



# guidelines for living

*a 5 minute message*

February 14, 2018

SECRETS OF A LASTING LOVE

(with Bonnie, Harold and Darlene Sala)

**Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5:21**

BONNIE: I'm Bonnie Sala, guest host of Guidelines for Living. In this special message today, my parents, Guidelines founders Harold & Darlene Sala are going to let us in on a few of the secrets of their 58-year marriage.

Dad, let's get right to the good stuff! What's Lesson #1?

HAROLD: **Our secret is simple: each of us lives entirely for the other, and both of us live for the Lord.** Both of us are committed to the same thing --God's purpose and will for our lives, so we stumble into each other's arms always wanting the very best for the other person. Having worked and counseled with many people in troubled marriages, I have come to the conclusion that the greatest problem in marriage today is pure, unadulterated selfishness--"me first!" I have often referred to it as the AYMF problem--"after me, you're first!"

DARLENE: **Lesson #2 would be that we try to focus on each other's strengths, not weaknesses.** We had been married only a few months when we left to do evangelism in Europe and in the course of that trip we had the privilege of seeing the amazing Grand-Place of Brussels. Evening had come and it was time to head back to our hotel. I thought we should go "this" way, and Harold thought we should go "that" way. After walking "this" way for what seemed like miles and not arriving at our hotel, we figured out that Harold is better with geography than I am, a conclusion that has proved true most of our 58 years together. I, however, tend to be able to better judge people and accurately make decisions about personality and temperament.

HAROLD: **Lesson #3 is: Strive to let each be his or her own person.** I often call this the "Lapidoth Principle!" Never heard of Lapidoth? You can read about him in Judges 4 of the Old Testament. His wife, however, got more press in her day. Her name was Deborah, and she was memorialized as "a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth who was leading Israel at that time" (Judges 4:4). In all probability,



# guidelines for living

*a 5 minute message*

she was not only a wife, but a mother as well, yet she was gifted by the Holy Spirit and had an important ministry leading Israel. Lapidoth could well have said, “Women are supposed to stay at home, do the cooking, and raise the children,” but he affirmed her gifts and calling. Happiness in a marriage is inversely proportioned to the ability of each to affirm the gifts and the calling of God in the lives of each other!”

**DARLENE: Lesson #4 is Learning to Cope with “Stuff!”** Every marriage will eventually be confronted with what we call “stuff”-- the unexpected that happens when one of you messes up! Like when Harold left our passports locked in a hotel safe while on an international trip! At times like this, you have two choices: realize we’re human and “stuff happens,” or hurt the one we love by saying things we will later regret.

**HAROLD: And finally, and most importantly, Lesson #5 is Stay Spiritually Connected to Each Another.** Early in our marriage we formed a habit that has been with us throughout the years and will be with us for the rest of the journey: read Scripture and have prayer together every morning! I have challenged people: “If you and your husband or wife have read the Bible together daily, have prayed together, and have gone to church together and yet your marriage has failed, let me know about it!” I have yet to hear of one who could honestly say, “We did that! And yet our marriage failed!”

**BONNIE:** Yes, I’ll always remember you and mom praying together at the kitchen table early each morning! Thank you for that powerful example.

Resource reading: Philippians 2:1-11