

## Love that Lasts a Lifetime!

### We all have a "love tank" that needs to be filled on a regular basis.

- We are all born with the need to be loved daily.
- Some refer to it as an "emotional love tank" that needs to be filled up on a regular basis much like putting gas in your car or oil in the engine. Random acts of love and kindness provide the fuel to keep the relationship going.
- Just like a car cannot run without gas or oil, if a person's "love tank" starts to get empty, that person will struggle to feel positive, little things may become issues, and keeping relationships a priority is difficult.
- It takes **continued, consistent effort** to have the deep, intimate loving relationship God desires for a husband and wife to experience.

### The love that lasts a life time is more than "feelings" or the "falling in love" stage.

- When we are "in love," we may be attracted to someone's physical characteristics and personality which creates warm tingly feelings like electricity.
- We can be so captivated by that person that we are led by our emotions and unable to see the flaws in them even if others point out their problems.
- We feel we will be able to discuss and solve any differences later.
- The stage of "falling in love" typically lasts about two years. After that we enter the world of reality and begin to assert ourselves, often being more concerned about my needs than the other person.
- Gary Chapman says, "**The *in-love experience* does not focus on our own growth nor on the growth and development of the other person. Rather, it gives us the sense that we have arrived and we do not need further growth.**" When the emotions are gone, we may question, "Why did I marry this person?"
- Do you treat your marriage like a garden or a department store? A gardener works the soil, adds nutrients and water to create the best environment for a fruitful harvest. In contrast, a shopper in a store checks out the best buy or something he thinks that he will like and buys it. If later he finds out that it was not what he thought it would be, he discards the item and returns to the store to purchase something else.
- Today's generation often chooses to jump ship and try again or feel they are destined to a life of misery. But statistics prove it only gets worse: 40% of first time marriages end in divorce, 60 % of second marriages and 75% of third marriages end the same way.

### Real love that lasts is a choice.

- It requires effort, discipline, and commitment.
- As we learn how our spouse receives love, we can keep filling up each other's love tank and experience more intimacy and love as the years go by.
- **We only get as much out of a relationship as we are willing to put into it.** Decide today to ask the Lord how you can minister to your spouse's needs.
- When our emotional love tank is low, we have few if any loving feelings toward our spouse. Instead we experience emptiness and pain. That is when we need to choose to love.
- Choosing to love does not erase the past, but it can make the future different. We can create an emotional climate where we can deal with our past conflicts and failures as we actively express love to our spouse in his or her love language.

## Love that Lasts a Lifetime

- Emotional love can be reborn with some work. When an action doesn't come naturally to you, then it is a greater expression of love.

Meeting our spouse's love needs will cause him or her to feel secure in our love. A person's sense of self-worth is increased when they know their spouse loves them.

### The Couple Bubble

We are all wired to desire relationships with other people where we can **feel cherished, cared for, and protected**. Father created Eve to be focused on relationship and brought her to Adam because He knew it would not be good for him to be alone. They were created to need each other!

- Marriage was the ideal situation for this to flourish in a safe place where they both could feel wanted, accepted, and cared for.
- It's also a place where each one's love need to be "**seen, heard, and known**" could be met. They could be there for each other no matter what may happen later in life.

In sharing life together with mutual respect for each other's uniqueness and differences, a couple in marriage needs to build a protective covering around themselves. Stan Tatkin in *Wired for Love* calls it "*the couple bubble...the mutually constructed membrane, cocoon, or womb that holds a couple together and protects each partner from outside elements.*"

- It is "*an intimate environment that the partners create and sustain together and that implicitly guarantees such things as: "I will never leave you." "I will never frighten you purposely." "When you are in distress, I will relieve you, even if I'm the one who is causing the distress." "Our relationship is more important than my need to be right, your performance, your appearance, what other people think or want, or any other competing value."*
- *It means putting your relationship and your spouse's well-being, self-esteem, and distress relief first place in each of your lives!*

### Be Best Friends First!

Love is friendship caught on fire. A strong marriage that will carry you through the difficult times is founded on a strong friendship with your spouse before you get married. Learn how to have fun together now, and when the slower or more challenging times come, you will be able to keep a joyful relationship that will help carry you through. ***Without friendship and fun, marriage is just work!!***

Unfortunately, our culture has pushed to immediately sexualize a relationship between a man and woman.

