

The Love Dare

By Stephen & Alex Kendrick with Lawrence Kimbough
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Fireproof
AffirmFilms, DVD
Reviewed by Kathleen Sowards

On their wedding day, every couple “knows” their love will last and they will have the “perfect” marriage. They cannot imagine a time coming that would change the image in their heads of “happily ever after.” Yet in reality, a couple at the beginning of marriage have little or no concept of the realities of life: demanding jobs, long days, sleepless nights, mounting bills, distractions and temptations. They perceive only dimly that each human being is basically selfish and that—without constant effort and a renewing of heart, mind, and soul—selfishness takes over. They understand very little about love as patient, kind, and thinking less of self than of others, especially when changes or difficulties arise.

The Love Dare is a book that faces these realities of marriage and offers a structured program for marriage enrichment. Specifically, it presents a 40-day challenge to changing your marriage relationship. The challenges are not intended for a spouse who reads the book to use to change the partner so that he or she conforms, but instead represent a process that will change the reader and his or her attitudes about what being a “partner” is all about. For each of the 40 days, there is a discussion regarding a “unique aspect of love”—a “dare” assignment to be carried out that day and to be written up in a “journal” of your thoughts, feelings, and insights on how that day’s dare affected you, your spouse, and your relationship.

Dare is not a process to be undertaken lightly; this is serious and challenging work that requires commitment. Some “dares” will not be so difficult; others will challenge the determination to see the 40 days through to the end. Faithfully read and implemented, *The Love Dare* will lead to new discoveries of what love is all about. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 is quoted from the New American Standard Bible in the opening to chapter one:

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.”

As an example of the challenges thrown out, Day 1 takes up *patience*. The reader is asked to not say anything negative or unkind or to act impatiently. Day 40, at the end, presents the differences between marriage as a contract and marriage as a covenant. Writing for the day is on renewing your vows as a “living testament” to your love and the value God places on marriage.

Between Day 1 and Day 40, the “dares” become increasingly challenging: doing something nice and unexpected for your spouse; calling just to say hi; planning a romantic evening to give you an opportunity to talk. Other additional skill-building information is included, such as the 20

questions at the end of the book that you can ask to get to know your spouse better and jump-start communication.

Fireproof is the movie example of what *The Love Dare* can do for the life of a couple. The husband featured in the movie, Fire Department Captain Caleb Holt, is ready to violate in his personal life the firefighter's motto "Never leave your partner." The motto forms a perfect illustration of what the book is about, for firemen know that to leave their partner is a sure way that someone can be injured or killed. Caleb's dad gives him *The Love Dare* book and extracts a promise from him to commit to the 40 day "dares" before making any decision to end the marriage in divorce. *Fireproof* portrays the experience of Holt as he follows the program independently of his wife who has had divorce papers drawn up. In the 40 days, Caleb learns that it's just as important not to leave your marriage or spouse behind as it is to not turn your back on your firefighting partner. Although Caleb is ready on more than one occasion to give up on the marriage, he sticks to his promise. Eventually he surrenders to God and learns the key to being a faithful and trusting partner—to his wife.

In the climax to the film, Caleb and Catherine recommit themselves to their marriage and begin again.

Fireproof Your Marriage Couple's Kit is also available for small groups.