and observations immerse the investigation into the participant's life story, chronological order of events, and the essence of the participants' experience. The essential principles taught throughout therapy (reciprocity, temperament, spousal needs being met) are thought to influence marital intimacy.

The research questions guiding the study are: 1) How do participants describe their experience with marital intimacy before and after temperament-focused marriage therapy? 2) How do participants describe their experience with marital intimacy who do (not) practice the principle of reciprocity? 3) How do participants who do (not) fully meet each other's temperament (individualistic) needs describe their experience with marital intimacy? and 4) How do participants whose spouse does (not) display the character of Christ describe their experience with marital intimacy?

Descriptive Results

The study used data from 12 married couples who had experienced temperament-focused marriage counseling. Participants took the 60-question temperament questionnaire, Arno Profile System (APS), to determine their specific temperament type.

Data from differing demographics (age, race, length of marriage, number of marriages), couples' varied temperament types (choleric, sanguine, melancholy, supine, phlegmatic), and self-reported religion were recorded.

The Arno Profile System assesses temperament types for three areas of life (inclusion, control, affection) and an expressed and wanted score. A simple way to understand the results is by viewing the APS 0 – 9 scale on a bar graph. The inclusion area represents one's expression, thinking/tasking, and socializing needs. For example, the analytical, introverted person will score a 0 – 2 on the expressed and wanted score. A social relational person will score a 7 – 9. Control represents one's ability to make decisions and the need for environmental control. The expressed control score represents one's need for control over others and one's environment. The wanted score in control represents one's willingness to accept control. The affection area represents a person's expression and needs for relational/emotional or task-oriented affection from their closest people, such as their spouse. A low score (0 – 2) represents a need to be task-oriented (orderliness, respect, dependability) and a low demand for emotional output. A higher score (6 – 9) would illustrate one who easily expresses emotions and needs emotional and relational affection (hugging, compliments, romance).

Societal Temperament Attributions

The theory of temperament does not characterize temperament attributions as masculine or feminine but instead discusses strengths, weaknesses, and temperament needs. According to the Christian temperament theorist and creator of the Arno Profile System, Dr. Richard Arno, there is no gendered (masculine or feminine) temperament type, and people score according to their temperament traits.

Historically, society has classified specific attributes as masculine, feminine, beneficial, or undesirable. Melancholy (M) and choleric (C) temperament types have traits that have traditionally been attributed to masculine qualities (task-oriented, disciplined, rigid, decisive, and take control). At the same time, the sanguine (G) and supine (S) represent the traditional feminine traits (relational, social, emotional, indecisive, submissive).

According to 2022 reports from the National Christian Counselor Association (NCCA), females scored slightly higher in the aforementioned masculine categories, such as control (choleric), independence, and task orientation (melancholy). This report reveals that out of people who scored as supine in affection, 83% were males. Contrary to masculine societal assumptions, a supine score in this area shows intuitiveness and a heart toward serving. They can be susceptible to their closest people (parents, spouse, children, best friend). This revelation could change the way that culture reveres masculinity. Most disclosed only a 7% average score separating the gender differences. More women scored as sanguine in the inclusion and affection area, illustrating a higher demand for socializing and the need to show and receive affection. Men leaned toward introversion in the inclusion area, and more task-orientated and service minded in the affection area.

Identified Themes and Additional Insight into the Field

Temperament-informed couples therapy adds new insight and knowledge to the field of couples counseling. Widely accepted in the field of psychology, founded by Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs, is that all behavior is motivated by a need. Adapting Maslow's approach to marriage therapy, individuals' behaviors (thoughts,

feelings, attitudes, emotions) are motivated by their spousal needs. A therapist can educate couples about their specific needs by expounding upon temperament. Using introspection, individuals can identify and verbalize their needs to their mate. With expression, partners can meet their spouse's needs and, thus, create positive attitudes toward the marital relationship.

The 12 selected participating couples demonstrate a commonly shared dynamic in couples' therapy. There were eight identified themes from the examination of the archival data.

1. Each participant desired their spouse to meet their specific temperament needs.
2. Individuals landed in three categories in terms of need expression.
 - a. Individuals who clearly expressed all their needs with great emotion.
 - b. Individuals who expressed only "essential" needs passively.
 - c. Individuals who rarely or never verbally express their needs.
3. People feel intimate with their spouse when their partner meets their needs.
4. When partners fail to meet needs, individuals will selfishly try to meet their temperament needs independently. Before temperament-focused marriage therapy, partners perceived their spouse to have similar needs and made efforts toward meeting perceived needs instead of meeting their spouse's desired needs. When partners showed love in their way and not in their spouse's way, feelings of rejection and neglect followed.
5. Therapist observed couple's issues, counseling goals, and marital complaints coincide with a lack of individual temperament needs being met.
6. Reciprocity, in terms of equal effort, was vital to couples' increased intimacy

and marital satisfaction.

7. A person's character will influence their relationships. The degree of reciprocity of Christ-like characteristics will affect marital intimacy and satisfaction.

8. A person's mindset on marital altruism will influence their relationship. The degree of marital altruism (one's selfless consideration for the well-being of one's spouse) will affect marital intimacy and satisfaction.

Couple One "The Polar Opposite Couple"

Couple one represents the temperament of polar opposites. The husband scored as melancholy (1 – 3) in each area of life, and the wife scored as sanguine (6 – 9). The husband is an engineer and works alone for most of his day. As a real estate agent, his wife is with the staff, talking to agents or out in the field with her clients. She looks forward to spending time with her team and clients, and he enjoys his career's solitude, planning, and problem-solving aspects. Whereas their individualism allows for boastful success in their careers, their uniqueness creates misunderstandings and conflict in their relationship. This couple adds value to the study because their marital issues are common in partners who have contrasting scores in one or more areas. This couple adds value to the study because their intimacy issues are common in partners who have opposing scores in one or more areas.

Relevant Background

When receiving therapy, this mid-30s couple married for eight years and had been in courtship for two years before marriage. Both individuals had never been married before and parented their two children under six. They each state they love each other and

want to make the marriage work. They feel that they have been drifting apart for the past few years.

Identified Themes

The couple's counseling goals were primarily linked to their temperament needs (socialization, affection, order, peace, and respect). Preceding therapy, the couple said they expressed misdirected efforts toward their spouse. The wife said, "I like physical touch and lots of communication, I thought he did too." The husband said, "I like it when she takes care of me (cooking, cleaning) and I thought she liked it when I did stuff for her too." Although each partner communicated temperament needs, they continued to love their partner in the way that they needed love. Through meeting their own needs, their selfishness damaged their relationship in terms of feelings of rejection and neglect. The relational disconnect affected every area of their life (family, work, social).

Counseling Complaints and Goals

The couple listed the following four issues/goals for counseling: 1) We want to understand each other, 2) We want to improve communication, 3) We want to reduce strife and conflict, and 4) We would like to increase intimacy in our relationship.

Temperament Needs

The couple and the therapist discussed and explored the results of the APS in detail. The therapist ascertained that everyone matched their assessment score through weekly discussions and face-to-face therapy sessions. The couple created a personal and spousal temperament needs list through these sessions.

The husband's listed needs were to make decisions and have control over himself, wants alone time, needs to plan and process information, and not be forced into things,

desires not to socialize unless necessary (work, church), requires respect, feels better when his work and home life is neat and orderly. He primarily needs appreciation and affirmation from his wife but also pushes her to be orderly, timely, and respectful (tone, emotions, budget, cleanliness), and to give him time to think about issues or conflicts.

The wife states that her general needs are relational and emotional. She desires to be social, to meet new people, and spend more time with her close people. She prefers to be spontaneous, and seeks adventure, fun, and pleasure. She reports that she needs her husband to be more emotionally connected (sharing, warm, nurturing, compassionate), desires open communication (vulnerability), nonsexual physical touch, and to go on fun adventures and try new things.

Temperament Score and Affect

Society of the mid-1900s and before would classify roles, identities, duties, and traits as male or female. Some of today's resources authored by people of that era present these traditional ideals as facts. Popular conventional (non)Christian recourses include books such as *Love and Respect* (Eggerichs, 2004), *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* (Gray & John, 1951). These recourses set out to explain the male and female differences. Although temperament would suggest an opposing argument, this couple conceptualizes the traditional husband-wife relationship. The husband presents masculine qualities (task-oriented), and the wife reflects feminine (emotional, relational) traits.

In the inclusion area, the husband embodied introverted traits and had a substantial need for quiet and alone time to think and process. Social settings are stressful and take much emotional effort, which is draining. In contrast, his wife is highly social and recharges by being around people. A significant point of contention for the wife was

that the husband “never wanted to go anywhere or do anything outside of the house.” Likewise, the husband complained that his wife “never wanted to stay home.” Another conflict from the inclusion area was their opposing attitudes approaching vacations/time off, spending/saving money, celebrations (birthdays, holidays, anniversaries), going out with friends, spending time with extended family, and experiencing fun and adventures.

This couple felt the most profound impact on their relationship in the affection area. The husband scored low (2) in the expressed and wanted affection area, while the wife scored high (8). As typical for an M, the husband focuses on the tasks of the relationship, and the wife strongly cares for the emotional expressions of the relationship. The husband expressed concerns about following budgetary and financial guidelines, rigidness toward disciplining the children, and realistic lackluster goals. His wife showed and expected tremendous emotional and physical love and affection. From her husband, she expected romance, adventure, and nonsexual touching (hugging, handholding, cuddling). The bulk of their conflict bore from their opposing needs. The husband felt disrespected when his wife, and often the children, would overspend, be late for appointments and events, or be untidy around the house. He also questioned her need to “always go out for weekly lunch dates with her friends.” Likewise, she could not understand his inflexibility with plans and rigid attitude about “going out and having fun family times,” such as bowling or Disneyland. Disciplining the children and sticking to a routine is of the utmost importance to the husband, while making sure love notes went into lunchboxes, out-the-door affirmations, and hugs guided the wife’s behaviors.

How they illustrated their love for one another was typical of their temperament but opposite of each other’s needs. He would often say, “You know that I love you

because I" earn a paycheck, wash the dishes, take the kids to school, or do meaningful to-do-list-like tasks. She often complained that his rigid inflexibility and lack of emotions were painful. She would verbalize that "all I needed was empathy, compassion, and a hug." He claimed that her disrespect, inconsideration of his time, and emotional outbursts were incredibly hurtful.

Character of Christ

During the initial intake interview, the couple expressed that divorce is not an option. In part, this declaration was due to shared religious beliefs. They stated that the covenant they made to God was sacred. There was an admission of selfishness from both parties. Throughout sessions, the husband remarked how he should be the spiritual leader of the home. His wife commented on his impatient, aggressive, and unkind behaviors. He expressed a genuine conviction in his behaviors and vowed to make changes. Likewise, the wife admitted to being emotional and said, "I am losing my cool too often." They both felt convicted about their spiritual life and expressed a need to nurture this area of their relationship.

They committed to doing more spiritual activities (praying, church attendance, and reading the Bible) as a couple and with their children. The couple confessed that the first few weeks were challenging to regain their routine of spiritual practices. However, during week 7, the couple openly discussed the positives of their renewed spiritual habits. Both agreed that they felt more intimate due to their religious practices. The wife said, "I just love it when he reads our daily devotions and then prays over me." The husband expressed that the morning devotions helped him to have the right mindset for the day.

He expounded this by saying, “I thank God for all His blessings every morning. This expression helps me to remember to be patient and kind. My family is a gift, a blessing.”

Counseling Results

On the first week of therapy, the wife stated, “Obviously, we are completely incompatible. How is this relationship ever going to work?” Temperament therapy examined techniques that would allow them to lean into each other’s opposites task and relational strengths and have grace while working through their differences and temperament weaknesses.

After eight weeks of temperament marriage counseling, the couple reported a deep understanding of their opposing temperaments. The couple concluded that these behaviors were innate and natural, not designed to hurt one another as they formerly perceived. They acknowledged that their conflict resulted from misunderstandings, differences, and temperament weaknesses. Understanding each other's temperament provided grace while working through differences. The power of grace replaced instinctive and emotional reactions (explosive outbursts of anger) with calm responses. Reciprocally meeting each other's specific temperament needs moved them from perceiving spousal neglect to feelings of intimacy. Through an expanded perspective, the husband took an emotional and nonsexual physical responsibility for meeting his wife's needs. Reciprocally, his wife understood his task-oriented mindset and expressed appreciation for the to-do-list type of work, and approached timeliness, budget, and discipline with more respect and consideration.

Conclusion

After the 8-weeks of temperament focused therapy, the couple claimed that their mate is the priority and vowed to reciprocally meet their partner's specific temperament needs. They viewed each other's needs as an opportunity to show love. During a follow-up therapy appointment six months after treatment, the couple reported that their old habits would rise and occasionally show love their own way. Still, she knew that he was showing her love through his tasks (work, discipline, budget), and he comprehended that her sweet notes and hugs were her attempt at meeting his needs. The wife stated, "It's not like our day-to-day issues just went away, but we now come from a place of understanding, we are able to work together." Her husband added, "We both are doing the work and trying to meet each other's needs regularly." One year after temperament-focused therapy, they reported reciprocally practicing to meet partner's temperament needs and their intimacy continued to increase.

Couple Two "Dominant Versus Submissive"

Couple two represents couples with opposing temperament scores in the control area (control and decision-making). The husband scored a 0 in the expressed score, meaning he desires no control over others. As a 6, he scored relatively high in the wanted score, which means he prefers to avoid making any decisions and does not want to be in charge. His wife scored oppositely, with a 6 in the expressed score and a 2 in the wanted score. Her score illustrates that she is most comfortable when in charge and desires to make the decisions. She represents a strong need for control over herself, her environment, and over others. She refuses to be controlled by others and is unlikely to ask for or take direction from others. This couple adds value to the study because their marital issues are common in partners who have varying control scores.

Relevant Background

At the time of seeking counseling, the couple had been married for one year, and they had dated for nine months. This marriage was each of their second; the husband was married for 13 years, and the wife for 20 years before marriage. Each had been divorced for several years before they found each other on an online dating site. They each had children of their own and shared custody with their ex-spouses.

Immediately after marriage, two months into the marriage and approximately 10 months before counseling, the couple started a business together. The wife, an entrepreneur, had been working part-time on a steadily growing company. The husband reported that at the beginning, “We were overjoyed with our venture together. We loved working together.” His wife responded, “Yeah, and then he just stopped talking to me one day.” Therefore, communication was priority for temperament-focused therapy.

Identified Themes

The couple’s “communication breakdown describes four themes.” 1. Wife decisively verbalized her needs and expectations regarding their business. 2. Husband felt excluded, controlled, and criticized by her. He would not speak up when offended until “emotionally pushed into defending himself.” 3. She claims to be meeting his needs by working on the relationship. He argues to be meeting her needs by doing most of the company’s labor. However, there was no evidence of affection reciprocity. 4. They both recognized their need for connection and desire to restore relational intimacy.

Although each genuinely believed they exhibited reciprocal relational altruism, their spouse did not perceive it. The husband said, “All I do is work to please her. Everything is for her, and I never consider my own needs.” The wife stated, “I work so

hard for our family and neglect what I want to do. My self-care does not exist! All I do is work for us, and I pour my all into it.”

Counseling Complaints and Goals

This couple’s major complaints revolved around control, decisiveness, exclusion, and criticism. Together they chose communication as their primary issue and counseling goal.

The husband’s complaint was twofold, 1. My wife does not include me in any significant decisions. 2. My wife is critical of everything I do.

The wife’s chief complaint was that he would not make a decision, and “he seems to be constantly angry with me, but he will not tell me why. I think it’s because he asks me to tell him what to do. But he gets angry when I tell him what to do.”

Temperament Score and Affect

The wife needs to be in control over her environment and the people inside that environment. Her primary flaw is using people as a means to an end, being critical of others, and demanding. Through therapy, she identified with her temperament weaknesses and strengths. Determination, strong leadership, and decisiveness are recognized strengths. His temperament strengths are that he genuinely enjoys serving others, is sensitive and intuitive to other’s needs. His weaknesses are that he automatically feels excluded. As a people pleaser, he has weak boundaries and refrains from making decisions. Although the couple is temperament opposites, they are uniquely balanced in their pairing. She is motivated by achievement, and he is inspired by serving.

Temperament Needs

After the temperament-focused therapist discussed the APS, both agreed that their results were accurately reflected. The husband desires to be included in all decisions. He states that his wife never includes him in any decisions “no matter how big or small the decision, she just doesn’t care enough about me to include me.” The husband claims that “she is always demanding stuff from me and ordering me around like a child” and “always correcting me and pointing out my flaws.” As a supine in control, the husband discussed several need factors. 1. He does not want to make decisions but wants to be included in the decision-making process. 2. He tries to please his wife but will not boast about his service to her. 3. He craves appreciation and affirmation, and he attributes his confidence and self-worth to her appraisal. 4. He bounces from anxiety to depression when she does not approve of his work (as a husband or business partner). 5. His feeling of significance and belonging are driven by her approval.

His wife acknowledged her “bossiness” and declared that if she “doesn’t tell him what to do, then it won’t get done.” She insists that she hates being his boss. “We should be partners, and I should be able to count on him. I must be the boss. He cannot decide, even stuff we have done a thousand times.” She desires him to be her partner, communicate, and make decisions. There is a recognition of his sensitivity (hurt feelings), but prior to therapy she did not know what to do about it. Her comment on communication is, “I cannot read your mind, and you need to be straightforward with what is bothering you! I would appreciate your clear, direct, and plain black-and-white communication.”

