

“Men Behaving Beautifully”  
Song of Solomon 6:13 – 7:10

A man behaves beautifully when:

- I. He advances in the praise of his mate. 6:13 – 7:6**  
(cf. 4:1-7; 6:4-9 and note the more intimate, sensual and developed adoration of his spouse)
- 1) Praise her publicly. 6:13
  - 2) Praise her physically. 7:1-5
  - 3) Praise her particularly. 7:1-5
  - 4) Praise her personally. 7:6
- P.A. Make it a priority to regularly say something nice about your spouse publicly and privately. Be genuine! Be specific!
- II. He is aggressive in the pursuit of his mate. 7:7-9**
- 1) Express a desire for her love. 7:7-8
  - 2) Expect delight from her love. 7:8-9
- P.A. Fan the flames of intimacy. Be creative in your advances.
- III. He accepts the passion of his mate. 7:9-10**
- 1) Let there be mutual giving. (cf. 1 Cor. 7:3-4) 7:9
  - 2) Let there be mutual gratification. 7:10
- P.A. Strive for mutual joy, pleasure and satisfaction physically and psychologically. Be giving! Be receptive!

“Men Behaving Beautifully”  
(Song of Solomon 6:13 – 7:10)

### Introduction

Men can be rather peculiar creatures. In the minds of women, often they are down right strange. A good friend of mine by the name of Charles Lowery is a Senior Pastor in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and a wonderful marriage and family conference speaker. Several years ago he tried to help us get a grip on the mind of the male in a column he wrote. I think you’ll find this both entertaining and right on target.

### Men

“A few years ago the Forester Sisters sang a song about men. It went something like this: “They buy you dinner, open your door, other than that what are they good for? Men.... Men do have problems with relationships. We grow up playing baseball, football, king of the hill, and capture the flag. We grew up competing with each other – doing things and fixing things. We don’t talk much, especially about our feelings. You might say that deep down, men are real shallow.

A man thinks talk is a four-letter word. He thinks the relationship is going great if he doesn’t have to talk. Putting him in a situation where he has to talk makes him very uncomfortable. That’s why men go to the bathroom alone, the way God intended it.” [As a quick aside let’s face

it. Women do not honor the sanctity nor privacy of the bathroom. But guys, we should have seen it coming. At a public gathering women head for the ladies restroom like a pack of wolves. A man, on the other hand, is perfectly capable of taking care of business all by himself. In fact guys, think of the utterly repulsive and yucky feeling you get just considering how you would respond if another man invited you to go to the restroom with him! No worry men, it won't happen in this lifetime!!!] Well Charles continues,

“A man just has difficulty expressing himself. My daughter will call and I will say only three things: “How's the weather, need any money, here's your mother.” A woman can talk on the phone 30 minutes and you say, “Who was that?” She says, “I don't know, she got the wrong number.”

Things are simple with a man. Women are complex. They may even be smarter. Think about it. A woman's best friend is diamonds, and man's best friend is a dog. Yes, women are more complex. When a woman is going out, she has to decide if she is going to wear her hair up or down, flats or high heels, slacks or dress, casual or dressy dress, stockings, knee highs or socks, jewelry or no jewelry, lots of makeup or little makeup. A man picks up some clothes, smells them, and if there is no visible dirt he has himself an outfit. A man makes a fashion statement by turning the brim of his baseball cap backwards. Women dress to express themselves and men dress so they won't be naked....

Of course the bottom line is look at what women carry – a purse. It contains everything she might need. Men carry a wallet. It conveniently contains nothing but money, which means you can buy whatever you need. Simple! These differences affect many aspects of a relationship.

Let me tell you “simple” doesn't work when dealing with your wife, especially in the area of gifts. If your last gifts have been things like salad shooters, dust-busters, weed whackers, deluxe irons and drywall compound, you are in serious trouble. They work, but they don't work with your wife....

Yes, we're different. That was God's plan. The difference is the dynamic. Together we could be more than we could ever have been apart. That's why God said it wasn't good for man to be alone. I will make him a helper to complete him ... or was it to finish him off?”

