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love always

365 DAILY
DEVOTIONS
FOR COUPLES

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love always

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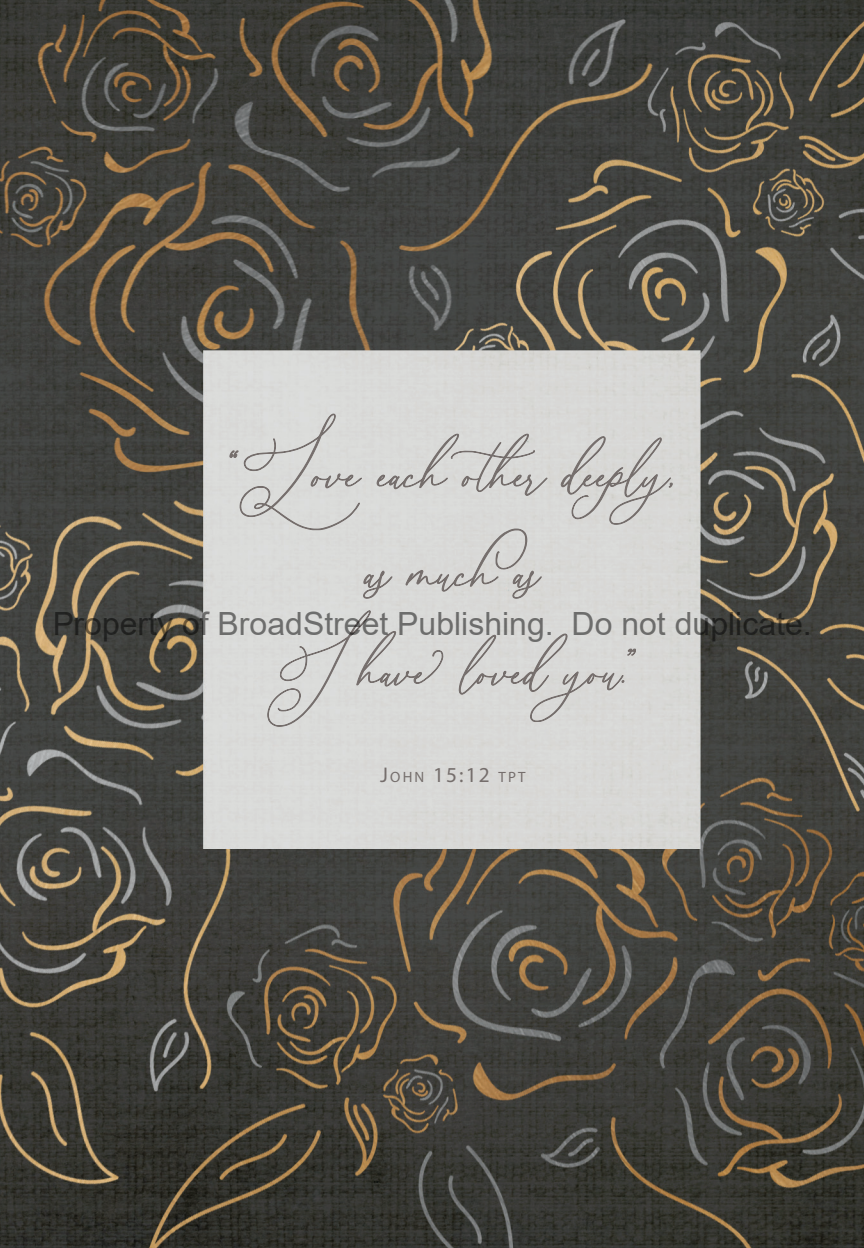
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23 24 25 26 27 28 29 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



“Love each other deeply,

as much as

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I have loved you.”

JOHN 15:12 TPT



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INTRODUCTION

Love. According to 1 Corinthians 13:7, “It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” *Always.* There’s a word that we would rather ignore. Is it even possible to always choose love?

The first days or weeks of marriage might feel easy; loving your spouse is as natural as breathing. But if you’ve been married for longer than a month, you’ve likely run into times when choosing love requires effort—sometimes a *lot* of effort. What would it look like to always protect each other? How can you trust when trust has been broken? Is there hope for a relationship that feels like a constant struggle? What can you do to persevere in the moments you want to yell, cry, throw things, run away, or do all of the above?

