

Three Enemies To Your Marriage: Part 2 - These Enemies and Me

LWCC Marriage Ministries Email - February 2026.

After a couple of days of gremlins in my system, Greetings to Part 2 of what is a 3 Part series of emails, and the most challenging Marriage Email (or series) I've done over the past 3 years or so since we began doing these. When I began putting pen to paper on this topic back in mid November, I certainly didn't see it stretching to 3 emails, but as time went on, I felt that to unpack the theme and do it justice, as well as making it as practical and helpful as possible, I needed to forget about length. So, here is Part 2.

Last month, through outlining the challenging journey of a couple who came to see us last year, and the quote repeated below, I began this series exposing the Enemies we face in married life. The quote was from Tim Challies: "*Marriage is under attack. Marriage has always been under attack. The world, the flesh and the devil are all adamantly opposed to marriage, and especially marriages that are distinctly Christian. Marriage, after all, is given by God to strengthen His people and to glorify Himself; little wonder, then, that it is constantly a great battleground*".

Let's unpack Tim's quote a little further, and see if we can bring some further helpful perspectives to these Enemies or Threats, because once we have Perspective we can then look at what we can do to bring Resolution.

1. **The External Enemy or Threat:** Sadly, whilst this has always been there in some form or other, many of us have seen a massive increase in external pressures impacting our Marriages over the past 20 - 25 years. The power and pressure of the media, along with societal attitudes and pressures around the conventional Biblical concepts of Marriage, have changed significantly. For some, another factor is pressure that comes from wider family members who have not fully appreciated the Biblical concept of 'leave and cleave'. Also, in some cases, members struggle with a lack of understanding or acceptance of your Christian walk, and (or) its different approach and standards in comparison to where they are at. Then there's the challenge many couples have with the fluctuating economic environment, or in juggling the demands of work and (or) career. Any of these can have challenging impact on couples, particularly if they struggle in having good understanding of, and ability to, express their own perspective, position and boundaries.
2. **The Internal Enemy or Threat:** Because of the "Fall", everyone, as we discussed last month, who enters into Marriage does so carrying a variety of 'issues', whether they are aware of it, or not. Sooner or later, any one - or all - of these 'issues' are going to conspire to impact our 'happily ever after' dream. And here's where the problems begin. If, in the early stages of our lives, and especially the early stages of our relationship, we did not learn to speak up for ourselves, or learn good communication and conflict resolution techniques, as many don't, the appearance or surfacing of these 'issues', and our immature, or irrational, or petulant response to them, can really throw a challenging curve ball into the mix. So often, in their quest to develop their 'happily ever after', couples simply fail to realize, or, as also mentioned last month, lived "blissfully blinkered" to the magnitude or the impact their 'issues' might have on their relationship. This baggage, as some call it, can come from a variety of sources, and what follows is not by any means an exhaustive list. They can come from such things as:

- Each of us coming to marriage from a different family culture, or way of doing things, which causes some adjusting and adapting to, when you get together. If one of your 'issues' is being a little selfish or self-centred, adjusting to these different ideas or ways of doing things, can cause some degree of tension.
 - That self-centredness or even selfishness is another 'issue' all its own. To a degree, it's only natural that there is a degree of this in each of us coming to marriage, because for some time since our mid-teens there has only been me and mine to consider. However, there is, due to our upbringing, life experiences and spiritual journey, a wide spectrum in how people respond in this season. Some, through that spiritual journey, respond well to the Lord putting His finger on different issues in our lives, while others struggle to adjust and can thereby get very self-centred, self-absorbed or selfish. Often times they simply have no idea.
 - If we are not overly confident as a person, this can be another 'issue' because it will often mean we struggle to express ourselves, or be prepared to ask for what we want at any given time. Especially if, as is so often the case, we marry someone who is of opposite temperament to ourselves, because they can cause us to feel quite intimidated.
 - For some, their upbringing has simply been dysfunctional, while for others it never prepared them for the real world because situations that arose were never properly followed through on, and conflict never adequately resolved.
1. **The Invisible Enemy or Threat:** What was Satan's agenda way back in the Garden - "If I can put a **Wedge** in this relationship, maybe I can put a huge **Spanner** in the other". So often he doesn't have to create an opening. All he has to do is use our 'issues', insecurities and baggage. It's all there. It's just a case of a little manipulation here (Eph.4:27), and prodding there, which will set a few things in motion, and before we know it, turmoil has erupted. If we allow this pattern to go on unattended for too long, without seeing it for what it is, we're off on a roller-coaster, the end result of which is our intimacy affected, and trust levels impacted. Then, if we're not really careful, it begins to infiltrate our Ultimate Relationship, and bingo, his **Spanner** worked again!!!!

Sadly, most of the time, couples prepare for their wedding day blissfully unaware they are bringing a person - themselves - to their marriage who is carrying a variety of 'issues', and certainly unaware of the magnitude or the impact their 'issues' could have, or the opportunity they were giving the enemy to go to work. I mean, let's face it, once I asked for her hand, once she said "Yes", what time did either of you have to actually sit down and share your 'issues', outline the challenging idiosyncrasies of your life, and the baggage you are carrying. And right now, like me, I can hear a few of you chuckling - "Yeah Right"!!!! But seriously, it didn't happen, largely because we were "Blissfully Unaware", and secondly because things began to get a bit hectic in the lead-up to the big day itself.

So, in similar fashion to how I finished last month's email, where to from here?

Hopefully this email has helped bring some further understanding and Perspective. In our next email we'll hopefully present a path to Resolution. In the interim why not take some time to once again reflect. What were / are your 'Issues'???

- Again, if you are able to look back on a journey of discovering and dealing to you 'issues' over the years, as we did last month, can we suggest you find some time to Celebrate, if you haven't already. Pause now, or better still, make a special time or evening to reflect back together, remember, champion one another and celebrate your achievement.

- However, if this email has been hard, can I congratulate you again, on persisting to this point. Why don't you too pause. We'll pick this up again in more detail in Part 3 next month, but why not think your marriage journey through. Make a list of the 'issues' you see surfacing through the years, and be objective about what 'issues' you brought to your marriage that have had an impact. Maybe there's some you see that I haven't already mentioned. Having done this, why not take a moment to pray individually and collectively, and ask the Lord to use this email, and the next, to help you get on top of your 'issues' once and for all. Put it out there. Express to each other you want to take your relationship to a different place. As we close out this month's email, why not consider what thoughts have run through your mind, and what feelings have been stirred in your heart, as you have journeyed through these two emails. If you're together right now, share those thoughts and feelings, or make some time to sit down together and go through the email. Whether now, or later, take a moment to remind yourselves of Eph.6:12 that says, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood" - that's each other - "but against principalities and powers..." See the enemy for who he is. Perhaps you could symbolically put a marker in the sand that says we've had **Enough!!!** Now, why not look one another in the eye and reassure each other, "**You Are Not My Enemy**", and I'm sorry if that is what it has seemed like, in the way I have behaved at times".

Don't rush this process. Take some time to reflect and gain Perspective to see the journey for what it has been, and gain a fresh determination to resurrect the dream. And having Exposed the Threats, we look forward next month to bringing some Resolution. And.....Who knows, by then you may have already got there!!!!

Blessings from your Marriage Ministries Team - Stan & Ronnie, John & Karen.