

FROM JESUS WITH LOVE



*For
Couples*

From Jesus with Love—For Couples



Love is the greatest force in the universe and this *From Jesus with Love* book is a link between you and the God of love Himself. No one understands matters of the heart better than Jesus, who is always on hand to listen, encourage, and offer solutions. He is the ultimate relationship counselor.

The messages from Jesus in this book will give you insight into your partner’s mind, tips for how to improve your connection with your loved one, and a heavenly perspective on the key issues of romance and relationships. Long live love!



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DISTRIBUTORS

USA

Activated Ministries
P.O. Box 462805
Escondido, CA 92046-2805
USA
Tel: 1-877-862-3228
E-mail: sales@actmin.org
www.activatedonline.com

Europe

Activated Europe
Bramingham Park Business Centre
Enterprise Way, Luton
LU3 4BU
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 845 8381384
E-mail: orders@activatedeurope.com
www.activatedeurope.com

Canada

Coloring the World Productions
P.O. Box 1034
135 West Beaver Creek Rd
Richmond Hill, ON
L4B 4R9
Canada
E-mail: activatedcanada@ica.net

South Africa

Aurora Media
Suite 548
Private Bag X18
Lynnwood Ridge 0040
South Africa
Email: sales@auroramedia.org

Philippines

Activated Philippines
P.O. Box 1147
Antipolo City P.O.
1870 Antipolo City
Philippines
Tel: +63 2 9852540
Email: activatedpi@activated.org

Selected by Maria Fontaine
Creative director: Giselle LeFavre
Design by: Yoko Matsuoka
Cover design by Laurent mignot
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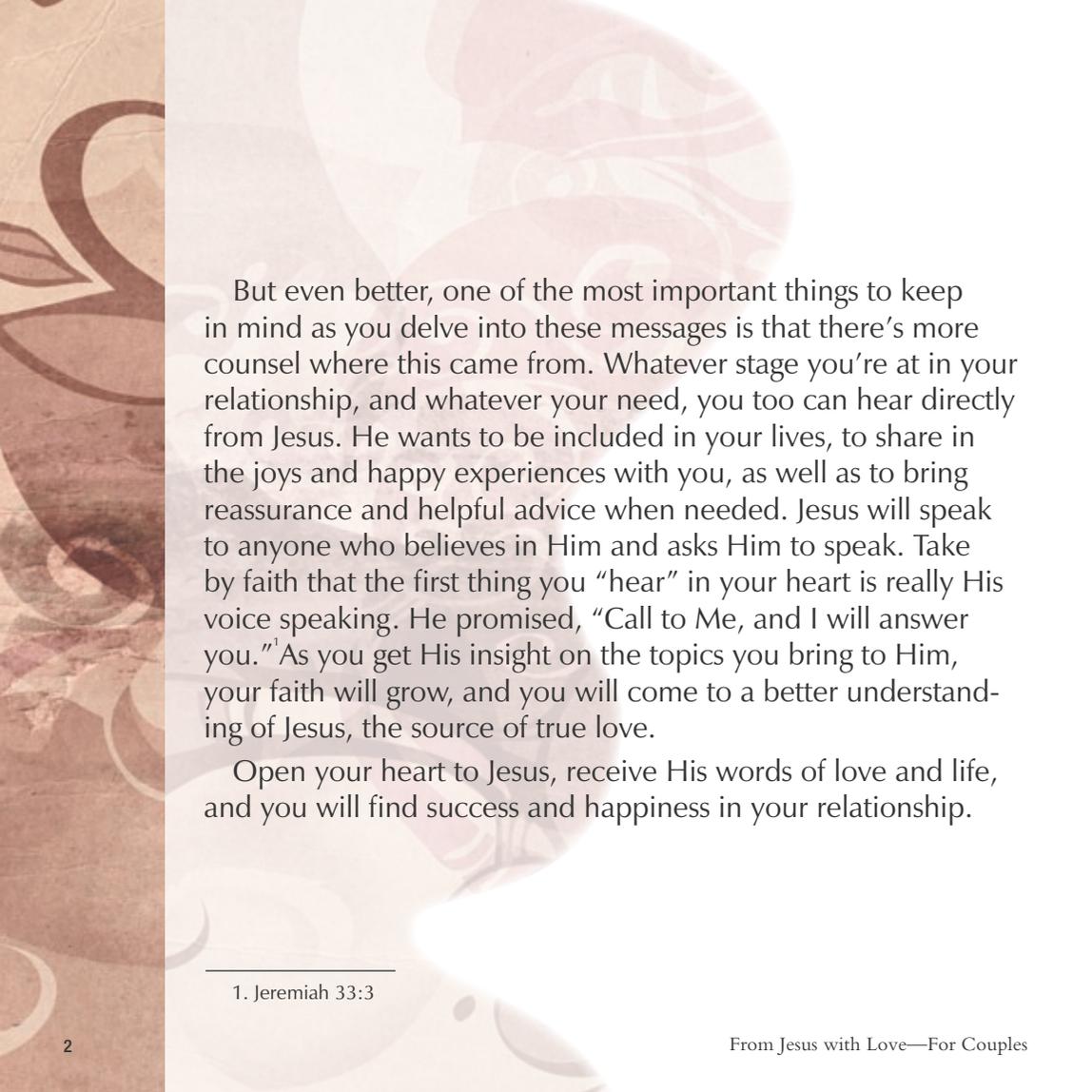


Introduction

Enjoying an intimate and loving relationship with another is among the most satisfying and strengthening experiences many of us will have. When there's someone to share them with, the joys in our lives often seem doubled, and in like manner the pains halved.

The messages from Jesus included in this book contain encouragement, insight, and counsel to help you and your partner relate to each other, strengthen your relationship, deal effectively with the various situations you encounter as a couple, and most importantly enjoy the beautiful journey of life with another.

Naturally, these messages don't catalog everything there is to know about each circumstance addressed, nor do they cover all possible scenarios. Some passages may seem like they could have been written for you alone, while others may not seem to apply to you right now—though they might apply later. However, it is my sincere hope that you will find guidance and support within the messages contained in this book.



But even better, one of the most important things to keep in mind as you delve into these messages is that there's more counsel where this came from. Whatever stage you're at in your relationship, and whatever your need, you too can hear directly from Jesus. He wants to be included in your lives, to share in the joys and happy experiences with you, as well as to bring reassurance and helpful advice when needed. Jesus will speak to anyone who believes in Him and asks Him to speak. Take by faith that the first thing you "hear" in your heart is really His voice speaking. He promised, "Call to Me, and I will answer you."¹As you get His insight on the topics you bring to Him, your faith will grow, and you will come to a better understanding of Jesus, the source of true love.

Open your heart to Jesus, receive His words of love and life, and you will find success and happiness in your relationship.

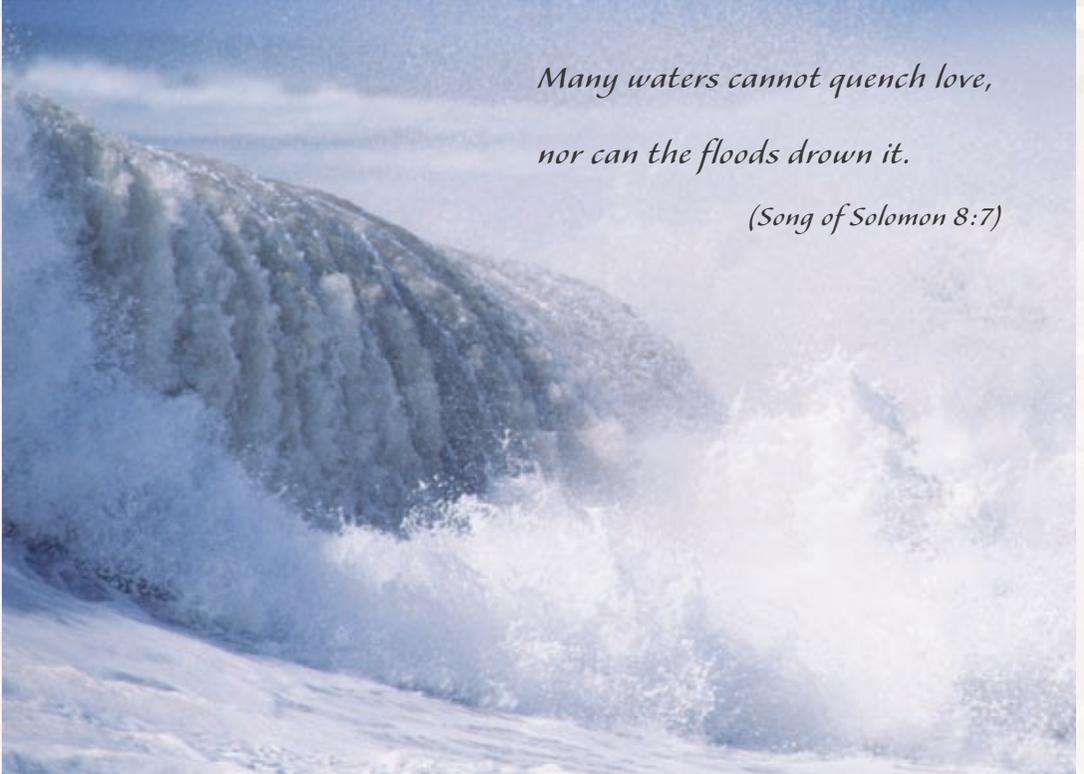
1. Jeremiah 33:3

CHAPTER I

OF LIFE AND LOVE

*Many waters cannot quench love,
nor can the floods drown it.*

(Song of Solomon 8:7)





Life's diamond moments

There isn't a single word or phrase in any language that can describe the intensity of understanding and emotion that results from exchanging a private, silent, and revealing glance with your loved one, a glance that in one single moment communicates everything. You can most likely recall a time when the both of you were separated across a crowded room, and yet, prompted by a thought or feeling, that quiet, knowing glance was all it took to share completely in your thoughts and feelings.

