

# Lives of Fragrance

2 Corinthians 4:14-17

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## On Marriage

The coming of Valentine's Day brings thoughts of love to the foreground; living in a fallen world, the meaning of love is often confused, but not for those in Christ. The Scriptures testify, "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 John 4:10-11, ESV). Below are several ways that those at Tulsa Bible Church have worked to show this love in their marriage.

### Debbie Breeden

Say "yes" to his crazy ideas as much as you can! The "one another" commands in scripture are a good place to start! Be kind to one another; love one another; respect one another and protect one another, to name a few! Have fun with each other! Date often!

### Violet and Carthal Cobb

Our marriage was successful (and sometimes we wonder) because we agreed and allowed each to use their spiritual gifts and also supported each other in things like watching many soccer games. May GOD bless your marriages also.

### Sharon Riggs

I married my best friend fifty years ago. It is amazing to watch how God has drawn us closer together even as we grow as individuals. Marriage is having a partner who has witnessed your life, for better or worse, and keeps showing up.

### Marcia Thutchley

The only way to keep a marriage, healthy, and glorifying to God is by making Him, Lord Jesus, the focus. Growing in Him as you both grow unified together. You can't escape the troubled waters, but you can remember Jesus is in your boat!

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## What's New

February 14<sup>th</sup>

Valentine's Day

April 18<sup>th</sup>

Tentative date for the Women's Spring Event

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### Marlene Jones

We have been married over 53 years and we still love each other very much, and count God's many blessings and goodness over the years! Some thoughts I have that I feel has helped us are: Remembering and thanking God for his work in our hearts and lives to draw us closer to Him and to each other. Loving and forgiving each other, remembering how much God loves us and has forgiven us. Being mindful that we can't change our mate, only God can and praying faithfully for each other, and mostly praying "God change ME." Serving the Lord together allowing God to teach us along the way. Making a habit of praying together, and thanking God for the gift of each other every day.

### Jennica Ralston

Amos and I will have been married for 15 years in July! As the saying goes, opposites attract. Over the years, I have come to realize that we don't need to squish ourselves or each other into a different mold; God has made Amos and me as individuals with unique gifts and interests who walk together through this life. As Amos and I take this lifelong walk, we each point out and talk about what we see—big and small, material and spiritual—and we take the time to listen to what is important to the other. Some days this sharing and listening result in mutual joy and appreciation; some days this sharing results in blank stares with glazed-over eyes. And that is okay! We have learned that the main thing is to keep pointing out, to keep talking, to keep listening, and to keep walking, hand in hand.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. From Psalm 23.

### Lydia Strobe

Do not say "I'm sorry." This is perhaps a surprising piece of advice, but being "sorry" is a feeling, not a request for reconciliation. We all still struggle with our sin natures and need forgiveness, so be honest and direct in the wording of your apologies, "Would you please forgive me for..."

# A Love Story for His Glory

Karen Krueger

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love" (1 John 4:7-8, ESV).

The Bible says a lot about love. As we read through the Scriptures, from Genesis through Revelation, a love story emerges. It is a holy love story, begun by God, demonstrated by God, and fulfilled by God. Happily, we are the objects of God's love, and His love will lead us to eternal home with Himself. God has always had perfect fellowship within Himself, with perfect love and unity. He made us in his image with the capacity to love. Due to the corruption of sin, however, we are unable to rightly love God or each other. In his grace, God has given us love for each other, which is a dim representation of His love. Our loves may manifest beautiful attributes of unselfishness, joy, and a desire to benefit the object of our love. In this way, our loves may faintly resemble God.

C.S. Lewis wrote, "Our Giff-loves are really God-like; and among our Giff-loves those are most God-like which are most boundless and unwearied in giving. All the things the poets say about them are true. Their joy, their energy, their patience, their readiness to forgive, their desire for the good of the beloved—all this is a real and all but adorable image of the Divine life." Lewis continues with a caution, "We may give our human loves the unconditional allegiance which we owe only to God. Then they become gods: then they become demons. Then they will destroy us, and also destroy themselves."

God is the source of love and the rightful recipient of our love. As we grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord, we begin to love him more deeply. His love is unchanging, vast, and He alone is worthy of our constant praise and adoration. We cherish our Savior, who died to give us life. We revere our Heavenly Father, who wove the plan of redemption throughout history and conceived that plan before the world and its history. "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9-10, ESV). We adore the Holy Spirit, who is our constant Comforter. "Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father'" (Galatians 4:6, ESV).

"...for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (Hebrews 11:6b, ESV). What stands in the way of my diligently seeking Him? Do I hold my earthly human loves too dearly? Do I have expectations which are more important to me than following Him? Do I count it all joy when I have trials? Do I rejoice in all that God gives me, both of trials and of daily life, knowing that this is His will for me in Christ Jesus? "And he said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me...'" (Luke 9: 23, ESV). There is the crux of the matter. Denial of self. My heart has many desires, loves, and expectations, and when these are not met, I can be unhappy, seek retaliation, or become bitter. My pride wants to be satisfied in my rightness. The self-will is strong, but Jesus said, "Deny yourself."

Is there an end goal to this life and to the sufferings which we endure? Yes, there is. As we follow Christ in humility and self-renunciation, we find a deep walk with God, which is strengthened and which gives joy in the midst of pain

Matthew Cyr writes,

...there are still more echoes and gleams of something in the distance, something we are coming to. The Lord who bled and wept will not make light of our sufferings, but will make Light of them. I think we must dare believe that when evil and pain at last are slain, the revealed beauty and goodness of the Lord will make us glad even of our sufferings—glad that his love and power have been shown forth through them. Then we will have grown to be the kind of children capable of loving him with such abandon that even our most heart-rending experiences in the Shadowlands will be significant in that they display his glory. 'To glorify God and enjoy him forever' to degrees we can't now comprehend: that is the end he was shaping for us..." (*The Garden Unguarded*, Matthew Cyr (Please note, *Lives of Fragrance* does not promote all the authors referenced in *The Garden Unguarded*)).

## Recipe

Cheri Ennis

Cheri states that this bar recipe has been one of her favorites since she was married 36 years ago and was given this recipe by her mother-in-law.

### Chocolate Cherry Bars

- 1 box of chocolate cake mix
- 20 oz. can of cherry pie filling
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- 3 beaten eggs

Stir ingredients by hand. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray baking sheet (about 10 x 15 in.). Pour mixture into pan and bake for 20-30 minutes.

Pour frosting over warm bars. See recipe below.

### Frosting

- 1 c. sugar (1½ c.)
- 3 T butter (4½ T)
- ½ c. milk (8 T)
- 1 c. semi-sweet chocolate chips (1½ c.)

Combine sugar, butter, and milk in saucepan. Bring to boil and boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and add chocolate chips, stirring until smooth. Pour over warm bars. Cheri notes that she usually makes 1½ recipe of the frosting for a gooier result. Amounts to increase the frosting ingredients by 1½ are given in parentheses.

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