



THE
Love Dare

DAY BY DAY



The Love Dare Day by Day

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ISBN: 978-1-4336-8137-0

B&H Publishing Group

Nashville, Tennessee

BHPublishingGroup.com

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Dewey Decimal Classification: 242.2
Devotional Literature \ Love \ Marriage

Printed in China

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 • 17 16 15 14 13



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DAY BY DAY



A YEAR OF DEVOTIONS
FOR COUPLES



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KENDRICK
WITH LAWRENCE KIMBROUGH



PUBLISHING GROUP
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE



THIS WILL BE A CHALLENGE.

THIS ONE-YEAR JOURNEY WILL TAKE COURAGE
AND ENDURANCE. AT TIMES IT WILL SEEM
CHALLENGING AND DIFFICULT, AND AT OTHER
TIMES IT WILL BE INCREDIBLY FULFILLING.

TO TAKE THIS DARE REQUIRES A RESOLUTE MIND
AND A STEADFAST DETERMINATION. IT IS MEANT
TO ENRICH YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND
YOUR SPOUSE THROUGH A DAILY TIME OF
PRAYER, DEVOTION, AND ACTION.

DON'T QUIT EARLY, FOR THOSE WHO DO
WILL FORFEIT THE GREATEST BENEFITS.
IF YOU WILL COMMIT TO A DAY AT A TIME
FOR ONE YEAR, THE RESULTS COULD CHANGE
YOUR LIFE AND YOUR MARRIAGE.

CONSIDER IT A DARE, FROM OTHERS
WHO HAVE DONE IT BEFORE YOU.



This one-year devotional journey contains the foundational principles of the original book, *The Love Dare*, while also providing fresh content and deeper studies.

A daily time of devotion is part of a living, loving relationship between you and God. Whether you read this alone or with your spouse, you should begin every day in prayer asking God to speak to you. This devotional should never be a substitute for your time in the Scriptures. It is meant to increase your understanding of biblical principles and awaken your appetite to search the Scriptures more deeply for yourself.

You are about to learn some things about yourself and your marriage. Some will be encouraging and some convicting. In either case, they will call for an honest view of where you are with your marriage and with God.

God uses the gift of marriage to help us eliminate loneliness, multiply our effectiveness, establish families, raise children, enjoy life, and bless us with relational intimacy. Marriage also shows us our need to grow and deal with our own issues and self-centeredness through the help of a life-long partner. If we are teachable, we will learn to do the one thing most important in life—to love. This powerful union provides the path for you to learn how to love another imperfect person unconditionally. It is wonderful. It is difficult. It is life-changing.

This book is about love. It's about learning and daring to do whatever it takes to strengthen and reinforce God's purpose for marriage. If you accept this dare, you must take the view that instead of following your heart, you are *choosing to lead it*. The Bible says that “the heart is more deceitful than anything else” (Jeremiah 17:9), and it will pursue what feels right at the moment. We dare you to think differently, and choose to *lead your heart* toward what is best in the long run.

This journey is not a process of trying to change your spouse to be the person you want them to be. Rather, this is a journey of exploring and demonstrating genuine love, even when your desire is dry and your motives are low. The truth is, love is a decision, not just a feeling. It is selfless, sacrificial, and transformational. When love is truly demonstrated as it was intended, your relationship is more likely to change for the better.

During your daily devotions, you will learn more about the nature of love, as well as the character of God Himself. Read each day carefully and be open to a new understanding of what it means to genuinely love someone. (For more on how to have a daily devotion time, see page 378 in the appendix.)

You will be given a weekly dare to do for your spouse. Some will be easy, and some very challenging. But take each dare seriously, and be creative and courageous enough to attempt it. Don't be discouraged if outside situations prevent you from accomplishing a specific dare. Just pick back up as soon as it is within your ability and proceed with the journey.

Finally, you are encouraged to get a journal to record your personal thoughts and experiences as you put these truths into practice. It is important that you capture what is happening to both you and your mate during the journey. These notes will provide a record of your progress and should become priceless to you in the future.

