Bob: Have you ever thought to yourself, “I wonder if I married the right person?” Trent Griffith says that’s the wrong way to be thinking about marriage.

Trent: So many people think the key to a happy marriage/the key to a durable, lifelong marriage is: “You got to find your soulmate.” Can I please give you a public service announcement? You have a better chance of marrying a mermaid or a leprechaun than your soulmate; okay? [Laughter] Soulmates do exist—they are built in the second decade of your marriage. [Applause] But if you give up on your marriage, when the feelings of love die, you’re never going to make it to the point where you are married to your soulmate.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Tuesday, March 12th. Our hosts are Dave and Ann Wilson; I’m Bob Lepine. The idea of a soulmate is just one of the myths of marriage that exists in our culture. We’ll hear the truth about marriage from Trent and Andrea Griffith today. Stay with us.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us on the Tuesday edition. I have to tell you guys—as great as it was a few weeks ago, being on the Love Like You Mean It® marriage cruise with a lot of our listeners and a lot of our friends—it was a different kind of cruise for me this year.

Ann: Because we weren’t with you? [Laughter]

Bob: That was part of it; that wasn’t what I was thinking, immediately.

Dave: There was somebody else that wasn’t with him, Ann.

Bob: It was because my wife wasn’t with me on the Love Like You Mean It marriage cruise. That’s kind of a bummer; right?—to go on a marriage cruise without your spouse?

Ann: That’s terrible.

Dave: How was it, Bob?
**Bob:** The reason she wasn’t with me was because we have a new grandbaby. She was with the new grandbaby, who is doing great, but was in NICU for a while. He was born early; and so we looked at each other, when he was born early, and we said, “Well, looks like you’re going to be in Brooklyn instead of on the cruise,”—that’s where she was. You go on with a whole different mindset when you’re there without your spouse. I was there to speak and to help with some of the sessions.

I’m mentioning this for our listeners; because we are 70 percent sold-out for next year’s cruise, already. Next year, we’re going to St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands; we’re going to Puerto Rico; we’re going to Coco Cay. We’re adding an extra day to the cruise, so it’s seven nights away. We’ve got Dr. Gary Chapman, who’s going to join us; Dennis and Barbara Rainey will be with us. You guys are going to be on the cruise—going to be speaking on the cruise; right?—

**Ann:** Woo-hoo!

**Dave:** We are looking forward to it.

**Bob:**—great lineup of artists and speakers. We wanted to make sure, before it’s all sold out, that radio listeners get a chance to sign up and join us. *This month,* if you use the promo code, “CRUISE MADNESS,” you can save $400 per couple off your cabin registration. All the information is available when you go to our website at FamilyLifeToday.com. The offer is good—I said it was this month—it ends on the 25th of March; so get more information and join us on the *Love Like You Mean It* marriage cruise in 2020, our tenth anniversary cruise.

Today, we are going to hear Part Two of a message from the cruise. Our friends, Trent and Andrea Griffith, spoke on the subject of “Myths about Marriage.” Trent is a pastor in Indiana. He and Andrea speak at our *Weekend to Remember®* marriage getaways. They talked on the cruise about the myth that, today, marriage is out of date/that it’s obsolete; they said that marriage is good. Then, they talked about [the myth that] marriage is designed to make you happy. They said we need to replace that myth with the truth. That’s where we’re going to pick things up as we hear Part Two of their message on the *Love Like You Mean It* marriage cruise.

**Trent:** Here’s the truth that replaces Myth Number 2. It is not marriage that will make you happy. Here’s the truth: “Marriage will make me better; marriage will make me grow; marriage will make me change; and marriage will make me holy,” if you will let it.

Let me show you a verse from Romans, Chapter 12, that states this truth—it goes like this [verse 9]: “Let love be genuine,”—you get it? There is no fake love that survives more than a few months in marriage. There’s a difference between fake love that like gets you to the wedding altar—all the infatuation and all the feelings and everything you thought was love—that doesn’t survive very long in marriage. There is a level of love that you get to that is more genuine than the love that got you to start dating. Here’s the
way you can find whether love is genuine—it’s the next two statements: “Abhor was is evil, and hold fast to what is good.”

