



God On Marriage

Topics

Husbands & Their Hang-ups
Affair-Proofing Your Marriage
Fanning the Flames of Romance
A Biblical Blueprint for Marriage
The Wonderful World of Women
Keys for Effective Communication
Warning Signs of a Failing Marriage
Men Are From Earth & Women Are From Earth: Deal With It!

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When Christ Is Lord Of The Home
Colossians 3:18-21

- I. Wives Will Yield To Their Husbands. 3:18**
- 1) Wives will give their submission to their husbands.
 - 2) Wives will give their adoration to the Lord.
- II. Husbands Will Love Their Wives. 3:19**
- 1) Husbands will provide the best for their wives.
 - 2) Husbands will avoid bitterness towards their wives.
- III. Children Will Honor Their Parents. 3:20**
- 1) Obedient children will bless their earthly parents.
 - 2) Obedient children will please their heavenly Father.
- IV. Parents Will Encourage Their Children. 3:21**
- 1) Parents should not unfairly demean their children.
 - 2) Parents should not unwisely discourage their children.

God Knows Best!

Scientific research vindicates the Creator's idea of the family.

Marriage is one of the greatest things going. In a new book entitled *The Case for Marriage*, Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher argue convincingly, and against conventional wisdom, that married people are “happier, healthier, and better off financially.” Amazing isn't it. We are now discovering in popular culture what many of us already know. **God Knows Best!** Yes, even scientific research is now vindicating the Creator's idea of marriage and the family. For example, when we examine evidence on sex we discover God knows best.

Sex

- 1) In 1993 it was reported that 68 million Americans had a sexually transmitted disease.¹ Approximately 15.3 million Americans contract a STD annually. One in 4 of the victims are under age 20. Five of the 11 most common reportable infectious diseases in this country in 1998, the last year for which data are available, were STDs. And that doesn't include the most common STDs, herpes and human papillomavirus (HPV); the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) don't collect data on these. HPV causes over 90 percent of cancer and pre-cancer of the cervix, which, in turn, is causing the deaths of approximately 5,000 American women yearly. The number of lifetime sex partners is highly correlated with the likelihood of contracting a STD. Studies from the CDC clearly show that, on average, the younger a person is when he or she starts to have sex the more partners he or she is likely to have. Hence, delay sexual activity until marriage and avoid STDs. Furthermore, the likelihood of contracting a STD during marriage is negligible. Thus, more marriage means fewer STDs.² And keep this in mind: many STD's are incurable, others can render you sterile, and some are potentially fatal. It is an amazing reality to think if we would simply do sex God's way, one man with one woman within the covenant of marriage for life, every single STD would disappear from the planet in one generation.
- 2) We now know sex is more satisfying for those who wait until marriage. A survey of sexuality, which was called the “most authoritative ever” by U. S. News & World Report, conducted jointly by researchers at State University of New York at Stony Brook and the University of Chicago, found that of all sexually active people, the people who reported being the most physically pleased and emotionally satisfied were married couples.³ One writer put it rather straightforward, “Promoting marriage in America will mean for a lot more happy men and women.” Sex in America reported that married sex beats all else. For example: “Married women had much higher rates of usually or always having orgasms, 75 percent, as compared to women who were never married and not cohabiting, 62 percent.” And, the researchers wrote, “those having the most sex and enjoying it the most are the married people.”⁴
- 3) Not only is sex better in marriage, it is best if you have had only one sexual partner in a lifetime. We now know “physical and emotional satisfaction start to decline when people

¹ Patricia Donovan, “A Prescription of Sexually Transmitted Diseases,” *Issues in Science and Technology*, (1993), 9:4, p. 40.

² Joe S. McIlhaney, “Improve Nation: Boost Marriage,” *Knight Ridder / Tribune News Service* (Sept. 29, 2000).

³ Robert T. Michael, John H. Gagnon and Edward O. Lauman, *Sex in America: A Definitive Survey*, (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1994) p. 124.

⁴ Joe S. McIlhaney, “Improve Nation: Boost Marriage.”

have had more than one sexual partner.”⁵ God knows best about sex. God knows best about marriage.

Marriage

- 1) We have discovered that married people have healthier unions than couples who live together. Research from Washington State University revealed, “Cohabiting couples compared to married couples have less healthy relationship.”⁶
- 2) Married people are generally better off in all measures of well-being. Researchers at UCLA explained that “Cohabitors experienced significantly more difficulty in [subsequent] marriages with [issues of] adultery, alcohol, drugs and independence than couples who had not cohabited.”⁷ In fact, marriages preceded by cohabitation are 50 to 100 percent more likely to break up than those marriages not preceded by cohabitation.⁸
- 3) “Wife beating” should more properly be called “girlfriend beating.” According to the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, “aggression is at least twice as common among cohabitators as it is among married partners.”⁹
- 4) Married people enjoy better physical and mental health. Dr. Robert Coombs, a biobehavioral scientist at UCLA, conducted a review of more than 130 studies on the relationship between well-being and marital status, concluding that “there is an intimate link between the two.” Married people have significantly lower rates of alcoholism, suicide, psychiatric care, and higher rates of self-reported happiness.¹⁰
- 5) Those in married relationships experienced a lower rate of severe depression than people in any other category.¹¹ The annual rate of major depression per 100 is as follows:

Married (never divorced)	1.5
Never married	2.4
Divorced once	4.1
Cohabiting	5.1
Divorced twice	5.8

The most careful recent study of the mental health of the married and unmarried looked at a nationwide sample of nearly 13,000 people. Married women were about 33% more likely than unmarried to rate their emotional health as “excellent.” Unmarried women were more than twice as likely as married women to rate their emotional health as “poor.”

- 6) Researchers at the University of Massachusetts say married people experience less disease, morbidity and disability than do those who are divorced or separated. Their explanation: “One of the most consistent observations in health research is that the married enjoy better

⁵ Michael *et al*, p. 125.

