

# Tom & Julia

**Luke** - Tom and Julia are about to share their testimony with you about the transformation that's taking place in their lives and marriage. Let's listen.

**Tom** - So I had what comes to my mind is almost like the heart monitor, where it's just kind of up and down. But for the most part, it's like this. Our marriage is like this. And then there's these. And then, you know, we had a couple. I'm not saying it was bad. There were good parts. But if you were to helicopter view the marriage that didn't have those where it was more red and green, if you will.

**Julia** - Yeah.

**Tom** - Until about five or six years ago. It just it's like the stocks. That's how you want to work that. That's the best way I can put it. Yeah, that's what came to me.

**Julia** - That's perfect. Yeah, that's right. We started off great. I thought we were the best couple ever. And then, just as you always hear, I mean, it sounds so cliché or whatever, but it's so true. It's just so true. You just get into life and you just start doing things. And then work takes over. Kids take over. And we just lost who we were. We had some issues in our marriage that that happened pretty early on that were pretty big. Very big. And we did not know how to deal with it.

**Tom** - Navigate it at all.

**Julia** - At all.

**Tom** - You know, turn the page, wake up the next morning and move on. That's what we thought it was. We just never thought about something that needed attention.

**Julia** - We went to a little bit of counseling because this was a pretty major thing that happened within our family.

**Tom** - Pretty serious event. Yeah. And, I mean, we we talked to pastors and and we were going to church. We had church in our lives. And we went to, you know, secular

counseling, family counseling. But it just kind of is what it is. Nothing. Was just. All right, we did it. Let's move on. And that's how we live. That's just how what we did. It was there was anything. He passed the big trauma. Little things, mainly me shut down. So I talk about it. We're not. It's not that big of a deal. We're all just kind of. Kind of flat. I hate to say empty, but it wasn't full.

**Julia** - Yes. I mean, there were times that I didn't think that he liked me at all. And I didn't think he cared whether I liked him or not either. I mean, I just it just was just like he did his own thing. And I. I got totally consumed and work.

**Tom** - And I just put my attention after work and to the kids and I felt like I was doing the right thing and supporting her work.

**Julia** - Yeah, it was.

**Tom** - I felt like my my role in this marriage is I will take care of the kids. She'll do her job. I'll do my job, and then, you know, turn the page. We'll do it again next week and then next week.

**Julia** - Yeah

**Tom** - Then.

**Julia** - Then.

**Tom** - Then we. We had a moment. It's like a life grenade, something. It was a.

**Julia** - Great word for it.

**Tom** - And it was a it blew us up. Yeah, it separated us from each other, from God. And we the only thing we needed to do was not the right thing. We would take care of the kids. She would go to work. And it just got to a point where we couldn't. It's not sustainable.

**Julia** - And then I had an emotional breakdown eventually. I mean, you know, this is years and years and, you know, like 17 years of functioning like this. And like I say, there were great times as well. But I mean, when we look back as a whole, this is what we see compared to where we are now. But I became just emotionally unwell and I had an emotional breakdown. I went into a psychiatric hospital and a behavioral hospital and God really met me there in an amazing way.

**Tom** - That was the beginning.

**Julia** - That was the beginning.

**Tom** - Of the healing.

**Julia** - Yeah. And then. And then God just we did not seek the marriage groups. God placed them. God placed UNIFY in our laps. And still to this day, we've moved from the area and we still have UNIFY just because of COVID. I mean, it's just unbelievable what God has done now.

**Tom** - He did. He put the people in place and then He said this is its going to be there for you no matter where you are. And you can there's evidence in in UNIFY. It's nationwide.

**Julia** - That's just amazing. It's absolutely amazing how He, just His hand was just right there the whole time.

**Tom** - The whole time. And like I said at the beginning, we don't we didn't we were Christians. We were going to church. Kids were going to church. It was like checking the box. It wasn't walking the Word living the Word.

