

LOVE DARE

Day One

The first part of the dare is fairly simple. Although love is communicate in a number of ways, our words often reflect the condition of our heart. For the next day, resolve to demonstrate patience and to say nothing negative to your spouse at all. If the temptation arises, choose not to say anything. It's better to hold your tongue than to say something you'll regret.

Day Two

In addition to saying nothing negative to your spouse again today, do at least one unexpected gesture as an act of kindness.

Day Three

Whatever you put your time, energy, and money into will become more important to you. It's hard to care for something you are not investing in. Along with restraining from negative comments, buy your spouse something that says, "I was thinking of you today."

Day Four

Contact your spouse sometime during the business of the day. Have no agenda other than asking how he or she is doing and if there is anything you could do for them.

Day Five

Ask your spouse to tell you three things that cause him or her to be uncomfortable or irritated with you. You must do so without attacking them or justifying your behavior. This is from their perspective only.

Day Six

Choose today to react to tough circumstances in your marriage in loving ways instead of with irritation. Begin my making a list of areas where you need to add margin to your schedule. Then list any wrong motivations that you need to release from your life.

Day Seven

For today's dare, get two sheets of paper. On the first one, spend a few minutes writing out positive things about your spouse. Then do the same with negative things on the second sheet. Place both sheets in a secret place for another day. There is a different purpose and plan for each. At some point during the remainder of the day, pick a positive attribute from the first list and thank your spouse for having the characteristic.

Day Eight

Determine to become your spouse's biggest fan and to reject any thoughts of jealousy. To help you set your heart on your spouse and focus on their achievements, take yesterday's list of negative attributes and discreetly burn it. Then share with your spouse how glad you are about a success he or she recently enjoyed.

Day Nine

Think of a specific way you'd like to greet your spouse today. Do it with a smile and with enthusiasm. Then determine to change your greeting to reflect your love the them.

Day Ten

Do something out of the ordinary today for your spouse – something that proves (to you and to them) that your love is based on your choice and nothing else. Wash her car. Clean the kitchen. Buy his favorite dessert. Fold the laundry. Demonstrate love to them for the sheer joy of being their partner in marriage.

Day Eleven

What need does your spouse have that you could meet today? Can you run an errand? Give a back rub or foot massage? Is there housework you could help with? Choose a gesture that says, "I cherish you" and do it with a smile.

Day Twelve

Demonstrate love by willingly choosing to give in to an area of disagreement between you and your spouse. Tell them you are putting their preference first.

Day Thirteen

Talk with your spouse about establishing healthy rules of engagement. If your mate is not ready for that, then write out your own personal rules to "fight" by. Resolve to abide by them when the next disagreement occurs.

Day Fourteen

Purposefully neglect an activity you would normally do so you can spend quality time with your spouse. Do something he or she would love to do or a project they'd really like to work on. Just be together.

Day Fifteen

Choose a way to show honor and respect to your spouse that is above your normal routine. It may be holding the door for her. It might be putting his clothes away for him. It may be the way you listen and speak in your communication. Show your mate that he or she is highly esteemed in your eyes.

Day Sixteen

Begin praying today for your spouse's heart. Pray for three specific areas where you desire for God to work in your spouse's life and in your marriage.

Day Seventeen

Determine to guard your mate's secrets (unless they are dangerous to them or to you) and to pray for them. Talk with your spouse, and resolve to demonstrate love in spite of these issues. Really listen to them when they share personal thoughts and struggles with you. Make them feel safe.

Day Eighteen

Prepare a special dinner at home, just for the two of you. The dinner can be as nice as you prefer. Focus this time on getting to know your spouse better, perhaps in areas you've rarely talked about. Determine to make it an enjoyable evening for you and your mate.

Day Nineteen

Look back of the dares from previous days. Were there some that seemed impossible to you? Have you realized your need for God to change your heart and to give you the ability to love? Ask Him to show you where you stand with Him, and ask for the strength and grace to settle your eternal destination.

Day Twenty

Dare to take God at His Word. Dare to trust Jesus Christ for salvation. Dare to pray, "Lord Jesus, I'm a sinner. But you have shown Your love for me by dying to forgive my sins, and You have proven Your power to save me from death by Your resurrection. Lord, change my heart, and save me by Your grace."

Day Twenty-One

Be intentional today about making a time to pray and read your Bible. Try reading a chapter out of Proverbs each day (there are thirty-one – a full month's supply), or reading a chapter in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). As you do, immerse yourself in the love and promises God has for you. This will add to your growth as you walk with Him.