⁶ Jan E. Stets (1993), “The Link Between Past and Present Intimate Relationship,” *Journal of Family Issues*, 114, p. 251.

⁷ Michael D. Newcomb and P. M. Bentler (1980), “Assessment of Personality and Demographic Aspects of Cohabitation and Marital Success,” *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 44, p. 21.

⁸ William Axinn and Arland Thorton (1992), “The Relationship Between Cohabitation and Divorce: Selectivity or Casual Influence?” *Demography*, 29, p. 358.

⁹ Jan E. Stets (1991), “Cohabiting and Marital Aggression: The Role of Isolation,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53, pp. 669-670.

¹⁰ Robert Coombs (1991), “Marital Status and Personal Well-Being: A Literature Review,” *Family Relations*, 40, pp. 97-102.

¹¹ Lee Robins and Darrel Regier, *Psychiatric Disorders in America: The Epidemiologic Catchment Area Study* (New York: Free Press, 1991), p. 72.

health than those of other [relational] statuses.”¹² One study concerning men in particular revealed that 9 out of 10 men married at 48 will still be alive at 65, while only 6 out of 10 single men will be.

- 7) Men and women are at much greater risk of being assaulted if they are not married, reported the U.S. Department of Justice in 1994.¹³ The rates per 1,000 for general aggravated assaults against:

<u>Males</u>	
Married	5.5
Divorced or separated	13.6
Never married	23.4

<u>Females</u>	
Married	3.1
Divorced or separated	9.1
Never married	11.9

God knows best about marriage. God knows best about children.

Children

- 1) The best environment to raise children is in a home with a daddy and a mother who are married to each other. On average, children do better in all areas when raised by two married parents who live together. The most authoritative work done in this area is by Dr. Sara McLanahan of Princeton University. In *Growing Up With a Single Parent*, she explains, “Children who grow up in a household with only one biological parent are worse off, on average, than children who grow up...with both of their biological parents, regardless of the parents’ race or educational background.”¹⁴ Adolescents who have lived apart from one of their parents during some period of childhood are:
- A. twice as likely to drop out of high school.
 - B. twice as likely to have a child before age 20.
 - C. one-and-a-half times as likely to be idle—out of school and out of work—in their late twenties.”¹⁵

A study conducted at the University of Utah said that parental divorce hurts young children because it often leaves them in the care of highly stressed and irritable mothers.¹⁶

- 2) Children without fathers more often have lowered academic performance, more cognitive and intellectual deficits, increased adjustment problems, and higher risks for psychosexual development problems.”¹⁷ Violent children are 11 times more likely not to live with their fathers and 6 times more likely to have parents who are not married. Children not living with

¹² Catherine K. Relssman and Naomi Gerstel (1985), “Marital Dissolution and Health: Do Males or Females Have Greater Risk?” *Social Science and Medicine*, 20, p. 627.

¹³ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. “Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1992,” NCJ-145125, March 1994, p. 31.

¹⁴ Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, *Growing Up With a Single Parent* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994) p. 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Family in America* (Feb. 2000), 2 nr.

¹⁷ George Rekers, “Research on the Essential Characteristics of the Father’s Role for Family Well-Being.” Testimony before the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. House of Representatives, 99th Congress, 2nd session, February 25, 1986, pp. 59-60.

both biological parents are 4 times as likely to be suspended or expelled from school.¹⁸ The **Heritage Foundation** noted in June, 2000, “A million children a year see their parents divorce. Only 42 percent of teens aged 14 – 18 live in a “first family,” an intact, two-parent married family. Children of divorce experience “anger, fear, sadness, worry, rejection, conflicting loyalties, lowered self-confidence, heightened anxiety, loneliness, more depressed moods, more suicidal thoughts,” says the Heritage report, “The Effects of Divorce on America” by Dr. Patrick Fagan and Robert Rector. Compared to kids in intact homes children of divorce face startling risks. They are: 12 times more liable to be incarcerated as juveniles; 14 times more prone to be physically abused by a single mother, and 33 time more at risk if she cohabits; 3 times more apt to get pregnant, and males commit suicide at 6-fold higher rates.” The report also notes that “many children of divorce become dysfunctional adults: “Even 30 years after the divorce, negative long-term effects were clearly present in the income, health and behavior of many of the grown offspring.” They have more failed romantic relationships, a greater number of sexual partners, are 2 – 3 times as apt to cohabit, are less trusting of fiancées, less giving to them and are twice as likely to divorce. When both are from divorced homes their risk of divorce is as much as 620 percent higher in early years of marriage. Thus the “marital instability of one generation is passed on to the next.”¹⁹ Dr. David Popenoe, a noted family scholar from Rutgers University, explains that there can be no serious debate over this issue: “I know of few other bodies of data in which the weight of evidence is so decisively on one side of the issue. On the whole, for children, two-parent families are preferable...If our prevailing views on family structure hinged solely on scholarly evidence, the current debate never would have arisen in the first place.”²⁰ Further, a sociologist at the University of Pennsylvania said: “most studies show that children in stepfamilies do not do better than children in single-parent families; indeed, many indicate that, on average, children in remarriages do worse.”²¹ It is disturbing to note that stepfamilies are the second-fastest growing family structure in America. The fastest is created by out-of-wedlock births.²²

- 3) Even the death of a parent is not as devastating to a child as losing one by divorce or desertion. Why? Single-parent families created by the death of a spouse have a natural protective mechanism distinguishing them from other single-parent families. Dr. James Egan, a child psychiatrist at Children’s Hospital in Washington, D.C., provocatively asserts, “A dead father is a more effective father than a missing father.”²³ When a father (or mother) dies, he still maintains a place of authority, influence and moral leadership in the home. Parents who have departed due to death usually leave positive reputations. Their pictures remain on the wall, they are talked about positively, and negative behavior on the part of a child can be corrected with a simple reminder: “Would your dad (or mom) approve of that

¹⁸ *Business Daily*, 11-12-97.

