



MARRIAGE - a copy and shadow of the eternal love covenant God has for each of us.

START and THROUGHOUT the day - say "I love you" and kind words "I appreciate you", "you are beautiful" (or handsome), "you are good at _____", "thank you for _____" to spouse and to God... verbal, notes, ecard,... PRAY together and for one another...

FEELINGS - neither right nor wrong... share yours: happy, hurt, rejected, accepted, understood, irritated, ecstatic, alone, defeated, inspired, discouraged, encouraged, etc, etc.

DIFFERENCES - every couple has them -> think about and declare spouse's strengths... pray about spouse's weaknesses. Can't change another - be prepared to change self.

SEX - God's idea for becoming one in body, soul and spirit. **Careful/ avoid:** pride, temptation (1 Cor 10:13), comparing, belittling, rejection., hardening of heart.

Beneficial/ do: bond emotionally, give/ sacrifice (1 Corinthians 7:1-7), stay pure (Hebrews 13:4).

- **She needs** to feel loved/ bond/ secure/ safe before sex. (Guys, romance your bride!)
- **He feels** loved/ bond/ secure/ close after sex. (Gals, give of yourself!)

CONFLICT - every marriage has them -> put problem in front of you (not between you). Your spouse is not the issue - don't build a "wall" between you.

FORGIVE - some conflict and past hurt can't be fixed or changed ... doesn't mean it was right and trust may take time.

Keep soft heart and FORGIVE.

APOLOGIZE - be sincere and don't be defensive or make excuses or justify... ("if you wouldn't have..., then I wouldn't..."). Avoid absolutes or lies - "you always or never...".

END of day/ final tips - PRAY together and..

- Love languages - learn and love your spouse by their love language(s): Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Gift Giving, Quality Time, Physical Touch. (Source: The 5 Love Languages by Gary Chapman)
- Good marriage book or devotional - read and discuss at bedtime or dinner (a few pages to grow closer together)
- "Date night" - each week... great investment for love, joy and peace in your marriage (and life after children).
- Bible verses for your marriage - learn and live by those that inspire - e.g. Ephesians 5:24-28, 1 Peter 3:7, Colossians 3:18-19, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a... or your own _____