Character of Christ

Before therapy, the husband's sensitivity, low self-esteem, and feelings of exclusion brought out anger and resentment toward his wife. Naturally, he is sensitive but enjoys serving others. He expresses that appreciation, grace, and patience should be more prominent at work, with vendors, customers, and especially with one another. After therapy, he recognized that his sensitive nature was a gift that could be used to empathize with and serve others. His self-esteem was no longer attached to performance or pleasing others (wife, customers, and vendors) but tied to his identity in Jesus.

Inherently, the wife is motivated and strong-willed toward achievement. She confesses that accomplishment, status, and success was her primary motivation. She explains that their business is a blessing from God and heavily emphasizes that "we should all be hard-working stewards." She took on a biblical sense of stewardship through therapeutic discussion, leading to a blessed perspective. She defined a biblical worldview on stewardship as "everything a person has, comes from God. People must be responsible, work hard, and show love (patience, grace, and kindness) throughout life." The stewardship perspective allowed her to remain goal-oriented and motivated while being kind and gracious.

Counseling Results

After the 8-week temperament-focused marriage therapy, the couple identified their needs for love and affection and how the area of control was causing marital division. She admitted that her criticism, demands, and "bulldozing" was hurtful. He recognized that his stonewalling and "cold shouldering" were equally cruel. After discussion, they agreed that neither was intentionally trying to hurt the other. On the contrary, they claimed to be for one another and never against. The couple decided to

work together and to communicate in the moment of hurt occurrence. Using communication cues, the husband, prone to shutting down and stonewalling, would use a common prompt to signal his wife that she was being critical or demanding. He would say, “Ouch, that sounded harsh.” Or he would ask, “Could you say that a little softer?” His wife would use grace to hear his request and make softer adjustments. Likewise, she would ask, “You seem angry, is everything ok?” Or “Did I do something to upset you?” They agreed a softer approach in sensitive times would work best. Additionally, they decided to ask, “What do you need from me?”

Conclusion

The couple came in for a one-year therapy check-in. The couple appeared to be in a cheerful mood. The husband immediately joked, “She is still bossy, doc.” After the laughter subsided, he confessed that they occasionally fall into old habits. He is too quickly offended and stonewalls, and she is often bossy, highly motivated, and strong-willed. With understanding temperament, they can have grace with these innate behaviors. The wife stated, “Before therapy, I thought he was always angry and hated me.” He said, “And I just thought she was a controlling and critical person.” Temperament allowed the couple to believe the best intentions of one another. Therapy led them to a narrative that said, “You are for me and never against me. You love me. You are not motivated to hurt me.” They used this account to quickly forgive, repair, and connect.

Before therapy, they often spent weeks being angry and not understanding why. One year after practicing temperament-focused strategies, he feels connected, affirmed, and appreciated. She softly discusses her needs and is gentle with him regarding business

to-dos. He acknowledged, "She always expresses her appreciation and includes me in most decisions." She recognizes that "He is not angry or stonewalling me like he used to." The couple adjusted their communication to meet each other's needs. She became careful with her criticism and shared more affirmation. He believes she has the best intentions and is more honest about his sensitivity. Although it is hard work, she enjoys success and counts the business as a blessing. He agrees that the business is a blessing and feels fulfilled serving his customers and wife.

Couple Three "A Pair of Melancholies"

Scoring as a melancholy (M) in each area (inclusion, control, affection), couple three represents introverted, analytical, creative, and task-oriented people. It is common for partners to share temperament type scores in one or two areas, but rare that types are the same in each area. Positive attributes of melancholy are task-oriented and analytical, rigid in routines, and values respect, discipline, and independence. Weaknesses include a deficit in social skills and an inability to express emotions. This couple adds value to the study because their marital issues are common in partners who share M scores in one or more areas.

Relevant Background

This couple was in their 20s, this was their first marriage, and they are parents to two biological young children (3 and 5). Their parents were divorced and the discussed a lack of good marital and parenting role models. There was a desire and an eagerness to learn and grow for the betterment of their family. They were new to Christianity but stated that "our faith is important to us!" and vowed that "divorce is not an option!"

Identified Themes

The couple's marital intimacy drift directly resulted from their melancholy temperament type. Temperament-related themes include a high need for independence, a desire to connect through tasks, a need for quiet and alone time, and a failure to express emotions. Innately, this couple has a propensity for tasks and analyzing (processing, thinking) but struggle with low social energy which is needed to express relational and emotional affection. Simultaneously, these same traits contribute to their relational success in the areas of co-parenting, friendship, and efficient roommates. Their relational and emotional ineptitude create a deficiency in intimacy factors such as passion, vulnerability, romance, adventure, empathy, and compassion.

Counseling Complaints and Goals

This couple had difficulties describing goals for counseling because perceived well-being was satisfactory and yet, felt a relational disconnect. The husband described their issue by saying, "we don't really argue; we just have been bickering a lot lately." The wife added, "yeah, it doesn't feel like we're husband and wife, more like friends or roommates." An overall life discussion revealed that the couple has a healthy but logistical surface-level type of relationship. Often, they were in the space and they equally shared goals, respect, and responsibilities. Reading, painting, sculpting, creating music, and alone time was listed as desirable "shared" activities.

They were always together but did everything separately. They woke at different times, and their daily activities were divided by work, school, and their children's extracurricular activities. Typically, dinner was eaten on the run, and at-home activities involved them playing with their kids or busying themselves with their creative hobbies (painting, music). After the children's bedtime routine, they would unwind by enjoying

their favorite pastime, she would read, while he watched videos on YouTube. They routinely spend the weekends doing family activities and always go to church on Sunday.

A thorough exploration revealed that the couple was proficient at their partnership but had never experienced a deep vulnerability or passionate romance. Their shared traits of introversion, independence, and desire for quiet and alone time had unwittingly driven them apart. Except for the occasional sexual activity, they had forgotten to intimately connect (conversation, adventures, sharing ideas, and dreaming of the future). Upon this discovery, they decided their counseling goal was to connect and reignite intimacy and marital passion.

Temperament Score and Affect

The husband and wife scored as melancholy (M) in each temperament area and shared the same traits. As an M in inclusion, the couple was introverted and analytical. They agreed, "I like to think and process my emotions and not just be in my feelings." Strategy, planning, and routines are essential to this couple's lifestyle. As with this couple, melancholy in inclusion is often highly creative in art (music, painting, crafting) and mechanics (architect, automobile mechanic, craftsman, decor). Each partner exhibited artistry and dabbled in both music and drawing/painting.

The melancholy in control places a high value on autonomy. In the control area, the M is independent and defined as a rebel. They do not desire to control others, do not like to take responsibility for others, nor would they stand for being micromanaged. Before making big decisions, they prefer to have time to think, research, and process. If a partner, or anyone else, tries forcing a decision, the M will push back, rebel, and behave negatively concerning the decision. The husband said, "We both need time and space to

think about what we should do.” The wife said, “Oh yeah, ain't nobody telling me what to do!”

In the affection area, melancholies show and receive love through tasks. The couple’s general feeling is that we are loyal to each other and do for one another. This couple joked that their motto was, “show me, don’t tell me.” To them, words did not have a deep meaning, but behaviors and actions were far more meaningful. Loyalty, dependability, respect, timeliness, and orderliness were among this couple’s top-stated needs. Their lack of nonsexual touching, emotional expressions, and relational skills deeply impaired their intimacy.

Temperament Needs

To some degree, their natural temperament needs were being met. Each partner thrives from their individualistic traits (independence, task, quiet alone time). Possessing the melancholy temperament impaired the couple from the opportunity to naturally expand beyond their natural tendencies. Naturally, they show and receive love through acts of service (tasks). Relational and emotional expressions are their temperament’s weaknesses. Through temperament-focused therapy, they discovered their need for relational and emotional connection. Temperament-focused therapy informed and provided strategies for their opposing traits (openness, socialization, emotional connection, spontaneity, and an adventurous spirit). They decided that increasing relational and emotional connectivity (verbalizing “I love and appreciate you,” hugs, hand holding, going on romantic dates and adventures, cuddles) were needed to break the couple's cycle of routine and monotony.

Character of Christ

This couple was new to their faith and desired a deeper spiritual connection. Using the knowledge from temperament-focused therapy, they began to sacrifice their needs (critical, independence, alone time, rigidity) for their spouse. The husband confessed, "I know that I can be too rigid and critical about the chores and unkind and impatient with the kids." The wife agreed that she too often loses self-control and expresses anger out of her desire for quiet or neatness. They innately served one another, hence the positive partnership, but they realize the need to be selfless, patient, kind, and gracious. The wife said, "This therapy has shown me that I can appear cold, black and white, rigid, and just overall unfriendly toward people. I know that God wants us to be kind and loving."

Counseling Results

On the one-year check-in, the couple reported that temperament-focused therapy created a new life and marital perspective. They were working on strategies to increase intimacy through an emotional and physical connection. The wife said, "We have come a long way. We scheduled a once-a-week romantic date. Most days, we take at least 30 minutes after the kids are asleep to connect (cuddle, talk), and we randomly and spontaneously do a 30-second hug." A 30-second hug is a strategy discussed in therapy to reduce the awkwardness of a couple who rarely share nonsexual physical touch. The couple described an impactful strategy of connecting every time they go and come back together. The husband said, "I am the first one out the door, and I always make sure that I give her a hug, a kiss, and I say I love you before I leave." The wife answered, "Yes, he does. And I always find him when I get home and do the same (hug, kiss, I love you)." Understanding their introverted disposition allowed the couple to go outside their comfort

and make church friends. Over the year, they have participated in a small church group and bragged about hosting. The wife said, “Although it takes a lot of energy, we routinely go to our small group, and sometimes, we even socialize outside of the scheduled meetings.” The husband added, “You know this is a big deal because, before therapy, we would have never, ever done that (socialize inside or outside the group).”

Conclusion

The couple reported that they feel more loved than before. The daily practice of emotional and nonsexual physical expressions has created a strong connection and restored intimacy. The wife said, “It is kind of sad that before temperament, we did not know we needed this type of love and affection.” Temperament-focused therapy allowed a new perspective and taught a family with poor parental role models how to love one another.

Couple Four “The Silent Drift”

This couple scored as supine in the affection area. They related to the supine temperament's conflict-avoidant, task-oriented, service-minded (people pleasing), sensitive, and intuitive qualities. Their scores were different in the inclusion and control areas. The husband is sanguine (extrovert), and the wife is melancholy (introvert). In the control area, the husband scored as phlegmatic (strong-willed, stubborn) and the wife as melancholy (independent). This couple adds value to the study because their marital issues are common, with partners sharing supine scores in affection.

Relevant Background

This couple has been married for 16 years and has two children, ages 10 and 12. Each partner has a career, the husband's career is full-time, and the wife works mornings

as an assistant to a real estate investor. The husband has a successful career as a salesman, where he is social, charismatic, confident, and optimistic. The wife commented on how this job suits her need to work alone, do tasks, and solve problems. Both partners enjoy what they do and commented on how their career choices match their temperament types in inclusion and control.

The husband claimed to be raised Catholic but comes from an emotionally and verbally abusive home with an alcoholic father. He said, “My dad was a drunk and continuously called me and my brother names. I was never good enough. My mother did not protect us, and they are still together.” The husband admits to a minor drinking problem but claims that drinking has never negatively influenced behaviors at home. He believes his sensitivity to close people is not natural (innate) but due to his parents’ abuse (nurture).

The wife was also raised Catholic, but “we were not practicing Catholics, just went to church on the holidays.” She reports that her parents were absent but not abusive. “My parents worked all the time, and my sisters and I were left to ourselves.” The wife talked about how she related to her temperament, “I know I am introverted. It’s because my parents never took us anywhere. And I am sure that my parents’ absence created some abandonment issues.”

The family occasionally visits the wife’s parents and has vowed never to see the husband. They continue the traditions of periodically going to their local Catholic church during holidays, and their children attend a Catholic school.

Identified Themes

The couple's marital intimacy disconnect is directly related to their supine temperament type in the affection area. Through temperament-focused therapy, the couple identified six key themes.

1. There is a strong need for sensitivity in softness, kindness, grace, and patience. This couple discussed in detail how sensitive they are to one another (closest people) but not sensitive to acquaintances (colleagues). The husband said, "Those people at work can't hurt me because I don't really care about what they say. But she can speak harshly, and I just shut down."

2. This couple would internalize feelings and avoid conflict with each other. This behavior resulted in automatic negative assumptions about their partners. The husband said, "You just think I am the biggest idiot and drunkard in the world! I know you despise me and prefer to be with someone else – who can make you happy." Upon hearing this, the wife responded, "Name one time that I have ever called you a name or said that I wanted to be with someone else." He answered, "You don't have to say it. I just know it." The therapist asked for clarification, and the husband agreed that she has never called him names or compared him to any other man, nor has she threatened to leave him for anyone else.

3. The need for partners to initiate love and affection. The couple's difficulty is that both partners desire meaningful connection, but neither initiate.

4. A supine in affection profoundly desires to please their spouse. They accomplish this through specific and meaningful acts of service. The wife commented, "I make your coffee just how you like it every morning."

5. They desire genuine acts of service from their partners. As a task-oriented person, she likes her husband to do significant tasks for her. She harshly complained, “When did you last make me a coffee?” The husband defensively responded, “You have the coffee covered. But don’t I make your favorite dinners when I am home in time to make dinner? Don’t I always make the bed and stack the pillows perfectly?” They each continued to list at least 20 tasks that sounded like a to-do list of chores (mowing the grass, stacking the dishwasher, folding laundry, taking the kids to school).

6. Although unspoken, there is an emotional demand to receive acknowledgment (affirmation, appreciation, or praise) for their acts of service.

Counseling Complaints and Goals

The couple had two counseling goals, 1. communicate until they resolve their issues and 2. learn how to connect and be more intimate. As told by the husband, “My major complaint is that we rarely have sex, we don’t communicate, and she never wants to go anywhere or do anything.” And “She is always angry, and she just shuts down for weeks.” The wife agreed and added, “It’s true. We never resolve our conflict. We both swept it under the rug and, eventually, acted like nothing ever happened. Of course, I don’t want to have sex. You don’t love me; I don’t think you even like me. You are so nice and caring with all your friends - who you always go out with. Maybe I would want more time with you if you treated me like that.”

The couple discovered three primary marital needs, the need for partners to initiate love and affection, the desire for genuine acts of service from their partners, and, although it is not verbalized, the emotional demand to receive acknowledgment (affirmation, appreciation, or praise) for their acts of service. Upon a deeper conversation,

the couple discovered that true to their supine traits, they avoid conflict, internalize hurt, and habitually make assumptions about their partner's thoughts and feelings. Conflict is avoided and discussed under distress. Their overly sensitive nature lends them to be easily offended by their partner. Although their desire to selflessly serve can be viewed as positive, there is a strong need for appreciation and affirmation. Often considered derogatory, a supine could be classified as a "people pleaser." Their significance and belonging are tied to their sense of caretaking. Therefore, they feel a sense of relational security when their partner appreciates and affirms them.

Temperament Score and Affect

The husband scored as sanguine in inclusion, phlegmatic in control, and supine in affection. He related to the sanguine traits of extroversion and optimism. He demonstrated these traits by saying, "I genuinely like people, and they like me. People are fun and easy to talk to. It is what makes me a good salesman. I am hopeful and always feel good and positive about everything outside of marriage." As a phlegmatic in control, he reported that although he appears passive to others, he is more comfortable making decisions. "I will let someone share their thoughts, but I typically already know what I want to do. And I am not changing my mind. I can be stubborn once I have my mind made up."

The wife agreed with her temperament assessment as melancholy in inclusion and the control area. She related to these scores and illustrated them by saying, "I am a very private person. I like quiet and alone time, and I don't like people – other than my family and best friend. No one can micromanage me. I get stressed and push back if someone

tries to control me.” Throughout therapy, she expressed her appreciation for quiet and alone time and autonomy and sternly stated her disapproval of socializing.

The husband and wife scored as a supine temperament type in the affection area. The affection area is how one is with their significant people (children, parents, best friends), especially their spouse. The positive traits of a supine are intuition, a servant’s heart, and sensitive nature. The strengths of these traits can be found in their innate genuineness, compassion, and nurturing character. They often use their intuition to empathize with others and genuinely care about their emotional health and well-being. They can be altruistic, using their servant’s heart to serve and nurture others without acknowledgment.

The negative weakness of this couple’s supine qualities is their conflict avoidance, ease of offense, and lack of initiation. For both, conflict avoidance was both obvious and due to assumptions. Their intuition would alert to a partner’s distress creating an unverified negative assumption. The wife said, “He would come after work so angry and stressed. I would immediately think I must have done something wrong, and he is angry. So, I needed to stay away from him, and I would not talk to him.” Her husband responded, “Likewise. I just thought, oh, here we go again. The silent treatment – which would last for days. So, I would not talk to her until she was over being angry with me.”

Upon a deeper inquiry, the couple reported that they “just knew” (assumed) that the other was mad at them. As a response to their coldness, they would continue the cycle of no response. The wife described it as “the most hurtful behavior is when he would get in his mood and ignore me. Sometimes weeks would go by without a single word. I wished that he would just yell at me. Silence is worse than yelling.” The husband stated,

“It was obvious to me that you did want me to talk to you. I already know you don’t love me and want out of this relationship. You proved this by giving me the cold shoulder for weeks.”

Giving into their temperament weaknesses tore this family apart. Their ease of offense, negative assumptions, and conflict-avoidant behavior kept this couple under constant disconnection. They would spend weeks ignoring one another. Their lack of effort toward initiating love and affection only strengthens the belief of negative assumptions.