¹⁹ Mike McManus, “Heritage Foundation Calls for Political Leadership on Marriage,” *Ethics & Religion* (June 22, 2000: Column #982).

²⁰ David Popenoe, “The Controversial Truth,” *New York Times*, December 26, 1992, A-21.

²¹ Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., “History and Current Status of Divorce in the United States,” *The Future of Children*, 4, no. 1 (Center for the Future of Children, Spring 1994), p. 37.

²² David Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), p. 307.

²³ James Egan, M.D., “When Fathers Are Absent.” Address given at the National Summit on Fatherhood, sponsored by the National Fatherhood Initiative: Dallas, October 27, 1994.

kind of behavior?” If the father has abandoned the child or was never identified, the answer to that question is either “Who cares?” or, even worse, “Who?”

In an article entitled “How Kids Mourn,” *Newsweek* reported, “The death of a parent can have devastating psychological consequences, including anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, underachievement and aggression. But so can a lot of other things, and losing a parent [by death] is actually less devastating than divorce. ‘We know that children tend to do better after a parental death than a divorce,’ says sociologist Andrew Cherlin of Johns Hopkins, ‘and that’s a stunning statistic, because you’d think death would be harder.’”²⁴ Actually there is nothing stunning about this at all. When a child, big or small, loses a parent by death their mind reasons something like this: “if my daddy could be here he would be here. But he’s dead and so he can’t.” On the other hand if a child loses a parent by desertion or divorce, their mind reasons differently saying: “if my daddy wanted to be here he would be here. I guess he doesn’t want to be here and ... it must be my fault.” This is the devastating fallout on children wounded by a divorce, a wound we now know often follows them into adulthood.²⁵

And now as the 1990’s close out and a new millennium dawns, additional new research has come forth that makes the argument for marriage with even greater force. As noted earlier, in their blockbuster, *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier and Better Off Financially*, authors Linda Waite, a professor of sociology at the University of Chicago, and Maggie Gallagher, director of the Marriage Project at the Institute for American Values in New York, reveal married women living with their husbands are much less likely to be victims of domestic violence and even violence from strangers than are their single, separated, divorced or cohabiting sisters. For most women, marriage is a safe haven. Marriage changes the relationship of the marriage partners for the good, giving them a stake in the well-being of each other and the family in a way other forms of “partnership” cannot. The public promise of marriage “changes the way you think about yourself and your beloved; it changes the way you act and think about the future; and it changes how other people and other institutions treat you as well.” An extensive survey of the data on marriage shows that married people, in general, are significantly healthier, both physically and mentally, than their non-married peers: They are far more affluent, even when living on only one income; women are safer, and men, even from backgrounds at “high-risk” for violence, are far less likely to commit crime; they report more satisfying sex lives than their single peers, even those who are cohabiting; and overall they are significantly happier than folks in any other kind of relationship “arrangement.”²⁶

God knows best. The evidence is absolutely overwhelming and indisputable. He knows best about sex, marriage and children. However, has the “case for marriage” received a positive verdict in my own heart?

²⁴ “How Kids Mourn,” *Newsweek*, (September 22, 1997), 58.

²⁵ See the major work on this by Judith Wallerstein, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce*.

²⁶ Betsy Hart, “Both Sexes Thrive in Marriage,” *Scripps Howard News Service*, (October 6, 2000).

Building A Christian Family

How to Function Biblically in Today's Family

I. The Responsibilities of a Christian Husband/Father.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1) Love (Agape type) | Eph. 5:18-33; Col. 3:19 |
| 2) Lead | 1 Cor. 11:3 |
| 3) Labor | 1 Tim. 5:8 |
| 4) Learn | Deut. 6; 1Cor. 14:35; Eph. 6:4; 1 Pet. 3:7 |

II. The Responsibilities of a Christian Wife/Mother.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1) Submit | Eph. 5:18-33; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-6 |
| 2) Support | Prov. 31:10-31 |
| 3) Stabilize | 1 Pet. 3:4-6 |
| 4) Socialize | Titus 2:3-5 |

III. The Responsibilities of Christian Children.

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|----------|------------------------|
| 1) Obey | Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20 |
| 2) Honor | Deut. 5:16; Eph. 6:2-3 |
| 3) Repay | 1 Tim. 5:4 |

Building A Christian Marriage
What Did God Intend?

I. Biblical People

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. People committed to the family. | Col. 3:18-21 |
| 2. People committed to each other. | John 13:34-35 |
| 3. People committed to life-long love. | 1 Cor. 13; Phil. 1:9-10 |
| 4. People committed to God's will. | Rom. 12:1-2 |

II. Biblical Purposes

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|---------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Complete Companionship | Gen. 2:18-23 |
|---------------------------|--------------|

Keys: Communication, Conflict Resolution, Commitment

Times of Crisis:	a) Arrival of Children;	b) Adolescence Period;
	c) Empty Nest;	d) Death of a Loved One;
	e) Financial Problems;	f) Care of Elderly Parents

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|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2. Sexual Fulfillment | 1 Cor. 7:3-5; Heb. 13:4 |
| 3. Responsible Parenting | Psalms 127, 128 |
| 4. Family Unity | Deut. 6:4-25 |
| 5. Church Symbolism | Eph. 5:18-33 |

III. Biblical Principles

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Monogamy | Gen. 2:24-25 |
| 2. Fidelity | Matt. 19:1-9 |
| 3. Heterosexuality | 1 Cor. 6:9-11 |
| 4. Mutuality | Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 7:1-7; Phil. 2:3-5 |

“Biblical people become biblical partners who can become biblical parents.”