Commit your marriage to God. Spend time in his presence together. Keep short accounts. Say sorry. Forgive quickly. Use this devotional as a tool strengthen your marriage. It will encourage you to dive into God’s Word, seek his wisdom, ask for help, and lean into his love. You cannot always choose love in your own strength, but everything is possible with God, and God is love. So, you can love because he loves you—always.



JANUARY

Be completely humble and gentle;
be patient, bearing with one another
in love. Make every effort to keep

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the unity of the Spirit through
the bond of peace.

EPHESIANS 4:2-3 NIV

JANUARY 1

POSSIBLE

Looking at them, Jesus said, "With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

MARK 10:27 NASB

How often do we tell God our deepest desires? As children, we have no problem praying for a ballgame win or a new baby brother, but as adults, we tend to lose the art of entrusting our dreams to the Lord. Maybe we keep a mental list of the times he hasn't answered our prayers the way we wanted, or we might think he has better things to do. Either way, we have to reawaken the inner child who longs to open up to the Lord and trust him in all things.

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The Bible is clear that prayer is important in our spiritual lives. One, we need to be reminded that God can do anything. Two, we need to exercise our vulnerability and humility. We need to verbally make our petitions known to God and verbally submit to his plan, whatever it is, just like Jesus did in the garden of Gethsemane. God's power is unsearchable. He can, and does, work miracles for his kingdom. Don't be afraid to ask him what you've been afraid to think about. Trust that he will answer you in the best way.

Lord, we praise you for your great power. You created the world with your words; you can do anything. Remind us that we can trust you with our requests in faith. You work everything together for good.

JANUARY 2

MUNDANE MATTERS

I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return.

PHILIPPIANS 1:10 NLT

Most people struggle with the mundane tasks of everyday life. Do they really matter? What eternal weight do they carry? Wouldn't our precious time and effort be better spent on more important things? As holy as that sounds, God has given us simple tasks because they can teach us about him. For instance, God is patient. He also esteems the lowly, prioritizes servanthood and care of others, honesty, and humility.

Today, if you are doing your taxes, changing dirty diapers, heading to a mediocre job, washing dishes, or caught up in thankless responsibilities, remember how Jesus also paid taxes, washed feet, worked as a carpenter, and lived a regular life pure and blameless. Do not become dismayed. These trite tasks matter too, and your Father sees you.

Oh God, sometimes it's hard to keep blameless and pure in our daily duties! Please encourage us and remind us to encourage each other too. Thank you for the example of your life.

JANUARY 3

FIRST

*We love,
because He first loved us.*

1 JOHN 4:19 NKJV

A good relationship is not made of two people who each give fifty percent. A good relationship is made of two people who are willing to give all when their partner gives nothing, to love their partner first before receiving love or even civility. Some days, we have to give our all. Other days, we are in a spiritual rut, and our spouses are the ones going the extra mile while we refuse to or can't lift our feet.

This is the precedent God set; he loved us before we loved him. A love like this is a true marker of commitment. It shows the other person that we are there for them even when they are at their worst, and we won't abandon them. The prophet Hosea was made to demonstrate this to an adulterous wife who, for all we know, never returned the love he poured over her year after year. We have a high standard to live up to.

Gracious Lord in heaven, you have planted in us the seed of love to grow, flourish, and give you glory. Teach us to show love to those who show us none and to be the one who loves first.

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JANUARY 4

MADE NEW

*If anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation;
the old things passed away;
behold, new things have come.*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 NASB

We need eyes to see situations and people the way God does. We are not defined by our pasts, and we have no right to define someone else by theirs either. Christ forgave even the worst people when they showed a desire to change. Murderers, adulterers, and thieves clamored for him to make them new!

On a smaller, more personal note, we can't hold the past sins of a spouse against them if they are sorry and working to change. Arguments that begin with "You always" or "You never" don't lead to a good place. Dragging up offenses of the past when dealing with the present is not good game play. When dealing with us, God deals with the current us. He doesn't define us by our past offenses. His forgiveness is final. Let's choose to be grateful and learn from his example.

Lord, this is a new year and a new day. Thank you for not holding our past mistakes against us but always leading us onward and upward. Please teach us to have the same forgiveness and patience with each other.

