

12 “Secrets” to a Long Marriage

Chuck Lawless

1. **Decide from the beginning that divorce is simply not an option.** Don't ever let the word enter your mind, much less your heart.
2. **Raise your children well together.** That doesn't mean your children will be perfect, but good child-rearing removes some of the potential stressors on a marriage.
3. **Be wise with your dollars.** Again, simply being sensible about how you spend money removes another common source of conflict in a long-term marriage.
4. **Love God first and stay in the church.** I hang around Christians much of the time, so this one may not be a surprising finding. Nevertheless, the point is that a relationship with the Lord is a serious glue for marriages.
5. **Be nice to each other.** That's basic, but it's true. Say, “Thank you” and “You're welcome.” Say, “I appreciate what you do.” Never verbally tear down a spouse. Sacrifice for the good of the other.
6. **Say, “I love you” every day.** They're just three words, but they're powerful ones. And, they never lose that power.
7. **Hold hands.** At a young age, we hold hands because we want to touch. At an old age, we hold hands to help each other walk—and still, to touch the same person we've loved for decades.
8. **Pray together weekly, if not daily.** The prayers aren't always long, complex (or sometimes, even theologically strong), but they're an invitation for God to be the center of the relationship.
9. **Serve each other.** I've watched in wonder as older couples' minister to each other, with one helping the other overcome whatever challenges they face together. You'll last long as a couple when you're always serving each other.
10. **Learn to forget stuff.** Holding grudges is neither healthy nor godly. Long-term marriage partners forgive offenses and truly let them go. They don't let the sun go down on their anger (Eph 4:26).
11. **Review the memories.** More than 50 years together will give you a *lot* of memories. Talk about them. Go back to the tough, challenging days that cemented your love and commitment. Reminisce, and rejoice.
12. **Laugh together.** Laughter has a way of reducing tension. When you laugh together, you increase the fun of being together.