

Bonding, Not Bondage!

What will hold a marriage together?

Marriage is a commitment to love!

- Romantic love is often idealistic.
- God loves us even though He knows us truly and thoroughly.
- He loves us despite our faults and sins.
- Romantic love is emotional; Christ-like love is basically a **choice of the will!**
- Christ-like love is sacrificial. It is a one-way kind of action.
- Christ gave with the possibility He might not get anything in return. No conditions were attached.
- Often in marriage we will be called upon to love in this way. During times of stress or sickness, one partner may be demanding more than he is supplying. It'll take some sacrificial loving to get over these tough spots.

We need to give I Corinthians 13 kind of love!

Christ-like love is one of the most down-to-earth concepts I know of. The Apostle Paul brings it right down to the dust on our feet in his extremely practical description in chapter thirteen of I Corinthians.

- **Love is *patient!*** When your spouse provokes you, you hang in there. You wait it out and then handle the dispute calmly at another time. You don't rush the person into growth or change, either. Like a gardener you watch the other mature and blossom -- with patience.
- **Love is *kind!*** While patience is the lack of nasty reaction, kindness is a positive reaction. Kindness reaches out to help even when the other doesn't seem to merit it. God directs every man to be kind to his wife when she least of all deserves it, because that was when she would need it the most. Good advice as well as for women in regard to their husbands.
- **Love does *not envy!*** There is no mental uneasiness over the other's success -- no sulking because our partner is experiencing something we were denied.
- **Love does *not boast, is not proud!*** It's tough to live with a proud person. Love doesn't say: "Don't you know who I am? I deserve better than this."
- **Love is *not rude!*** Too often we reserve our politeness for people outside the family. We think we have the liberty to treat harshly those who are close to us. Not so, says Paul.
- **Love is *not self-seeking!*** While we can expect to get something out of marriage, this sacrificial attitude should dominate us! We are not seeking our *so called rights!*
- **Love is *not easily angered!*** We would understand this better if it were translated "*does not fly off the handle.*" Anger is not always wrong, but love

doesn't lose control.

- **Love keeps *no record of wrongs!*** Keeping score and getting even is destructive. Peter says "*love covers a multitude of sins.*" If you keep harboring ill feelings and ruminating on them, you'll produce enough "emotional upset" to make you suddenly explode like a broken furnace.
- **Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth!** Someone has said that you can tell when the honeymoon is over. "*You are absolutely perfect!*" is exchanged for "*The problem is with you.*" Faultfinding is a damaging activity that love avoids.
- **Love bears all things!** Forbearance is the major ingredient in marriage not perfection . . . just as forgiveness and not obedience is the major factor in our relationship to God. We put up with each other as God puts up with us!
- **Love always trusts!** To doubt someone is unloving. Love trusts. To say to your partner, "*I believe in you,*" "*I trust you,*" is one of the more supportive things you can do for them.
- **Love always hopes!** Sometimes one of you will be despairing. Depression makes you see a black sky in every direction. Then your lover says, "*there is hope -- the future is better than you think.*"
- **Love always perseveres and never fails!** It will always continue -- it is stable for His glory!