**When a Man Loves a Woman: How to Be the
Husband God Meant You to Be**

Ephesians 5:25-33

1 Peter 3:1-7

When a Man Loves a Woman:

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|----------------|--|--------------------------|
| I. | <u>He will care for her by loving her.</u> | Ephesians 5:25-33 |
| | 1. His love will be sacrificial. | 5:25 |
| | 2. His love will be sanctifying. | 5:26-27 |
| | 3. His love will be sensitive. | 5:28 |
| | 4. His love will be satisfying. | 5:29-30 |
| | 5. His love will be specific. | 5:31-33 |
|
II. |
<u>He will care for her by knowing her.</u> |
1 Peter 3:7 |
| | 1. Be a <u>spiritual leader</u> . | Psalm 1 |
| | 2. Give <u>personal affirmation/appreciation</u> . | Proverbs 31:28-31 |
| | 3. Speak <u>romance</u> in a language she understands. | Song of Solomon 6:4-10 |
| | 4. Initiate <u>intimate conversation</u> . | Song of Solomon 2:8-14 |
| | 5. Always be <u>honest and open</u> . | Ephesians 4:15 |
| | 6. Provide <u>home support and stability</u> . | 1 Timothy 5:8 |
| | 7. Demonstrate <u>family commitment</u> . | Ephesians 6:4 |

7 Ways to Bless Your Wife

A husband can be a blessing to his wife by loving her as
Christ loved the Church and giving her specific gifts of love:

1. **Be a spiritual leader.**
Be a man of courage, conviction, commitment, compassion, and character. Take the initiative in cultivating a spiritual environment for the family. Become a capable and competent student of God's Word and live out before all a life founded on the Word of God. Lead your wife in becoming a woman of God, and take the lead in training the children in the things of the Lord (Psalm 1; Ephesians 5:23-27).
2. **Give her personal affirmation/appreciation.**
Praise her for personal attributes and qualities. Praise her virtues as a wife, mother, and homemaker. Openly commend her, in the presence of others, as a marvelous mate, friend, lover, and companion. Help her feel that, to you, no one is more important in this world (Proverbs 31:28-29; Song of Solomon 4:1-7, 6:4-9, 7:1-9).
3. **Show personal affection (romance).**
Shower her with timely and generous displays of affection. Tell her how much you care for her with a steady flow of words, cards, flowers, gifts and common courtesies. Remember, affection is the environment in which sexual union is enjoyed and a wonderful marriage developed (Song of Solomon 6: 10,13; Ephesians 5:28-29, 33).
4. **Initiate intimate conversation.**
Talk with her at the feeling level (heart to heart). Listen to her thoughts (i.e., her heart) about the events of her day with sensitivity, interest, and concern. Conversations with her convey a desire to understand her not to change her (Song of Solomon 2:8-14, 8:13-14; 1 Peter 3:7).
5. **Always be honest and open.**
Look into her eyes and, in love, always tell the truth (Ephesians 4:15). Explain your plans and actions clearly and completely because you are responsible for her. Lead her to trust you and feel secure (Proverbs 15:22-23).
6. **Provide home support and stability.**
Take hold of the responsibility to house, feed, and clothe the family. Provide and protect, and do not feel sorry for yourself when things get tough. Look for concrete ways to improve home life. Raise the marriage and family to a safer and more fulfilling level. Remember, the husband/father is the security hub of the family (2 Timothy 5:8).
7. **Demonstrate family commitment.**
After the Lord Jesus, put your wife and family first. Commit time and energy to spiritual, moral and intellectual development of the children. For example, pray with them (especially at night by the bedside), read to them, engage in sports with them and take them on other outings. Do not play the fool's game of working long hours, trying to get ahead, while your children and spouse languish in neglect (Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:19-20).

Adapted From:
Toward A Growing Marriage
By: Gary Chapman (p. 162-164)

Suggestions Wives Have Made to Husbands

How to Make Romance and Sexual Relations More Meaningful

1. Show more affection; give attention throughout the day; come in after work and kiss me on my neck and ask me about my day.
2. Spend more time in preparation for intimacy; love, play and romantic remarks are important.
3. Encourage and be open to sexual intimacy at various times rather than always at night when tired.
4. Be more sympathetic when I am really sick.
5. Be the aggressive one instead of waiting for me to make the first move.
6. Accept me as I am; accept me even when you see the worst side of me.
7. Tell me that you love me at times other than when we are in bed; phone sometimes just to say, "I love you!" Do not be ashamed to tell me, "I love you" in front of others.
8. While I am bathing or showering, find soft music on the radio or dim the lights and light a candle.
9. Treat me as your wife, not as one of the children.
10. Honor Christ as the Head of our home.
11. Write love notes occasionally; send homemade love cards.
12. Talk to me after our lovemaking; make caresses after our lovemaking and hold me.
13. Be sweet and loving (at least one hour) before initiating sex.
14. Show an interest in what I have to say in the morning.
15. Do not seem as though you are bored with me in the evening.
16. Help me wash dinner dishes and clean the kitchen.
17. Go to bed at a decent hour, rather than staying up late and watching television.

18. Say sweet little nothings and be silly.
19. Bring me a flower or candy occasionally, when you can afford it.
20. Occasionally buy me lingerie, perfume and so forth.
21. Pay romantic attention to me (hold hands, kiss) even during relatively unromantic activities (television watching, car riding, walking in the mall, etc.).
22. Help me feel that I am sexually and romantically attractive by complimenting me more often.
23. Tell me what you enjoy and what excites you; express your desires more openly; share yourself more fully with me.
24. Express appreciation for the little things I have done that day (e.g., say the meal was good, appreciate the tidy house, etc.).
25. Pray with me about the problems and victories you are having; let me express my own needs to you.
26. Appreciate the beauty of God's creation and share this appreciation with me.
27. Take more of the responsibility for getting the children settled so I can relax and share more of the evening with you.
28. Be patient with me; do not ridicule my desire to prolong our intimacy. I enjoy the time we share.
29. Do not approach lovemaking as a ritualistic activity; make each time a new experience. Do not let lovemaking get boring by doing the same things over and over; try new things, new places, new ideas.
30. Never try to make love with me when you are harboring bad feelings toward me or you know things are not right; let there be harmony between us so that our lovemaking can indeed be an act of love.
31. Make me feel that I have worth as a person (not just as a wife and mother), warts and all!
32. Think of something nice to say about me and do it in front of others often.
33. Demonstrate agape love as well as eros. I need both.
34. Spend some quiet times with me, just sharing life.
35. Allow me to meet your needs even when I am tired or preoccupied.

