

Improving Our Marriages
Lesson 1 – Things I Give My Mate Because I am a Christian
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Introduction: Faith in God is the foundation of all relationships.

A. When I become a Christian I am to seek to be like God and seek to serve others.

(Mt 22:36-40)

1. The love we are to have for God comes from God Himself. **(1 Jn 4:19)**
2. This love is from the Greek word “Agape” and is defined: ἀγάπη, ης, ἡ love; especially as an attitude of appreciation resulting from a conscious evaluation and choice; used of divine and human love *love, devotion*; - **Freiberg Lexicon**
3. This love is commanded and thus is an act of the will.
4. Agape has to do with the mind: it is not simply an emotion which rises unbidden in our hearts; it is a principle by which we deliberately live. - **Barclay**
5. It is the kind of love that we must have for all men — even our enemies **(Mt 5:44)**. The Christian must always act out of love, i.e., in the best interest of his fellow human beings. – **Wayne Jackson**

B. When I am converted to Christ it will be seen in all my relationships.

1. Who we really are will be seen in our marriages.
2. Sadly, some had to be reminded that your mate would qualify as being “your neighbor” and thus we should love as ourselves!
3. Serving God allows us to become servants and put others first.

I. I will be committed to making my marriage for life

A. You do this because this is God’s law of marriage. **(Mt 19:3-9)**

1. Divorce for any cause is not an option. **(Mt 5:32)**
2. This being so you must never even mention a divorce just because you are disappointed. You have made a vow before God. **(Mal 2:16)**
3. How do you stay in a marriage when things are difficult? You trust in God and refuse to take the worldly way out. **(Heb 11:35)**

B. You are committed to making your marriage better.

1. You do this because God has commanded you to love your mate. **(Eph 5:25)**
2. It is not dependent upon your mate cooperating with you in working things out. You do it because you love God and you follow what He tells you. **(1 Pt 2:18-19)**

3. You will seek to better understand your mate and better learn how to serve their needs. **(1 Pt 3:7)**

4. What needs to be told the Christian when he says “I don’t love her anymore?” The Lord says to repent and start loving (agape) your mate. This can be done.

II. As a husband I will be committed to serving my wife. (Eph 5:25-29)

A. **I will always seek to understand my wife. (1 Pt 3:7)**

1. The very act of seeking understanding shows humility and care.
2. How would you like a boss who cared nothing about your thoughts?
3. Do you understand the great risk your wife has taken in submitting to you?
 - a. She depends on you as the breadwinner. **(Gen 3:19; Eph 4:28)**

- b. She depends upon you for her emotional needs.
- c. She depends upon you for your spiritual leadership. **(1 Cor 11:3)**
- d. In dating she would not have imagined you ever forsaking these duties.
Some men are satisfied with just bringing the money home!
- e. In divorce these vulnerabilities are clearly seen.

4. Please notice that he should **always** seek to understand!

B. I will be a spiritual leader. (Eph 5:27)

- 1. This is the greatest duty of the man. **(Mt 6:33)**
- 2. When a man surrenders the spiritual leadership to the woman he is making a clear statement as to what is important to him.
- 3. Are you making decisions that will best cause spiritual growth?

C. I will be willing to listen and yield in decision making. (Phil 2:3-4)

- 1. Headship means you can overrule when there is a disagreement, but when?
- 2. Consider some attitudes towards money and spending.

III. As a wife I will be committed to serving my husband. (Eph 5:22)

A. I will seek to respect and praise my husband. (Eph 5:33)

- 1. There are fewer things more difficult for a man to deal with than disrespect.
- 2. A disrespectful wife has a corrupted heart. Here is where you must learn what it means to be a Christian. **(1 Pt 3:1-4)**

B. I will patiently yield to his judgment. (Col 3:18)

- 1. There is a limit to this submission. **(Acts 5:29)**
- 2. There are ways a woman can "force the issue" to get what she wants or tear down his judgments when she does not get her way. (Ex. Modesty in a daughter)
- 3. What should a woman do when she disagrees or wishes to be heard?

C. I will set an example of humble service to God. (1 Pet 3:5-6)

- 1. The woman has a great influence on the atmosphere of the home. It is in the home where we are made strong or weak in our service to God.
- 2. How many wives are interested in Bible study? You will be a powerful influence on how your children view the Bible.
- 3. A husband could have no greater blessing than a wife who loved God!

"I Don't Love Her Anymore"

by Greg Gwin

A forty year old man, suffering through the classic "mid-life crisis," sat down to talk to a preacher about his problems. He explained how his marriage of 20 years was no longer satisfying or fulfilling. Finally, he reached the "bottom line." "I just don't love her anymore," he said. "What can I do?"

After a brief moment of reflection, the preacher said decisively, "As I see it, you have only one option." The man perked up with anticipation. Was the preacher going to suggest a divorce? Would he be free to pursue the thrilling lifestyle of the younger generation that he had come to admire? Would this be his chance to regain his fleeting youth? What was the preacher's advice? "...Seems to me that the only thing left for you to do is REPENT and start loving her again."

So often we hear of married couples who complain that they have "fallen out of love." That's sad -- but it happens. The real issue is: What do you do when you realize that such a situation exists? The Bible still says the same thing that it has always said. Husbands are to "love your wives" **(Eph. 5:24)**, and wives are to "love their husbands" **(Titus 2:4)**.

Please note that these are not just suggestions -- they are commands. To fail to love your mate is to commit sin! And sin always requires repentance if there is to be forgiveness. Be careful. Do not confuse commanded love with the gooey, silly infatuation of a teenager. It is far more than that. It is a sacrificial love that seeks the interest of the one loved more than self. It is the kind of love that Jesus has shown us **(Eph. 5:25)**.