Yes, it is clear men and women both think and act differently. Unfortunately, far too many men both think and act badly. In fall, 1996, NBC introduced a sad, sick comedy called “Men Behaving Badly.” It depicted men as crude, rude low lifes, scum bag dogs pure and simple. Song of Solomon, however, has a different take on men. It shows us men who behave beautifully, men behaving as God intended when He created them in His image and saved them through His Son Jesus Christ. What does this man, this husband look like? Solomon highlights three truths.

#### I. He advances in the praise of his mate. 6:13 – 7:6

We have already seen Solomon praise his wife twice for her physical beauty and priceless character (4:1-7; 6:4-9). In each description there is growth in appreciation for her. The description became more personal, intimate, sensual and developed. A friend of mine heard I was teaching the Song of Solomon over a five month period and asked, “How can you take that much time? Haven't you found the book to be rather repetitious.” I answered him with a “yes” and “no.” I readily acknowledged the repetition, but quickly pointed out repetition is often the best teacher. I also pointed out God obviously thinks (and probably our spouses too) that kind

and uplifting things cannot be said too often to our mate. Finally I noted that the repetition we discover is seldom, if ever, identical. There is growth and progress in the love, knowledge and joy Solomon and Shulamith share. Solomon is advancing, he is growing up in the school of praise of his mate. What are the particulars?

### 1) Praise her publicly. 6:13

Solomon sweeps his wife off her feet and places her in his “royal chariot” (NIV). This public display of affection draws the praise of her friends who plead with her to return that they may “gaze” upon her. Four times the imperative “return” is voiced. However, she is gone. She has left all for a man who is so public, in this instance even without words, in his love for his wife. The word “Shulamite” is used only here in the Song. It is actually the feminine form of “Solomon,” literally “Solomoness.” It means “perfect one.”<sup>1</sup>

Shulamith is taken back by the praise she receives, and responds with a question: “What would you see in the Shulamite – as it were, the dance of the two camps” (Heb. Mahanaim)? This later phrase is unclear, but her question and action is not. They have praised her beauty, and she is appreciative. But there is another whose praise means even more. That person is her husband. His praise has freed her to express herself with unhindered abandonment. She will now dance, and dance nakedly and seductively. However, this dance is not for many, but only for one. It will be a private performance reserved only for her husband. There is power in public praise.

### 2) Praise her physically. 7:1-5

This is the third, and most sensual and detailed, physical description by Solomon of his wife. Starting from her dancing feet to a woman’s glory (her hair, see 1 Cor. 11:15), Solomon describes physical features of his wife which draw attention to her beauty as a woman. One thing is obvious – at most she has removed her outer garments and dances in the light clothing of a shepherdess, or, she dances fully naked, wisely and seductively appealing to the male’s heightened sense of sight.<sup>2</sup>

However, let’s keep this in perspective. What constitutes a sensuous and attractive woman is probably a badly misunderstood idea by most. A USA Today survey asked men what they first noticed about a woman. Interestingly, the #1 answer was the eyes (39%). Second was the smile (25%). Only 14% said the first thing they noticed was the body.<sup>3</sup> Different men find different kinds of women attractive. I think Linda Dillow and Lorraine Pintus say it best when they write, “nothing is as “sexy” as a woman who gives in to her sensuousness, a woman who enjoys sex and lets her husband know she loves to give and receive pleasure.”<sup>4</sup> Going on to quote Lisa Douglass they add, “nothing transcends the traditional definitions of beauty like the face and the body of a passionately aroused woman.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Garrett, 419.

<sup>2</sup> Carr, 156.

<sup>3</sup> “Snapshots,” *USA Today*, 6-9-98, D1.

<sup>4</sup> Dillow and Pintus, 60.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. See Lisa Douglass, “Orgasms: The Science,” *New Woman*, June 98, 126.

