



Every Day an Adventure

Beat the winter blues by doing something creative .

1. Paint a self-portrait.
2. Write a psalm or worship song
3. Cloud watch for 20 minutes.
4. Try a new food or restaurant.
5. Take a different way home.
6. Listen to a new kind of music.
7. Rent a kids movie and watch it with some kids.
8. Hang a new picture on your wall.
9. Visit an art gallery, Look for God.
10. Find a hymnal, read it as poetry.

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(from page 3) God’s Word. She listened; spoke God’s truth, never mincing words, while being loving and non-judgmental. She would not tolerate me feeling sorry for myself and I needed that. She was a God send but not available 24 hours a day. God alone is my constant companion and counselor and He carried me through.

Not all forgiveness leads to reconciliation and restoration but that became my prayer. God brought me back to Himself and He has committed me to proclaim the message of reconciliation, 2 Cor. 5:18-19. God’s desire is for me to be His ambassador and minister to my husband and others going through the same difficulty.

In addition to forgiving my husband and trusting God, I had to learn acceptance. For

me that meant giving up the dream of a “Cinderella” existence. It required full acceptance of my husband and seeing him as God sees him. It has caused me to examine my faith and to choose to believe God. To believe that He is able to do what I am not, to walk my faith and to believe that God does work all things together for good of those who love him.

The equilibrium of trust in relationships is very precarious. What takes a lifetime to develop dissolves in a moment of betrayal. But with God’s help, balance can be restored and trust rebuilt. It requires letting go of fear and opening oneself up to the possibilities of what God has in store for his or her life. It’s learning to place our trust in the hands of the One who will never betray us or let us go.



*Live a life of love;
just as Christ loved us.*
Ephesians 5:2



5 Ways Friendships Can IMPROVE YOUR MARRIAGE

You know the saying, No man is an island? Well, the same is true in marriage. A successful marriage doesn’t happen just between a husband and wife. Rather, it occurs in a community. Relationship experts agree that although husbands and wives should consider their spouse to be their best friend, having healthy, same-sex friendships can enrich a marriage relationship. Why? Those friendships are good for the individuals in the marriage. And healthy individuals make up a healthy marriage.

So if it’s been a while since you’ve invested in your friendships, it’s time to change that. Not only will you be building quality friendships, you’ll also be building a better marriage. Here’s why:

1. Friendships provide a support system. Bob Lepine, co-host of the popular daily radio program “FamilyLife Today With Dennis Rainey,” says, “I think it’s critically important that a husband and wife have healthy, same-sex friendships so they aren’t relying on one another to meet all of their emotional needs.”

Lepine says he realized the importance of this after his family moved to a new town. When reflecting on how his wife, Mary Ann, felt after returning home from a visit with friends, he says, “I got a refreshed wife back because she had spent this time with other friends.”

2. Friendships help keep you grounded. Lorilee Craker, author of *See How They Run: An Energizing Guide to Keeping Up With Your Turbo-Toddler*, witnesses this in her friendship with a fellow writer. “I can relieve a lot of stress and anxiety and just feel a lot better about my life and my work by talking things over with her,” Craker says. “That way, I don’t just drop everything on [my husband] when he comes through the door.”

Women and men think and communicate differently. Sometimes women need to be around other women who understand what it’s like to be wives and mothers, friends who can offer spiritual guidance and healthy perspectives. And men need to be around other men who will offer both accountability and companionship.

3. Friendships indicate balance in our lives. “Not having quality friendships could be a symptom of an overload in other areas,” explains Claudia Arp, co-founder with husband, Dave, of Marriage Alive International, Inc., a non-profit,

marriage and family enrichment resource. “One of the first things to go when you’re in overload are your gender-specific friendships. If you look around, and you don’t have any friends, it’s an indication that you probably need to slow down your life a bit.”

