

The Fundamentals of a Strong Marriage

There are several non-negotiable essentials that stand as pillars in every strong, spiritual marriage.

LOVE - When we speak of love, we are not talking about the kind of love portrayed in Hollywood. Movies and television depict love as nothing more than sexual desire. While the sexual relationship within the context of marriage is very important,

1 Cor. 7:1 - 5 says that even it flows from a deeper, more spiritual kind of love.

7 Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me:

It is good for a man not to touch a woman. ² Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. ³ Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. ⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*. ⁵ Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Paul describes the kind of love we are talking about in 1 Cor. 13:4 - 6:

⁴ Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

A closer look at love's character is in order here.

V. 4 - **Suffers long** - This word means "patient endurance even when provoked; long-tempered." Love does not retaliate!

V. 4 - **Is Kind** - This word refers to active goodness. It is never hateful or mean. Love is kind in words and actions.

V. 4 - **Does not Envy** - True love is not jealous. Instead of being jealous when others prosper or excel, love is pleased when they do well.

V. 4 - **Does not parade itself** - Love does not brag! It does not draw attention to itself or to what it is doing.

V. 4 - **Is not Puffed Up** - Love is not arrogant or proud. It does not demand to be number one.

V. 5 - **Does not Behave Itself Unseemly** - Love is never rude, but it always treats others with compassion, consideration and respect.

V. 5 - **Seeks Not its Own** - True love is never selfish and self-centered, but it is actively interested in what will profit others. It never looks at itself first, but it always considers another ahead of itself.

V. 5 - **Is not easily Provoked** - True love keeps no record of evils done to it, but it willingly endures all slights and injuries. It is not irritable.

V. 5 - **Thinks no evil** - keeps no record of wrong - Two thoughts are in mind here. First, genuine love does not keep a record of evils done to it. It doesn't hold a grudge.

V. 6. - **Rejoices not in iniquity** - Love does not rejoice in sin.

V. 6 - **Rejoices in the Truth** - It rejoices when truth is proclaimed and when truth wins the victory. Love is glad for the truth, even when the truth hurts. Love is glad when truth wins the day.

V. 7 - **Bears all things** - Loyal even when things are tough. It doesn't walk out in the day of trouble.

V. 7 - **Believes all things** - Loyalty believes in one's mate. It trusts them.

V. 7 - **Hopes all things** - Loyalty never looks for the worst in them, but only believes the best.

V. 7 - **Endures all things** - Loyalty sticks it out. Loyalty does not abandon the fort.