“The Lover’s Quotient Test”

We need to find out just how creative you are as a husband! Let’s take the following “Lover’s Quotient Test.” Give yourself ten points for each item on the following list if you have done it once in the past six months. If you have done any item on the list two or more times, you get twenty points. A word of advice: don’t take the results too seriously – but do take them seriously enough!

- ❑ Have you phoned her during the week and asked her out for one evening that weekend without telling her where you are taking her? A mystery date is what we have in mind!
- ❑ Have you given her an evening completely off? You clean up the kitchen; you take care of the kids; you get things settled for the night.
- ❑ Have you gone parking with her at some safe and secluded spot and kissed and talked for an evening?
- ❑ Have you drawn a bath for her after dinner? Put a scented candle in the bathroom; added bath oil to the bath; sent her there right after dinner, and then you cleaned up and put the kids to bed while she relaxed. (In order to get any points for this you must also clean up the tub!)
- ❑ Have you phoned her from work to tell her you were thinking nice thoughts about her? (You get no points for this one if you asked her what was in the mail or what is for dinner!)
- ❑ Have you written her a love letter and sent it special delivery? (First class mail will do.)
- ❑ Have you made a tape recording of all the reasons you have for loving her? Given it to her wrapped in a sheer negligee?!
- ❑ Have you given her a day off? Send her out to do what she wants. You clean the house, fix the meals, and take care of the kids. (My wife says you ought to get thirty points for this one!)
- ❑ Have you put a special effects recording of ocean waves on tape and played it while you had a luau on the living room floor? Other creative evening adventures may be substituted!
- ❑ Have you spent a whole evening (more than two hours) sharing mutual goals and planning family objectives with her and the children?

- ❑ Have you ever planned a surprise weekend? You make the reservations and arrange for someone to keep the children for two days. Tell her to pack her suitcase, but don't tell her where you are going (just be sure it's not the Super Bowl). Make it someplace romantic.
 - ❑ Have you picked up your clothes just one time in the past six months and put them on hangers?
 - ❑ Have you given her an all-over body massage with scented lotion? (If not, why not?!)
 - ❑ Have you spent time in intimacy that included at least two hours of romantic conversation, shared dreams and much variety of approach and caresses?
 - ❑ Have you repaired something around the house which she has not requested?
 - ❑ Have you kissed her passionately for at least thirty seconds one morning just before you left for work, or one evening when you walked in the door?
 - ❑ Have you brought her an unexpected little gift like perfume, a ring, or an item of clothing?
 - ❑ Have you replaced her old negligee?
-

This ridiculous test has been given to men all over the country. Let's see how your scores compare with theirs:

200 – 360	Lover	Awesome! You are the man! You undoubtedly have one of the most satisfied wives in the country. You are in the top 1%!
150 – 200	Good	Way to go! Very few make this category. You are a top ten candidate! Your wife probably smiles a lot!
100 – 150	Average	This husband is the norm and usually not very exciting as a lover. You are steady, but there are not many fireworks in the area of romance from your wife's perspective.
50 – 100	Klutz	Boring! You can do better than this! Too many score in this category. I hope you will begin to work to move up soon.
0 – 50	Typical Husband	Ouch! Sad! Sad! Sad! There is a huge difference between a "typical husband" and a "lover." The only reason your wife is still married to you is that she's a Christian. She has unusual capacity for unconditional acceptance (of you!), and there are some verses in the Bible that sustain her.

**Put Your Husband Where Your Heart Is:
The Irresistible Wife**

Ephesians 5:21-24,33

Put Your Husband Where Your Heart Is By:

I. Honoring him with your submission.

**Ephesians 5:21-24;
1 Peter 3:1-5**

II. Honoring him with your admiration.

**Ephesians 5:33;
1 Peter 3:1-5**

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Give him admiration & respect. | Ephesians 5:33;
1 Peter 3:6 |
| 2. Provide sexual fulfillment. | Proverbs 5:15-19;
Song of Solomon 4:9-5:1;
1 Corinthians 7:1-5;
Hebrews 13:4 |
| 3. Cultivate home support. | Proverbs 19:13; 21:9,19;
25:24. |
| 4. Strive to be an attractive wife. | Song of Solomon 1:8-10;
2:2; 6:13-7:9 |
| 5. Become his best friend. | Song of Solomon 8:1-2,6 |

5 Ways To Bless Your Husband

A wife can be a blessing to her husband by honoring him as the Church honors Christ and giving him specific gifts of love:

1. **Give him admiration and respect.**

Work to understand and appreciate his value and achievements as his wife. Remind him of his capabilities and gifts and help him maintain his walk with God and also his self-confidence. Be proud of your husband, not out of duty, but as an expression of sincere admiration for the man you love and with whom you have chosen to share your life (Ephesians 5:22-23, 33).

2. **Provide sexual fulfillment.**

Become an excellent sexual partner to him. Study your own response to recognize and understand what brings out the best in you; then communicate this information to your husband, and together learn to have a sexual relationship that you both find repeatedly satisfying and enjoyable (Proverbs 5:15-19; Song of Solomon 4:9-5:1; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Hebrews 13:4).

3. **Cultivate home support.**

Create a home that offers him an atmosphere of peace and quiet and refuge. Manage the home and care of the children. The home should be a place of rest and rejuvenation. Remember, the wife/mother is the emotional hub of the family (Proverbs 9:13, 19:13, 21:9, 19, 25:24).

4. **Strive to be an attractive wife.**

Pursue inner and outer beauty in that order. Cultivate a Christlike spirit in your inner self. Keep yourself physically fit with diet and exercise, wear your hair, makeup, and clothes in a way that your husband finds attractive and tasteful. Let your husband be pleased and proud of you in public, but also in private (Song of Solomon 1:8-10, 2:2, 6:13-7:9; 1 Peter 3:1-5)!

