

What is love? What is love really? I think it's one of the most misunderstood and overused words. We use "love" for everything. I love tacos. I love football. I love God. I love my wife. (Not necessarily in that order!) We use that term to refer to all kinds of different things. I think love is a misconception for many people. .

Many people think love is a feeling. An ocean of emotion! And I'm in love! A sentimental knot in my stomach! That means I have love! No. You might have just eaten a bad pizza or something. Love creates feelings but love is not a feeling. How many of you always feel loving toward your husband/wife? We don't always feel loving. I mean, Jesus says, we are to love our enemies. Do you have warm cushy feelings toward your enemies? No way, that's because, Love is an action. The Bible says, "Let's don't just love in word or in language or in speech, but love with action." It's something you do. It's not just something you talk about. Love is more than a feeling and more than a thought. Jesus tells us in John 15:9, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love." Let's follow the encourage of loving each other as Jesus has loved us. Let's Love each other by Putting the 6 C's of a successful marriage into effect. C Number 1.

Communication. Newsweek released a statistic that said, "The average couple talks to each other alone four minutes a day. The average couple spends 30 hours a week in front of the television and spends about 30 minutes total in communication per week. It's no wonder we don't communicate. We don't talk with each other.

Communication is a skill you've got to learn through practice. Years ago, my dad told me that my mother talked a lot. I never understood until later in life, that that is indeed true, do to her makeup under God. The fact is that women do talk more than men. The average man talks about 10,000 words a day. The average woman talks about 30,000 words a day. When your husband is out with his friends golfing, going out for lunch, running some errands, he's all used up except maybe 50 words. So he's going to grunt his way through the evening. But you oh wife, because you have a bigger storage, have ten grand to expand. You're dying to talk! So husband, allow her to talk, and be a good listener.

Each day, there should be a time of 15-30 minutes where you can sit down together, take a walk together, and just talk about the day and what happened, as well as anything else on your mind. That is showing love. Communicating with each other. And what is so important in communication is listening. When a person speaks, we need to listen, listen, listen and not interrupt. The Bible says, Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." When your spouse is done speaking, you need to clarify what they said or paraphrase back what was said. Like, this is what I heard you say. Then speak slowly, in control. Stay in the moment too. That means if your husband is talking about the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, you don't interrupt, and say, honey could you please clean up the dishes in the kitchen. Wait until the present conversation is completed before moving on to another topic.

C number two. Consideration. In Ephesians 4:2 it says, "Be completely humble and gentle: be patient, bearing with one another in love." Consideration simply means paying attention to what they say, showing common courtesy, treating people with respect. Consideration means you go out and bring in the groceries, Husband, even if it is the 4th quarter in a Gator's football game, and they are marching down the field for a touchdown with the score tied, you get out in that garage and bring in the groceries when

she asks you.

Consideration means you wait until she has both legs in the car before you pull out of the driveway! It's amazing how quickly consideration disappears after we are married.

Have you ever heard about the 3 years of a married cold. Year one, Darling, let me call the paramedics to take you immediately to UofM hospital for a checkup and some tests. I know you don't like hospital food, so I'll bring you up your meals. Year two. You look like you have a fever. Why don't you drive yourself over to Emergency Care to get checked out. I'll do the dishes and clean the house while you are gone. Year three. Would you please stop coughing? I can't hear the television program I am watching. Would you mind going in the other room while this show is on. You sound like a barking dog.

C3 is Compromise. Christian love is not self-seeking. It does not demand its own way. Three facts of life: 1) You will have conflict in marriage. Every marriage has conflict. 2) There are some issues you're never going to agree on. Because you're different. 3) Compromise is the evidence of real love. You meet in the middle. You're flexible. Both of you give your opinion on something. Then you brainstorm solutions that are agreeable to both of you. Then you pick one and go with it. You learn the art of negotiation. You learn to compromise. That's very important to learn this skill if you're going to have a satisfying marriage. You have to compromise on many things:

The kinds of vacations you take. Some people like to see 102 events in 52 days. Other people want to go to one place and stay put. We relax different ways. You have to compromise. the way your money is spent.... how often you see family.... What makes you think you have the right to spend it anyway you want to? You're in a family now.

More marriages die from inflexibility than adultery, alcoholism, or abuse. It's a fact that we're just plain stubborn. We're rigid. We don't want to change or negotiate or compromise. We want our way and that's why most marriages die. Learn to compromise.

C4 is Courtship. If there was more courting in marriage there would be fewer marriages in court. The real problem with many marriages is that what you did to win your mate's love you have not continued to do to keep your mate's love. You've stopped courting.

Husbands and wives see each other at the absolute worst part of the day. A few minutes in the morning when you're getting up. You're stressed, trying to get ready, pressured to get to work and get going. Busy getting on with the day. And at the end of the day a few minutes when you're tired and exhausted, irritable and you have no more to give. You see your mate at the worst times of the day. You've got to intentionally plan for courtship. Date your mate. The things she did before she was your wife, do those same things with her now that she is your wife. Make your relationship a priority, become best friends, have fun. Marriages are built on shared relationships.

C4 is Commitment. You'll never build a great marriage if divorce is always an option for you. If it's always back there, lurking in the back as a potential option, you will never build a great marriage. It's just too easy to walk out. When the times are tough and every bone in your body says, "I'm not going to take this anymore! I'm splitting!" -- if divorce is an option, you'll take it.

You have to lock the escape hatch on your marriage if you want a great marriage. Throw away the key. You must assume "Til death do us part. I made a promise to God and I'm going to keep it if it kills me!" Commitment is what makes a marriage great. If divorce is an option then you're not going to put forth the effort. In other marriages, I have stated, we are stuck with each other. If we want this marriage to be better, we are both going to have to work on it. If the Chevy is broken, you fix the Chevy, you don't go looking for a new Cadillac. Commitment means being willing to be unhappy for a while until you can work things out.

Then the Final C and the most important C, is Christ. Jesus Christ showed us what real love is all about. His whole life was one of giving, serving, and helping. And the culmination of his love is when he went to a cross and died for all the times, I have communicated in anger, been inconsiderate toward others, held grudges, or just plain neglected the Lord. His selfless spirit motivates me to be kind and caring toward my spouse. If Jesus Christ is at the center of your relationship, all your needs will be met. Everything will be ok. It says in Philippians 4:19, "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

On one particular day a woman entered the art gallery of man named Gustav Dore. Gustav was painting a picture of Christ. The woman said to Dore, "You couldn't paint a painting like that unless you loved Christ." Dore responded, That is true. But the more I love him the better I will paint him. The more that you and I love Jesus and appreciate what he has done for us, the better we shall love others around us.

Let's face it there will be times when the other person really gets under your skin. You make comments to each other in anger, meaning to hurt. A fight ensues. At times like this, there needs to be a spirit of confession and forgiveness in your marriage. Be big enough to apologize sincerely when you were out of line. And be willing to forgive the other person for the hurt. Why? Because Christ has forgiven you and me again and again. IN fact, He went to a cross to pay the penalty for all the times we sinned. He suffered our punishment that we deserved. Now He tells us to go and do likewise in our marriages. Forgive means to give up your right to punish someone for what they've done to you, and turn them over to God. Christ motivates us to do this. Yes, when both of you love Christ, you will learn to love each other even more.

Good Marriages Just Don't Happen. They take time, commitment, and work. You have dreams for the future. Some beautiful dreams. It is my prayer that you will see those dreams fulfilled. But its going to take effort on your part to make this happen. May our Savior Jesus Christ motivate you both, to carry out the 6 C's in your marriage. And May God give you both a marriage that lasts a lifetime. Amen.