**Julia** - And that's where UNIFY came in, as just showing us really, truly, practically, literally, what it is to be Christlike in a marriage and how to walk it out. And that was my healing for sure. And our our healing, because if it wouldn't have been for UNIFY, I don't think that.

**Tom** - It gave me the tools on how to minister to good help.

**Julia** - Yeah.

**Tom** - And to understand this is what God gave me.

**Julia** - Yeah. And I had I had deep wounds from past sins. I had an abortion when I was young, and Tom had nothing to do with that. I had not repented of it. I had not healed from it. If it hadn't been for UNIFY, I that gave Tom the tools to help me to, for one, even recognize that that was any part of our problem. And then how to. He loved me regardless of how terrible I was acting. And that gave me the strength to heal and to and then to recognize my part, what I was doing to cause the problems in our marriage. And I don't know if I said that well enough, but because that's huge, him just being able to be kind to me when we had a conflict, you know, not blowing up at me, that allowed me to then see the problem that I was causing in our marriage.

**Tom** - And I was not helping. I mean, I was not turning a blind eye to it. I was just I was

ignorant. I wasn't what God called me to be. I was not that person. I was not that man.

**Julia** - And you were angry.

**Tom** - And I was I mean, in the whole situation, I was very angry with it. And what I would do is I would not talk. And that allowed the vacuum to be filled.

**Julia** - And you do more than that, I promise.

**Tom** - Yeah.

**Julia** - There were moments there.

**Tom** - Were moments where unpleasant for sure, but to go back, it gave me the tools on creating a safe space for her to share and for helping me to help. I'm not called to fix it. I'm going to I'm to minister to to lead, to help heal. I mean, God will fix it by follow His ways through me the way He has it planned, designed His will. She can heal. I can heal, and hopefully we can People can see that God's way is the way.

**Julia** - And that and we had to learn what God's way was.

**Tom** - You know. And that goes to my ignorance.

**Julia** - All of our ignorance. Yeah.

**Tom** - I went to church my whole life.

**Julia** - Yeah, me too.

**Tom** - And, and I didn't necessarily have well, I didn't have the the model and Jesus is the model. I mean, I didn't have an earthly model. I just figured less conflict, the better. Sometimes you need the the rock in your shoe or the sandpaper in your pocket. You have to get uncomfortable because He will comfort you.

**Julia** - And that's I mean, He is the Wonderful Counselor and the Great Physician Yeah. And that's what He's done for us.

**Tom** - And the best is yet to come.

**Julia** - That's for sure thing.

**Tom** - There.

**Julia** - But it is it is so true. It just keeps getting better. And I've heard people say that, you know, once this terrible thing has happened in your marriage and, you know, it's never going to you could never get it back. Well, that is so not true. I think that that has made us stronger. We have been through so much and I wouldn't trade it. It was terrible. It was horrible. But it has brought us both so much closer to God and so much closer to each other. And we can get through anything and we know it. Yes. And I'm sure there will be more to come. You know?

**Tom** - Yeah. Yeah. And she touched on it and we had heard it's been said in our group and, you know, as bad as it was for however many years, I wouldn't trade it because when you see the fruit of the healing, it's worth it. You know, ten years ago, I would have never said that.

**Julia** - That's for sure. That's for sure.

**Tom** - Today.

**Julia** - And I look back and I'm proud of what we've come through. I'm not proud of how we did it, but I'm so proud that we have overcome that and such. It is just awesome.

**Tom** - It is for the better. Our marriage has changed for the better from where we were. We've been married almost 29 years this year.

**Julia** - He's better at keeping up with that than me.

**Tom** - So and you know, from the giddy puppy love, the.

**Julia** - Infatuation.

**Tom** - Infatuation of, you know, the beginning and the dating and and then the hiccups hit and the family, you know, the kids come and and then you just have the the traumas and the incidents and the rocky road, the the bad days, the bad years, the bad stretch. I hate to say misery, but it was hindsight. It was not pleasant, it was not healthy. It was it was painful. We were going through the motions of what we thought marriage was. You know, we were providing we had a house, we had kids, we had family, we had cars, dogs, we had TV, marriage.