Temperament Needs

This couple needed their partner to initiate love and affection and to be sensitive to them. They are hurt without a soft tone, a demeanor of partner acceptance, and a positive attitude. There was a need for a partner’s adoration (they needed their partner to be pleased with them) which could only be felt through verbalized affirmation.

Reciprocity, fairness, and equality were of the utmost importance to this couple. There was a mental scoreboard that the wife described as the “what have you done for me lately tally.” The couple’s discord was driven by their temperament need for their partner’s insensitivity, lack of initiating affection, and the failure to feel served or please one another. Their innate sensitivity would create offense, to which both partners responded by shutting down, avoiding the conflict, and ignoring each other for weeks.

Character of Christ

This couple naturally exhibited traits of Christ, illustrated by their empathy and sacrificial servant’s heart. They were able to use these strengths at the beginning of their marriage and continue to share these positive traits with other people. However, during

therapy, the last several years of their marriage were riddled with bitterness toward each other. They held such resentment that their hearts were full of contempt. The past, full of false negative assumptions, kept coming up, and both expressed that there was too much hurt to move forward. Neither of them was willing to practice the principle of forgiveness.

Counseling Results

The husband and wife refused to meet on the one-year check-in but agreed to individual sessions. Since our last session, the couple decided to divorce. Individually they blamed one another. When prompted about the strategies, each claimed their partner refused to communicate and neglected to initiate affection or affirmation. They both expressed defeat and recognized that the ease of offense, negative assumptions, conflict avoidance, and lack of initiation destroyed their marriage.

The husband appeared frustrated and disappointed, saying, “There was just too much hurt and not enough willingness to change. I tried to communicate and allow for a safe place to talk about things (hurts, conflict). I thought about giving more hugs and saying I love you more, but she didn’t want it. I am just not what she wants.” Throughout his session, the husband continued to blame his wife. He repeatedly communicated about his wife’s unwillingness to work on the relationship. He said, “She wouldn’t try. She really didn’t love me anyways. Just the same ole thing.”

In her session, the wife’s effect was mournful and sad. She blames claims that he is angry, impatient, unkind, unappreciative, and unaffectionate. She said, “he is so mean and hateful. It’s obvious that I am just not good enough for him. I don’t know why he

married me.” More profound output revealed that she did not feel she was a priority or significant to him. She maintained that she was in fear of his angry outbursts.

Conclusion

The couple unsuccessfully completed the temperament-focused treatment. They entirely refused to practice the three critical factors of therapy (reciprocity, meeting the partner’s temperament needs, and Christ-like character). Although they understood their own and each other’s temperament, there was minimal effort on both sides to meet one another’s needs. They admitted no reciprocity and blamed the other for not trying (initiating). They disregarded the critical element of a Christ-like character, forgiveness. There was no intimacy repair with no reciprocity or effort and no forgiveness, patience, kindness, grace, and love.

Couple Five “Emotionally Outspoken”

This couple scored as sanguine (G) in the inclusion and affection area. The G temperament type is extroverted, outgoing, optimistic, and seeks pleasure. The G needs to be social and accepted, to be the center of attention, to express their emotions, to receive tremendous emotional love and affection, and to have relationships. Both admit that they are highly emotional and outspoken. Their shared worldview is through the lens of emotions (how one feels) and relationships.

A melancholy (M) is introverted, creative, task-oriented, analytical, and has an opposing view to the sanguine. An M temperament type view life through a set of circumstances to be managed through analyzing, processing, and performing a task. Although this couple differs in the control area, the husband scored as melancholy and the wife as choleric; they are both strong-willed and need independence. This couple adds

value to the study because their marital issues are common in strong-willed partners who share G scores in one or more areas.

Background

This couple briefly talked about their extended family (parents, siblings) and thought their childhood was great and a positive relationship still exists. At the time of therapy, they had been married for eight years and had three children; this was their first marriage. They were in courtship for two years and abstained from sex while dating. The wife admitted, “Of course, there was some heavy petting going on, but we managed to abstain.”

They claimed to have had a solid marriage until recently. Although they have typical life stressors, their tone, demeanor, and attitude have been negative. They report that their partner is having frequent outbursts of anger, impatience, and overall mood. When asked to recall how long these behaviors have persisted, they agreed for about two years. Except for the youngest being born preceding this time, they could identify any new life circumstances.

Identified Themes

The couple’s marital issues were directly related to their temperament type. The first theme identified is that they are both strong-willed and prone to interpret their partner's behavior as controlling. The husband said, “She is always telling me what to do. It is infuriating. I repeatedly must tell her to ask me and not to tell me. I have been treated like a child and won’t stand for it.” The wife responded, “Yes, I know I can be bossy, but I cannot help it.”

Secondly, they are relational and emotional people. They genuinely love to socialize, as a couple and individually. Their shared experiences are full of relational and emotional input. Therefore, they have these bouts of feelings about, for, or with the people in their life. The wife commented, “My best friend is going through a divorce; I feel so sad for her. Moreover, my other friend just cannot get along with her teenager. It is so frustrating.” The husband did not show as much empathy for friends but strongly reacted to his sibling’s difficult life circumstances.”

Lastly, when questioned about their conflict, they were vague and agreed that they argued about everything. Upon deeper guided conversation, the couple discovered they needed to spend more time or emotions on their marriage. Reciprocally, all their concerns and time were spent with others, neglecting their intimacy.

Counseling Complaints and Goals

The couple had three mutually agreed-upon goals. 1. Communication. The husband said, “We need to communicate without exploding.” The wife responded, “Yes, we need to make more time for one another to talk.” 2. Life balance. The wife said, “He is always away from the house (work, friends, church, hobbies). And when we should have some alone or family time, we always spend it with other people.” 3. Routines for shared responsibilities (household chores, budget, planning). The husband complained, “Our house is always a wreck. She is always out spending money. I never know what the plan is for anything ever. I come home, and people are always at my house.”

Temperament Score and Affect

The husband and wife's major conflicts were two-fold. The first conflict was the lack of a same team mentality. As strong-willed people, they both need to feel in control over their life. When this value is violated, it creates tension within the relationship.

The couple noted that they are emotionally enthralled with their life circumstances. They are highly vocal and prone to anger outbursts when they feel controlled, not a priority, or neglected, and they feel down when lonely or rejected. Likewise, they are prone to outbursts of positivity when loved, accepted, pursued, and adored. There is a need and enjoyment when expressing love and affection (hugs, gifts, affirmation) to their partner, family, friends, and strangers. The wife said, "Yes, his facial expressions always tell me when he is up to something." The husband answered, "Anymore; she does not allow time for me to notice her facial expressions; she just blurts out her feelings."

The second was from a lack of spiritual, emotional, and physical connection. A sanguine temperament is capable of expressing a significant amount of love and affection. Likewise, the sanguine needs to receive a high frequency and quantity of love and affection. The wife said, "I love random hugs and kisses, spontaneous and planned romantic dates, or we could sit on our patio and talk about life." The husband responded, "You used to hug and kiss me spontaneously. You do not anymore. We used to go on elaborate dates and take awesome vacations."

As the couple unpacked those thoughts, they realized that they had unintentionally moved away from all those intimate practices since the children were born. After deeper discussion, they quickly realized they needed each other's time, attention, and affection. The husband jokingly said, "Our marriage is suffering because of those kids. We must

make time for one another and return to date nights.” They agreed that the most efficient way to meet their partner’s needs reciprocally was to make a plan. Working with the temperament-focused therapist, they decided to make the most out of their time intentionally. They used a strategy called “intentional dating.” Intentional dating can occur anywhere and only requires that partners are reciprocally intentional about being mindful, present, and in the moment with their spouse.

Temperament Needs

This couple agreed they needed to feel like a team to appease their innate desire to be in control. In marriage, the temperament-focused therapist guides two strong-willed people toward being a team who will share all the same goals. A same team mentality meets the need for connectedness through making decisions together.

Most importantly, this couple agreed they need many relational interactions, attention, and affection. They recognized that when their partner was not connecting with them or meeting their needs, they would meet them elsewhere. There was a selfish imbalance concerning these events (going out with friends, busy themselves at work, taking advantage of hobbies) of getting their needs met without their spouse.

Character of Christ

This couple exemplified the character of Christ to one another and others through their gift for creating and maintaining relationships. They exceeded their socialization skills and are quick to affirm people, strangers included. Outside the marriage, each wore a smile, encouraged others, and generously shared love.

Inside their marriage, things were out of control. Their conflict created impatience, anger, jealousy, and unkindness. After temperament-focused therapy, the

couple agreed to the goal of selflessly sacrificing their wants, needs, and desires to meet their partner's needs reciprocally. The most difficult obstacle was that of self-control. These two are emotionally driven and find it difficult to control their emotions. They agreed to share grace and patience while working on their emotional self-control skills.

Counseling Results

One year after the completion of the 8-week temperament-focused therapy, the couple came in for a check-in session. During this session, the couple reported doing well but needed to return to therapy to restructure strategies for intimacy. The couple described their 6 months of experience after counseling to be intimate. The wife said, "After therapy, he was much more intentional about showing me love and making time for me and the kids." The husband replied, "She started to express her needs for attention and would freely initiate nonsexual physical touch – which we both enjoy." They both agreed that their marriage was filled with affection, patience, and self-control during those six months.

The husband said, "The last six months have been rough. It seems like we slipped into our old patterns and are bickering more. Our conflict is not nearly what it was before therapy, but we are both concerned that it could return." After further investigation, many adjustments (new job, children's school changes, and additional extracurricular activities, sold house) had happened over the last six months. Their life became busy, and they were not making time to connect.

In therapy, the couple discussed three strategies, intentionally date, dream about and discuss plans (dates, vacations, adventures), and practice intentionally connecting daily. During this busy season of life, the couple decided to use an intentional date

strategy. That is to be intentional about connecting on the patio, at lunch, or in the evening while enjoying their television program. The husband said, “We used to comment how this is our date night when our favorite show came on. We made popcorn and snuggled on the couch.”

They gravitated toward discussing future strategies because it created a date plan and gave them something to look forward to. They used the planning time to discuss the following weekend’s plan and their big once-a-year vacation to Hawaii. The wife said, “I enjoy looking forward to our time together. It gives me something to remember when we have not connected.”

The intentional daily connecting strategy was discussed as a necessity. The couple recognized a need for attention and affection, and intimacy could not afford a week off from each other. There was an idea to connect when before leaving each other and when coming back together; throughout the day, they would flirt by text, try to eat dinner at the table together and spend a few minutes before bed talking, cuddling, and praying together.

Finally, the couple decided to return to therapy once a month during this busy season. The couple found therapeutic accountability to be beneficial to the relationship.

Conclusion

This couple requires a great deal of love and affection from each other. They efficiently communicated their needs for love and affection, but voicing their frustration would come across as anger and cruelty. Emoting came naturally, but emotional self-control took effort, tools, and practice. Emotional people are not prone to orderliness, habits, or planning, creating chaos at home. The family did not have positive routines in

place, and without a system, they would not make time to meet each other's needs. Therefore, they would seek to meet their needs outside of the marriage (friends, career, hobbies, children's activities).

Due to their innate spontaneity, the couple connected when they planned for spontaneity. The wife said, "We hate planning, but it was fun to plan the right time that allowed for a spontaneous adventure. My parents watch the kids one Saturday a month, and we decide the day of or maybe the day before what adventure we want to try." The couple struggled with intentional dating and intentional daily connecting due to their lack of planning skills. The monthly accountability sessions encourage the couple to balance connecting with others and prioritizing their marital intimacy.

Couple Six "Adjustments"

The couple attended three 8-week temperament-focused therapy sessions throughout the first seven years of marriage. They initially attended temperament-focused therapy as a premarital couple. During premarital treatment, they said, "We never argue, and we are completely in love." Temperament therapy revealed temperament differences and discussed possible changes after the honeymoon phase. The husband scored as phlegmatic (P) in inclusion, phlegmatic in control, and melancholy (M) in affection. The wife scored as a sanguine (G) in inclusion, choleric in control (C), and sanguine (G) in affection.

Approximately three years after marriage, the wife returned to temperament-focused therapy. She said, "He does not love me. I do not think that he ever loved me. How can someone be so deceptive for two years (during their courtship)? We used to have sex all the time. He wrote me poems, went on adventures with me, and spent hours

talking. He was romantic and socialized with our friends. Now he constantly complains about the household chores and sits around playing video games.” After a few sessions with the wife, the husband came in. He expressed discomfort with therapy and said, “I do not think this is necessary. No offense, but we can figure this out on our own.” The husband inconsistently and begrudgingly showed up for three out of the eight sessions. Temperament-focused therapy underlines differences and discusses strengths and weaknesses. During the review of the couple’s temperament scores, the husband said, “Oh, I know. This is all my fault. I have to be affectionate 24/7, and we must always be doing something.” The wife answered, “You don’t have to be affectionate 24/7, but once a week would be nice.” The couple discussed a wide range of strategies to repair intimacy. In the last session, the wife came alone and reported that “he is unwilling to try any strategies.” She reflected on her defeat and strongly doubted his intentions toward repairing intimacy (sex, dates, romance, adventures, socializing).

In the fifth year of marriage, the wife came to a session and reported that the union had fallen apart. “For the past two years, all he has done is go to work, play games, and demand that I keep a spotless house and stay home.” Over the past two years, she became determined to meet her needs (adventure, socializing, intimacy, and friendship). To meet her needs for love and affection, she goes out with friends and meets new people. She was involved in an emotional affair, social drinking, and staying out all night with friends. In two years, she went from being the Sunday school teacher to being someone who goes out all the time. She blamed her husband’s neglect for this lifestyle divergency and requested a divorce. Her divorce request shocked him, and he asked for marriage counseling. In the husband’s first session, he strongly presented his argument

against divorce. The wife stated, “I want a divorce because I am tired of being treated like a child, being emotionally and physically neglected. We have no children because you refuse to have them with me. I am living like a single person anyways!”

Relevant Background

This couple boasted about their healthy childhoods. Both sets of parents were still married and provided a loving and robust Christian home. Their parents’ Christianity led to their courtship at church that lasted until college. They attended the same college and were married at the age of 20. Careers began shortly after marriage. She chose sales, and he selected a specialized field of mechanics.

The premarital and newlywed phase of their relationship was healthy. Changes (maturity, adulthood responsibilities, revealing temperament traits) happened around the third year of marriage, and they did not adjust well. During their last 6-month check-in session, the couple boasted of continued career success and looked forward to their upcoming 6th wedding anniversary.

Identified Themes

Life circumstances, maturity, responsibilities, ability to adjust, and temperament traits influenced themes. Six themes influenced marital intimacy 1. honeymoon/newlywed phase of life, 2. mature adult life responsibilities brought about temperament weaknesses. 3. the inability to make adjustments, 4. temperament needs not met led to meeting one’s own needs, 5. the relational crisis brought about the fear of divorce, and 6. repair and renew. The couple reported that “our courtship and first year of marriage was perfect.” They enjoyed faith, hope, love, and a chemically induced honeymooner high that lasted until the first year.

The second phase of their marriage happened after the honeymoon was over. Career, maturity, and real-life adult responsibilities revealed their temperament traits (task-oriented versus relational orientation). The husband became driven by his profession and tasks and decreased intentionality toward relational (emotional, physical) intimacy. Although unsuccessful at getting her needs met, she voiced her needs, made demands, and finally resorted to threats and ultimatums. Stubborn and strong-willed, he downplayed her bids for affection. Although his efforts were minimum, he did not receive appreciation for his attempts. She felt rejected and neglected, and he felt disrespected and unappreciated. Both felt unloved and insignificant.

Their temperament needs remained unmet throughout the second and third years of marriage. The wife considered her husband's behavior to be neglectful and hurtful. She claimed that he purposely rejected her, creating feelings of relational loneliness. He claims that his efforts are discounted, creating marital hopelessness. Although both worked, she reported being constantly criticized about the household chores. He said, "Yeah, she is home more than me, so I expect the house to be picked up. I don't have much energy after 16 hours of working six days a week." She answered, "We do not need the money, and you choose to work those hours. I work and make more money than you."

Continual unmet needs support a marital drift. Intimately separated, they each selfishly focus on meeting their own needs. The wife's intense need to socialize led to her going out more. She associated with single friends who like going nightly, drinking, and meeting men. His need for respect created an overly critical attitude and angrily expressed about household chores, finances, and her socializing.

Their reciprocal selfishness and contempt for their partner quickly elevated their marital crisis. The major catastrophic marital blow came when she revealed her emotional affair, and he disclosed his secret financial accounts. They said their situation made them panic and motivated their need for God's grace, forgiveness, and temperament-focused marital strategies. The fear of relational loss brought them out of crisis and encouraged them toward repair and renewal.

Counseling Complaints and Goals

During premarital counseling, their goal was to do as their parents prompted and get premarital counseling. The wife said, "Premarital was useful. I remember thinking we were different, but those differences did not affect us because we were excited and in love."

Although the wife initiated the therapy and the husband's effort was light, they each had equal input concerning goals. The second round of treatment brought shared goals but diverse perspectives, 1. communication, 2. increased intimacy (spiritual, emotional, physical, sexual), 3. respect, and 4. freedom. The husband is asking for more communication about financial and social decisions. He said, "She spends money without talking to me about it. She never discusses her plans and always disappears. And she is always inviting people over." She responded, "He doesn't care to go anywhere, so why should he be included? I make my own money, so why should I ask permission where to spend it? He doesn't love me and wants to talk to me, so I talk to my family and friends."

The wife desires relational factors such as romance, spending time together (church, adventures, socializing), hugging, cuddling, and having more sex. Their view on increased intimacy was highly different. The husband expressed concerns about

togetherness by staying home, eating dinner, having a clean house, having a budget, and attending church.

