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## So, How Do You Stay in Love?

**Psalms 141:3: (NASB) Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth;  
Keep watch over the door of my lips.**

We humans are built to long for love, commitment and longevity. We all want to be happy and for most that means being involved in a special relationship. We want "...and they all lived happily ever after!" for such an end is what dreams are made of. For a few, this may become their reality, but for most their reality sounds more like "and they lived tentatively ever after, never quite satisfied but rather they were tolerant of their lot in life." How do we avoid the tragedy of the last ending and find some of the "happily" of the first?



Today's conversation is not a scientific approach to the issues of marital life, nor is it based on human psychology. We will look at this based on some common sense driven by scriptural principle and the personal experiences of several individuals.

You have heard of TLC meaning "Tender Loving Care." Let's alter that a bit to TRUST - LOVE - CHERISH.



### "Broken Together," (Verse 1) Casting Crowns

How do you build trust? Trust is an aspect of faith. Faith is conviction based on some measure of proof. Trust is the heart's *application* of faith, the willingness to be vulnerable and exposed as a result of your faith. To stay in love, we must trust in two things: our spouse and our marriage.

**Trusting in our spouse:** Proverbs 31:11 Proverbs 31:11

CQ Staffers were asked to contribute what they felt are valuable principles for a strong marriage.

**Loni suggests respectful and honest communication:**

A pivotal moment for my husband and me in our relationship happened before we were even engaged. We sat down (face-to-face - not over email, Facebook, texting, twitter or Instagram) and had an honest discussion about "having honest discussions" in our relationship. We made a commitment that we would always be completely upfront, honest and respectful with each other, even if what we had to say was difficult. We committed never to make personal attacks and that gave us the confidence to always view the other as trying to help, not hurt. Therefore, any time we run into a difficult situation, problem or disagreement, we have a very honest and open discussion. The simple act of viewing it this way - rather than as a "fight" - intrinsically leads us to work together to find productive solutions, rather than cultivating grudges, anger or bitterness.

Respectful communication uses kind words that convey accurate thoughts and feelings. One thing my husband and I often say to each other is, "Remember, Honey, I can't read your mind." And while that is somewhat cliché, it is so true. Respect one for another is commanded in God's word.

**Trusting in your spouse is reflected in your intentions:** Ephesians 4:29-32



### Broken Together, (chorus) Casting Crowns

**Realize that to trust in your marriage is to trust in God:** Psalms 34:8

**The first marriage:** Genesis 2:20-24

**Observations regarding the first marriage:**

- (Verse 20) The noticeable absence of the woman revealed the emptiness man had without her.
- (Verses 21-22) God's creation of woman from man gives a sense of equality and companionship.



- (Verse 22) God presents Eve to Adam to be named as his own companion and helper. "Helper" is defined as "one who helps" but certainly not one who has to be in a lesser position as shown by: Psalms 33:20: (KJV) *Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help <5828> and our shield.*
- (Verse 23) *At last, bone of my bone, etc.* Adam's deep desire for companionship was now fulfilled.
- (Verse 24) *Therefore* a man leaves his home and *clings*; implies a LIFELONG devotion.
- They become *one flesh* - inseparable and united in every way.



### "Because You Loved Me," (verse one) Celine Dion

Jesus confirms marriage as a God-based lifelong human arrangement: Mark 10:6-9: *What God has joined together* - what does this actually mean? Pinky-swear? Cross my heart? Too often people enter into marriage with the ability to walk away. We have to commit to our spouse and to the promise of commitment. **Marriage is a "covenant" (contract) and not just any covenant; it is a covenant of God:** Proverbs 2:11-12,16-17

(Source: McClintock and Strong Biblical Cyclopedia) **Covenant:** A mutual contract or agreement between two parties, each of which is bound to fulfill certain engagements to the other.... The Hebrew word is derived...from the root...*"He cut,"* and taken to mean primarily *"a cutting,"* with reference to the custom of cutting or dividing animals in two, and passing between the parts in ratifying a covenant. ...In making such a covenant God was solemnly invoked as witness (Genesis 31:50), whence the expression *"a covenant of Jehovah"* in 1 Samuel 20:8; compare Jeremiah 34:18,19. ...and accordingly a breach of covenant was regarded as a very heinous sin (Ezekiel 17:12-20).

Once you have entered into that promise, you need to stay with that promise. Trust what it means and do your part.

### Okay, we have a basis of trust. What role does love play?

The type of love we are focusing on is "agape" love - a benevolent, selfless love.

**Men and women are wired differently (topic for another day) and as a result have different roles:** Ephesians 5:21-24: What does THIS mean? Notice the simplicity of this command and the lack of "agape" reminders.

**Now the command to the husbands:** Ephesians 5:25-31

### Observations:

- Women - LOVE (implied) and *be subject*.
- Men - LOVE and give yourself up for her.
- Men - LOVE and care for her as your own body. Men are to take their self-centeredness and become "wife-centered."
- Men - Your love for her becomes your way of self-preservation.
- Men - Cherish her.
- Men - Leave all other ties for her sake.



