

**Culture**  **Christianity**



Intown  
Community  
Church



# Is Marriage Relevant?

## Week 3: What is Marriage For?

February 2023



# What is Marriage For? Tips for Healthy Conversation



# Definition of Marriage

- A “better or worse,” publicly accountable, exclusive pledge to share 100% of life with each other
  - in a pattern of “mutual fulfillment through mutual sacrifice”
  - for life-giving purposes

Tip 1: Don't *assume* the  
question behind the question:  
**Who gets to say what marriage  
is for?**





# Additional Cultural Perspectives

Marriage is “simply a social tradition” that is dying off; “paper from the government can’t make a relationship... more legitimate”

*from online Q&A  
platform Quora*

**Tip 1: Don't *assume* the question behind the question:  
Who gets to say what marriage is for?**

- **Cultural construct**
- **Individual choice**
- **Supernatural gift**

# Tip 2: Stay focused. What is            for?

- **Marriage**
- **A wedding ceremony**
- **Legal/civil functions**
- **Cultural expressions  
associated with marriage**

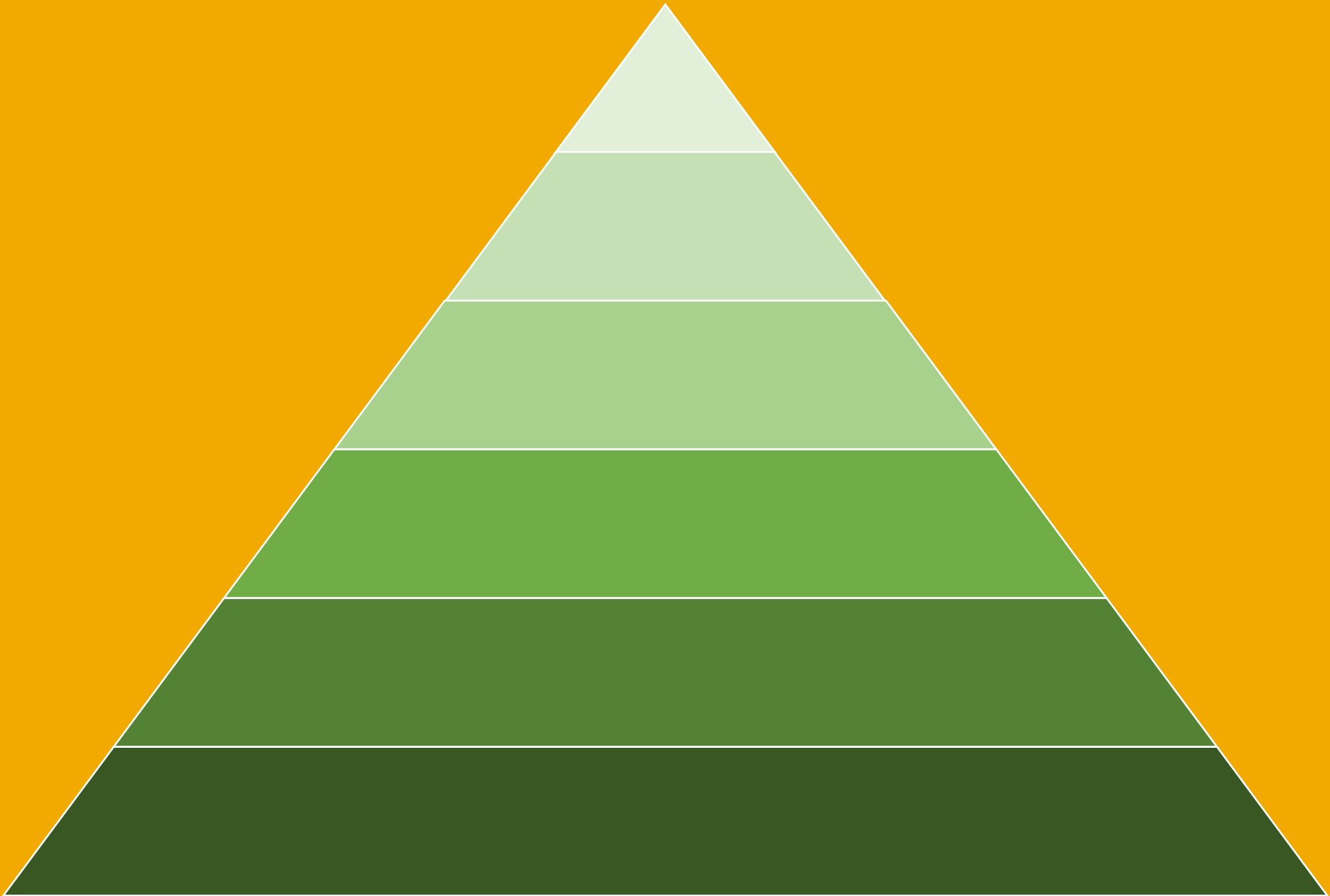


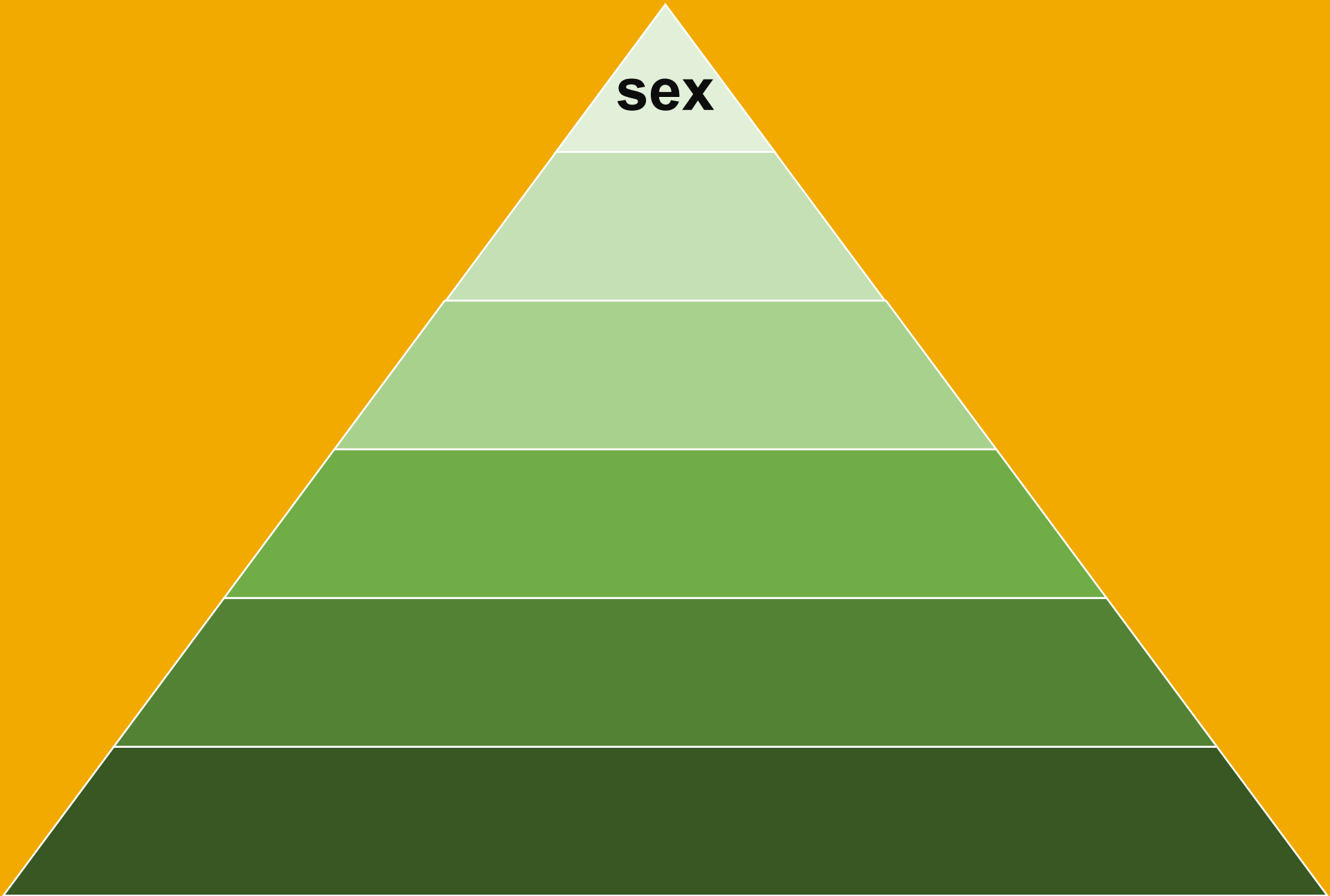
## Tip 3: Emphasize core themes

- **Power of truth (fully known)+  
power of love (fully loved)**
- **The “low- or no-maintenance”  
dilemma**
- **The need to *be* when we don’t  
*feel***