5. **Become his best friend.**

Develop mutual interests with your husband. Discover those activities your husband enjoys the most and seek to become proficient in them. If you learn to enjoy them, join him in them. If you do not enjoy them, encourage him to consider others that you can enjoy together. Become your husband's best friend so that he repeatedly associates you with the activities he enjoys most (Song of Solomon 8:1-2,6).

Adapted from:

Toward A Growing Marriage

by Gary Chapman (p. 161-162)

Suggestions Husbands Have Made to Wives
How to Make Romance & Sexual Relations More Meaningful

1. Be attractive at bedtime – nothing in the hair or strange on the face. Wear something besides granny gowns and pajamas.
2. Be aggressive occasionally.
3. Be innovative and imaginative.
4. Do not be ashamed to show you enjoy being with me.
5. Do not always be on a time schedule that places sex when we are both physically tired.
6. Dress more appealingly when I am at home (no housecoats, slippers, etc.).
7. Do things to catch my attention: remember that a man is easily excited by sight.
8. Communicate more openly about sex.
9. Go to bed earlier.
10. Do not make me feel guilty at night for my inconsistencies during the day (not being affectionate enough, etc.)
11. Prolong the joy of intimacy.
12. Be more aware of my needs and desires as a man.
13. Allow variety in the time for the sexual intimacy (not always at night).
14. Show more desire and understand that caressing and foreplay are as important to me as they are to you.
15. Do not allow yourself to remain upset over everyday events that go wrong.
16. Relax with me at least once a week.
17. Stop trying to look romantic rather than being romantic.

18. Clear your mind of daily things (today's and tomorrow's) and think about the matter on hand – love.
19. Do not try to fake enjoyment. Be authentic in your response to me.
20. Do not try to punish me by denying me sex or by giving it grudgingly.
21. Treat me like your lover.
22. Listen to my suggestions on what you can do to improve our sexual relationship.
23. Forgive me when I fall short of what I should be.
24. Tell me what I can do to be the sexual partner you desire.

Nourishing Your Love

Think back to what first attracted you to your husband and:

1. Show him admiration and appreciation.
2. Nurture his friendship.
3. Lower your expectations. (You married a real person!)
4. Watch your priorities. (Is he #1 after Jesus?!)
5. Enhance your love life.
6. Be forgiving. (Even as God in Christ has forgiven you. Eph. 4:32)

Adapted from Marie Pierson's article in Virtue.

The Twelve Steps to Intimacy

1. Eye to Body

A glance reveals much about a person - - sex, size, shape, age, personality and status. The importance people place on these criteria determines whether or not they will be attracted to each other.

2. Eye to Eye

When the man and woman exchange glances, their most natural reaction is to look away, usually with embarrassment. If their eyes meet again, they may smile, which signals that they might like to become better acquainted.

3. Voice to Voice

Their initial conversations are trivial, and include questions like “What is your name?” or “What do you do for a living?” During this long stage the two people learn much about each other’s opinions, pastimes, activities, habits, hobbies, likes and dislikes. If they’re compatible, they become friends.

4. Hand to Hand

The first instance of physical contact between the couple is usually on non-romantic occasions such as when the man helps the woman descend a high step or aids her across an obstacle. At this point either of the individuals can withdraw from the relationship without rejecting the other. However, if continued, hand to hand contact will eventually become an evidence of the couple’s romantic attachment to each other.

5. Hand to Shoulder

This affectionate embrace is still noncommittal. It is a “buddy” type position in which the man and woman are side-by-side. They are more concerned with the world in front of them than they are with each other. The hand to shoulder contact reveals a relationship that is more than a close friendship, but probably not real love.

6. Hand to Waist

Because this is something two normal people of the same sex would not do, it is clearly romantic. They are close enough to be sharing secrets or intimate language with each other. Yet, as they walk side-by-side with hand to waist they are still facing forward.

7. Face to Face

This level of contact involves gazing into one another’s eyes, hugging and kissing. If none of the previous steps were skipped, the man and woman will have developed a special code from experience that enables them to engage in deep communication with very few words. At this point sexual desire becomes an important factor in the relationship.

8. Hand to Head

This is an extension of the previous stage. The man and woman tend to cradle or stroke each other’s head while kissing or talking.

9. – 12. The Final Steps

The last four levels of involvement are distinctly sexual and private. They are:

9) Hand to Body

10) Mouth to Breast

11) Touching Below the Waist

12) Intercourse

Obviously, the last three steps of physical contact should be reserved for the marital relationship, particularly since they are immensely and progressively emotional and sensual.

What Happy Couples “Say” About Sex

1. They make sex a priority; it is important to them.
2. They make time for sex.
3. They stay emotionally intimate.
4. They know how to touch and what works.
5. They keep romance alive by meeting each other’s needs.
6. They keep their sexual anticipation alive.
7. They know how to play and foreplay (both in and out of bed).
8. They know how to talk to each other.
9. They remain lovers and friends.
10. They maintain a sense of humor and know how to laugh.
11. They want to please each other.
12. They cherish each other as a sacred and precious gift of God.

