

## Dive Deep with Jeff and Beth McCord

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**Jill Savage:** Well, welcome to this month's Dive Deep interview. We are so excited to have with us, Jeff and Beth McCord. They are the authors of a brand-new book called *Becoming Us*, and it is using the enneagram to create a thriving Gospel-centered marriage. Welcome, Jeff and Beth.

**Beth McCord:** Yeah, thanks guys.

**Jeff McCord:** Hey, thank you so much for having us.

**Mark Savage:** Yeah, we are excited about this conversation.

**JS:** And we're kind of double excited because for those you that are watching, Jeff and Beth actually used to live here in Bloomington-Normal where we live. Bloomington-Normal, Illinois. Jeff was on staff at a church here in town, and we got to know them a long time ago, actually before the enneagram was a really cool thing.

**JM:** [chuckle] Oh, that's right. That was one of the first presentations Beth did really early on.

**JS:** Was it?

**BM:** Yes, yes.

**JS:** So I got this phone call from, I think it was from Jeff or maybe it was an email from one of you guys, and you offered to train our Hearts at Home staff on this so that we would better understand our personalities and how to work with each other. And we used it. We would pull out our papers and we would think about how to approach a person if things were difficult. So, I love that you have taken this, and you have applied it to marriage. That's obviously what we're going to jump into. But before we do that, tell us just a little bit about yourselves because you're not living in Bloomington-Normal anymore. Where do you live? Tell us about your family. What are you doing?

**JM:** Yeah, so we live in Nashville, Tennessee now. Actually, one of the suburbs, in Franklin. We've been here since 2014, but for Beth and I, this is year number 24. We got married when we were 20 years old. We were still in college.

**JS:** You were babies.

**BM:** We were babies.

**JM:** We became adults together. [laughter]

**JS:** I know. I was 19.

**JM:** Wow.

**BM:** So, you guys know.

**JM:** There's part of it that I look back and if our kids were to come to us and say, "Hey, we want to get married at 20," I'd be like, "Yeah, that's going to be tough." But I'm really thankful for our story, both the highs and the lows, because it's the story that God would have for us. And our story is really what's captured in our book. We're not the couple who's saying that we get it right. Well, matter of fact, we just find that we need Jesus more than what we thought we did yesterday. Beth and I, we've always worked together. It was back in 2001 while I was attending seminary in St. Louis when our mentors were going through crisis in their late 20s, early 30s, in marriages, career, as well as having children. They introduced us to the enneagram during that time. That was really in seed form what became something really big for Beth and what she's been able to accomplish now.

**JS:** Wow. Well, tell us a little bit more about your marriage story and how the enneagram has played a role in that. And while you're at it, I'm sure there are people that don't understand what the enneagram is. So, jump in there and define it for us as well.

**BM:** Yeah, absolutely. Well, Jeff and I, before we got married, which is probably the same story for most people, we thought we were this awesome couple. We had it all figured out. We had the same calling and desire. So why not get married? So, we dated for 13 months and got married at age 20, like he said. Shortly after marriage, which I'm sure is the same for lots of people, instead of being ballroom dancers who are dancing beautifully together, we realized we were doing the game Twister, stumbling all over each other time and time again. It was like, "What is happening?" And you quickly realize that I don't know this person. And then you realize, I don't even know myself! How are we going to navigate this? What we realized is that after several years, and having two kids, which throws in a whole other layer of complexity, we needed help. We just did not understand what was going on. Why couldn't we figure this out? Why wasn't it like our dating relationship? And that's when the enneagram was introduced to us.

**BM:** And the enneagram is, if you were to see the symbol, a nine-pointed geometric figure. It looks like a nine-pointed star. Each point represents nine basic personality types or nine valid perspectives of the world. Why that's important is that if we all have different sunglasses on when we're born, they all have different shades of color. So, there are nine basic shades. Now just like when you go into Sherwin Williams, there might be blue, but there's lots of blues right? There's lots of reds. So even though there's nine basic types, that doesn't mean everyone is just put in the one box. There's lots of different shades of these different personality types. But that being said, Jeff and I were wearing different lenses and we didn't know it. So, what usually happens is we commit assumicide. An assumicide is where we assume incorrectly people's thoughts, feelings and motives. And then we can turn that assumption into harmful conversations and conflicts.

