

Cultivating a Marriage Overflowing With Heavenly Love

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres” (1 Cor. 13:4-7, NIV).

Love is patient.

Patience is hard for me. I am a Type A, go, go, go guy. I have learned that patience can be sweet and it seems to help me give grace to Lisa and accept her more than trying to conform her to my wishes. I have found patience comes when I make the incident more about serving Lisa. If I can lose myself in serving, I usually can reach patience.

Love is kind.

Kindness is loving and serving your spouse the way they need it. Kindness may take some forethought or planning ahead. Most of us know what our spouse needs to feel loved. Kindness is consistently giving that gift. Kindness is also anticipating a need and meeting it before it is requested.

Love does not envy.

It's so easy to be a victim in a marriage, and to feel like you got the bum deal because you're a man or a woman, and the other spouse has it better. Love doesn't look at the positives of one role and the negatives of the other. Love accepts their role as God's will and training ground for them. Staying away from envying your spouse can keep you resentment-free

throughout your marriage.

Love does not boast.

Here is the other side of envy. Love doesn't look at my strengths or roles in a one up manner, nor focuses on the negatives of the other. I guess if I could sum up these two points, love doesn't compare, period. Love sees the whole of marriage and knows both are equal but have different contributions to a successful marriage and family.

Love is not rude.

Most of us are surprised to realize the person who loves and serves us daily can often be the person we are most rude to. Rudeness is a choice to put yourself first, and can it can be as simple as not letting the other person finish their sentence, or not being on time for your spouse. Love moves us away from rudeness into an other-centered approach to marriage.

Love is not self-seeking.

If your marriage is all about you, then you decide everything, you get mad when things don't go your way and you have difficulty serving others. A person who stays self-seeking chooses to love himself or herself and to not love those around him or her. Love is committed to serve and be aware of the other person. If someone hasn't made the basic decision that marriage is about serving their spouse, then their lack of love and immaturity can keep their marriage intentionally in pain.

Love is not easily angered.

There is nothing like a spouse to give you the opportunity to be angry. They are resistant to change the way you want them to change, and they know how to push your flesh-buttons to get a response. I am amazed at how little it takes to get a

Spirit-filled Christian angry with their spouse. Before I choose to get angry, I have found that asking myself two questions helped me get through this. First, is this really a big deal? Second, will this matter in five years?

Love keeps no record of wrongs.

Love doesn't need a laundry list to shame a spouse. This is a really challenging characteristic of love. Love doesn't do history lessons. We are grateful that God doesn't do history lessons but casts our sins as far as the east is from the west.

Love doesn't delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth.

All spouses have a sin nature. Love doesn't focus on their weaknesses, but delights in their superiority in an area of life. Love rejoices in the truth. We are all sinners, all flawed and all loved.

Love always protects.

Practically cover your spouse's weaknesses, even if family members or friends get into some negative character evaluations of your spouse in humor. Always resist the temptation to join in.

Love always trusts.

Believe your spouse is a competent, intelligent and capable human being. When you come from this position it puts limits over instruction, reminding and parenting your spouse. Trust they will try to do their best and when, not if, they fail, give more opportunities to demonstrate future competence.

Love always hopes.

Love doesn't just see each day as a photograph of their spouse. Love sees a movie in which we are only in a scene. The movie of my spouse is awesome. What God is and will continue

to do in and through my spouse over the decades is truly amazing.

Love always perseveres.

This means you commit to the tomorrow. I know, even on a rough day or night, that Lisa and I will have a tomorrow. Usually the issues get clearer, smaller and more manageable, and we reconnect and verify our commitment and love to each other.

You know what I am talking about. You have had many tomorrows because of your commitment to manifest love by persevering today.

Love never fails.

It's here that the Scripture mentions the last and final "always" of love. Love never fails. The very nature of God is in our marriage. He is able to sustain and mold us through this miracle we call marriage. When we both manifest His nature toward each other, we do not fail. {eoa}

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