How to Bless Rather Than Curse Your Relationships

Philippians 2:1-5

1. Make a choice (commitment) to accept that person as they are recognizing that they were made in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27) and that Christ died for them (John 3:16). Accepting them does not entail always affirming their actions (Phil. 2:3-5).
2. Receive that person as someone valuable in your life. God will use them to conform you more to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28-30).
3. Accept personal responsibility for that relationship. Do not play the blame game (Prov. 14:16; 15:12, 32; 28:13; Eph. 4:29-31).
4. Rejoice and value the differences, looking for the positive. (See the Song of Solomon).
5. Determine to communicate in a godly manner (Prov. 4:24; 10:11, 19-21, 31-32; 26:20-28) by:
 - a) Sharing (Prov. 11:13-14; 25:11-12; Eph. 4:15).
 - b) Listening (Prov. 12:15; 15:22; 19:27; 21:23; 29:11, 20; James 1:19).
 - c) Talking (Prov. 15:1, 23, 28; 16:24; Eph. 4:25-27).
6. Never assume anything. Grow in your understanding of others (Prov. 3:3-4, 7; 17:27-28; 18:1-2, 13, 15; 19:2).
7. Be an encourager. (Prov. 3:27; 12:25; 15:15; 17:22, 1 Cor. 8:1; 13:7).
8. Be real: be honest and willing to admit your own failures. Learn to say, "I am sorry, I was wrong. Will you forgive me?" (Eph. 4:32; Jam. 5:16).
9. Accept yourself in Christ (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 1:3-14). It will free you to love and accept others without either a superiority or inferiority complex (1 Cor. 13:4).
10. Be a *Lover*: Learn to speak in a language that they will understand (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

Words
Touch
Service
Gifts
Time

Men Are From Earth and Women Are From Earth: Deal With It!
Song of Solomon 2:15

I. Beware of the Foxes of Danger.

- Warning #1: A marriage will get into trouble when God's role for the husband and the wife is reversed or abused.
(*The Fox of Role Reversal*)
- Warning #2: A marriage will get into trouble when initial, sensual love fails to develop into true intimacy.
(*The Fox of Intimacy Stagnation*)
- Warning #3: A marriage will get into trouble when it is not being nourished by regular and genuine communication.
(*The Fox of Silence / Stonewalling*)
- Warning #4: A marriage will get into trouble when forces or persons outside the marriage encroach on the all-important time the two of you need alone to build and maintain a healthy relationship. (*The Fox of Time Ill Spent*)
- Warning #5: A marriage will get into trouble when real and personal needs are being met more and more outside the marriage.
(*The Fox of Outside Interference*)
- Warning #6: A marriage will get into trouble if the wedding vows are considered conditional, marriage is no longer considered a sacred covenant before God, and divorce begins to be considered as a possible solution to an unhappy situation.
(*The Fox of Fatigue*)
- Warning #7: A marriage will get into trouble if the man and woman fail to understand and appreciate and enjoy just how really different they are from one another.
(*The Fox of Misunderstanding*)

Nine Warning Signs Of Infidelity

1. Feeling of “going through the marriage motions.”
2. Inventing excuses to visit someone of the opposite sex.
3. Increasing male/female contacts in normal environments (e.g.: work, choir, recreation).
4. Being preoccupied with thoughts about another person.
5. Exchanging of gifts with a “friend” of the opposite sex.
6. Making daily/weekly contact with someone by phone.
7. Putting yourself in situations where a “friend or employee” might become more.
8. Having to touch, embrace or glance at a person of the opposite sex.
9. Spending time alone with anyone of the opposite sex.

Seven Myths About Extra-Marital Affairs

1. Everybody’s doing it.
2. It’s good for the relationship.
3. A person cannot possibly love his or her spouse and be involved with someone else.
4. It’s the other spouses responsibility (If you were a good spouse, your mate wouldn’t be having an affair.)
5. The other person is more sexy than the spouse.
6. Pretending not to know is healthier.
7. The marriage is over.

Men and Women: Just How Are They Different?

II. Beware of the Foxes of Difference.

1) Communication

- ◆ Listening is hard work for men; it brings happiness to women
- ◆ Talking can intimidate men; it nurtures intimacy for women
- ◆ Men tend to report facts; women want to share feelings
- ◆ Men feel compelled to offer solutions; women want affirmation and assurance
- ◆ Men tend to compartmentalize; women think more integratively
- ◆ Men don't respond to hints; women are subtle and coded in their conversation

2) Romance

- ◆ Romance for men means sex; for women it can mean lots of things
- ◆ Romance for men is highly visual; for women it is extremely relational/personal
- ◆ Romance for a man is what he sees; for a woman is what she feels

3) Needs

- ◆ Women need to feel valued; men need to feel successful
- ◆ Women need to be heard; men need to be praised
- ◆ Women want to be inter-dependent; men want to be self-sufficient

4) Self Worth

- ◆ Women value relational moments; men value occupational achievements
- ◆ Women fear neglect; men fear failure

5) Time

- ◆ Men do not think about time; women value quantity and quality of time
- ◆ Men go with the flow; women appreciate specific and creative ideas

6) Parenting

- ◆ Mother's nurture; Dad's provide strength and a child's sense of self worth
- ◆ Mother's provide the emotional support for children; Dad's provide a sense of security

***Remember: the difference can be the death or the dessert of your marriage. Make sure it is a dessert!**

Wisdom for a Wonderful Marriage

1. Accept your mate as a gift from God.

2. Be attentive to their needs.

3. Show affection.

4. Be available.

5. Be action oriented:
 - a. Repent of your failures and sin.
 - b. Remember the things you used to do when you fell in love.
 - c. Return to those special places and activities.
 - d. Redo them again and again.

** In other words, perhaps you are at a point where what you really need is a new marriage. Great! Begin treating each other like you did when you first began dating. Court, romance and honor each other as it was in the beginning, and see if God doesn't do something wonderful. Of course, a new marriage may require a new mate, and a new mate is possible only through a relationship with a new master: Jesus Christ the Lord.

*If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.
Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new.
2 Cor. 5:17*

We Grew Up A Little Bit

We got married early and just a little bit late.
 Baby came too early, but some things just can't wait.
 We were just beginning but it was very clear
 We grew up a little bit that year.

I caught on as a meter man. You were caught at home.
 When I started night school you ended up alone.
 But you had another baby while I had my career.
 And we grew up a little bit. We grew up a little bit.
 We grew up a little bit that year.

They put me in an office job, the young man on the move.
 We bought a house in Shaker Heights. You supervised the move.
 We were cashing checks. You were changing children
 while I played engineer.
 And we were growing ever faster every year.

But I got bored of kilowatts and you were tired of kids.
 I started staying out at night, and soon that's what you did.
 At parties we'd go separately. You'd wiggle and I'd leer.
 And we were growing faster. We were growing ever faster.
 We were growing ever faster every year.

