



# NEW HEART BEAT DEVOTIONS

## Our Ruby Anniversary

*In high school, I was turned down for a date and did not ask anyone else out. During the second week of college, I remember praying to the Lord for a steady girlfriend. The next week, I sat next to a girl on the college bus. Within a few days, I got my wish. I still remember my first kiss ever. Within a few months, she met my parents. But then, I felt that we were moving too fast. Over the next year, I broke up with her four times. She left college but she kept in touch. (After that, I tried but never developed more than a friendship relationship with the other college girls.) At college graduation, she came back to see me. Then for four years after graduation, she would call and write from hundreds of miles away. The last time I heard from her was when she tried to be at my wedding. I knew in my heart she was not the one for me.*

*After college years, I tried but never developed more than a friendship relationship those of the opposite sex, locally. (I remember to a church service with my sister where we were announced as Charles and Karen Stambaugh. We were asked if we had any little ones. I replied, "Oh, we are not married. We just live together.") I even tried blind dates. (I know now why they call them blind dates.) Nothing ever clicked.*

*Then for a church banquet, I was set up with a 24-year-old. I know nothing about her, not her phone number, address or even her name. I was told you go to Yoe, then turn left then right, third back door of the row homes. Well, I got my left and rights backwards. I knocked on many back doors looking for someone whom I did not know. All I could do is yell "Yoe". Once I finally found the correct back door, I was given a long list of does and don'ts from her father. For months after that I was not perfect enough to her father. She just wanted me to get her out from her father's rule. I did not know what to do. I prayed and prayed to the Lord.*

*During those days, I would go on church visitation. This time, the Pastor took me to the home of a family of a first-time visitor. Living with them was their daughter, named Susan, who was my age. At the end of the visit, I stated that I had to get home to call my girlfriend. The next Sunday, I saw Susan at church. I asked if she would go to the park with me to discuss the issues I was having with my girlfriend's father. She said yes.*

*I remember that day, we shared a little about our past, Then I poured my heart out about the issue. She gave good advice, but I thought "She is interesting." I did not take her advice but quickly called my "girlfriend" and said "Sorry Charlie". The next date she met my parents and we held hands. Our third date was to church camp where everyone knew something was developing. Susan later told me that she knew on that first date that this was the one whom she was going to marry. It just took me a little longer to realize what I found.*

*I remember that first year of romance, love letters and surprises every day with late-night talks, kisses and hugs. My heart would just beat out of the chest just to see her again. I got permission to marry her from my Pastor, my parents, her parents, and her dog. Six months after that first date, on my, birthday which is on Valentines' Day, I gave her a "congratulations on your engagement" card. She was so excited that she forgot to say Yes. Six months later we tied the knot.*

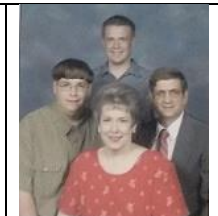
*Forty years later, we are still together. We made it through sickness and health, rich and poor, kids and grandkids, thick and thin, fights and love, highs and lows, stress and pleasure, temptations and godliness. Many ask what is the secret? Well, lots of prayer, commitment, compromise, counseling, communications, companionship, compassion, fighting, forgiving, appreciation and throw in some romance.*

*I strongly believe that God gave us each other to make us better and not bitter. Without each other, we would be incomplete, not able to fulfill our purposes in life, and not be conformed to do our Lord's service.*



*Charles Stambaugh*

*"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Mark 10:7-9*



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