**Julia** - We went to church.

**Tom** - We went to church and we participated. We were active in the church. Yeah, We were outside looking in what people would think of marriage probably.

**Julia** - Definitely would be. People would never hearing this. I'm sure that people would never have thought that. Our friends would never have thought that.

**Tom** - I mean, even some of our friends told us that they thought we had a, you know, a marriage to aim for. But now we really have. Yeah, we have come through this stuff and we are so much better for it.

**Julia** - Yeah, I'm just a different person.

**Tom** - I'm a different person.

**Julia** - Thank God.

**Tom** - We are different people.

**Julia** - Yeah.

**Tom** - He's made us new. He's made our marriage new. He's made our marriage what? He called it to be.

**Julia** - Yeah.

**Tom** - He gave me good help and I didn't recognize it at the beginning.

**Julia** - And then I up and he gave me a wonderful servant leader. You were a servant in a lot of ways. I think now, more so spiritually, he is a servant leader in all aspects.

**Tom** - And as a husband, what my my role from the beginning I thought I was just there to be support for whatever. Just, you know, be the dad, be the husband, go to work. And the Holy Spirit through UNIFY has just taught me how to be a servant leader. You walk with Christ and He will He will.

**Julia** - All the time. You know.

**Tom** - You want to go?

**Julia** - Yeah. Can. Just thinking about what? UNIFY has has taught us about our roles has just been hugely instrumental in changing our marriage. Just for me, just knowing that I am to be his good help. I mean, before I, I had gotten to the point where I couldn't speak up about anything. I didn't feel safe to tell him good things and I didn't feel safe certainly to tell him bad things emotionally.

I just struggled more and more. And now, I mean, just knowing, you know, that that is what I'm called to do. And then him knowing also that I am called to speak up about things and just that he has made it safe for me. He just has I guess the Holy Spirit has given gentleness and just kindness Whenever we have any sort of conflict or something that before would have been, you know, he would just rather not address. And so he would just shut me off or shut me, keep me from talking. But now I think just knowing our roles has helped us be able to communicate better.

**Tom** - Well, I think humility is a big part of it. And I think the word is meek.

**Julia** - Meek: power under control. Yeah.

**Tom** - Because just understanding how much power I have in the marriage and not holding it over her head as I am the one with the power. So this is the way it goes. Just being able to know that I have that power. And then when you let the Holy Spirit, when you have Christ on the throne of your heart, you know you have you create a safe space because Jesus is a safe space.

And if you're walking that way, yeah, you're going to listen to the good help that he's provided you and you're going to respond.

**Julia** - Lovingly and yeah.

**Tom** - With love for sure.

**Julia** - Yeah.

**Tom** - And not aggressively.

**Julia** - Or when when we disagree, you know.

**Tom** - And you're not going to give an answer.

**Julia** - Is learn to hold his tongue more even just to let me speak, you know, even if he doesn't agree with me and and then I, I, the Holy Spirit has taught us how to hold our tongues and how to respect each other and honor what the other one says. And listen more. You know, the Scripture says, put a gate on my mouth or my lips, and it's it's helpful.

I mean, that really I think sometimes saying less can be way better than saying a whole lot.

**Tom** - And just the whole just understanding the role of being a good husband, a godly husband over the household creating. I said that already, that safe space, that atmosphere of.

**Julia** - And he really does set the tone for our house.

**Tom** - And you do you control at all as a husband you can a house you can you can build a house.

**Julia** - Spiritual houses.

**Tom** - Spiritual houses for sure.

**Julia** - That's what we were praying we build now.

**Tom** - And this whole process has just given me that I understand my role and responsibility. Yes. And the priority of going to God and understanding your wife, I mean, 1 Peter 3:7. Love your wives in an understanding manner.

**Julia** - So that your prayers won't be hindered.

**Tom** - Hindered?

**Julia** - Yeah I that's I'm that's the best way I can say it is that you can't correct what you don't know how to or that it's even wrong or where it's going wrong.

