

Introduction: Welcome to Engage360 Denver Seminary's podcast. Join us as we explore the redemptive power of the gospel and the life changing truth of Scripture at work in our culture today.

Dr. Don Payne: Hi, there I'm Don Payne, your host for Engage360. We're glad you're with us again. You know, it's not every day that a seminary professor writes something useful. Now I said that mostly just as a hook to get your attention and I need to qualify that statement considerably. Many of the things we write as seminary professors do have a lot of usefulness, at least I, I hope and pray that is the case, but many times they're useful kind of in an upstream sense. It's not all that common that a seminary professor will write something that has more immediate practicality to a very broad audience. But today we are privileged to have as our guest, one of our colleagues here at Denver Seminary who has done that very thing. So, we're glad to welcome to Engage360 Dr. Ron Welch from our counseling faculty. Ron, welcome to the podcast.

Dr. Ron Welch: Thank you for having me. Great to be here.

Dr. Don Payne: We are glad you're here for many reasons but let me introduce Ron to you a little bit first. Ron has been on the faculty of Denver Seminary since 2008. Before that he taught for seven years at Colorado Christian University. He spent about seven years. I want to say he spent seven years in prison, but he actually spent about seven years working in the prison system as a psychologist. He holds a doctor of psychology degree from central Michigan University and is the author of a couple of key books. The first of which is called the Controlling Husband. But the one we want to talk mostly about today is his most recent book titled 10 Choices Successful Couples Make. And interestingly, this book has made almost a national splash. It's garnered quite a bit of national attention just in the last few months. And we're going to have Ron, tell us a little bit about that. Before we do that though, we need to talk about baseball.

Dr. Ron Welch: Of course.

Dr. Don Payne: Of course, because Ron if you don't know, Ron, you may not know this. If you do know Ron, you may not know this, but Ron is pretty much into baseball in a pretty serious way. Coached baseball for quite a number of years. And I think just in the last year or so retired from that.

Dr. Ron Welch: Yup.

Dr. Don Payne: Two boys' wife, Jan, I don't know if Jan plays baseball?

Dr. Ron Welch: She does not, no.

Dr. Don Payne: But I think both of your sons played baseball. Did they not?

Dr. Ron Welch: Yeah. They did.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. Okay. Tell us very briefly about your illustrious baseball coaching career, if not your baseball playing career too.

Dr. Ron Welch: It's awesome because baseball is one of those sports where people are destined to fail. And so, the very beginning.

Dr. Don Payne: Sounds like it's made for me.

Dr. Ron Welch: Successful people fail about seven out of 10 times. They walk up to the plate. So, you have a failure based experience. And for young men growing up, trying to figure out how to trust in failure and figure out how to recover and be resilient. It's a great sport to teach character in. And because in any given game, even the most successful are probably going to have times where it doesn't go well. And so, I spent about 20 years working with kids all the way from T-ball coach pitch, all the way up to high school coaching, very highly competitive college teams, high school teams. And now I'm a consultant with a local D2 athletic school. And so, I work with all their athletic teams consulting at the highest level in college in terms of how does character display itself in athletics? And how can you use athletics to learn, to be the kind of person God created you to be?

Dr. Don Payne: Was there a particular position you coached?

Dr. Ron Welch: I've spent most of my time working with first base and outfield. But I also did some work with infield. I have no idea about pitching. My son was a pitcher and I let all the other people teach him how to pitch. Cause I had no clue how to throw a curve ball.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. Okay. Who's your team?

Dr. Ron Welch: My team is the Los Angeles Dodgers. I'm a Colorado Rockies supporter since I'm here, but I am a Dodgers fan through and through.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. And I know you're from Idaho.

Dr. Ron Welch: I am.

Dr. Don Payne: And I also know because of the shirt you happen to be wearing right now, which our listeners can not see that you're a Dallas Cowboys fan. So how indeed did that combination come about?

Dr. Ron Welch: You grew up in Idaho and there are no sports teams other than the local Caldwell Cougars. My high school team that. I did. However I played my high school playoffs in the Boise State blue Smurf field. So I played on that field several times.

Dr. Don Payne: You're the only he person I know who has actually set foot on that blue turf.