Remember, *you* have the responsibility to protect and guide your heart. Don't give up and don't get discouraged. Resolve to lead your heart and to make it through to the end. Learning to truly love is one of the most important things you will ever do. May God bless you as you take this dare!

NOW THESE THREE REMAIN: FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE.

BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.

1 Corinthians 13:13



IF I SPEAK WITH THE TONGUES
OF MEN AND OF ANGELS,
BUT DO NOT HAVE LOVE,
I HAVE BECOME A NOISY GONG
OR A CLANGING CYMBAL.

IF I HAVE THE GIFT OF PROPHECY,
AND KNOW ALL MYSTERIES AND
ALL KNOWLEDGE; AND IF I HAVE
ALL FAITH, SO AS TO REMOVE MOUNTAINS,
BUT DO NOT HAVE LOVE, I AM NOTHING.

AND IF I GIVE ALL MY POSSESSIONS
TO FEED THE POOR, AND IF I SURRENDER
MY BODY TO BE BURNED, BUT DO NOT
HAVE LOVE, IT PROFITS ME NOTHING.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1–3 (NASB)



DAY 1

Love is the greatest of these

*If I have all faith, so that I can move mountains,
but do not have love, I am nothing.*

1 Corinthians 13:2

Loving God and others is what life is really about. No matter who you are or what you do, it comes down to whether you'll live a life of love or not. And there is a vast difference between the two. One is priceless . . . and one meaningless.

Love is the most important ingredient to any meaningful relationship. It is fundamental to true significance. Your quality of life is directly tied to the amount of love flowing in you and through you to others. Though it's often overlooked, love is infinitely more valuable than riches, fame, or honor. They will pass away, but love remains. You can be fulfilled without these, but not without love.

The absence of love leaves a devastating void. When it is not present, your spirituality becomes superficial, your benevolent deeds self-centered, and your sacrifices insincere. In any relationship where love is not your motivation, you can expect it to feel bland and unfulfilling—if not meaningless. When asked to identify life's greatest command, Jesus summed it up this way: to love God with all you are and to love your neighbor as yourself. Will you embrace a life of love?

THIS WEEK'S DARE

Begin praying this week: "Lord, teach me what real love is and make me a loving person."

DAY 2

Love is life's motivator

For Christ's love compels us . . .

2 Corinthians 5:14

Anger can fuel hatred in a man's heart until he feels like attacking his enemy. But love can spark kindness in his heart so he lays down his life for his friend. Selfishness can drive a woman to tighten her grip and hoard her resources. But love can inspire her to open her hands and give sacrificially. Love is the purest and most powerful motivator. It gives courage to a coward, wisdom to a fool.

When love invades your heart, you are empowered to endure deeper pain, willingly pay a greater cost, and run risks to your reputation for the sake of another. Love causes a soldier to lay down his life for his country, a mother to pray relentlessly for her child, and a gracious God to send His only Son to die for our sins. Love is that powerful.

Paul the apostle endured beatings, intense persecution, and hardship throughout his life. He did it for one reason alone: "Christ's love" compelled him. If love began fueling your decisions, what would it drive you to do for your marriage?

GO DEEPER

Read 1 Corinthians 13. After you have read it, read verses 4–7 again. This time, replace the words "love" or "it" with your first name. Then close in prayer and ask God to help make this a reality in your life.

DAY 3

Love is the key

Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love.

But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

Love is fundamental to the success of your marriage. Not your current feelings of romance or sexual satisfaction. Not a stronger financial standing or even your spouse's behavior. All of these can circumstantially change, and they will. But when storms rise and conditions worsen, love-driven marriages endure and work through even the toughest issues without giving up.

When marriages crumble, couples often claim that it was due to their irreconcilable differences. But genuine love is a master at reconciliation. When love takes over, it compels us to humbly apologize and take full responsibility for our failures, then to fully forgive where our spouse has failed us. Over and over again.

Resilient marriages are built on honesty, respect, commitment, forgiveness, and endurance. And love constantly inspires all of these things to grow and thrive within us. Though love reaches far beyond marriage, it is a God-given key to its success. You can strip away most of the pleasures you and your spouse hold together, but your marriage hinges on love.

THIS WEEK'S DARE

Keep praying this week: "Lord, teach me what real love is and make me a loving person."