Love is incomparable. The warmth, connection, and security that it generates inspire and challenge and make life all that it can be. A loving look caught in passing, an instant communion of thought between two people amidst a noise-filled room, an almost furtive touch exchanged—these all speak deeply of love, concern, and desire. These are some of life's diamond moments.

My plan for you

I've been with you from the very beginning of your life. Every step along the way has led you both to where you are now, linked together and walking down a joint path. I knew that you would be the right match for each other, and so I put a series of events into motion to bring you together and connect your hearts.

I coaxed you along gently, helping you to stay the course that I was leading you on. You didn't always see the way as being good, but now you can know that it was all for a purpose. It brings Me great joy and satisfaction to see My creations enjoying the life that I have given them, under My blessing and care.

A thread masterpiece

I have interwoven your lives in such a way that the very different threads of your hearts and spirits may combine and be woven into a masterpiece tapestry—a declaration of My wisdom, My insight, and most of all, My love.





Like a kite

Your hearts were designed to soar on the winds of joy and to rise on the thermals of affection. Albeit flying high can be dangerous. You need a steady hand to guide you up, and you need a tether to keep you from getting blown away.

Your heart is like a beautiful, multicolored, and intricately designed kite. It is a wonder to behold as it flies and dances and weaves in the wind. But the secret to its success is the almost-invisible string that is attached to it and held firmly in the hand of the one who flies it. A kite won't launch without its string and a guiding hand pulling it along and helping it to start the upward climb. In the case of those who put their trust in Me, I am the one who holds the strings to their hearts.

Even in the hands of a skilled flyer, sometimes the kite takes a nosedive when it hits a downdraft. If you are in a freefall, know that I am doing as much as you allow Me to in order to avert the crash and get you climbing again. Even if you crash, I will race over to the crash site to retrieve and save My beloved kite. I will carefully pick you up, repair the broken pieces, and make modifications so that you will fly better next time.



Created to please

The world was created for your enjoyment. Because I love you, I gave you everything I could to make you happy—senses to experience your surroundings, a multitude of flowers and plants to marvel at, animals to be your companions and pets, different landscapes and climates to enjoy, and a special attraction between a man and a woman. I designed this magnetism to create an avenue for friendship, support, understanding, affection, and physical closeness.

Love that is expressed physically makes a spiritual connection as well. It draws you closer together and often gives you a better understanding of each other. It's an avenue for fun and fulfillment, but it also strengthens the attachment and friendship that are essential to a successful relationship. I made this experience to be an important manifestation of your love and a reinforcement of your bond with each other.

The blessing of intimately loving each other is a great gift I give you. In My eyes, it is pure and designed for your enjoyment.

The adventure of your life

The road I have for you two to walk together is a road of love. It's a journey I want you to embark on with anticipation and joy, but also with the understanding that it can only be safely traveled with Me at your side. On your journey you will experience and feel new, wonderful, and amazing things, but the road will not always be smooth. There will be difficulties along the way,

but these are designed by Me to help you mature and grow in depth and giving and love.

Life with another person is an adventure. It can be compared to going on a trek together through uncharted territory, over many different kinds of terrain. Those times you must clear the brush as you push onward through the thick jungle will teach you



perseverance, and your ingenuity and resourcefulness will be put to work as you discover shortcuts to get to your destination.

The forest holds special enchantment and magical moments—even though the sunshine may not always be visible, you'll gain keener senses and enhanced perception as you walk within its magnificence. In the arctic environment you'll need the fire of your love to burn brightly to give you warmth and light. The tropical climate will be a time to shed any cover-ups that might hinder your freedom, to bare your hearts to each other in honest communication. The desert leg will be a time of testing that will draw you to reach for and depend on

My supernatural power to sustain you. The mountaineering will be an exhilarating time of challenge, overcoming, and conquering.

Sharing life intimately with someone is not for the fainthearted; it's for those who are determined to walk as one through the good times and bad times, and come out the better for it. Ask Me to accompany you, by taking Me into your heart and life, and I will then be your constant companion, your guide, your compass, your light. With Me by your side you can be assured of the best guidance, protection, and care that can be afforded for your journey. I'm your insurance policy. Take Me with you, and your adventure will be complete!



Shelter in the time of storm

As you and your partner grow in your relationship, you are going to experience times when life is trying. There may be stretches where you don't feel as close as you used to, when it's difficult to communicate, when your "love meter" for each other isn't registering high.

Life on earth is certainly not going to be perfect all the time. Just as there are seasonal cycles in nature, so there are cycles in life and relationships, times when things go well and times when you encounter difficulty. It's helpful to realize that there is a purpose for the cycles. It's through experiencing life—and that means the bad times as well as the good times—that the spirit is strengthened and deepened. The stormy and turbulent times can cause your relationship with your partner to deepen and become more meaningful. Then when the sun comes out again, your relationship can grow into new and more fulfilling joys.

Being willing to go through those stormy times together, and accepting that they are building your character and adding depth to your relationship, shows patience and faith in Me. Instead of allowing them to distance you from each other, face them together and you will come through to the sunshine once again.

CHAPTER 2

HEAVENLY PERSPECTIVE



Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

(1 Corinthians 13:4–8)

A close-up photograph of a young Black couple smiling and embracing each other. The woman is on the left, wearing a white top and a necklace with orange beads. The man is on the right, wearing a patterned shirt. They are both looking towards the right of the frame.

A foretaste of heaven

“I have come that [you] may have life, and that [you] may have it more abundantly.”¹ Beauty, unconditional love, acceptance, and rewards are not blessings that are only reserved for heaven. Those who live in a godly way, with love at the core of their lives, can enjoy a measure of these heavenly blessings even in earthly surroundings.

A relationship that is based on a foundation of love and respect is a foretaste of the type of love you will experience in heaven. Love in heaven is perfect, pure, unconditional, and complete. When you look into your loved one’s eyes and feel acceptance and warmth, you are experiencing a bit of heaven’s love. When you hold each other in a tight embrace and feel security and comfort, that is a representation of the tenderness of My care for you. And when you forgive—rather than holding on to a grudge—you are experiencing the marvel of My forgiveness. These are just foretastes of what awaits you in heaven!

1. John 10:10

Embrace the challenge



You're never going to understand each other totally. That's the way I planned it. I don't want you to be discouraged to where you don't even try, but you should be aware that it takes effort to gain understanding of each other. Even then, assuming you'll always be fully understood by your partner, or vice versa, is an unrealistic expectation that leads to disappointment.

Only *I* have the ability to understand each of you completely. Ask Me to open your spiritual eyes so that you can see your loved one as I do and understand the full extent of his or her heart and intentions.

And then don't be discouraged by your partner's quirks, idiosyncrasies, and maybe even eccentricities. You very likely *will* start noticing these things as you get to know each other better—that's a fact of life—but they don't have to spoil your relationship. "Love will cover a multitude of sins,"¹ and living closely with someone over a long period of time is one of the best ways to grow in true love and selflessness and gain depth of character and spirit.

Embrace the challenges that come into your life and learn how to positively work through them together. It will change you both in remarkable ways.

1. 1 Peter 4:8

A shared accomplishment

A successful relationship is a platform for one of the most rewarding experiences in life—a shared accomplishment. Two individual lives united can achieve great things. The Bible says, “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor.” One reason for this success is then explained: “For if they fall, one will lift up his companion.”¹ When you are working toward a goal in partnership with another, you can support each other and spur each other on. Shared enthusiasm is more than twice as powerful, and when

one is going through a low time, the other is often able to pull him or her up.

Building a life together comes with challenges, to be sure. But as the years go by, you can look back on where you’ve come from and be satisfied with what you see. When you compare how far you’ve come in relation to where you started off at, or where you were at years ago, you realize that all you’ve put into this partnership has paid off. It was only possible because you did it together, and you will enjoy the results for a long time to come.

1. Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

The art of relationship

Life, like art, is full of opportunities to be creative—situations where there are an almost limitless number of options that can be explored and developed. Just as there is hardly a limit to what can be expressed artistically, there are a nearly infinite number of ways to build a happy and successful relationship. The path for each person and each couple is unique.

What artist would say that he or she has fully mastered every art medium, completely developed his or her talent, or created everything he or she ever wishes to create? Artists are on a constant quest to express, to create, and to refine their skills.