Respect also held a different meaning for them. The husband thought, “A man should be respected and head of the household. Ultimately, what I say should go. I give her everything she wants (monetarily). I built her an office. I maintain her car. I sacrifice by working 16 hours a day. She can go anywhere she wants. All I want in return is a clean house, a budget, and my wife to be home at night during the week.”

Lastly, the wife expressed her need for freedom and accused him of being controlling. He reports that she always goes out, and he only asks for a few home days. She does not want his input and is expressing the need for independence. He refutes and says, “We are married. You cannot just do whatever you want.” She responds, “Yes, I can.” The husband wants reasonable expectations and boundaries on going out and spending money. The wife wants complete autonomy without limits.

While in crisis, the couple united for a primary common goal of reconciliation. The partners discussed their genuine desire to meet their partner’s temperament reciprocal needs, forgive each other, increase intimacy (spiritual, emotional, physical, sexual), share common goals (morals, values, financial), and create a brand-new relationship.

Temperament Score and Affect

The husband scored as a P – P – M. As a phlegmatic in inclusion, he identified with this temperament's analytical and detailed traits. He meekly related to social characteristics and strongly connected to task orientation. He described himself as “I prefer to work alone. Occasionally, I want to talk to my coworker, and I don’t mind

talking to someone at church. But for the most part, I prefer to do things alone or with my wife.” As a P in the control area, the husband acknowledges his stubbornness. He referenced a long line of undebatable decisions that he has made. He said, “No one can change my mind once it’s made up, not my parents, teachers, friends, or wife.” He continually noted his inability to be influenced.

As a melancholy in affection, he strongly connected with a need for respect and expressed rigid qualities (routines, timeliness, orderliness). He described himself as “I am OCD regarding some things. I like routines and orderliness. The house should be in order, my tools must be in their spot on my workbench, on time is 15 minutes early, and I am never late. I get up at the same time and go to bed at the same time. I like to eat at the same time every day.” After a few minutes of referencing a blend of strengths and weaknesses riddled with healthy habits and rigid routines, he included his significant need for loyalty and respect. He said, “I cannot take it when someone talks or acts disrespectfully.” And “I am the most loyal person you will ever meet. If you’re my friend, I got your back, and I know you got mine.” His outpour of traits is standard, with an M in affection. Unlike the relational qualities of his wife, his expression and reception of love look like a to-do list of tasks or acts of service.

The wife’s temperament scores were G – C – G. She related to choleric (C) in the control area. She said, “I do need a lot of control. I own my business and must be in charge. I have always liked being in charge, and I struggle with people who don’t know as much as me telling me what to do. I don’t think I boss or talk down to my husband, though.” He responded, “No, I wouldn’t like anyone bossing me around or talking down to me.”

She relates to the open, optimistic, people-loving, social person. She loves to meet new people, adventures with people and spends time with her friends. With her closest people, she needs relational and emotional love and affection. Her sanguine scores in the inclusion and affection area relate to marital intimacy. She struggles when her husband does not verbally express, love, or physically touch her (sexual and nonsexual). She fears being alone and discussed her feelings of depression when feeling isolated and lonely.

Temperament Needs

The husband identified his needs as being typical of the phlegmatic and melancholy. He needs peace in his relationships and environments, wants time to think and process, desires quiet and alone time (not socialize), prefers to follow routines, needs to be in control of his environment, requires autonomy, shows and expects acts of service, follows a to-do task list, necessitates respect and loyalty. From his wife, he needs acts of service, dedication, dependability, appreciation, and respect.

The wife needs attention to receive tremendous amounts of relational expressed affection (emotional, physical), to be social, to be affirmed, to go on adventures, to engage in relational communication, to be accepted, and to have many friends. From her husband, she needs an emotional and relational connection to hear "I love you," to feel loved, to receive sexual and nonsexual physical touch, to go on adventures, and to dream about the future.

Character of Christ

This couple genuinely followed their faith guidelines throughout their courtship and until their second year of marriage. To the outside world, they appeared to be following their spiritual directions. The husband was kind and hardworking at his place

of business. The wife was generous and friendly to her support staff and clientele. They went to church, volunteered and charitable events, taught Sunday school, were involved in their church's small group, and seemingly got along. Family members were deceived as they went to family dinners and celebrations regularly. The unkindness, impatience, and overall selfishness were publicly hidden. Eventually, their hurtful behaviors at home bled into their public lives. He became moody at work, stopped attending church, and did not show up at her family gatherings. She replaced church involvement with socializing with single friends.

After temperament-focused therapy, the couple realized they needed to return to their faith. Within their religion, they held relational rules, boundaries, safety, love, and other missing elements. The couple became patient, kind, and gracious using the biblical perspective of love. As Christ did for the church, the husband's behavior positively influenced marital intimacy by sacrificing his needs, desires, and wants. Her act of counting blessings, expressing appreciation, and showing respect and loyalty made him feel loved by her.

Counseling Results

The wife retained temperament strategies from their premarital temperament-focused therapy, and the husband reported that he did not remember much. The significant impact came in marriage year three when she came to sessions with pre-determined causation ideas of their marital drift. The wife tried to connect with her husband using temperament understanding and strategy. At first, she voiced her needs and had grace while he refused to meet her requests. The husband's stubbornness, while

giving him a few years of peace, cost him several years of intimacy, and he almost landed a divorce.

The fear of relational termination threatening their seventh year of marriage pressed the couple toward marital reciprocity. During the first session, the husband confessed that his compliancy and selfishness almost cost them their relationship. Although aware, he refused to prioritize her needs (affection, attention). Likewise, she denied him his needs (appreciation and respect). They prioritized each other's needs over their selfish wants and desires. They operated in grace while practicing reciprocity in meeting partners' needs. They vowed to forgive one another for five years of neglect, rejection and hurt.

During the final round of temperament-focused therapy, the couple shared equal motivation toward behavior changes and allowed their partner's desires to influence them. After a year of check-in, the couple came together with their newborn child. They reported that forgiveness, sacrificial service to meet their partner's needs, and grace were the key to building a new relationship. They each said their relationship was the best it had ever been. They requested to schedule accountability temperament-focused therapy sessions every six months.

Conclusion

Reciprocity and selflessness are crucial elements of relational intimacy. In 5 years, this couple went from the honeymoon phase to a marriage in crisis. They got caught up in selfishness and refused to meet each other's needs reciprocally. Desperate to meet their own needs, each went deeper into desire and further away from intimacy. This

family understands the impact on intimacy that meeting a partner's needs has but stopped practicing.

During the marital drift, the husband isolated himself, playing video games, working long shifts, and spending his short burst of social energy on his interests (church, gaming, fishing). His bitterness came out in expressions of control, unkindness, impatience, and criticism. Meanwhile, the wife threw herself into socializing. At first, she employed healthy socializing strategies (work, started a teens Bible study, women's small groups). After a few years of feeling rejected, her bitterness turned socializing into unhealthy outlets (social drinking with friends, singles parties, inappropriate relationships with a male).

Their shared faith was the foundation of a new relationship. Although they have badly injured one another emotionally, their faith moved them to forgiveness. Through Christ's forgiveness, they could let go of the past hurts. Free of painful burdens, the couple could practice the reciprocity of meeting their partner's needs. Each would sacrifice their needs, wants, and desires for their spouse. They continually held themselves to the Christ-like characteristics' of love (patience, kindness, forgiveness, grace). On their last six-month check-in, the wife reported that "occasionally, we find ourselves selfish.

Nevertheless, now we discuss, forgive, repair, and move forward in love. We are faithful to our church, Bible study, and strategies for meeting each other's needs." After she gives a few examples of meeting his needs, her husband cheerfully replies, "Yes, we spend a lot more time together. Furthermore, I surprise her with flowers, hugs, trips, and a few jokes now and again! We also plan on going out on dates once a week."

Couple Seven “Passive vs. Aggressive”

The couple’s temperament traits prompted opposing characteristics in assertiveness. The wife scored as a choleric (C) in inclusion, C in control, and sanguine (G) in affection. The wife is assertive and shows aggression toward accomplishing goals. She quickly accesses her emotions and utilizes them (frustration, anger) to motivate people.

The husband scored as phlegmatic (P) in each area. He exhibits passive, stubborn, and immovable attributes. He desires relational peace and environmental calmness. He says, “My motto is, don’t worry, be happy.” She replied, “And it drives me crazy. He doesn’t care about anything.”

Relevant Background

The couple has been married for seven years and has two children; this is their first marriage. They grew up in different states but were raised Catholic and still practicing Catholicism. They met online, and their one-year courtship and engagement were primarily long-distance dating. Although they talked daily, they only met in person four times before the wedding day. They exchanged visitation sites (every other visit to the partner’s house) and slept at different places during quarterly visits.

The husband, a business owner, admitted to being preoccupied with work. The wife was a behavioral therapist. After marriage, she took a career break to homeschool her children.

Identified Themes

There were many assumptions about the other due to spending little in-person time during courtship. Due to the husband's business success, his wife assumed he was a

“motivated go-getter.” Likewise, he believed she was a loving, kind, and gracious woman “because she was raised as a good Catholic girl.” Her “alpha traits” and his “go-with-the-flow attitude” quickly stirred frustrations within the relationship. She said, “I get things done, while he just lets everything go. He doesn’t take the intuitive for anything. Not at work, not at home, not as a father, husband, not dates, he gives me no attention, affection, or sex.” She continued a 20-minute rant listing his failures and disappointments. The husband was highly offended by her accusations, but he said, “It hurts me the most when you say I don’t love our kids. They are my life. They are the reason I work so hard.”

Six themes identified are 1. The wife has a controlling trait and angrily expresses demands for her needs (time, attention). 2. He refuses to be controlled or commanded. 3. He stubbornly and passively ignores her needs. 4. She is fully aware of her highly aggressive and disrespectful demands. 5. Forceful efforts have yet to motivate the husband toward behavior changes successfully. He will passively agree to demands for peace but will not follow through. 6. The husband is highly stubborn and strong-willed.

Ultimately, the couple’s temperament need for love and affection is not met by their partner. He feels disrespected, unappreciated, criticized, and not good enough for her. The wife feels insignificant, neglected, rejected, and not in control of her relationship.

Counseling Complaints and Goals

The couple’s goals, primarily driven by the wife, are 1. to improve communication, 2. to achieve a work-life balance, and 3. to increase intimacy.

The wife complains that her husband is passive, especially at home. She said, “He doesn’t care about the kids or me. He spends all his time at work and never anytime with

his family. All I want is a husband with a work-life balance. I ask him to do things with us, and he refuses to comply.” He responded, “I am home at least one day a week, and I take a late morning twice a week.” She refutes and claims, “he hasn’t spent a full day home in months.” She continued, “Not only are you never home, but you leave at 5AM, before the kids awake, and you come home when they are going to bed after 8PM, even on the weekends.” Furthermore, the wife complained that he never makes time for her, is constantly stonewalling, and starts work early and ends late.

There is a constant beratement of complaints and demands. The husband’s minor complaint is that he never receives any credit or appreciation for his hard work. The crux of his complaints stems from his wife’s controlling traits. He exclaims, “She wants to wear the pants in the family, and I don’t like that. No wonder I work all day!”

Temperament Score and Affect

The husband related to the phlegmatic common traits, possessing an immovable or stubborn attitude, being tough-minded, hard to offend, and emotionally stable. They are also known for their slow pace and detail orientation. As a business owner, he believes he is a resource to his employees but not a micromanager, works alongside and not above, and has a passive and peaceful management style. He expects his environment to accommodate his passive and relaxed attitude. He said, “I want everything to go smoothly and peacefully at work. When there is a problem, I handle it—no big deal. At the end of the day, I just want to come home and see my kids, have peace, and relax. I don’t require anything from her (his wife).”

The wife has the combined temperament traits of choleric (strong-willed, controlling) and sanguine (emotionally and physically needy). She related with intense

expressiveness of each attribute. Choleric strengths are being a natural leader, making many decisions, directing people, setting and achieving goals, and being competitive. The weaknesses include expressing anger to motivate people, using people as a means, and having high, unrealistic expectations for self and others.

Temperament Needs

The husband's phlegmatic temperament needs to be respected, have complete autonomy, receive appreciation, have peace in his home, and have harmony in his relationships. The husband expressed that his marital temperament needs are to "feel free from demands, control, and not to be ridiculed. All I want is peace when I get home."

The wife needs to receive much love, be in control, and feel like she is a priority. The wife's choleric traits produce a need to be in complete control over her life. Simultaneously, her sanguine affection temperament generates a strong desire to receive love, attention, and affection. Her need for control and affection is emotionally expressed through demands and threats. She said, "I need a man to show me he loves me. A real man makes love to his wife. Takes their wife out for romance. A real man is a father to his children and makes time for them. A real man doesn't punish his family by neglecting and ignoring them."

Character of Christ

As Catholics, the couple shared spiritual and core values. These shared morals were evident in their career, with colleagues, family members, friends, and at church. However, they were not practicing a Christ-like character with their spouse. Their temperament differences and trait weaknesses (strong will, stubbornness, and inability to submit) impeded their intimacy.

They held off loving each other as Christ loves until their marriage, life, and reputation were vulnerable to ruin. The destructive path of selfishness almost devastated a husband, wife, and children. The husband was forced into intentional family involvement. After his willingness to be a godly husband and father, his wife's needs were met, and she was willing to be a godly wife.

Forgiveness allowed grace to rescued seven years of marital decay. Reciprocal selfless and sacrificial service permitted the couple to ascertain trust. With their faith-driving behaviors and several passing months, the couple regained enough relational courage to be open and vulnerable. Vulnerability (open, honest, but grace-filled communication) provided an opportunity to establish intimacy. The husband quoted a mixed version of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. He said, "Love is patient, kind, forgiving, gracious. We don't keep records of wrongdoings anymore. She doesn't act jealous or hateful. And we put up with each other when there is stress or misunderstandings." She agreed, adding, "He is doing everything I have been asking, and he seems sincere and genuinely caring."

Counseling Results

After the couple's eight consecutive weeks of temperament-focused therapy, they continued once-a-month check-ins. Although they had an in-depth understanding of their partner's temperament, they refused to change their behavior. She still made demands, called him names, and criticized him. He continued to work long hours and to be uninvolved in family life. Each monthly check-in encouraged the therapist to increase activities that produced connectivity (romantic dates, lunch dates, dinner together, family time, church time, talking, hugging) and decrease hurtful behaviors (criticism, disrespect,

threats, stonewalling, absenteeism). Monthly check-ins were consistent, with no increase in connectivity nor a decrease in malicious behaviors.

Approximately two years after the couple's last check-in session, the wife scheduled an appointment with her husband. At the beginning of the session, he said, "My wife is making me come in here because I was having an affair. Although the affair is over, she threatens to take my children and publicly humiliate me unless I do what she wants." As a family of Catholicism, parents from both sides of the family were now involved. The husband was being belittled by his in-laws and lectured by his parents and siblings. He admitted the affair was wrong and sinful but blamed it on his wife's emotional abuse. He said, "My wife acts like the man in our relationship. She is controlling and pushing me constantly. All she does is put me down and criticize me. I did not know that I was marrying a woman who is so vicious."

The husband agreed to a list of his wife's demands. The list consisted of accountability measures (leave for work at 9 am and be home by 5 pm, location tracking, facetime at any time, passwords to all social and business accounts) and connection (take me on one date a week, take family vacations three times a year, spend the weekends with your family, always eat dinner together, to have sex once a week). Emotionally void, he was putting forth an effort to meet demands. His attitude, tone, and demeanor illustrated a low, depressed mood. His wife criticized his mood and demanded that he "cheer up."

The temperament-focused therapist encouraged the husband to change his mindset from feelings of being forced to that of a willing spirit (mood). The husband agreed to work on changing his focus. He said, "I will tell myself I don't have to love my

wife. I get to love her.” Approximately six months after employing this strategy, the couple reported increased connectivity and that their relationship was better than before. The wife was not as critical, and the husband was intentional with his time. They were reciprocally making an effort toward intimacy. They reported that their marriage was doing “amazingly at their last one-year check-in.” Arguments have been reduced, and they were repaired quickly. He stopped stonewalling and started being present. She intentionally expressed appreciation and was kind, considerate, and respectful when correcting.

Conclusion

Reciprocity and extreme behavior changes made all the difference in terms of intimacy. At a marital low, the couple was daily actualizing their temperament weaknesses. They practiced intentionality toward meeting their partner’s needs during their high points. Although feeling forced and resentful initially, he showed her the love, attention, and affection she needed. She showed him the grace, kindness, and respect he needed to meet her temperament needs.

Couple Eight “Spiritual Dilemma”

This couple has a spiritual dilemma attacking their core value system. At the time of therapy, the wife was a practicing Christian and strongly wanted to provide their children with a Christian environment. She desires spiritual reciprocity with her husband and to share faith with their children. Although agnostic, the husband soothed his wife’s desires by being religiously affable. Begrudgingly, he went to church and made allowances for traditional ceremonial prayers. To his credit, he showed honor and

respect by reframing non-Christian entertainment (movies and music) in his family's presents.

Relevant Background

They were not religious during their two-year courtship. They met through an online dating service during the finalization stages of the divorce process from prior marriages. After several months of dating, the wife moved her son and daughter into a home where he and his son reside. After a two-year engagement, they were married. Shortly after marriage, the wife realized her spiritual needs were unmet. After discussion, they executed a plan where she could practice her faith (church, prayer, worship music, reading scripture), and he would “go with the flow” and continue religious agnosticism.