**BM:** If I'm wearing a certain lens, let's say purple, and he's wearing orange, I might be like, "Why did you do that? I would never have said that. I would have never done that." So, because you did it that way, that hurts me, or you must have meant it this way. But it could have been that he's coming from a completely different perspective. Because I didn't understand it or take the time to get to know it, I harmed, hurt, or even destroyed a relationship based off of my wrong assumption. So, what the enneagram helps us to understand is why. That's the big word in the enneagram. Why you think, feel and behave in particular ways.

**BM:** And what it's also going to show you is: with those thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, are you on your best path which is getting closer to being like Christ or are you veering off course and

you're going to land into those common pitfalls that we do time and time again? The Enneagram is just a tool. Think of it like a flashlight. It's going to illuminate your heart's condition. Are you aligned, misaligned, or out of alignment with the truth of the gospel? And we need that because our heart's deceitful above all things. If we can see where our heart's condition is, it's not to shame ourselves or to beat ourselves up. It's to really praise God for what he's accomplished already for us and that we are His beloved child. When we can come back to that truth time and time again when we've messed up, He then gives us the freedom to come back into alignment with him to enjoy that rich satisfying grace and love. That will change the trajectory of our relationships, particularly our marriage, when we are satisfied in Christ first and foremost. So that in a nutshell is a little bit of the Enneagram and how we can use it going from there. But there are nine basic personality types.

**JS:** Right.

**JM:** And I think for Beth and I, it was around year six when we found out about the Enneagram. When we started to hit some of those really difficult years of marriage realizing there were routines in our fights. We were fighting the same way. It didn't matter what the topic was. Oftentimes, there was way more harm than it was helpful. We were totally missing each other, scared to death to really voice emotional need. Then we had this framework of the Enneagram that was giving us insight not only about each other but about ourselves. Why do I do what I do? Because sometimes I didn't even know why I was so reactive to something that Beth or maybe one of the kids had done. What ends up happening by just the virtue of being as a pastor, we would have couples that would come over and we would quietly share with them, "Hey, here's what we know to be true biblically about marriage. But there's this other helpful tool that gives you a quick reference guide into your own heart, and into the heart of your spouse." So, it became this little mantra in our church of getting time at the McCord's table. That was probably around 2008 when that started to happen.

**JM:** So, all the things that we're doing now really are the overflow of over a decade of sitting with couples and using it in our own family because we found it so beneficial. But the goal has never been to necessarily become the Enneagram experts. Really this whole goal is to focus upon Christ and what He intends for our marriages, and the Enneagram just helps to give us awareness of where we're at with that.

**MS:** Yeah, I love how you've really connected the Gospel to the Enneagram and you've honestly done an outstanding job of communicating that in your book. Tell a little bit about that process of connecting the Gospel to the Enneagram.

**BM:** Yeah. So, when I started reading about the Enneagram back in 2001, there were no books out there that were gospel-centered. There was one book that was from a Christian perspective, but it still wasn't fully aligned with how probably we would see it.

**JS:** Define Gospel.

**BM:** Jeff, I'll let you, being the pastor, define the Gospel for everyone.

[laughter]

**JM:** That's true. We were being influenced. We're in the same denomination as Tim Keller, and so, early on we were being influenced by some of his earlier writings and this idea that concerning

Jesus's life, death and resurrection, by faith, we can have a relationship with God because of all that Jesus has accomplished for us. Not only is that a way of salvation, but it's the very core of the Christian life. We're going to continue to grow in our understanding of all that God is for us in the person of Christ. And so, what we saw then was the opportunity. We saw these individual types who have core motivations, a way that they were uniquely designed, that expresses themselves relationally. And then the truth of the Gospel and that when you apply all of these promises to each individual type, something exceptional happens, which we call the fruits of the Spirit. As I am loved and God addresses my core need, I find that I become an instrument of that in the lives of others. So, we had this great tool and a really cool Gospel, and then Beth has done an excellent job of bringing those two together.

