

SpirituallyHungry.com
Presents:

Take Home Retreat

Married Couple's Retreat

Where's God Leading
Your Marriage?



Hello and welcome!

We are so glad you decided to do this retreat! We hope that it's three great days of adventure, learning and growth!

Everything we do at SpirituallyHungry.com is to provide you with tools to connect deeper with God. That's our mission, because we strongly believe there is nothing more important than staying close to God's love and presence.

So thanks for signing up, and we're excited for you!

A Little Bit About Us

Spiritually Hungry is a family - literally! Our names are Alexis and Aaron Waid, and we have been married for 8 years. Prior to marriage, we were best friends for 7 years, before ever dating. We have been in each other's lives for 16 years and we approach life as a team.

We are both graduates of Denver Seminary, and each hold master's degrees from our wonderful alma mater. In addition, we both have served in various professional ministry positions, even as co-pastors together.

SpirituallyHungry.com is our new venture together, as we share our ministry online. On our site, we focus on making God accessible to people and helping them connect in meaningful, impactful ways. We deeply believe that what Jesus did 2,000 years ago has profound implications for us today. We really are all about Jesus, the fruit of His ministry, and the love God has for us.

Marriage is a beautiful union - a tough and challenging one - but a rewarding and unbelievable experience. We want to help you this weekend, just a little bit, in moving your relationship a step forward in God's direction - because we ALL need that, no matter how great our marriages are.

Opening Thoughts:

Our focus for the weekend is: Where Is God Calling Your Marriage?

As we're writing this, we of course have no idea where your marriage is at presently. Regardless, we know that everyone needs to be reminded of the true source of their marriage - and that's God.

Perhaps you feel like your marriage is going well right now, or maybe you're in a rougher spot in your marriage than you would like. Maybe things are "just ok," or maybe it's been a long time since you've really thought about how your marriage is doing. All of these positions, and the many in-between, all need the same thing, and that is God's love, power and direction.

Everyone's marriage needs work. You know how I know this? Simple - it's because we are all capable of sin. We hurt people; not because we want to, but because we live in a broken world, and this world affects us. This world poisons us, and the only thing that can cleanse us is God. And we need cleansing a lot! We often lose our way, and forget what we learned and let our emotions get the best of us. We ALL do this from time to time.

But, this isn't a time for pointing the finger at one another, but rather an invitation. Put the guilt aside and simply recognize a call to awareness and to lean on God more deeply. He loves both of you, and He sees all who have accepted the Gospel through the perfect lens of His Son, Jesus Christ.

You're covered by the work of Jesus Christ. And the call to action is for a better life; a life that's reflective of God's love, peace, joy, self-control, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, kindness and patience (Galatians 5:22-23). We're called to a life that is remarkable and reminiscent of the life of Jesus Christ.

This is the life we are all invited to, but it takes an enormous amount of work and dependency on God. It cannot, and should not, be done without the love, power and grace of God.

This life is not just for you individually, but also for your marriage, because you are both in a sacred union between you, your spouse and God. And God wants your marriage to reflect His love and perfect union in the Trinity.

So no matter where you are at on the marriage road right now, there's always room for God's growth in it.

As a married couple - you are a single unit. It's a unique role because you are two people, but also one (Mark 10:8).

As two people, you both have different perspectives, drives, emotions and so forth. All of this is brought into the marriage constantly. What affects each of you individually, essentially affects the marriage also.

I know this is not news to you, but it is important to bring this to attention for the sake of this exercise.

We are called by God to be His, right? We are called into His love, His truth, and to walk with Him all our days. As we see through Jesus' ministry on this Earth, He walked closely with God wherever He went. He shows us what it looks like to be a true disciple of God.

A lot of the time, we mere humans have a difficult time with fluidity. We like to place the many areas of our lives in boxes - in separate compartments of our lives. When we go to work, we have a "work mode" we operate in. When we're at home we have a "home-mode" for that, and when we go off to church...you guessed it, another mode.

God is calling all of us to have Him in all areas of our beings, in all the places in our days. So in our free time, our church time, our work time, our home time, and our play time, God wants to be in all of these places.

God wants to be profound in all the areas of our life for our own good. Our lives are enriched dramatically when God's presence is realized in all areas of our lives. Because our God is a good God, one who wants to tend to us and grow us in His love.

And our marriages are no different.