### 3) Praise her particularly. 7:1-5

Solomon focuses on 10 aspects of his wife's beauty. Though attention is on the physical, certain features also highlight the attractiveness of her personality and character as well.

She dances before him, and so he mentions first her feet. Her "sandals" would have left the top of her feet nearly bare. This would have been alluring and particularly attractive.<sup>6</sup> His reference to her as a "prince's daughter" is a symbolic way of praising her noble character and testifies to how her husband viewed her and treated her. He honors her as God commands. (1 Peter 3:7). There are no demeaning glances, no rude snapping of the fingers, no harsh words of contempt or criticism. She is a princess, a queenly maiden.

Her thighs are shapely and priceless, the work of a skilled craftsman. The word refers to the upper part of the thigh where the legs begin to come together.<sup>7</sup> Like priceless jewels they are attractive to see and precious to hold.

Verse two is badly translated in my judgement in virtually every English version. The problem is with the word "navel." It simply does not fit the upward progression or description. The Hebrew word is rare, occurring only three times in the Old Testament (cf. Prov. 3:8; Ezk. 16:4). Here the word almost certainly is a reference to the innermost sexual part of a woman, her vagina (vulva).<sup>8</sup> Solomon's description makes no sense of a navel, but it beautifully expresses the sexual pleasures he continually receives from his wife. Like a rounded goblet, it never lacks blended wine; she never runs dry. She is a constant source of intoxicating pleasure and sweetness. The idea of blended or mixed could refer to the mingling of male and female fluids in the appropriate place of a woman's body.<sup>9</sup> Shulamith was an exotic garden (4:12, 16) and an intoxicating drink (7:2) in her lovemaking. Seldom, if ever, was her husband disappointed. She was his dream lover and amazingly, he wasn't dreaming!

He compares her waist to a mound of wheat encircled by lilies. This could refer to her gentle curved figure and also to the fact she was like food to him. She is wheat and wine, food and drink. She nourishes and satisfies him in every way.

He again describes her breasts like two fawns (cf. 4:5). They are soft and attractive, enticing him to pet them. Her neck is an ivory tower (cf. 4:4). She is majestic, stately, a confident and dignified lady. Her eyes are beautiful, pure and refreshing (cf. 1:15, 4:1), like the Moabite city of Heshbon (cf. Num. 21:25), a city known for its reservoirs. The location of Bath Rabbim is unknown, though it is possibly the gate in Heshbon that lead to the pools. Her nose is like the tower of Lebanon looking toward Damascus. She is strong in character and there is a genuine sense in which he draws strength and security from her. He may also be saying "her nose complements and sets off her facial beauty."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Snaith, 100.

<sup>7</sup> Carr, 156.

<sup>8</sup> Carr, 157; Snaith, 101.

<sup>9</sup> Snaith, 103.

<sup>10</sup> Garrett, 422.

“Her head crowns her like Mount Carmel” (v. 5). The Carmel range was considered to be one of the most beautiful in all of Palestine. She is beautiful and unique, majestic and awesome (cf. Isa. 35:2; Jer. 46:18). Her hair is like purple (or deep red), and her husband is held captive by its beauty. He has been ensnared by her, a king has been captured.

#### 4) Praise her personally. 7:6

Solomon summarizes his praise of his wife by telling her she is beautiful (NIV) and pleasing, a love with delights. He is specific and personal. Physically she is stunning, and personally she is pleasing. She is his love and lover, and he associates nothing but delight with her. What man would not willingly allow himself to be captured by such a lady.

I think I know something of what Solomon felt. When I was dating Charlotte, a number of my friends playfully remarked “Danny’s been caught in Charlotte’s web.” I had indeed been trapped and captured by her beauty from head to toe (or toe to head following Solomon here). I’m glad to report, over 25 years later, I still haven’t escaped! A man who behaves beautifully will advance in the praise of his mate and enjoy all the good things that follow.

