

# COUPLES RETREAT

SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

Take **ACT**ion at Couples Retreat

## Building Fulfillment in the Middle Years

The time between the first five years of marriage until the physical and hormonal changes of aging set in can be considered the “middle years.” These are often hectic years with children in the home, job pressures and many other activities that drain a couple’s energy supply, including energy for sexual desire and responsiveness. This is a time to determine priorities.

To keep passion alive during this time, it’s vital that couples are intentional about staying connected and planning for intimate times together. This may be the stage of your marriage when scheduling becomes necessary. Couples who grow in passion during these years are those who make mutual decisions regarding their sexual times together rather than have sex by duty or demand. Demand, whether subtle or overt, stifles sexual desire. “Duty sex” kills passion for both spouses over time.

To keep passion alive through all stages of marriage, we encourage couples to practice our “Formula for Intimacy” (see below). Whether couples are in the early adjustment years of marriage or in those challenging middle years, the passion of a relationship can be savored or rekindled. Couples will be able to keep the spark alive by taking time for each other — time to talk, to have fun and to kiss. Daily passionate kissing keeps the pilot light on so the flames can easily be turned up. If you take time and make the commitment to work toward building deeper passion based on true intimacy, your marriage will grow and glow with greater vibrancy over your lifetime.

(continued on page 2)

## What Cherishing Your Spouse Really Means



One of the easiest ways to discover the difference between loving and cherishing is to compare the famous biblical chapter on love (1 Corinthians 13) with the Song of Solomon, a book devoted to cherishing. Consider the following:

**Love** is about being gracious and altruistic. “Love is patient and kind” (1 Corinthians 13:4).

**Cherish** is about being enthusiastic and enthralled. “How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your oils than any spice” (Song of Solomon 4:10).

**Love** tends to be quiet and understated. “Love does not envy or boast” (1 Corinthians 13:4).

**Cherish** boasts boldly and loudly. “My beloved is radiant and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand” (Song of Solomon 5:10).

(continued on page 2)

## Building Fulfillment in the Middle Years

(continued from page 1)

### Formula for Intimacy

- *Connect 15 minutes a day*  
Emotionally: Look into each other's eyes; share a positive thought, feeling or affirmation of the other.  
Spiritually: Share an inspirational reading and prayer.  
Physically: Hug for 20 seconds; kiss passionately for 5 to 30 seconds without leading to sex.
- *One evening a week*  
Walk, date, caress with no demands.
- *One day a quarter*  
Make time for special fun and playing together without distractions; lead and teach enjoyable touch.
- *One weekend a year*  
Spend time alone together away or at home with no distractions.

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## A Message From Your Directors

Couples Retreat is almost here and we couldn't be more excited! Although registration is closed, Rita and I want to thank our COGOP family for your overwhelming response. This year's retreat will feature some great workshop presenters. Look for our next newsletter for an introduction to our workshops and presenters. Thank you in advance for your prayers and support.

## What Cherishing Your Spouse Really Means

(continued from page 1)

**Love** thinks about others with selflessness. "[Love] is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way" (1 Corinthians 13:4-5).

**Cherish** thinks about its beloved with praise. "Your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely" (Song of Solomon 2:14).

**Love** doesn't want the worst for someone. "[Love] does not rejoice at wrongdoing" (1 Corinthians 13:6).

**Cherish** celebrates the best in someone. "Behold, you are beautiful, my love; behold, you are beautiful" (Song of Solomon 1:15).

**Love** puts up with a lot. "[Love] hopes all things, endures all things". (1 Corinthians 13:7).

**Cherish** enjoys a lot. "His mouth is most sweet, and he is altogether desirable". (Song of Solomon 5:16).

Love and cherish complement each other. Without the bedrock force of love, cherishing won't last. It'll be a sentimental ideal that is lost in the real world. Without cherishing, love feels like a duty more than a delight. I don't want my wife to think I'm with her only because God says I'm not allowed to leave; I want her to think my greatest delight is sharing life with her.

Men, our wives want more than simply to be loved. They want to hear, "You have captivated my heart, my sister, my bride; you have captivated my heart with one glance of your eyes" (Song of Solomon 4:9).

And wives, your husbands want more than to be tolerated. They want to hear, "As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men" (Song of Solomon 2:3).

Dave Wilson, co-founder of Kensington Community Church, asked seven male leaders, "How many of you have a wife who loves you?" and every man raised his hand to signify yes. He then asked, "How many of you have a wife who likes you?" and every hand went down.

Every husband felt loved. None felt cherished.

From an article by Gary Thomas at  
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