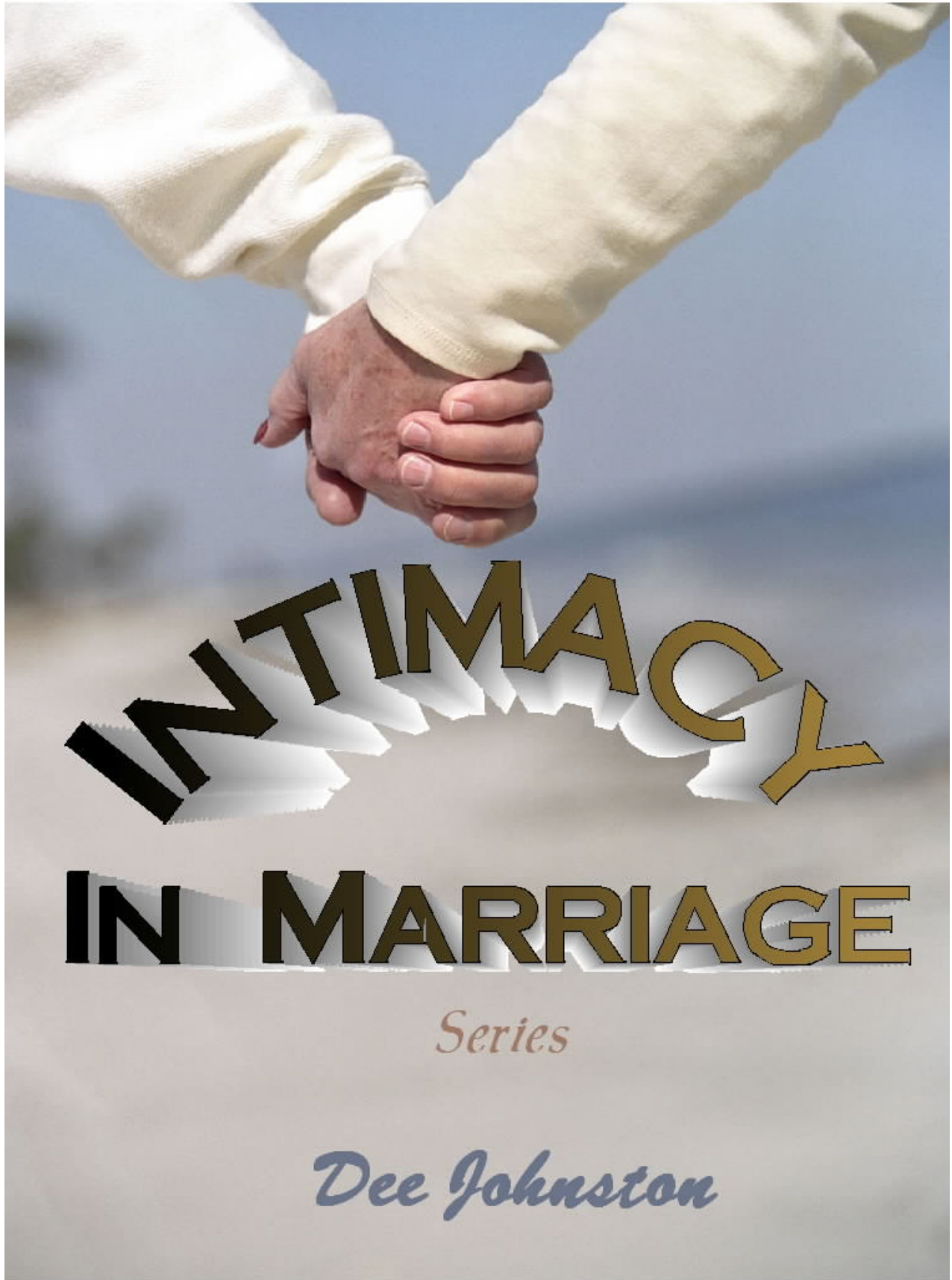


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INTRODUCTION

Intimacy in Marriage is a series for couples who are already married or thinking about getting married in the near future. The series highlights four important areas that we need to give specific attention to if we are to have/and or maintain a healthy relationship with each other.

These four areas include *Relational Communication, Unhealthy Relationships, Intimacy in Marriage, and Roadblocks to Intimacy*.

Communication is critical in any relationship but it is essential in marriage. Where there is no communication love breaks down and people begin to distance themselves from each other. Communication is a key ingredient when connecting with another person on a relational/emotional level. When there is a lack of communication there is also a decline in *intimacy*.

Unhealthy Relationships breed further unhealthy relationships. Unless we can stop the cycle from reoccurring again we will continue to stay stuck in a pattern of unhealthiness. If we are trying to change for the better but those around us are choosing to not change, eventually their actions and choices will affect us as well

Intimacy in Marriage is not just about sex. True intimacy has many parts. . . *openness, honesty, trust, unconditional love, and listening* just to mention a few. The loss of any one of these can have an impact on the level of intimacy maintained in any marriage. With the loss of more than one the odds get even worse.

Roadblocks are obstacles that usually involve unresolved heart issues and affect how two people relate to each other. We can be blinded by what the real issues are or we may know what the issues are but refuse to deal with them. Either way dealing with these heart issues will involve working through areas of *conflict, sin, and wounded-ness* if relationship is to be restored.

Marriage is a special union between men and women designed by God. Matthew chapter 19 verses 4-6 says, "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female, and said, 'for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."