**JS:** It's helping us to become more like Jesus every day.

**JM:** That's right.

**BM:** But that's not how the Enneagram was taught when I was reading it. As I'd read the different books almost 20 years ago, a lot of them really were from people from different world views, different religions, and different belief systems. Though the information was really solid in the sense of gravity is gravity, that's the truth, but the way they were wording it, I was like, "Well, that's just not how we believe it." So, I would tell Jeff, "Hey, here's this truth, but they're wording it in these ways and I know theologically in my mind it fits with what we believe. But how do we look at this? How do we word it?" Since he had four years of seminary training, he would nuance it more in a theologically correct manner, and I'd be like, "Oh yeah, that totally makes sense. Thank you." So, we would do that time and time again as we would study the Enneagram. We would only bring into our own practice, in our own internal work, those things that would align with the truth of the gospel, and we wouldn't bring any other words or practices that we wouldn't agree with.

**BM:** Those we left aside, and it's just been really neat to see how much truth there really is but also how it aligns with the Gospel. And of course, if it's truth, it's God's truth. We just need to make sure it's worded in that way that can fit what we believe and how we should live out to be like Christ.

**JS:** Got you.

**MS:** Yeah. Cool.

**JS:** So, talk to us about who Beth and Jeff were before the Enneagram and who they are after the Enneagram.

**BM:** Jeff you wanted to go first with that one?

[laughter]

**JM:** That's a great question. Oh man.

**BM:** Well, okay. I'll start with me. Beth before the Enneagram and is still this today, I still have to work on it, I am a peaceful mediator, the type nine. Beth was the type of person who wanted to make everyone happy to please everyone, and the way she would do that is to merge, to immesh with other people's wants, desires, and needs. So, what happens is, I would lose myself and my own

desires and wants and needs. I would just not even look at it, wouldn't even know how to. So basically, I would live in a fog, and the only thing that would bring me clarity was asking other people or just merging with what they want. Like, "Oh I'll just follow them. I'll just do what they want." And that was a way to people please to make others happy, to feel secure, to have peace and harmony. But when you avoid conflict, you actually create conflict without even knowing it.

**BM:** And so, we all self-sabotage ourselves but we don't even realize it. We're trying to use certain tools and resources we have inside ourselves, but it just doesn't work. And so, through understanding my personality, I've understood how I have let go of how God has created me and the desires He's put in me and the calling and really, primarily merged with Jeff and my kids. And then of course anyone else, but primarily them. That enabled me to lose myself. And so, learning, "Wait. God has given me a calling, a voice that matters, and a perspective," and coming to others with that. To share it with others has been really hard, but also freeing and beautiful and glorious all at the same time, which is growth for any of us. It's hard, but it also is beautiful when we are in alignment with Christ. So that's kind of my story. Jeff, what was yours?

**JM:** Yeah. I was adopted very early on, six months old, and my parents were not of the same race that I was. So, I looked very, very different from them and knew from very early on that I was adopted. It serves as an appropriate metaphor for my life because I have often lived more like an orphan. I lived with this ongoing anxiety that life is terrifying, and I can only be secure as to the degree that I have the resources to be able to engage with life. I carry within me this sense of anxiety of wondering, "Am I going to have enough support? Am I going to have enough guidance?" If you were to come into our home, you'd quickly see bookcase upon bookcase of books. It makes me look like a really wise pastor, but the reality is, that came from a lot of anxiety, trying to figure out life and feeling like I was alone. So, I'm the loyal guardian. I'm a type 6. We find security through authority figures, mentors, community theological systems, anything that's going to give us guidance, because there's this fundamental lack of trust that God's enough.

**JM:** In the past, what that meant is that I just devoured information. I would really latch on to leaders and ideas. But what that's meant now is I have found that, that which led me away from Christ is also a gift that leads me to him. I find that I have a really big heart and can provide safety for others when I'm operating at being a child of God versus an orphan on my own.

**MS:** That's beautiful.

**JS:** Wow. Beautiful.

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** So then, what happens when the six and the nine do life together?

**BM:** Yeah, well.

**JM:** The seas roar and the mountains crumble. It's amazing.

[laughter]

**MS:** And that's our story.

**JM:** That's awesome. Good for you.

**BM:** Jeff and I have gone around the country and done Becoming Us live events, and what we're teaching in the live events that's a step even beyond our book is how we have a relational dance together. Each of us does no matter what types you are. It could be the same two types together or two different types, but each type combination has their own dance that they do, and we call it a misaligned dance, and then an aligned dance. When it's misaligned, it means that we're living as orphans or thinking we have to do it in our own strength. When we're aligned, we're believing and trusting in our identity in Christ. Jeff and I's misaligned dance, obviously there's going to be different ways of going about this, but for me I wonder as a type 9 if my voice and presence matters. I really want to know that my voice and my presence matters. So, if I'm talking to Jeff and I'm meandering around in my talk style and he looks at his phone or gets up or does something, my first thought is, "See, I guess I don't matter. Why should I even talk?" And so, it makes me want to withdraw and close up inside. That not only is going to hurt me, but then what happens is when I withdraw or shut down, that will activate Jeff's core fear of being abandoned.

