

What Did You Expect?

Commitment #4 – We will commit to building a relationship of love.

- “There are many relationships that end in marriage that seem founded on love but really aren’t.” (p. 168)

A. Love Draught Indicators

1. Disunity

- ✓ Self-love makes us impatient, makes us want our own way, and convinces us our way is THE right way
- ✓ True love celebrates our differences, the process of working out difficulties, turns differences into opportunities for change and greater unity

2. Misunderstanding

- ✓ Too many marriages are filled with “But I thought you said...” – “No I didn’t” conversations
- ✓ Self-love makes us more committed to what we understand than understanding our spouse, it causes us to not listen well, to speak before we hear all that our spouse has to say
- ✓ Self-love makes us unwilling to wait until we are sure we have understood our spouse and it keeps us from viewing our spouse’s words, perspectives, desires and opinions as valuable
- ✓ Love longs for husband and wife to be on the same page, to make the daily sacrifice it takes to reach understanding, to listen well and make much of the other’s words, perspectives, desires and opinions

3. Separation

- ✓ Not speaking here of living in two separate houses, but of living separate lives in the same house
- ✓ Sometimes this life is chosen to avoid the arguments and the anger – but such a situation is far less than the “one flesh” union God intended for marriage
- ✓ Sometimes it is chosen through a lack of control over our schedules, sometimes out of laziness and avoidance
- ✓ True love will always find such separation unacceptable and painful and will be motivated by the deep privilege of growing a one-flesh, intimate relationship

4. Physical Dysfunction (Sexual dysfunction)

- ✓ What diverts and destroys physical sexuality is a lack of love
- ✓ If you haven’t loved your spouse out of bed, why would you think he or she will love you in bed

- ✓ Love lives in awe of the holiness of the sexual relationship in marriage
- ✓ Love finds joy, comfort, satisfaction and safety
- ✓ Love sees sex as an act of and celebration of the relationship of self-sacrificing

5. Conflict

- ✓ Self-love causes fights and quarrels – we believe winning is more important than unity, than the heart of our spouse
- ✓ True love is pained when something is wrong, not because it discomforts us, but because it hurts our spouse
- ✓ Love seeks to minimize conflict by overlooking minor weaknesses, irritations and offenses
- ✓ True love seeks peace

B. Beware of Faux Love

- The following four traits can be confused with love when they stand alone – none are bad in and of themselves

1. Physical Attraction

- ✓ Physical attraction is an amazing thing, and we are all drawn in by it in some way
- ✓ God has made us all different, that is why beauty is in the eyes of the beholder
- ✓ This is not bad – if someone is physically repulsive to you then the relationship probably will not last long
- ✓ As wonderful as it is, physical attraction can be valued far too highly, even becoming the sole reason for marriage – although this might not be seen
- ✓ We often confuse physical attraction with love, trouble is “Physical beauty gets normalized in marriage”

2. Emotional Connection

- ✓ How wonderful it is to find someone you can talk to easily, that you can relate to, talk to and feel comfortable with
- ✓ In marriage such connectivity is crucial – you cannot have a meaningful long-term relationship with someone who is never on the same emotional page as you
- ✓ As important as it is, emotional attraction can actually be self-love, for we like how someone makes us feel – how they put us at ease, how enjoyable they are – perhaps we are drawn to the effortlessness of the relationship

3. Spiritual Unity

- ✓ Once again this is powerful and important
- ✓ Many marriages struggle because they are not on the same spiritual page, so how wonderful it is to find someone who is on the same page – not just being a Christian, but one who shares the same worldview, the same theology

- ✓ It is powerful to pray together, to worship together
- ✓ But this can be self-love in disguise – we like the idea more than the person, and often a man likes the idea of being looked up to as a spiritual leader more than he likes the woman looking up to him (because of self-love – makes us feel good and needed)

4. Culture

- ✓ It is great to find someone who shares similar likes and dislikes, similar values about family, the best place to live, what roles husbands and wives should play
- ✓ But this can be self-love disguised, perhaps we are drawn to our spouse not because we love her, but because we love ourselves and are drawn by how much she agrees with us
- ✓ This also will be challenged in marriage as we find out more and more differences (which are not bad, but if you have built love on the idea of sameness...)

C. Love Defined

- Love is best defined by an event before it is defined by words
 - ✓ 1 John 4:7-12, 16b-21 –
 - ✓ John calls us to “cruciform love...love that shapes itself to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (cruci = ‘cross’ and form = ‘in the shape of’).” (p. 187)
 - ✓ 1 John 4:11 – “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” – Certainly John means we are to love others in the same way
- Love Defined: “Love is willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that does not require reciprocation or that the person being loved is deserving.” (p. 188)
 - ✓ Love is **willing**
 - John 10:18 – “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.”
 - You cannot force a person to love
 - ✓ Love is willing **self-sacrifice**
 - There is no such thing as love without sacrifice
 - Love calls us beyond the border of our own wants and needs to those of another
 - It calls for us to invest our time, energy, money, resources and abilities for another
 - Love calls for us to be silent when we want to speak, to speak when we want to be silent
 - ✓ Love is willing self-sacrifice **for the good of another**

- Love always has the good of another in view before it has our own good in view – of course the two are always the same although it may not appear that way outwardly
- Love is excited about the prospect of alleviating burdens and meeting needs
- ✓ Love is willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that **does not require reciprocation**
 - Jesus dies for us while we were still sinners – if he had waited until we could reciprocate there would be no help for us
 - Love is not a “you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours” bargain, it is not motivated by a return other than the good of the other
- ✓ Love is willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that does not require reciprocation or that the person being loved **is deserving.**
 - Christ loved us and was willing to go to the cross precisely because there was nothing we could do to deserve either his love or our salvation
 - “If you are interested only in loving people who are deserving, the reality is you are not motivated by love for them but by love for yourself.” (p. 189)
- Where do we get this kind of love?
 - ✓ 1 John 4:19 – True love does not grow out of the soil of duty (although duty is not bad) – it grows out of the soil of gratitude
 - ✓ “Love is not born through begrudgingly succumbing to duty. No, love is born out of remembering and celebrating. When I remember the lavish, faithful, patient, forgiving, and empowering love that has been poured on me—that I could never have earned and will never be able to fully reciprocate—I will want to give that love away to someone else. When I wake up in the morning and—although my bills are not all paid, and my house needs work, and my children are a bit of a mess, and my husband or wife is less than perfect—I am filled with gratefulness that love has been poured down on me that has changed me and my life forever, then I am motivated to look for opportunities to be a tool of that kind of love in the life of the person whom God has given me as my lifelong companion.

“Perhaps one of the most unrecognized sins in marriage is the sin of forgetfulness. When we forget how we have been loved, it becomes even easier to be comfortable with a failure to love others. No one loves better than the person who knows that he desperately needs it himself.” (p. 190)