

Romans 13:8 *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

1 Peter 5:5 *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*



"I'm learning to accept you just the way you are until I'm done changing you."

GRACE: “ _____ ”

1 Peter 5:6 *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

1 Peter 5:7 *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

Galatians 6:9-10 *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how well do you feel you've kept the covenant of your wedding vows ...

- **To have and to hold** (how well have you bonded and “held” to your spouse?) _____
- **For better or for worse** (how stable is your treatment of your spouse, regardless of the circumstances?) _____
- **For richer or for poorer** (how well does your marriage stand up to financial pressures?) _____
- **In sickness and in health** (how well have you supported your spouse through physical and/or emotional struggles?) _____
- **To love and to cherish** (how well do you put your spouse's needs and requests above your own?) _____
- **And thereto I pledge my faithfulness** (how faithful have you been to your spouse?) _____

THE LOVE DARE CHALLENGE:

Ask God to change your heart toward your spouse in any area where you have not been unconditionally committed to them. Do something to show your spouse that you have prioritized their needs above your own.

Now, commit to implementing it this week in a practical way!

TOMORROW IN THE LOVE DARE: “LOVE SEEKS TO UNDERSTAND”



Long ago, Israel's King Solomon handed down both wisdom and poetry on the topic of marriage. We all understand “two are better than one” when we long for a best friend, lover and ally who will remain with us for the rest of our life. Solomon captured the feelings eloquently when he wrote, “This is my lover, this is my friend.” (Song 5:16) In the same book of the Bible, Solomon invites his beautiful wife and lover to “come with me.” The words are frequently used in weddings because we can all identify with the romance and the desire for a “soulmate.”

And, the vast majority of us will find someone to “come with me” and fill that need for a companion. Approximately ninety percent of us will eventually marry. If you aren't currently married, chances are that someday you will be.

Unfortunately, around half of all marriages will end in divorce. Most will perish from what is known as “irreconcilable differences.” That's the catch-all phrase for what Caleb Holt means when he says, “It's just not working out anymore.” The common explanations are, “I've fallen out of love with her/him,” or “We're just two different people now.”



In fact, there are days in every marriage and every relationship when there are irreconcilable differences. But marriage is intended by God to last a lifetime. Is there a way to withstand the fires and build an enduring marriage? It is too late to “fireproof” a marriage that has already been burned?

As fellow firefighter Michael Simmons explains to Caleb, “Fireproof doesn't mean that a fire will never come, but that when it comes you will be able to withstand it.” The key to a loving, lasting marriage that can go the distance when the fires of conflict burn hot is found in a single, simple word – commitment.

Tonight, we will learn that a wedding vow is not a contract, it is a covenant!



TODAY IS DAY 17 OF THE LOVE DARE!

- Love cherishes
- Love lets the other win
- Love fights fair
- Love takes delight
- Love is honourable
- Love intercedes
- Love promotes intimacy

None of these things can happen in a marriage without:

- _____
- _____
- _____

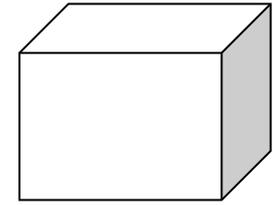
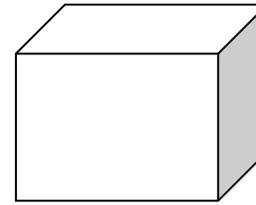
1 Corinthians 7:10-11 (MSG) *And if you are married, stay married. This is the Master's command, not mine. If a wife should leave her husband, she must either remain single or else come back and make things right with him. And a husband has no right to get rid of his wife.*

Malachi 2:13-17 (MSG) *You fill the place of worship with your whining and sniveling because you don't get what you want from God. Do you know why? Simple. Because God was there as a witness when you spoke your marriage vows to your young bride, and now you've broken those vows, broken the faith-bond with your vowed companion, your covenant wife. God, not you, made marriage. His Spirit inhabits even the smallest details of marriage. And what does he want from marriage? Children of God, that's what. So guard the spirit of marriage within you. Don't cheat on your spouse. "I hate divorce," says the God of Israel. GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies says, "I hate the violent dismembering of the 'one flesh' of marriage." So watch yourselves. Don't let your guard down. Don't cheat. You make God tired with all your talk. "How do we tire him out?" you ask. By saying, "God loves sinners and sin alike. God loves all." And also by saying, "Judgment? God's too nice to judge."*

All you need to do to ruin every relationship is _____!

CONTRACT: _____

COVENANT: _____



THREE OPTIONS WHEN EXPECTATIONS COLLIDE:

1. _____ – leave the relationship
2. _____ – stronger partner dominates
3. _____ – draw strict boundary lines

Any time a marriage degenerates into DEBT/DEBTOR status, intimacy evaporates because there is no room left for the one thing a marriage needs most: _____

How do I know if I've moved from DESIRE to EXPECTATION?

1. Expressions of _____
2. Acts of _____

How do I know what is in my EXPECTATION BOX? Ask this:

Ephesians 5:21 *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

Submission means to _____ your spouse's desires over yours ... not in reverence to _____, but to _____.

Ephesians 5:22, 25 *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord ... Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*