4. Friendships give you encouragement. LaShon Whitfield has a special appreciation for the friendships she developed while adjusting to being a newlywed approximately nine years ago. “My girlfriends probably don’t realize how much they encouraged me and confirmed that I wasn’t going crazy,” Whitfield says. “When we talked, our main focus was to share, not give advice. It was to let one another know we weren’t alone in the ‘cleaving’ process.” Through her friendships, she found out firsthand what it means to “encourage one another and build each other up” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

And when individuals in a marriage are encouraged and energized, they can give to their spouses out of that overflow. The more encouragement a husband and wife share, the more energized and fulfilling their marriage will be.

5. Friendships improve your health. A considerable number of medical studies have been shedding light on the health benefits of friendships.

Research has shown that a lack of good social relationships was a major risk factor in both men and women for poor health, in the same way as blood pressure, smoking, and obesity. They’ve also shown that keeping involved in social activities seems to reduce stress, strengthen immune systems, and result in longer life expectancy. And longer lives obviously lead to longer marriages.

The next time you’re tempted to skimp on friendships, rationalizing that your spouse and family need you, remember that they also need you to be supported, grounded, balanced, encouraged, and healthy, too. So make your marriage better with a little help from your friends. Your spouse just might thank you for it.

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By Shelley Kimmons Bacote

*Love Talk Seminar with the Parrotts***TRANSFORM THE WAY YOU & YOUR SPOUSE COMMUNICATE**

You don't want to miss this amazing seminar for couples of all ages coming to the Topeka Performing Arts Center on Saturday, February 11, 2006. Drs. Les & Leslie Parrott will use biblical insight and practical advice to help transform the way you communicate with the love of your life. This 9 am to 3 pm seminar is entitled "Love Talk" and is packed with practical solutions to improve communication with your partner and will include such topics as how to tackle problems, how to influence each other, and how to make decisions, just to name a few.

Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott are best-selling, highly-regarded authors and educators whose relationships work has been featured frequently in USA Today, the NY Times, CNN, Good Morning America, Fox, and Oprah. Les and Leslie give corporate relationship seminars,

trainings, and college classes in over 40 cities annually, appearing live before 1.2 million people per year. They are the authors of best selling books like, *Saving your marriage before it starts*, *When bad things happen to good marriages*, *Becoming Soul Mates*, & *The Love List*. Les and Leslie Parrott are co-directors of the Center for Relationship Development at Seattle Pacific University.

This "Love Talk" seminar will cost only \$35 per person and includes seminar materials, a book authored by the Parrotts, and a boxed lunch provided by Engroff's. Registration will be held at the Welcome Center at TBC beginning Sunday, January 8 and will continue throughout the rest of the month. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Sandy Ruelle at 379-5667.



Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott

*Gift Ideas for***THE ONE'S YOU LOVE**

Valentine's Day, time for chocolates, flowers and pretty cards, right? Contrary to popular belief Hallmark didn't invent Valentine's Day, they have just perfected their marketing techniques.

Valentine's Day has evolved from early Roman rituals between unmarried men and women to a holiday named after St. Valentine who died February 14, 269 A.D. There are several myths about St. Valentine's plight but most agree that he was a priest who was imprisoned and executed for his crimes of defending love and marriage.

Valentine's Day should remind us of love, our family, friends and of our King. Jesus loved us all the way to the cross, the greatest gift we'll ever be given.

The best gift you can give anyone is your love. Let Valentine's Day remind you to let the loved ones in your life know you love them. Say "I love you", give them a hug and, if you like, top it off with a gift. Need some gift ideas?

Husband or Wife

- *Give them a massage*
- *Write a poem.* Try writing it yourself or "borrow" it from a professional like Robert Browning or Elizabeth Barrett Browning.
- *Romantic Dinner.* Make it at home.
- *Breakfast in bed*
- *A study or devotional book.* How about dedicating time to your spouse to read "The Power of Praying Together" by Stormie Omartian?

Child

- *A "date" with Dad or Mom*
- *The ever popular, Valentine candy.* A money saving hint: everything Valentine goes on sale February 15. Let your child pick out their favorite Valentine candy on a special outing February 15.
- *A Valentine's Day themed family night.* Build it around hearts or the color red
- *A Valentine's Day book.* Check out The Christian Book Store or amazon.com for ideas.
- *Movie night at home* complete with "movie" candy and popcorn. Let them pick the candy

Parent(s)/Grandparent(s)

- *Something homemade* – any craft, card, picture, letter, poem, or song will be treasured
- *A "coupon" book.* Coupons might include things outside of your normal chores, like making breakfast or mowing the yard
- *Take them to dinner.*
- *Arrange to have a family portrait taken* You can accomplish this using your own camera or at Sear's or a professional studio.

