



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



Image Source: Volkswagen

A Celebration of True Love

Some good things get better with time — like the iconic Volkswagen Beetle and my parents' marriage.

Volkswagen began production of the bug-eyed Beetle in 1945. The vehicle's unique shape, size and efficiency made it a practical and popular choice for many drivers. Its popularity grew with each passing year. At the end of its 33-year first-generation production run, Volkswagen had sold 21.5 million of the cars. Some might call it "Bug" at first sight. But the love enthusiasts claim for the Volkswagen Beetle can't compare to that which I've seen my parents demonstrate in more than 35 years of marriage.

This month my parents will celebrate their anniversary. In a world which struggles to define love, their marriage relationship has portrayed 10 love traits worth celebrating.

Staying I Do

First, their marriage has taught me the importance of commitment. According to the Bible, marriage is between one man and one woman, for life. My parents' relationship began with a choice, but each day their marriage continues through a series of intentional choices. These

choices have sustained their relationship for these many years.

A Little Kindness Goes a Long Way

Next, their marriage has taught me the importance of kindness. Life is full of challenges and there are plenty of things to make us discouraged. Painful moments. Heartbreak. Loss. Injustice. Health concerns. Physical and emotional weakness. Fear. Financial burdens. Kindness is the oil which keeps the gears rotating smoothly. I've seen gentle words and small acts of deliberate good will go a long way.

Love That Lasts, Laughs

A sense of humor is another essential to a healthy marriage. Like kindness, humor can breathe fresh air into an otherwise-tense situation. It creates an atmosphere where both spouses are free to relax. I think back fondly upon times when our whole family laughed hysterically to the point of tears over a humorous moment Dad shared from his day. In those moments I learned laughter really is like medicine. (Plus, it's good for your blood pressure.)

Resolve to Work Through Conflict

For every effort to build a relationship up, there are countless forces, visible and invisible, which are bent on tearing it down. Conflict happens because marriage is between two different and imperfect human beings. Sometimes there are misunderstandings, unmet expectations and other disappointments. Sometimes conflict is simply on account of each person's different personality or life experiences. From observation I've learned conflict is not an enemy, but a bridge — and opportunity — to greater understanding and a deeper relationship. I've observed how an initial commitment by both spouses in the relationship equips them to work through conflict together. *(Continued next page)*

Love Without Limits

Years of marriage-watching have also taught me the enduring importance of unconditional love. It's easy for most people to love because. That bases the other person's value on how many boxes they check off in our wish list, and how often they check those boxes. In a committed marriage, both partners choose to love in spite of the other person's imperfections, without limitations.

Give . . . Like a Lover

Someone once said, "You can give without loving, but you can't love without giving." A lasting marriage is marked by love-driven generosity, not by how much each partner can take from the other. This kind of generosity doesn't give merely for the sake of giving. It gives intentionally. Sacrificially. Cheerfully. Freely. With no strings attached and expecting nothing in return. I've learned when each individual in a marriage lovingly gives to meet the needs of the other, the relationship thrives.

Forget About "Me"

Another relationship lesson I've learned is the power of selflessness. Someone said, "When a man and woman marry, they become one. The trouble starts when they try to decide which one." I remember my mother often taking care of cleaning and cooking at home so my dad could study for his sermons or continue his education. Whenever my father had to travel for work, Mom kept the house spotless in his absence (and still does). She was his right arm and biggest cheerleader during his years as a pastor. Sometimes Dad sacrificed his plans and schedule to assist her with different projects around the house. He didn't do it because he had to, but because he wanted to. This taught me true love doesn't keep score. A successful marriage works because each partner has chosen to put the needs of the other above their own.

Trust Me

Our hookup culture has devalued relationships. With hundreds of options, why settle for just one person? Why even build a committed relationship at all? Loyalty to one person is becoming increasingly rare. That's why it's so attractive when we see it. My parents have often said if they had to do it over again, they would still be married to the same person. Their loyalty to one another speaks volumes to their ability to trust one another. Their trust, in turn, provides security in their relationship.

Keep the Peace

Peace is the cumulative benefit of each of the above qualities. Thanks to my parents' character, the Edwards home is a relatively quiet place (except when the clothes dryer, vacuum cleaner or lawn mower are running or the piano is being played). You can't put a price tag on the absence of constant conflict in a home. King Solomon spoke from personal experience when he wrote, "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." (Proverbs 21:9) This king's palace would have made an oil sheikh envious. But his house was all but peaceful. His 700 wives and 300 concubines needed him until he eventually surrendered his convictions. Which leads me to my final point. . . .

Build on a Solid Faith Foundation

My parents would credit their long and happy marriage to their shared faith in Jesus Christ. He has been the Glue that has kept their relationship intact through the years. His Word is the Arbiter of every disagreement, the Catalyst for every act of service. Having Christ in common has been to their marriage what a strong layer of bedrock is to the foundation of a building. It has been an unshakeable foundation for the family they have built together.

Mom and Dad would be the first to tell you their marriage isn't perfect. No relationship is. But they are both committed to working at it until it becomes the best it can be this side of Heaven. And that is why they succeed.

Perhaps you are married. Which of these lessons resonates most with you? Make a list of three ways you can practice it this week. Was there a trait we didn't list that should have been included? Please let us know by email or in the comments on our website. If you are not married but hope to be, pray that God would prepare you to live out these traits in your future marriage.

Happy anniversary, Mom and Dad! Thank you for your inspiring testimony of faithfulness and fun. Best wishes for many more years!

- Cam Edwards