Dr. Ron Welch: I have set foot on. In fact, I've laid on the ground and been stumped on several times. But a lot of that was from not having teams in the state and looking at the teams growing up, that you could admire. Roger Steinbach, Golden Richards, Drew Pearson looking at the, the early Lakers teams, people that I could just look up to as a young kid and say, man, I wish I could play at that level. So that's where all that came from.

Dr. Don Payne: What's the most interesting thing going on this season in the major leagues?

Dr. Ron Welch: You know, I think one thing that's been very interesting is that the pitchers used to be the power brokers and now they just keep watching the ball go over the fence over and over and over again. The home run records for all time were broken like a month ago. And so you look at that and the game has totally changed. Now you don't necessarily have a pitcher who can stop everybody. It's a matter of, can I hold them to three or four runs? And if I can, that's a successful game. That's a lot different than it used to be.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. Yeah, indeed. It is. Okay. So some years ago I met a professional baseball scout who made the observation that he, unlike most people could look at a, I think, a shortstop and he could spot the difference between a single A level shortstop and a triple A level shortstop. Can you tell that?

Dr. Ron Welch: Are you kidding? No, I don't have, don't have that kind of skillset. Scouts can go out there and they can tell you just by body type half the time, but no, I have to see people in action and see them actually being.

Dr. Don Payne: Well, I think that's what he meant he could, he could watch them play and he could see the difference between a single A level and a double or triple A level. I'm afraid that's a pretty finely tuned art.

Dr. Ron Welch: Yeah. That's the, those are the folks that send them the games because they know they'll tell them who the players are afterwards. I don't have that kind of skill level.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. Okay. And let's talk about your book. The book is entitled 10 Choices Successful Couples Make. Subtitle, The Secret to Love That Lasts a Lifetime. I'll get into the outline here and ask you a few questions about that in just a moment. But I know that, and I mentioned that just recently, this book has attracted a bit of national attention and I think you were even interviewed on a nationally syndicated morning show. Tell us about that.

Dr. Ron Welch: Yeah, it was pretty exciting. Fox News had found out that Henry Winkler had been married 40 years and that a couple in Carolina had been married 80 years and started looking at that and saying, wow, this lifetime marriage thing is still happening. And how is that that occurs when we look at the divorce rates in the country? And so they quickly call me, ask if I could fly out put me on a plane, out to New York and had an interview with them on Fox News on their Fox and

Friends show. And part of what was most interesting about that was that they were looking at, at the concept of how marriages survive rather than reasons for divorce. And so it was really interesting and they asked me to come up with some of the four or five principles that I would suggest would be most valuable. And we talked about things like forgiveness and selflessness, concepts that just aren't popular in today's relationships. And I thought it was just really awesome that they were interested in successful marriages rather than talking about those that don't work out.

Dr. Don Payne:

Yeah. That's not the most common approach to the topic today. Okay. So here are some of the choices that you outlined. Communicating well, and these are all prefaced by I choose to. Believe, communicate well, let go of old baggage, forgive, be unselfish, challenge unspoken truths, be intimate, not take you for granted, focus on the process, trust, and love you forever. Maybe in a big picture sense. What prompted you to write this book in the first place? What's the backstory?

Dr. Ron Welch:

Oh, this, it came from the idea that there are kind of two models in marriage right now that we see in the country. One is all about me and one's all about my partner. And for many years, people have kind of had this concept that I'm really in the relationship to get my needs met. And so now if that doesn't happen, then you sort of like click a button and unfriend your partner on Facebook. And then suddenly the relationship's over. We have no fault divorce everywhere. There's no, no level of intentionality. College freshmen come college telling us we kind of expect to be married two or three times. There was a USA show, not that long ago called the Starter Wife where they use the starter marriage concept to say, Hey, you're probably not going to stay with this person anyway. So you might as well learn what you need to and go on to the next one. And it really has gotten my heart thinking about how can we look at a model of marriage that focuses on your partner and not yourself.

