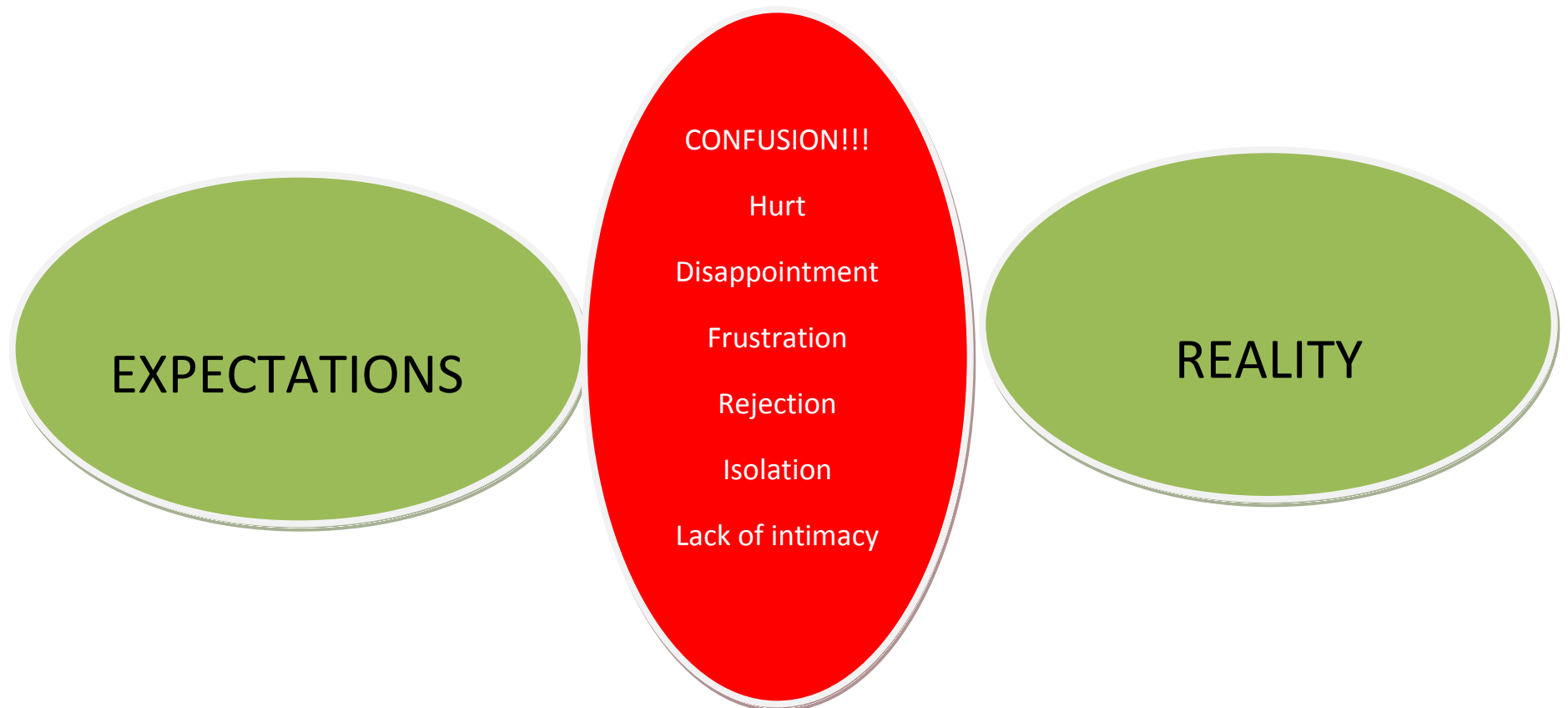


# Marriage expectations

*Every marriage has challenges. Once we accept that even the Huxtables didn't live the "Huxtables" fairytale, a lot of our issues will be experienced from a different mindset. But beyond the hope of a "fairytale" many of us have/had what we thought were realistic expectations that have not been met in our marriages. Below is a visual image of what happens when this occurs.*



*Several relationship experts & pastoral leaders that I highly respect believe that we solve this issue by not having any expectations in our marriages. While I understand the premise of why they would say that, it is difficult for me to imagine my marriage with absolutely no expectations. I think the balanced approach would be to say that each person must evaluate if their expectations are God-centered or self-centered. If our expectations are self-centered, then THAT is what needs to be adjusted. Our expectations should be based on God's design for marriage and not our own view of what we thought marriage would be. Once you, as an individual have gotten clear that your expectations line up with God's Word, then the couple should then discuss those expectations and create a mutually agreed upon list of expectations within your marriage.*



## OUR MARRIAGE EXPECTATIONS

As we start this process you will see that I interchangeably use the words EXPECT and DESIRE! That is because I believe that many of our challenges in marriage can be addressed more effectively if we put expectations on ourselves and share with our spouse our desires. Before you start this exercise I encourage you and your partner to be PRAYERFUL and HONEST! Being clear on what you are expecting/desiring and what is expected of you can help to eliminate unnecessary conflict. Remember, that prior to completing this worksheet you should have taken time to ensure that your desires are in line with God's Word. For example: Are you expecting that your husband sends you flowers every day and find yourself angry because he doesn't do that? Or Are you expecting that your wife meet your intimacy requests regardless if she has a headache (a real one. Not the proverbial 'I have a headache' excuse)? Once you've been prayerful about your expectations and lined them up with the Word of God you are almost ready. One more thing. You will notice that there are only 3 lines for your expectation/desires. I am sure you have more than that. But remember, giving someone a LONG list of what they NEED to do can be overwhelming. And, many times we put more on others (especially our spouse) than we do on ourselves. Think about this through the lens of God: What does GOD expect of you and your partner in marriage?

Finally, pray this simple prayer together before you start this exercise:

*Father, we pray that as we seek to honor You through our marriage, may we both lay our expectations at the cross. May we only expect of one another that which you expect of us. May our primary goal be to love one another through the gift of your grace. Amen!*

***Each of you will fill out both sheets separately and then share your response with your spouse.***

**In my marriage, I desire:**

(Example: In my marriage, I desire to be treated with respect. I feel respected when....)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. \_\_\_\_\_

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**My expectations of myself in marriage are:**

*(In marriage I want to be a wife that is faithful to my husband physically & emotionally)*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. \_\_\_\_\_

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