Your life is your personal body of artwork. Maybe you still consider yourself an amateur and dream of unveiling your first masterpiece, or maybe you're already accomplished in several mediums. Whatever the case, there is always more to create, and that's the joy of it.

Sometimes you're so immersed in your relationship that it seems more like “work” than “art.” That's when it's time to step back a bit and look at the full picture, rather than staring at the one part you're working on at the moment. When you do that, you're more likely to see how your relationship is developing and becoming more beautiful, more complete—a work of art that you can be proud of.



Never fear

At almost any phase of a relationship, it's easy to start wondering what the future has in store for you. You both have high hopes and great aspirations for your lives together to be beautiful, productive, and fulfilling.

But... There is always a "but," it seems. What if such-and-such happens? Will my partner love me forever? What difficulties will we face, and how will they affect our connection and relationship?

It's a shame to let such woeful musings dampen happy times. I love you, and I have good things planned for you. It's not that you'll never have a cloud in your sky, but don't allow the threat of clouds to spoil the sunshine I'm offering you today. You have a choice to either trust that I lovingly care for you and that whatever I allow to come your way has a purpose and a reason, or to give in to worries.

Every time you are tempted to fret and fear about possible worst-case scenarios, come to Me. Get quiet, meditate on My love, and let Me dispel the clouds of gloom. I promise that I will walk with you each day and share your joys and pains.

Look to Me, smile real big, and let the joy burst from your heart. That joy is a gift from My hand, and I gave it freely for you to revel in!

CHAPTER 3

INGREDIENTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIP



*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,
peace, longsuffering, kindness, good-
ness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-
control. (Galatians 5:22–23)*

Qualities of a good relationship



So much has been said and written about relationships—much of it rather complicated or seemingly contradictory—but being successful at a relationship wasn't meant to be so complex or difficult that only a few could master it. It's within your reach. Following are some of the main qualities of a good marriage. Of course, no one will excel in *all* of them, but simply do your best and ask Me to help you with the rest.

- ❖ **Putting Me first.** It's a spiritual law that when you put your time with Me first, both alone and with your loved one, other things go better. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these [other] things shall be added to you."¹
- ❖ **Unselfishness.** For a relationship to work, both partners need to put the happiness of the other before their own.
- ❖ **Willingness to recognize and work on problems.** Most of the problems that sink relationships start small but grow out of hand because the couples fail to deal with the problems soon enough. Often they tell themselves that the problem will go away if they ignore it or when

1. Matthew 6:33

circumstances change, but that passive approach seldom works. Those with the strongest relationships are those who learn to face their problems head-on and take steps to overcome them together.

- ❖ **Good communication.** In order to understand and meet each other's needs, as well as to unite to overcome problems, good communication is a must.
- ❖ **Forgiveness.** Be quick to apologize for any hurtful words or actions you may have directed at your partner.
- ❖ **Being supportive.** Dwell on each other's good qualities, look for ways to bring out the best in each other, and don't belittle, criticize, or nag.
- ❖ **Teamwork.** Discuss and agree on goals and priorities, and learn to tackle problems together.
- ❖ **Consideration.** Being considerate of each other's feelings, likes and dislikes, time, and energy not only says "I love you" in a convincing and endearing way, but it also relieves stress, prevents friction, and keeps many problems from ever happening.
- ❖ **Affection.** Vocal expressions of your love for each other are important, but sometimes touching, kissing, and hugging can convey love and reassurance even better. They are physical manifestations of inward feelings.
- ❖ **Equality.** Equality is not a matter of scheduling or dividing the workload equally, but of valuing and respecting each other so each one's strengths can come to the fore.

- 
- ❖ **Admiration.** Few things boost self-esteem or make people want to succeed in the truly important things of life more than hearing that their good qualities and hard work are noticed and admired. Sharpen your appreciation of the wonderful person you're with, and watch him or her become even more wonderful.
 - ❖ **Reaching out to others.** Even if you seem to be the most compatible couple in the world and feel completely satisfied and secure in each other's company, you both need other friends. Others can help you grow in ways that your partner can't.
 - ❖ **A sense of humor.** Lighten up a little and you'll find that most of the everyday inconveniences, annoyances, and problems you face aren't so bad after all. "A merry heart does good, like medicine."²
 - ❖ **Optimism.** The tendency to believe and expect the best, which is linked to faith in Me, nearly always pays off big, because I love to reward faith.
 - ❖ **Including Me.** I'm the Answer Man. I can make mountains of problems melt away, and I can make your dreams come true, but there's one condition: Include Me. You'll be amazed at what the three of us can accomplish together!



The way to be happy

Thinking of the needs and welfare of your partner before your own is one of the secrets to a happy relationship. When you get together with someone, you often have to give up old habits, old preferences, and old ways in favor of the new—the wonderful person who has come into your life. Sometimes this process can be frightening. It's easy to wonder if these changes will really make you happy, and what will become of your own desires and preferences. But the truth is that when you give something up for someone else out of love, you find great happiness. I always

bless those who put the happiness and well-being of others above their own.

True happiness is not found through seeking your own contentment, but in making others happy, giving your time to another, lending a helping hand or a listening ear, being more attentive to your partner's needs than your own. A little bit of love can make a big difference. One act of kindness or unselfishness can start a whole chain reaction of events that will, in the long run, make life a lot better for you and your loved one.

Winning words

Everyone needs to know he or she is appreciated, but sometimes the ones you love most are the very ones to whom you fail to express appreciation. It's common courtesy to thank the stranger with whom you interact—the cashier, the service station attendant, the waitress, the bellboy. But it's easy to forget to show your gratitude to those closest to you—your boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife, family members, best friends.

How often do you verbalize your appreciation for all the many things your loved one does that make your life richer and better, including little things like

filling the car's tank, putting food on the table, and doing the laundry, as well as big things that provide companionship, support, and understanding?

Your loved one is most likely not a mind reader, so if you don't put your appreciation into words, chances are he or she will miss it. Everyone needs to hear appreciation expressed in words. These don't need to be poetic or profound or even original. Just a simple, sincere "I appreciate that," or "You're so good to me" can mean a lot and make all the difference in your loved one's day and, over time, life.

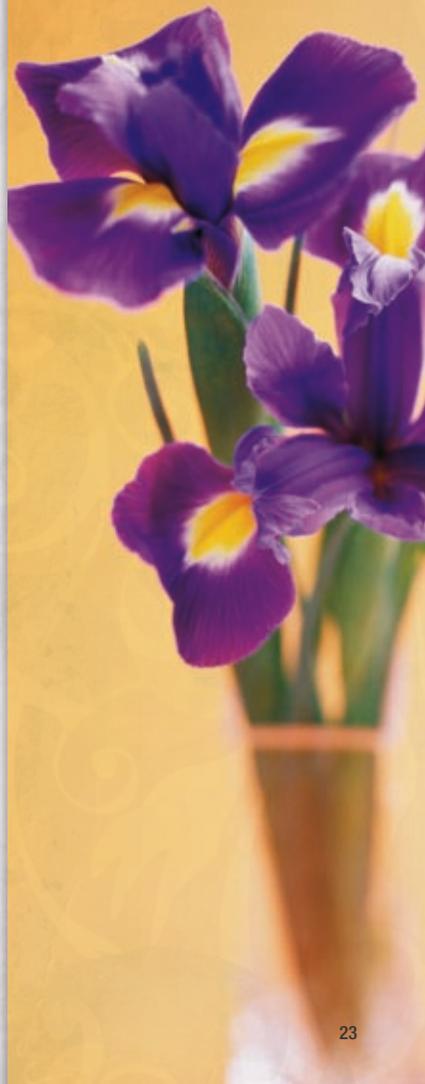


Two worthy investments

Your relationship with your loved one is similar to your relationship with Me. Both of these relationships need to be invested in and built on over the years. Neither will be very solid nor fully rewarding without time and effort given to them, but with proper care and nurture, both will thrive and prosper. The more you invest in these relationships, the more you get back from them.

So invest in your relationships daily, and you will soon find that they are each growing exponentially stronger and adding more benefits into your life. Invest in your relationship with Me by reading My Word, praying, and praising Me for the many blessings that I bring your way. Invest in your physical relationship by communicating often and openly, showing your appreciation for your partner and what they bring into the relationship, and giving them the time and attention and care that they need.

Small daily investments bring great dividends over time.



Defuse anger

King Solomon, one of the wisest men of antiquity, wrote that a soft answer turns away wrath.¹ More than 3,000 years ago, he'd hit upon a universal truth that can greatly improve a relationship.

I promise you it's worth a try. When your partner is heated about a certain subject, or may even be accusing you of something you feel is unjustified, avoid responding in anger.

Oh, this can be hard, I know. At times like this, all you want to do is defend yourself and point out the

flaws in your partner's argument, or counterattack by bringing up areas that you feel he or she falls short in. But you'll find that if you refrain from getting riled up it will help your partner calm down, and your soft answer will indeed turn away his or her wrath.

Love begets love; kindness begets kindness; forgiveness begets forgiveness; and approaching things in a humble loving spirit will help your partner to respond in like manner.

