

## Happiness Can Be Uncertain, but True Love Endures Forever!

Even though our 3+ years of dating were carefree and fun, getting married raised everything to a new level of enjoying each other. I (Rick) didn't have to leave every evening to either go home or back to college, and we were free to enjoy the pleasures and delights that Father intended for us to experience as a man and wife! I felt like this was the happiest time of my life and I expected it to last this way forever.



It wasn't long, however, before the reality of **“little foxes that spoil the vines” S of S 2:15 began to impact the happiness that I was enjoying.** The first big surprise was discovering that Sue was pregnant and all our neat plans for the future were suddenly changed. Living together 24/7 also gave us the realization of how many differences we had with each other. Compounding everything else was the discovery of all the judgments and father and mother wounds that were hiding below the surface and now began to manifest in our relationship. This resulted in increasing times, of disagreements, outbursts of frustrations, and worries about the future that robbed my joy and zest for married life.



**Happiness became more of rollercoaster ride** with frequent periods of good times followed by dips into anxieties and disagreements over a variety of issues. The arrival of our first son created a whole new set of issues that would try to steal away my joy and happiness of life. I was the youngest child with no experience being around babies, so I was not prepared for the stresses of being married with a newborn baby in the house. Fortunately, Sue was a great mother and calming influence in our marriage during those days of transition while both of us finished our schooling and I found a full-time job.



When Sue and I mentor couples before they are married, we spend some time addressing the stresses and changes that take place as you walk through life together. **One thing is inevitable, changes will and do happen that can try to steal our joy and happiness that we all have when we are first married.** Just as life itself, every marriage goes through a number of “seasons” from the cold quietness of Winter, to the newness and excitement of Spring, the warmth and growth of Summer, and the beautiful colors of Fall. There is no assurance of how long each season may last only the hope of something better in the future.



**Many married couples try to hang onto their happiness** through the distraction of work, the house, kids, making money, accumulating things, and friendships or activities outside of the home. They may have the appearance of happiness to others, but deep down inside there is the pain of lost dreams, broken promises, disappointments, unmet expectations, and empty relationships. **The truth is that happiness by itself cannot produce the life-long love affair that our heavenly Father wants all of us to experience.** That is only achievable through His comforting love first filling your heart and then the heart of your spouse. Without out a heart full of His love, we are like two fleas and no dog trying to suck all the life out of our spouse until there is none left.



**Love isn't optional, LOVE IS A CHOICE!** Early in our marriage, Sue had to make the choice to love me with all my messes, all the ways I use to hurt her, my stubborn ways,

my anger, and every other way I was not being Christ-like. It took me a lot longer because of my stubbornness and thinking that I was always right before I also chose to love Sue regardless of what she said or did. Walking in love with each other continues to be an on-going process of living life loved as our own hearts have been healed and the broken parts put back together from our childhood. The biggest step in this process was the discovery of God as our Father and that we are His beloved son and daughter. Knowing that Father loves us unconditionally has helped us be able to love each other. The love we receive from Him now gives us love to give to each other and our family. It hasn't been easy and there have been many setbacks, but the fruit of our efforts have been worth it!



**Our happiness can still rise and fall with the circumstances of life, but the sweet under tone of His great love for us never changes and never quits.** His love and blessings just keep going on and on and on, and our love for each other keeps going deeper and stronger. We are enjoying each other in every way more today than any time in our marriage of almost 48 years! Father also wants you to have that same deepness and sweetness in your marriage too! Choose this day to walk in love with each other regardless of what the other person says or does. If the relationship has turned abusive, however, you may need to do this at a distance until things change. When a husband and wife both make this commitment, you will have a 100% chance of experiencing a Life-Long Love Affair!

### **Dialogue Questions**

1. How do you feel about our marriage and our level of happiness and love right now? (*Be specific why you feel that way.*) What are two things that you could do for me that would make me feel more love?
2. Where do I see our marriage being 10 years from now and what are some things that we can do together to reach that expectation? How does that make me feel?

### ***Fun Night Ideas***

1. Take a walk in a park or woods somewhere and see how many different flowers you can find. Also look for the beauty in Father's creation that you may have never seen before!
2. Fix one of your favorite snack, treats, or desserts together and then sit outside and enjoy eating them as you watch the sunset together. Make sure there is lots of non-sexual touching too!
3. Turn the lights down low, put candles on the table, fix a special meal and sit so you can look into each other's eyes as you talk and eat. Take your time and enjoy the moment!
4. Share with each other about your first date or how you met for the first time. Include all the feelings and how it has impacted your life. Make sure that there is lots of eye contact!