**BM:** A type six fears being abandoned. So, when I withdraw or disengage in any form and he can sense it, his first thought is, "Is this the beginning of the end?" So, then he might pursue me with more tension or passion. Well, nines don't want tension and passion. So then, I withdraw even more, and that only activates his heart more and on and on you go. That's why we said, it's not so much the topic at hand, it's knowing our heart and why we do what we do that can help understand our dances. Now the only thing that's going to solve the dance is when we understand that we have pure satisfaction through Christ. So, when I recognize that, "You know what? Even if Jeff doesn't think my presence and voice matters, my voice and presence matters to Christ. He demonstrated that to me by coming to earth, living a hard life, being beaten, being killed, buried, and then rising again, all to bring me to himself." Like, I don't know how much more your presence can matter, right? So when I recognize that, and I come back to that daily, hourly, minute-by-minute, then I'm no longer demanding or judging or punishing Jeff for not doing it because he can never satisfy that to the degree that I need it, even if he tried.

**BM:** And so, by coming to Christ and being satisfied there first, it allows my heart to come back in alignment, which then can change the dance. So, when I talk to Jeff and I'm feeling that same thing of, "He's not paying attention," that's a warning signal to me now, we call it a rumble strip on the highway, that I need to be alert, like, "Wait, is that really true?" And then, even if it was true, do I have to really fall into that same pitfall, or can I come back and feel satisfied by Christ? It's there that I can change that misaligned dance into an aligned dance and ask clarifying questions, not committing assuicide, and moving towards Jeff instead of being reactive. There are so many things that we've learned along the way in how to nuance these dynamics, and Jeff has his own stories as well.

[chuckle]

**MS:** Sure, yeah. I love the rumble strip idea. Jill and I, in our discussions and our talks, we talk about a stop sign and ruts. We all have ruts in our lives, and we blow through a stop sign and follow a rut.

**JM:** And it's almost like you know it. You almost know you're about to do it, but you don't know

how to stop it. [chuckle]

**MS:** I know. It's like, "I'm sliding into this thing and I'm going to slide back out." I know. But we've really learned that a lot of those ruts or thinking comes from childhood. You guys talk about that. Let's talk a little bit about what are the messages that we bring into today from childhood?

**JS:** Well, and I guess I would add to that, and maybe you can answer it at the same time is, the enneagram is the way we were created by our God who formed us in our mother's womb. But then, how is it affected, positively or negatively, by our experiences in this life? And particularly, in our experiences growing up?

**MS:** Yeah, like she said.

[laughter]

**JM:** That's awesome. There's a lot that goes into that particular question. We would say that people are born a particular type. Now, is a child thinking, "I'm a one and I have these core fears?" No, not that. But there's just something about how we are made that we just have the hard-wiring for it. Usually what happens in our development with our family is that there are roles that we play in our family. There are patterns of how family deals with care and conflict that impact us both relationally and physiologically. So, we learn that from attachment to people, that even our brain is somehow changed by how people attend to us. So, what we would say is that those things reveal type. As I mentioned earlier, it's almost like we've been given certain gifts to be able to bless others with, but as children, we oftentimes use it as survival. We bring those same patterns into our marriage, but the rules no longer apply that applied to our family. And so, that's why in our 20s, oftentimes it's us trying to get distance from our family to figure out who we are apart from them, which can be a bumpy season for a young adult, particularly if they're married.

**JM:** But we've got these neural pathways in our brain, or just these physiological sensations that, when tension comes up, my gut gets tight, and my mind shuts down. Or whenever tension comes up, I become more intentional about my language and more focused to get it right. And those are all styles of relating, and through the lens of the enneagram, it helps to identify what those are. What are your strategies that lead you away from trusting in Christ versus leading you towards Christ and relating? So, it is true. Families typically reinforce our types, and we bring that into our marriage and can replicate it, but it's a new relationship and a new opportunity for us to operate from a different place in our hearts.

