

Some "Do's" and "Don'ts" for Loveable Companions

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The word of God commands a husband to love his wife (Eph. 5:25), and not to be bitter against her (Col. 3:19). It also commands the wife to love her husband (Titus 2: 4). Husbands and wives ought to make this command easier for their companions by striving to be *loveable*. To be *loveable* is to have qualities that cause others to love you. Many husbands and wives are just not loveable people, and this puts a big strain on their marriage. If I Corinthians 13 were just practiced in the marriage relationship many marriage would be saved from the divorce court! Let us study what love is that we might learn to be loveable. There are many "do's and don'ts" in the practice of being loveable. Let us examine some of them in light of the scripture.

DON'TS

1. DON'T BE ENVIOUS of your companion. "*Love does not envy*" (I Cor. 13:4 - NKJB). Envious feelings arise from a selfish heart that is discontent and unhappy at the excellence and good fortune of another. We should rejoice in every success of others, and most certainly in the successes of our companion, not be envious of them!! One must remember that they are no longer two, but one flesh (Eph. 5:31) and Paul said "*for no man yet hated his own flesh;*" neither should a man or woman envy their "own flesh" (their companion)!
2. DON'T BE SUSPICIOUS. Love "*thinks no evil*" (I Cor. 13:5). A good marriage is built upon trust. Being suspicious and jealous where there is no basis for such does great damage to a marriage.
3. DON'T BE SELFISH. Love "*does not seek its own*" (I Cor. 13: 5 - NKJB). A selfish person wants everything to go his (her) way. A self-centered person is not capable of either giving or receiving love, and can think only of how things affect him (her) personally.
4. DON'T BE CONCEITED. Love "*does not parade itself, is not puffed up,*" (I Cor. 13:4 - NKJB). There is no trait that is more unlovable than that of one who has a conceited opinion of self and thinks he (she) is an important person. *Really* important people *never think they are important!* An arrogant, prideful mate who thinks he (she) is above all others is not a loveable companion!
5. DON'T BE EASILY ANGERED. Love "*is not provoked*" (I Cor. 14:5 - NKJB); "*Love never flies into a temper*" (Barclay). An uncontrolled temper is one that bursts and flames out, then dies. This quick temper coupled with a sharp, biting tongue destroys peace and happiness in the home (Prov. 21:9).
6. DON'T BRING UP DISAPPOINTMENTS OF THE PAST. Love "*bears all things*" and "*endures all things*" (I Cor. 13:7 - NKJB). A companion who *truly* loves will never bring up the injuries and disappointments of the past -- they should have been forgiven and forgotten!

DO'S

1. BE PATIENT. "*Love suffers long*" (I Cor. 13:4 - NKJB). One who is loveable is patient with the weaknesses and imperfections of his (her) companion, knowing that he (she) also has weaknesses and imperfections. A truly loveable companion is always understanding of the others' faults and shortcomings. A companion who is slow to anger when unkind and hurtful things have happened is a priceless mate!!

2. BE DEPENDABLE AND TRUSTWORTHY. Love "*endures all things*" and "*never fails*" (I Cor. 13: 7, 8 - NKJB). Love will never end. A love that "*bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things*" can never fail in this life. Whatever need our mate may have we will try to supply. It is very comforting to know that one has a companion who can be depended upon. A dependable companion is a loveable companion. "*Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.*" (Song of Solomon 8:7).

3. BE KIND. Love "*is kind*" (I Cor. 13:4). One of the most loveable things a person can do is to be kind and thoughtful when his (her) mate makes mistakes (we all make them, you know!). Kindness shown at this time will bring about a rich and loving devotion from your mate that will be so rewarding it is impossible for mere words to describe it.

4. BE COURTEOUS. Love "*does not behave rudely*" (I Cor. 13:5 - NKJB). Someone has said, "*Beware of the common fallacy that home is the place where manners don't count. Only the best behavior is good enough for daily use.*" Mates should always be courteous to one another: in public; in family circles; in association with brothers and sisters in the Lord; in the privacy of the home; and in the intimacy of love. Courtesy is a loveable quality that cannot be put aside in any relationship to one's companion.

5. BE CHASTE. Love "*does not rejoice in iniquity*" (I Cor. 13:6 - NKJB). Every person has a right to expect chaste behavior from his (her) mate. Chaste behavior comes from a pure heart. Mates who are chaste do not commit adultery in the heart (mentally - Matt. 5:28). Mental adultery is to look with a view of feeding lustful desire; to *think about adultery* with a person to the point that *if an opportunity* were presented, you *would commit* the physical act! Mental adultery, in time, will result in physical adultery! No companion can expect to be loved and respected when he (she) has "*eyes full of adultery*" (2 Pet. 2:14). The Lord considers the sin of adultery so damaging to the marriage bond that when one breaks the marriage vows in that physical act, He permits the innocent to divorce the guilty and to marry another (Matt. 5:32; Matt. 19:9). For this cause only (adultery) does the Lord permit divorce and remarriage. All loveable companions heed Paul's warning to "*flee fornication*" (I Cor. 6:16).

6. BE FORGIVING. Love "*beareth all things*" (I Cor. 13:7; I Pet. 4:8). Paul also said, "*Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye*" (Col. 3:13). The first place we need to apply this verse is at home -- between mates! The most "unlovable" thing a companion can do is to take pride when the other has slipped!

Understanding and forgiveness are two necessary ingredients in building a good marriage and strengthening love.

7. BE SELF-LESS. Love "*does not seek its own*" (I Cor. 13:5 - *NKJB*), and "*endures all things*" (I Cor. 13:7 - *NKJB*). The loveable endure slights and hold no malice. They understand fatigue and mental stress, and are willing to bolster lagging self-confidence in a companion. They know how to protect their mate from crushing criticism and insensitive "barbs" from without. They seek first the satisfaction and fulfillment of their mate in the act of marriage (I Cor. 7: 2 - 5). They consider their mate first, and believe only the best of this one to whom they are married. The self-less are loveable -- and their rewards are tremendous!

All married people can be loveable, but many are not! After reading this article and thinking about it, can you honestly say, "I am loveable"? If your answer is negative, won't you begin today to try to develop the qualities that will make you loveable? The bottom line is this: BEING LOVEABLE IS WHAT GOD REQUIRES of husbands and wives if they are to be saved (I Pet. 3:7)! As a Christian I may do everything else right and be lost because of the way I treat my companion!! Think about it !!!

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