A wise assumption

Give each other the benefit of the doubt, because not everything is the way it might seem at the time.

1. Proverbs 15:1



Friendships

Your companion cannot fill your every need. I made it so that you will also crave the companionship and friendship of others. Your partner will only be able to fill a certain amount of your needs, and it's unrealistic to expect him or her to give you everything. Likewise, don't expect that you can fill all of your partner's needs; understand that some of his or her needs will be filled by other friends, his or her career, and other experiences.

Each of you will most likely need friendships where you can discuss or talk about things that your partner doesn't relate to so well. This does not necessarily mean that you are not a good match or that something is missing from your relationship. In fact, keeping your life open to others and giving of your time to others is often what completes your happiness as a couple.



Jump-start

The surest way to get off to a great start each day is by starting it with love. Easier said than done, you might say, if you have a hard time being outgoing when you're just waking up. But if you pray for that extra oomph and give it a try, I think you'll be pleasantly surprised. If you give love, you'll get love.

Don't just eat breakfast together in silence, staring at your plate, the newspaper, or the back of the cereal box. Count your blessings together. Thank Me for the wonderful things you're sure I'm going to do for you that day in answer to prayer and because I love you. Read a short passage from the Bible or some other devotional material. Pray for each other and the different

things you expect to face that day, and claim promises from My Word.

Tank up on Me. I am love and light, My strength is unfailing, and all things are possible with Me. Fill up on Me first thing, and you will both be ready for any challenge the day may bring your way.

Those few minutes you have together in the morning are also a great time to give encouragement. Tell her how nice she looks. Tell him you hope he has a great day. Give a parting hug or kiss that conveys, "I can't wait to be with you again!"

Start the day with love, and love will carry you through the day.

Be that person

All men and women fall short of their goals and aspirations at times, but when the one they love most in the world lifts them up by respecting and honoring their attempts to reach those goals, it renews their inspiration and gives them a boost of strength and courage.

Worth the time

Time is one of the best investments in a successful relationship. It takes time to learn about your lover and to make a commitment. It takes time to experience the joys and thrills of sharing your life with someone else. It takes time to grow and mature, and time to learn how to live with someone else.

Some people make the mistake of failing to continue to invest in their relationship after they get married or move in together. Show your partner that you have the time to talk, to listen, to think about the things that he or she says and how he or she feels. Pray for each other.

Time is also needed when you are experiencing relationship issues, conflicts, or disagreements. Sometimes your partner might need space and time, and it will require patience and tolerance from you. Time can heal wounds, whereas rushing into a confrontation or a hasty decision might compound the problem.

Let your loved one know that he or she is worth a lot to you by giving the gift of your time.

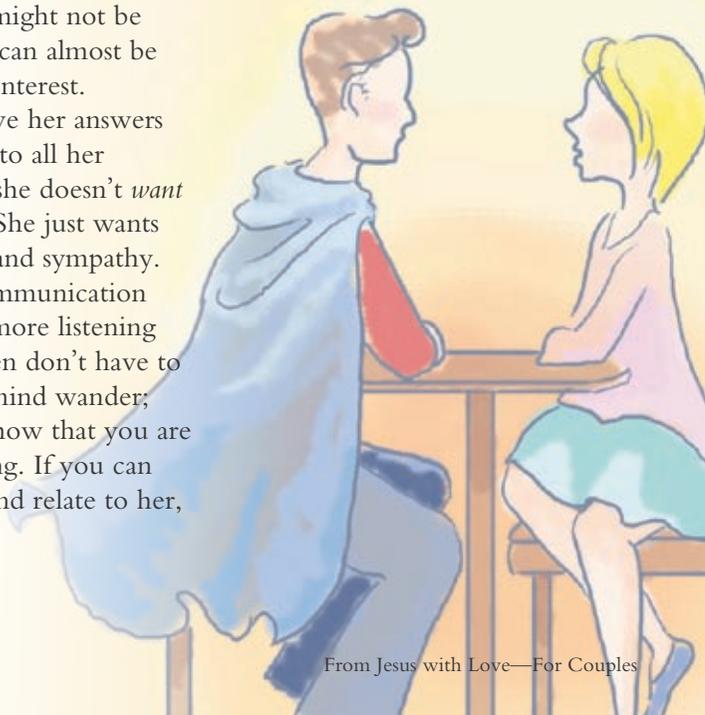


Be her hero

Even if you are not the traditional strong silent male type, chances are, being totally open about all your thoughts and feelings doesn't come naturally for you. In fact, nearly all men can improve in the area of communicating meaningfully with their partners. You don't have to be a chatterbox, but it is essential to be a communicator. Her interests might not be the same as yours—in fact, that can almost be expected—but *she* can be your interest.

You might not be able to give her answers to all her questions or solutions to all her troubles, but much of the time she doesn't *want* answers or solutions from you. She just wants you to listen and show interest and sympathy.

You'll probably find that communication with your partner will involve more listening than talking. But while you often don't have to say a whole lot, don't let your mind wander; she'll expect you to listen and show that you are taking notice of what she's saying. If you can show her that you understand and relate to her, you will be her hero.





Make his day

Would you like to know how to make your husband's day? Try this simple little formula: See how many male-friendly ways you can say "I love you." Here are some ideas for starters, and as you get in the groove, you will no doubt come up with many of your own that will suit you and your man.

- ❁ Make a list of his strengths and qualities and comment every so often on one of them. Tell him why you love it and how thankful you are for it.
- ❁ Compliment and support him in front of others.
- ❁ Make or buy his favorite snack without telling him, and leave it in the fridge for him to find on his own.
- ❁ Let him watch his favorite TV show or sports game with his friends without making him feel bad.
- ❁ Give him some time off. Most men need opportunities to be away from domestic life, to be alone or to pursue a personal interest. (Men, many women need this too.) Giving him this personal space shows him that you respect his needs and trust him, and he will love you for that.

CHAPTER 4

MAGICAL TIPS



*Above all these things
put on love, which is
the bond of perfection.
(Colossians 3:14)*



Small steps

Life is filled with little things that can make your day, renew your inspiration, or satisfy you. Each person is unique and has different likes and dislikes, but everyone can be deeply touched by little deeds of kindness and affection.

Make a list of things that you know are special to your spouse, and set a goal to provide as many of them as you can. The fact that you went out of your way to connect with and do something special for the one you're close to—that you thought about his or her particular preferences and found a meaningful way to show your love and appreciation—can mean even more than an elaborate or expensive gift.

From time to time, surprise your partner by doing something out of character. Do the laundry for her before she gets up, or leave him an “I love you” note somewhere unique or obvious. The pleasant surprise will brighten their day and inspire them to return the favor. Loving deeds and acts of kindness are contagious, so start the ball rolling today.

A habit of novelty

Try to do something new or different for your partner as often as you can; it reminds them that you still love them.

Focus on the good

One of the secrets to keeping a relationship healthy and fulfilling is to strive to always think the best about the person you're with. The power of positive thinking is an amazing tool and can work creative wonders in your relationship.

Try to look past the things about your partner that irritate you. Maybe his habits don't sync with yours, maybe she tends to overreact, maybe your political or religious opinions differ; however, regardless of these things, determine to go into each situation expecting the very best from your loved one. This doesn't mean that you place the bar so high that you set yourself up for disappointment.

A clean sheet

Resolve to never bring up problems from the past, except to ask for or to extend forgiveness. Don't think about yesterday's problems or slips or failings—just like I don't remember *your* failings or shortcomings. My mercies are renewed every morning.¹ I love you anew each day, and I want you to extend the same love and mercy to each other.

1. Lamentations 3:22–23

The point is that by expressing your faith and confidence in him or her you can transform not only your perception, but the whole situation, for the better. You might still be faced with the immediate issues, and not everything is going to be solved in an instant, but with a positive mindset, the obstacles won't seem that huge after all.

When you're faced with something about your loved one that causes you to react negatively, think about specific things that you love about him or her. Look at his good points. Thank her for all that she does for you. Praise Me for the good, and watch the bad melt away.

Seize the day



There are so many things for you to enjoy together, and almost any experience is enriched by having someone to share it with. Those who go slow enough to spot the opportunities I bring their way will be able to use these experiences to strengthen their bond in little ways that matter. A stroll in the park, a smile, an embrace, a warm compliment, a written or texted love note, a squeeze, a shared treat—these are occasions that don't require a lot of work or planning and can easily be missed or hurried, but what sparkle and joy they add to your relationship!

Life is especially wonderful for couples who take the time to enjoy Me and My creation together. My desire to make you happy knows no limits, so don't let the days and weeks go by without taking advantage of My love and goodness.

As you learn to recognize the good things that come your way as gifts from My hand, this will add meaning and joy to your relationship. Look back every so often at the good times you've had together, and thank Me for bringing them into your lives.

Enjoy yourselves

To have a strong relationship you've got to laugh together, have fun together, and enjoy life together. Laughter is a great medicine and helps you face life positively.

Diversity in intimacy

Each person is unique. This holds true in every aspect of life, including the area of physical intimacy. When it comes to lovemaking, people enjoy different things and have different needs and preferences, and perhaps one or the other partner might be more comfortable with trying out new things. Often, differences aren't as evident when people are just beginning an intimate relationship, as their passion and desire for each other is stronger and might overshadow any differences, but as time goes by, these will likely become more apparent.