Our marriages are covenants and are sacred unions with God as the unifier.

And God always wants to bring closeness, truth and love to your covenant.

This weekend is all about where God is leading the two of you. This isn't necessarily about jumping from one place to another, but rather a gentle nod in the direction God wants you to go. Think about it from moving from A to B not moving from A to Z.

Retreat Breakdown:

So here's a quick look at "Married Couple's Retreat Guidebook" to give you an idea of what it really looks like.

The Retreat Guidebook will provide you with:

Worksheets

Activities

Schedule

We personally designed this guidebook with these features to help you center your mind, heart, and actions on improving your marriage and embracing the Lord in new ways.

Basic Rules of the Retreat:

We really want both you and your spouse to be on board for this weekend. You'll get the most out of this retreat if you're both willing to participate. Although one of you will probably be more enthusiastic than the other for this retreat, please recognize that honest, thoughtful answers are needed for this to be a success.

If your spouse is reluctant to take this retreat, or maybe you haven't had the courage to ask them to take it with you, I want you to turn to God and spend some time praying over this situation. Ask Him for guidance and a movement from the Spirit for an open heart in your spouse.

Additionally, although you can take this retreat anywhere, we really - I mean, REALLY - encourage you to go away for the weekend. You can pick a location you want to travel to, or you could even pick a nice hotel nearby that would serve as a getaway.

This is important because change of scenery helps. It shakes things up and each of you may be able to focus more on the retreat being away from the house. It's tempting to look around and focus on things that need done around the house, or errands, you need to do. This weekend is for both of you. It's supposed to be a time set apart for each other. Minimizing distractions will only help. Of course, you can do the retreat from home, but we sincerely believe that you will get more from this retreat if you do go somewhere.

However, if you do decide to do this retreat at home, please plan ahead to minimize distractions. Pay bills early, take care of chores ahead of time, mow the lawn earlier in the week, shop for groceries on Thursday. Whatever chores you typically find yourself doing on the weekend should be moved out of the way as much as possible. The point of a retreat is to relax and refresh, so create space in your home for a retreat, as though you were inviting others from your church over for a weekend, rather than just spending a weekend at home in with your spouse.

If you have children, I want to encourage you to find a weekend babysitter, or maybe a grandparent or relative that would love to be with your kids for the weekend. A healthy, Christ-centered home starts with the two of you, and this time is needed for the overall well being of your family. We at Spiritually Hungry fully recognize that this might be difficult to do, as we have a 1-year-old child ourselves at the moment of us writing this.

If you have an infant or young children that you can't send off to grandma's, consider planning your sessions around the child's napping and bed times, and find ways to make the weekend as special as you can.

Ground Rules:

#1. Although this is a married couple's retreat, it is really about each of you individually. You can only change yourself. You cannot truly change another person - only God can do that.

#2. When you are both sharing, try to be aware of how your feelings or thoughts might come across.

#3. Be aware of accusatory statements like: *"I hate when you do...."* Instead, try to rephrase with phrases like, *"I feel hurt when you ..."* and *"I wish I could..."*

This is your spouse, the person you made a marriage covenant with. You are together in this and communication is often a huge problem in marriages. Remember, even the best marriages have trouble communicating from time to time.

#4. Stay together this weekend! Do not schedule private outings like a massage for you alone, or a golf outing with friends. Find things you both like to do, or try out for the first time what each other likes doing.

#5. Try to listen to your spouse this weekend, even if you might not like what you are hearing.

Retreat Schedule

This retreat is formatted in block scheduling, with 4 retreat sessions over the weekend. There is room in the schedule for outings and fun activities, so please take advantage of this time, because a vital part of the retreat is doing things together and having fun.

Remember, having fun is an important part of your relationship!

	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning		Session 2: Worksheet p.11 Activity Time: Pick A Morning Activity To Do	Session 4: p.16 Listen To Sermon Online Discussion Guide: p.17
Afternoon	Fill Out: Activity Planning Exercise p. 6	Activity Time: Pick Some Activities To Do This Afternoon	Activity Time: Pick Some Activities To Do This Afternoon and Evening
Evening	Read: Retreat Guidebook Session 1: Worksheet and Assessment p. 8, p.10 Activity Time: Pick An Evening Activity To Do	Session 3: Worksheet p. 13 Activity Time: Pick An Evening Activity To Do	Activity Time

Make An Activity List

To get started, make a list of 5-10 activities you could do together over the retreat weekend. You can write separate lists and then come together and discuss which ones you both will do. Or you can write one list together, collaborating as you go.