**Tom** - And you can take it outside of our marriage. I can see our kids coming back to what we were hoping we planted.

**Julia** - To UNIFY and our marriage strengthening our marriage has been amazing and the best thing ever. The best thing ever. But that's not where it ends. It affects every relationship. How you now know how to love better. You just you do. You just God teaches you how to love better. That affects our children hugely. Immensely. And then just everyone else from there on down.

**Tom** - It's a beautiful snowball. UNIFY has impacted me in so many ways. I don't know that there's one specific thing the fellowship, the walk with other men and women wives and the vulnerability that's there. The fellowship. The biggest thing that comes to my mind is the accountability. When you're accountable and I know we're ultimately accountable, but when you have other men walking with you and you're accountable to them and each other, it just that it's probably the biggest thing that has changed me because I was I don't want to get on the hot seat.

**Julia** - But.

**Tom** - The accountability is probably the biggest, I would have to say, if I had to pick one. Being accountable.

**Julia** - Yay men! That's been great. Yeah, the changes have been great. And for me, the biggest impact, oh gosh, I don't even know where to begin on that. The biggest impact



that UNIFY has had. I guess I would have to say just truly showing me what it is practically and literally to walk in a Christlike manner. The guidance that UNIFY gives the example of a Christlike marriage and it's not just one example. I mean, Luke and Kathy, are just tremendous. But the whole there are so many other couples that give their testimonies and just share their vulnerability and their mistakes and their foul ups and just how they walked through them practically teaching me. I mean, because you hear it, you read it in the Bible, sometimes you can just think of them as just like moral statements or whatever. But to literally figure out how to change the way you speak to someone, change your attitude towards someone, how to do that. I mean, it's walked out and it's not just one time. It takes it's taken me a long time, years, weeks, months of hearing how it's done, messing up and learning again how to how to walk it out. And the other thing is priority. Just God practically being number one in my life. And then, Tom, a very, very close second to that. And I didn't know how to do that. If you would have asked me, I would have said, Gods first, Tom, second kids third. You know, I know the answer. And I you know, I didn't think I was lying, but that was not the truth then. I was just because I didn't know how I wanted to. And I'm so glad that we are now. It's great.

**Tom** - These are tears of joy. It is great. It's so encouraging even when you're when you're on the hot seat, you know, because you will there will be a face plant. But when you're on this path and UNIFY with this leadership and these couples, you're going to you just know we've learned.

**Julia** - We've learned how to ever walk through, how to get back up and even when we do mess up and we know that we will. But yes, we know that we have learned how to to fix it, know how to get back on the path. And we have people to keep us accountable to that.

**Tom** - And you just keep doing it. And it it takes less time to get through it.

**Julia** - Now.

**Tom** - Sometimes you recognize it in the middle of it. Yeah, but if you don't, you know, you have the tools, you have the group, you have the men and the women, the good help. You just have the support and you can get back on the horse so much quicker. Just it's just you can see joy. And to think that I'm.

**Julia** - The reason for that, you are the reason for that.

**Tom** - And it came up earlier just she would know that she was not able to to share good or bad.

**Julia** - But I was so shut down.

**Tom** - Now she can share and I'm comfortable hearing it. And that's probably the biggest thing. Yeah, it's just.

**Julia** - Oh yes, our conflicts are just just that they're conflicts. They're not separation. That's really what our conflicts were before. It was just total separation. It was so divisive. And now I.

**Tom** - Would shut down and shut her down.

**Julia** - He knew exactly how to shut me down, and that was his goal is just we're just not gonna argue. And so yeah, but now it's totally different and.

**Tom** - And you can see part of the understanding of your wife, even if it hasn't been vocalized, she hasn't shared it. You can see it and I couldn't see it before, but I can see not all the time but I can see it more.