#### II. He is aggressive in the pursuit of his mate. 7:7-9

Variety is said to be the spice of life, and when it comes to sex, nothing could be more true. In an article entitled “Keeping the Romance Alive,” it was pointed out that there are at least four categories of sexual activity we should give attention to:

- 1) The Quickie – quick, fast and a gift from one to the other.
- 2) Normal – the 20 to 30 minutes of married sex.
- 3) Romantic Variety – sex on vacation, in a hotel.
- 4) Adventuresome Sex / Cliffhanger Sex – new positions, new places. 11

Solomon is certainly creative and imaginative as he expresses his desire for Shulamith. He is not monolithic or boring. He was always looking for new and fresh ways to communicate his affection.

#### 1) Express a desire for her love. 7:7-8

Solomon compares his wife to a stately, swaying palm tree and her breasts to a cluster of dates. Her breasts are a sweet and tasty fruit that he finds irresistible. He moves quickly to express his intentions: “I will climb the palm tree; I will take hold of its fruit” (NIV). Solomon has watched his wife dance nakedly before him as long as he could. His passion is at a fever pitch. He leaves nothing to chance, he does not assume his wife understands what he is feeling. He tells her and he tells her plainly.

Men should not assume when dealing with a woman, especially a wife. It can get you into serious trouble. In our first year of marriage I made such an assumption. I assumed a particular object lesson would make the appropriate impression on my wife, Charlotte. We sat down one Saturday evening to eat a sandwich for dinner. As she placed a wonderful sandwich on the table, Charlotte also put beside it a Tupperware product that had inside of it, if you used your imagination and a magnifying glass, something that remotely resembled potato chips. Once these crumbs were placed in your mouth, you could easily have assumed it was a new variety of

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<sup>11</sup> “Keeping the Romance Alive,” *Style* (Jan/Feb 2000).

chewing gum. They were awful. I turned to Charlotte and said, “Honey, I don’t like these. They’re too small and stale. I want some big, fresh, crispy, potato chips.” Well, she responded, “Sweetheart, when all of these are gone we can get some more.” That was not the answer I was looking for and so I said, “but Darling, I saw in the pantry on the way in here a brand new bag of fresh, crispy, virgin, potato chips that has never been opened. I want those!” Quick as a flash she shot back, “Well, Sugar Dumpling, when this container is empty we can get those.” I then did something that a man would only do in his first year of marriage. I stood up, took her Tupperware and dumped all the chips in the floor! I then said, “this one is empty now. You can go and get the others.” It probably won’t surprise anyone that 1) she did not go get the other chips, 2) it was rather chilly at our house (and in our bed) for several days and 3) I learned the danger of assuming my wife would appreciate my creative object lesson.

## 2) Express delight from her love. 7:8-9

Solomon tells Shulamith that he wants her and that he senses that she wants him. I wonder how he got that idea?! Her breasts, her breath, and her mouth all are sources of sensual desire and delight. Her breasts are attractive and sweet. Her breath is fragrant like apples.<sup>12</sup> The deep, sensual kisses of her mouth are intoxicating like the “best wines.” Shulamith had earlier described her husband’s mouth in this way (1:2). He now returns the compliment. The environment has been set for a time of meaningful romantic lovemaking.

John Gries is on target when he writes, “Jesus intended marriage to be happy for you. God expects regular sex in marriage, and sex is a learning process.” In his book, *Sex 101: Over 350 Creative Ways to Combine Sex, Romance and Affection*, John points out seven essentials for satisfying sex. They include communication, time, patience, experimentation, understanding, being teachable and humor. He notes, “every ingredient is very important.”<sup>13</sup>

RNS reported that “Family, money and religion are even more important to Americans than sex, according to a new survey on attitudes toward sexual health. But that does not mean Americans devalue sex. Of those surveyed, 82 percent said sexual satisfaction was important or very important. “Loving family relationships,” received the most votes, with 99 percent considering it important or very important. Financial security was a close second, receiving 98 percent. Ranked third, religion and spiritual life was considered important or very important by 86 percent.... This survey is a ‘snapshot’ in time that looks at how American adults view issues related to sexuality and sexual problems as a whole,” said Dr. Marianne J. Legato of Columbia University. Researchers also found that age did not affect the importance people placed on sex. The vast majority of respondents, 94 percent - - split almost equally between men and women - - agreed that “enjoyable sexual relations add to a person’s quality of life, even when they grow older.”

