**Chapter 3**

What does Keller mean when he refers to the marriage vow as a “test”?

Why is sex is different outside of marriage, and how does that shape our expectations of sex within marriage? Do you agree with him? Why does Keller say it’s important for married couples to have sex even when one (or both) partners is not in the mood?

What are the differences between a “consumer” relationship and a “covenantal” relationship? How does the consumer model apply even to couples who live together before marriage? What makes marriage, by contrast, covenantal? How does the wedding ceremony itself reflect this covenantal view?

Under what circumstances do you believe divorce is permissible? Is this consistent with scripture?

What is the relationship between our *identity* and the *promises* we make? Can you relate to this Lewis Smedes quote: “My wife has lived with at least five different men since we were wed—and each of the five has been me.” What does Smedes means when he says that his promises enable him to rise above “all the conditioning that limits me.”

What does Wendy Plump say about her affair and divorce as contrasted with her parents’ 50-year marriage?

What does Keller have against falling in love? Do you agree with him?

Keller discusses the relationship between authentic love and emotion. Jesus commands us to love, and you can’t *command* a feeling. How is love possible when you’re not feeling it? Do you agree with him that love is sometimes more *difficult* when our affection interferes?

Do you believe that feelings of love (“likings”) often follow loving actions? How has Keller’s pastoral experience confirmed this for him? How does this principle relate to marriage?

Keller says that he can guarantee that all married couples will sometimes “fall out of like” with one another. Is this true in your experience? How do you sustain a marriage during those times?

Re-read Keller’s words at the end of the chapter about the love that parents have for children. What would happen if we applied this same biblical pattern of love to our marriages?

Re-read the last two paragraphs of this chapter. What does Keller say we ought to speak to our hearts when we’re not feeling love for our spouses?

**Marriage Link**

[Watch this Joni Mitchell performance of her song “My Old Man”](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lGebF49Vw8) from the *Johnny Cash Show* in 1970. [Click here](http://jonimitchell.com/music/song.cfm?id=159) to read the lyrics. What would Tim Keller likely say in response to the sentiments she expresses here?