

A man and a woman are lying on their stomachs on a thick layer of fallen autumn leaves. The woman is on the left, wearing a white cable-knit sweater and a thick beige scarf, looking up at the man with a smile. The man is on the right, wearing a white cable-knit sweater and a brown jacket with a fur collar, looking down at the woman with a smile. The background is a dense carpet of yellow, orange, and red maple leaves.

# **31 DAYS TO A Better Marriage**

**Fall 2015 Series**



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## DEDICATION

*This book is dedicated to wives, women who are engaged, and women who desire to be married who crave a satisfying, godly marriage. It doesn't happen overnight, but it is possible to have a fulfilling marriage with Jesus at the center. I'm praying for each one of you who picks up this book to have a more intimate experience in your relationship with Christ that will translate into a marriage that reflects the love of our Savior.*

— Carlie K | Curator, [\*31 Days to a Better Marriage\*](#)

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## INTRODUCTION

Being a Christian wife in today's world looks a lot different than it did in the generation that precedes us. While marriages have faced their own unique set of issues since the beginning of time (think Adam and Eve in the garden), our generation certainly has much more to think about.

From the advances of technology that have given us access to a world beyond our physical reach to the moral decay we see around us; we need to be reminded that good, healthy marriages still exist. But the truth remains that there are many more things to distract us and lure us away from our priorities as a Christian wife (to love God first and then our husband and children). So we must choose to fight hard for our marriage!

But there is good news! God has provided a way of escape from every temptation and gives us the wisdom and power to overcome any obstacle that we face!

*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man:  
but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above  
that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape,  
that ye may be able to bear it.  
1 Corinthians 10:13 KJV*

For the past two years I have hosted a series called [31 Days to a Better Marriage](#). This popular series has had rave reviews and a lot of wonderful insight written by the webs most popular Christian marriage bloggers. This book is a compilation of the articles in the fall 2015 version of the series nicely formatted to read all in one place.

### IN THIS BOOK YOU WILL LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- why Christian wives should have more sex
- how God can redeem an unequally-yoked marriage
- nurturing your marriage during financial hardships
- domestic abuse
- reasons why your marriage isn't thriving

- how to be sensual (when caring for young children has you tired)
- the art of forgiving
- how prayer and fasting can bless your marriage
- things you should know before getting married
- the truth about marriage after saying “I do”.
- and much more!

I hope that you are blessed by the pages of this book and that you experience a healthy, loving, and holy marriage that God designed just for you!

**In His Love,**

Carlie Kercheval

Curator, [31 Days to a Better Marriage](#)

Co-Founder, [Fulfilling Your Vows™](#)

## 5 REASONS MASSAGE HELPS YOUR MARRIAGE

Carlie Kercheval | *Fulfilling Your Vows™*

**F**or the past 15 years of our marriage I have been blessed to have a husband that **massages me nearly every day that we spend together.** No kidding. And while that is a great blessing to me, I wanted to be able to bless him the same way. But it just didn't start out too great. For starters, my husband is 6'2" with a super athletic build, and I am just 5'2" with tiny hands. My little hands would cramp up if I even tried to massage him. When I would try, I'd give up (rather quickly) and eventually didn't even try at all. However, until recently, I had no idea how to massage him and I knew that had to change.

It wasn't until this year that I came across a wonderful online resource aimed at married couples and began to learn that I can massage my husband, small hands and all! After going through the online video series offered by [Melt: Massage for Couples](#), I have not only learned how to confidently massage my handsome husband, but it has brought numerous benefits to our marriage! Today I am going to share 5 reasons massage helps your marriage, both in the short-term and the long-term! What a blessing!

### IT GIVES YOU MORE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR MARRIAGE BED

**Let's be honest, ladies. We are not always as confident as we'd like to be in the marriage bed.** It can be for a variety of reasons: insecurity about our body, exhaustion from working hard as a wife and mother, or any other variety of things. But as we know, our marriages are tri-fold: body, spirit, and mind. We can't ignore the fact that physical intimacy in marriage is equally important to both the spiritual and mental sides.

I've struggled during certain periods of our marriage to be confident in my body (especially after giving birth). While my husband never said anything or made me feel any different, I still wasn't feeling that great about myself and had a temptation to shut out physical intimacy. However, I believe that because my husband massages me and loves me so tenderly in this way, it has not only kept our marriage bed exciting, but also given me the confidence I need to keep it that way!

## IT'S ALL NATURAL

**For us, this matters.** It makes both my husband and me feel great that all we are using is our own hands and some great all-natural essential oils. Since we are avid essential oil users, we always choose the oil that will best suit something our body needs. Last night my husband used a blend of Roman Chamomile and Lavender to help soothe my mind and it definitely worked!

