

Steadfast Love

Steadfast love refuses to focus on the negative aspects of one's spouse. All of us discover certain things about our spouse that we perceive as negative. We don't deny them. On the contrary, we discuss them, especially if there is the potential for change. Yet steadfast love refuses to dwell on these negative aspects. The violation of this principle has destroyed many marriages. Few people can survive the constant harassment and condemnation of a spouse. Such condemnation does not encourage one to change, but rather to give up. When we focus on the positive aspects of the spouse and give verbal affirmation, he or she is far more likely to continue to grow.

How does all of this affect our emotions? When the husband or wife chooses to express steadfast love toward his or her spouse, positive feelings are generated. The more you express affirmation and appreciation for the positive traits in your spouse, the stronger will become their positive feelings toward you. On the other hand, the more you focus on his or her failures and frailties, the more negative will become their feelings toward you. Our feelings are affected by our thoughts and our words. Tell yourself what a horrible spouse you have; rehearse for yourself all of her negative traits, and you will end in depression. On the other hand, focus on her positive traits; tell yourself – and her – how wonderful she is. Then enjoy to the fullest your spouse, and you will find positive feelings emerging from within.

Steadfast love is a choice. That's why Paul commanded husbands to love their wives (Eph. 5:25) and challenged wives to learn to love their husbands (Titus 2:4). Something that can be commanded, taught, and learned is not beyond our control.

By Gary Chapman, from his book Covenant Marriage

Read together a chapter from a marriage book each week.
Gary Chapman's Covenant Marriage would be a great start.



Your marriage can be one of your life's most rewarding relationships!

It's a challenge to build a strong, God-honoring relationship. But so worthwhile! Whatever your age, whether dating, engaged, or married, there's a class or seminar for you.

RESOURCES FOR COUPLES

Joy to the World! It's pretty hard to keep from singing at Christmastime. That being the case, why not turn the Yuletide festivities into an opportunity to have some fun, both as a couple *and* as part of a larger group? You'll find a guide to a fabulous date night at tinyurl.com/pzmp3lk Have a joyous Christmas season!

Retrouvaille provides the tools to help put your marriage in order again. The main emphasis of the program is on communication in marriage between husband and wife. It will give you the opportunity to rediscover each other and examine your lives together in a new and positive way. January 19-21 in Portland. Details at www.HelpOurMarriage.org

Engaged Encounter Lay and clergy couples share the joys, troubles, and victories that they have encountered in their marriages. Engaged couples then have opportunities, alone as a couple, to discuss the challenges they will face: such as maintaining open communication and resolving conflicts on issues such as religious differences, money, planning and sex. January 19-21 in Portland. Details at OregonEngagedEncounter.org

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Every Marriage Matters

Helping Marriages Become All God Intended

Check out additional resources at www.EveryMarriageMatters.org