Day Twenty-Two

Love is a choice, not a feeling. It is an initiated action, not a knee-jerk reaction. Choose today to be committed to love even if your spouse has lost most of their interest in receiving it. Say to them today in words similar to these, “I love you. Period. I choose to love you even if you don’t love me in return.”

Day Twenty-Three

Remove anything that is hindering your relationship, any addiction or influence that’s stealing your affections and turning your heart away from your spouse.

Day Twenty-Four

End it now. Identify every object of lust in your life and remove it. Single out every lie you’ve swallowed in pursuing forbidden pleasure and reject it. Lust cannot be allowed to live in a back bedroom. It must be killed and destroyed – today—and replaced with the sure promises of God and a heart filled with His perfect love.

Day Twenty-Five

Whatever you haven’t forgiven in your mate, forgive it today. Let it go. Just as we ask Jesus to “Forgive us our debts” each day, we must ask Him to help us “Forgive our debtors” each day as well. Unforgiveness has been keeping you and your spouse in prison too long. Say from your heart, “I choose to forgive.”

Day Twenty-Six

Take time to pray through your areas of wrongdoing. Ask for God’s forgiveness, then humble yourself enough to admit them to your spouse. Do it sincerely and truthfully. Ask your spouse for forgiveness as well. No matter how they respond, make sure you cover your responsibility in love. Even if they respond with criticism, accept it by receiving it as counsel.

Day Twenty-Seven

Eliminate the poison of unrealistic expectations in your home. Think of one area where your spouse has told you you’re expecting too much, and tell them you’re sorry for being so hard on them about it. Promise them you’ll seek to understand, and assure them of your unconditional love.

Day Twenty-Eight

What is one of the greatest needs in your spouse’s life right now? Is there a need you could lift from their shoulders today by a daring act of sacrifice on your part? Whether the need is big or small, purpose to do what you can to meet the need.

Day Twenty-Nine

Before you see your spouse again today, pray for them by name and for their needs. Whether it comes easy for you or not, say “I Love You,” then express love to them in some tangible way. Go to God in prayer again, thanking Him for giving you the privilege of loving this one special person – unconditionally, the way He loves both of you.

Day Thirty

Isolate one area of division in your marriage, and look on today as a fresh opportunity to pray about it. Ask the Lord to reveal anything in your own heart that is threatening oneness with your spouse. Pray that He would do the same for them. And if appropriate, discuss this matter openly, seeking God for unity.

Day Thirty-One

Is there a “Leaving” issue you haven’t been brave enough to conquer yet? Confess it to your spouse today, and resolve to make it right. The oneness of your marriage is dependent upon it. Follow this with a commitment to your spouse and to God to make your marriage the top priority over every other relationship.

Day Thirty-Two

If at all possible, try to initiate sex with your husband or wife today. Do this in a way that honors what your spouse has told you (or implied to you) about what they need from you sexually. Ask God to make this enjoyable for both of you as well as a path to great intimacy.

Day Thirty-Three

Recognize that your spouse is integral to your future success. Let them know today that you desire to include them in your upcoming decisions, and that you need their perspective and counsel. If you have ignored their input in the past, admit your oversight and ask them to forgive you.

Day Thirty-Four

Find a specific, recent example when your spouse demonstrated Christian character in a noticeable way. Verbally commend them for this at some point today.

Day Thirty-Five

Find a marriage mentor – someone who is a strong Christian and who will be honest and loving with you. If you feel that counseling is needed, then take the first step to set up an appointment. During this process, ask God to direct your decisions and discernment.

Day Thirty-Six

Commit to reading the Bible every day. Find a devotional book or other resource that will give you some guidance. If your spouse is open to it, see if they will commit to daily Bible reading with you. Begin submitting each area of your life to its guidance and start building on the Rock.

Day Thirty-Seven

Ask your spouse if you can begin praying together. Talk about the best time to do this, whether it’s in the morning, your lunch hour, or before bedtime. Use this time to commit your concerns, disagreements, and needs before the Lord. Don’t forget to thank Him for His provision and blessing. Even if your spouse refuses to do that, resolve to spend this daily time in prayer yourself.

Day Thirty-Eight

Ask yourself what your mate would want if it was obtainable. Commit this to prayer, and start mapping out a plan for meeting some (if not all) of their desires, to whatever level you possibly can.

Day Thirty-Nine

Spend time in personal prayer, then write a letter of commitment and resolve to your spouse. Include why you are committing to this marriage until death, and that you have purposed to love them no matter what. Leave it in a place that your mate will find it.

Day Forty

Write out a renewal of your vows and place them in your home. Perhaps, if appropriate, you could make arrangements to formally renew your wedding vows before a minister and with family present. Make it a living testament to the value of marriage in God’s eyes and the high honor of being one with your mate.