JANUARY 5

COURAGE AND FAITH

We are not like those who turn away from God to their own destruction. We are the faithful ones, whose souls will be saved.

HEBREWS 10:39 NLT

The Lord wants us to courageously live like Christ in a world that doesn't respect him or his way of doing things. How we speak, act, and make decisions will be confusing to a population rooted in self-interest and temporary living. Even our marriages look different because they exist to serve him rather than ourselves.

It won't always be easy to swim against the current of this culture, but our faith in the Lord provides us the courage and assurance we need to stay strong and continue. Take the path less trodden, read his Word to light your way, and lean on your spouse when times get hard. Marriage provides a wonderful partnership to help us along the way.

Father God, we are your faithful ones. At times we stumble, and we're not always faithful, but our faith is always in you. We know we can rely on you, and that confidence influences every aspect of our lives. Thank you for calling us your children and providing us a way.

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JANUARY 6

NEWLY MARRIED

"When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken."

DEUTERONOMY 24:5 NKJV

Isn't this an incredible mandate God gave the Israelites? Clearly, God takes marriage seriously, and he knows how important a solid foundation is. Although this Old Testament law is not as applicable in modern society, the principle behind it can still be respected.

While enjoying wedded bliss, build those strong foundations before jumping back into normal life. No matter how far along in our marriage journey we are, let's take time to enjoy each other's company and always spend focused time within each other's love and happiness.

Heavenly Father, we are grateful for our marriage that uses you as its foundation and love as its pillars. Please remind us to prioritize our time together and bring happiness to each other.

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JANUARY 7

GOD'S SUPPLY

*My God will supply all your needs
according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:19 NASB

Have you ever been at the end of your rope and God miraculously came through for you? When you have a need and you don't know how to fill it, where do you turn to first? Do you worry? Work harder? Pray?

God has riches beyond our wildest imagination. God lacks nothing, and he wants to share everything with us. More than paying a bill or meeting a deadline, however, God cares about your heart and your faith. He wants you to trust him in moments of need as well as moments of plenty. Yes, we ought to work hard and take responsibility for our lives, but the first thing we should do is call out to our loving, caring, generous Father and ask him for his help and supply.

Dear God, we come to you with our needs today before we try to fill them ourselves. Please supply us with everything we require. Above money, food, answers, or relationships, we pray you would give us faith, courage, love, and peace. We know situations will work out for the best when we trust you.

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JANUARY 8

LIVING IN FREEDOM

Are you bound to a wife?

Do not seek to be free.

Are you free from a wife?

Do not seek a wife.

1 CORINTHIANS 7:27 ESV

Being single and being married both have their blessings. One is not greater than the other, for different ways to serve the Lord are possible with both, and different blessings are associated with each circumstance. Rather than bemoaning what someone else has been called to, try looking at all the Lord has given you in this season and consider how you may use it for his glory.

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As believers, we have a responsibility to not sin in our circumstances whether we are married or not. Let's honor the Lord and our spouses by staying faithful to marriage in word, deed, and especially our thoughts.

Lord, thank you for the different seasons we find ourselves in throughout life. Each of them is an opportunity to love you more and serve you better. Please show us how we can serve you now.

JANUARY 9

SLEEP WELL

*It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest,
eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives to his beloved sleep.*

PSALM 127:2 ESV

What are your first feelings when you wake up? How about when you lie down to sleep? Is anxiety eating away at you? You are God's child; your birthright is peace, joy, and eternal security with your Father. Don't let the worries of the world steal your birthright.

Rising early, working hard, and being responsible is very different from striving vainly in our own strength. We can trust God to take care of us while still devoting ourselves to our duties and maintaining a good work ethic. The question is, do you truly trust that God is going to take care of you? If you do, sleep well. He has it under control.

Heavenly Father, we want our first thoughts of the day to be of you and our first feelings to be peaceful. Teach us the balance between working diligently and trusting you. Bless your children's sleep, Lord.

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INVESTMENTS

*May mercy, peace, and love
be multiplied to you.*

JUDE 1:2 NASB

If you are familiar with compound interest, then you know that it is the multiplied return of an investment. Our life in Christ also has a return on our investments, and its compounding profits are mercy, peace, and love.

