LWCC marriage Ministries Email for May 2026

What Is Love?

Greetings again from the Marriage Ministries team at LWCC.

I wonder if any of you saw these three short stories in the Word for Today a few months ago. They got me to thinking.

1. A man was observing a couple and said to his wife, “Look at them, they look so happy”. She replied, “ Don’t be so sure; they’re probably saying the same thing about us.”
2. A woman once said, “My husband and I have a very happy marriage. There’s nothing I wouldn’t do for him, and there’s nothing he wouldn’t do for me. So we’ve gone through life doing nothing for each other”.
3. A husband told his friend, “My wife and I have decided never to go to bed angry”. “How’s that working out for you?” his friend asked. To which he replied, “We haven’t slept for a month”.

Quite humorous stories, eh, until you look closely. Sadly, at some point, we’ve heard variations of each from spouses just crying out to be heard. When two people put their own desires and interests first, or say things that belittle their spouse, or struggle to deal with issues brought with them into Marriage, their relationship is headed on a very slippery slope, and the one thing that really gets affected, or should I say Infected, is the one thing that brought them together in the first place - LOVE.

Let's look at that for a moment. What is Love??? The dictionary defines it like this – “A profound, tender, passionate affection for another person.” Another says, - “An emotion involving strong attraction, affection, or emotional attachment for someone.” OK, I think we can all relate to that. In fact I hope as you read that, it caused a bit of a flutter to stir inside. So, why not pause - read it again - then think - 'As I read that, what was I feeling, or what was coming to mind'!!! Reflect and entertain those thoughts and emotions of your Affection, Attraction and Attachment to your spouse.

As the years in our Marriage journey unfold, all sorts of things can cause that Glow to erode over time. So it's a good thing every now and then to pause and reflect on those three words.

Here's some other words worth reflecting on: *“Love is Patient, and Kind; Love is not Jealous; Love does not Brag, is not Proud; Love is not Rude, Is not Selfish, and does not get Upset with Others; Love does not count up wrongs that have been done, and takes no pleasure in evil, but rejoices over the truth..... Love patiently accepts all things; it always trusts, always hopes, and always endures. Love never ends.”* (Contemporary English Version)

I love the way Dr. Brian Symmonds’ expresses the last part:

“*... Love .... never gives up..... There are these three things that remain: faith, hope, and love—yet love surpasses them all. So above all else, let love be the beautiful prize for which you run.”* (The Passion Translation)

Wow!!! For many of us, we know these words so well – 1 Corinthians 13: 4 – 8, 14. But I wonder if we’ve ever really stopped and thought through each phrase, and what the outworking of them would actually look like!!!

Let me pause here for a moment - because most of these statements relate to Virtues. Virtue as defined in the dictionary is, “the quality of doing what is right, and avoiding what is wrong” or, “morally good behaviour and character”. So Love could effectively be defined as the outworking of good moral behaviour and character towards each other. Or, one step further: they are the effective issues for establishing good character and behaviour, deposited within each of us by God Himself, to help us become the people He intended for us to be.

Before we came to know the Lord, or got really serious with God, the enemy was working in the background of our lives using and manipulating things to influence the opposite of all of these virtues being developed into the fabric of who we were to become. In the process, he was often causing some fairly uncomfortable or unpleasant 'issues' and 'baggage' to develop and percolate under the surface, occasionally rearing their ugly head, in the way we behaved or reacted to things.

As we allowed the Lord to influence our lives, over time, in all sorts of ways, He has this amazing way of putting his finger on many of these Virtues, pointing out to us areas that needed refining and (or) adjusting. I'm sure, as we moved into this wonderful institution called Marriage, the effectiveness of this process would have been tested and exposed at some point(S) along your journey together.

So, with this in mind, *I wonder,* as I said earlier, *if we’ve ever really stopped and thought through those phrases in Corinthians, and what the outworking of them would actually look like!!!* For example:

“**Love is Patient and Kind”:** along your Marriage Journey, I’m sure there have been *Many* occasions when you simply needed to exert Patience and Kindness.

- Patience = the capacity to tolerate delay, difficulty, suffering, or provocation without becoming irritable, annoyed, upset or angry. *It’s more than just waiting*; it’s about maintaining self-control, and accepting that things in a marriage will not always happen according to your schedule.
- Kindness = the quality of being friendly and considerate, helpful and caring. It goes beyond being ‘nice’; it’s being thoughtful and respectful, and showing concern. Just think about it: how many situations over the years that turned to ‘custard’ for you, (that did not turn out particularly well), could have been avoided, if only either of you had applied a little more Patience and Kindness???

I hear you saying: "Hey Stan, you seem to have veered a little away from your earlier comment of defining Love". Well, consider this: What is the glue that keeps that Affection, Attraction and Attachment alive and growing deeper as the years have rolled by??? I wonder if it's our regular attention to those virtues. Our consistent and conscientious attention to the outworking of them, deepens and strengthens every aspect of that *"profound, tender, passionate affection"* for our spouse.

Here's a suggestion for you; why not take that passage, 1 Cor.13: 4-8 & 14, read it together in a few different translations, (if you have them, try the Passion Translation and The Message), then ask each other, “How do I match up? As far as our relationship is concerned, in our daily life together, how well do my actions, attitudes and behaviour line up with each of these phrases.” Be really brave, and ask each other for insight and observation, and ask, "In meeting your love needs, where might I improve", keeping in mind Dr Symmonds’ reflection – “ Love is a safe place of shelter, for

it never stops believing the best for others. Love never takes failure as defeat, for it never gives up……. It is the ultimate beautiful prize”.

Our prayer is that there are a few pearls here that might just take the Love factor in your relationship to another level. In fact our belief is that every time you take the opportunity to use these emails to engage with each other, you are sowing stuff into your relationship that is going to do just that, and thereby cause you to enjoy greater levels of "**that beautiful prize called LOVE**."

Blessings from your Marriage Ministries Team: Stan & Ronnie, John & Karen, Phil & Mel.