

C. Self-Denial toward Our \_\_\_\_\_

MATTHEW 16:24

*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

3. The \_\_\_\_\_ for Relational Health

A. Honestly Examine \_\_\_\_\_

**Ask:** What am I doing to enhance the quality of our marriage? What could I do? What am I doing that hinders oneness in our marriage?

1 CORINTHIANS 11:28

*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.*

B. \_\_\_\_\_ Your Relationship's Strengths and Weaknesses with Your Spouse

EPHESIANS 4:15

*But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*

C. \_\_\_\_\_ to Make the Necessary Changes

- Apologize when necessary, admit your mistake, and move on.
- Define specific, measurable, and realistic steps toward change.

D. \_\_\_\_\_ Resources in Deepening Your Relationship

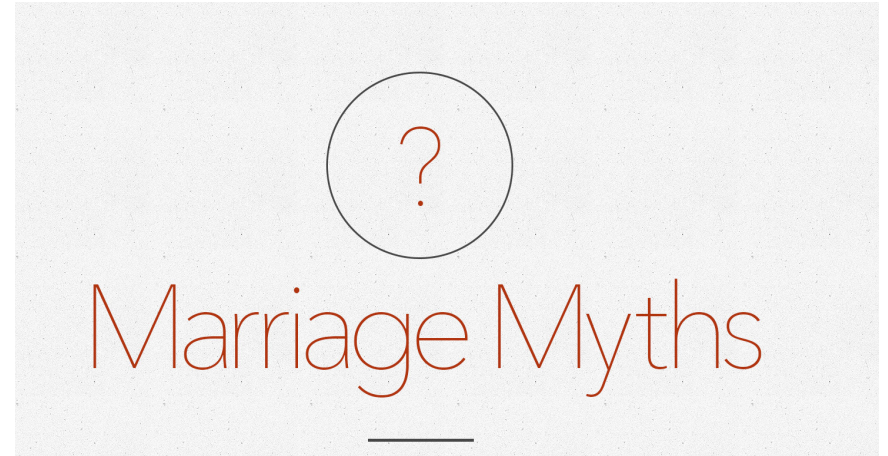
LUKE 12:34

*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

- Words
- Time
- Money
- Energy

**Conclusion:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Today's Lesson:

**Mystical Myth:**

a lasting marriage is based on fate, feelings and fantasy

**Why we believe it:**

As a combined result of Hollywood and human nature, we have concluded that love is something that happens to us, instead of something we are responsible to commit to and cultivate from within. We conclude that the absence of "happily ever after" is a result of missing magic or—worse—the wrong mate.

**What the Bible says about it:**

MATTHEW 19:5 - 6

*<sup>5</sup> And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? <sup>6</sup> Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

1 PETER 3:7

*Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*

**Introduction:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## QUOTE

“For most of us, our wedding day was one of the highlights of our lives. But the honeymoon is soon over, and our courtship dreams of romance and candlelight too often dissolve into the reality of dirty dishes and diapers.”—  
Kay Kuzma

## 1. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Marital Love

ECCLESIASTES 3:1

*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.*

Quote ~ “Even marriages with the best of beginnings will have their share of problems. Over time, a brightly burning fire of love can fade and smolder; if we are careless, it can flicker out altogether. Unless a husband and wife work hard to keep the fire alive, they can wake up one morning to find the warm breezes replaced by an arctic breeze howling through their bedroom.” - Ed Young, Sr.

### A. \_\_\_\_\_ First Impressions

**Marked by:** Putting our best foot forward, overlooking and excusing faults, and the excitement of having found “the one.”

**Strategy:** Get real, open up, and discuss the big stuff.

### B. \_\_\_\_\_ - Can Life Get Better?

SONG OF SOLOMON 4:7

*Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.*

**Marked by:** Romantic optimism, warm embraces, and the conclusion that each other can do no wrong.

**Strategy:** Cultivate disciplines in the areas of communication, conflict-resolution, and servanthood.

### C. A \_\_\_\_\_ Awakening

**Marked by:** shocking realizations - almost daily - that the person we married is much different than we expected.

**Strategy:** Create an environment of security by communicating openly and avoiding judgmental behavior.

### D. We Two Become \_\_\_\_\_

**Marked by:** The arrival of one or more children, along with the demands of a budding family.

**Strategy:** Refuse to allow the daily grind of a busy life to drive a wedge between the two of you.

### E. \_\_\_\_\_ the Next Generation

**Marked by:** Many transitional periods, some placid and predictable, others hectic but memorable.

**Strategy:** Carve out time with one another, alone. Don't let your relationship become defined by the potential demands of your children's schedule.

### F. Honeymoon \_\_\_\_\_

**Marked by:** A quiet house—once again—and an opportunity to enjoy additional time with one another.

**Strategy:** Maintain a godly influence in the lives of your adult children with support and counsel - but not control.

### G. Leaving a \_\_\_\_\_

**Marked by:** Investing influence in the lives of multiple generations.

**Strategy:** Invest a lifetime of lessons into the lives of your children, grandchildren, and spiritual children.

## 2. The \_\_\_\_\_ Disciplines for Enduring Love

1 CORINTHIANS 13:7 - 8

*<sup>7</sup> (Charity) Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. <sup>8</sup> Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”*

Quote ~ “Every marriage will naturally move toward a state of isolation. Unless you lovingly, energetically nurture and maintain intimacy in your marriage, you will apart from your mate.” - Dennis Rainey

### A. Dedication to our \_\_\_\_\_

HEBREWS 13:5

*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

### B. Devotion to \_\_\_\_\_

JOHN 13:34

*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*