**BM:** And I would also say, with the childhood messages, as we've talked about in the book, you're hard-wired in your personality to see things in a very specific way. Let's say there were nine kids in a family, and they all had one of the enneagram types, so nine types. That means that they see the circumstance differently and they interpret it differently. So, the childhood message is either something that's been directly told to us or it's what we inferred was happening. A message that was being given to us. But it may not have been, which is really intriguing. So, if you have nine siblings, and I'm sure we could all attest to this that have siblings (I know Jeff was an only child, so it's a little different), but if we talk about an incident that we were all a part of, it's amazing how, when we're older, we all saw it differently or we acted to it differently, or were hurt differently, or weren't hurt at all. It's like, "Wait, what?" And so, that's why we talk about that these are nine valid perspectives. And there are nine different messages that the kids will infer. So, if I go through

something as a type nine, the message that I'll probably pull out of it is, "See? You shouldn't assert yourself." Now, that's totally different than, like Jeff says, "You shouldn't trust yourself." And then, another type is, "You should not trust others, you should only trust yourself." And so, each of the types are going to see and interpret these circumstances from their own personality lens. And as an adult, why that's helpful is, it's not that their experience, that they're wrong, or that it didn't happen, it's, "How can I look at it from a different perspective, now that I'm older?" And, "How can Christ bring healing to that now that I understand how I'm hard-wired?" And, "Maybe I did interpret it wrong, maybe there is healing, maybe I didn't, maybe I really need to go into it even further with the help of a counsellor or a therapist." So, there's lots of things to realize. But it helps us to understand why, especially siblings, don't see it the same way.

**JS:** Very true. Yeah, that's good. That's really helpful. I can see that. Okay, so let's personalize this just a little bit because you guys have talked about, you're the six and the nine, and the things that you're learning about. So, we're sitting at Jeff and Beth's table, and we've discovered that we step on each other's toes in this dance and we've taken the test. So, I'm a one, married to a two.

**BM:** Great.

**JM:** That's a great couple-type. The best.

[laughter]

**JS:** I don't know if that's always been the case.

[laughter]

**MS:** I always thought it was true until...

[laughter]

**BM:** Right.

[laughter]

**JS:** Oh goodness. So, let's apply it to another kind of couple-type. What are things that we need to understand? And obviously, we're going to send those that are watching this to where they can take the free test, and they can get more information about their types, and of course your book and all of that. But talk to us for just a moment because we're sitting at your table and we're struggling in some way, shape or form. How does the Enneagram affect us and what do we need to know?

**BM:** Yeah, well first in finding your type, the pre-assessment on our website is great, but the test cannot determine your type, it's going to be a guiding post. And so, when people take it, we want them to find the type that has their core motivations. There are four core motivations of why you think, feel, and behave in particular ways. There's the Core Fear, what you're always running away from or trying to prevent. There's the Core Desire, what you long to have, like, "Oh God, life would be perfect if I had this." The Core Weakness, which is your Achilles heel or the thorn in your side. But God is your strength in your weakness, and He's the one that's always there to help make you more like Christ, but we'll still deal with it for the rest of our time on earth. And then the Core



Longing, this is the message our heart longs to hear and the very thing that Christ has satisfied.

**BM:** So, we also have a free PDF download and they can get that at [yourenneagramcoach.com/coremotivations](http://yourenneagramcoach.com/coremotivations), and it will show all the different nine types Core Motivations. So they can look at those. But also, in the book, it's in there as well, for all the nine types. So those are two different places that they could find that. Then, once you find your core motivations, it's so important to know these, because this is what's getting activated in your heart when you guys miscommunicate in a wrong way or you are in conflict, it will go back to these core motivations. Now, what you experience is the outward behavior, and that's what gets us all riled up and it hits our core motivations. And so, understand that core motivations are going to be really crucial in how you understand your dance. And Jeff, why don't you explain the dance just a little bit?