- This early involvement in sex prevents a true friendship from developing.
- Instead of sitting just to talk and go out to have fun together, they jump into bed with each other. The result is a stunting of the relationship.
- Many more have tried to pretend marriage before actually getting married by living together first. "***Pretend marriage never works because it's stolen intimacy.***" Jimmy Evans

Statistics show that couples who live together before marrying are 50% more likely to divorce than those who choose not to cohabitate.

- *“Courtship is a time to get to know each other’s hearts, not each other’s bodies!”*  
Jimmy Evans

### **Not Getting in a Rut**

- Once we marry, it is easy to get involved with other activities and not focus on your relationship like you did before you were married. Life can become routine and monotonous.
- It is important to continue to invest time, energy and money into your relationship! Each person must think creatively and take time to keep the romance in their marriage.
- **For men, they are conquerors.** Once they have reached their goal of marrying their wife, they may not feel the need to continue to do the things that they did to win her heart.
- Yet every marriage needs to keep things exciting to see relationships grow. Your spouse needs to feel that they are the most important person in your life, and that no job, projects or other people can take their place!
- Many **women** are now working outside the home, thus they spend the majority of their day functioning out of traditional masculine rules of conduct. Husbands need to help their wives get in touch with their feminine side, which is warm, nurturing, and giving.
- Letting your wife talk about her day and not trying to solve anything or give her advice can help her unwind and connect to her feminine side.
- Men need to feel appreciated and honored on a regular basis. Wives need to affirm their husbands and thank them for the little things they do for you. When a man hears words that tell him what he is doing right, they can spur him on to do more. Respecting and honoring your husband will build up his self-esteem. Your words are very powerful and can impact his image of himself.
- God desires that each couple enjoy the fullness of intimacy and love that He planned for marriage. That will happen more easily if you each ask the Father how you can show love to your spouse today.

### **Keep Your Priorities Straight!**

Our fast-paced society fills our lives with many activities and children that demand our attention. With all the stresses in a family, it’s easy to let our priorities get out of order. Our priorities must be Father first, then our spouse, followed by our children, and our job. Next to Father, our spouse is the most important person in our life. If we’re not careful, our stress-filled lives can choke the life out of our marriage. Here are four ways to keep your marriage the first priority:

- **Sacrifice** – We must trim away all of the “lower priorities” or they will continue to put extra stress and unyielding time demands on us that rob us of the most precious things in life. That may mean putting boundaries on parents, reducing activities outside of your family, or limiting your time away from the family.
- **Time** – We all have to balance our time between all of the things that are important to us like work, your spouse, children, extended family, friends, church, etc. Keeping the Sabbath Day is also important for us to be able to focus on Father, the Word, and family. Our bodies need a day of rest too! We need a dedicated and protect amount of time every day and week where we can focus our full attention on our spouse too!

## Love that Lasts a Lifetime

- **Attitude** – We can do things either out of a desire to bless and give to our spouse or an attitude of apathy or obligation. We may be doing good things for our spouse and pursue each other but with the wrong attitude, and we can usually tell the difference. We communicate our priorities in life by either feeling like meeting their needs is a big “ball and chain” which translates to rejection to our spouse, or we do it with enthusiasm and delight that makes them feel loved.
- **Energy** – Do you give all your energy into making your spouse feel loved and cared for, or do you hold back doing only the minimum necessary to try and please them some times? Is more of your energy going towards something or someone else other than your spouse? We need to pour into our relationship at the expense of everything else!