Anyone

- *A card.* It can be homemade or purchased from a card shop or by email.
- *A letter* reminding them why/how much you love them
- *Flowers..* Different flowers hold different meanings. Talk to a florist to send just the right message
- *A picture frame* with a meaningful photo.

For more gift ideas, and a few good laughs, surf the Internet or walk the mall. From personalized Valentine's Day photo frames to "Love Bandit" Teddy Bears you'll have your pick of Valentine's Day presents.

By Joy Bailes

*Finding healing*
AFTER BETRAYAL

Betrayal! The moment I heard it was true my world began spinning out of control. I couldn't believe that this was my life. I didn't want to believe it was happening and yet there it was and I was going to have to deal with it. The pain was excruciating! My mind began racing, this was not the man I knew, how could he do this to me and what was he thinking? And of course the "Why's"? Round and round I would go, it felt as if the rug was pulled out from under me and there I was in a heap of emotions. How can anyone survive this? Do I want to survive this?

The life I knew and planned was destroyed and I didn't know what I would do. My first thought was to run away. There was so much pain, disappointment, humiliation and anger. My thoughts controlled every moment. Just when I thought there was a lull, the questions would begin again. Did he love me? Did he ever love me? How could he disregard the years we had together. How could I? What took over 25 years to build was destroyed in an instant and I was numb in disbelief. How could I ever trust again when my confidence in him was gone and more importantly, my confidence in myself shattered?

I had to learn to trust again, for me that meant turning it all over to God. I threw myself into God's Word and prayer. I found myself pouring out my heart to my loving Father. The more I gave Him, the more He filled me up with what I desperately needed; reassurance, love, comfort and healing.

First, I needed to forgive. Secondly I had to believe and trust God for the results. It was not easy. My heart wanted to go the way of the world and just get things over with by filing for divorce and moving on with my life. God had other plans for me. As much as I wrestled with Him about what I thought was the solution, God through His Spirit and His Word spoke to my heart and told me to stay in my marriage. I was afraid but I knew that

for me I had to live out what I believed. The entire process became a test of faith.

Two forces came colliding together between my will and God's will for my life, between obedience and disobedience, and between faith and trust. God was calling me to forgive; I had to move beyond the hurt for my own benefit. "Bitterness, however much we feel it is justified, will only consume our souls and ultimately achieve nothing." (A.J. Okumu) In Ephesians, 4:31-32 God was telling me to rid myself of all bitterness, rage and anger and to be kind, compassionate and forgiving. Every time I would turn a page in His Word He was calling me to forgive. Sin had infiltrated my marriage and I was determined it was not going to consume me. The power to forgive had to come through Christ. I prayed constantly for the Holy Spirit to guard my thoughts and hold them captive to Christ alone. (2 Cor. 10:5)

Being in God's Word through Bible Study and personal quiet time became necessary for me to know God's direction for my life and His desire for me. He wanted my attitude to be the same as Christ, Phil 2:5. Oswald Chambers tells us that, "Our human relationships are the actual condition in which the ideal life of God is to be exhibited." Was I doing that? I had to place my full confidence in God and that required a balancing act between my emotions and my will. I had to choose to forgive. I found that if I gave in to my negative feelings it provided access to Satan which grieved the Spirit and caused feelings of fear, discouragement, and frustration. When I allowed the Holy Spirit to reign there was peace, hope and contentment. I had a choice as to who would rule my heart, and I chose God.

Besides prayer and being in God's Word I also had a sister in Christ that provided prayer support, words of encouragement and a good talking to when I started feeling sorry for myself and wanted out of the relationship. I would have doubts about my decision but she always directed me back to (continued)

By an Anonymous TBC Woman

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