**JM:** Yeah. So, look at James 4 - What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from the desires that wage war in your heart? The Greek word there is *epi-desire*, it's idolatrous desire. And so, for the Type 1, there are core motivations, and for the Type 2, there's core motivations. Whenever an incident happens, we see it from our perspective, and we interpret it through our perspective. A child, the dishwasher, something happening relationally with friends. We bring those core motivations. I perceive it, I think and feel internally first. That expresses itself in particular ways of communicating and each type has a way of communicating. Well, then that contributes to the original circumstance, and then your spouse is going to come with their motivations and their lenses, and so that's the dance. It's looking at what's happening internally and then out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks, and so what's in our heart is going to come out, and we can miss each other then, in our dances. And so, Beth, why don't you go through the core motivations for the 1 and 2?

**BM:** Yeah, so for the Type 1, their Core Fear is being evil, wrong, corruptible, and not having integrity. They desire to be balanced, to be right, to be good, to be virtuous, and their core weakness is resentment. Now resentment comes because they repress their anger that the world, others, and themselves aren't perfect. And so, the reason they have it is, they look around and they have an inner critic that assaults them that there are imperfections. Now, this is a constant berating. We all have an inner critic, but this is just constant, it's brutal, and it's intense. And when it comes out of the Type 1, it's only because it's been 100-fold inside of them already. It's a very oppressive and hard inner world to deal with.

**JS:** I don't think that describes me at all, does it?

[laughter]

**JM:** Mark, are you familiar with that critic? Have you heard that critic?

[laughter]

**MS:** I'm just scared, all of a sudden, listening to you rattle on and off.

[laughter]

**BM:** Yes, I know. It's like someone is talking about your internal diary.

[laughter]

**JM:** Sure. Yes.

**JS:** And there's a reason why my last three books were *No More Perfect Kids*, *No More Perfect Moms*, and *No More Perfect Marriages*.

**BM:** Amen.

**JM:** Jill, that's really interesting...

**JS:** Because I've obviously been processing this as well in my own journey. So yeah, it totally makes sense.

**JM:** I noticed that in my preaching. I often preached from the perspective of a six. I was addressing my needs.

**BM:** Tell really quickly about what Dan Allender had talked about, like some of our past wounds, how they are then used?

**JM:** Yeah. So, I went through some training with Dan Allender and I was surprised he had us do StrengthsFinder, which isn't a typical, Allender-esque kind of thing. What was interesting in the end he said, "Whenever you face trauma, you relied on the strengths that you were given to cope with it, but as you live through your trauma, you're using your God-given strengths to survive." Well, that means that as you move forward in relationships, oftentimes when you are using strength, it also comes from a place of shame, and so you're experiencing both at the same time. And it has an impact on us because, in one sense, the one's inner critic has always been there, it's helped them to make it where they're at. And then, in another sense, it's also kind of the weakness, their unhealthy habit that they bring to relationships, that can actually be unhelpful in a marriage.

**JM:** And that's also true of the two as well. The two, whose heart it is to want to be valued, to want to be loved, and they do that through serving others, will oftentimes serve to the degree that they lose themselves, and will get to a point where they want to give to get. To try to get people to love them through serving. And what ends up happening is they end up losing themselves and becoming really upset with their spouses because they've never been seen by their spouse. But Beth, why don't you go through the motivations for a two?

**BM:** Yeah. Well, lastly, the type one longs to hear that you are good, and we talk about how Christ satisfies that by literally removing your sins, past, present, and future, and giving you his full righteousness. Then, when He looks at you, it's not saying that *you* are good, because we all know that we're sinners, but you are good because of Christ. And there's freedom in that. Then the type 2, their core fear is not being loved, wanted, or appreciated, and that's what they're really wanting. To be loved, wanted and appreciated. They also really fear rejection and being dispensable or disposable.

**BM:** Their core weakness is pride, and pride for the two, is that they're solely looking at the feelings and needs of others and negating their own. And when they do that, they really have the superpower

of knowing what people feel and need and they move into those people's lives with confidence and assertiveness. They insert their help because they need to be needed, they want to be appreciated. If they don't feel like they're loved or appreciated, they're looking for needs, whether they realize this or not, and they're like, "Oh they have a need," and so they moved into that person's life with advice, help, service, you name it, even if it's not wanted, because they need to hear the affirmation and the gratitude to feel loved and wanted. Does this sound familiar?

