

John Paul II's Theology of the Body

provides the inspiration and motivation to live a life of total mutual self-donation, but it is the everyday ways that we embrace a Theology of the Body lifestyle that truly empower us to live in love.

Conjugal spirituality is a sacramental couple's way of loving. Here are ten ways to make the catholic theology articulated in the work of John Paul II a lived reality.

Love is indeed "ecstasy",
not in the sense of a moment of
intoxication, but rather as a
journey,
an ongoing exodus out of the closed
inward-looking self towards its
liberation through self-giving, and thus
towards authentic
self-discovery and indeed the discovery
of God.

Benedict XVI - Deus Caritas Est

The Living in Love program suite consists of:

Every Day in Love

an upbeat, engaging, experiential, video-based relationship skills course: Smart Loving, The Passionate Couple, Talking With Purpose, and Living The Dream. Open to all.

Living in Love

a powerfully transformative day and a half romance retreat workshop for married couples and priests held in parish facilities.

Preparing/Beginning to Live in Love

state of the art marriage preparation based on John Paul II's Theology of the Body that combines the benefits of a personal mentor with a comprehensive, seven-session, experiential, life skills curriculum.

Matrimony: an Invitation to Live in Love

a unique paradigm that exposes teens to an authentic sacramental witness while teaching Theology of the Body life skills through an engaging, experiential curriculum.

Love Worth Praying For

a parish-wide campaign designed to harness the prayer of the entire Body of Christ to focus on family and marriage and specifically the couples who are the heart of each of those families.

**For more information, contact the
Pastoral and Matrimonial
Renewal Center**

contact us

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10^{top} tips



for Living in love

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Top 10 tips

for Living Every Day in love



1. Approach marriage as a proactive “vocation”

Seeing marriage as a proactive and unilateral mission to convince the other that he or she is loved and lovable changes our whole mindset and simplifies our objective. When we live in love on purpose, we can ask the Lord for the specific graces we need as well as experience being sent to bring His love to our spouse.

2. Affirm each other as a man or woman every day

Affirming the other lifts our own spirits and makes us feel grateful to have this man or this woman as our spouse. If we look for virtue, we will find it. It is not just that he or she is a “nice” person. It was their unique masculinity or femininity that drew us to them in the first place. When we affirm them as a man or woman, it resonates most clearly with their innate personhood and is the most powerful affirmation. Criticism is a cancer that kills marriages, and the best way to root out criticism is to actively affirm the other.

3. Love “smarter”

Too often, we give the gift that we would want rather than what the other most wants and needs to feel “in love.” If we are to be a gift to each other, as Pope John Paul II suggests in his *Theology of the Body*, it helps to find out what our spouse would put on their “gift registry.” Is it eye contact? laughter? music? tender verbal sentiments? Learning what makes the other feel “in love” makes it easy to put a smile on their face and releases joy in marriage that blesses the whole family.

4. Make love as something you are “saying” not doing

If we approach making love as something we are “saying” to each other rather than just an activity that we are “doing,” it becomes a powerful “language of the body” that speaks the total, permanent self-donation of our wedding vows. Ask yourself what you most want to say to the other before you make love. Then, make sure you say it verbally as well as non-verbally.

5. Be “spiritually naked” in prayer

We are most open and true to ourselves in prayer. Allowing each other to overhear our sincere prayer is a spiritual nakedness that is profoundly bonding. When we also tell each other about our personal faith experiences and share our relationship with God, we deepen trust and achieve the most profound intimacy. Recent studies indicate that couples who share faith and belong to the same church have the lowest recorded incidence of divorce.

6. Nurture the atmosphere of being “in love”

We love a lot of people, but we are “in love” with only one. Being “in love” is what makes marriage unique and exclusive. When we prioritize nurturing the atmosphere of being in love, we are fueled for all our other responsibilities. Otherwise, marriage is too much “work.” We can “flirt” before we speak, remind ourselves of what is most attractive about the other, and reconnect with all our memories of being in love. It is more effective to pray for passion than patience.

7. Relate rather than debate

The issue is not the issue. “We” are the issue. When we focus on each other, we can feel emotionally connected, even in areas where we are conflicted, if we suspend judgments and opinions and simply describe the emotions we are feeling. We can encourage the other to relate to a time when they may have felt the same way. Describing our feelings in writing can help us to get in touch with more than we would share just by speaking.



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8. Never go to bed angry

Anger can replay in our minds and cause more distance and hurt than the original offense. Learning to reconcile hurts promptly and well can actually bring a couple closer than before the incident. The experience can teach us how to love the other better and help us grow in humility and sensitivity. Love means saying more than just, “I’m sorry.” It requires trust and vulnerability to say, “Will you please forgive me?” Reconciling well is a fundamental act of recommitment that strengthens the bonds of love.

9. Be a couple first

Consider what is in the best interest of the marriage - before you parent, work, play, or relate to friends. In making decisions, consider what will absolutely advance our coupleness. That is always God’s plan for us. The truth is that nothing is more important than our marriage. Our own happiness and our children’s happiness absolutely depend on it. If we are not growing closer, we are growing apart.

10. Be a “living” sign

Couples set the level of love in their homes and in their community. They also reveal and make manifest the passionate, intimate, permanent, and life-giving love that Christ has for the church. When a husband and wife are in love and allow that love to be visible, everyone around them and especially their children will experience God in a real and tangible way. The realization that others are depending on us motivates us not to take our love for granted or settle for just getting along. Jesus does not just “get along” with us.