**Julia** - Yeah. Yeah he does. Yeah, that is definitely true. Just I mean he- my words will never do justice to what he has done for me and the healing that he has brought to me. Things that he did not cause my hurts and wounds and scars. And then somebody did. He is he has brought so much healing. I can't express that. Like I want to.

**Tom** - But you do. I can see it.

**Julia** - I hope so. Because I hate to think where I would be. I really do hate to think what kind of state I would be in if it hadn't been for this group. And because I was not well.

**Tom** - And I wasn't helping.

**Julia** - You have now.

**Tom** - Yeah, it is well.

**Julia** - It is well, very much so with my soul.

**Tom** - I think the hardest part for me and we've talked about this in the past is the accountability.

**Julia** - That.

**Tom** - It's hard to be held accountable. And crucifying your flesh is really hard to do. And I didn't know it was even an option. But learning from Luke how to do it, to take the authority and then you're held accountable for it and that that was that's very hard and

it's still hard. It's not I don't know that it gets easy. I just don't think it does gets easier. You recognize it quicker, but the devil never stops trying. And that's hard. But back to the accountability and the group just being in there and hearing, sharing, when you stumble and being encouraged, it's hard to put into words. You can just you just feel it. You just know it. But it's hard to to fight that enemy. But when you have when you have the good help and and you're walking, you do your heart check. You learn how to how to squash that a whole lot quicker and prevent potential damage.

**Julia** - Yeah. And you can't correct what you don't know is is wrong and then I mean the flesh is I mean that's just not something we learned about in church. It's just I that's I'm, that's the best way I can say it is that you can't correct what you don't know how to or that it's even wrong or where it's going wrong. But this group just helps you to see so clearly. Finally see like the scales falling off your eyes just. A-ha! Wow! Like an epiphany. Oh, geez. You know, this is this is where we've been messing up all this time. The same the same thing over and over and over again. The same pattern. You know.

**Tom** - It's amazing. Truly amazing. We miss it when we're not in it.

**Julia** - Yes.

**Tom** - More than we have time for what? Just the benefit of this, this of UNIFY is recognizing how great my good help is.

**Julia** - That was nice honey.

**Tom** - It's true. I like that.

**Julia** - I mean, that's just the tools that are provided. The heart tool is just life changing. It's yeah, I mean, we marriage changing. I mean, we get to experience miracles all the time and it's a miracle that we are sitting right here. Mm When you look at where we were seven years ago now, six years ago.

**Tom** - A few years ago. Yeah. How? It wasn't probably going to end very well had we not had had God not put certain people in our lives and connected us to UNIFY. That's a huge benefit. And that right there.

**Julia** - Yeah, that's and I'll just say Tom's growth as a spiritual leader is just the hugest, best, biggest blessing. And I don't I can't quote Scripture very well, but the washing of the Word, you know, Tom washing me with the Word just gives me security and healing and comfort and faith and strength and courage. He it has just and prayers us praying together and praying for me and with me and over me and it just amazing how it changes a marriage. God's Word is true and it works. We just had to learn it.

**Tom** - And it has brought life back in this marriage.

**Julia** - Yeah. Yep, yep. We just had to learn. We wanted it. We just had to learn how, you know, we got it.

**Tom** - Plus, we made really good friends.

**Julia** - That is true. Well, I know my brother has said multiple times that he can see just the joy and the strength of our marriage. And he was with us through some right in the thick of it.

**Tom** - He was. he saw.

**Julia** - He saw a lot. So, yeah.

**Tom** - And he has said it.

**Julia** - Multiple times. Yeah.

**Tom** - And your mom, she tells me all the time.

**Julia** - Yeah. She loves him. Yeah. Yeah.

**Tom** - Those are the two biggest I think.

**Julia** - And I think I'm a, I'm a I can also say this a dear friend of mine at one point told me she goes, you are just a mute. Just she, I mean I just it was at a funeral was my best friend's funeral and I, I, I couldn't speak. I just, I couldn't make any decisions. I couldn't I mean, obviously it was because of the trauma of the loss of my friend, but also all throughout the background of that was all this, you know, it was just my marriage, you know, my life. Because my marriage is my life. I mean, I hate to say that, but there really is the core of your life. I was lost. I just I wasn't myself. So I think the biggest benefit is I'm me again or I'm better than than me because I've got a lot of Christ in me. So. Yeah. But I feel I just feel so much freer, so much happier. Joy. And that's actually how my journey really began was I would take my dog for a walk and I would just pray, Why don't I have joy? Why don't I have joy? It was a long journey, but I have joy.