**MS:** No, not at all. [laughter] Honestly, the part of our story is that when I left pastoring, that need to be wanted just raised its ugly head big time. Also, part of leaving the pastoring was that I was angry with God for the very same reason that we're talking about. I had given everything for God, and what about me?

**BM:** Absolutely.

**JM:** Yes.

**MS:** I found myself angry at God, at the church, at Jill, and all of it. I could have actually said some of the very same phrasing that you just said. And then I ultimately had an affair because nobody wants me over here. Oh, I'm wanted over here.

**BM:** Yup, yup, absolutely.

**MS:** I had never thought about pride until I read your book, but for me it was selfish because I really stepped into people's lives for myself. What was I getting out of it?

**JS:** And one of the things we even identified is, I am very strong and independent, but I unintentionally with that strength and that independence sent a message to Mark that I didn't need him.

**BM:** Exactly.

**JS:** Which now I'm understanding the two, that's like a huge message.

**BM:** Oh, that's the biggest fear.

**MS:** Just rip my chest right open.

[laughter]

**BM:** That is a type two's biggest fear: rejection. Jill in your mind, you're not thinking, "Oh, I'm rejecting you," because the lens you have is people should be independent, and people should be strong, and you should have an inner critic that guides you. Why wouldn't you just follow your inner critic? Just do what you're supposed to do people, like this is not hard.

**MS:** Oh my gosh you're starting to sound just like her.

[laughter]

**BM:** So, the dance is going to come in. Well, let's give the dishwasher a go. I don't know if the dishwasher has ever been a problem for you guys, but usually the type one, there is a right way to load the dishwasher. And so, let's say Mark that you have so generously served her because she's tired, and you just put stuff in there, and she's like, "Let me re-organize this, because you obviously didn't know how to do it right." And Mark is going to be hurt, feeling rejected, I'm not needed, she'll just do it herself, and around and around that dance will go. You can see how we miss each other because for Jill, it could very well be that she is not necessarily looking that you did a wrong job, the inner critic is like, "No, this is not right, there is a right way of doing this," and it won't be quiet until it's fixed.

**BM:** And either she's going to tell you to fix it or she's going fix it, but she's not going to be able to get away from this inner critic. What I tell people, (this just goes into a whole other part of the Enneagram), is that I have a wing of type one that I use at times, and I tell people it's like a bat just beating at your head. That's how ruthless it can be. And if you're just trying to get away from this bat, you're going to tell other people what to do, or you're going to do it. It's like, "Come on, people," and that's where the resentment comes in.

**BM:** And so, if we put the lens of our spouse on and see it from their vantage point, we'll never fully get it, but if we can see through their vantage point, it's like, "Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry. I had no idea that you were assaulted in such a way." Or for Jill to go to Mark and put his lens on and say, "I had no idea you felt so rejected and unwanted and unloved. That was never my intention," Which is what I'm hearing from you guys. It takes a lot of years to get there, and a lot of heartache. That's where the Enneagram, when used through the gospel's perspective, we're hoping and praying that there will be many marriages that start off a little bit better with a lot better understanding. All marriage is going to have turbulence. Don't be fooled. But we're hoping that they don't have to go through such turbulence and such discord that some of us have had to go through. But you will, and that's where we just need Jesus all the more.

**BM:** But to have this clarity and this understanding of how the dance works, then we can ask clarifying questions to one another like, " Hey, I just loaded the dishwasher and I really was just trying to serve you and you kind of came in behind me and re-arranged that and it really hurt me. But knowing you, I don't think that's what you were intending. Was there something else going on behind all of it that I can understand better? Or were you really trying to hurt me?" But to get that clarification instead of assuming, we call this assumicide in the book. Instead of assuming incorrectly about our spouse, because Mark, you would never do that. You wouldn't come along behind and rearrange stuff. You would be like, "Oh my gosh, thank you so much," because that's how you want to be treated. Since she doesn't do that, you're assuming incorrectly that you're dispensable and disposable. So, asking these clarifying questions and knowing, I think, they're coming from a different angle, can really help eliminate some conflicts, but also smooth out others.

**JS:** Right. The enneagram is about understanding yourself and understanding how you operate in this world. But it's also about understanding others and how they operate. One of the things we say in our *No More Perfect Marriages* book is when I'm a better me, we're a better we.