This couple’s unique dynamic was that, except for spirituality, they genuinely met each other’s needs. They were always together as a family, and there was harmony between the stepparents and stepsiblings. There was harmony with many core value elements such as co-parenting (discipline, rewards, extrafollicular activities), household chores (laundry, dishes), and the budget. Major intimate factors like affection, affirmation, and appreciation were reciprocated and abundant between them. However, these intimate influences decreased as the spiritual conflicts increased.

As the conflict increased, their marital intimacy decreased. The husband expressed that his sense of morality should be good enough. He said, “I don’t cheat, do drugs, go out to clubs, and I am not abusive; I don’t yell or hit anyone.” She replied, “You are easily angered. You constantly listen to music that talks about sex and violence. And you were inappropriately flirting with women and watching pornography at the beginning of our relationship.” Although they had a rough courtship, the past two years

of marriage were positive, spirituality aside. She said, “To clarify, I found out about the porn a few months before we were married (2 years before therapy), and talking to women stopped after a few months of us moving in. For the last two years, we primarily argue over his entertainment choices. I am scared because those evil influences (entertainment) could lead him back into pornography and cheating.”

This couple reported being connected in the intimate areas of emotional, intellectual, (non)sexual, physical touch, and affability. However, their differences in values, morals, and religion were straining those relational categories.

Identified Themes

There were four identified themes: 1. The wife's bids for religious involvement (church, prayer, reading scripture, listening to Christian music) morphed into demands. 2. As her demands increased, so did his aggressive rejection of spirituality. 3. At the root of the conflict were his stubbornness and her strong-will demands. She continually expressed her need for spirituality, and he would refute her bids and increase his hedonistic entertainment. 4. The conflict was causing their affability to spiral.

Counseling Complaints and Goals

The couple agreed upon three counseling goals: 1. to understand and respect each other, 2. to have better communication, and 3. to increase their intimacy.

The wife's three complaints are 1. he has broken his premarital religious commitment, 2. he is displaying negative behaviors (anger and untrustworthiness), and 3. he is inconsiderate of her thoughts and feelings. To summarize his complaints, the husband said, “I don't want to be controlled. I am a grown man and should be able to do what I want. Why do I have to go to church and listen to religious music all the time? I

don't like to pray in front of people. She knew I was like this before we were married. She is trying to make me change who I am."

Temperament Score and Affect

The husband scored as a melancholy (M) in inclusion, a phlegmatic (P) in control, and a supine (S) in affection. The husband related to the M temperament's introversion, private, and analytical parts. As a musician, he described himself as a creative overthinker. He needs no socialization from the people outside his inner circle and requires quiet and alone time to recharge. In the control area, he will often appear courteous and passive, but he is independent and not easily influenced. Additionally, he does not want to be demanded and angrily reacts when pushed.

As a supine in affection, the husband related to being a certain way (nonconfrontational, a server [people pleaser], easily offended, and a need for appreciation) with his closest people (wife, children, best friends). These secretive behaviors cause his wife to be suspicious and doubt his trustworthiness. His need for her affirmation, approval, and appreciation is tied to his feelings of belonging and significance. Although he wants to please his wife, he does not want to give up his secular entertainment. His need to please and nonconfrontational nature leads to hiding behaviors (pornography, drinking, cursing, worldly entertainment) that would be met with disapproval.

The wife scored as a choleric (C) in inclusion, C in control, and M in affection. Choleric temperament is known to have a high need for control. She identified with the controlling traits and discussed her career benefits from her ability to make decisions confidently. She needs to have a sense of being in control over her environment and the

people within her environment. She scored as melancholy in affection and identified with its task-oriented qualities. She expresses and receives love through tasks (to-do-list, chores), dependability, orderliness, discipline, loyalty, respect, and honesty. She said, “I work hard and expect those around me to work as hard as I do. I like routines and my office and house to be orderly. My faith is important to me. I cannot always trust that my husband will do the right thing. But if he were a Christian, I would feel more confident that he would be loyal and trustworthy.”

Temperament Needs

The husband’s primary temperament need was perceived autonomy and appreciation. He desired to feel free from being controlled. Whenever criticism or demands were made, the husband would feel less than or not good enough. As a melancholy in inclusion, the husband needs to be free from socializing and desires time to think and process. As phlegmatic in control, the husband needs to feel free to make decisions, that the workload is equal, and that there is peace.

The difficulty for the husband is the enmeshment of his home life and work life. He works with his wife and is supine in affection. This means that he can display supine traits at work. A supine has a servant’s heart and puts others before themselves. He desires to please those he serves and needs affirmation and appreciation for his services. The husband’s sense of relational belonging and significance is related to his wife’s appreciation, affirmation, and happiness.

The wife needs to feel in control and prefers that her closest people (husband) show love through tasks. She can feel neglected, redetected, or angry when her goals are not being met, and her partner is not meeting her need for acts of service. Her

temperament's weakness is that people can often become a means to an end. Naturally, the wife's temperament pushes her to be highly motivated toward goals and make demands on those around her. She wants to micromanage to ensure that tasks are done as she wishes.

Character of Christ

The husband is involved, loving, compassionate, and caring as a spouse and parent. He financially, emotionally, and physically contributes to the household. He is a hardworking and honest business owner. He claims that his altruistic behavior and good enough morals cover relational needs. During therapy, he confessed that he struggles with occasional porn use, cursing, anger outbursts, drinking alcohol, and non-Christian entertainment.

The wife admits that she struggles with anger outbursts and making demands. She claims this husbandly beratement is righteous because she desires a faith-based home. Her husband reports that she is a good and godly wife and mother. She leads the home in religious practices such as attending church, praying, reading scripture, worshiping, and Christian-acceptable entertainment. She is an involved partner and mother and fully invests her intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual energy into her family.

The couple presents in a genuine but humble manner. Although missing spiritual engagement, the couple considers themselves good and moral people. Volunteering at church functions, helping neighbors, and sacrificing their time to coach and mentor was among the routine. Outside of the home, they appeared to be altruistic.

Counseling Results

After eight weeks of temperament therapy, the couple understood that freedom of choice was essential to their relationship. The wife's demands for fulfilled religious traditions and the husband's spiritual rebellion perpetuated the cycle of disharmony. The wife's solution to her husband's selfish and hurtful behavior was criticism. Rejected conversion efforts increased her badgering and critiquing. Although his stubbornness withstood all her forces, their intimacy suffered immensely.

In the fifth week of therapy, the couple learned about behavior motivation. Together the partners recognized the importance of their need for freedom of choice. The wife decided to change her demanding behavior and relinquish control over God. Through therapy, she acknowledged that she could not beat him into submission. Instead, a personal conviction was his only path to changed heart and behavior. They agreed that he would say at least one prayer a day if she stopped pressuring him. He expressed relief and seemed thrilled with this decision. On week eight of therapy, the husband reported feeling guilty. "Without her nagging me, I felt guilty about not leading my family in faith. I decided to be the one to lead prayers, go to church, and read a daily devotional."

At their one-month check-up, the couple reported some hiccups along the way. They had slipped into old habits. He claims that stress at work caused him to drink and contributed to his anger. She also blamed his anxiety as a contributor to his religious backsliding and her need to hold him accountable. She said, "We are right back where we started from. I know he is stressed about work, but he is back at old habits instead of going to God. He started drinking again. His music playlist is full of cursing and sexual lyrics. I noticed him checking out inappropriate women on social media. I don't think I

can handle this anymore.” The husband severely downplayed his wife’s claims but admitted that he needed to return to his morning prayer and devotional routine.

Over the next several months of check-ins, the couple reported that things between them were good, and most of their hurtful behaviors had been minimized. The wife said, “He has been doing his morning God time and even met some Christian friends. He’ll have an occasional drink, but that’s ok.” He agreed and added, “She hasn’t nagged me as much anymore. We’ve been expressing appreciation and making time for dates. Every week's dates would be nice, but we’re too busy. However, we make time daily to talk and connect.”

At the year check-up, the couple announced that their relationship was great. The husband was practicing a Christian lifestyle which eased the wife’s fears. They were highly involved in their church. The wife expressed concerns about alcohol and entertainment vulgarity but was mainly satisfied.

Two years after therapy, the couple did a telehealth check-up with the temperament-focused therapist. A minor temperament issue was revealed during the conversation. The wife's demands changed from religious ones to other life issues. The therapist gently reminded the couple about their temperament struggles in the control area. Heeding the reminder, they decided on a communication plan to ease conflict and integrate gentleness, patience, and feelings of partnership. She would replace forceful demands with a gentle and kind bid for affection. She said, “Ok, so I should ask whether you would mind doing this for me. And not say, you need to do this for me now!”

Conclusion

This couple was convinced their intimacy issue was spiritual. Although their differing lifestyles created a marital rift, the role of temperament needs was the root issue. The wife's strong will and need to control her life, environment, and the people in her life resulted in her making demands and criticisms. The husband's strong will and stubbornness influenced his rebellious attitude toward her requests. His need for freedom of choice and her need for control perpetuated vicious cycles.

She said, "It was when I let go and let God that I saw a change in him. But letting go was the most difficult thing that I have ever done. I do appreciate all his hard work and efforts. And I tell him how much I appreciate him." He joked, "Yes, she still likes to tell me what to do sometimes, but, for the most part, she makes requests, and I always oblige. Occasionally, she will even throw a compliment my way." Their responses represent that their temperament's communication needs were being met. She felt control and relational security when she refrained from making demands. He received appreciation, peace, and harmony at home when he transformed his behaviors.

Couple Nine "Performers"

On the surface, the failure that put this marriage on the brink of divorce seemed to be their focus on each other's performances. The wife was highly critical of household chores. Dishes needed to be specifically stacked, the laundry's folding required accuracy, vacuuming included a three-phase process, there was an exact science to counter, toilets, and floor cleaning, and children's lunch preparation was particularized. She kept a giant whiteboard with the household maintenance progress (bug spraying, mowing, changing air filters) and due dates. She continually made demands without consideration of his thoughts or feelings.

The husband was continually asking for sexual attention. He demanded sexual interaction (sexual touching, groping, intercourse). At every opportunity, he would sexually grab and grope her without consideration for her feelings. She described his asking as a continual nagging or pestering. He would ask for a sexual interaction three or four times daily. Before intercourse, he pleads for specific actions or positioning. He went to an extreme to create a sexual menu containing all his fantasies. During intercourse, he would critique his wife's performance, asking her to position herself in ways that were uncomfortable for her but appealing to him. His badgering persists, and he does not consider her thoughts and feelings about their sex life.

Relevant Background

The couple dated during high school and married shortly afterward. Both of their parents were still married and reportedly provided a good life—the couple remanence about having a positive and healthy childhood and appropriate parental role modeling. The wife's mom was overly tidy and extremely strict with her children's cleaning habits. The wife recalled her mom being particular in how she cleaned and was intensely critical if chore completion did not meet her excessively high standards. She joked, "My high standards are high, but they pale in comparison to my mom's."

The husband recalled growing up in a Christian environment and recanting about his parent's dedication to their church. Although there was much Christian influence, his parents did not discuss sex. He was left to discover sex independently. Although the wife had conviction about it, they were having sex throughout their courtship. She remarked, "We lived in different cities. So, he would continue to ask for sexual stuff on the rare occasion that we could hang out." When he was 12, his older brother introduced him to

pornography. For the past 16 years, all his information and ideas about sex were severally influenced by pornography. He and his wife had many conversations about pornography and decided early in the relationship that there was no place for it.

Throughout their marriage, they practice many traditional family routines. They make a point to be involved in their church and prioritize it. They serve in and attend weekly worship services and host a small group at their house. Although the wife desires the husband to be more involved at home, they agree on family time and parenting styles. Praying before each meal, they routinely eat breakfast and dinner together. The husband is their sons' sports coach. The wife attends every game and volunteers as the team mom. They plan regular fun day trips and summer vacations and try to connect daily as a family. The family (parents and children) are always together and do not socialize much outside the regular family routines (sports, church, school).

Identified Themes

There were six themes identified. 1) They each strongly desired for their needs to be met by their spouse. 2) The couple was demanding and critical of one another when expressing needs. 3) When needs were unmet, she would ridicule and scold him, and he would nag and badger her. 4) Love, grace, patience, and kindness were present throughout the marriage, but those characteristics would waver when needs were unmet. 5) They would profess that they practice reciprocity (an equal effort to meet spousal needs) and altruism (sacrificing one's needs for the sake of others' well-being). However, the therapist reports a lack of selflessness and bitterness toward spousal bids. 6) The couple experienced childhood trauma that flooded their marriage with discord.

Counseling Complaints and Goals

The wife's goal is to improve communication and to understand each other's perspective. She claims he never listens to her and disappears when it is time to help. She said, "He never helps, and when he does attempt, he leaves things undone and incomplete. He is always disappearing in the middle of tasks." She believes he has attention deficit disorder (ADD) and does not consider or care about her because he is unhelpful. She gave specific examples of him inaccurately making the children's lunches and only doing 1 of 3 of the levels of vacuuming the bathroom.

The husband's goal was to improve their sex life. He admitted to her claims of disappearing to the backyard during chore time (cleaning after dinner, kids' bedtime routine). His only concern was their sex life. He said, "I will do whatever cooking and cleaning and all of that, but I need more than three times a week for sex." She interjected to remind him that three times a week was intercourse, but nagging, requesting, and sexual touching happened many times daily.

Temperament Score and Affect

The husband scored as phlegmatic (P) in inclusion, melancholy (M) in control, and P in affection. He related to the P in inclusion as having the desire to socialize and to do tasks. On the job, he prefers a pattern of functions, socializing tasks, and socializing. As a team leader, his circumstances allowed him to do so. His wife spoke up and pointed out that she saw a similar pattern at home.

He related the need for freedom of choice to an M in control. He also recognized that he needs to feel competent and in control of tasks, decisions, and life choices. This need for independence and competence created distress when his wife made demands and criticisms.

The P in affection accounts for some of his wife's complaints. His affection temperament includes observing relationships, moving from social situations to doing a task, desiring peace in the home, and having low energy. She described him as constantly being distracted and uninvolved. His wife translated this by saying, "He always plays video games and avoids helping. At home, he rarely interacts with the children; when it is time to work, he disappears. He will be there momentarily, and when he knows I need him, he goes outside to tinker with his truck. The only attention I get is sexual." Upon hearing this, his countenance became low, but he agreed.

The wife scored as melancholy (M) in inclusion, phlegmatic (P) in control, and sanguine (G) in affection. She agreed to her temperament results and related to each temperament trait. As an M in inclusion, she is very logical and orderly, needs time to process, and prefers to have strategies for life situations. As a P in control, she is detailed oriented and can appear to go with the flow but likes to be in control of circumstances that she deems necessary. She commented about her stubbornness, saying, "I listen to everyone and am amiable. Everyone has a short time frame to convince me of change when making decisions, but I am not caving once I decide."

She is a G and admits her great need for attention and affection in the affection area. She related her emotional and relational perspective with her close people (husband, children, family, and friends). Although it is primarily sexually motivated, her husband regularly shows attention and affection. She continually asks for nonsexual affection and attention but reports that he rarely meets that nonsexual physical touch need. She said, "Even when he says he isn't being sexual, I know that is what he wants. He can't even

hug me without grouping me. His kisses can't ever be innocent or kind. They're always sexually motivated."

Her inclusion and control areas are affecting her home life. She desires an orderly household. Therefore, she has high cleanliness expectations and makes intense demands. Her ability to work at a slow pace and to notice details wear on her husband. Most of the time, his unacceptable standard of cleanliness is highly criticized. The wife has self-control in environments outside of the home. In her affection area, she is highly emotional and admittedly has regular anger outbursts. She said, "Yes, I express my emotions regularly. I do share my anger too easily with my husband. But I also express my happiness and celebrate loudly too."

Temperament Needs

The husband needs to have peace and autonomy and to feel appreciated. He also needs a balance of time to do tasks and socialize. He needs to feel appreciated and autonomous from work, family, and friends; reportedly, his outside-the-home needs are fulfilled.

He needs peace, independence, and appreciation from his wife. At home, the phlegmatic temperament needs peace. The husband wants his house to be full of peace. He reports that she rarely offers peace, and the majority offers hypercriticism and strong emotions. He said, "Even when she isn't yelling at me for a wrongdoing, she is expressively upset about something else." His need for autonomy creates a rebellious attitude toward demands. About her criticism of his cleaning abilities, he said, "I am not a child, and I will not be degraded." Through therapeutic discussions, the husband revealed that he wants to please his wife. He said, "I feel like a failure. Nothing I do will ever

please her. Why am I ever here? I should leave. Why stay if I am only going to upset and disappoint her.” Her criticism made him question his sense of belonging and spousal significance.

The wife has a fulfilling job and a supportive family. Outside of her husband’s failures, she reports meeting all her nonmarital needs. From her husband, she needs cooperation, involvement (with chores and children), lots of attention (communication, dates, romance), and affection (nonsexual touching, cuddles, hugs). Unless it is family duties (baseball, karate, school activities), they do not spend time together, leaving her feeling neglected and rejected.

The wife’s level of intimacy was dwindling due to her feelings of not being good enough. She said, “He critiques my body. He hates the way I look. I must pose certain ways or do things sexually, or I am afraid he will leave me. He controls me by threatening to leave if I don’t engage in sex on his terms and his timeline.” He responded, “Yes, I have threatened to leave. Wouldn’t it be better to be with someone who matches my sexual desire?” Tearfully she says, “No, you have a sex addiction, and no one could live up to your high sex expectations.”