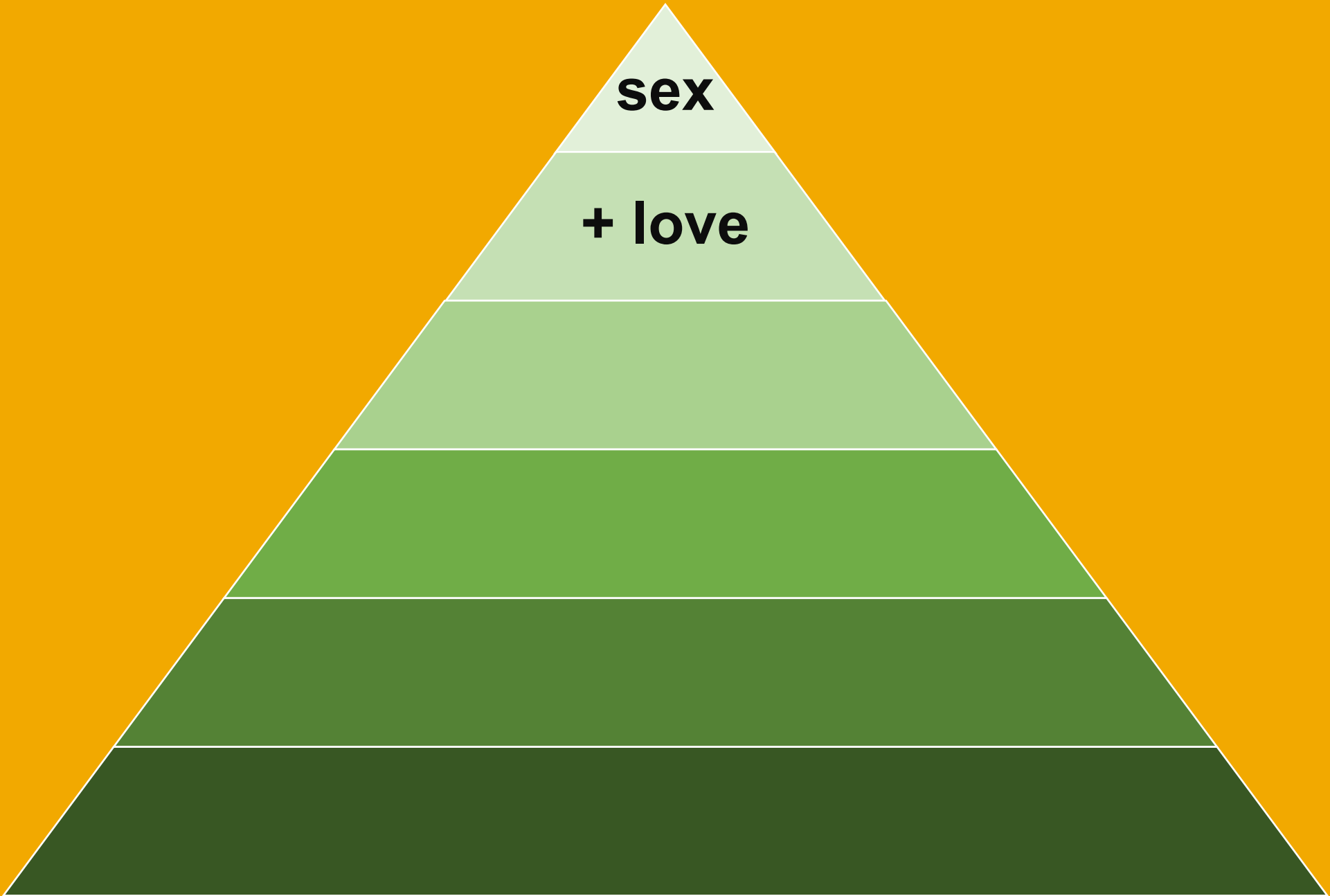


# What is Marriage For? A Test Case





**sex**



**sex**

**+ love**



**sex**

**+ love**

**+ won't leave**



Outside of marriage, sex is accompanied by a desire to **impress** or **entice** someone.