This isn't something to worry about or be hurt by. Many people have a hard time talking about intimate and personal details of this nature, but the best way to ensure continued pleasant experiences for both is to simply and honestly discuss the differences. When you do, you'll likely discover the diversity to be an enriching factor in your private lives.



A photograph of a man and a woman sitting in the front seats of a car. The woman is on the left, looking towards the man on the right. They are both smiling and appear to be in a happy conversation. The man is holding a smartphone in his left hand. The background shows the interior of the car and some greenery outside.

Need for words

Stop and recall the last time you said a loving word or expressed appreciation to your partner. If it was more than 24 hours ago, then it's been too long. Maybe you feel that you show your love through your actions—by providing for your family, by caring for the children, by doing the washing and housework, or by a touch or a tender kiss—but if you're not *also* verbalizing your love and appreciation, then something is missing in your relationship.

Though actions speak louder than words, there is also a strong case to be made for using words in expressing your appreciation, and it takes so little effort that it's a shame more people don't do it. The only effort it takes is thinking about something specific to appreciate or commend the other for, and then remembering to express it. It may take a little courage, if you're not used to giving appreciation or expressing your love verbally, but it's more than worth it.

I guarantee that sincere appreciation carries a special magic that inevitably lifts the spirit of the receiver and in return gives you joy because you've brightened their day.

An experiment

Give your partner some sincere appreciation today, and take note of the effect it has on him or her.

CHAPTER 5

WHEN BUSY OR APART



*Now abide faith, hope, love, these
three; but the greatest of these is love.*

(1 Corinthians 13:13)

Keep the fires burning

It can be difficult to find time to nurture your relationship in a day filled with the demands of work, family, friends, and home life. If you face the added challenge of being apart some or much of the time because one of you travels often or you work different schedules, you'll have to make an extra effort to keep the spark in your relationship, regardless of the distance.

Before parting, agree on something that you will do together when you see each other again. It can be as simple as sharing a bottle of wine, taking a walk, or going out for coffee. Or it can be something more elaborate such as asking a relative or friend to look after the children while you go away for a couple of days together. Have something that you can look forward to while you are apart.

Call daily or regularly, ideally at a time when you can spend uninterrupted time together. Respect your time together by keeping the conversation upbeat and supportive. Share events of your day and your plans and listen to your partner do the same. Pray together. Send pictures often so the other can enjoy your experiences with you. Send each other text messages or emails to stay in touch. Remind each other of your love. Discuss plans and agree together on decisions that affect the both of you.

Most importantly, support each other in your daily personal prayers. Tell Me what you wish for. Tell Me what worries you. Tell Me exactly how you want Me to care for your loved one in your absence. I will go to work on your behalf and engineer things so as to answer your prayers in the ways I know are best.



Protecting

When things are exceptionally busy, it's easy to put your personal life on the back burner, and quality time with your partner is often what is neglected.

The key lies in seizing the little moments. Usually when things are busy, you're focused on the big needs and the "big time" that those needs take. It's easy to have the "big outlook" during busy times. That's when everything seems rather big: the projects seem "big," the amounts of time it will take to complete the projects seem "big," the hours seem "big," the days seem "big"—all that needs to be done is just so, so "big." That's why it is easy to push aside your personal life in favor of tending to those big work needs, because you don't see how you can fit both big needs into your day.

Maybe you do need to spend the majority of your day at work or tending to the children, errands, or responsibilities, but everyone has some time that they can spare

what matters

if they make the effort. Find out which few minutes you have during your day that you can spend with your partner just to tell them you love them, to tell them they're looking beautiful or handsome, to ask them how their day went, to pray with them before beginning the day, to communicate before going to sleep at night.

This is one way to protect your relationship from suffering during busy times. Take advantage of the little moments and spend them on each other. Schedule some time you can spend together that won't interfere with your daily duties. Then, even though you aren't able to do the big things together that you would like to do, you're still tending to your relationship. Do this even when things are extra busy. Then once you get through the busy time, you won't feel like your relationship suffered or was neglected, because you took advantage of the little moments and used them wisely.

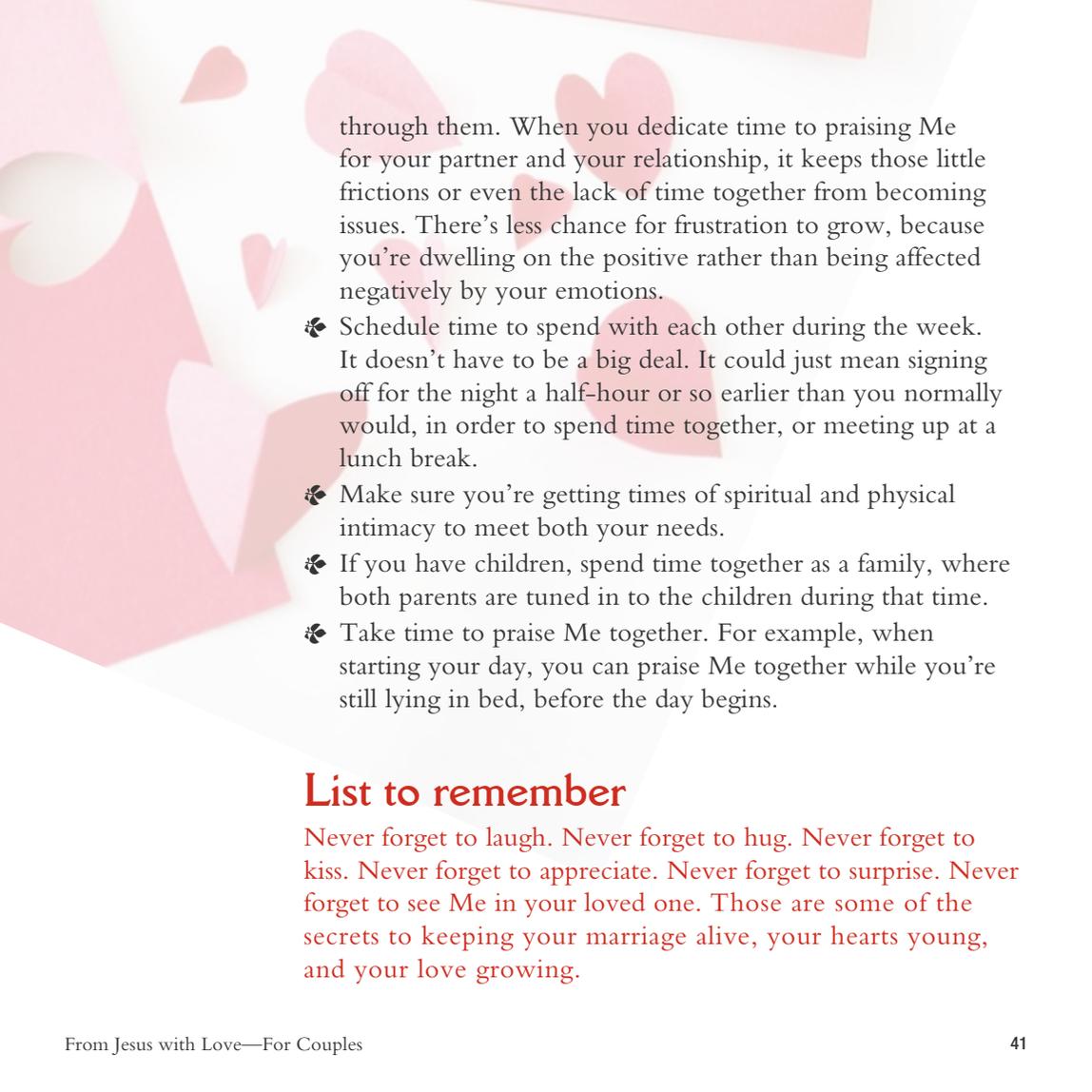




Keeping love alive

Your relationship is a beautiful perk that I put in your life so that you can find strength and wherewithal to meet the challenges that you face. If you maintain a healthy relationship, it will fill your heart with extra love, joy, and contentment, which will aid you in other areas of your life.

- ❁ Even if you're busy, there's always time to remind your partner of how much you love and appreciate them. You can show that love through a thoughtful word, a tender hug and kiss, a loving touch or caress, an acknowledgment of love when your paths cross throughout the day, a short love note, and in many other ways.
- ❁ Make it easy for the other one to be good. Make an effort to avoid doing those things that irk or bother your partner, so that your times together are not focused on each other's faults. Take the extra step to be more thoughtful in the things you do.
- ❁ Praise Me for your partner. Think on their qualities, the things you love about them, the joy they bring into your life, and the many other blessings that you receive



through them. When you dedicate time to praising Me for your partner and your relationship, it keeps those little frictions or even the lack of time together from becoming issues. There's less chance for frustration to grow, because you're dwelling on the positive rather than being affected negatively by your emotions.