And so, a lot of this book was based on the idea of talking to the general secular public. This is not, was not written as a book, just for Christians to help other Christians become better Christians. It was meant as a book to talk to the climate of the nation as a whole, which is why it was so cool to get on Fox News because I got to talk to a whole bunch of people who wouldn't have heard the message otherwise. And that's where the concept came from is saying, what if we were looking at other focused relationships, what if we were looking at forgiveness and selflessness and concepts that involve putting your partner first. How would that work to look at a biblical model of marriage that suggested as more successful than anything else out there in any culture, as opposed to a model that says I'm kind of in this for me, if it doesn't work out, I'll find somebody else that can meet my needs better. And we even have people talk about trading up to a better model. Buyer's remorse about your partner, all that kind of stuff. So even the language in our culture.

Dr. Don Payne:

Yeah. That language becomes very, very problematic. Very toxic.

Dr. Ron Welch: Yeah, very much so.

Dr. Don Payne: So, if we were to frame this theologically, it sounds like you're working in the arena of God's common grace for all, because you mentioned this is not specifically a book for Christians to help them become just better Christians, nor does it presume that a person has to be a Christian to have a good and healthy relationship. Which again, theologically, we can kind of root that in the concept of God's common grace for all which among many evangelical Christians, I think tends to be an underdeveloped, under attended, concept.

Dr. Ron Welch: There's also a level of looking at the way this is used evangelically. So if someone is looking at a model that works well and it's not selfish, or it's not self-centered, or it's not focusing on resentment and bitterness and, and making you do what I want, then people tend to ask the question, well, where does that come from? Where'd you get this idea. And conversations then ensue talking about the biblical basis for a model that works better than secular models of relationships.

Dr. Don Payne: Right. So how did you distill your list to these 10 items?

Dr. Ron Welch: Boy, that was hard. And I won't.

Dr. Don Payne: Or was it an editor who just made you go with 10?

Dr. Ron Welch: No.

Dr. Don Payne: How did they come to these 10?

Dr. Ron Welch: Baker of Eller are awesome. They they've went out of their way to help to help me develop my own kind of ideas. And clearly this is based on the 10 I happened to choose, but most of them came from my marital practice over the years. And from my own marriage from couples, I've worked with, from the students I talk with here, I teach the marriage class here often I've had so many opportunities to interact with couples. These are the things that I see most often successful in the work I do with couples, in the relationships I interact with, in the couples we work with in churches, in the marriage ministry we do, and in my own relationship.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. So you refer to your own history of working with marriages, which is considerable. I know, I'm curious what you've learned over the years, working with marriages have, have your views on anything changed over the years or how have you perhaps refined your approach to dealing with marriages? What have you learned in working with marriages?

Dr. Ron Welch: One thing I've learned is that I don't know nearly as much as I thought I did.

Dr. Don Payne: Joint, yeah get in line. Yeah.

Dr. Ron Welch: I discovered after a period of time in my own marriage, and certainly your audience is welcome to look at the first book related to that. That first book has a lot of our history and our story in it. But I discovered that I spent a lot of time trying to get my own needs met. Here's an example. I would ask Jan, my wife, what would you like for dinner? What I was really asking was can we start a conversation about the barbecue I'd like to have, right. And when that process became clear to me.

Dr. Don Payne: Hitting a little close to home there.

Dr. Ron Welch: Yeah. Texas Barbecue specifically, although I'm still a Memphis barbecue guy, I got to clarify.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah, well you'll, you'll learn.

Dr. Ron Welch: But overall I was, I was having conversations on a win lose basis. I had an idea. She had an idea. Let's see if I can convince her my ideas. Right. And it wasn't just because I'm a naturally selfish person. I mean, all of us struggle with some of that, but I, it's just one of my big crosses that I bare, I have a hard time thinking of the other person. First, I have to make myself do that. And I started thinking, gosh, what if most couples are functioning from a, I better convince the other person what I really want, or my voice won't be heard. I won't get what I need. And then I start thinking, what if we flip that upside down? What if my role in marriage is to help Jen get closer to God in every interaction I have. And what if her role is to do the same for me? What would happen if our relationships were based on trying to help the other person grow?

And that's my job. And then I thought, well, the problem with that is I've got to trust because that's fine. If I'm a giver and you're a taker and you take, take, take, and I give, give, give, but then at some point that's going to become uncomfortable and sad and depressing. But if we were both givers, I'd have to trust that you'd have my back. Like I do yours. This is when my relationship personally with God started to develop in the ways where, I kind of consider myself to be a two-stage Christian. I spent a lot of years intellectually, right on top of everything, faith wise. Personally, Jesus and I were in different time zones. And now over this period of time in my marriage and working with couples, I've started to realize, you see who you are in your marriage. You see the true side of yourself. The mirror shows you.