*The reason we “fall out of love” is because we get lazy. We stop working at the relationship and wonder why it doesn’t work!*

### The Chemistry of Romance

- Romance is the most important ingredient to having a successful marriage
- There are two types of Romance:
  - Intuitive** – You don’t know what or why you do things, but you are trying to win the affection of the other person. After marriage, this often goes away.
  - Educated** – To keep romance in your marriage for the rest of your life you must understand it is not luck or just for women.
- **Romance is not a mood or a feeling, it is an atmosphere.**
- It is not seasonal just for birthdays or Valentine’s Day, but it is a daily essential need in marriage.
- Romance is the cornerstone of your courtship and marriage.
- It is essential for keeping passion and intimacy and it helps you build relationship skills.
- *Without romance, you open the door for you or your spouse to be tempted to look outside your relationship.*

### The 3 Chemical Elements of Romance

#### #1 - Meeting an Unspoken Need or Desire

- **Be a self-starter.** Without any input from your spouse, do something special for them.
- When you were dating, you were watching each other and trying to anticipate what the other person wants, what he likes to do, and their likes or dislikes.
- ***By doing this you are telling the other person that you were on my heart!*** I was thinking about you, not because I have to, but because I want to.
- Romance says I want to please and serve you!!
- The core issue is desire. We all want to be desirable!
- Love has two parts: 1) How I feel about you. 2) The way you make me feel valuable!
- The opposite is true too. The greatest wound is rejection – not feeling valued or desirable.
- When I self-initiate acts of love, I’m saying you are desirable to me. It works both ways. The other person needs to receive acts of love too!

**#2 - Speaking Love in your Spouse's Language**

*“Romance is not something we do for ourselves, romance is something we do for our spouse. To be romantic means that we meet his or her needs, not our own.”*

Jimmy Evans

➤ **Basic Needs of a Man**

**Honor** – Men are sensitive in their ego and gravitate to where they get the most praise and away from where they feel dishonored.

**Sex**- Men are visual.

**Kindred Fellowship** – A man needs his wife to be a buddy.

**Domestic Support** – Women create the atmosphere of the home.

Men also need:

<b>Trust</b>	<b>Approval</b>
<b>Appreciation</b>	<b>Encouragement</b>
<b>Admiration</b>	<b>Respect</b>

➤ **Basic Needs of a Woman**

**Security** – She needs to know her needs are going to get met in a selfless sacrificial way. (Insecurity comes from a selfish man.)

**Open and Honest Communication** – Talking about how you feel

**Soft, Non-Sexual Touches** – The more soft and non-sexual a man is, the more sexual she will become. As He makes her feel more valuable and safe, she becomes more aroused.

**Leadership from her man** – She does not want to be dominated as she is your equal. She wants you to initiate disciplining the children, the finances, the spiritual atmosphere, and romance.

Women also need:

<b>Caring</b>	<b>Devotion</b>
<b>Understanding</b>	<b>Validation</b>
<b>Respect</b>	<b>Reassurance</b>

➤ **Speak the Right Language**

We must speak love in the language of our spouse. Some people receive love through words. They need to hear, “I love you.” “You look beautiful.” “I’m glad I married you.” Some receive love through physical touch and affections. Others require focused quality time with their spouse. Use the handout on Five Love Languages and find out what yours’ and your spouse’s love languages are and start speaking them! Ask each other, *“What can I do that would make you feel loved?”*

**#3 - Communicating Unique Value to Your Spouse**

- Romance is for only *one person* in your life.
- Your marriage will start to go the wrong direction if you no longer value your spouse.
- You need to communicate value to your spouse.
- Romance has to be consistently practiced. It can’t be done to try and repair damage you have done to the relationship and it can’t be as an offering for guilt.
- **Women feel valued and loved when:**
  - Men come up with ideas, ask her out, surprise her, and make time to talk.
  - They feel loved through tangible things like cards, phone calls or you hiding notes.

## Love that Lasts a Lifetime

- By remembering special days and doing things to help her without her asking first.
  - She knows that she is meeting vital needs in your life and work that on one else can meet.
  - She needs to know that you cherish her and that you delight in her as a person.
  - Praise her in front of others
  - She needs to know that you understand her areas of limitations and you'll protect her.
  - She needs to know that you're aware of her presence even when your mind is on other things.
- Men will sense their value without any words when:
- You give him a buffer zone of time when he first comes home from work. This allows him to switch from a "political" male role to a "loving" male.
  - Give him your ear even if the subject is less than meaningful to you. He needs to feel heard too. He may express his feelings easier over a cell phone while driving.
  - Give him time away with his guy friends as it can be energizing for him.
  - Give him what he wants before he knows he wants it. Do little acts of kindness from pouring him a cup of coffee to pursuing him sexually so that he feels manly.
  - Give him your admiration and build up his self-esteem through genuine compliments. He needs feminine approval like a mother's.
  - Give him his adulthood by not trying to control his irresponsible behavior. Let him learn from his mistakes. Don't act like his mother!
  - Give him his dreams. If he tells you what he wants to do in the future, let him dream even if they seem unrealistic. Don't rain on his parade! (What to Give Men by Susan Gifford)

### **What Romance looks like:**

It is all day long, not just at night. Women are all inclusive. So the man needs to be connected with everything that is going on around her and help her navigate through all the issues.