You can learn about many different oils and their uses by checking out research backed books at your local library.

And of course it's natural for a husband and wife to have their hands on one another in LOVE (smile).

## PHYSICAL TOUCH CAN HEAL

As we read all throughout the New Testament, Jesus and his disciples healed people through physical touch. And [studies show](#) how physical touch can be responsible for aiding emotional and physical healing. I have witnessed first-hand how the power of touch can be a blessing in both my own life and the lives of others. Because of how often my husband and I massage one another, I am really seeing how God is using the art of physical touch to heal many things in each of our lives. I am so very thankful for this gift between spouses!

## IT'S FREE

**Need I say more?** As some of you may know, I am a stickler for [frugal living](#) so this is a very appealing aspect to me. And we also have the free will to choose how we spend our time and who we spend it with. When my husband and I choose to massage one another, not only is it free, but it frees toxins trapped in our bodies, frees the mind, and relaxes our bodies! Believe me, my husband and I have been to many fancy restaurants and vacations, but massaging one another is now our date night of choice! And I believe that if you and your spouse are committed to the idea, it will be your date night of choice, too!

## IT'S A GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

The beautiful thing about massage is that it doesn't expire or end. It keeps on going as long as you and your spouse are willing to put forth the effort to give the time and tender loving care to one another. And think about this: If you and your spouse are increasing your intimacy in a healthy way, just think of the priceless example of love you are giving to your children. I know that our children are always watching us and they notice everything — from the good to the bad. And it often seems like the children can focus on the



bad more easily. Let's give our children something GOOD to talk about when it comes to their parent's marriage. Let's beat the statistics and allow God's love to shine through our marriages!

I am really excited that I've had the chance to sit down and share my thoughts with you about marriage. I am a firm believer that if you don't keep looking for creative ways to keep your marriage passion alive, you will eventually lose the desire to be married. No one wants that. We all want to have a thriving and Christ-filled marriage where all aspects are flowing — mind, body, and spirit! Let's take our marriages to the next level...we can only go up from there!

## 10 WAYS TO REKINDLE YOUR LOST LOVE

Sunu Philip | [ClothedInScarlet.org](http://ClothedInScarlet.org)

**D**o you remember your wedding day? It was your big day with flowers and good wishes all around, and the two of you deeply in love. Do you remember your honeymoon and the sweet, tender love that flourished between you and your husband? I'm sure it still puts a smile on your face!

I was so much in love with my husband after our wedding day... but it didn't last long. In the fifth month of our marriage I became pregnant and my husband had to travel for work. I was alone on bed-rest and eventually went into a deep depression. This morphed into postpartum depression after my son was born, and resentment towards my husband started building up in me.

I hated my husband with the same passion that I loved him. I would feel only hatred towards him one day, and then two days later I would love him fiercely. I don't know if you can relate to how I used to love and hate the very same person. I realized that love and hate are just two sides of the same coin. Some things would trigger the hate and other things would trigger the love.

All in all, it was a mess. I was a mess! God took me through a journey, teaching me different ways to change the hatred I felt to pure love. These are lessons God taught me, and I'm sure they will help you to rekindle your lost love too.

### 1. LOVE GOD

Jesus is the only lover you need; only He can fill you and meet your emotional needs. We were created to be filled by His love and no other love (not even our husband's) will fulfill us like God's.

### 2. LOOK FOR THINGS THAT MADE YOU FALL IN LOVE IN THE FIRST PLACE

As life happens, we all tend to change. Your husband might have changed a bit but he's still the same person. Instead of seeing only his faults, look for the positive side of him – the things that attracted you when you were newly married.

### **3. DON'T TAKE YOUR HUSBAND FOR GRANTED**

Your husband is a gift from God. Unless you unwrap him, the best side of him will remain under cover. And how do you unwrap him? By appreciating him, of course! It took me a long time to start appreciating my husband, but it worked wonders for our marriage. Take time to appreciate all the small things your husband does, because what you have now is to be appreciated.

### **4. DON'T PUSH YOUR EXPECTATIONS ONTO HIM**

This is by far the biggest mistake I've made in my marriage. Your husband is in no way perfect, and neither are you. Try to accept him as he is, rather than pushing him to be the man you want him to be. Tell him that you love him for who he is!

### **5. REMINISCE YOUR FUN FILLED DAYS TOGETHER**

View your wedding album or watch your wedding video together. Think about an experience you had as newlyweds and reminisce about it together. Try to bring up an instance that made you laugh out loud in the past, and laugh again together.

