

Relationships: Some Assembly Required

Part Four

I'm Working On It

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Ruth 1:16–17 (NIV)

16 But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me."

MAIN TAKEAWAY: A relationship can be compared to a garden. Gardens need to be worked "on", not just worked "in". Many "work in" their marriage, but few have learned how to "work on it".

Song of Solomon 4:12 (NLT)

12 You are my private garden, my treasure, my bride, a secluded spring, a hidden fountain.

Three Ways to Nourish Your Relationships

1. Nourished Through _____

2 Chronicles 16:9 (NIV)

9 For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war."

Commitment—

"The avowed or inferred binding dedication to a relationship based on a willful promise. Commitment is maintained by a moral obligation to loyally persist in spite of obstacles, costs, or alternative possibilities. Whether in love, friendship, marriage, work, career, moral life, or religion, commitment is a profoundly important human activity. While it is certainly related to love, it is not the same as love." L. Parrott III, "Commitment," ed. David G. Benner and Peter C. Hill, Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology & Counseling, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 225.

Three elements of commitment:

(1) Duration

(2) Intensity

(3) Priority

Ecclesiastes 4:12c (NLT)

"...for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken."

"Commitment is a choice to forgo a future choice. Commitment is falling in love with something and then building a structure of behavior around it for the moment when love falters."

—David Brooks, NY Times columnist

2. Nourished Through _____

1 Corinthians 7:9 (ESV)

9 But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up your men to go to the forest and gather wood, saw it, and nail the planks together.

Instead, teach them a passion for the sea."

—Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Three elements of passion:

(1) Thrill

(2) Affection

(3) Sensuality

"Today a new sun rises for me; everything lives, everything is animated, everything seems to speak to me of my passion, everything invites me to cherish it"

—Ninon de Lenclos (French courtesan)

3. Nourished Through _____

Genesis 4:1 (NKJV)

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD."

Three elements of intimacy:

(1) Emotional connection

(2) Physical connection

(3) Spiritual connection

ANSWERS:

1. COMMITMENT
2. PASSION
3. INTIMACY