DAY 4

Love simplifies

*Do not owe anyone anything, except to love one another,
for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.*

Romans 13:8

Love ultimately fulfills every law of God. It persuades us to live out all that is good and forbids us from doing all that is evil. Every act of hatred, subtle deception, or plot of unfaithfulness is vetoed when love takes command in our hearts. Love toward God leads us to obey Him and uphold His rightful place of honor in our lives. If we do so, we will by default not sin against His name. Love toward others transforms our behavior for the better and defuses evil intentions like light dispels darkness.

Men who lead by love won't deceive or degrade their wives or their neighbors. When love fills a woman's mouth, she encourages her family instead of tearing them down. When you're focused on love, you will naturally demonstrate patience, tenderness, and kindness. Rather than trying to manufacture right actions and attitudes, let love become your first response and your default position. Then you're set to launch into any circumstance graciously and to land with no regrets.

GO DEEPER

Read Romans 13:8–10 and study Paul's explanation of how love fulfills all of God's law.

DAY 5

Love is the business of men

*God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness,
but one of power, love, and sound judgment.*

2 Timothy 1:7

When a movie is marketed as a love story, we assume it's primarily for an audience of women. If plots don't contain fighting, bleeding, or exploding, men will gladly avoid them. But real love is not merely women's work. It's at the core of manhood, transforming men to be strong and courageous.

Love makes a husband put away childish things and embrace his responsibilities to lead his family. It drives him to defend his wife, provide for his children, and even lay down his life if they become endangered. Love motivates a man to confront injustice and take passionate stands for what he believes in, like crossing an ocean to fight for his country.

Jesus was the most loving man ever to walk the earth and remains the perfect example of manhood. With passion, He confronted evil, cast out demons, and rebuked religious hypocrites. Out of love, He served sacrificially, rescued the brokenhearted, and willingly died for the sins of the world. Real men embrace this love as the driving force to boldly do what boys merely dream of.

THIS WEEK'S DARE

Keep praying this week: "Lord, teach me what real love is and make me a loving person."

DAY 6

Love is your job description

*This is the message you have heard from the beginning:
we should love one another.*

1 John 3:11

People from every nation, tribe, and tongue have it in common—everyone is longing to be loved. It's inbred, God-given, lifelong, and deeply felt. "Would someone please love me?" is the unspoken cry from billboards, television shows, magazines, and T-shirts. We work constantly to get others to notice our worth and validate us with their attention. We will even give ourselves to someone with hopes of receiving love in return. But ironically, people rarely take their focus off themselves so they can meet this need in others. Selfishly, we may even overlook our own spouse. But he or she needs it just the same.

Love, however, is your primary responsibility in marriage. Did you not vow to a lifelong love at the altar? Are you not the one God has privileged to fill your mate's love tank? And remember this: when your spouse deserves your love the least, that is when they need it the most. No one on Earth is more strategically positioned, commanded, and called on to love your mate than you are.

PRAYER

"Lord, I thank You for the spouse You have given me. Teach me to love them in a way that meets their needs and honors You. In Jesus' name, amen."

DAY 7

Love is fertile soil

... that you being rooted and grounded in love . . .

Ephesians 3:17 NASB

When we plant a living seed into healthy soil, we expect it to blossom. And just as flowers in a greenhouse are supplied with an ideal environment for growth, so a home filled with love provides the ideal atmosphere for people to bloom.

We know that children who grow up in loving families tend to sleep deeper, stand taller, and venture farther than those who are never secure in their parents' love. Likewise, when you provide safe, loving soil for your spouse to grow in, they will be more likely to flourish with confidence, knowing they are valued and secure.

What happens when someone is loved over the years? Their needs are met, dreams encouraged, opinions heard, and successes praised. They're assured of your patience and forgiveness when they fail, and free to express themselves honestly without fear of your judgment. They'll even weather intense seasons of disappointment with the stability your love supplies. Admit it—we'd all love to be loved like that.

QUESTIONS

How will your mate be affected by living with you in the future? Will they become radiant or saddened? Confident or angry? Will you dare to create a loving environment for your spouse to grow in?