Well you learned to live in silence. I learned to live in lies.
 And we both ignored the empty spaces growing in our eyes.
 Your breath became a gin and tonic while mine became a beer.
 And we grew up a little more last year.

Today at work they passed me by and promoted John instead.
 I came home to find you'd wrecked the car. I guess I lost my head.
 Well, I can't believe I hit you but the rage came on so strong.
 Ah, where did we go wrong?

As you sit there crying I wonder who you are?
The partner-stranger-friend and foe who's come with me this far.
 We stand here in the ashes and I guess it is quite clear.
 We did not really grow too much each year.

So, you say we're going nowhere. Well, I know that's where we've been.
 But still I can't help wondering can we begin again?
 I feel so full of questions, curiosity and fear.
 But could we grow a little bit...Could we grow a little bit...
 Can we grow a little bit this year?

Harry Chapin
 From the album,
 "Dance Band on the Titanic"

“Love: God’s Great Gift”
1 Corinthians 13

I. Love is essential 12:31 – 13:3

1. Without love it does not matter what you say. 13:1
2. Without love it does not matter what you know. 13:2
3. Without love it does not matter what you do. 13:3
 - a) Sacrificing your possessions gains you nothing without love.
 - b) Sacrificing your person gains you nothing without love.

II. Love is expressive. 13:4-8

(Sixteen descriptive terms used to portray Christ-like love.)

1. It has a proper inward perspective (self). 13:4
 - a) Love’s beauty – suffers long and is kind.
 - b) Love’s humility – does not envy...parade itself, is not puffed up.
2. It has a proper outward perspective (others). 13:5
 - a) Love’s courtesy – is not rude.
 - b) Love’s sensitivity – does not seek its own, is not provoked.
 - c) Love’s purity – thinks no evil.
3. It has a proper upward perspective (God’s will). 13:6
 - a) Love’s integrity – does not rejoice in iniquity.
 - b) Love’s transparency – rejoices in the truth.
4. It has a proper forward perspective (the future). 13:7-8
 - a) Love’s generosity – bears and believes and hopes all things.
 - b) Love’s durability – endures all things; it never fails.

III. Love is enduring. 13:8-13

1. Love will outlive spiritual gifts. 13:8-10
2. Love will outlast spiritual growth. 13:11-12
 - a) We will grow beyond the need of some things. 13:11
 - b) We will know beyond the need of other things. 13:12
3. Love will outshine the spiritual graces. 13:13

Adapted From
Yardsticks for Love
 by: Howard G. Hendricks

- 1) True love involves a responsiveness to the “total self” of the one loved. You do not fall in love with a body. You fall in love with a person. Indeed it is better stated: “You grow in love with a person.” In a proper love relationship you enrich the totality of the other person’s life.
- 2) In true love there is not only a feeling of pleasure but also of reverence. Do you ever look at your wife or your husband and think, God gave her to me? God hand-tooled him for me?
- 3) True love has a quality of self-giving. God so loved the world that He GAVE. Many people are in love only with themselves. The smallest package in all the world is the person who is all wrapped up with himself. But in true love, a person thinks more of the happiness of others than he does of himself.
- 4) Love embraces a willingness to take responsibility as well as to accept joy. A person constantly asks himself, not what he can get out of a relationship, but what he can give to it. For example, marriage is not just a matter of finding the right partner – It’s a question of being the right person.
- 5) True love is marked by unusual joy while in the company of the other and pain in separation. Magnetism and companionship develops in love.
- 6) There is a mutual enjoyment of each other without constant need of physical expression. It is joy simply to be in the presence of the one you love. Many of you know the great satisfaction there is just being in the same room with that special one.
- 7) True love has a protective attitude. You desire to shield the one you love from any harm, from any injury, from any damage, from anything that will in any way be detrimental. Food for thought: One of the most lethal weapons in a relationship is the little chipping at one another with sarcastic barbs. This is especially hurtful when done in front of others. You develop a person only by magnifying his strengths, never his weaknesses. Take pride in each other.
- 8) In true love there is a feeling of belongingness. The person in love always thinks of himself in relationship to the other person, and it’s a beautiful way to live. What is he doing? What is she doing? What is he thinking? What is she feeling?
- 9) True love has a feeling that you understand each other unusually well. You feel the same way about important things because there is a fusing of minds. When a couple’s communication system is developed, each learns how the other thinks.
- 10) Love matures. It is dynamic in its growth. Real love, centered in Christ, takes on the characteristics of Christ. It begins to resemble the love Paul described in 1 Corinthians 13.

**“God’s Guidelines for
Growing Your Kids”**
Ephesians 6:1-4

I. We grow our children by educating them. 6:1-3

a. It is proper. 6:1

b. There is a promise. 6:2-3

1. A better life 6:3

2. A longer life 6:3

II. We grow our children by encouraging them. 6:4

a. We should avoid making them angry.

b. We should be active in giving them advice.

**“How to Love Your Children
and Let Them Know It”**

*“Most of us love our children, but that is not the issue.
The issue is: do your children feel loved?”*
Charles Lowery

We love our children by:

- 1) “Getting down” on their level (note the example of Christ – Phil. 2:5-11).
- 2) Loving our mate (Eph. 5:25-33; Titus 2:4).
- 3) Disciplining them (Prov. 13:24; 17:10; 29:15).
- 4) Looking at them (Prov. 20:12).
- 5) Touching them (Eccl. 3:5).
- 6) Spending time with them (Deut. 6:7-9).
- 7) Listening to them (James 1:19).
- 8) Blessing them rather than cursing them (Matt. 7:12).
- 9) Having fun with them (Prov. 15:13; 17:22; Eccl. 3:4).
- 10) Nudging them out of the nest (Eccl. 3:6).
- 11) Admitting when you are wrong (James 5:16).
- 12) Introducing them to the perfect parent (John 1:12).