

## Love, Honor and Cherish

Their wedding day is usually a time when a bride and groom look forward to their future life with great anticipation and excitement. It is, however, also a time to recognize the important challenge of their future – that challenge is to take two individual lives and join them into a strong, united couple. A traditional part of the marriage vows is a promise to **love, honor, and cherish** each other. Making a conscious choice to put these vows into practice on a daily basis will help you make the necessary transition for a successful union. You can walk the path to a long, happy marriage by intentionally implementing the following steps.

**Love:** Loving your partner means protecting him/her from harm. This includes harm from the outside (friends, family) or inside (anger, resentment). It is making sure your partner feels safe and secure in the relationship. It means you never intentionally hurt your partner by punishing, making judgments, using demeaning words or tone, or using anger as a weapon. Loving your partner also means altering any behavior that is annoying or hurtful. It means you do not make unreasonable demands of your partner. If you make a request and the answer is no, the loving response is to withdraw the request without anger or recrimination.

**Honor:** Honoring your partner means you are honest at all times and in all things. This means you let your partner know how and what you are feeling, even if it is not pleasant. It means you **do not** avoid an issue because it is disagreeable. Honor means telling your partner about your past, your fears, and your weaknesses, as well as your goals, your dreams, and your needs. Honor involves letting your partner know what is happening in your daily life. Providing your partner with information about where you are and what you are doing, especially when it affects him/her, is part of honoring the marriage. Honor requires you to be clear with your partner about your feelings, thoughts, likes, dislikes, needs, and plans for the future at all times. Anything less is unfair to your partner and your commitment.

**Cherish:** When you cherish your partner, you let him/her know every day that you care and are glad to have him/her in your life. You do not take your partner for granted; you demonstrate admiration and respect for his/her presence in your life. This means you make every effort to meet your partner's needs. One of the first thoughts you should have each day is, "How will I make my partner feel loved today?" You constantly evaluate your performance in the marriage from your partner's viewpoint. If your partner feels cherished he/she will be a responsive, loving mate.

If you follow these guidelines willingly, and with a sense of gratitude, you will have a happy and fulfilling marriage.