Here’s how I know that Andrea loves me with a genuine love—she abhors what is evil in me, and she clings and calls out what is good in me. God is trying to use her to make me better. Because I’m married, I’ve got an opportunity to grow; because you’re married, you’ve got an opportunity to grow! You might say the person in this room that has the hardest spouse to be married to has the greatest opportunity to grow and to be better; because in genuine love, we abhor what is evil; we cling to what is good.

Andrea: The verse continues—it says, “Love one another with a brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor.” That word, honor—it just means placing high value on. You did this when you were dating. You know, your fiancé—the guy you are dating—he comes to the door and your just “Aaah” [sigh]; you’re so happy to see him! You place that high value. Well, this verse—it tells us to outdo one another.

I’m not a very competitive person—Trent’s a lot more competitive than I am—but I like this competition; because, if we will do this, we both win. That’s my kind of competition—that we’re both trying to serve each other, or we’re both trying to find things to put a smile on each other’s face, or looking out for the other’s interests—outdo one another in showing honor. This makes me better; because I have to put aside my natural tendency to just think of myself—just to think what I want/what will bring a smile to my face—or I have to put aside my agenda and learn what his is and, then, we can start creating an agenda, together, weaving our lives together.

I really did start out believing and hoping that marriage would make me happy. Part of my happy dream—it was being married but living in a house. It could even be a small house—I didn’t care—just a house near a beach, in a warm, sunny climate; okay? [Laughter] That was my dream. Anyone else have that dream? That was my dream.

Trent’s dream was to do hard things for God. As part of our ministry, after we got married, he moved me into an RV travel trailer—for 15 years!—15 years! That’s the only house we had—was an RV travel trailer. As each child—when it was time for them to be born, they were just born in whichever state we were in; and that was just our marriage, and our ministry, and our life. Fifteen years after that, I finally got a house!! Guess where it was?—Michigan!!—[Laughter]—Michigan! [Hooting]

Trent: There’s a beach!

Andrea: Yes! [Sighs and laughs]

Trent: There’s a beach!

Andrea: —so we get all the systems snow that come through, and we get all the lake effect snow; and that’s where we live. We now live five miles south of that original
house, where we were in Indiana. I can guarantee you—the reality of that life has been harder than my little house on a beach, but it has definitely made me better. It taught me so much on depending on the Lord and just staying just under it and enduring.

The reality is—in this room/everyone of you—marriage has been harder than you thought—just the realities of life have been harder than you thought. If we let it, it can cause us to grow—it can make us better. Through the years of us being married—mirroring back to each other what we see in each other—we can help shape each other to make us better; so that, when God has us in His hand as a tool to use, we are sharp/we are an instrument that He can use to do His work.

Marriage won’t make us happy; but if we let it, marriage will make you better.

**Trent:** If marriage makes you better—

**Andrea:** —better, it’ll make you happy.

**Trent:** —it’ll make you happy.

Here’s the third myth—and we all believe it—here it is: “Love will hold my marriage together.” I mean, what else can hold my marriage together; right? “Love will hold…”—see, here’s the thing—we need a better definition of love and a better definition of marriage.

When we finally got to the altar there—and I walked Brooke down the aisle and I had to do the switch/turn around thing—and then, David’s there beside me. I got a lot to say about marriage, so I had to cram it all into one statement; so I told these guys: “Here’s everything I want you to know about marriage. I want you to know what marriage actually is and what it is not. So here’s what marriage is—marriage is a holy covenant, initiated by God, conditioned on an irrevocable promise to pursue oneness with an imperfect person of the opposite sex, for a lifetime, for the glory of God. That’s all I’ve got to say about it!” [Cheers] That’s how we had a 40-minute wedding.

We need a better definition of marriage and we need a better definition of love. So many people think the key to a happy marriage/the key to a durable life-long marriage is: “You got to find your soulmate.” Can I please give you a public service announcement? You have a better chance of marrying a mermaid or a leprechaun than your soulmate; okay? [Laughter] Now, people have said soulmates don’t exist—I rebut that. Soulmates do exist; they are built in the second decade of your marriage. [Applause] But if you give up on your marriage, when the feelings of love die, you’re never going to make it to the point where you are married to your soulmate. We have to find a different definition of love.

