



The Best Gift Requires Work

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One of the greatest gifts parents can give to their children is a secure, stable home. Children who are reared in positive, loving, two parent homes are often freed from the insecurities and sense of loss that face children whose parents have separated or never married.

Self-centered adults sometimes allow their homes to fall apart by walking out of a marriage because they aren't happy or because some new flame comes along that make them feel better.

Parents who give priority to their children do not split up just because the "romantic" feeling dies in their marriage. Parents who really love their children base their marriage on commitment, not feelings.

If, when love dies in a marriage, the husband and wife would treat each other as they would a new flame, they might find that their own fire has been rekindled. Feelings always follow behavior. When two spouses treat each other like dirt, they feel like dirt toward each other. On the other hand, when two persons who do not deeply love each other begin to treat each other as if they did, real love is not far behind.

One of the greatest problems facing our nation is that people base their actions on what feels good at the moment. Just because two persons are married doesn't mean that they won't feel sexual attraction toward other persons. Body chemistry, if left unchecked, is no respecter of marriage vows.

Even the Bible acknowledges that *"stolen water is sweet"* (Proverbs 9:17). Persons who have allowed the fire of their marriage to cool may discover new emotional highs in an affair or a new marriage. For a short time, the sex is great and the new partner seems to have no defects. Soon, however, the fire cools down and the defects become apparent. Then the relationship usually breaks up because one or both of the partners no longer has the same feelings.

The reason that some people bounce from marriage to marriage is that they focus on how they feel instead of their commitment. The only way any relationship can last is if both partners treat each other lovingly regardless of how they feel.

For persons who are in a marriage where there is abuse or devastating addictions, getting out may be the only solution. However, for couples whose love has merely died, the most loving thing is to stay together and act like a loving couple regardless of the feelings. Not only will the children gain a secure childhood, but also as the spouses treat each other right, love is often rekindled.

Marriages die when husbands and wives try to draw happiness and security from each other, but it thrives when they give love and security to each other. Jesus said, *"Give, and it will be given to you"* (Luke 6:38). By giving to each other, both marriage partners receive what they seek.

The best gift we can give our children is a loving, stable home. It won't happen by accident; it requires time, effort and commitment. True love grows when people do what is right and best even when they don't feel like it.

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