

Keeping Love Alive

An acquaintance of my wife told her that she had finally got a divorce after 23 years of marriage.

“Wished I had done it sooner” she exclaimed, *“the flame went out long ago, now I’m free.”*

My wife was speechless, but tried to hide her sorrow and disgust.

Twenty-three years, two sons, love, sweat, toil and heartache, all for a piece of paper that said *“divorced”*.

A wise friend of mine once told me that marriage is like a hot pot placed on a cold stove, it soon cools off unless we take precautions.

We have in the Handbook For Life, the Christian Bible of a church which had *“gone off the boil”*.

Revelation 2:4 [Living Bible] *“... there is one thing wrong, you don’t love me as at first.”*

This was Jesus Christ speaking to a group of Christians who were preparing to be His bride.

Cooled-off love can be re-kindled, and loving relationships can be restored.

How?

Revelation 2:5 [Amplified Bible] *“**Think about** those times of your first love [how different now!] and **turn back** to me again and **work** as you did before...”*

This instruction can apply to our physical marriage as well as our future spiritual marriage to Jesus Christ.

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“Think about” – that is the first step that God gave as a solution to marriages that had *“cooled-off”*.

God gave us the power to retain memories.

We must live in the present, plan for the future.

But we can learn valuable truths from the past.

Do you recall the first time you encountered your first love?

I remember my first face-to-face meeting with the young girl I would be marrying two years later.

I was at a conference for young people and she was coming down a flight of stairs as I was going up. I saw this very attractive girl laughing with a group of her friends. I stopped directly in her path and said *“haven’t I seen you somewhere before?”* Rather a dumb remark but it worked. We had seen each other before, but not spoken to each other. Sylvia told me she had been a member of the choir that had visited my local church, and that she had noticed me at that time also.

I turned around and walked down the stairs beside her as we discussed what was happening at the conference and she invited me to join her and her friends on an outing up to London the next week.

The rest, as they say, is history!

There are many other memories of our early weeks and months together that are still fresh in my mind, followed by many lovely memories of our time together after marriage.

Such memories can reignite love in both of us.

“Turn back” – this is the second step.

Love includes being able to say sorry and really mean it.

When was the last time you said “*sorry*” to your mate?

Forgiveness is an integral part of every good marriage.

We can so easily wrong others, even the one we love most intimately.

We need to change, to constantly improve our relationship in marriage.

Sometimes even little habits can greatly annoy our mate.

We should be sensitive to these habits and be willing to adjust.

Some of the nicest words we can ever hear. They come to us like pleasant music to our ears although they are short three word statements “*please forgive me*” and “*I forgive you*”.

Those who genuinely forgive and accept forgiveness have grasped the deeper meaning of love.

“Work as you did before” – this is the third step that God gave to marriage relationships that have “*cooled-off*”.

To spend extra time with Sylvia I used to make a 12-mile each way to Colchester journey on my bike because the final bus home was 8pm, far too early to satisfy my desire to spend time with her.

When Sylvia went on holiday that first year with one of her long-time friends she found in her hotel room a vase full of 12 red roses awaiting her with a loving message from me.

I constantly looked for ways to express my love for Sylvia. I didn’t need special days, for every day was special because of our love for each other.

“Memories are made of this” is the title to a love song.

What memories do you have of your first young love for your now wife?

Evaluate your marriage

How are you doing?

Here are some each ways to help us remember our first love and re-ignite it into a flame.

Pay attention – believe what your mate is doing or saying is the most important thing of the moment.

When he or she says something, repeat it quietly to yourself or write it down, re-read it and if necessary work on it.

What are the things we should always remember?

Anniversaries, favourite gift items, sizes of clothing, most desired foods and entertainment.

Little things are always important in marriage and should never be forgotten.

Love takes work

Love does not grow without proper cultivation and real hard work. The Handbook For Life, the Christian Bible, gives us a basic principle.

Galatians 6:7- [Message Bible] *“Don’t be misled, no-one makes a fool of Gods. **What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others and God, harvests a crop of weeds.** All he will have to show for his life [or marriage] is weeds! But one who plants in response to God, letting God’s Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life.”*

Ask God to help you re-kindle your marriage.

The choice is ours.

Love is as strong as we make it.

Love is building for eternity.

Keep your love growing and alive in your marriage for it is the best training ground for an eternal life with the God who is love itself.

1 John 4:8 [NIV] *“Whoever does not love does not know God, **because God is love.**”*