



1509 N. Clinton Blvd. · Bloomington, IL 61701 · (309) 828-MOMS · hearts@hearts-at-home.org

## February 2011

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**M**y friend and I sat across the table chatting over lunch.

With February being the "month of love," we began to discuss our plans (or lack of plans at that point) for Valentine's Day weekend. Eventually we moved into sharing some marriage lessons we've learned throughout our combined 45 years of marriage.

Without thinking much of it, I shared that I've learned that love has to mature for a marriage to go the distance. And then I followed that with, **"I guess love has to move from being a *noun* to being a *verb*."**

We both paused and considered the implications of that. My friend said it was one of the most profound things I've ever said. While I'm quite sure it's most likely the *only* profound thing I've ever said, I've definitely not been able to get the concept out of my head.

**Immature love is a noun.** A thing we long for. A feeling. An expectation of what someone will do for us.

**Mature love is verb.** An action we take. A decision. A choice to do something for someone else.

**Unfortunately too many of us have yet to mature in our love, and our relationships bear the scars of that fact. But it's never too late to grow up.** If we want our love to last a lifetime, we can't afford to keep believing that love is a noun. The feeling of love is short-lived. We have to transition to understanding that long-lasting love is really a verb.

But what does this English lesson of nouns and verbs have to do with real relationships? How do we take this concept and apply it to real life? Maybe these scenarios can help paint the picture.

- Love as a noun spent all last week wondering what your spouse was going to do for you for Valentine's Day. Love as a verb spent all last week preparing your expression of love for your spouse.
- Love as a noun feels despair when you no longer feel "in love" with the person you are married to. Love as a verb understands the ebb and flow of feelings. It focuses more on expressing love than feeling love.
- Love as a noun demands its own way. Love as a verb works to understand differences and is open to new ways of doing things.
- Love as a noun finds faults in others. Love as a verb gives grace and forgiveness.
- Love as a noun expects others to serve them. Love as a verb serves freely.
- Love as a noun expects to always feel warm and fuzzy and "in love." Love as a verb realizes that often we have to choose to love even when we don't feel like it.

The most frequently quoted Bible verse at weddings is I Corinthians 13, which is often referred to as the "love chapter." It says that *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the*

*truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."*

It wasn't until just a few weeks ago that I realized that every time love is mentioned in this often quoted verse, it is a verb. Maybe this concept has been right in front of my eyes all along, but I just didn't understand it until recently.

The most interesting thing, however, is a less often quoted part of the verse that says, "*When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.*"

So love has to grow up. It has to mature. Who knew grammar could reveal so much about love?

*Jill*

Wife of Mark

Mom to Anne, Evan, Erica, Kolya, and Austin

Nana to 9-month-old Rilyn

## Use Valentine's Day to Remind You to Invest in Your Marriage Everyday

- Leave a love note on the mirror with lipstick or shaving cream.
- Prepare his favorite dessert.
- Tell him how much you appreciate how he provides for the family.
- Leave him a love note in his briefcase.
- Call him in the afternoon to check in and say "I love you."
- Arrange for a sitter and kidnap him at work for a night out or an overnight.
- Forgive him.



- Go to a ball game with him.
- Help with the housework.
- Plan a vacation getaway for just the two of you.
- Give a hug... a big hug.
- Incorporate non-sexual kisses and touches into your relationship.
- Plan a date night weekly, bi-weekly, or at the very least, monthly. Arrange for the sitter and stick to it.
- Join him in a hobby.
- Say "I love you" in everything you do.

## Happy Valentine's Day!

Need regular marriage encouragement?  
Join us every Monday at  
[www.hearts-at-home.org](http://www.hearts-at-home.org)  
for our weekly  
*Marriage Monday* posts!

## Valentine's Love For Single Moms

Every year as Valentine's Day approached, Amanda braced herself for the emotions of the day. Amanda is a single mom and Valentine's Day was always one of the most difficult days of the year for her.



Until last year.

Last year, Amanda changed her perspective and determined to use Valentine's Day to remind her to give a little love to herself.

If you're a single mom, consider how you might be able to use Valentine's Day to love

yourself and to bask in God's love. If you're not a single mom, but you know one, could you please pass this along to encourage her?

- Light some candles and take a bubble bath after the kids are in bed at least once a week.
- Ask another single mom to trade an "afternoon off" with you every other weekend. You watch her kids for a few hours every other Saturday and she watches your kids on the opposite weeks.
- If you enjoy them, treat yourself to some fresh flowers every once in a while.
- Give your body some love by committing to regular exercise. Even going for a walk everyday can make a huge difference.
- Talk to God whenever you can. He's available all the time and can give you the strength you need when it feels you have nothing left to give.
- Find a church home where a church family will love you and partner with you in raising your children God's way.
- Bask in God's love. Psalms 36:5 tell us, "Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies."

## *It's Hearts at Home's Valentine's Gift To You!*

During the month of February, Karen Ehman's book ***The Complete Guide to Getting And Staying Organized*** is 30% off when you use the discount code **HAPPYHOME!**



The key to good organization is not a one-size-fits-all method. It's a unique plan that considers personality type, lifestyle, income level, and family schedule. Author and speaker, Karen Ehman believes that with her simple step by step process moms can recognize their own personal style of managing their households successfully and develop a unique plan that gives them the freedom to:

- \* Manage their time wisely
- \* De-clutter and organize their homes
- \* Plan menus, shop more efficiently, and become more comfortable and creative in the kitchen
- \* Get children involved in pursuing an ordered life and home
- \* Avoid the trap of overcommitment
- \* Use practical tools to assist in organization

Getting and staying organized means more time for the important things in family life-- concentrating on cultivating a close, personal relationship with the Creator, drawing His word into every aspect of living, and ultimately tying their children's heartstrings to God.

## **Ready to revolutionize your mothering?**

You won't want to miss our  
2011 Hearts at Home Conferences!



**Best Value Registration  
for the National Conference  
ends this Wednesday, Feb 9!**

**To save yourself \$20 and make sure your  
registration includes lunch, register today!**

**REGISTER NOW!**

*Want to get a sneak peek of a couple of the  
National Conference Main Stage Speakers?*

Click [HERE](#) to watch a video of Jennifer Rothschild (Morning Main Session)

Click [HERE](#) to watch a video of Chonda Pierce (Moms Night Out only)

***Can't attend a conference?***

Check out the [Conference To-Go](#) option to receive the conference of your choice via CD.

***Want to bring a group?***

For the first time ever, Hearts at Home is offering a discount for groups of 10 or more who register at the same time. Click [HERE](#) for details!

**Hearts at Home**  
**1509 N. Clinton Blvd.**  
**Bloomington, IL 61701**

Email: [hearts@heartsathome.org](mailto:hearts@heartsathome.org)

Phone: 309 828 MOMS

Web: <http://www.heartsathome.org>