Character of Christ

This family regularly participated in religious activities. They appeared to be kind, giving, and loving at church, on the sports field, and at work. At home, there were many selfless behaviors and reciprocity of meeting needs. The couple professed to love one another, and outside of chores and sex, they showed love in 1 Corinthians 13 way. Generally, they were patient, kind, and giving to their colleagues, fellow church members, friends, family, and children.

Their childhood brokenness impaired their ability to be loving toward each other. The wife's unforgiveness toward her mother's lack of protection and harshness in words and deeds lashes out toward her husband. His shackles bond him to his 12-year-old self, abused through pornography exposure. Together they would torment the other, transferring all that shame, pain, and abuse to their spouse. Their dissatisfaction demanded more (sexual experiences, chore perfection) from their spouse. Demands for unreasonably high expectations lead to bitterness, resentment, and disdain.

Through therapy, the couple discovered their need for inner healing. The husband needed to be unshackled from his sexual sin, and she needed healing from her parental abuse. His inner healing led to a sexually moral perspective, providing him sexual satisfaction. Recovery made way for understanding the biblical purpose of sex (selflessness, spousal bonding, bearing children, increasing intimacy) and set him free from sexual sin. Her inner healing allowed her to forgive her parents as Christ forgave her. She became healed from shame, no self-worth, and low self-esteem. She recognized that her criticism of his performance came from her mom's criticism. She understands that performance and self-worth are unrelated. Discernment released her from having unreasonably high expectations for her husband.

Counseling Results

This couple had an ongoing couple and individual sessions for a year. They understood that their desires could not be satisfied because dissatisfaction was due to childhood wounds, and their spouse could never fulfill this void. Counseling moved from couples' therapy to individuals to heal childhood wounds. Childhood wounds (her

mother's abusiveness and pornography exposure) were being transferred to unreasonable expectations (chore perfection, sexual experiences) for their traumas.

The couple's inner healing allowed for a satisfaction capability. Individual inner healing terminated the unreasonable partner's expectations. They made reasonable requests and met each other's needs, free from childhood trauma. Their demands for sexual experiences and chore perfections were dissolved and allowed for their need for autonomy.

His biblical perspective on sex ended sexual addiction prohibited continual lust and permitted him to be sexually satisfied. He said, "I am so happy to be free from always thinking about how I can get sex. I used to think that if I just did the dishes or cleaned the bathroom correctly, I could get sex." His biblical perspective unbound his wife from sexual demands and feeling judged on looks and sexual performance. He could appreciate unsexual experiences with his wife and genuinely love all of her. The husband's behavior allowed her to feel loved, and sex became a point of intimacy rather than a selfish, lustful demand.

Her parental forgiveness allowed her to break her perfectionism enslavement. Inner healing diminished her criticism and chore perfectionism. She was able to genuinely affirm, appreciate, and respect her husband. Her genuine affirmations made him feel loved and established his sense of belonging and significance.

After a year of therapy, the couple had a 6-month check-in session. The couple revealed that life was hectic, but it was good. Occasionally, they had fallen into making performance demands but used therapeutic strategies to talk it over and repair the relationship. They reported being happy, peaceful, and fulfilled.

Conclusion

Selflessly, the couple recognized their need for inner healing from childhood trauma. Changed behaviors came slowly and created marital challenges along the way. Amid the eight months of individual healing therapy, the couple went through a separation and continually threatened divorce. However, understanding bought grace while they individually worked through their trauma.

Inner healing made room for reasonable requests of needs. The couple reciprocally replaced their unreasonable trauma-based demands with reasonable expectations. The couple found ease and felt free to reciprocally sacrifice their selfish needs to meet each other's needs once unshackled from their childhood trauma.

There were five therapeutic keys for this couple. Individual inner healing was the first step. There was a great deal of grace shared throughout the personal inner healing process. They did not respond well to demands but were open to kind and reasonable requests. Criticism was like a disease to the relationship; connection and affirmation were the cure. The couple formed a biblical perspective on worthiness and sex that enabled genuine intimacy.

Couple Ten "Parenting Styles"

The couple's opposing parenting styles create tension and conflict between them. The wife is considered to have an authoritarian parenting style, and the husband has a permissive parenting style. Their opposing ideas seep into other home lifestyle areas, such as household chores, budgeting, timeliness, and routines. The wife believes that kids should follow the rules. Household chores and discipline are more important than a child's feelings. Meanwhile, the husband will agree to house rules but will not reinforce

them. He believes parents should not interfere often, and the consequences are unnecessary.

Relevant Background

This couple is a blended family; the wife married once, and the husband married twice. She has two children from her previous marriage: a 5-year-old daughter and a 3-year-old son. From his first marriage, he has a 17-year-old daughter and a 15-year-old son; from his second marriage, he has a 4-year-old daughter. They have full custody of his 4-year-old daughter. She has majority custody of her two children, and his two teens spend most of their time with their biological mother, visiting their father once a month. The family dynamic usually consists of the husband and wife, her two children, and his youngest daughter. They manage well when all the children are present, but it can be overwhelming with 5 children. Most issues are between her 5-year-old and his 4-year-old. The parents report that the children get along well and have only minor sibling-type rivalry.

The conflict is that the parents cannot get on the same page with parenting. They stated they desire to share the same values (faith, finances, parenting). Mom expects everyone to respect the same rules, routines, discipline, and boundaries. She believes that everyone should know what the rules are and what the consequences are for breaking the rules. Dad agrees but will not discipline any children and refuses to enforce the rules. When they got married 6 months ago, they agreed that the biological parent should be the one to discipline their biological child. The stepparent should focus on connecting and bonding with their stepchild.

She feels that parenting life has been unfair because he is not enforcing the rules. She said, "I tell my child that she cannot have her tablet at the table, and he allows his child all access. I have bedtime routines and rules, which go to dinner, a bath, and I lay down in their bed and reading two books, and then lights out. Meanwhile, he allows her to watch movies after their bath, and my childing is glaring at me, saying this isn't fair." He replied, "Well, you know I only give her the tablet while she is getting used to a new bed so she will fall asleep. She has such a difficult time going to bed on time." She responds, "This is what I am talking about. It's not just the nighttime stuff, but you always make excuses for her behavior. You refuse to discipline her, and if she whines about anything at all, you just give in and do what she wants." He replies, "You don't understand. She used to sleep with me, and she was scared. It has only been the two of us for so long. Her mom has abandoned her. I refuse to allow you to single her out. She is only 4."

They have fundamentally different ideas and envision parenting differently. The husband feels ashamed and depressed that his daughter was abandoned by her biological mother. The wife is trying to connect and be a positive role model for his daughter. She firmly believes that a child is healthier when established routines, especially bed and nap times, are enforced. Since he has raised two daughters, he claims to have more experience and knows better. "I have been there and done that. It is better for everyone to calm down and to not worry as much. She is a first-time mom with two small children, and she overreacts."

Identified Themes

There were several identified themes: 1) The couple felt disconnected over the continual parenting conflict. 2) The wife felt disrespected, unappreciated, and like she was made out to be the bad guy. 3) He was dealing with guilt from being married 3 times and putting his children through many difficulties. 4) The couple's household flow and chores expectations were vastly different.

Counseling Complaints and Goals

The wife's complaint was that she wanted them to enforce rules together and did not want to do this alone. She wanted him to be more involved with routines, household chores, and discipline. He complained that she was too strict on his child and came across as aggressive. There was a fear that she would push his child away by taking sides with her children.

They aimed to develop a household plan that created a harmonious flow and a peaceful environment. They desired to find a balance between routines, chores, and discipline.

Temperament Score and Affect

The husband scored as phlegmatic (P) in inclusion and affection and as a supine (S) in control. As a phlegmatic in inclusion and affection, he related to the passive, peaceful, and not caring mindset. He said, "I am a go with the flow kind of guy. Not much upsets me. I don't have too many worries. Everything works out in the end." As a supine in control, he related to his desire not to make decisions and admitted avoiding conflict. However, he did not relate to the people-pleasing or servant-heart aspects of the supine.

The wife scored as melancholy (M) in inclusion and control and a sanguine (G) in affection. She related to M's need for order, routine, independence, and introverted traits. She said, "I like things to be neat, tidy, and I love routines. Before we were married, I had the same morning and evening routine and occasionally would mix it up a little on the weekends. Even with two children, my house was always neat and clean, and I would never go to bed with dishes in the sink." As a sanguine, she confessed that she needed much emotional and physical input from her husband. She said, "I need to feel loved. I love it when he talks to me about his day, hugs and kisses me, and I need lots of cuddles and affirmation." She has few friends, and most of her love and affection input is from her husband.

Temperament Needs

The husband's P temperament needs peace. His S temperament needs to be free from making decisions and avoids conflict. He had no complaints about his career or anything outside the family dynamics. From his wife, he requests peace and sex. He said, "I am very laid back. So, when I come home, I only want things to be peaceful. I don't mind helping around the house, but I don't want any conflict or tension. I like to just chill, and I like it when everyone is just chilling. Maybe that's why I got into the habit of giving my daughter the tablet."

The wife reports that everything in her career is promising. At home, her M temperament needs order, routine, and discipline. She wants her children to be responsible and to perform chores appropriately. Her G temperament is relationally driven and needs relational times with the family. She wants to have regular routines with her children and spend time doing family activities like eating together, having fun

outside, playing board games, and reading books. She balances her opposing temperament traits by having routines and chores and spending time having fun and being relational.

Character of Christ

This couple has moral characteristics that impact their dynamic. Overall, they were loving, patient, and kind. They chose to love through disagreements and did not allow conflict to affect their spiritual, emotional, or physical intimacy. Although they disagreed, they exhibited self-control throughout their conflicts. The wife would make gently make requests and would clearly state her expectations. The husband passively and patiently responds. Naturally, there were a few instances where emotions drove them apart, but they always came together to repair the relationship.

Counseling Results

This couple participated in 8 sessions of temperament-focused therapy. They quickly understood their temperament, resulting in support for their strengths, weaknesses, and needs. This understanding allowed for grace while negotiating a plan for a balanced flow for their home. The adjustments from meshing their lives together were creating stress and conflict.

This couple was successful because they were willing to utilize temperament and reciprocity principles. Before therapy, an individualized plan was followed without consideration for each other's needs, wants, or desires. Therefore, neither person was getting their needs met. He needed peace and to be without conflict, and she needed order and relational connection.

Throughout therapy, the couple negotiated balanced strategies to achieve their goals, to meet temperament needs, to have order, connection, and peace, and to lessen conflict. Over time, the family created a set of house rules and routines that everyone could easily enforce. This agreement empowered the husband to enforce rules and to easily discipline the children. With the husband being equally involved in the parenting process, she was able to focus on connecting with her stepdaughter, which pleased her and her husband and created mother-and-stepdaughter bonding moments.

The couple reported that their life was good at the one-year therapy check-in. They continually employ their agreed-upon strategies and reciprocally meet each other's temperament needs. They keep the house orderly, follow routines, and stay relationally connected as a family. As partners, they continually work on their intellectual, emotional, spiritual, physical, and sexual intimacy. Together they prioritize family and spousal time.

They admitted that there had been some slip-ups along the way. When stressed, she slips into that militant-like demanding household orderliness, and on occasion, he will have a conflict-avoidant and overly passive attitude. Recalling their communication in conflict strategy, they quickly communicate and repair the relationship.

Conclusion

This couple's therapeutic experience influenced an altruistic approach to marriage. Understanding spousal temperament needs and selflessly working to reciprocally meet those needs allowed this family to increase family cohesiveness. They were able to overcome unhealthy blended family dynamics by reaching a fair balance between her rigid demands for order and routine and his over passiveness and complete un-involvement. This couple realized the importance of their partner's temperament

needs and took a serious and genuine approach to the application. Authentic humility and selflessness paved the way to reciprocally meeting a partner's needs.

Couple Eleven "Reciprocity"

The couple's unique dynamic rested on the reciprocity of the relationship. Each claimed to be putting in the most effort but at different times of the relationship. The husband claimed, and his wife agreed, that he put forth all the relational attempts during the first five years of their marriage. He was the one who initiated intimacy through emotional (affirmation, appreciation), intellectual (affability, sacrificially serves), spiritual (enthusiastic about worship, prayer), nonsexual physical touch (hand holding, hugging, cuddling), sexual (initiated intimacy), and romantic (date nights, planning spontaneous adventures and vacations) gestures. After years of rejection and feelings of being controlled, the husband's intimacy efforts dissipated. He said, "I spent the first five years doing everything. I believed my responsibility was to pursue her mentally, spiritually, emotionally, physically, and sexually. I am the one that greased the wheels. She just sat back and let me. All she could focus on was having children. She forced the fertility procedures and put me through hell, rejecting me and all my efforts along the way." She replied, "These are true statements. I did not know any better. I have grown and learned since then."

For the past two years, the wife claimed, and the husband agrees, that she is putting forth all the effort, and there is no reciprocation. Out of desperation, she obsessively calls and texts him during work hours. She continually sets up romantic dates, which he frequently declines. The husband refuses, but she persistently begs for any attention (compliments, affirmation, appreciation) and pleads for physical touch

(hand holding, hugging, cuddling). The wife immediately criticizes her husband when she feels rejected or is denied a bid for affection. He said, "I have created a demanding and criticism boundary with her. I will not do anything she asks, especially when I feel forced or expected to do it. I am especially enraged when she demands and criticizes me. Here is an example. This morning I got out of bed to get ready for work. I assumed she was asleep, and respectfully, I quietly got up to shower and dress. When I was fully dressed and ready to walk out the door, I kissed her forehead while she lay in bed. At that moment, she begins to chastise me for not cuddling with her before getting up and for kissing me on the forehead and not on the lips. Every moment of the day, I am told how I am hurting her by doing or not doing something she wants." To this, she responded, "Yes, that is true. I am doing my best and working on not being so needy. I used not to be this way. I am starving for his attention."

Relevant Background

At the time of therapy, the couple was in their late 30s and had just celebrated their 7th anniversary. They have each been married once before. The husband brought two teenagers, and she carried no children into their marriage. They shared two biological boys, ages 3 and 5, who resulted from costly fertility treatments. His teens are in their house twice a week and every other weekend, and naturally, the boys are home full-time.

Their chosen profession is first responders. Individually, they reported career-related stress and time restraints as contributing factors toward the breakdown of their intimacy. Workdays included long shifts, but they shared the occasional day off together. Spending quality time was complicated due to their alternating schedules to ensure parental childcare. Although they had varying shifts, they would make the best of their

shared available times. The family prioritized vacations together and made an effort toward mini-vacations and day trips.

They both confess having issues and agree that joint effort is needed to repair the relationship and regain intimacy. The wife claims to be “willing to do whatever it takes,” but he is not. He needs her to “back off,” giving him complete autonomy and allowing intimacy (emotional, spiritual, physical, intellectual, sexual) to happen organically. She needs to receive affirmation, security, and intimacy. She is demanding it to transpire and criticizing when it does not occur.

Identified Themes

There are a few unique identified themes. 1. They have yet to align reciprocity. The husband's relational efforts were actuated in the first five years, and her efforts were during the last two years. 2. His bitterness and resentment come from 5 years of rejection and seven years of feeling controlled. 3. She blames ignorance and unawareness on his claims of rejection and control. 4. Her feelings of relational neglect create desperation, leading to affection demands. 5. Her demands are perceived as control.

Counseling Complaints and Goals

After seven years of marriage, they both report feeling defeated, rejected, and lonely within the union. Although there is no proof, and he denies the allegation, his wife accuses him of having an ongoing affair. She reasons the affair must be factual due to his neglect and refusal to initiate affection. Furthermore, she complains that he is aloof and distant. She is highly motivated to repair the relationship. She demands that the counselor hold her husband accountable and strongly stresses that the therapist must tell her husband to try harder. She is requesting transparency with their phones, tablets, and

electronics, and she wants to track software on his phone. Her goal is to repair the relationship and rekindle intimacy. “I just want things to return to how they were initially. He loved me unconditionally, and I didn’t have all this worry.”

He complains that she is controlling and continually berates and criticizes him. He reports feelings of not being good enough and a loss of hope for the relationship. He refuses to meet any of her controlling (transparency, accountability, tracking software) and affection (kissing, hugging, verbal expressions, cuddles) demands. He holds resentment for the first five years of marriage, which he claimed to put in all the effort, and he has bitterness for being controlled. At the beginning of therapy, his goal was to be free to express love and affection on his terms and timetable but absent her demands. He requests a “controlling” boundary so she will not constantly pester and question all his actions.

Temperament Score and Affect

The wife is melancholy (M) in inclusion, choleric (C) in control, and confident (G) in affection. The wife agreed with the temperament-focused therapist as he discussed each area of temperament. She related the introverted and analytical traits of the M in inclusion and the high need for control qualities of C in her control area. She primarily associated with her G score in the affection area. The sanguine has the greatest need for relational and emotional love and affection. She said, “I have never been this desperate for attention. I feel like I am suffocating or starving. He gives me nothing, and I need him.” Her husband responded, “I used to give her all those things, but she did not appreciate it. She just piled on demands, beratement, and criticisms. I don’t want to give her anything, and I especially hate being pressured.”

The husband scored as a phlegmatic (P) in inclusion, a supine (S) in control, and S in affection. The husband reviewed his scores with the therapist and agreed that this accurately scaled his temperament. As a P in the inclusion area, he recognized that he was detail-oriented, the peacemaker, and needed to balance being social and tasking. The supine in control likes to know and follow the rules. He is a leader at work and has been in charge for many years. Before taking on the leadership role, he was a loyal follower of his commanders and gained the necessary experience and knowledge to command. His years of experience eliminate gray area scenarios and empowers decision making.

