

Before You Divorce

“This is it, I can’t take it anymore! This marriage is over!”

With these heated words Peter announced the end of 10 years of marriage.

Peter’s wife as disillusioned, depressed and frustrated, Peter was **not** the man she fell in love with.

The fragile hearts of their two children were shattered for their world was falling apart and they felt lost.

In desperation, Peter turned to his best friend for advice.

His friend listened, then pointed out an important key in the Christian Bible.

As the friend explained the scripture Peter was inspired with hope.

Peter returned to his wife and over the next few months this scripture began to open the door to marital healing.

This same understanding can turn any marriage around and save your family from the heartache of divorce.

1 Corinthians 13:8 [New King James] *“Love never fails ...”*

What is this godly love and where can it be found?

The word *“love”* has been used so loosely that it has lost much of its true meaning.

To understand what the apostle Paul meant when he used the word *“love”* we need to understand which Greek word is used in this scripture as there are three different words in Greek that Paul could have used.

The word that Paul used was the word that is always used when referring to God’s love.

“Agapé” which has the meaning of a love that is spontaneous, irrespective of the *“rights”* or response of the recipient, a sacrificial love that puts aside personal desires to love the object of that love.

The most common problem among married people is selfishness expressed in feelings, and marriages fail because feelings fade and then fail.

True godly [*“agapé”*] **love is not a feeling but a thought-out decision.**

Any marriage that is built on feelings is on a very shaky foundation.

Some people marry because they *“feel”* that the other person will be able to satisfy their needs, such a union is founded on selfishness.

Each will take and take again until they have taken all the life out of each other.

The marriage becomes empty and they throw it away like some empty drink can.

Any marriage based on selfish feelings that dictate behaviour, is bound to end in divorce.

In some marriages the relationship is conditional on the performance of the partner ... “I’ll give to you if you ...”

Such conditional relationships usually fail.

But the godly love that Paul preached is unconditional.

“Agapé” love is like the sun that never fails to shine. The sun does **not** shine on the water because it shines back, or the land because it produces fruit. What the water and land do is irrelevant to what the sun does.

Matthew 5:44-45 [New King James] *“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”*

It is God’s agapé love that causes Him to act in this way.

Agapé love is clearly a gift from the Creator God, He gives this love to you so that you can give it to others.

1 John 4:16, 19 [New King James] *“And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.” ... “We love Him because He first loved us.”*

It is through an intimate relationship with the Creator God that we receive this love.

1 John 3:18 [New King James] *“My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”*

True love is not just expressed in words but in actions that reflect the words.

Galatians 5:22-25 [New King James] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”*

Love is one of the “fruits” of our intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit, that is given to all who obey God’s Words, as found in the Christian Bible, [Acts 5:32].

Some people have looked for love in all the wrong places.

They have looked for it in other people, especially their wives and husbands, to fill them with love.

The truth is that **only** the Creator God can fill us with this agapé love, that “never fails.” How and why?

Romans 5:8 [New King James] *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

This is the model of love that is lived in many successful, long-lasting marriages.

To love or not to love, the decision is ours to make, and **not** a feeling to follow.

As we see, true love is expressed in actions within an intimate marriage relationship, not just words that spring from feelings.

Within the words of Paul expanding on godly love, we are shown ways in which we can express this love in our marriage.

“Love does not seek its own” [verse 5] – this is a guiding principle in every situation of marriage. Ask the Creator God to show you what is best for your partner.

If you are considering divorce, are you seeking what is best for yourself and for others in your family?

Have you considered the emotional, mental and physical effect on your family and community?

Is it worth the imagined relief you think you will have after divorce?

They say *“the grass is greener on the other side of the fence.”* But a beautiful lawn needs to be fertilised, watered and mowed. So why not give that kind of attention to your own partner?

You may be pleasantly surprised to see your own marriage growing greener and more beautiful.

“Love suffers long,” [verse 4] – you may **not** see immediate results, love takes time.

If you feel the need for your marriage to be *“fixed”* right away, isn't that a cry for selfish self-satisfaction?

Doesn't your partner need time to adjust to the *“new you”*?

Give your partner time to change their response to you.

Most important, give the Creator God time and room to work in your partner's life.

The Creator God does **not** force anyone to change, but He can work miracles if you give your partner time and space to change.

Patience costs you nothing, but a divorce may cost you everything.

“Love is kind” [verse 4] – you may **not** feel like being kind, your partner may **not** deserve your kindness, but allow the Creator God to give kindness through you.

Acting on feelings has caused many harsh and hurtful things to be said and done in your marriage. Ask the Creator God to inspire and empower you to decide to give kind words and kind acts to your partner.

Remember, that love is an act of will, **not** the reaction of emotions.

1 Corinthians 13:5 [NIV] *“... love keeps no record of wrongs ...”*

In other words, true agapé love forgives and forgets.

Forgiveness is the most important key to reconciliation in a marriage.

Let's face it, both you and your partner have made mistakes.

Forgiveness is one of the most powerful medicines for the human spirit.

It can heal your broken heart and marriage. When you exercise forgiveness, your partner will sense in you sweetness instead of bitterness, peace instead of anger. Your partner will experience the love of God from the gentleness in your voice to the sincerity in your eyes.

Your partner will be drawn to you, and may even be inspired to be reconciled with you.

Why not sacrifice your feelings for self-fulfilment on the altar of love?

Why not allow the Creator God to give you and your partner the love you could never generate yourself, agapé love?

Why not allow the Creator God to take care of your emotional needs?

Allow the Creator God to love your partner through you, and save your marriage!