- ✿ Schedule time to spend with each other during the week. It doesn't have to be a big deal. It could just mean signing off for the night a half-hour or so earlier than you normally would, in order to spend time together, or meeting up at a lunch break.
- ✿ Make sure you're getting times of spiritual and physical intimacy to meet both your needs.
- ✿ If you have children, spend time together as a family, where both parents are tuned in to the children during that time.
- ✿ Take time to praise Me together. For example, when starting your day, you can praise Me together while you're still lying in bed, before the day begins.

List to remember

Never forget to laugh. Never forget to hug. Never forget to kiss. Never forget to appreciate. Never forget to surprise. Never forget to see Me in your loved one. Those are some of the secrets to keeping your marriage alive, your hearts young, and your love growing.

Absence

Identify what your needs are during those times when you have to be apart or are extremely busy. Write out a list together of what you feel are the pros and cons of the times that you are separated. Pros would be positive things, such as, “It helps us to appreciate each other more,” “It gives us time to think and reflect,” or “to invest in developing our relationship with Jesus,” “I enjoy having the house to myself every so often,” or “I enjoy traveling and seeing new places.” Then list the things that you consider cons, and be honest about what it is that you miss or that you feel is lacking, or any ways you’d consider that distance puts a strain on your relationship.

The purpose for recording the pros first is to help you to look at the situation positively. Then listing the cons will help you to identify the areas to give thought to, so you can explore ways to make things better and easier for each other, and keep your relationship alive, happy, and healthy. Depending on your personalities and relationship, the balance may seem weighted toward one or the other side, but an honest and open-minded approach will help you to communicate openly.

If you include Me in finding the solutions to whatever cons you’ve listed, I’ll be sure to give you some good, workable ideas.



CHAPTER 6

COMMUNICATION

*That their hearts may be encouraged,
being knit together in love, and
attaining to all riches of the full
assurance of understanding.*

(Colossians 2:2)



Communication that builds

There's hardly anything that strengthens a relationship like good communication. And hardly anything tears it down like the lack of it. Communication is key to building a foundation that lasts and that will stand the tests of life that inevitably come. Don't think that you can brush it aside or ignore it, just because you're both busy or because it's difficult. In fact, the busier you are, the more important good communication becomes. And while it is difficult at times, especially on matters that are sensitive, it's well worth the effort. It's not only worth it, but it's vital to your survival.

Good communication is like oil in a car engine. You hardly notice it's there and it doesn't seem to do anything that's visible. But if the oil level falls too low, you could ruin your engine for good. Don't ever let your communication "engine" run dry.





Communication that reassures

This is made up of the short and simple loving words and gestures that you share with each other at different times during the day—a kiss and a few words when you first wake up, a short phone call at lunch time if you’re not together, an “I love you” SMS sent from work, just to mention a few. It could be a warm greeting when you see each other in the evening, or bringing your loved one a drink while he or she catches up on paperwork. It says, “I’m thinking about you, and you’re important to me.” That kind of communication reassures and gives peace of mind.

Everyone needs it—a woman’s need may be more obvious, but men need it too, even if they don’t show it. These may seem like small things, but they’re like the foundation on which the house of your marriage or relationship is built. If the foundation is weak, no matter how pretty the house may look in good times, it’s likely to fall down when times are rough.

Game rules

Remain open to each other’s hearts, minds, thoughts, and souls, so that you can be understanding, tolerant, helpful, and supportive.



Communication that connects

In order to thrive, a relationship calls for communication of the kind that brings you closer to each other, where you're talking about things that interest you, catching up on each other's day, staying in touch with how the other person is feeling about things. It can be casual, and also deep and personal; in fact both types are needed.

Through this deeper type of communication, you'll gain a greater understanding of your partner and will be aware of how things are going in his or her life and work. In today's busy society, there are so many things that work to pull you in different directions, and your communication with each other is the glue that will keep you together.

It also gets you in the habit of talking about things that are non-confrontational. This is very important, because if you only talk when things go wrong, you'll find yourselves having to overcome barriers that naturally form when there is a lack of communication. If, on the other hand, you regularly communicate about the positive things, you're ensuring that the barriers stay down. Your hearts are open toward each other, which will make talking about difficult things, when that's needed, much easier.

Communication that repairs

Communication during times of crisis can make or break your marriage or relationship. If you've been consistent with the other types of communication, then this type will be much easier to tackle; but even so, it won't be without effort. Honesty is the best policy, even if it hurts at first, as letting a matter simmer in your heart will result in resentment and eventually bitterness—a very destructive force.

At the same time, being honest doesn't mean blurting out how you feel without thought for the timing or presentation. If something is bothering you, first take the matter to Me in prayer and determine whether it's just a bad feeling that will pass and therefore it's better to not make a big deal out of it, or if it's something that won't be resolved on its own and that you *should* bring up.

If it's something very delicate or sensitive or that you're emotional about, wait for a good time when you can get your partner's full attention. Then speak your mind, but speak it in love. Don't go into the conversation trying to apportion blame—that will get things started on the wrong foot. Remember that the goal is to gain better understanding of each other and to find a solution together. And be open to listen as well as speak—successful communication is a two-way street.



Regain the treasure

When a relationship gets rocky, oftentimes the rocks can be found in your mouths. Picture yourself with a mouthful of gravel, and every so often spitting out a stone at your significant other. It is at once comical and ridiculous, but perhaps looking at it that way will help motivate you to get rid of the rocks.

When you started dating you would not have dreamed of saying anything unkind, but as time passed, you found those sharp words coming out at times. At first you were shocked and probably apologized quickly, but as you grew familiar with each other you failed to notice these harsh words had become a regular occurrence. When it comes to the hurtful things we say, the damage is quickly done and nasty words leave deep and lasting wounds. The good news is that these can be cured by humble apologies and kind and loving words and deeds, especially if that healing balm is applied quickly and consistently.

The old saying, “Familiarity breeds contempt,” can often be applied to relationships. If you are not communicating well—and not just through words, but actions too—then you can all too easily let contempt and a lack of caring for your partner enter in. Through forgetting the value of what you have, you let it deteriorate from lack of care.

To regain the treasure of a happy relationship, constantly remind yourself that you have been blessed with something priceless, and take steps to prevent your special connection from weakening into a dreary and monotonous routine.

Talk to Me

Are you feeling isolated? Angry? Hurt? Frustrated? Misunderstood? Tell Me about it. You don't have to keep it all bottled up inside. I am your best friend, and you can confide in Me. I am your strong shoulder to lean on when times are tough or people are being difficult. Come to Me and tell Me your thoughts, and I will guide you through those trying times.

Often, just talking about things is the best way to sort them out, and if you don't feel you can talk with anyone else about what you're going through, you can always talk to Me. I will help you make sense of what you're feeling. In some cases I will help you to see things from another viewpoint, and that will be enough. In others, I will give you ideas of how to go about resolving the problem.

It's tough to be objective about your emotions, as they can be overpowering. But if you'll come to Me and talk things out with Me, I can help you to live above those feelings and make good choices. That is the surest way to true success and happiness.



CHAPTER 7

WEATHERING THE STORM



*Above all things have
fervent love for one
another, for "love will
cover a multitude of sins."*

(1 Peter 4:8)

Rebuilding dreams

You had so many dreams when you first got together, but it seems that one by one each has crumbled. Your relationship that was once loving has grown cold, and you feel distant and disconnected. It may look hopeless, but don't give up just yet. I can help you rebuild your dreams.

I am able to rekindle the love you once felt, but you must turn to Me for help. It starts with you wanting, with all of your heart, to make things right and start anew, no matter what the cost to your ego or your own plans or preferences. No conditions or reservations. It's easier if you seek My help together as a couple, of course, but I can get started with just one—you. We can start right now.

Ask Me to bring to remembrance all of the qualities you saw in your partner that caused you to fall in love in the first place. It may seem that you're now together with a different person, but you're not; all of those good qualities are still there. Dwell on those good things, and that will be the start of bringing them to the fore.

And don't forget that it works both ways. I also want to help you be the person your partner was crazy about. As you humble yourself before Me and your other half, I will help you clear away the rubble of past mistakes, hurt feelings, and bad habits so together we three can build anew, this time on a stronger foundation, dreams that will last.





Keeping afloat

One of the biggest lifestyle changes that being in a relationship brings is that everything you think and do—your hopes, ambitions, plans, and decisions—affects not only you, but the person you're with as well. The kind of life you want and the things that are important to you are reflected in your financial decisions, so you must make the time to discuss these things together, get to know each other intimately, share dreams and perspectives, and agree on financial plans.

In times of difficulty, when financial pressure threatens to take its toll on your happiness, there are three important things I would like you to remember:

- ✿ I am always there to support, advise, and guide you. Talk to Me as you would a friend, and let Me speak to you through your thoughts and feelings.
- ✿ I created you and the world you live in, and I can provide all your needs if you trust Me to. Just ask.
- ✿ The things of highest value have nothing to do with money. Remember what life is all about—your family, your friends, you, and Me. Whether you're living in hardship or prosperity, don't forget the things that really matter.

Three's a team

What to do when times are rough? You're not getting along. There seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel. You're misunderstood, not trusted. You're locked into an endless cycle of disagreements and bickering. Your love life has grown cold and is approaching absolute zero. You know, you should have called on Me sooner.