Now, listen—something happened to me when I was 16 years old that gave me confidence in God’s Word to change a life. I was a junior, 1984, at Eisenhower High
School in Lawton, Oklahoma. I took a sociology class. My teacher, Mrs. Ryans—I'll never forget—she gave us an assignment one day. She said, "I want you to go home tonight—take a blank sheet of paper out—I want you to write down your best definition of the word, "love." Now, when she made that assignment, you could hear an audible gasp from all the girls in the room! [Makes gasps like a girl] [Laughter] I mean, that was the easiest assignment they had ever received. I mean, they had been thinking about that; they knew what the wedding dress was going to look like—I mean, it was just like—it just flooded their minds; right?

You could also hear a grunt by the guys: "What?!" You know, we didn't have a clue. I remember—I went home that night, and I stared at that blank sheet of paper for an hour. I finally got some words down on the paper, took it back in, handed it in with everybody else the next day. During the class, Mrs. Ryans graded those papers. At the end of the class, she said: "I want everybody to stop what you're doing. Everybody give me your undivided attention. You have got to hear the definition of love that one of you turned into me today. It is the best definition of love I have ever received in 13 years of making this assignment in our public high school."

She had our attention. This is what she read—she read: "Love is patient, love is kind, love does not envy; love does not boast, love is not arrogant, love is not rude; love does not insist on its own way; love is not irritable or resentful, love does not rejoice in a wrong doing, love rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things; love believes all things; love hopes all things; love never fails." When she finished reading that, everybody was looking around, thinking, "Which one of us idiots could have written that definition?" Finally, people began to demand Mrs. Ryans to reveal who wrote that. Finally, with a tear in her eye, she said it was her teacher's pet—she said [Tearfully], "Trent wrote that." [Laughter]

And then people began to get mad at me, because the level of love at the high school—the bar had just been raised! [Laughter] What we'd been doing on Friday and Saturday night, that we were calling love, was not love at all. And that was kind of destroying the relationships. I had people like start shouting at me: "Hey; that ain't love," "That's unrealistic—nobody can love like that." A big football player, with his football with him—he's like: "My parents got divorced. Your definition says love never fails. Does that mean my parents didn't never love each other?!"

I finally raised up my hand and said, "Look; look—I didn't write that." They said, "You cheated!" [Laughter] I said, "I copied every word"; then I slid my sociology textbook away, and I pulled out my Bible that I took with me in my public high school every day. I opened it up to 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13, verses 4-8. I revealed—I said: "Look, if you have a problem with that definition, you really don't have a problem with me; you have a problem with God. That's God's definition of love; and if you don't like it, you need to take it up with God." I should have known, then, that I was going to be a FamilyLife Weekend to Remember®/Love Like You Mean It speaker for FamilyLife®!—right? [Laughter]
Now, listen—I didn’t know this at the time, but Mrs. Ryans was having a little trouble loving Mr. Ryans—the school counselor / the disciplinarian—the guy you had to go see when you got in trouble. Well, you know what Mrs. Ryans did? She took that definition of love, and she went home, and she started loving Mr. Ryans according to God’s definition of love.

I didn’t know this for another year; but in that moment, she—not only embraced God’s definition of love—she embraced God’s offer of love. She received Christ as her own Savior, recognizing that Mr. Ryans couldn’t love her in a way that would meet the need of her heart—only God could do that. She received the love of Christ; and now, she had a whole new supply of God’s love to love Mr. Ryans. A few years after that, I was the eighth grade Sunday school teacher at my church. Mrs. Ryans brought her two eighth-grade students to my class. I got to teach them God’s definition of love.

Andrea: Mrs. Ryans! [Laughter]

Trent: We got to tell them God’s definition of love, because they don’t know. God’s definition of love changes everything. And He replaces the myth that love will hold your marriage together. Here’s the truth: “Marriage will hold your love together.” It is the commitment; it is the genuine love—going to God to get the supply of love that you need—to bend it out to your spouse to love them in a way that you could never love them on your own.

Andrea: Trent just gave us God’s definition of love—one of them—and yet, I find myself having my own definition of love so many times—like love has to look a certain way/feel a certain way—it’s just my thoughts. So, every day, I have to go to God’s Word, and get in it, and say: “Okay; what is truth? What is right? What does God say?” and to put my life—my thoughts/my feelings—under the authority of Scripture, and let myself change under what God says is love. When I see how much He loves me, even in my weakness and in all my mess-ups—and so many things—that I am able to take that love from Him and give it out to my spouse, to my children, to the people in my life, where maybe things aren’t going so well.