Dr. Don Payne: I was going to use that image of the image. No pun intended. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. It is a mirror.

Dr. Ron Welch: You start to see, Oh my goodness, this is who I actually am. Even worse Don, I started seeing that I was teaching sons how to be that way. I started seeing them order my wife to do certain things. And I was like saying, that's what we should do. And then I'd give them the lecture. You know, the dad lecture, don't talk to your mom that way. And at one point, God just slapped me across the

face and said, you know, you're teaching him that, you know that, right. This is your mini me. You're creating these people who are not treating women respectfully. And as those things started happening, that led to the second book because I started realizing, okay, I need to get my own house in order. And it took a long, long time. And every day I wake up trying to figure out what can I do today?

So that Jan will feel honored and loved by God and valued. She grew up in a family where she didn't really feel that way. And then I came along and she thought I was going to be the Knight in shining armor. And I just replicated her childhood. And so I look at all those opportunities for even evangelism and witness and discipleship. And I'm just so sad that some of those things happened. And I thought, boy, if we could create a model where people could be daily in relationship for the purpose of growing each other closer to God, that would be really cool. And that's what this book is all about.

Dr. Don Payne: I remember maybe in the realm of 15 years ago, there was a very popular book and I may not have the title just right. And I won't name the author. I don't want to get into those weeds. But the book had something to do with, or the title had something to do with his needs, her needs. It was kind of a needs, a mutual needs based how to get your needs met in marriage. I never read the book, but it made a pretty big splash. And I know people who I think seemed to be really helped by it. But if you're familiar with that whole movement, how does this compare to that?

Dr. Ron Welch: It's one thing when you're saying that, that the need has to be met, so that I'll be happy if you remember that. I'm okay. You're okay from way back. Same deal.

Dr. Ron Welch: Transformational psychology.

Dr. Ron Welch: Right. And it was the whole idea of, of, I just need to make certain, I tell you what I need so you can meet my needs and we're all good, but it's still all about me. Okay. I like the concept that focuses more on my role today is to be the kind of partner that can help you feel loved, honored, respected, cared for, valued, and your role with me is the same thing. That means conversations aren't about I want, and you want, so now we're going to have the two attorneys are going to argue until I get my way. It's more. Wow. Is there a way we can both honor each other and both get some, do we have to compromise? Do we have to come up with door number three? We've never thought of? Conversations aren't as conflictual. There's not as much confrontation. And a lot of this book is about ways that you can, instead of assuming fights are going to happen. That as a couple, you can find ways to not argue, to work together as a team, not have to be opposing forces, trying to make your needs get met.

Dr. Don Payne: One of the things that really intrigues me about that, Ron, is that that strikes me as a more qualitative approach rather than a quantitative or what some would call a zero sum approach. I guess a lot of, a lot of operate on those zero sum

terms where, you know, there's a fixed amount of something, anything fixed amount of need, fixed amount of power, fixed amount of opportunity. And we're always measuring or bean counting to make sure that there's proper equality or that the ledger's all balancing out. But if you ask an entirely different type of question, a more qualitative set of questions that the game changes entirely, you're not concerned with, who's getting more of what, and whether I'm getting my fair share. And it really is a very different way of living. Isn't it?

Dr. Ron Welch: Especially if you think of things like forgiveness, if a couple has had an affair, or if there's been pornography involved or financial decisions made that felt like betrayals, and now you have to find a way to move forward. Some couples I work with that they kind of move on, but they both remember the great pancake incident of 2016. It's always there.

Dr. Don Payne: It's always there lurking in the air.

Dr. Ron Welch: As opposed to, I'm going to treat you as if that never happened. The kind of forgiveness that involves a two way interactive process with redemption and reconciliation. And it's a whole different process when you're going to say, I forgive you. And when you say, I'm sorry, you mean I'm going to do everything I can to never do it again. And I forgive you means I'm not going to hold it over your head and remind you, the score is three to two.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah, keeping score.

