

Love is...

Intro: *Love is being unwilling to ask your spouse to be the source of your identity, meaning and purpose, or inner sense of well-being, while refusing to be the source of his or hers.*

- Your husband is not capable of carrying your hopes or happiness.
- Love does not ask your spouse to do what only God can do
- Love seeks vertical fulfillment so it can horizontally serve.

Chapter 1: *Love is a daily commitment to grow in love so that the love you offer to your husband is increasingly selfless, mature, and patient.*

- Do not live with the belief that you or your marriage have “arrived.”
- Accept the reality that God is still calling you to grow and change
- Love doesn't coast but always carries a personal-growth agenda

Chapter 2: *Love means giving up your autonomy*

- No longer live as though your life belongs to you
- Approach every desire, choice, decision, word, or action in the context of what is best for your husband
- Refuse to view yourself as separate from your husband
- Always choose and act with your marriage in view

Chapter 3: *Love is the willingness to make regular and costly sacrifices for the sake of your marriage without asking anything in return or using your sacrifices to place your spouse in your debt.*

- Real love loves when love isn't much fun or fulfilling
- Love loves in the dark of the night as much as in the warmth of the sun
- Love requires real, willing, and daily sacrifices
- Love is costly and requires us to be willing to suffer

Chapter 4: *Love is being willing to have your life complicated by the needs and struggles of your husband without impatience or anger.*

- Jesus lived in this fallen world in order to meet your greatest need
- Abandon your demand for a comfortable and predictable life
- Find greater joy in meeting the need of your spouse than in getting your own way

Chapter 5: *Love is refusing to be self-focused or demanding but instead looking for specific ways to serve, support, and encourage, even when you are busy or tired.*

- We often believe we deserve something and that we are right in demanding it
- Love doesn't demand that the spouse meet all our perceived needs
- Our heavenly Father knows precisely what we need and has promised to supply

Chapter 6: *Love is staying faithful to your commitment to treat your spouse with appreciation, respect, and grace, even in moments when he doesn't seem to deserve it or is unwilling to reciprocate.*

- The sins and failures of your husband will be your firsthand, daily experience
- Marriage means loving your spouse when he is irritable and impatient, hurtful, demanding, or critical
- Love perseveres through hard times and difficult days
- Love is respectful and looks for ways to express appreciation

Chapter 7: *Love is daily admitting to yourself, your spouse, and God that you are not able to love this way without God's protecting, providing, forgiving, rescuing, and delivering grace.*

- Love does all with a commitment to the welfare of another.
- It is impossible for any of us to love as God commands and describes
- God's call to love confronts us with our weakness and inability
- God uses marriage to expose our delusions of wisdom, righteousness, and strength and to cause us to run to Him for help
- Jesus died to give us the desire, wisdom, and power to love as we should
- Jesus suffered so that you would never be alone and He showers you with His love so that you would never be without what you need to love

Chapter 8: *Love is always being willing to ask for forgiveness and always being committed to grant forgiveness*

- There probably is never a day that we don't sin against one another
- Recognize that your spouse has to live with a sinner like you
- Say no to keeping a record of wrongs, vengeance, or bitterness

Chapter 9: *Love is being unwilling to flatter, lie, manipulate, or deceive in any way in order to get your spouse into giving you what you want or doing something your way.*

- **Daily acknowledge your struggle with the selfishness of sin**
- **Love is not complaining or demanding**
- **Love is willing to sacrifice what you want in order to give your spouse what he needs**
- **True love is other-centered and other-motivated**

Chapter 10: *Love is speaking kindly and gently, even in moments of disagreement, refusing to attack your spouse's character or assault his intelligence*

- The wounds from words live long in the heart
- Do not give yourself permission to go on verbal attack
- You cannot allow yourself to go where your emotions are leading you
- Use words as tools of love

Chapter 11: *Love is being lovingly honest and humbly approachable in times of misunderstanding, and being more committed to unity and love than you are to winning, accusing, or being right.*

- There will be misunderstandings and we don't always communicate as clearly as we think
- Work through misunderstandings with patience, kindness, and grace
- We usually believe we are more righteous than we actually are
- Be willing to own your own wrongs and admit you need your spouse to help you see yourself with accuracy

Chapter 12: *Love is actively fighting the temptation to be critical and judgmental toward your spouse, while looking for ways to encourage and praise*

- It is easier to notice our spouse doing wrong than notice him doing right
- When you forget what a sinner you are, it is much easier to be critical of your spouse
- Critical responses are always rooted in self-righteousness
- Be grateful for the grace given to you and pass it along to your spouse
- You are a flawed person living with a flawed person
- Recognize what is important and needs to be lovingly addressed, and what is insignificant and needs to be lovingly overlooked

Chapter 13: *Love is recognizing the high value of trust in a marriage and being faithful to your promises and true to your word*

- You want your spouse to know he can depend on you
- Whatever you promise, to the best of your ability you will do
- Your spouse should never have to wonder who you are with or what you are doing
- Love means your spouse can rest, knowing there are no secrets in your life about which he needs to be concerned

Chapter 14: *Love means being willing to invest the time necessary to discuss, examine, and understand the problems that you face as a couple, staying on task until the problem is removed or you have agreed upon a strategy of response*

- You live in a broken world and there will be problems
- Learn together to be active problem solvers and celebrate the growth and change resulting

Chapter 15: *Love is a commitment to say no to selfish instincts and to do everything that is within your ability to promote real unity, functional understanding, and active love in your marriage.*

- You must first say no to yourself
- We are prone to be consumed with our own desires and take little time to notice or respond to the needs of our husband
- We may be selfish with our time, money, energy
- Often we want to just be alone at the end of a long day

Paul Tripp, *What Did You Expect?* p. 191-201