As an example, a sample activity list for us (Aaron & Alexis) would be:

- Take a walk together
- Play a video game together
- Go on a drive together
- Go to the gym and workout together
- Go out to eat
- Go bowling
- Read a book together
- Watch our favorite show or movie together
- Go exploring

Think about the things you love doing together. If it has been some time since you have done “fun” things, think back to earlier in your relationship. Recall the things you did when you were dating or when you had less responsibilities. If you have found that you have outgrown those activities, this is a great weekend to experiment on what might be some new fun activities for you two to do!

Once you both agree on your list, you will use this to plug these activities into your weekend schedule at the “Activity Time.”

May this a weekend of enjoyment and rejuvenation for both of you and your marriage!

~ Alexis & Aaron @SpirituallyHungry.com

Session 1: Where Is Your Marriage At?

To get started, you're going to spend time evaluating where your marriage is at right now. In order to understand "right now", you should reflect on your recent history. We have provided you both a worksheet to fill out independently and thoughtfully. Take your time as you reflect and answer. Once both of you finish, come together and have a discussion. Share your responses, being open to each other and listening to what the other one has to say. Use this time to learn and communicate with each other.

Six Months Ago Till Now

For this section, go back in time six months from the present date, and spend a moment remembering what was going on in your life and marriage then. Really try to place yourself back in your life situation six months ago. It's often easy to forget even major issues that were taking place in the past, so don't try to rush your thoughts.

#1 Your Personal Life Six Months Ago - What was going on in your personal life six months ago? For this question, think about aspects of your life that your marriage has less impact on, such as work, health, friends, faith, or personal interests. What did you spend most of your time doing, thinking about, pursuing, or hoping for? Jot down the major issues below.

#2 Your Marriage Six Months Ago - What were the most important issues in your marriage six months ago? For example, what were the most commonly spoken about topics between you and your spouse six months ago? What did you spend your time together talking about - or avoiding talking about? Jot down the major issues below.

#3 Your Personal Life, Six Months Ago Till Now - Beginning at six months ago, think about the issues in your personal life and how they have progressed, changed, or gone away in that amount of time. What new issues have come up since then? How have those new issues affected your life?

Don't just focus on problems that have come along, but anything that has made a significant alteration to your life. And don't forget about long-lasting issues or joys that continue to be prominent in your life, even if they began long before six months ago.

#4 Your Marriage, Six Months Ago Till Now - Using the same method, take your marriage into account, and ask yourself how the issues from six months ago have progressed, changed or gone away between then and now. Again, reflect on the new issues that have arisen, and how they have affected your marriage.

#5 Create A Short List Of Most Important Issues, Six Months Till Now - Using the reflections you've just created, write down the most important issues in your own personal life. Then, write down the most important issues taking place in your marriage. Try to find at least five topics for both your personal life and married life.

#6 The Connection Between Your Personal And Married Life - Having separately considered both your personal life and your marriage, reflect on how those two areas affect each other. For example, are there work issues that have impact on your marriage? Or have issues in your marriage had an impact a personal interest in your own life? Really try to see the interconnectedness of both areas of your life.

The point here is to recognize that your marriage is not separated from anything in your life, but is integrated throughout everything you do. If you tend to see your marriage as separate from other areas of your life, that would also be a good topic to explore further at this time. Simply become aware of your view on the issue of seeing your marriage as separate or not connected with everything you do.

Assessment

On a scale of 1 to 10, where do you think your marriage is at in regards to the following topics:

1. Communication _____

- a. Listening to each other _____
- b. Communicating your needs _____

2. Love _____

- a. Feeling loved from your spouse _____
- b. Showing love to your spouse _____

3. Intimacy _____

4. Parenting (if applicable) _____

5. Enjoyment _____

(This simply means are enjoying each other, spending time together, playing together, etc)

6. Decision Making _____

- a. Spending Money _____
- b. Problem Solving _____
- c. Future Planning _____

7. Faith In Your Marriage _____

- a. Prayer Together _____
- b. Talk About God/Faith Issues _____
- c. Worship Together _____
- d. Teaching Your Children About God (if applicable) _____
- e. Using Faith Principles In Decision Making _____

8. Overall how do you feel like you are getting along and working together _____

This Ends Session 1

Session 2: Where Has Your Marriage Been?