But since things have gone this far, at least call on Me now, so that we can get to work fixing things. I can't fix them, you can't fix them, and your partner can't fix them.—Only *we* can fix them. We're a team. If you're at the end of your rope, hang on! I'll help pull you back to safety.

First of all, agree together that things aren't how they should be. Agree that you need help—not just Mine, but each other's. Admit to each other where you've been wrong and ask Me to help you get back on the foundation of faith and trust—in Me, and in each other. I'm the God of salvation. I can salvage any situation, even yours. But I need your cooperation. Will you help Me help you? I love you and want you both to be happy, and I'm a very present help in time of trouble. Let's roll up our sleeves and get to work!



Divine intervention

When those you love are going through hard times, you feel their pain and burdens. But I ask you to let Me carry the load that you are inclined to take upon yourself. Each time you feel a twinge of pain, or when you feel you must take on the responsibility of helping them, look to Me; call on Me for help. Don't try to bear the burdens of others by yourself. You weren't made for that.

I am pleased that you want to help care for others in their time of need, but often, the best way to help is to ask *Me* to intervene and solve things as only I can. I can not only give you peace of mind, but I can actually answer your prayers and work in the hearts and lives of your loved ones for their good. You can still offer your assistance, advice, and support, but Mine is even better—and sometimes it's the only thing that will help.

In some cases, you might think the answer or solution for a situation is obvious, and you think you should be getting in there and “fixing it,” but I know each person's heart and I can see things much more clearly than you can.

I know things you couldn't possibly figure out on your own. Sometimes I will use you as one of My instruments to help bring about the solution, so be sure to ask Me about that too.

Pray for Me to work, and ask Me for advice, before you rush in to the rescue. Let's work together.



Speed bumps

Mistakes, like speed bumps, can serve a useful purpose. They make you slow down and thus be more aware of the road conditions so that you don't rush headlong into a potential accident or cause danger to another. Mistakes can be part of life's learning process—to help you take note of the conditions around you or the needs of others, often helping you to avoid a more “fatal” mistake later on.

The next time you make a mistake—when you could literally kick yourself for having said or done something insensitive—look at it from a positive angle. Look your partner in the eye, sincerely apologize, and you'll gain not only more of your partner's love, but his or her respect as well.

Use what went wrong for good, by reflecting on how your mistake occurred, how it affected your partner, and what you can learn from it and do differently next time. Mistakes can be effective tools to strengthen your relationship, if handled and recovered from correctly.

Having the right attitude about your own mistakes, as well as the mistakes of your partner, will make for a healthy, balanced, humble, and understanding approach to life.

Preemptive strike

Always include the most needed of all ingredients in a relationship: to love without holding back. When your partner has wronged you, forgive him or her before he or she even asks.

Resistance training

Challenges are a part of a healthy relationship, so when you face them, don't feel that you should throw everything out the window. Sometimes what looks like a problem in a relationship is actually My way of strengthening it by bringing those involved to a crisis. If you handle the crisis right, by praying, counseling, seeking Me, and communicating honestly, then your relationship will be stronger in the end. You will be more mature, deeper spiritually, and you will understand your partner better.

It's like working out with weights: in order to build muscle, you need some resistance training. It's not the easiest thing to go through, and sometimes you walk away from your workout a little sore, but in time you see the positive results of a more muscular, toned body. You should look at the difficulties and challenges that you face in your marriage as if they were spiritual "resistance training"—experiences that may be difficult to go through, but that will make your relationship stronger in the end, if you persevere through the tough times.

Both right?

Just because your partner doesn't agree with you doesn't necessarily make one of you wrong. You may just be seeing things from a different viewpoint.



CHAPTER 8

WHERE I
COME IN

*We have known and
believed the love that God
has for us. God is love, and
he who abides in love abides
in God, and God in him.*

(1 John 4:16)



Linked with love

Love for others is a gift from Me. How do you receive it? Just as you would receive any gift from Me. You simply ask, believe, and accept. How do you live this principle? One step at a time, with one loving deed followed by another.

You can show My love to each other in many ways—through forgiveness, kindness, thoughtfulness, concern, understanding, words of love, words of encouragement, words of praise, taking time to talk, taking time to listen, empathizing, sharing the load, and giving of yourself even when it is least expected or least deserved.

Receive My gift of love and transmit it day by day, step by step, deed by deed, word by word, action by action. Every time you are

concerned for others and translate that concern into loving action, you also become a little more like Me and people will see more of Me, and My love through you.

One of the wonders of love is that every time you share My love with another, love will come back to you in some form. As you make the effort to give love, I will more than match you; I will pour My love into you in greater measure so you will have more to enjoy and more to share.

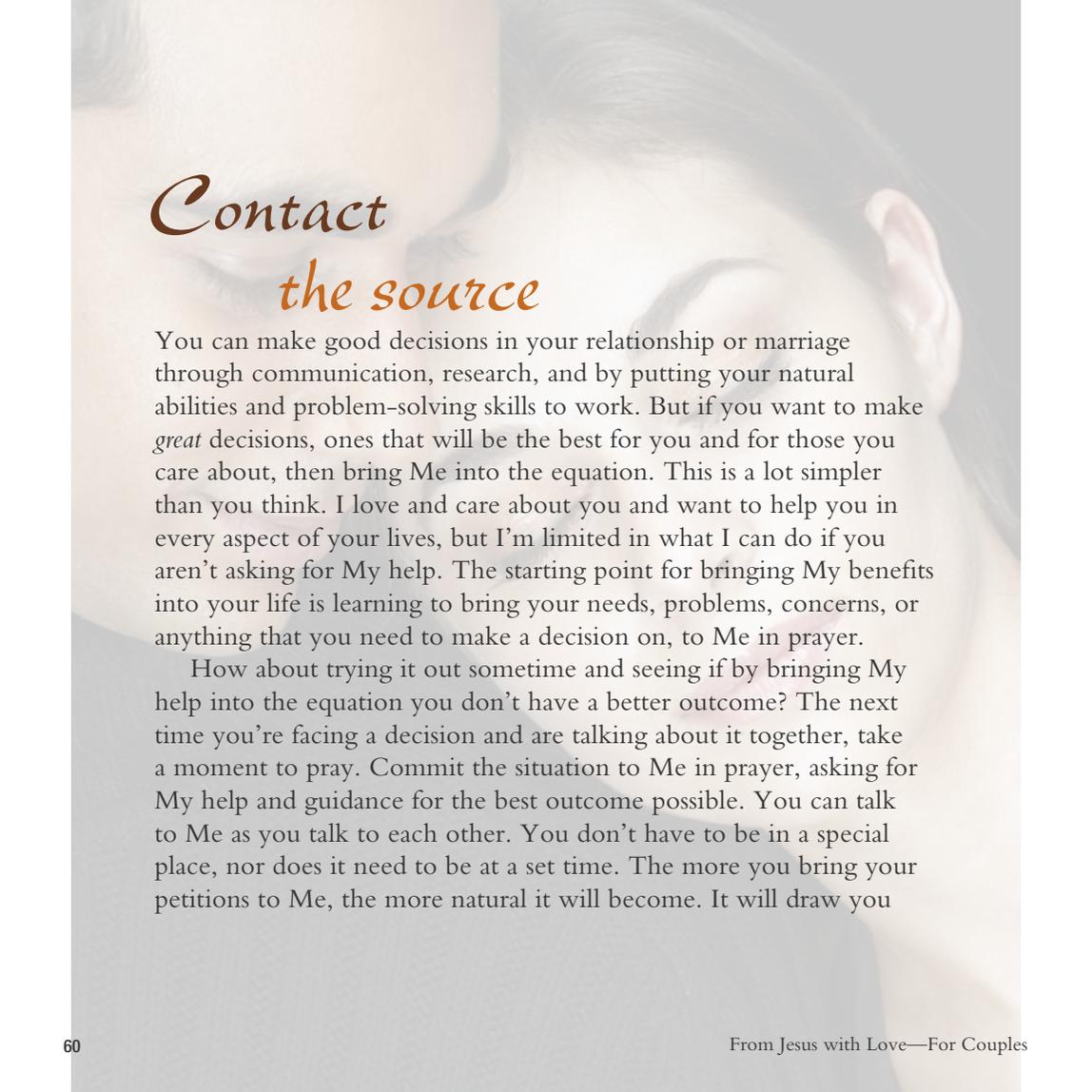
What we share

The intimacy that you and your partner share can give you an idea of the type of loving relationship that *I* would like to share with you. Your partner loves and adores you, and you feel the same in return. I love and adore you, and when you return My feelings, this brings an even deeper love into your life than anything you have known so far. Not only does My love benefit you, but an intimate connection with Me can also strengthen the love that you and your loved one share.

Just as you and your partner have a mutual need for each other, I need you and you need Me. You might be more aware of the “you need Me” part, and you might realize that there is a fair bit I can do for you—such as answer your prayers, care for you, protect you, provide for you, and bless your life in a variety of ways. But maybe you haven’t realized that I need you too. I gave My life in order to free and save you, and your love for Me is what makes Me know it was worthwhile.