*Tim and Kathy Keller,  
The Meaning of Marriage*

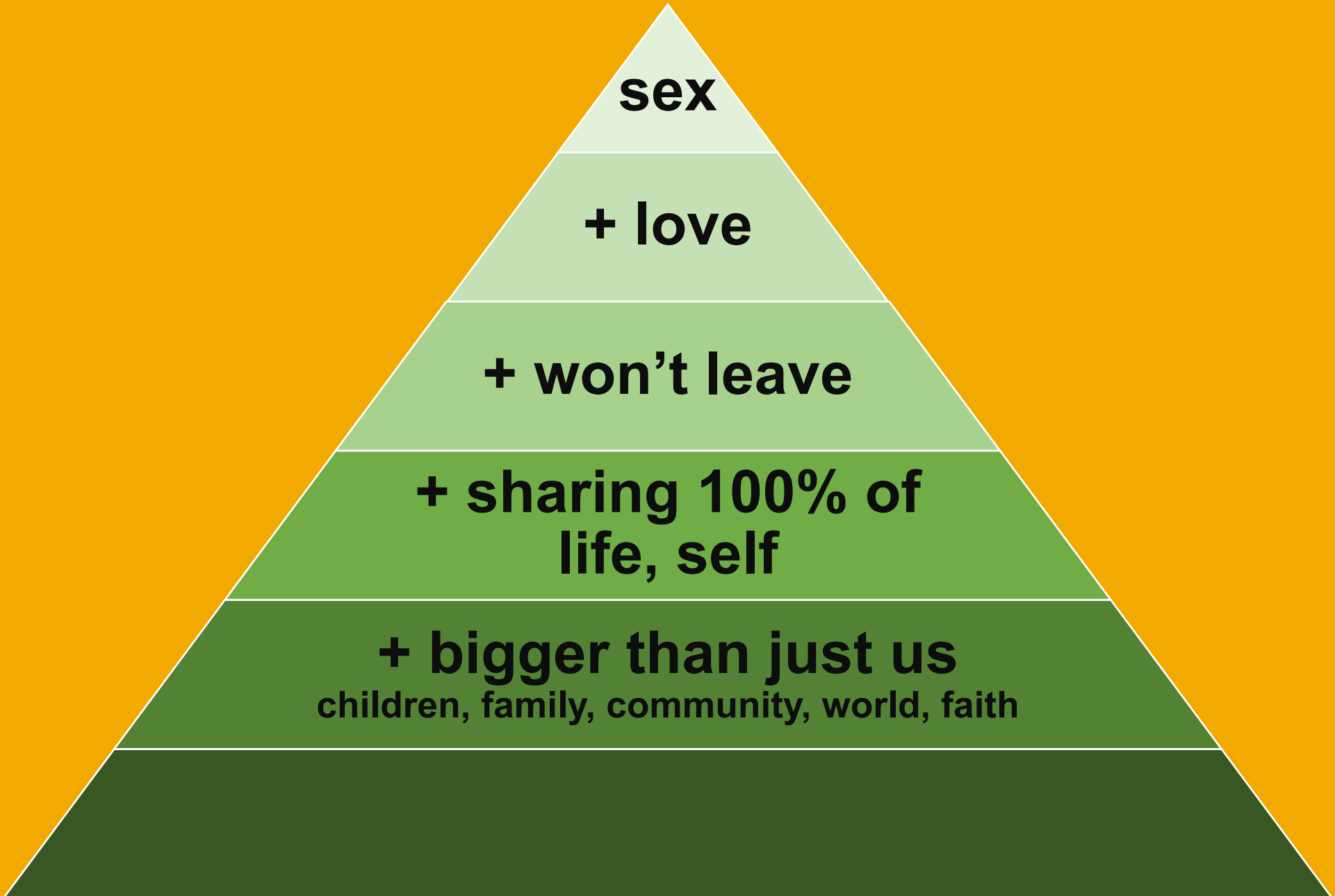


**sex**

**+ love**

**+ won't leave**

**+ sharing 100% of  
life, self**



**sex**

**+ love**

**+ won't leave**

**+ sharing 100% of  
life, self**

**+ bigger than just us**

children, family, community, world, faith



# Additional Cultural Perspectives

Marriage="introspective coupledom"