Dr. Ron Welch: Speaking to baseball again. And you have this process where I know how far behind you are and you got a lot of work to do to catch up as opposed to we're starting fresh. we're not keeping a scoreboard.

Dr. Don Payne: We're not keeping score, which I think I read something about that in one of Paul's letters, this not keeping score thing.

Dr. Ron Welch: It might have been here long before.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. It might've been, Hey, I read one of your press releases for the book, which were really interesting. And it seemed like the way the book was being pitched by the publishers, it was aimed at kind of a, what would you call it, a remedial approach? A reparative approach to relationships that had really fallen on hard times? Is that fair? Is that a primary driver?

Dr. Ron Welch: That's one of the audiences. Yeah. That's one of the audiences aimed at the idea that no kind of conflict is irredeemable. The idea that certainly if you have violence, and serious destructive processes in a relationship, that very well may involve legal authorities and courts and all that kind of thing. But if there are communication issues or there are relationship pain, all sorts of things that couples go to go to counseling for, there's all sorts of ways. Things can be redeemable. A lot of couples come to me and they're like, well, it's either you or

the divorce attorneys. And I'm figuring the attorneys are probably the best shot. And in reality, it's just because they have no hope. They can't see a way. That's part of the reason why the, one of the first chapters in the book is on hope because a couple may think, I know you, I know who you are. I have a chapter talking about unspoken truths. And that idea is the concept that your wife knows you. If I were to ask her, she would be able to give me two or three statements that are truths that she knows to be true.

And yet, if those things were causing severe conflict between the two of you, that could be a real barrier to change. Because even if you tried to, to be a better person, she would say, well, I know, I know Don. I know who he's going to be. It's just a matter of time to old Don comes back. That was one of the big holdups in our marriage with my wife, Jan, even after she started seeing me try to be the man she deserved. Gosh, Don, it was probably six, seven years before she started believing it was authentic and real and true cause we'd had a lot of years of water over the falls before that. And so part of this is looking at the idea that yes, for couples who need hope, this book is very, very valuable. On the other hand, for couples who are premarried, newly married, looking at positive, strong relationship principles, all 10 of these, these principles, I think are very, very valid for couples starting out in marriage.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah, I figured they would, but that's what I wanted to ask you was what this would look like from a health based standpoint or a preemptive standpoint? What suggestions would you give to people who are, you know, in that premarital stage or they're not in a bad place, but are there different ways of approaching these choices that then build the habits preemptively?

Dr. Ron Welch: So, we talk a lot about understanding where you're at in a process like what's happening between you. The book talks about there's a chapter that talks a lot about process over content. And what we're really talking about is that you can argue about the can opener and it may be that you're fighting about the can opener, who left the toilet seat up or whatever else it is that seems to cause the conflict dejour. But in reality, what you need to do is figure out how to change the process. Because if you interact in a way that's honoring respectful, loving, caring, and you do that, it doesn't matter whether you're arguing about the car or who's going to take care of the kids that night or how you're going to get over this major betrayal that occurred. You're still looking at how I treat you, not necessarily what we're talking about. That's part of the key to this model is focusing much more on process of how you treat each other than content or what you actually talk about.

One of the ways we do that as we look at things like communication, right? So a premarital couple, we might talk to them about you're talking and talking and talking, and you're saying a lot of words, but all you've been doing over and over again is saying, I'm mad at you. I'm mad at you. I'm mad at you as opposed to thinking accurately and speaking briefly in bullet points, validating that the person actually knows what you're saying. Try to listen. Instead of, instead of proving your point, some of those communication principles get lost because

the emotion takes over and people are so upset. So that's part of what we would do with premarital and newly married couples is the book would provide a lot of skills and techniques they can use.

Dr. Don Payne: One thing I appreciate about that, Ron is the note on intentionality in building those disciplines proactively. And admittedly, I think for most people, the motivation is never quite as strong, unless there's a problem. Unless perhaps they have a vision for what they want to be and realize I've got a lot of work to do to get to that place, even if I'm not in a really bad place now. But that intentionality and that's probably what would need to be commended to listeners who are in an okay place in a relationship or on the front end of a relationship. That the discipline, the commitments of building these habits is just as vital as it is to get out of a bad place.