### "Broken Together," (Verse 2) Casting Crowns

**Debbie wrote:** Hebrews 10:24: (NASB) *and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds...* If our mate is a fellow Christian, they would be the first one we would want to consider because they're the ones we share our life with and our most intimate conversations. If he or she were not a Christian we would still want to be sure that we take into consideration that we ourselves should be an example of love in our words and actions, taking our example from our Lord Jesus. Ephesians 4:1-3: Be patient with your spouse; they see the good, the bad, and the ugly in you and have vowed to live with you anyway!



**Cherish your spouse! We are told to do so! Ephesians 5:29-31**

To cherish a spouse can be a challenge, especially for men and especially in our time of everything being instant and replaceable. So, how do we do it? How do we truly cherish our wives?



**"Cherish," (last verse) The Association (1966)**

1 Peter 3:7: (KJV) *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving **honour <5092>** unto the wife, as unto the **weaker <772>** vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*

**Honour:** Strongs #5092, time (tee-may') esteem (especially of the highest degree), or the dignity itself

**Weaker:** Strongs #772, asthenes (as-then-ace'), strengthless (in various applications, literal, figurative and moral)

Give great esteem to your wives, as you would to something that is of great value, yet fragile. Our marital instinct should be to protect, honor and respect our wives above all others - cherish! Our wives are of priceless value and deserve treatment as such.

**This principle is exhibited in the following text. Although it does NOT mention men and women, the same words explain relationships within the body of Christ:**

1 Corinthians 12:21-23: (ASV) <sup>21</sup>*And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.* <sup>22</sup>*Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be **more feeble <772>** are necessary:* <sup>23</sup>*and those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant **honor <5092>**; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.*

The above comparisons speak volumes! For example, *eyes to hands* - both have obvious value, yet the eye directs the hand. *Head to feet* - both have obvious value, yet the head directs the feet. So, just because some in the body are not "out front," that never diminishes their worth. This is the same within a marriage. Ideally a cherished spouse should honor and appreciate in return.

An example is Christian Questions. Our listeners are familiar with the hosts, Jonathan and Rick. But CQ is not Jonathan and Rick. It is all of the other contributing individuals week-to-week and year-to-year. Are they less valuable because you do not hear their names? Not at all.

Cherishing is of great value and the idea of *weak* is not weak at all.

Proverbs 25:24: (NASB) *It is better to live in a corner of the roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.*

Proverbs 21:19: (NASB) *It is better to live in a desert land than with a contentious and vexing woman.*

CQ Staffer Julie called in to discuss an unusual solution that worked for her marriage. Early on she decided she did not want to be the one who made her husband want to stay not only on the rooftop, but on the *corner* of the rooftop! **Please see the Full Edition Rewind for this fun discussion about a butler named Sinclair.**

Philippians 2:1-4: When we look at the trials and trauma of life, we see the world is full of temptations bigger than ever. We need to have places to go in our hearts and minds to refocus and be on the right page.

**How do we go about cherishing not only our spouse but our very marriage as well?**

When you truly cherish someone or something, it is always on your mind and your most basic instinct is to protect it. Staying in love means feeding that protective instinct for not only your spouse, but for your actual marriage covenant as well.



**Generally it is pride that is behind our destructive behaviors in marriage:**

**Proverbs 16:18-20,24-25:** Often we get stuck in the emotions and temptations of the moment. When we allow that to draw us away, we stop cherishing the covenant of marriage. Thoughts can come into your mind, but what do you do once they get there?

CQ Staffer Becca wrote: For myself and my marriage, I think one of the biggest pieces of advice I would give to any Christian would be to have a spirit of thankfulness. (Thankfulness stimulates protection!) This works in two really major ways: First, thankfulness towards God through prayer is a wonderful unifying action that makes me feel like we, (God, my husband David and I) are all on the same page talking together. It is important to thank God daily for all of the things He does for us in our lives and for that to be a constant habit. It is also the best way to deal with difficult experiences - especially for me - I am a very "action" oriented person and I want to do, to fix, to make better and come up with a plan to help, and the best plan is ALWAYS when David and I stop and pray together. Whether it's for a particular problem that one of us is specifically dealing with or if it's something that is affecting both of us, praying together is unifying and comforting to feel like God is working to help both of us in our walks. It's also a good reminder for myself that I need to give things up to God more often and stop trying to control things.

**1 Thessalonians 4:3-5: Holiness and honor** - when we lose this basis for our lives, we lose the foundation on which to build, cherish and protect a successful marriage. *Honor* means certain things are not allowed to remain in your thoughts - not entertained at all. This is necessary as temptations in the world get worse and worse.

**Do we fall into the old "the grass is greener elsewhere" thinking?** Proverbs 5:15,17-18

**Holding grudges and constant complaining are never good things:** Proverbs 19:11,13

**Letting anger or resentment fester - that is going to hurt tomorrow!** Ephesians 4:25-27



**"Because You Loved Me," (last verse) Celine Dion**

Another way to cherish and protect a spouse is to not put them down or complain about them to others.

How can we do better? We can use "TLC" - Trust - Love - Cherish - to help change the way we look at things. "Happily ever after" becomes a distinct possibility.

***So, how do you stay in love?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!***