It's lots of talking, holding, and always is connected with feelings and emotions.

Everything moves forward slowly.

It's about atmosphere.

Sex is optional.

### **Romance may look different for men and women**

Romance is a language demonstration, not a lesson.

***For a man, everything naked is romantic!*** It can be quick with food and talking being optional.

***For women it is candlelight, music, conversation and more!***

Men need to speak female and women need to speak male. Without speaking the other person's language, it's impossible to be romantic.

Most dangerous things in marriage are unmet needs. However, most people use their God-given energy not to love the each other but focus on trying to change the other person.

***When you learn each other's language you become one!***

### **Lasting Passion**

- Passion is a reservoir of positive emotions that fuels the happiness and satisfaction of a marriage relationship. If it's missing for any length of time it's a danger signal.
- Be passionate in your relationship with Jesus and in your marriage. **Matt. 6:19** speaks about your heart and treasure being connected.

## Love that Lasts a Lifetime

- Whatever you invest yourself in is where your passion will be. We fall in love when we give our love and attention to someone.
- Lasting passion is disciplined investments. You reap what you sow.
- Make sure you don't give what belongs to your spouse somewhere else. If you get distracted you may become emotionally conflicted.
- Compassionate, sympathetic, helpful love hangs on the imagination of the lover, so be creative! Seek to understand your spouse by feeling what they feel, thinking what they think, and imagine what would spark their romantic interest.
- Ask yourself: "***What is it like to being married to me?***" Also imagine yourself in your spouse's place and imagine what you would like done to you. Then do it for your spouse!

### **Ways a Man can make his wife feel special and loved:**

1. A woman likes the man to plan a date and ask her out – him coming up with the ideas.
2. She also likes to be surprised.
3. Giving her gifts on special occasions is good, but gifts at other times are really special!
4. Take your wife gently into your arms and kiss her. Look in her eyes and tell her how much you love her and you'd marry her again.
5. Fix her favorite breakfast in bed. Then wake her up with a kiss. Sit in a chair by the bed and talk with her while she eats.
6. Have a bubble bath and her favorite music or book ready for her after a hard day. Give her a massage and let her go to sleep.
7. Write a letter to your wife describing her strengths and your need for her.
8. Encourage her with some scriptures you think describes her walk with God. (ex. A humble heart, Phil. 2:1-11)
9. On a Saturday morning, tell her she is "queen for a day." Handle all her household responsibilities and let her spend her day as she chooses.
10. Schedule a weekly devotional time with your wife. Take some time to read through Scripture, talk about how it applies to your lives, and pray together.
11. Leave a big note on the washing machine thanking her for washing your clothes.
12. Leave a single rose (a unique color) with a love note (telling her how special she is to you) where she can find it after you are gone to work or outside.
13. Wash her feet and give her a pedicure or a foot massage.
14. Write special notes of love and appreciation and hid them in places where your wife will eventually find them. (microwave, jewelry box, dresser, etc.)
15. Phone her during the day and tell her "I'm thinking of you..."
16. Periodically mail her a romantic card or love letter.
17. Go out for ice cream or coffee and let her pick the topics of conversation.
18. Create a romantic setting with candles and sparking grape juice and watch a romantic movie together.
19. Take silly pictures of you both – selfies in the woods or at a park acting like kids – acting like it's summer on a snowy day, etc. Then go home, get some food to snack on and enjoy looking at your pictures together!
20. Go on a walk together and stroll hand in hand.