Note: Use the same method for answering these questions as described on p. 8

#1 Recall the very beginning of your relationship. Take a moment to note the feelings, thoughts and desires you had at the very beginning of the relationship. Write down what you remember being the most important to you at the time.

#2 Why did you want to marry your partner?

#3 Recall the beginning of your marriage.

What were some of the greatest moments of the beginning of your marriage?

Why were they great?

What were some of the most challenging times at the beginning of your marriage?

How did you overcome them?

What did you learn about your spouse through those challenges?

#4 Overall, what are the most cherished moment(s) of your marriage?

Why?

#5 How has God played a role in your marriage in the past?

If God has played a role in your marriage, what did you learn from His interaction in your union

Session 3: Where Do You Want Your Marriage To Go?

Note: Use the same method for answering these questions as described on p. 8

What would you like your marriage to look like in the future, beginning today? Answer this question in any way that you feel compelled to answer seriously.

Refer back to the answers you gave in Sessions 1 and 2, and see if there any things in your distant or recent past that might be helpful or harmful in achieving what you'd like your marriage to look like.

The following section will ask you to specifically assess where you'd like to grow in your marriage. For quick reference, place your previous scores from each area in the blanks below, as a reminder of how you scored each area in Session 2.

1. Communication _____
 - a. Listening to each other _____
 - b. Communicating your needs _____

What are some tangible things that you can do to move in the direction of more communication in your marriage? For example: *"I will try not to interrupt when my spouse is speaking"* or *"I will ask my spouse more discussion leading questions, such as 'How was your day?'"* or *"What was the most challenging thing for you today or the most surprising thing?"*

List 2-5 communication goals that you will work on for your marriage:

2. Love _____

- a. Feeling loved from your spouse _____
- b. Showing love to your spouse _____

What are some tangible things that you can do to move in the direction of more love in your marriage? For example: *“I will try to receive the love my spouse shows me without judgment”* or *“I will find a creative way to show love to my spouse each week.”*

List 2-5 love goals that you will work on for your marriage:

3. Intimacy _____

What are some tangible things that you can do to move in the direction of more intimacy in your marriage? For example: *“I will hold my spouse’s hand more”* or *“I will make it a priority to give my spouse a kiss each day.”*

List 2-5 intimacy goals that you will work on for your marriage:

4. Parenting (if applicable) _____

What are some tangible things that you can do to move in the direction of better parenting in your marriage? For example: *“I will respect my spouses parenting style”* or *“I will work on becoming a better team player in our parenting.”*

List 2-5 parenting goals that you will work on for your marriage:

5. Enjoyment _____

What are some tangible things that you can do to move in the direction of more enjoyment in your marriage? For example: *"I will seek out ways to have more fun with my spouse"* or *"Every week, I will set aside time with my spouse to do something we love to do together."*

List 2-5 enjoyment goals that you will work on for your marriage

6. Decision Making _____

- a. Spending Money _____
- b. Problem Solving _____
- c. Future Planning _____

What are some tangible things that you can do to move in the direction of better decision making in your marriage? For example: *"I will try to work as a team with my spouse on making big decisions"* or *"When spending money, I will stay within and respect the family's budget."*

List 2-5 decision making goals that you will work on for your marriage:

7. Faith In Your Marriage _____

- a. Prayer Together _____
- b. Talk About God/Faith Issues _____
- c. Worship Together _____
- d. Teaching Your Children About God (if applicable) _____
- e. Using Faith Principles In Decision Making _____

What are some tangible things that you can do to move in the direction of having more faith in your marriage? For example: *"I will try to be open to new ways of connecting to God with my spouse and family"* or *"I will pray with my spouse every night for a few minutes praying for our marriage and our family."*

List 2-5 faith goals that you will work on for your marriage:

Session 4

This morning we hope you two stay cozy in bed and pull up an amazing sermon online. If it's Sunday and you'd like to attend worship, that's great! However, we'd still love for you to take some time to here this really, really excellent sermon for you today. It is from Louie Giglio, one of our favorite Christian leaders. He and his wife are founders and pastors of Passion City Church in Atlanta, Ga.