**Tom** - I have joy too. I didn't even know what it was. Thought it was a girl's name. And it's abundant and it's free.

**Julia** - Yep. And I think marriage is the greatest tool to help us find that, to conform us. And it's worth it all.

**Tom** - Sign up quick. How? I just think that UNIFY is UNIFY is a ministry led by the Holy Spirit, and we know the Holy Spirit is our, was sent as a helper and this is an amazing help to a marriage. It will it will change your marriage. It will change a man's heart changed my heart changed, my priorities changed my direction. I can't recommend joining becoming reaching out to this to this group. There are so many men led by Luke and Kathy. It to me it's it from where we were even from the beginning. But seven or eight years ago where we were then and where we are now, it's a no brainer to me. UNIFY is an anointed ministry that.

**Julia** - Amen.

**Tom** - Will heal marriages and teach, provide tools, give you support. It will I said, it'll change your life. It'll change your marriage. It'll change your kids. I think, without UNIFY in our lives. And I said it earlier, we miss when we're not in it, you know, But it's a ministry that God has put on Luke and Kathy to be God's first institution to make marriage what He designed to be. It's a servant leader and good help walking with Christ. The model and I had no idea. And it's is amazing the the tools the the couples, the support, the encouragement.

**Julia** - Huge. It's huge.

**Tom** - It is It's it's a life changer. I just I hate to be redundant, but it's a life changer.

**Julia** - Our lives are changed.

**Tom** - And we are we are truly blessed to be part of this ministry. UNIFY is to God God's glory and to be walking in his instruction. I mean, He gave us the manual.

**Julia** - I couldn't say it any better than that.

**Tom** - UNIFY has been and continues to be, and as long as we can, we will be part of it.

**Julia** - Yes, we will, because.

**Tom** - It's making it's it's changed our lives. It's made us.

**Julia** - It changes our week every.

**Tom** - Week. Every week. You know, it can make a hard a hard day. And on a glorious note.

**Julia** - It's so true. That's true.

**Tom** - And when you are with fellow believers on the same mission, there's really nothing better now.

**Julia** - And that's so true. We've come in just feeling so down. And there just were times we didn't really think we wanted to get on. But then afterwards it was just like the best, most uplifting healing.

**Tom** - And the Holy Spirit at work in there is.

**Julia** - Yes,

**Tom** - because.

**Julia** - Yeah. You know it.

**Tom** - And you may have an idea on whatever is going to happen, but then the Holy Spirit walks in. It's like we're going to tweak this part right now, like, this is the best. So glad I'm. Yeah, and it may not be us.

**Julia** - Yeah, it could.

**Tom** - Be another.

**Julia** - Couple, someone else.

**Tom** - And to be able to walk with couples that are struggling just like we are or were whatever their wherever they are, it's very encouraging.

**Julia** - And then also knowing when you're listening to them and they're struggling and you remember back to when you were in that place and you just you have such hope for them. You just know, just hang in there, Just keep going, keep coming. It's coming.

**Tom** - It's coming. And you see the growth.

**Julia** - Yes. And then there's.

**Tom** - A newer couple that comes in. You can see over time where that husband is truly conforming to becoming a servant leader. And you see his wife has completely changed from the beginning.

**Julia** - Yes.

**Tom** - And then I look at where we were and I'm like, my wife has completely changed and I got to be part.

**Julia** - Yeah, you're the you're the catalyst, babe.

**Tom** - Now. So sign up now for UNIFY.