If we invest in the world, we will reap its flavorless fruit. If we invest in our marriage, it will be stronger and more fulfilling. If we invest in our kids, they will have a more solid foundation as adults. If we invest in God and in understanding his Word, we will reap his rewards, which will be greatly multiplied like any good compound interest. Invest in what matters, not in what diminishes the value of your life. The return is well worth the venture.

There is no better investment we could make than investing our hearts in you, dear Father. Please multiply your mercy, peace, and love back to us and make the most of our lives which we willingly offer to you.

TRANSPARENCY

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

PSALM 139:23 NLT

Even been embarrassed about something you did? Did you hide it because you were scared of the consequences? Maybe you hide things from your spouse because you don't know how they will react. Do you struggle to be transparent about your struggles?

We can bring our sins and fears to God, and they won't overwhelm or surprise him. In fact, he already knows all about them and still loves us unconditionally. He never gives up on us, and he doesn't want us to give up either. He knows the best way to conquer the sin and darkness in our life is to expose it. It's scary, uncomfortable, and humiliating, but darkness is terrified of the light. Bring your anxious thoughts, your hidden sins, the darkness in your heart, your secret struggles, and lay them at the foot of the cross. If they creep back, lay them down again. Ask God and your spouse for help. Whatever you do, live in the light.

Lord, today we will be honest with you, and we will be honest with each other. We want to walk in the light, but we can't do it alone. Search us, dear God.

ALL WE ARE

*Love the LORD your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

DEUTERONOMY 6:5 NIV

The Lord has never been interested in a transactional relationship with his people. He has no desire to be one of our hobbies. God, our Creator and salvation, deserves our full attention and passion. Loving our spouses can help us understand the way that God wants us to love him. We love our spouses with affectionate hearts, with our bodies in acts of service and intimacy, and we love them in spirit by encouraging and investing in them.

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The Lord asks that our every facet be devoted to him. Our relationship with him should be lively. Much like a marriage, this relationship requires effort. It demands intentionality, honesty, and humility. To love God, and to love a spouse, means loving them with all that we are emotionally, spiritually, and physically.

Lord, awaken our souls to a new depth of relationship with you and with each other. Show us where we lack a fullness of passion and have become apathetic and complacent. We praise you for your bottomless ocean of love, joy, and creativity that allows us to engage our whole selves in relationship with you and each other.

LOVE MANDATE

*"This is My commandment,
that you love one another,
just as I have loved you."*

JOHN 15:12 NASB

God is love, and he commands us to love like he loves us. Love is not just something we do. It is who we are as children of the God who is love. A husband and wife who love and serve each other are a testimony of what love is supposed to look like.

Love and marriage are not about what we can get; they are about what we can give. Love means giving ourselves; our time, energy, resources, and space. Just as God gave so much of himself for us, including his life. Love is not optional for a child of God; his commandment is that we love each other as he has loved us.

Lord, thank you for your example of love. We pray that our marriage can be a testimony of your goodness as we learn to treat each other with love as well.

FAITHFULNESS AND COMPASSION

*Be gracious to me, God, according to Your faithfulness;
According to the greatness of Your compassion,
wipe out my wrongdoings.*

PSALM 51:1 NASB

Often when we strive for faithfulness, we do it with mumbling and discontent. We will stay married, but not happily. We will stay at our job, but not with a good attitude. The heart of God is in contrast to this, abounding in faithfulness rooted in compassion. He is not faithful to us because he has to be. Out of compassion for our poor souls, he is willing to "wipe out" our wrongdoings. He is not chained to us; he binds himself to people he knows will run away time and time again.

Despite this, he chooses to love anyway. He chooses to invest in us and be gracious to us. This is the image of true Christian marriage: the compassionate, covenant relationship between God and the church. If we want this in our marriage, we will pray for hearts of faithfulness rooted in compassion as well as loyalty.

God, give us hearts of compassion and commitment this day. Make us people of open hearts who are willing to love when unloved and willing to stay true when abandoned.

ADULTERY AND IDOLATRY

*"You shall obey the voice of the LORD your God,
and observe His commandments and His statutes
which I command you today."*

DEUTERONOMY 27:10 NKJV

In the Bible, the relationship between God and his people is often compared to a marriage, and spiritual idolatry is equated with marital infidelity. The bond we have with the Lord is not something to be taken lightly. Sin is a violation of our union with God just as infidelity is a violation of our marriage promise to forsake all others. Our spirits belong to the Lord when we ask him to save us. When we dethrone God in our lives to replace him with another authority, we commit spiritual adultery.

