

February 3. A perfect marriage is just two imperfect people who refuse to give up on each other. Love is not a feeling; love is a commitment. Our world has redefined love to be nothing more than a fickle feeling that comes and goes. Based on this hollow definition of love, married couples often call it quits simply because they've "fallen out of love" or "don't feel the same way they used to feel." Resist the temptation to base your marriage on your feelings. Build your marriage on a rock-solid commitment and your feeling will usually have a way of catching up. *Reflection: How am I communicating my love and commitment to my spouse every day? It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. 1 Corinthians 13:7.*

February 4. Be an encourager; the world has plenty of critics already. Choose to be your spouse's biggest encourager; not his/her biggest critic. Choose to be the person who wipes away their tears; not the one who causes them. Choose to become a cheerleader for your spouse's strengths instead of always pointing out his/her weaknesses. Encouragement is a simple-but-powerful tool to bring fuel to your marriage and joy to your spouse. *Reflection: Through both my words and my actions, how can I be a better encourager to my spouse? Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up. Proverbs 12:25.*

February 5. Don't just be physically monogamous; be mentally monogamous too. In our world we are constantly bombarded with lust-fueled images that objectify people, cheapen the sacred gift of sex and tempt our minds to wander into dangerous and sinful fantasies. Jesus taught that to look at someone lustfully is to commit an act of infidelity. Resist the urge to let your eyes or your thoughts travel to places that could pull you away from your spouse. Lust views people as objects to be used; love views people as souls to be cherished. *Reflection: Are my thoughts honoring God and honoring my spouse or are my thoughts harming my marriage? But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Matthew 5:28*

February 6. Your habits will shape your marriage, so keep the right habits and quit unhealthy habits.

Keep being thoughtful. Keep writing love notes. Keep doing the things you did at the beginning of the relationship and adding new marriage-building habits to the old ones. Don't let your marriage get on autopilot, because anything left on autopilot will eventually crash! Remember that consistency is the most powerful force in a marriage. Make sure you are consistently doing the right things. *Reflection: Which habits do I need to keep and which ones do I need to quit? Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9.*

February 7. The little things in marriage can make a big difference! Small acts of thoughtfulness done with great consistency can make a massive positive impact in a marriage. Conversely, seemingly-small negative actions or habits can erode intimacy and eventually stifle a marriage altogether. Watch out for those "little foxes" that seem relatively harmless. Don't let them weasel their way into your home. Protect your marriage from negative thoughts, negative influences, negative habits or negativity in any size or form. *Reflection: What are the "little foxes" that are stealthily causing damage in our marriage and how can we get rid of them? Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom. Song of Songs 2:15.*

February 8. Thoughtfulness is a source of fuel that keeps a marriage going strong. You don't need a lot of money or any special set of skills to be thoughtful and considerate towards each other. Don't let selfishness or pride distract you from consistently putting the needs of your spouse ahead of your own. When a marriage has both spouses intentionally being considerate and showing thoughtfulness to each other, the marriage will thrive. Make sure your spouse knows that he/she is always on your mind. *Reflection: Am I consistently thoughtful and considerate towards my spouse? Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.*

Philippians 4:5

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