Louie's message is all about a Godly marriage. It is a long sermon, but even for someone who really detests long sermons-(Alexis), we can never get enough of Louie's messages. It's because He really speaks about the truth and love of God in profound ways.

You can find the sermon at the following address, and should be able to listen on any device.

<http://passioncitychurch.libsyn.com/stronger-0>

Should the link not happen to work, the sermon is titled "Stronger" and is from the Relat(able) series, May 31, 2015.

After you finish listening to the sermon, (and we really hope you did, it is so worth the time) we have one more exercise for you both to do.

And for this last exercise, you'll work on it together!

One of the main purposes of this retreat is to see the interconnectedness between all areas of your life, past and present, and where your marriage is at, and where it's going. It's always necessary to look back before moving forward.

We hope these exercises have helped you recall where you came from and where you're at. We believe that looking at these things will help you better prepare for the next step.

And we hope you are sensing your next steps.

We also assure you that the next steps for your marriage are slow and steady, not huge leaps and jumps. **Think of moving from "A to B" not "A to Z"**. If you should feel a tremendous pull to make drastic changes in your marriage, please seek support. Talk to your pastor, or even a counselor for help.

For this last session, **take the remaining portion of your morning and spend time talking, dreaming and planning for the next step in your marriage.**

God's guidance and presence in mind during this process. In order to help you, we've put together an easy little guide to help you invite God into this conversation and to try to discern where He is leading your marriage.

Use the Discussion Guide below to help each of you cultivate a conversation about where God may be leading your marriage. This may be a good exercise to do on your commute home, if you travelled somewhere over the weekend.

Discussion Guide:

What was the most surprising thing about this weekend for you?

What was your favorite activity to do with your spouse this weekend?

Is there anything that you, as a couple, didn't get to do that you wish you could have done?

Did you learn something new about your spouse this weekend?

What do you feel was the most difficult question to answer on the worksheets and why do you think that was?

Is there anything that you remembered about your relationship past that you have forgotten about?

What was the biggest thing you realized about the present state of your marriage?

What do you believe are the things that led to the present state of your marriage? Note: This doesn't necessarily mean negative things, just focus on any factors that led to where your marriage is at now.

What was the biggest thing you realized about what you'd like your marriage to become?

How can you individually, and as a couple, take steps in the right direction to achieve your future goals?

Thank you so much for taking this retreat!

We sincerely hope that your weekend was great, and one where you grew closer together as a couple and closer to God.

We have other opportunities for you to grow in your relationship with God.

*** Spiritually Hungry Challenges**

What would it look like if you devoted a period of time to working on a character trait or a discipline with God? Would your life change?

We believe so! By consciously working on attributes with God, we believe that your life will become different. Can you imagine if you took on more of God's character, how different things would be?

Some of our past Challenges include
Cultivating A More Thankful Heart
Living In Joy
Loving Your Spouse Through God's Definition Of Love

You can find all of our Challenges at spirituallyhungry.com/challenges

We also have support for the Challenge:

Facebook Challenge Group

In addition we have a Facebook group, Spiritually Hungry Challenges
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1051266348352753/>
In our group, we come together and talk about the current Challenge and spiritual development. Being part of this group will also allow you access to bonus content such as devotionals, Christian encouragement and prayers.

*** Spiritually Hungry Take Home Retreats**

We also have other retreats available for you. We are just starting this venture as of 2017 and more will be added throughout the year. But for now, we have a take home retreat that focuses on Self-Care. It is crafted for the person who gives, and gives, and gives some more. You need a break and some rest. It's time to take care of yourself with God, spend three days resting, relaxing and refueling with God.

You can find our retreats at spirituallyhungry.com/retreats

*** Articles**

Spiritually Hungry also has a lot of great posts on spiritual growth and development. We love to help people find ways to grow closer to God and one of those ways is through knowledge and truth.

Some of our top posts are:

How To Be The Light Of The World:

<http://spirituallyhungry.com/how-to-be-the-light-of-the-world/>

Why God Wouldn't Let Me Lose Weight:

<http://spirituallyhungry.com/weight-loss-with-god/>

20 Worship Songs For The Sad Heart:

<http://spirituallyhungry.com/20-worship-songs-for-depression/>

What To Think About Unanswered Prayers:

http://spirituallyhungry.com/unanswered_prayers/

Thank you again for participating and we hope we see you over at our website!