Yes, we should expect delight from the love of our mate. And the good news is it can get better with each passing year.

## **III.** He accepts the passion of his mate. 7:9-10

<sup>12</sup> Carr (162-163) points breath could be a reference in the Hebrew text to the nipples of her breasts.

<sup>13</sup> Terri Lackey, “Counselor Offers Help to Couples for Reclaiming Marriage Intimacy,” *Baptist Press* (11-1-00).

It has been sometime since Shulamith has spoke (6:13). She has been carefully listening and taking in all that her husband has said. He has gotten the attention of her heart and again it was through her ear, through what she heard. Now it is her time to act, and act she does. What do we discover about the pleasures of passion in a good marriage?

1) Let there be mutual giving. 7:9

Picking up on the imagery of wine, Shulamith expresses her desire to satisfy and bring pleasure to her husband. “The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved (NIV lover) moving gently the lips of sleepers ( or “lovers”).<sup>14</sup> They are making love to one another and it is delightful; like sweet, intoxicating wine. They exchange kisses and intimate expressions of love that each finds satisfying. His goal is to satisfy and please her. Her goal is to satisfy and please him. The marvelous result is when there is mutual giving with the goal of pleasing your mate, both spouses will experience the joy and pleasure God intended for us (cf. 1 Cor. 7:3-4; Phil 2:3-5).

Susan Townsend says play FAIR when making love.

Flirting (a smile and a look)

Appreciate (and express it)

Intimacy (let you know me)

Risk (have adventuresome sex; talk about new topics; keep the spice.)<sup>15</sup>

2) Let there be mutual gratification. 7:10

There has already been refrains or statements of mutual possession (2:16; 6:3). However, this time the statement is different. Rather than read “I am my lover’s and my lover is mine” (6:3), we read “I belong [am] to my lover, and his desire is for me” (NIV). This is a strong affirmation of possession and gratification. She delights in the fact her husband’s desire is only for her. What security! What satisfaction! What safety! She is so taken back by his love for her she does not need to mention her possession of him. The word “desire” occurs only here and in Genesis 3:16; 4:7. It speaks of a strong yearning. Solomon, as is true of all men, has an earnest desire for “the loving approval of his wife.”<sup>16</sup> She is grateful for his desire for her, and he is grateful for her admiration and respect.

Passion is not an easy thing to keep aflame over a lifetime, but it is an essential thing. What are some strategies we can put into practice to ensure that flame is never extinguished? Let me quickly give you several :

## TWELVE WAYS TO KEEP PASSION ALIVE IN YOUR MARRIAGE

1. Work At It

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<sup>14</sup> Garrett, 423-24.

<sup>15</sup> “Keeping the Romance Alive.”

<sup>16</sup> Patterson, 110.



A lifetime of love and romance takes effort. Few things in life are as complicated as building and maintaining an intimate, passionate relationship. You need to work on it constantly to get through those trying periods that require extra work.

## 2. Think Team

When making important decisions, such as whether to work overtime or accept a transfer or promotion, ask yourself this question: What will the choice I am making do to the people I love? Try to make the decision that will have the most positive impact on your marriage and your family.

## 3. Be Protective

Guard and separate your marriage and your family from the rest of the world. This might mean refusing to work on certain days or nights. You might turn down relatives and friends who want more of you than you have the time, energy or inclination to give. You might even have to say no to your children to protect time with your spouse. (The kids won't suffer if this is done occasionally and not constantly).

## 4. Accept That Good and Not Perfect is O.K. When It Comes To Your Mate

No one is perfect. You married a real person who will make real mistakes. However, never be content with bad. Always aim for great, but settle for good!