**Ways a Woman can make her husband feel special:**

1. Recognize his need to hear words of appreciation on a regular basis. Your words will encourage him to do more.
2. Give him some "down time" to do something he likes to do without interrupting him.
3. Plan a candlelight dinner of his favorite foods at home to make him feel special.
4. Greet him in a sexy outfit when he would not normally expect it.
5. Write an "I love you, \_\_\_\_\_" message to him in a creative way – (Rainex on the bathroom mirror that appears with steam or messages in the snow or sand, etc.)
6. Order pizza, and watch a sports game with him. If there is no game, rent his favorite adventure movie.
7. Think of something God is teaching you through your husband's leadership. When he's not busy; tell him what you are learning.
8. Talk about how special he is in front of others.
9. Relax with him by listening to some of his favorite music. Then before bed, give him a passionate kiss and tell him you love spending time with him.
10. Phone his job after you know he's left for the day and leave a simple but romantic message telling him why you appreciate him.
11. Write 5 things you appreciate about him on 5 cards (one per card) and leave the cards in various places where he will find them.
12. On a Saturday morning, tell him he is "king for a day." Tell him he has no responsibilities that day except to enjoy himself. Let him design the day.
13. Write a letter and mail it to him of love thoughts from you.
14. Decorate his office when he is not there with balloons or something to make him feel special.
15. Prepare a picnic dinner, pick him up from work, and take him to a place he enjoys.
16. Take him to a go-cart track and race with him. (bowling, miniature golf, etc.)
17. Have a progressive dinner at his favorite restaurants on a less busy night when you don't have to rush.
18. Write a love poem telling him you are taking him on a date. Cut it up into puzzle pieces and have him put it together.
19. Cook dinner together and later watch a movie.
20. Do something fun and romantic that you did when you were dating.



## Handout Worksheet For Love That Lasts A Life Time

To experience a life-long love affair for your marriage will take lots of effort and continual evaluation of where your relationship is at now and where you want it to be. We have a long list of possible resources in our marriage reference handout and there are many more great ideas on the internet to help you make your marriage fun and exciting or help you with difficult areas in our relationship. Sue and I made a commitment that our marriage was important and we were going to do whatever we could do to make it even better. After over 48 years of marriage, we continue to read books together and attend training to take our relationship to new levels. And most of all make sure you have lots of fun together!!

Before the next time we meet, use the questions and activities below to enhance your commitment to a life-long love affair together.. Enjoy the rich fellowship with each other as you open your hearts and connect on a heart-to-heart level!

1. Think about a time together when there were moments of distress, strong disagreement, big emotions, or arguments with each other. Express to each other how that made you feel? How did you handle the situation or get yourself back to a state of peace and rest with each other? Discuss how you might create a “couple bubble” that can protect/prevent future blowups.
2. Take the time to have more than a surface level conversation by using the following questions:
  1. What are the five most romantic things I could ever do for you?
  2. What are the three most romantic times we've had together?
  3. If we had two days alone together, how could we best spend them? Why?
  4. What is the most romantic place we've ever been? Would you like to go there again?
  5. What do I do that really makes you feel loved? In what ways can I make you feel more loved?
  6. What three ingredients are a must for a romantic evening?
  7. What could I do to best help you in the next 30 days?
  8. Are you satisfied with our level of friendship? What could we do to improve?
  9. What three things do you like doing with me the most?
  10. What kind of clothing do you most like to see me wear and why?
3. If you don't know yours or your future spouse's love language, take the Five Love Language Test. Then talk about what were your two highest scores on the test and why those are important to you.
4. Use the handout *Five Love Languages Explained* and under each of the five love languages highlight to each other the bullets that really witness to your heart about yourself.
5. Each of you make a list of ten things the other person could do for you that would make you feel loved. Then exchange lists and talk about different ways you might do those things on your list for each other.

6. What does the sentence “*Love is a choice or decision.*” mean to you. Talk about some ways you are going to apply that to your marriage in the future when the “falling in love stage” comes to an end and some of your differences start to surface as irritations.
7. Talk about what you think “Romance” means to you. Make a list of some things that your future spouse could do that would be romantic to you.
8. Look at the “*Basic needs of a man*” and “*Basic needs of a woman*” from the lesson and talk about the ones from the lists that witness to your heart as needs that you have as a man or as a woman.
9. Each of you talks about some ways that you intend to keep your priorities straight when you are married. Affirm each other that you are the most important person in my life and that you will always be my number one priority next to my heavenly Father.