

taking inventory

Marriage Check-In

TICK THE BOXES OF THE WAYS YOU LOVE YOUR SPOUSE WELL AS CHRIST COMMANDS IN 1 COR. 13. TAKE INVENTORY OF AREAS WHERE IMPROVEMENT CAN BE MADE.

- Do you suffer long and show patience with your spouse?
- Are you kind to your spouse?
- Are you content with your spouse?
- Do you serve them in humility?
- Do you build up more than you criticize your spouse?
- Do you seek their welfare over yours?
- Do you seek to understand your spouse and maintain boundaries?
- Is your first instinct to believe the best about your spouse?
- Do you acknowledge and rejoice in their good works?
- Do you value their differences?
- Do you show grace for your spouses failings?
- Are you committed to be faithful and endure to the end?
- Do you actively seek to see your spouse succeed in their dreams and faith?

Choose one area that can be improved and make every effort this week to choose love.



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WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR MARRIAGE BY APPLYING 1 COR. 13:4-7. READ CHAPTER 13 AND THEN BEGIN!

While we can never love perfectly like Christ this side of Heaven, with the power of the Holy Spirit in us, we can grow in love for God and others. Growing requires effort on our part as we yield to God and seek to imitate Him. I Corinthians 13 tells us how to love like Christ and reminds us that the greatest fruit we can bear is love. But, we don't often know how to put these into practice in real time. Here are just a few ideas on how to do your part to grow your marriage in a biblical way. If you have a spouse open to working together, this could be a great discussion starter!

1. **Long-suffering:** I think we can dwell on tiny irritations to the point that they fester and cause us to snap at one another. We need to keep short accounts with one another. Look for the reason for impatience and what it really is that bothers you and then talk it over with mutual respect.
2. **Kind:** Sometimes we are kinder to those outside our home than inside. We can't take our spouses for granted. Do something for them that they can do for themselves just because. Know their love language and do something kind and generous without wanting acknowledgment.
3. **Does not envy:** Have you ever found yourself jealous of your spouse? Their job? Health? Family? Friends? This can harbor in your heart and cause disconnect and a lack of intimacy if unaddressed. Begin by praying over them and asking God to forgive your envy. Address what you feel is lacking in your own life.
4. **Is not puffed up:** No one is better than another. Even in marriage, competition can exist where cooperation and support is commanded. Read Philippians 2:3-8 on humbling ourselves as Christ did. Take an interest in your spouse and listen to something they are excited about.
5. **Is not rude:** Rudeness seeks to demean another person in purposeful ways. It may be through talking in insulting ways, using too much sarcasm, belittling, or using crude words in communicating with one another. Instead of pointing out your spouses flaws and sarcastically teasing them about their failings, be courteous and positive. Avoid insults, eye rolls, or other purposeful rude body language. Instead, speak life and remember our own flaws.
6. **Doesn't seek its own:** Marriage is where two become one. God wants us to live in mutual affection and unity. Set aside a time to spend alone together if you tend to go your own ways. Do your interests and hobbies come before investing in your marriage? Consider their needs too.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

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7. **Not easily provoked:** Sometimes we forget that our spouses have needs that vary from our own. If they need to go to sleep and you always pick 11 pm to try to start a meaningful conversation, that may irritate them. (maybe speaking from personal experience here :)) We need to understand how they tick and not always push them to bend to our ways. Know what boundaries they need for privacy, etc. and respect them. Don't provoke them when you know something irritates them and you can avoid it.

8. **Thinks no evil:** If your spouse happens to run late, do you automatically rush to judgment and think the worst of them? God asks us to think no evil. Don't assign judgment until you have asked and sought understanding. Assigning motivations that aren't there hurts others. Guard your mind from thinking evil of your spouse.

9. **Rejoices in the truth/not iniquity:** We should never push our spouse to do something against their conscience even if you know it is good. And we don't rejoice when they fall and hold it over their heads as a weapon of retaliation. Acknowledge the good works you see them doing and seek restoration when they fall.

10. **Bears all:** We are to bear one another's burdens, including our spouse's. To have true, healthy intimacy, we can't hide things from one another. Trust can't happen without transparency. If you are holding something back, maybe it's time for a conversation. Pray for one another as often as you can!

11. **Believes all:** Again, believe the best about one another and build trust through faith. Speak well about them to others. Try bragging on them for just being who God made them to be.

12. **Hopes all:** Do you hope together? Do you look to the future and envision the kind of family you want to have? In what ways do you help and encourage one another to achieve their dreams and goals? How do you help them hang on to hope and faith in God? Share your hopes with your spouse this week and make plans to help each other grow this year.

13. **Endures all:** God's love is faithful and endures. Are you committed to the best of your ability to remain faithful and pure to your spouse? Will you tell God that you desire to keep your vows and ask Him to help you make every effort to love your spouse according to His word? Hug your spouse and tell them you are theirs for life.