



# An Unlikely Path from Con Alley to the Pulpit

with Allen Bonnell

## DISCUSSION

1. What kind of role models did your family members provide for you—not only your parents but also siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins? What sort of moral grounding did they provide you? What about spiritual guidance? How is that reflected in the person you are today?  
*1 Timothy 4:12-13, Proverbs 1:8*
2. Who have your relationship role models been? What values or lessons—good or bad—did you pick up from them? What about later on in life? Allen says it's a good idea to have an older couple in your circle of friends who have a healthy, loving marriage and can serve as your "marriage mentors". Do you and your spouse have a couple like that in your lives? If not, who are some couples that could potentially serve as those mentors, and what do you admire about them or their relationship? *Proverbs 22:1*
3. What's a passion or interest of yours that a friend originally introduced you to? Was it something you instantly enjoyed, or did it take some time for you to learn about it and appreciate it? What kind of role has that friend played in your life?
4. What kind of learner are you? Do you appreciate having a teacher or mentor who's hands-on, always there with help and guidance? Or do you prefer less involvement and more independence, finding satisfaction in coming to discoveries on your own? What discoveries have you made on your own that brought you the most personal satisfaction?

5. Allen and Nate both talk about the importance of learning or being a student of your spouse. How much have you learned about your spouse over the course of your relationship? What did you learn early on in that relationship that was challenging for you to understand or appreciate? What has proved particularly rewarding to learn?
6. What's a pastime, hobby, or interest you and your spouse or partner have picked up together? How did you acquire this interest? What are some benefits you've gained from this pastime that you might not have gained if you were pursuing it on your own?
7. Allen goes into detail about the need to "deny the self" in a committed relationship. What are some things you've had to deny yourself to keep your current relationship loving and harmonious? These sacrifices can be material things or activities, but they can also be abstract and emotional, such as giving up anger over certain things, preconceived ideas, or even grudges. What have been the hardest things for you to give up or abstain from? What are some things you think your spouse has denied herself for you? *Philippians 2:3*

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction:  
Discipleship in an Instant Society*  
by Eugene H. Peterson