Our culture is going to tell us one thing—our culture says, “Marry the one that we love”, right? Our culture says, “Marry the person that you love.” So, yes!—that’s—all in favor of that—we want to marry the person we love. But the gospel takes it another step. The gospel tells us, “Now, love the one you marry every day,”—to make that choice to love my spouse again, to choose my spouse again, to put my spouse first in my life in everyday daily things—to choose him again.

Audience: Amen.
Trent: So here’s what we’ve learned: “Marriage will hold my love together,” “Marriage will make me better,” “Marriage is good!” But there’s a caution: “Marriage is good, but marriage is not God.” You see—like a Michigan road, we’re constantly sliding into one ditch or the other. [Laughter] On one side, we’re in the ditch that marriage is obsolete; so we over-correct. If we’re not careful, we’ll slide into the ditch on the other side and believe that marriage is an idol—we’ll idolize marriage.

Listen—marriage is good, but marriage is not ultimate. It is a covenant relationship with God that brings the foundation for you to have the covenant love relationship for a lifetime with your spouse. It’s not until you recognize that, on that cross, God absorbed His wrath so that He could love us perfectly, even though we are imperfect, to empower us to imperfectly love another imperfect person in the context of a lifelong love relationship called marriage.

[Studio]

Bob: Well, again, we’ve been listening to Part Two of a message from Trent and Andrea Griffith from the Love Like You Mean It marriage cruise that happened a few weeks ago. Trent is exactly right. This is what you guys talk about in your book, Vertical Marriage. If we want our marriage relationship to be all that God intends it to be, we need to understand that flows out of our relationship with God, understanding His love for us and then letting that love spill out to one another.

Dave: Yes; you know, he did such a good job talking about it. The myth is: “You think another person will give me all that I’m longing for.” I mean, every show/every romantic story sort of alludes to that. I think, because we buy into that, we then are disappointed when that person doesn’t bring us the happiness we long for.

Trent and Andrea get at: “It’s only God that can do it.” It’s vertical marriage—when you go, vertical, you find what you are looking for, from the Creator, not from the creation.

Ann: I’m just going to confess: I did put my marriage, for a time, before God; and it does not work. Marriage is great, but it’s not the ultimate. It is not God, and it doesn’t give you the full satisfaction that only God can give.

Bob: You expect your husband or your wife to do things that only God can do/only Jesus can do in your life. No human being can live up to that; right?

Ann: Exactly!

Dave: As great as the person you married is, they are not a good God.

Bob: Yes; that’s right.
I want to remind our listeners—the 2020 Love Like You Mean It marriage cruise—our tenth anniversary cruise—is going to be happening Valentine’s week next year, from February 9th-16th—we’re adding a day. We’re going to Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands—and Coco Cay. We’re also on board a new cruise ship next year—the Allure of the Seas—a Royal Caribbean cruise ship that’s an amazing vessel. We’ve got a great lineup of speakers, including Dave and Ann Wilson; Dennis and Barbara Rainey will be joining us; Dr. Gary Chapman; Charlie and Kirstie Dates are going to be with us. Mary Ann and I will be on the cruise. We’ve got a lot of plans—some great musicians and artists will be with us. We’d love to have you join the Love Like You Mean It marriage cruise in 2020.

Right now, 70 percent of the cruise ship is sold. If you would like to join us, you need to act quickly. Our team has made the next few weeks, “CRUISE MADNESS.” In fact, that’s the promo code you can use to save $400 per couple off your stateroom for the 2020 cruise. That’s the lowest price that’s going to be available this year. Go to FamilyLifeToday.com for more information about the Love Like You Mean It marriage cruise and plan to join us, on board, February 9-16, 2020. Again, if you have any questions, or if you’d like to register, go to FamilyLifeToday.com. Or call us if you have any questions: 1-800- FL-TODAY is our number—1-800-358-6329—that’s 1-800-“F” as in family, “L” as in life, and then the word, “TODAY.”

Now, tomorrow, we are going to hear from a panel of speakers, who were on board the Love Like You Mean It marriage cruise. They’re going to be answering questions that were posed by our cruise guests. Many of the questions had to do with marital intimacy, so that’s where we’ll start with tomorrow’s program. I hope you can tune in for that.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, along with our entire broadcast production team. On behalf of our hosts, Dave and Ann Wilson, I’m Bob Lepine. We will see you back tomorrow for another edition of FamilyLife Today.

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