

FAST Lesson 3F: A Real Man leads with a Servant's Heart – Marriage for Life

John Kain, 2009

“The idea that ‘being in love’ is the only reason for remaining married really leaves no room for marriage as a contract or promise at all. If love is the whole thing, then the promise can add nothing; and if it adds nothing, then it should not be made. **A promise must be about things that I can do, about actions: no one can promise to go on feeling a certain way.** He might as well promise never to have a headache or always to feel hungry.”

(C.S. Lewis, “Mere Christianity”)

- I. God wants our actions to have priority over and to come before our feelings (and often in spite of our feelings). In other words, “I don’t feel like it” is never an acceptable reason to not love another or to not do the right thing.
- II. We should not expect our feelings to always motivate our actions, especially when it comes to building a health marriage.
- III. In the same way, we should not expect romance to go before friendship and dating – “friendship and dating before romance” is a healthy principle to apply both before marriage and during marriage. We cultivate romance during marriage by being a good friend to our wife, and by courting her (dating her) for the rest of our life.
- IV. If they have “lost that loving feeling” (which sometimes happens in all relationships), real men take action (work at the relationship) rather than drifting further apart or blaming their spouse. They honor and pray for her, consider her interests ahead of our own, avoid hurting her with unkind words or deeds, and make amends when they fail. Older men cultivate a second deeper love with their wives by investing anew in the marriage.
- V. Married men do not cultivate private friendships with other women – in fact, care is taken to avoid otherwise “harmless” encounters with available single women so that there is not even the appearance of divided commitment or a hint of wrong intentions. An authentic married man does what it takes to reinforce his proud status as a “one woman” man. Of course, this does not inhibit our God-given call to

be compassionate to women outside of our family - we may channel such loving-kindness through our wives, relate to another women as a couple (including our wife in all aspects of the friendship).

“Love in this second sense – love as distinct from ‘being in love’ - is not merely a feeling. It is a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit; reinforced by (in Christian marriages) the grace which both partners ask, and receive, from God. **They can have this love for each other even at those moments when they do not like each other; as you love yourself even when you don’t like yourself.** They can retain this love even when each would easily, if they allowed themselves, be ‘in love’ with someone else. ‘Being in love’ first moved them to promise fidelity: this quieter love enables them to keep the promise.”
(C.S. Lewis, “Mere Christianity”)

"But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' **So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.**"
When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her."
(Mark 10:6-11)

“Husbands, in the same way be **considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect** as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.” (1 Peter 3:7)

“Marriage should be honored by all, and **the marriage bed kept pure**, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.” (Hebrews 13:4)

“But among you **there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality**, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.” (Ephesians 5:3)