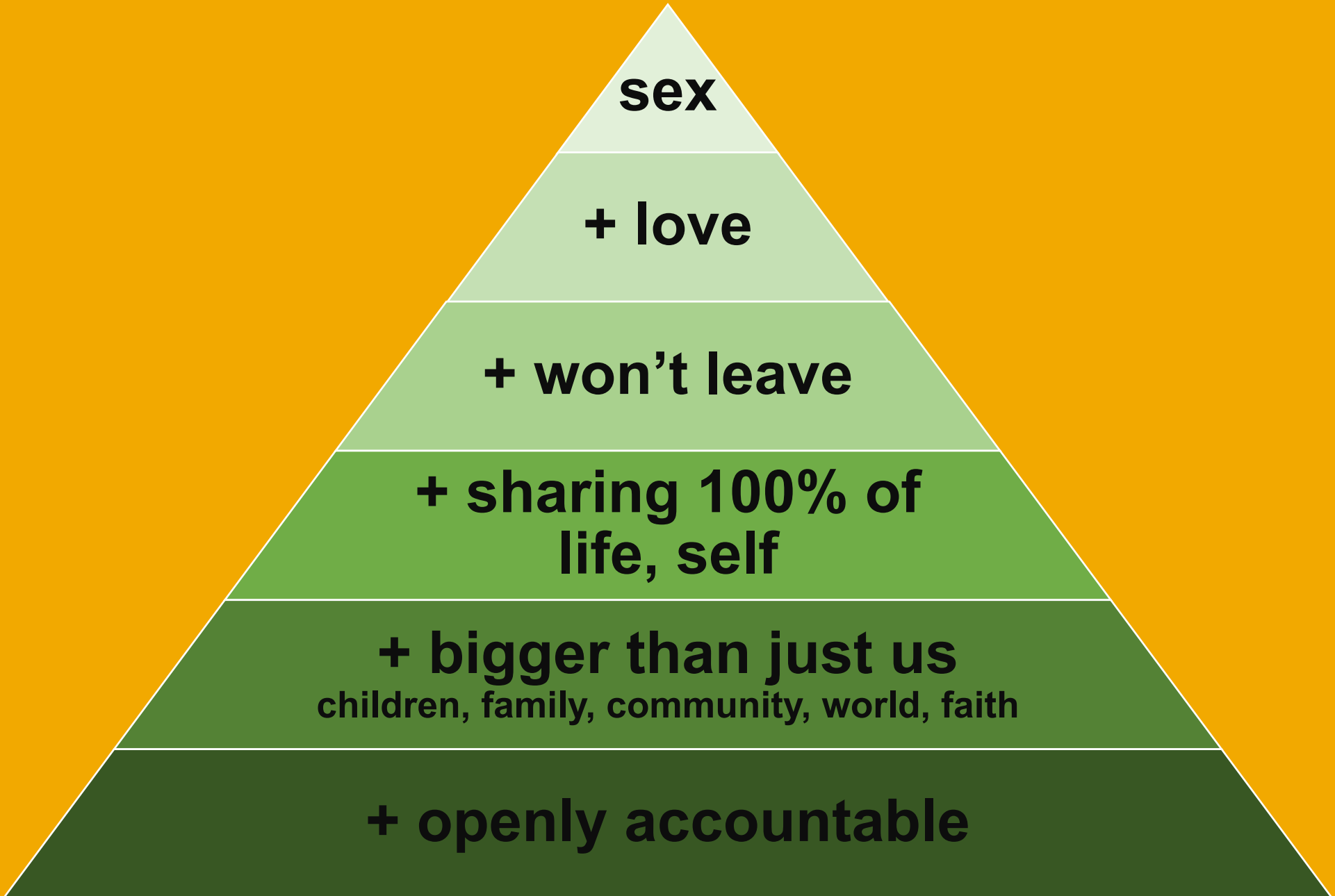
*Christopher Ash*



# Additional Cultural Perspectives

“The whole purpose of marriage is that **your life will not go unnoticed**. Your spouse would be the witness of your joys, your sorrows, your sufferings, your each tiny experience, and in short, your spouse would be **the witness of your life.**”

*from online Q&A  
platform Quora*





Unmarried cohabitations labor under an **ambiguity** about what exactly the man and the woman have consented to. Often there are **different understandings** between the two of them. But when a man and a woman marry, there is no such uncertainty. Each has **publicly pledged their lifelong faithfulness** before the **wider society** in which they live.

*Christopher Ash*



A wedding ceremony can celebrate how we *feel* in a given moment or set of circumstances.

But a covenantal marriage commitment involves a promise to *be* something even in the times I don't feel like being it—even when the circumstances change.



# Sanctification

**+ love**

**+ won't leave**

**+ sharing 100% of  
life, self**

**+ bigger than just us**  
children, family, community, world, faith

**+ openly accountable**

*Growth and change*

**+ love**

**+ won't leave**

**+ sharing 100% of  
life, self**

**+ bigger than just us**  
children, family, community, world, faith

**+ openly accountable**



Marriage has the **power of truth**, the ability to reveal to you who you really are, with all your flaws. ...[I]t also has the “**power of love**” --...to affirm you and heal you of the deepest wounds and hurts of your life.

*Tim and Kathy Keller,  
The Meaning of Marriage*



A marriage based not on self-denial but on self-fulfillment will require a **low- or no-maintenance** partner who meets your needs while making almost **no claims** on you.

*Tim and Kathy Keller,*  
*The Meaning of Marriage*



You put gems into the tumbler and they are brought into constructive, creative contact with each other. They knock the rough edges off of each other until each gem is smooth and beautiful.

*Tim and Kathy Keller,  
The Meaning of Marriage*



...But if you don't put a special compound into the tumbler with the gems, the stones will either bounce off of one another... or may crack and shatter each other. The grinding compound in the gem tumbler is like God's grace in a marriage.

*Tim and Kathy Keller,  
The Meaning of Marriage*



# Resources

Christopher Ash, “A Biblical View of Marriage.”

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/biblical-view-marriage/>