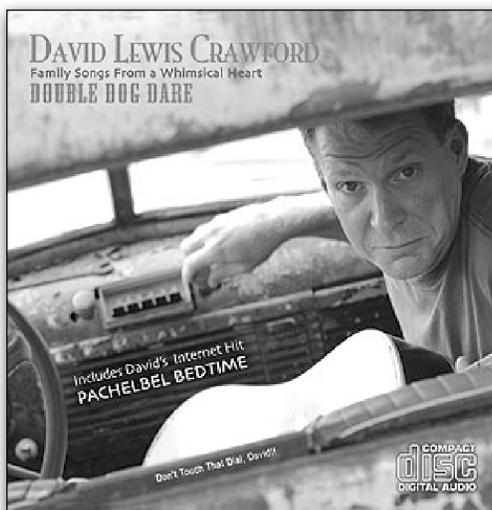


Facilitator's Guide

2 of 11 Interactive Bible Discussions on Family Relationships

based on the songs of

David Lewis Crawford's Americana CD
DOUBLE DOG DARE
Family Songs from a Whimsical Heart



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Lesson 2 – Track 2

"Our Love is Forever"

TOGETHER FOREVER

TOPICS

- Idealistic thoughts of marriage vs. reality
- Thinking the best of our spouse
- Trials of parenting and its effects on marriage
- Disciplining together as an act of love
- Setting goals for the future together

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVE

By the end of this lesson husband and wife will be able to articulate the virtues and vices that will build up or tear down their relationship and the Biblical principals necessary to maintain their love for a lifetime.

OPENING QUOTE

"It is misunderstood by the moderns, who imagine that romance would exist most perfectly in a complete state of what they call liberty." (G. K. Chesterton. *Heretics*. New York: John Lane Co., 1905)

THE SETUP

Begin by asking participants for examples in their marriages when the virtues of trustworthiness, love, and respect were especially evidenced and what that did for their relationship. After three or so appropriate examples, stop the discussion and introduce the song along these lines:

For those of you who have been together through kids and grandkids, you can identify with every part of this song. For those of you who are more newly married, you can see the stages of life your love *will* go through in David's song. See what you identify with and what you can learn from the special insights in the lyrics of Our Love is Forever. It's one of my favorite cuts on the CD.

Play TRACK 2: OUR LOVE IS FOREVER

BIBLE REFERENCES

As best suits your group, read the following Bible passages and allow a short comment or two about each, as they pertain to the ability of married love to last for a lifetime.

Old Testament

- Genesis 6-9. Contemplate Noah's wife. Noah lived 950 years. It doesn't say how old

Noah's wife was when she died—not even her name was mentioned—but we do know how old Noah was when his sons were born. He was 500 years old or more. And, we know that when the flood came, all three sons were married, and Noah's wife was still with him. Now let's be conservative and say that they were both 100 years old when they married. They were married 400 years before kids, and I'll speculate they were married 100 years after their kids were born. So, that would mean they would have been married 500 years or more. That's quite a lifetime. Plus, she stayed with Noah through his "crazy" years of building the ark with all of the ridicule from neighbors and "friends." She even cleaned animal droppings every day for 5-6 months and was the on-call delivery midwife for everything from piglets to porcupines, and hippos to giraffes. She didn't have a life of luxury and relaxation. But, I'd say she was pretty happy she stood by her man. Not only did she see plenty of miracles from God, she saved her life. And, Noah was one very blessed man to have her.

Poetry

- Song of Songs 4:10 — "How beautiful is your love, ... my bride, how much more delightful is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your ointments than all spices?"
- Proverbs 31:1, 31 — "When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls...Give her a reward of her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates."
- Proverbs 18:22 — "He who finds a wife [husband] finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD."
- Proverbs 5:18 — "Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife [husband] of your youth."

Epistle

- Ephesians 5:21-25, 28 — "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."
- Ephesians 4:26 — "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger."

Gospel

- John 2:1-11—The Wedding at Cana: Weddings back then were several days LONG. The wine had to be plentiful. The wine at the Wedding of Cana is a metaphor for how the wine at the end was better than the beginning. Just as wine gets better with age, so do good marriages get better over time, when we put the other person first. (Note: Christ managed to accomplish the aging process of wine in a few seconds!)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitator Tips

Before you begin an open discussion, remind your group of the following:

- Every marriage in every family is different based on the different events that shape our lives. As you give examples, please preface your remarks with the kind of relationship/background for husband and wife you're talking about.
- Let's openly share our experiences and thoughts realizing that our conclusions are heavily

influenced by our personal experiences and that what is a fast rule for one family may not apply to another.

- Try to keep your comments short so others have an opportunity to contribute.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Shared Experiences

- When you see your spouse in a less than perfect light or in a situation that could leave you embarrassed, what are your thoughts?
- When your children cry in the night, how do you/should you handle it?
- When a child does something innocent but inappropriate like smearing glue all over the van, what should be our response?
- Are you fearful of the years ahead when all the children are gone? Or, what sort of plans, with respect to your children, have you made together for the time of your retirement?
- As it pertains to the difficulties and disappointments that inevitably arise in a marriage, what advice would you offer young couples anticipating marriage so that it can last a lifetime?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Bible and Church Teaching

- Reflecting on the Bible verses mentioned earlier and others, what does the Bible say about this topic?
- What does our Church teach about this topic?

MORAL PREMISE

Not thinking the best of your spouse leads to mistrust, disrespect and separation; but Thinking the best of your spouse leads to mutual respect, trust, and love for life.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Whenever we become impatient with our spouse's imperfections, think of how much God our Father has to put up with our imperfections, and apply the same love you receive from Him onto your spouse!

Thinking the best of your spouse, brings out the best in your spouse.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, you've promised your love to us for longer than we can conceive. And your promise to help us with our relationships here on earth is for a lifetime. May we be ever grateful for your forbearance toward us and helping us to be faithful in our relations with others. Please give us the understanding and will to love sacrificially, and to embrace the "imperfections" in others

with tender understanding, as you have embraced us. Amen.

SONG SYNOPSIS

Stanza 1: A husband sees his wife in the romantic light of the morning, but she's in her old house shoes and a faded moo-moo. Still, he knows he'll love that woman *forever*.

Stanza 2: A wife sees her husband on their beach vacation, and he's as white as a ghost. She tells him she loves him anyway, exactly the way he is—that's a *forever* kind of love.

Refrain: Just like wine gets better with age (alias: sippie cups with apple "wine" fermenting in the van), so married love grows stronger with age, because husband and wife are facing each day *together*.

Stanza 3: Parents set their eyes on that first child after 9 long months of waiting, but then that perfect baby cries all night for 18 weeks! That's when they hold *each other* even tighter and get through it together.

Stanza 4 & Refrain: A daughter smears glue all over the family mini-van, and she is so proud of her work she can't wait to show her parents. Mom and Dad are surprised but not happy. Together they show her how to clean it up, and then (*together*) tell her that they love her.

Stanza 5: Eventually, the kids leave home, and parents are left with their memories. Now they have other fears and challenges to face that are going to require continued love and understanding *together*.

Stanza 6: Husband sees wife's hand, though now weathered with age, is still a perfect fit, because they *chose "us" instead of "me."*

Refrain: On a couple's wedding day, forever seems like such a long time, and as they journey together, some of the hills of life are long and hard to climb, but all things considered, it is well worth it. Most of the days are love-filled and full of unsurpassed joy together. And, before they knew it, their love made it over the "*forever*" of time!