Jesus came to atone for that spiritual adultery, which, as sinful humans, we can't fully put to death until we are glorified. When we fall into spiritual adultery, we feel a righteous shame, but after asking for forgiveness, we feel a deep gratitude for the God who gave us the ability to be forgiven.

Father, please use our marriage to teach us about your desire for our hearts. Help us understand the similarity between adultery and idolatry, and let it move us to be more dedicated to a faithful relationship with you and each other. Thank you for sending Jesus so our shortcomings could be used to further your glory.

JANUARY 16

GENUINE LOVE

*Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil;
hold fast to what is good.*

ROMANS 12:9 ESV

The devil works hard to make sin seem attractive, but if we really understood how deeply hurtful it is to our loving God, we would abhor it. People everywhere try to soft-peddle their sin to appease their guilt, but the truth is that whatever is not for God is against God. Scripture tells us to “hold fast” to what is good because it is not easy. It takes intentionality and dedication.

Genuine love for the Lord and for others motivates us to do what is good and refuse what is evil. We can't fake love; either it will be genuine, or it will be exposed as forced. To genuinely love God, we have to genuinely know God because how can we love someone we don't know? Hold fast to what is good, hold tightly to spending time with God, and evil will become more and more abhorrent to you.

We genuinely love you, Lord, and we want to know you more. When we think of how it hurts your heart to watch your children flirt with evil, it horrifies us. We never want to do that! Please keep us far from evil.

PRAYERFUL APPROACH

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 NKJV

Christian marriage is not devoid of problems, but the difference is we can take issues to Christ in prayer and find help. Instead of feeling anxious and overwhelmed, believers may humbly and gratefully approach God with whatever is on their minds.

Mature prayer includes thanking God for all he has done in addition to asking for his help. We believers don't have problem free lives and marriages, but we do have the greatest helper on our team ready to lead us through any obstacle. Addressing problems with real, lasting answers begins with prayer because all true wisdom comes from God. Reliance on Christ creates contentment and produces peace in marriage as well as our other relationships.

Lord, sometimes life throws a lot at us, and we don't know how to deal with it. Sometimes our marriage goes through tough times, and we get anxious. We ask, Father, that you guard our hearts and minds against anxiety, give us peace, and strengthen our marriage.

JANUARY 18

THE GREATEST LOVE

*"Greater love has no one than this,
than to lay down one's life for his friends."*

JOHN 15:13 NKJV

Christ loved and cherished the church, his bride, so dearly that he gave up his life for her. In doing so, he offered the greatest example of love: the innocent willingly sacrificing themselves for the guilty.

Do you love your spouse? Your family? Your friends? Perhaps there is no crucifixion in your future, but Christ made it clear that love is active and not passive. Love is a lifestyle and not feelings or empty words. Every day Jesus served those he met. He washed feet, fed the hungry, healed the hurting, and taught those who were desperate to understand more. Ultimately, he gave himself over to death on our behalf, but he gave up his own life each and every day for the sake of those he loved. That is true, great, unconditional love.

King Jesus, we are in awe of the love you have shown us. Amazingly, you have put this same love in us to pour out on other people. When we're feeling tired or selfish, remind us of your great love and flood our hearts again.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD

Do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord.

Remember the great reward it brings you!

*Patient endurance is what you need now,
so that you will continue to do God's will.*

Then you will receive all that he has promised.

HEBREWS 10:35-36 NLT

It's tempting to rely on our abilities and resources rather than trust the Lord and depend on his provisions, but we can't serve two masters. It is either us or God. Scripture constantly reminds us to place our trust in the Lord because it turns out much better for us if we do. We can keep pressing on against all odds because we have confidence in God's ability and intention to provide for us.

Let's face today's challenges with courage and confidence. It may take longer than feels comfortable for things to turn around, but with patience and endurance, we will experience the rewards God has promised for those who persevere.

Oh God, sometimes it feels like things will never change. Sometimes it seems there is no way through. In those moments, remind us how great you are and how much you care.