As a supine in affection, he desires to serve his wife, children, and close people and needs them to be pleased with him. His relational esteem is associated with his ability to please his wife. For the first five years of the relationship, his wife allowed him to serve her, and he would initiate relational, emotional, and physical affection. He began to back off services as he felt criticized and controlled. He said, “Eventually, she was never happy with me. We had difficulty getting pregnant, and she continually made demands and criticized me. After our first child was born, I swore that I would never go through that again. But she forced me to do it (fertility treatments) all over again.”

Temperament Needs

The wife’s need to control her environment motivated her to make demands and push her husband to do what she desires. Her need for affection area was creating enormous feelings of fear, anxiety, paranoia, and desperation. The sanguine temperament type needs a great deal of attention and affection. They have a vast need for emotional and relational interaction. Loneliness and unhealthy relationship can cause clinical depression and anxiety. During the first five years of marriage, her needs for control and

affection were being met by her husband. He met every demand and served her as she desired. Over the past two years, the wife has perceived to have no control and felt neglected and rejected, which has nearly pushed her into a psychotic break.

Character of Christ

This couple had some ups and downs with their religious practices. They proclaimed Catholicism as their religion. The husband reported being faithful to his spiritual practices for the first five years of marriage. Although his faith was important to him, he was taking a break from religious practices (praying, going to mass). His break from spiritual routines greatly concerned his wife. She claimed that her faith meant everything and had never stopped her religious rituals. She would continually assault him about coming to mass and praying together as a family, and he would deny her.

Through the first year of therapy treatments, they professed the loss of joy and peace regarding their home life. They were constantly bickering and had lost their sense of patience and kindness. Resentment and fear drove their relationship, and anger was the fruit.

Finally, after two years of therapy, they decided to be faithful to their church. They began to show love through kindness and patience. They let go of their records of wrong keeping and forgive each other of all their offenses. The couple turned 180 in demeanor, attitude, mindset, and character. This heartfelt spiritual change was the catalyst for a saved marriage. Unprompted and freely, he started to express love and affection. She stopped the demands, criticisms, and accusations and claimed to hand over her worries and fears to God. Together they truly practiced the principles of a character like Christ.

Counseling Results

This couple completed the typical eight weeks of temperament-focused therapy, including reciprocity encouragement. At the end of the eight weeks, the husband was still asking for space, and the wife was allowing for some relational autonomy. The family discussed once the month of check-in continues. They agreed that the wife would “do her very best” to make no demands and stop the criticism. The husband decided to try to make an effort if he felt autonomy. The main argument was “he doesn’t love me” and “she criticizes before I have the opportunity to do anything right.” The first three months of check-ins were filled with strategy and boundary reminders. They continually had relational ups and downs.

Finally, after the fourth once a month of check-in, the wife reported that she was giving it up and giving it to God. Through further exploration, the wife said, “I am so tired of not getting the affection I ask for. So, I have stopped asking. I just let him do whatever he wants.” She continued to report that nothing had changed. She still does not receive the affection needed. Angerly, he refutes her claim. He said, “This is what I am talking about. From my perspective, we had a great week. We took the kids to the beach overnight, were intimate, and had a terrific time overall. Every time I think things are good, she is unhappy. I just can’t win.” She answered, “Yes, we had a fun family time. That isn’t our time.”

During the seven monthly check-ins, the couple reported making a turn for the better. The wife confirmed that he was trying, and he agreed she was making fewer demands and criticisms. He said, “We are not nearly 100%, but we are improving. I have felt free to make more attempts without her nagging me constantly.” She said, “We have

a long way to go, but I have noticed more effort. We are both trying.” The couple skipped three of the following six months’ worth of appointments. After two years, nearly nine years of marriage, the couple reported they had regained their stride. They agreed that their partner was equally putting forth effort. He was serving her, and she freely expressed her affirmation and appreciation of him. She would initiate a nonsexual physical touch, and he would easily reciprocate. In the session, the couple was sitting close, and the wife gently reached over to hold his hand, and he reciprocated. The couple decided on an every 6-month check-in for their next appointment. At their last meeting, the couple reported that intellectual, emotional, spiritual, physical, and sexual intimacy had increased. They said they genuinely and sincerely love and care for each other. Plans and excitement for the future were expressed.

Conclusion

After nearly two years of therapy, the couple decided to meet each other’s needs reciprocally. Reciprocity was the deciding element for the couple’s relationship. Relational intimacy decreased when only one person tried to meet their partner’s needs. This couple took almost ten years of marriage to complete each other’s temperament needs selflessly and reciprocally. During the first five years of marriage, the husband puts forth all the efforts. He became angry, bitter, and resentful without reciprocity from his wife. At the start of therapy, the husband stated that he was indignant and did not believe they would make it. Although the wife made relational efforts (planning dates, expressing appreciation and affirmation, physical touch) for two years, after his five years of struggle, she placed high expectations of affection and strongly demanded attention. When she could not control him, she would criticize his every move.

This marriage was restored by deconstructing what was (demands, criticisms, rejection, neglect) and constructing a new type of relationship. This new construction took years of therapy to overcome hurtful habits and replace them with healthy routines.

Couple Twelve “Premarital”

The couple decided to seek temperament-focused premarital counseling before their upcoming wedding. They acknowledged that they were in the infatuation stage and that their relationship was healthy.

Relevant Background

The 25-year-old couple scheduled premarital counseling six months before their wedding date. They met via an online dating site, and at the time of counseling, they dated for one year. Their marriage will be their first marriage. Their friends, family, and community support the relationship. Both of their Christian parents are still married, and, according to the couple, they are happy. Each person proclaims to be Christian, and they go to church together. To honor their family’s religious values, they have decided to abstain from sex.

The soon-to-be groom has a resolute mindset about marriage. He believes that “Marriage is forever – no matter what. Through thick and thin, you figure it out and make it work. There is no quitting.” The soon-to-be bride has a romantic perspective on marriage. She believes marriage brings all the good things in life (happiness, joy, adventure, romance, and three children) and that they will be happy.

Identified Themes

The couple recognized their different temperament styles. As a couple in courtship, they expressed being happy in love. There were general concerns about adjustments and moving in together, as neither had lived with anyone before.

Counseling Complaints and Goals

The groom's perspective of premarital counseling was out of due diligence, and he felt "it is the right thing to do." The bride said, "This is going to be fun. I can't wait to learn more about him." There were no significant complaints at the start of therapy, and the common goal was to understand each other.

Temperament Score and Affect

The wife scored as a sanguine (G) in each area of her temperament. The husband scored as a melancholy (M) in each area of life. The couple found it humorous how different their temperament was but optimistic about their future.

The bride related to the sanguine traits and recognized that she was outgoing, social, optimistic, talkative, wants, and expresses incredible attention and affection. She said, "I tell him all the time to sit closer to me, to hug me, and to cuddle – and he does! He likes it too. He's very appreciative and tells me how pretty I am. We go out a lot and do lots of things. This weekend a large group of us went camping. It was so much fun."

The melancholy husband-to-be agreed that he was introverted, analytical, task-oriented, independent, and appreciated alone time. He said, "We have a great relationship. We see each other once a week, and although we spend the weekends together, I go to my home every night. We talk on the phone every night. I have a lot of alone time but miss seeing her."

Temperament Needs

Throughout the courtship, the bride reported that the groom was meeting her needs. Nonsexual physical touch (hugs, kisses, handholding, cuddles), verbal expression of affection (compliments, appreciation, affirmation), and romance (dates, spontaneous adventures, loving gestures like cards and poems) were regularly expressed to him. Sanguines (bride) need to be social and to receive affection.

Melancholy does not have much energy for socializing or expressing affection (physical touch, talking, romance, dates), and they prefer to be at home with their closest people and not out on the town. A melancholy needs quiet and alone time to process, think, and re-energize. They enjoy the autonomy of not being responsible for others. Due to their strict work, school, church, and general dating schedule, the groom received much needed alone time. He had more energy to meet her needs because he had plenty of alone time. Throughout courtship, he would go home three days a week, and for their weekly date night, he had one hour after work to rest. On weekends, he began and ended his days at his place alone.

Character of Christ

This couple was hopeful, faithful, and loving, and they expressed gratitude to God for their blessings and were thankful that God brought each other into their lives. During courtship, the couple voiced kindness, patience, and a mutual desire to serve one another. They were dedicated to their religious beliefs and faithfully honored their sacred boundaries by abstaining from sex throughout courtship. As a couple, they expressed altruistic acts by serving people experiencing homelessness, older adults, and the foster care communities.

Counseling Results

This premarital couple reported feeling better prepared for marriage. Through therapy, the couple understood the individual and partner's temperament. Therefore, they understood how each would respond to conflict differently. For example, she could react emotionally and possibly more explosively in conflict. Stressed, he could feel overwhelmed without time to process his emotions. They also concluded that although their needs differed, their partner could reciprocally meet them. Understanding allowed flexibility and grace while working through temperament needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Before they marry, the couple understands that there will be times when their differences can be frustrating.

One year after their wedding, the couple came in for a checkup. The husband reported, "The temperament stuff helped. We are so different. She wants to go out all the time, and I don't. But she knows when I am feeling overwhelmed and gives me space. I eventually come around." She replied, "Yes, the temperament assessment has given us a lot of understanding and grace. I don't take it personally when he doesn't want to do something fun with me." The couple were managing their differences but were deeply engaged in conversation about understanding temperament needs and differences. They were trying to find ways to meet their and partners' needs. He was having difficulty with her ongoing expressions of emotions. She was struggling with his inability to express feelings and affection.

The couple scheduled a few more appointments to grasp temperament concepts. After the third session, they suggested keeping an as-needed schedule but went ahead and booked their annual meeting.

On their two-year checkup, the couple agreed that their relationship was healthy, but many of the issues from the first-year checkup kept creeping up. Once again, she complained, “Well, he never wants to go anywhere and doesn’t show me enough affection. And he often complains about the household chores not being completed.” He replied, “It’s true. I prefer to stay home after working all day. I give her attention daily. I work hard, I do most of our chores, the budget is sound, and our daily life runs smoothly. However, I do forget to cuddle her sometimes, but we do hug and kiss often. I know she needs more talking and date nights. I should do better.” Ultimately, the couple stated they were healthy and agreed to schedule regular date nights to connect. He decided to be open to going out at least once a week, in addition to regular outings such as church and work. She agreed to make efforts toward maintaining the household chores. They decided to email if an appointment was needed and scheduled their third annual appointment. The couple reported feeling reciprocally happy, loved, and nurtured.

On their third and final annual checkup, the couple reported that their relationship was healthy and, for the most part, they were happy. They stated they loved each other, and their partner was doing their part in expressing affection, chores, and socializing.

Conclusion

The couple’s therapy began as a fun interactive part of their premarital process. They enjoyed the interaction and were amazed about their differences. Although there were deep conversations about temperament, they did feel alarmed throughout their premarital therapy. After the first year of marriage, they felt the impact of their differences. The wife said, “Our temperament differences brought us together but are now creating conflict.” The couple regained their relational confidence with a

temperament review and several weeks of temperament-focused therapy. They were able to use awareness and strategies for the remainder of their first year and desired a counseling check-in at the start of their second year. After a few sessions during the second annual check-in, the couple maintained their healthy, positive outlook. They used their temperament and understanding to have grace and patience with each other. Spousal sanguine and melancholy temperament strategies strengthened their marriage.

Due to their preparation during premarital counseling, this couple was not blindsided by their differences – in fact, they expected there to be differences. When the premarital and newlywed infatuation stage wore off, they could maintain a healthy relationship despite their differences and conflict. Annual temperament-focused check-ins influenced an increase in reciprocally meeting the partner's temperament needs, which increased intimacy. Although the couple struggled with their difference, grace through understanding temperament differences equipped them to maintain closeness.

Study Findings

Research Questions

How do participants describe their experience with marital intimacy before and after temperament-focused marriage therapy?

Participants who complete temperament-focused marriage therapy report increased marital intimacy after therapy. Couples practicing strategies (reciprocity, meeting spousal temperament needs, altruism, and Christ-like character) report an increase in relational hopefulness and individual's marital satisfaction and influences the connection of the relationship.

Participants who attempt meagerly or do not implement temperament-focused strategies at all report decreased marital intimacy. Each participant who reported feeling a drop in intimacy blamed themselves or their partner for not putting forth enough effort toward a specific strategy (reciprocity, meeting spousal temperament needs, altruism, and Christ-like character). One person said, “I feel worse because we have the understanding and tools, but they refuse to try.”

How do participants describe their experience with marital intimacy who do (not) practice the principle of reciprocity?

The principle of reciprocity is represented when partners equally put forth relational effort toward intimacy. In each case, the partner’s perception of reciprocity regarding equal effort greatly influenced relational intimacy. Participants who practice the principle of reciprocity reported an increase in marital intimacy. Successful couples reported that reciprocity created a team or close feeling. One participant said, “I see that he is really trying. Finally, I feel like we’re a team and I don’t feel alone anymore.” Many couples cited gained hopefulness when an apparent effort was present.

Partners who perceived their spouse as not trying expressed frustration, disappointment, and hopelessness. One participant said, “I still need to see them try before I am going to lift a finger to help.” Her husband responded, “Really? You don’t see all the effort I am making?” After this statement, he lists nearly 10 self-perceived improvements (cleaning, cooking, involved parenting).

How do participants who do (not) fully meet each other's temperament (individualistic) needs to describe their experience with marital intimacy?

Participants who delved into temperament and understood their and their partner's specific temperament need to report an increase in overall well-being and satisfaction. Persons who understand temperament need to report increased patience and kindness in responding to relational stress and conflict. Individuals who met their temperament needs (alone time, socializing, autonomy, peace) reported increased well-being. Individual temperament needs influence well-being, life satisfaction, and increased personal positivity (joy, happiness, peace) and health (less stress and angst). Participants whose individual temperament needs were met reported increased desire and ease to meet spousal needs. Couples who perceived their spouse to be meeting or genuinely making an effort to meet needs report a significant increase in relational intimacy.

Participants who did not desire to invest in their or partner's temperament cognitively needs reported feeling the same or decreasing well-being. Individuals who perceived their temperament needs to be met reported a high intimacy increase. Participants who perceived their spouse as not meeting their temperament needs reported decreased intimacy. A participating wife said, "Now, when he refused to meet my needs (hugs, emotional attention) it almost seems intentional. I know he knows what I need, and it seems he is neglecting or punishing me."

Individuals who did not practice meeting needs but practiced additional temperament-focused therapy techniques (reciprocity, altruism, and Christ-like character) reported increased relational intimacy. The study supports that a participant who refused temperament application but still applied other temperament-focused therapy methods possessed a significant increase in relational intimacy.

How do participants whose spouse does (not) display the character of Christ describe their experience with marital intimacy?

Participants' approach to positive and negative life circumstances and issues, conflict, relationships, altruism, reciprocity of service, and meeting spousal needs depended on their character. Christ's character possesses elements of intimacy (patience, kindness, forgiveness, nurture, humility, gratefulness, generosity, empathy, intuition, selflessness, loyalty, openness/transparency, trustworthiness, joy, peace, and happiness). Partners whose spouses possessed Christ-like characteristics reported feeling safe during difficult life circumstances. Partners who perceived their spouse as Christ reported feeling safe, loved, nurtured, and considered.

All participants reported having some Christ-like characteristics. A typically reported theme amongst these was angst, fear, worry, anger, loss of self-control, and impatience, which drove an environment filled with yelling, constant conflict, and strife. Participants commonly reported a loss of self-control in anger and criticism and an expressed need for more patience and peace. For the relationships with the least amount of reported intimacy, partners reported the least amount of Christ's character.

Analytical Process

This narrative qualitative research project aims to evaluate the importance of reciprocity in meeting a partner's temperament needs in terms of marital intimacy. This research investigated the archival data of 12 married couples who received temperament-focused marriage therapy between 2015 and 2022. Throughout therapy sessions, the therapist collected data by conducting in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews with each participant individually and with their partner. Interviews and observations

immerse the investigation into the participant's life story, chronological order of events, and the essence of the participants' experience. The essential principles taught throughout therapy (reciprocity and partner's temperament needs to be met) are recognized as influencing factors regarding marital intimacy. In addition to the reciprocity of meeting the partner's temperament needs, the data supports that an altruistic relational perspective and the character of Christ influenced the level of intimacy between couples.

Data Organization

For this narrative qualitative research, the proposed data for analysis will consist of the researcher's digital observational and field notes recordings. The researcher closely attended to the chronological unfolding of events. There are specific lessons and strategies taught throughout the eight-week temperament-focused courses. For example, week one introduces the concept of reciprocity. After week one of the reciprocity therapy, the researcher will use memos to note reciprocity behavior. Participants will be receiving interviews that will be dated for chronological analysis.

Analyzing narrative research data requires a curious and exploratory attitude while paying close attention to the details of the participant's story. The researcher has accomplished a thorough analysis by immersing himself in the details by reading and reflecting on the data several times. Memos are used to capture, organize, and prioritize significant phrases, key concepts, and emergent ideas. Following a thorough preliminary reading of the collective database, emerging ideas received notable flagging for further coding. Once the reading, reflecting, and memoing were completed, the next step involved describing and classifying codes into themes and presenting them on a spreadsheet.

Categories or codes are a representation of meaningful qualitative data analysis. Codes are condensed, reduced, and delineated into themes. Themes include reciprocity, temperament, needs met, relational altruistic view, the character of Christ, and marital intimacy. For brevity purposes, code names are created for themes. The analysis will include definitions for all themes and code names. Examples of context will be included with each presented theme.

