
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **If you don't "love" your spouse anymore, what should you do?**

This is a very important question we are discussing because half of all marriages in America end in divorce and the most popular reason given is, "I don't love my spouse any more."

THE COMMON IDEA

When people say, "I don't love my spouse anymore," what they mean is they have no romantic feelings for their spouse anymore. The spark is gone from the marriage. There is no feeling of romance and as far as anyone can tell, there is no chance of re-kindling the flame.

What should be done in a case like this? The common solution is to divorce. When differences between couples seem irreconcilable, the only solution in the opinion of many is to divorce that spouse and find another!

But what does the Bible say? Is there a possible alternative? The Biblical answer is YES. It is wrong and unscriptural to divorce for every cause (Matthew 19:9).

BIBLE "LOVE"

The problem with many couples in America is they trust and rely upon their feelings to guide them in religious matters. It is sinful and wrong to trust in feelings to guide us in our duties.

Proverbs 16:25

²⁵ There is a way that seems right to a man,
But its end is the way of death.

Jeremiah 17:9

⁹ "The heart is deceitful above all things,
And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"

Despite these warnings in the Bible that the heart is deceitful above all things people still look to their feelings as their guide in religious matters. This is wrong.

For example, suppose a mother says to herself, "I don't feel like getting up in the middle of the night to take care of my sick baby." Would it be alright to ignore the baby's needs just because of feelings? Of course not. Again, suppose a father says, "I don't feel like working and earning a living for my family." Is it then acceptable for that man to refuse work because of his feelings? Obviously not.

In the same way, when a married person says, "I don't have any feelings for my spouse anymore," that does not relieve him, or her of their obligations.

Rather than looking to feelings and trusting them as our guide, we must look to the Bible for guidance. The Bible is the inspired word of God. It is complete and is able to direct us in any decision we are faced with (2 Timothy 3:16-17). What then is the Biblical solution for a married couple that has no "feelings" for each other anymore?

THE BIBLICAL SOLUTION

FIRST: Let every married couple realize they have made a vow before God and before men to "love, honor and cherish" their spouse "until death we do part."

This vow was voluntary. No one forced them to take such a vow. In fact, in many cases there were people pleading that the couple not make the vow, but they ignored these warnings and made them anyway. Once the vow has been made, it is sinful for a man, or woman to break that vow!

Proverbs 20:25

²⁵ It is a snare for a man to devote rashly something as holy,
And afterward to reconsider his vows.

SECOND: Let us all understand Bible love is not a "feeling."

This is the concept of Western civilization. We have been indoctrinated by Hollywood that marital love is a romantic love that can be felt and when that "feeling" disappears the marriage is not worth saving.

But Bible love is not a feeling. Bible love is commanded.

Ephesians 5:25

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Listen carefully, men are commanded to love their wives. Feelings, however, cannot be commanded. For example, you cannot command someone to feel happy. You cannot command someone to feel sad. Neither can you command someone to feel romantic toward their spouse. Bible love, then, is not a feeling.

Love is commanded and something that is commanded can be obeyed, or disobeyed. A person chooses intellectually whether to obey, or not. Furthermore, a command can be obeyed whether a person feels like it, or not! Mothers are commanded to care for their babies (1 Timothy 5:14) and they must do this whether they feel like it, or not. Fathers are commanded to work and earn a living for their families (2 Thessalonians 3:10) and they must do this whether they feel like it, or not. Likewise, husbands are commanded to love their wives (Ephesians 5:25) and wives are commanded to reverence their husbands (Ephesians 5:33) and they must do this whether they feel like it, or not.

Bible love, then, is not a feeling, it is a command. To love someone means to treat them kindly and considerately! It is an action, not a feeling. He may not feel romantic toward his wife and no one can command him to feel good about her, but he can treat her kindly and considerately; in fact he is commanded to do this! This is what he vowed he would do when he married her!

Since Bible love is an action, not a feeling, a wife is commanded to love and reverence her husband. She may not feel romantic toward him, but she can treat him with respect and reverence; and in fact she is commanded to do this! This is what she vowed she would do when she married him!

Since Bible love is an action, not a feeling, we voluntarily choose whether to obey this command, or not. We choose either to treat someone kindly and considerately, or else we choose to treat them degradingly, but we can blame no one but ourselves if we decide not to love our spouse.

If you will take time to read 1 Corinthians 13 you will find that 15 verbs are used to describe Biblical love. Fifteen verbs! Verbs describe action. God gave us 15 rules and guidelines on how to treat someone in a kind, considerate fashion.

SUMMARY

So then, what may we conclude from all this? If you don't feel good toward your spouse any longer, what should you do? The Bible is saying that the wife must treat her husband with respect and reverence anyway, because that's exactly what she vowed she would do "until in death we do part." The husband must treat his wife kindly and considerately, whether he feels like it, or not, because that's exactly what he vowed he would do "until in death we do part."

Think about this for a moment. If the husband began to treat his wife kindly and considerately, and the wife began to treat her husband with respect and reverence, wouldn't they eventually start feeling romantic toward one another again? It would be very difficult to imagine a man and wife living in the same house, who are treating one another kindly and affectionately without romantic feelings eventually developing.

Every couple desires romance and the feelings that come with it. The only way to get those desired feelings is to begin loving one another the way God has directed in His word. If couples would realize Biblical love involves actions, not feelings and if they would begin treating one another kindly and considerately, eventually they would develop the feelings they wished they had.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on *Bible Talk*.