Dr. Ron Welch: Here's an example. I use metaphor of Niagara falls. I don't know if you've ever been to Niagara falls. Big waterfall, lots of water. The Gingrich's, want me to clarify the Canadian side is much prettier. They're very clear about that, but in general, the metaphor was one I used in the prison system because it worked with a lot of violent individuals. They probably couldn't stop themselves from acting violently on the rec yard. Two days after they were disrespected in the lunch line, cause they're so angry and their fist is ready to punch somebody, but two or three days before they might've been able to make different choices. So with premarried couples, with newly married couples, with couples who have been in conflict for 20 years, I use this analogy of Niagara Falls that I learned from Bill Flaming and a lot of work he did with anger management.

And we then help people learn where they're out in the water, how close they are to the falls. When you went to Niagara Falls, you probably didn't go up river or up above the falls and go back. Well, that's, it's calm. You can get in out of the water. You can take rowboats, whatever. And what we learned is the closer to the falls, the more power there is, the more difficult it is to get out. And most marital conflict takes place right at the edge of those falls when it feels like it's overwhelming.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. What a great image.

Dr. Ron Welch: And it works because couples can relate to it. I have couples who have laminated a picture of Niagara falls on their kitchen refrigerator door. And they got here's our warning signs and here's where we are. It's coming, we got to change. And if we develop, we work with them to develop all the warning signs to see when they're getting closer, you start doing those kinds of things. Those skills are valid for a newly married couple, pre married couple, couples who have been married for 40 years.

Dr. Don Payne: Wow. For a seminary professor, you're amazingly helpful.

Dr. Ron Welch: We try to be.

Dr. Don Payne: Tell me a little bit about one of these chapters. You have the chapter on forgiveness, broken out into two parts. One of them, the subtitle is, or part two is Choosing to Forgive the Big Stuff. What do you mean by that? And the big stuff in comparison to stuff you don't forgive? I mean, what are you talking about there?

Dr. Ron Welch: This came from conversations I've had over the years with one of my good friends, a great author Ev Worthington who has written a ton of books about forgiveness. And he had to go through the process of figuring out how to forgive the individual who brutally offended against his mother and killed his mother and went through the process of developing. What does it look like to forgive a person in a Christian worldview who did something that horrendous in your life? How could you treat them as a redeemed child of God? And I started thinking about that and I thought, well, it's one thing to say, I forgive you because you fouled me in the pickup basketball game. And it's one thing to then live in unforgiveness, right? Where you're literally resentful and bitter all the time. And a lot of the couples I work with, that's their, that's their place where they do well. There's a level of, I need to make certain you pay for what you did. And I started realizing that forgiving the big stuff like pornography, alcohol and drug use, prescription medication abuse, maybe financial choices, losing jobs, not being the kind of parent that I wish you would be. All those things.

Dr. Don Payne: Stuff that's got a lot of tangible effects and long-term effects.

Dr. Ron Welch: For a long time. And it starts to become that's who your character is. You're a bad father. You're a person who's late all the time. That forgiveness piece involves getting to the point where I can literally say, I'm going to let go of the power that not forgiving you gives me. And what I mean by that is that when you hold something against someone, you have power over them. They owe you one that whole phrase in our society. There's lots of ways that's discussed. And it's almost as if they don't get to get away with it. If I forgive them, they get to do what they did. And they get treated as if that's not right.

Dr. Don Payne: Violates our sense of justice.

Dr. Ron Welch: Yeah how dare we? Oh, wait a second. That's what our actual experiences and that's what God did for us. Hmm. How do I forgive like Christ forgave? Me? And that's really difficult, especially for a lot of couples I work with who don't have that Christian model at all. They're like, what do you mean I'm going to give up justice? They're going to pay. That's part of where the model in this book is different because I'm arguing that that never ends up doing anybody any good. It destroys you from the inside as well as your partner. And so this model is talking about something that would involve not holding onto that bitterness for a long time.

Dr. Don Payne: I think one of the most intriguing titles in your book is I Choose to Be Intimate, toward the end of the book. Now that's intriguing because there's a, I think a pretty widespread, popular notion in our country that choices like that, like

intimacy, whatever you mean by intimacy, kind of have to grow out of where you already are authentically. And this is a very different type of approach because too many, too many ears, at least of the type of people I know that would sound backwards. I choose to be intimate. Tell us more about that.

