

The background image shows a close-up of a couple's hands clasped together. Overlaid on the hands is a yellow line-art diagram of two interlocking circles, with a heart shape in the center. The title 'First Comes Love' is written in a white, serif font across the top of the image.

# First Comes Love

How to build marriages & relationships that last

## WEEK 3 - KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

### OVERVIEW

In a very comfort-obsessed culture, the idea of sticking with it through difficult circumstances is the last thing we want to do. If we seek advice on the internet for how to deal with challenges in a marriage, far too often the advice is simply, "end it!" But if we are truly called to demonstrate covenant faithfulness to our broken world, this cannot be our default response to hardships.

Scripture consistently invites us to endure the challenges we face because they give God a chance to work, and they give *us* a chance to grow. The same thing is true when we face difficulty in our marriages. We must remember that we are not just honoring our spouse in marriage; through our dedication to covenant faithfulness we are also honoring God. By keeping our eyes focused on the Lord, we stand a far greater chance of avoiding the "poisonous root of bitterness" (Hebrews 12:15) which can take root if we lose focus and turn our attention back to our own selfish desires. It is time for us to do the hard work which will bear the long-term fruit in our marriages of joy, peace, and love. Keep your eyes on the prize!

*Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope.  
Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.*

**Romans 12:11-12**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Does God's Spirit in you simmer like a pot on the stove ready to boil over? What kind of evidence would show that?
2. What is Biblical hope? How is that different than thinking, "I hope it gets better"? (see Hebrews 10:23)
3. How could it be helpful in any struggling relationship to not just focus on what is broken, but to fix your eyes on what is possible?
4. Which of the encouragements from Romans 12:11-12 speak to you?
  - a. In zeal, don't be idle.
  - b. In the Spirit, boil.
  - c. In the Lord, serve.
  - d. In hope, rejoice.
  - e. In suffering, endure.
  - f. In prayer, persist.
5. How could you apply what we learned about endurance (*hypomonē*), earlier this year, to relationships? Read 2 Corinthians 4:8-10.
6. What do we do in a marriage when it seems like there is no path forward? Give an example of a good first step towards healing if you are in a time like the "twenty years of silence treatment" Barry shared.
7. What suggestions do you have for specific "best practices" in marriage? (In the app, Barry gave an example of setting an expectation before clocking out for awhile)

### RESOURCES

On marriage: <https://gracechurch.us/marriage>

Marriage Retreat at Grace: <https://gracechurch.us/marriageretreat>