



# Love and War Devotional for Couples: The Eight-Week Adventure That Will Help You Find the Marriage You Always Dreamed Of

By John Eldredge, Stasi Eldredge

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## A Realistic Guide to the Marriage You've Always Dreamed Of

Is your relationship with your spouse far from the union you'd hoped it would be? John and Stasi Eldredge know about the realities of marriage—and they know why it's so important to take hold of the dreams you once had and see God fulfill them.

In this eight-week devotional, John and Stasi will guide you and your spouse to see God's heart for your marriage more clearly. This life-changing guide includes new insights, encouraging Scriptures, and practical exercises that will help you develop a personal plan for a vibrant marriage.

As John and Stasi write, "We learn to love moment by moment. Day by day. Week by week. Our marriages grow and become what God intended and what we ultimately long for in the same way. We are, all of us, learning to love."

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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### Editorial Review

About the Author

**John Eldredge** is the director of Ransomed Heart™ Ministries in Colorado Springs, Colorado, a fellowship devoted to helping people discover the heart of God. He is the author of numerous books, including *Wild at Heart*, *Waking the Dead*, and *The Sacred Romance* (with Brent Curtis). **Stasi Eldredge** is the coauthor of *Captivating* (with John) and leads the women's ministry of Ransomed Heart™. They have been married over twenty six years and have three sons.

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### INTRODUCTION

Our lives are lived moment by moment, in increments we can actually handle. Our marriages are lived the same way. Not anniversary to anniversary or even month to month, but daily—in the ordinary ins and outs of time. The choices we make in the moments create the lives we enjoy—or don't. Thus, a love and war devotional. This devotional is a tool for you, for your marriage. We invite you to walk alongside us for eight weeks—five days a week—and dive deeper into the tangible realities of your marriage. We'll focus on Scripture and the heart of God and the heart that he placed in you and the heart he has placed in your spouse.

The journey of our lives is a journey of transformation. We are here to learn how to love. How do we learn? Moment by moment. Day by day. Week by week. Our marriages grow and become what God intended and what we ultimately long for in the same way. We are all of us learning to love.

Let's learn together.

### DAY 1: Romance Meets Reality

*We love because he first loved us.*

—1 JOHN 4:19

We probably ought to just start here: marriage is fabulously hard.

Maybe that's an odd way to begin, but it is *true*, and everybody who's been married knows this, though years into marriage it still catches us off guard, all of us. And newly married couples, when they discover how hard it is, seem genuinely surprised. Shocked and disheartened by the fact. *Are we doing something wrong? Did I marry the right person?* The wonders that lure us into marriage—romance, love, passion, sex, longing, companionship—sometimes seem so far from the actual reality of married life that we wind up fearing we've made a colossal mistake, caught the wrong bus, missed our flight. And so the hardness of marriage can also come as something of an embarrassment.

Or maybe it's just us. Don't you feel embarrassed to admit how hard your marriage is?

Yep. This is everyone. We might as well come out and admit it.

The sooner we get that shame off our backs, the sooner we'll find our way through. Of course marriage is hard. In fact, if you look back at the first marriage, that fairy-tale start in Genesis, you see that Adam and Eve had a pretty rough go at it. And they didn't even have parents to screw them up as children or friends giving them ridiculous advice. The fall of man seems to come during the honeymoon or shortly thereafter. (And how many honeymoon stories seem to reenact that little drama?) They hit rough water as soon as they set sail. This is the story of the first marriage, and it's a bit sobering.

But it also gives us some encouragement. It's normal for marriage to be hard. Even the best of marriages.

And God is in that.

In order to have the life we want, the life we are made for, and the marriage we long for, we need God. That's a very good thing! Because without him, nothing is as it should be. With him, all things are possible. Yes, marriage can be extremely hard. But that is not a reason to despair. Nor is it the final truth. There are seasons in marriage—in every relationship. Marriage is meant to be wonderful, and most of the time it is. Though it's sometimes so hard, think of the difficulty as a doorway. A doorway to all the *more* Jesus has for us in himself ! There is hope!

*Dear God, as I begin this study, I offer up this time for your purposes. Please help me draw closer to your heart and deepen my marriage in every good way. Sometimes it is very hard. Even painful. I invite you into that as well. Have your way with me, with my spouse, and with our marriage. We need you. I am looking to you. In Jesus' mighty name, amen.*

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. (Romans 5:3–5)

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