

# *Still Best Friends*

“STILL BEST FRIENDS!” wrote my friend on her Facebook page. Lisa and her husband were celebrating their silver wedding anniversary.

My cursor hovered over the “Like” button. Then I changed my mind and clicked on the “Message” tab. “Congratulations!” I typed. “That’s amazing! If you have a moment, I’d love to hear what’s kept your friendship so vibrant and alive.”

“Good question!” wrote Lisa. “Let me think . . . Lots of love, having a laugh together, being kind to each other, not saying everything we think, forgiving each other, learning to appreciate our differences, trying to solve our problems respectfully . . .”

As we messaged back and forth, we noticed that many of the secrets of their friendship were similar to the fruits of the Spirit: being loving, joyful, kind, self-controlled, patient, and peace-loving.

Friendship brings us together at the beginning of a relationship. It helps us to be more resilient when we face the different challenges of life. And it warms our hearts with happy memories when we grow older and look back on years of companionship. When we’re married to our best friend, it reassures our children, it inspires young people to choose marriage, and it blesses our communities.



## *How do you nurture the friendship “fruits” in your marriage?*

Here are some ideas for nurturing the friendship “fruits” in your marriage.

### **PRAYER**

- Pray that the Holy Spirit will grow the fruit of God’s love in your life so that it can infuse and transform the friendship in your marriage.

### **LOVE**

- You are the best channel God has for expressing His love to your spouse. Which aspects of God’s love are flowing through your life into theirs?
- Discover each other’s “love languages” so that your love can be more effective. You can take a free quiz at: [5lovelanguages.com](http://5lovelanguages.com).
- Try the free “7 Days of Love” program ([thedatingdivas.com](http://thedatingdivas.com)) to help you discover how your spouse prefers to be loved. The Dating Divas website is run by Christians who have loaded it with beautiful and inexpensive materials to nurture the adventure and friendship in your marriage.
- Ask yourself: What’s the most loving thing I can do for my spouse today?

### **JOY**

- List some of the things that have brought you joy as a couple. Which ones can you do more of in this season of your marriage?
- Joy is a deeper sense of happiness that comes through your gratitude for each other. Make a list of at least 20 things you appreciate about your spouse. Find a quiet and cozy time to read them aloud.

- Keep looking for fun and creative ways to delight each other.
- At the end of your day, share your happiest moments together and thank God for them (Philippians 4:4).
- Ask yourself: What do I do that makes my spouse’s heart sing with joy? How can I do that more often?

### **PEACE**

- Make at least one room in your home a haven of peace and tranquility where you can both relax. Use soft lighting or candles, play soft worship music, scatter some pillows and throws, stack inspiring books, and create a collection of beautiful natural objects that fill you with wonder (Philippians 4:6, 7).
- Find ways to relax together: go for a walk, have a warm bath, read, share a hobby, work in your garden, pray for each other, etc.
- Ask yourself: What can I do to help my spouse relax and let go of their stresses and concerns? What can I do to reduce the level of conflict and stress in our marriage? See Romans 12:16.



*“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”*

*Galatians 5:22, 23*

#### **PATIENCE**

- Paul listed “patience” as the first quality of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4. Patience encourages us to slow our pace to match the other person so that they feel safe and comfortable. Realize that patience shows respect and care for the other person.
- What changes could you make to your schedule and planning so that you have more unhurried time for each other?
- Ask yourself: When am I most likely to be impatient with my spouse? How can I give them the gift of my patience, let go of my need to rush, and lovingly put their needs ahead of mine?

#### **KINDNESS**

- Kindness is a vital ingredient of any friendship, and especially a marriage. Read Ephesians 4:32.
- Being kind and helpful every day, even when you don’t feel like it, is one of the easiest ways to strengthen your marriage. Even small kindnesses can make a big difference. Offer to spend 10 to 15 minutes doing the most helpful thing for your husband or wife.

#### **GOODNESS**

- Make a list of your personal values. Describe how you are living out each value in your marriage. How do these lived values bless your spouse? Read Romans 12:9-21.
- Ask yourself: Which character strengths am I working on with God that will also bless my spouse and strengthen our marriage?

#### **FAITHFULNESS**


- Find ways to increase the spiritual connection in your marriage. Agree to pray for each other throughout the day. Read Psalms to each other. Attend a couples’ retreat. Find a ministry you can do together.
- Ask yourself: How can I show my spouse that I am committed to making our marriage the best it can be? See Ephesians 5:21-33.

#### **GENTLENESS**

- Speak warmly and softly to each other. Touch each other gently. Do things that increase each other’s comfort (Philippians 4:5).
- Anticipate each other’s needs by offering to make a drink, pack a lunch, or send an encouraging text during a challenging day.
- Ask yourself: How can I be gentler toward my husband or wife today? How can I increase their sense of comfort and well-being?

#### **SELF-CONTROL**

- Filter your words before saying them. Ask yourself: If I say this, will it bring us closer together, or will it push my spouse away? See Ephesians 4:29.
- Plan regular friendship times together and prioritize them, no matter how busy you are. Use self-control to manage your time and workload so that you can protect your precious couple time.
- Ask yourself: How can I use my self-control to protect my spouse from pain, fear, and distress? 7



**Ask yourself: How can I surprise my spouse with kindness today?**

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