I crave communication with you. If you freely share your thoughts, your dreams, your fears, and your needs with Me, this makes Me happy—especially when it’s a two-way discussion, and you let Me give you My thoughts in exchange for yours. I desire to be a part of your life and your experiences, and I can be when you think of Me, pray, and express praise to Me throughout your day.





Contact

the source

You can make good decisions in your relationship or marriage through communication, research, and by putting your natural abilities and problem-solving skills to work. But if you want to make *great* decisions, ones that will be the best for you and for those you care about, then bring Me into the equation. This is a lot simpler than you think. I love and care about you and want to help you in every aspect of your lives, but I'm limited in what I can do if you aren't asking for My help. The starting point for bringing My benefits into your life is learning to bring your needs, problems, concerns, or anything that you need to make a decision on, to Me in prayer.

How about trying it out sometime and seeing if by bringing My help into the equation you don't have a better outcome? The next time you're facing a decision and are talking about it together, take a moment to pray. Commit the situation to Me in prayer, asking for My help and guidance for the best outcome possible. You can talk to Me as you talk to each other. You don't have to be in a special place, nor does it need to be at a set time. The more you bring your petitions to Me, the more natural it will become. It will draw you

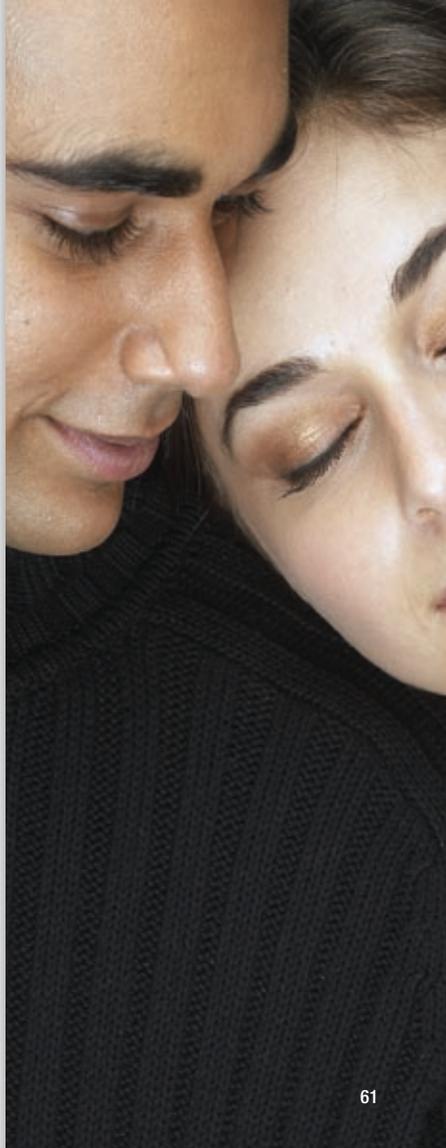
closer to Me and to each other, and it will bring a spiritual dynamic into your lives that will pull down My help and blessing.

Once you've prayed for guidance in your decision making, why not ask Me to speak to you and give you specific counsel? Tap into My wealth of wisdom and knowledge by giving Me a chance to guide you personally and directly. I will give you the solutions while you're alone with Me that will make the mountains of your problems melt away.

Positive outcome

Whatever the situation, everything will work out for good. That's a promise. "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."¹ Stand on this promise and hold on to your faith.

1. Romans 8:28



Include Me

If you want a happier family and a happier family life, here's how: Include Me in everything you do.

I'm not talking about dry, formal, somber religiosity—anything but! You just might be surprised at how much fun I can be. The benefits of including Me are too numerous to list here, but I'll give you three.

One: I'm full of ideas. My Father and I created this world together, and you've got to admit, we came up with some pretty good stuff. Don't you think I can show you fun and enjoyable activities to do together?

Two: I can relate. There's no situation you face that I haven't helped

others deal with before, so consult with Me the moment you begin to have problems.

Three: More love. Isn't that what you want most for your marriage—love? I am love, so where I am, love is. The Bible says that in My presence is fullness of joy, and at My right hand are pleasures forevermore.¹ I have so much love to give you and yours—more than you could possibly imagine and much more than you can contain. It's here for you any time, all the time, just ask.

I'm at your beck and call. Just say, "Jesus, thank You for being the head of our family. Be with us now in what we're about to do."

1. Psalm 16:11

CHAPTER 9

JESUS, ON MARRIAGE



*Bear one another's
burdens, and so fulfill
the law of Christ.
(Galatians 6:2)*

Beyond the ceremony

There is a certain mystique that has always surrounded a wedding ceremony. Brides- and grooms-to-be naturally look forward to their big day with a special anticipation. The joining of their destiny with their loved one's, the presence of family and friends, and the public declaration of love all combine to make this a treasured and memorable occasion.

All of these happy elements, however, are not what really make the marriage. A wedding ceremony is an opportunity for a man and woman to seal their love and commit to each other, but unlike fairy tales where couples get married and “live happily ever after,” successful marriages are established through the ups and downs of daily life over a long period of time.

There's more to a “real” marriage than a triumphant wedding. A marriage that'll last requires enduring love, understanding, sacrifice, good communication, and forgiveness. If both partners are willing to give of themselves in these ways, then their union will truly be a winning partnership, and they will reap the rewards of their efforts.

Traction

A good relationship with both people pulling the same way is like a four-wheel drive vehicle. No matter what obstacles you encounter, whether rocks or rills, mud or hills, in a four-wheel drive you will be able to easily cross them, because you are both heading in the same direction.



For better or worse

I know that the decision to commit to spending the rest of your life with your loved one isn't one you've come to lightly. You may even have struggled for some time as to whether or not you'd actually go through with it, but in the end you chose to move forward and start a whole new chapter in your life. But even though you've made your decision, there might still be some lingering doubt about that intimidating formula.

I promise to be with you for better or worse. When *you* say those words, you can't be fully aware of what you're committing to and what the future might bring, but here *I'm* saying it to you, and I not only mean it, but I will make good on it.

Yes, difficult situations will arise, problems will appear, and there are

likely to be times when you wonder if you made the right choice, and if your commitment is strong enough to keep you together. Crumbling relationships and failed marriages are a reality in today's world, but often that is because I am left out of the picture.

If you have done your part and determined that this is what you want, then commit yourself to Me, as well as to your spouse. I have the love, insight, and understanding that you will need in the days ahead, and I will give you what you need to face any difficulty and have a truly successful marriage. I will remain by your side always, through sickness and health, in poverty and in wealth, for better or worse, and will give you the means to do the same for the one you love.

Home of hearts

Love has creative power, and in the home love does its magic by engendering unselfish acts and helping each family member see the others in a positive light. Everyone wants to be understood, accepted, and loved, and the home is a God-created environment for this to happen.

There are also situations in the home that work against love—enemies of love. Disagreements between spouses and sibling rivalries are a couple of the obvious ones, but there are other problems that are more subtle and even more dangerous—selfishness, laziness, indifference, criticalness, nagging, taking one another for granted, and thinking and talking negatively about one another, to name a few. These usually begin with small, seemingly innocent incidents—finding excuses to not help out, squabbles over petty issues, little putdowns and sarcastic remarks—but unless you recognize these as attacks on your family’s love and unity, they will develop into bad habits that will take a terrible toll on your family.

The root problem is a lack of love. The only thing that will cure a lack of love is love itself. If you ask Me to give each of you genuine respect and appreciation for the other, I will put that kind of love in your hearts. Then it’s up to you to enrich that love through loving thoughts, words, and actions.



Reflected love

What greater gift can you give children than to provide a home where their mother and father love each other deeply? As has been so wisely said, one of the best things you can do for a child is to love your spouse.

Your love for each other, your camaraderie, and your unity of purpose and goals will go a long way in helping your children to form positive attitudes in their own lives. Your positive example will affect the way they'll look at the situations and circumstances they'll encounter later on in life. In an environment of love, your children will develop tender hearts and grow into loving, caring, and thoughtful people.

Love truly is the greatest force in the world, so let My love flow through you for each other and for those I give you to care for.

Keeping tight

Marriage is love, and love is giving. So in order to have a truly loving marriage, you must be giving.



The marriage triangle

Marriage is the joining of hearts, that two may become one. It's a wonderful thing with wonderful rewards for those who are willing to make the necessary sacrifices—and there *are* some sacrifices involved. To become one, each partner must be willing to give and change. The man must give of himself to become all that his wife needs him to be, and the woman must give of herself to become everything that her husband needs her to be. That's the kind of self-sacrificial love that the strongest, happiest marriages are built on. Where do you get such love? Only from Me.

Picture your marriage as a triangle, with the two of you at the bottom two corners and Me at the top. As you both climb the sides of the triangle to come closer to Me, the source of love, you are also drawn closer together. The way to greater love and greater closeness with each other is to climb closer to Me.

The closer you both come to Me, the more love you will have to share with others. And the more love you share, the closer others will be drawn to both you and Me. It will start with those nearest and dearest to you—your children and other family members—and grow from there.

Marriage is a wonderful thing with wonderful rewards—so wonderful, in fact, that the sacrifices cease to be sacrifices.



