



Secrets to a Successful Marriage

Principle number Fifteen

Love is the secret of life

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, and it is not proud. 5 Love is not rude, is not selfish, and does not get upset with others. Love does not count up wrongs that have been done. 6 Love is not happy with evil but is happy with the truth. 7 Love patiently accepts all things. It always trusts, always hopes, and always remains strong. 8 Love never ends. NCV

This scripture is a description on God's great love. It is His love for us. The more we are transformed into the image of Jesus the more we will be able to walk in this same love. Can you just image what your marriage would be like if both you and your spouse walked in this amazing love for one another? Take a moment and read the passage of scripture again, and then again, and then again, and again, etc. Read it and meditate on it until it is firmly established in your heart. Before you know it this passage of scripture will be ruling your heart and your life and marriage will be heaven on earth. This kind of love is not based on feelings but it is based on a commitment to God and to one another.

Marriage is not built on feelings. I have heard many times a spouse say, "I don't love them anymore." What they are really saying is I don't have romantic feelings for them anymore, or I don't have feelings for them anymore. If marriage were based on feelings it would be unjust for God to command us to love one another. Marriage is not based on feelings, but on commitment. You love your spouse as an act of your will. You love them because you choose to. God's love lays its life down for others (*1 John 3:16*). It prefers others before itself (*Philippians 2:3*). It esteems its brother above itself. When you lose your life, then you truly find life (*Matthew 16:25*). One reason you no longer have feelings for your spouse is because of unforgiveness. You have been hurt and disappointed by your spouse many times and you have allowed resentment and bitterness to take root in your heart. You are blind and can only see your spouse's weaknesses and faults. You've listened to the devil's counsel which centers everything on you. When you are the center of your thoughts and your life and you are headed down the road to destruction. Another reason your feelings for your spouse have died is

because you have no room in your heart for your spouse. You are so consumed with yourself and your happiness there is no room for anyone else.

If you will obey God's word, you will find the great joy to a wonderful marriage. Choose this day you are going to forgive your spouse. When you choose to forgive, you release the hurt out of your heart. God's healing process begins and you will experience a miracle. Your feelings for your spouse will begin to return. The romantic feelings will begin to return. When the healing process is complete, the feelings will be completely restored. Every time you are wronged or hurt, choose to forgive, in doing so you will protect your feelings for your spouse. If you will walk in God's love, you will always have feelings for your spouse. They will never die. It is when you disobey God's instruction that the feelings die. If you will make yourself last and put your spouse first you will have a wonderful marriage. If you put yourself first you will have a miserable marriage. The choice is up to you.

Joshua 24:15 ...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Will you serve the Lord or will you serve yourself. Be like Joshua and serve the Lord.

Make a commitment today to fear the Lord in your marriage. Focus on your responsibilities. Accept your spouse the way that they are faults and all. Judge yourself and not your spouse. If you want a change in your marriage be willing to make the change. Change does not happen on its own. You have to purpose to make a change in your heart. You have to make a decision you are going to change and then do it.

Make this commitment and say this prayer

"Heavenly Father, I thank you for my spouse. They are your gift to me. Forgive me for being judgmental and critical toward them. I forgive them for the hurts and disappointments in life they have caused me. I make a commitment to accept them just the way they are. I choose to forgive them every time they hurt or disappoint me. I commit to examining my own life and to make the changes that are needed to have a good marriage."

A Time to Reflect

1. Do you see any of the traits of love in your life or in your spouse's life?
2. Are you willing to meditate on 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 until it is rooted in your heart?
3. What do you need to forgive your spouse for?
4. Do you have strong romantic feelings for your spouse?
5. What can you do to increase your feeling for your spouse?