Dr. Ron Welch: So it's the same thing as thinking about whether you fall into love or fall out of love, you know, like it happens to you. I like to think of it as into love. And staying in love and actively choosing every day to be the person your partner deserves. If you choose to be in a minute saying I'm going to work hard to date and know you because the version of intimacy, I like the best is that knowing and being known concept of, of someone, knowing who you are, your character, your personhood, if I'm going to do that with my wife today, I have to actively engage in time with her, in space for us to be together, in activities that will allow me to, to help her grow and know more about what she is. And what's important to her now. And you can't do that if you don't even have five minutes in the day for your relationship. I ask couples all the time to pull out their planners.

And I'll say, so who's in your planner. And like the jobs in there and some crazy Uncle Louie, the dog gets a place, you know, everybody's in there, a chicken, whatever. But nowhere in there is my wife or my husband. And then I'll ask them. So when does your marriage happen in a regular week? And they'll say, well, maybe between 9:55, after the kids go to bed and 10:15, when we're watching a show, you can't have a successful intimate marriage if it happens for five minutes a day. So the idea of choosing to be intimate means I'm going to actively seek to be close to you, to connect with you, and to be known by you every day.

Dr. Don Payne: Your approach overall is incredibly Augustinian because Saint Augustan situated the will, the volition as the core faculty of the human person. And so when you use this language, I choose to this. That's a growing out of a robustly Augustinian anthropology. Now there's more to his anthropology, you know, that could be discussed. But that, that caught my eye that I choose to do this, is so pivotal and powerful and central to this whole model.

Dr. Ron Welch: Is it kind of the key sanctification point, right? It's like, I'm going to decide to have a positive influence in the world today. I'm going to let my faith, who I am and what God's done for me, drive everything I do in the precious moments I'm given. If that's how you live your life in your marriage, my guess is it's going to be one of those lifetime marriages people can be a very, very satisfied with.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah, well put Dr. Ron Welch. Hey, here's the time in the podcast, when I asked the SSPQ, which is the stereotypically stupid podcast question. So, for you, what is the least professorial thing? Other than baseball.

Dr. Ron Welch: We hang out in the mountains a lot and I try to realize that when I'm in professor mode, by definition, I'm teaching or trying to make something happen. When I go up to the mountains, we hang out in Dillon. We've been

going there since our honeymoon. We go up there every year. When I'm hanging out by the Lake and looking at God's majesty of those mountains all around and all the reflections, I can't try to make anything happen. All I can do is just sit back and say, man, God, you're awesome.

Dr. Ron Welch: Kind of receive.

Dr. Ron Welch: And if I can receive, then I'm not being a professor. I'm sitting back and God's teaching me rather than me trying to teach someone else.

Dr. Don Payne: Wow. That was a far more profound answer than I expected to a stupid question. That was great. Dr. Ron Welch, our professor in our counseling program here at Denver seminary and his book is 10 Choices Successful Couples Make. And the book he referred to previously was the Controlling Husband. Is that right?

Dr. Ron Welch: That's right.

Dr. Don Payne: When did that come out?

Dr. Ron Welch: That was about four and a half years before this book. So it'd be a 2014. Okay,

Dr. Don Payne: Good, Ron. Thanks.

Dr. Ron Welch: You're welcome. Thanks for having me.

Dr. Don Payne: This has been a lot of fun. And thanks to each of you for listening. We hope you'll keep listening. And if I could ask one thing of you, if you've enjoyed the podcast tell a friend about it. And if you have not already subscribed, please do that. Subscribe on whatever your favorite podcast platform is. You can reach us with questions or comments of any sort, just email us [podcast@denverseminary.edu](mailto:podcast@denverseminary.edu). And we hope that you will periodically visit our website as well. And look at different programs and resources we have. As always want to thank our incredible production team who make all this happen in real time. And in cyberspace, Dusty DeSanto, Krista Ebert, Rob Foley, Aaron Johnson, and Michael Roberts and Maritsa Smith and Sean Truman and Andrea Weyand. These folks are incredible. And one of these days I might even interview one of them just to embarrass them and let you get a sense of who they are and what they do. So I'm Don Payne, your host. This is Engage360 from Denver Seminary, and we hope to talk to you again next week.