**MS:** Right.

**JM:** Yes.

**JS:** When I better understand myself and when I better understand him, I'm a better me because I'm learning about him and I'm better understanding his motivations. Then ultimately, we are stronger together. And really that's what *Becoming Us* is all about.

**BM:** Exactly.

**JM:** There are three things that we commonly hear from couples as we do what we just did with you. Just talking through what the dynamics are and how they miss each other as they're seeing things from their own perspective is number one, understanding. They get a language for understanding what's happening in their own heart and in their spouse's heart. It's not that they didn't know that it was happening, they just didn't have a language to be able to identify it so that they could actually change it.

**JS:** Yes.

**JM:** Number two is compassion, and that is, "Mark, I didn't know that you felt so rejected." Or, "Jill, I didn't know that you felt so condemned by this critic that's playing in your mind constantly." So, there's compassion and empathy for one another. Thirdly is affirmation, and that is that no longer are we trying to change our spouse to become what we want them to become. Then we start to see, "Wait a minute, God's made them unique and so I can be supportive now in helping them to become who God intended for them to become versus what I thought they should." So now there's a new level of affirmation rather than, "Hey, you're not doing it the way that I would do it, this thing isn't working. This relationship isn't working," because the couple is actually totally missing each other because they're only related on observations versus what's going on in the heart.

**JS:** Yeah. Oh, you guys, this is so good.

**MS:** This has been awesome.

**JS:** Thank you. We could talk for another hour but...

**BM:** We really could.

**JM:** It's true. We love it.

**BM:** We might bring it to two hours.

**MS:** Yeah, we should do this again.

**JM:** One additional resource that we've developed on [becomingus.com](http://becomingus.com) is our free personalized marriage plan. So, if you and your spouse know your enneagram types...

**JS:** Which you can take on...

**JM:** [youenneagramcoach.com](http://youenneagramcoach.com), and then the next step would be that you can take this assessment with your spouse, and then we will give you a six-page report on the dynamics between your two enneagram types as it relates to spirituality, family of origin, core motivations, communication, conflict, and becoming your best selves together. It'll lay out what the dynamics are and all of that is

free.

**JS:** Okay.

**MS:** Cool.

**JS:** I love it. Well we will make sure that we put the links underneath this video so that people can easily link over to that. But we are just so grateful for you taking the time to share your experience, and your knowledge, and your wisdom. We have one more question for you and that is a question we ask everybody that we do a Dive Deep interview with. Since we're talking about date night, what is your favorite date night activity? And it can be the same for both of you, or you can each have your own individual likes.

**BM:** Yeah. Jeff, do you want to go first, or do you want me to?

**JM:** I've been thinking about this. I think I've identified it.

**JS:** What's that?

**BM:** Okay.

**JM:** Beth and I, and this is not like a Friday night date kind of thing because we're entrepreneurs, we work crazy hours.

**JS:** Right.

**JM:** But when we really want to connect with one another, we do the same thing every time. We go on a drive.

**BM:** I was going to say the same thing. [chuckle]

**JS:** Really? And what do you do on a drive? Why?

**JM:** I don't know.

**BM:** Well, for one, Tennessee is beautiful. Rolling hills.

**JM:** It's beautiful. Leiper's Fork which is where all the country western celebrities are at. It's just rolling hills, farmland, beautiful mountains, and so there's that part. We listen to the same music each time and it's usually around sunset. We just find that in about the first 15-20 minutes our internal worlds calm down and then we can just talk to one another in a non-anxious way. So yeah, it's driving.

**BM:** Yeah. I was going to say the same thing.

**JM:** We really love it.

**JS:** One of you will just say, "Hey, you want to go for a drive tonight?"

**JM:** Yes, that's exactly right.

**BM:** Yeah.

**MS:** Wow, that's excellent.

**JS:** I love it.

**JM:** So, if you're ever in Nashville, we'll take you for a drive. [chuckle]

**JS:** Every once in a while, we sure are. We'll have to catch you guys sometime.

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** Well thank you guys.

**MS:** Yeah, thank you so much.

**JS:** This has been such a good conversation, and we're just so grateful.

**BM:** Thank you.

**JS:** And thanks for those of you that are watching, listening, or reading the transcript. This is Mark and Jill Savage, along with Jeff and Beth McCord, reminding you that a real marriage isn't perfect, a real marriage is two people being perfected. Thanks for joining us.