## 5. Share Your Thoughts And Feelings

Unless you consistently communicate, signaling to your partner where you are and getting a recognizable message in return, you will lose each other along the way. Create or protect communication-generating rituals. No matter how busy you may be, make time for each other. For example, take a night off each week, go for a walk together every few days, go out to breakfast if you can't have dinner alone, or just sit together for 15 minutes each evening simply talking, without any other distractions.

## 6. Manage Anger and Especially Contempt Better

Try to break the cycle in which hostile, cynical, contemptuous attitudes fuel unpleasant emotions, leading to negative behaviors that stress each other out and create more tension. Recognize that anger signals frustration of some underlying need, and try to figure out what that need might be. Avoid igniting feelings of anger with the judgment that you are being mistreated. Watch your non-verbal signals, such as the tone of your voice, your hand and arm gestures, facial expressions and body movements. Remain seated, don't stand or march around the room. Deal with one issue at a time. Don't let your anger about one thing lead you into showering the other with a cascade of issues. If different topics surface during your conflict, flag them to address later. Try to notice subtle signs that anger or irritation is building. If you are harboring these feelings, express them before they build too much and lead to an angry outburst. Keep focused on the

problem, not persons. Don't turn a fairly manageable problem into a catastrophe. Emphasize where you agree.

#### 7. Declare Your Devotion To Each Other Again And Again

True long-range intimacy requires repeated affirmations of commitment to your partner. Remember: love is in what you say and in how you act. Buy flowers. Do the dishes and take out the trash without being asked. Give an unsolicited back rub. Committed couples protect the boundaries around their relationship. Share secrets with each other more than with any circle of friends and relatives.

#### 8. Give Each Other Permission To Change

Pay attention. If you aren't learning something new about each other every week or two, you simply aren't observing closely enough. You are focusing on other things, not one another. Bored couples fail to update how they view each other. They act as though the roles they assigned and assumed early in the relationship will remain forever comfortable. Remain constantly abreast of each other's dreams, fears, goals, disappointments, hopes, regrets, wishes and fantasies. People continue to trust those people who know them best and who accept them.

#### 9. Have Fun Together

Human beings usually fall in love with the ones who make them laugh, who make them feel good on the inside. They stay in love with those who make them feel safe enough to come out to play. Keep delight a priority. Put your creative energy into making yourselves joyful and producing a relationship that regularly feels like recess.

#### 10. Make Yourself Trustworthy

People come to trust the ones who affirm them. They learn to distrust those who act as if a relationship were a continual competition over who is right and who gets their way. Always act as if each of you has thoughts, impressions and preferences that make sense, even if your opinions or needs differ. Realize your partner's perceptions will always contain at least a few truths, and validate those truths before adding your perspectives to the discussion.

#### 11. Forgive And Forget

Don't be too hard on each other. If your passion and love are to survive, you must learn how to forgive. You and your partner regularly need to wipe the slate clean so that anger doesn't build and resentment fester. Holding on to hurts and hostility will block real intimacy. It will only assure that no matter how hard you otherwise work at it, your relationship will not grow. Do what you can to heal the wounds in a relationship, even if you did not cause them. Be compassionate about the fact that neither of you intended to hurt the other as you set out on this journey.

## 12. Cherish And Applaud

One of the most fundamental ingredients in the intimacy formula is cherishing each other. You need to celebrate each other's presence. If you don't give your partner admiration, applause, appreciation, acknowledgement, the benefit of the doubt, encouragement and the message that you are happy to be there with them now, where will they receive those gifts? Be generous. Be gracious. One of the most painful mistakes a couple can make is the failure to notice their own partner's heroics. These small acts of unselfishness include taking out the trash, doing the laundry, mowing the lawn, driving the carpool, preparing the taxes, keeping track of birthdays, calling the repairman and cleaning the bathroom, as well as hundreds of other routine labors. People are amazingly resilient if they toil with appreciation. So make a concerted effort to notice daily acts of heroism by your loved ones.