A culmination of the developed themes was analyzed and further assessed for data interpretation. The researcher explored possible findings that influence intimacy in marriage. Interpretation has provided a clear and concise portrait of the qualitative research findings. The findings are represented through analysis description and appropriate visual representation (sketches, diagrams, charts, word clouds).

All files are carefully transferred to a digital document (Microsoft Word/Excel). In the researcher's sole position, all digital files are kept in a password-protected folder on a secure computer. To explore temperament needs and the couple's dynamics, each couple's data share one folder for the analysis process. Each participant's collected data was paired with his/her spouse during the analysis process. Each couple's digital files are kept in a single document folder titled under their married name. The researcher's digital field notes for each participant are kept in the beforementioned couple's documented folder. Each couple's files were coded for themes on a document entitled "last name themes." The couple's coded themes were copied and pasted to a collective spreadsheet entitled "All Themes." Therefore, a copy of the couple's themes is kept inside their folder, and the data is copied and pasted to the collective "All Themes" spreadsheet.

Themes Presented by Research Questions

Potential data comprised 50 diverse couples (100 participants) who received temperament-focused therapy by therapist Jimmie Inman. The potential cases were reduced to the twelve couples (24 participants) representing the most common types of phenomena impacting marital intimacy. Mining the data revealed four major themes that impacted marital intimacy. 1. The principle of reciprocity. 2. Meeting of partner's temperament needs. 3. A altruistic approach to marriage. 4. Possession of the character of Christ.

Data comprised temperament assessments and relational questionnaires; the predominant bulk of data was taken from the therapist's session notes. Codes were prioritized by influencing elements of marital intimacy. Noted driving factors for intimacy and conflict were organized. Specific descriptions of the beforementioned factors were coded. Intimacy drivers were coded: selfishness, selflessness, sacrifice, working, trying, anger, mad, angst, stress, hurt, pain, forced, fun, pleasure, enjoyment, happiness, celebrating, and togetherness. Various phrases for needs were coded, such as I bid, need, want, desire, like, wish, crave, request, require, and demand. Encoded were character and behavior descriptions such as sensitive, empathetic, patient, kind, submissive, strong-willed, controlling, decisive, introverted, extroverted, quiet, shut down, stonewalls, fighter, quitter, boisterous, conceited, humble, cold shoulder, compassionate, and nurturing.

Notable Key Terms

Principle of Reciprocity

The putting forth of equal effort in terms of meeting partner's needs.

Cyclical, reciprocal, contribute, sacrifice, effort, equality, trying, influence, fairness, together, jointly, mutual, cooperative, work, power, allocate, delegate, add, supply, avoid, and share.

Temperament Needs

The temperament needs of an individual.

Nonsexual touching, physical touch, hugs, cuddles, hand holding, kissing, sex, quiet time, socializing, extroversion, introversion, strong-willed, submissive, weak-willed, stubborn, alpha, type a peace, sincere, significant, priority, loyalty, dependable, reliable, emotional, connection, intimacy, spiritual, intellectual, roommates, affability, gentle, intuitive, angry, happy, expressive, shuts down, task-oriented, analytical, processing, thinking, over-thinker, controlling, trapped, freedom, autonomy, decision making, decide, vulnerable, open, stone wall, critical, correction, acts of service, quality time, gifts, timeliness, orderliness, organized, timeliness, expressive, and explosive.

Bids for Needs

A bid (ask) to your partner to meet your needs.

Request, bid, ask, suggest, need, must, have to, should, want, desire, like, wish, crave, request, require, and demand.

Relational Altruistic Approach

Sacrificing one's needs in the service of another's needs. Considering relational needs before one's needs. Self-sacrificing for the sake of another.

Servant, sacrifice, generous, giving, gracious, grateful, empathy, nurture, compassion, selfless, help, assist, their needs, aid, support, provide,

Character of Christ

The character and attributes that Christ lived out on earth.

Godly, loving, patient, kind, faithful, wise, virtuous, empathetic, peace, generous, grateful, self-control, sensitive, intuitive, just, loyal, orderly, responsible, tenderness, gracious, mercy, trustworthiness, self-sufficient, relational, humble, meek, ethical, moral, reliable, servant, committed, forgiving, gentleness, attentive, available, cautious, diligent, discerning, and enthusiastic.

Summary

This qualitative narrative research used the archival data of 12 couples who underwent temperament-focused marriage therapy. The participants' outcomes best represent the diverse phenomena from temperament-focused therapy. The data research identified four marital intimacy factors: 1. The principle of reciprocity. 2. Meeting of partner's temperament needs. 3. A altruistic approach to marriage. 4. Possession of the character of Christ. However, partners' perception was pivotal in intimacy incline or decline. Intimacy was reported to increase when partners perceived their spouses as making an effort. In contrast, partners reported an intimacy decline, perceiving no effort.

Although marital intimacy improved with the practice of every single factor, all four factors were necessary to increase intimacy to a satisfactory level. Partners who perceive their spouse to practice all four factors (reciprocity, temperament needs met, altruism, Christ-like character) felt an increase in relational intimacy. Partners who perceived their spouse as unwilling to practice the four factors felt decreased intimacy.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this narrative qualitative research project was to evaluate the importance of reciprocity in meeting a partner's temperament needs in terms of marital intimacy. This research investigated the archival data of 12 married couples who received temperament-focused marriage therapy between 2015 and 2022. Throughout therapy sessions, the therapist conducted in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews with each participant individually and with their partner. Interviews and observations immerse the researcher into the participant's life story, chronological order of events, and the essence of the participants' experience. The research supports the four essential principles taught throughout therapy (principle of reciprocity, meeting of partner's temperament needs, an altruistic approach to marriage, and the possession of the character of Christ) to influence marital intimacy. A large body of work is examined that supports that needs met (personal, social, spiritual, temperament) are essential for an individual's overall health and well-being. Three theories laid the theoretical foundation for this study (1) Maslow's theory of Hierarchy of Needs, (2) Schutz's Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO), and (3) Arno's Temperament Theory. Drawing upon biblical principles, particularly the character of Christ, will strengthen support for reciprocity in meeting a partner's temperament needs.

Summary of Findings

This qualitative narrative research used archival data of couples who completed temperament-focused marriage therapy. The participants' complaints, goals, and outcomes best represent the diverse phenomena from temperament-focused treatment.

The data research identified four marital intimacy factors: 1. The principle of reciprocity. 2. Meeting of partner's temperament needs. 3. A altruistic approach to marriage. 4. Possession of the character of Christ.

Temperament-Focused Therapy

Participants who complete temperament-focused marriage therapy report increased marital intimacy after therapy. A part of the completion process is that couples continue to practice strategies of the four factors (reciprocity, meeting spousal temperament needs, altruism, and Christ-like character). Four-factor practitioners report increased relational helpfulness and individual, and marital satisfaction, which influences the relationship's connection. Relational intimacy increases or decreases depending upon the continued application of learned strategies.

Partner's Perception

Intimacy is maximized in marriages where both mates utilize strategies, recognize efforts, and express appreciation for their partner's actions. Relationships suffer when a spouse applies techniques without their partner perceiving the step or expressing gratitude for the work. Partner's perception played a vital role in terms of felt intimacy. Those who perceive their spouse to practice the four factors (reciprocity, temperament needs met, altruism, Christ-like character) felt increased relational intimacy. Partners who perceived their spouse as unwilling to practice the four-factor approach felt decreased intimacy.

Principle of Reciprocity

The partner's perception of reciprocity regarding equal effort greatly influenced relational intimacy. Participants who practice the principle of reciprocity reported an

increase in marital intimacy. Successful couples said that reciprocity created a feeling of togetherness. Many couples cited gained hopefulness when an apparent effort was present.

Participants who attempted meagerly did not apply or whose partner did not perceive actions of temperament-focused strategies implementation reported decreased marital intimacy. Each participant who reported feeling a drop in intimacy blamed themselves or their partner for not putting forth effort toward a specific process (reciprocity, meeting spousal temperament needs, altruism, and Christ-like character).

Temperament Needs Met

Individual temperament needs influence well-being, life satisfaction, increased personal positivity (joy, happiness, peace), and health (less stress and angst). Participants who gained an understanding of their individual and their partner's specific temperament needs will experience an increase in overall well-being and satisfaction. Individuals who met their temperament needs (alone time, socializing, autonomy, peace) reported increased well-being. Participants whose individual temperament needs were met reported increased desire and ease to meet spousal needs.

Couples who perceived their spouse to be meeting or genuinely trying to meet needs report a significant increase in relational intimacy. Individuals who perceived their temperament needs were met reported a high intimacy increase. Participants who perceived their spouse as not meeting their temperament needs reported decreased intimacy. Participants who did not invest in their or their partner's temperament needs will experience decreased well-being.

Character of Christ

Participants' approach to positive and negative life circumstances and issues, conflict, relationships, altruism, reciprocity of service, and meeting spousal needs depended on their character. Christ's character possesses elements of intimacy (patience, kindness, forgiveness, nurture, humility, gratefulness, generosity, empathy, intuition, selflessness, loyalty, openness/transparency, trustworthiness, joy, peace, and happiness). Partners whose spouses possessed Christ-like characteristics reported feeling safe during difficult life circumstances. Partners who perceived their spouse as Christ reported feeling safe, loved, nurtured, and considered.

Participants with low characteristics of Christ typically reported angst, fear, worry, anger, loss of self-control, and impatience, which drove an environment filled with strife, criticism, and conflict. For these relationships, partners reported the slightest intimacy and the most separation.

Applied Factors

The study supports that the participants who did not apply the whole gamut of temperament-focused therapy techniques (meeting temperament needs, reciprocity, altruism, and Christ-like character) have a slight increase in well-being. In terms of relational intimacy, a fullness in couples' intimacy was experienced when all factors were applied, and only a partial increase in the application of one or two factors alone.

Discussion of Findings

Laying the foundation for this study is Maslow's highly recognized and accepted Hierarchy of Needs theory (Crandall et al., 2020; Deckers & Lamber, 2018; McLaughlin et al., 2012; Zebrack et al., 2014). A large body of literature supports a correlation between an individual's unmet needs and mental illness (McLaughlin et al., 2012).

Humans are at risk for mental health disorders (depression, anxiety) when needs (self-actualization, transcendence) go unmet (Weiss et al., 2016).

In a review of the current literature, ample support shows that everyone has needs, and their well-being depends upon meeting those needs. Specific desires vary from person to person. The temperament assessments allow individuals, psychological practitioners, and therapists to identify and understand the person's unique, innate (temperament) needs. For this discussion, temperament needs represent a person's specific innate needs.

This study on the reciprocity in meeting a partner's temperament needs in terms of marital intimacy supports the following research literature. Couples' intimacy is a critical construct contributing to marital satisfaction, quality, stability, and individual well-being (Lee et al., 2021; Masoumi et al., 2017; Kamali et al., 2021). This study supports research that these unique needs significantly influence intimacy as a construct, such as communication, conflict resolution (Mozas-Alonso, 2020), physical touch, service, affirmation, quality time, and gifts (Ince, 2020), peace, social support, and emotional understanding (Rashidi, 2022), spiritual guidance and religious agreements (Aman, 2022), grace, patience, and kindness (1 Corinthians 13:4) to mention but a few.

This current research (temperament-focused therapy) strongly supports the literature review stating individuals have distinct needs for life circumstances and love and affection. This recent study's contribution is that a partner's ability to meet unique (temperament) needs will significantly influence the individual's feelings of intimacy. Furthermore, couples' intimacy is dependent upon the reciprocation of meeting each other needs.

Biblical Significance

This current study states four attributes (reciprocity, temperament needs met, altruism, and Christ-like character) that influence marital intimacy. These same principles are found throughout scripture. Scripture acknowledges that God is the creator of marital intimacy (Genesis 2:18). Scripture's depiction of marriage strengthens the scientific research concerning the need for intimacy. The Bible supports that people have social needs (Acts 2:46). For God's salvation, man can turn from his sinful nature and display godly characteristics (John 14:26).

Christ-followers are called to have their character and to display the fruits of the spirit (Romans 8:9, Galatians 5:22-23). A prominent biblical theme of altruism is to "love your neighbor" (Mark 12:31). Through a Christ-like character, people can love as the apostle Paul defines love, "love is patient and kind" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). God has called Christians to encourage and build up (1 Thessalonians 5:11), act in humility, gentleness, and patience, and bearing one another in love (Ephesians 4:2), take one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), give grace to all (Ephesians 4:29), love as Christ has loved (John 13:34), and many more. Scripture defines a Christ-like character as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." Ministry leaders could use temperament-focused therapy research to support that marital intimacy is heavily influenced by individual and partners' Christ-like character.

Implications

The findings from temperament-focused therapy in terms of significant improvements in human relationships could be used to impact the scientific community, psychological practices, churches, and many other organizations. The findings support

that four factors (relational reciprocity, meeting temperament needs, relational altruism, and possessing a Christ-like character) increase intimacy in relationships. Individuals who practice temperament-focused strategies utilize the four factors within their relationships.

The temperament-focused strategic application could be adopted in individual, family, and couples therapy to increase intimacy in close relationships. Marriage and family therapists can adopt the four-factor temperament-focused model to increase intimacy between family members. Increased intimacy would mean less conflict, lower divorce rates, healthier family unity, and improved well-being for individuals within the family system's benefactors of temperament-focused therapy.

Psychologists could use a temperament-focused approach to improve well-being and increase individual connectivity. Improved relationships support a less stressed lifestyle that reduces anxiety, depression, and interrelation conflict. Individuals practicing temperament-focused strategies practice positive characteristics such as patience, kindness, grace, gratefulness, forgiveness, and compassion. Individuals with healthy well-being make for more beneficial friends, supportive partners, involved parenting, and productive employees.

Healthy environments assist people in their well-being and produce higher outcomes. Employers could use this approach to improve cohesiveness and productivity between colleagues and coworkers. Businesses could also use temperament-focused strategies to enhance the quality of client services.

Limitations

The significant challenges facing this study were sorting through a large amount of captured data (field notes, couples' diaries, interview notes), correctly interpreting the data, the limited number of participants, and participant demographic, and accurately interpreting participants' perceptions of changes in marital intimacy. Data are collected through interviews and observation during the face-to-face sessions; therefore, making valuable determinations depended upon sorting through 7 years of data for the interpreting process. This intimacy study may inspire other researchers to overcome the limited number of participants by duplicating the study on a larger scale utilizing a more diverse demographic (unmarried couples and parent and child) and an increased number of participants.

There are three criteria for the acceptable archived data for this current study: 1. All participants were in the premarital phase of courtship or were married, 2. both partners must be willing to participate in the study, and 3. each participant must be a Christian with a fundamental understanding of the faith's biblical beliefs. Although these demographic criteria limit participants, they were specifically chosen for this study due to the Christian faith's natural built-in components that seamlessly align with temperament-focused marriage therapy. Two major aligning themes are 1) marriage is the highest form of achievable relational intimacy, and 2) there is a fundamental understanding of Christ-like character.

This study has the unique challenge of interpreting one's perception of intimacy. Most marital studies use scales such as satisfaction or quality to measure a couple's closeness. They are limited to one or two variables (sex, communication, parenting styles, attachment) as focal points. A new temperament-focus therapy model is used to explore

this marital intimacy phenomenon in terms of 4 key factors 1. Reciprocity, 2. Temperament needs met, 3. Relational altruism, and 4. Possessing a Christ-like character. This study could benefit from exploring a broader scope of spousal needs factors believed to influence marital intimacy.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could adjust the findings from temperament-focused therapy in terms of a significant increase in marital intimacy to study various demographics. Temperament-focused research using the four intimacy influencing factors (relational reciprocity, meeting temperament needs, relational altruism, possessing a Christ-like character) did not include nonreligious or couples of different religions.

At the crux of this research was the principle of reciprocity with couples. Outcomes support that couple's perception of reciprocity (equal effort) increased intimacy. Future research could examine the reaping of intimacy in relationships when reciprocity is not included. Researchers could expand the study by exploring the outcome of a one-way application - if one person is implementing temperament-focused strategies without knowing their unsuspecting partner.

This study taught couples to apply four intimacy factors, and researchers could further the study by investigating the effectiveness of each element singularly. Does one aspect have a more significant influence than the others? Are there factors with a greater combined power not considered in this study? Perhaps, altruism as a sole factor, or possessing the character of Christ, could increase intimacy between couples more effectively than all four combined.

The implication of this study could be a global phenomenon. Research could apply temperament-focused therapy on an international scale. Is temperament universal for all humans? Could it be internationally altered to fit the needs of other societies? If yes, adapting temperament-focused therapy to fit the culture and societal systems could impact international cultures worldwide.

Summary

A participant's understanding and behavior toward temperament will impact their personal well-being and marital satisfaction. Partners' perception of their spouse's follow-through behaviors toward a factor (reciprocity, meeting spousal temperament needs, altruism, and Christ-like character) has a tremendous impact on marital intimacy. Participants who perceived their spouse to practice the principle of reciprocity reported a higher increase in marital intimacy than partners who perceived their spouse as not trying. Individuals who perceived their temperament needs to be met reported a higher intimacy increase than those who perceived their temperament needs to be not met. Character influences individual behavior. Therefore, character-motivated partners have positive and negative interactions.

Implications of this study suggest that specific factors can influence intimacy between people. Everyone is uniquely created and has unique traits, behaviors, and needs. The keystone of this study is if a person can understand their needs and the needs of loved ones, then, through serving each other, needs can be met, and people can feel loved. Temperament-focused therapy strategies could improve individual well-being, marriages, families, businesses, organizations, churches, and possibly nations.

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