### Conclusion

Most of us are familiar with the "virtuous woman" of Proverbs 31. She is most certainly a worthy model for all women to emulate. However, you might not be as well informed of the "noble man" of Proverbs 32! Now, if you know your Bible you will be quick to point out, "there is no Proverbs 32 in the Bible," and you would be quite correct. But, several years ago a fine student at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky wrote something of a modern-day proverb that beautifully expresses what it means for a man to "flesh-out" the biblical command to love his wife just like Jesus Christ loved the church and gave Himself [in sacrificial death] for her (Eph. 5:25). Thank you Michael Jones for challenging all husbands everywhere to behave beautifully.

### PROVERBS 32

#### "The Husband of Noble Character"

A husband of noble character who can find? He is worth more than winning the Publisher's Clearinghouse Sweepstakes.

His wife has full confidence in him and lacks nothing of importance.

He brings her good, not harm, all the days of her life.

He works hard to provide for his family. Getting up early he helps get the kids ready for school, then dashes off to work.

With his shoulder to the grindstone he works with energy and vigor, as one who is working for the Lord. And while busy, he always finds time to call his wife during the day just to say, "I love you."

He promptly comes home from work and immediately pitches in with the chores, helping the children with their homework, or with making dinner. While hot dogs and baked beans are his

specialty, he doesn't fear heating up a TV dinner or even making a meat loaf. He does this with such ease that all are amazed and in awe.

When his wife prepares a meal he always eats with gusto and when finished, never forgets to smile and tell her how great it was. Of course, he is always the first to volunteer to do the dishes, or at least to volunteer the children to complete the task!

All in all, he is a joy to have in the kitchen.

As a father, there is no equal on the face of the earth. No matter how exhausted from work or other responsibilities, he always takes time for his children.

Whether its making funny faces at the baby, tickling the small child, wrestling or playing with an older child, or making pained and disbelieving expressions at his teenager, he is always there for them.

He is a whiz at math, science, spelling, geography, Spanish, and any other subject his children are studying at school.

And if he should be totally ignorant of the subject at hand, he skillfully hides his ignorance by sending the child to their mother.

He can fix any problem from a scraped knee to loose bicycle chains, from interpreting rules for a kickball game to refereeing sparing matches between his kids.

More importantly, he is also the spiritual leader in the family. He always takes the family to church. He shows his children, by life and example, what it means to love the Lord Jesus and be a Christian.

He teaches his children how to pray and the importance of knowing and loving God. He often rises early to pray for his wife and children, and He reads from his Bible at night before falling off to sleep.

He disciplines his children with loving firmness; never yelling or with humiliating words. He is always more interested in teaching a lesson and building character than in simply punishing.

During the day he meditates on God's Word and on how to live it. He shows Christ in all his dealings with others and is considered a valuable employee by his bosses. His co-workers respect his hard work, his integrity, and his kindness.

He always shows his wife the utmost respect, even opening the door for her. He is always quick with a word of encouragement, and is constantly telling her how beautiful she is, even when she isn't wearing any make-up.

A day seldom passes that he doesn't tell her of his love for her. Praise for her is always on his lips.

Anniversaries and birthdays are never forgotten and gifts and flowers are often given, “just because.”

And, he even makes superhuman efforts to be nice when her family is visiting.

He is full of compassion for the pain of others and willingly helps those in need. Whether its changing a stranger’s flat tire, helping with a friend’s home improvement project, or feeding the poor at the local soup kitchen, he is the first to volunteer.

He is not afraid to shed a tear with a friend in pain or to be rowdy in laughter at another’s good joke.

He loves life and lives it with passion.

His children, while not always calling him “blessed,” have no doubts about his great love for them. His wife also calls him many things, among them, “the best,” and she thanks God for him.

Many men do many great things, but he surpasses them all.

Flattery is deceptive and good looks, like hair, is fleeting; but a man who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give him the reward he has earned, and let his deeds bring him praise.

Michael M. Jones  
Louisville, KY 1996