### **6. TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR NEGATIVE THOUGHT CHAINS**

I don't know about you, but something will trigger a negative thought in my head, which will lead to another, and soon forms a chain of negative thoughts against my husband. I realized it was the devil's way of sneaking in and claiming my heart and my thoughts. I prayed about it and God gave me a solution. The instant the first negative thought pops into my mind, I should stop thinking and start praying. And it worked!

Yes, there are days when I don't stop and pray – I think I'm immune and have my thoughts under control. But I don't, and the same thought patterns wreck havoc again. Make it a habit to stop and pray when a negative thought about your husband enters your head. Even if you fail on some days, don't give up – try again.

### **7. LEARN YOUR HUSBAND'S LOVE LANGUAGE**

Speak your husband's love language and do it often. My husband's love language is acts of service, and when I take time to do something special for him, he really takes note of it. At the onset of marriage, we all knowingly or unknowingly speak all the five love languages. We were filling a need, but as days went by, we stopped doing it. Find out what makes your husband feel loved and be intentional about doing it just for him.

## **8. SIT AND LISTEN TO HIM**

This was very difficult for me to do, personally as my mind was constantly in work mode even when I sat alongside my husband. I realized this was doing my marriage no favors and decided to sit by my husband with an open mind – and listen without interrupting him. Other things can wait. Simply sit with your husband and listen to him. Start with just 10 minutes and no talking please! At first, he may not even talk much because he is so used to you being preoccupied. But use this time to grow your friendship, and let him open up and start speaking to you from his heart.

## **9. INITIATE OR BE READY FOR MORE SEX**

Sex is designed by God, not just for reproduction but also for building up the intimacy between you and your husband. Regardless of what people might say, sex is more than just a physical release. In some mysterious way, sex involves our emotions too. So having sex often leads to more intimacy in the physical and emotional realm.

## **10. CRY TO GOD WITH A BROKEN SPIRIT**

There are some things that we don't have any control over, but God does. It was God who restored my marriage when I cried out to Him and said, "I can't do this alone... I'm messing it up. I'm weak, Lord and I need You." And then He took over. The beautiful marriage I have now is His doing; all glory goes to Him alone. I couldn't have possibly done it alone!

We are weak but He is strong. When we cry out to God with a broken spirit saying we can't do it on our own, then His power takes over. Seek God with your broken heart and He will restore your marriage. Lower yourself, cry out and submit whatever aches your heart to Jesus. He will make marvelous things happen. I know this really works... I am living proof!



## LOOKING BACKWARD TO GROW FORWARD

Lindsey | *The Road to 31*

### THE FAMILY TREE

**D**o you ever dwell on the past to help you attain your goals in the future? I didn't think that to be a particularly life-altering question. I went to Google and was looking for a quote that might capture my sentiments to some extent about it, but all I could find were trite cliches like, "You can't start the next chapter of your life if you keep re-reading the last one," or, "Life isn't meant to be traveled backwards."

These quotes leave much to be desired. No matter what kind of family you were born into, they shaped who you became to some extent. Whether your experience was good or bad, your life history plays a part in who you are today.

My husband says I have my mother's paranoia and my father's obsessive, compulsive tendencies. My husband has his father's problem with a lack of communication. Does it mean that we are the same? No, but it does mean that our parents affect who we are today.

We both came out of strong, Christian families. I know that is not the case for everyone. My grandfather was an abuser and an alcoholic. My father was nothing like his father, and for this I am thankful, but it did shape who my father was. Because he saw the pain his father caused, he went the opposite direction. God shaped him to be a man completely unlike his dad, but my grandfather's sins still shaped my father nonetheless.

**The ability to look backward is important in every area of life. We learn from our history. We learn from those who have gone before us. We learn from mistakes made, but we also learn from traditions, stories, skills, and faith in practice handed down from those who went before us. We need this, but we often do not *know* we need it.**

### THE LONE WOLF

I am a very self-centered person, and I live in a very self-centered society. I often complain about the common lack of respect for authority among youths, but that has infiltrat-

ed my own thought process as well. Our generation feels like we can do it better, like we don't need antiquated thoughts on the matter at hand. We will forge our own paths.

Time and again I have seen how this pattern of behavior in myself and those around me has only hurt us. History is something to learn from. We can try to re-write it to fit our own agendas or erase our mistakes, but there is no good that can come from it.

### **How does all this apply to marriage and family?**

I saw a post up on Facebook once ... "What is the #1 piece of advice that you would give a new mom?" Everyone pretty much across the board said don't listen to anyone else, just trust your instincts. This advice is ill conceived, but it is the perfect display of the point I am getting at.

Often we walk into the great wide world of marriage and family all on our own. Maybe you didn't have a mom who taught you how to be a wife and mother. Maybe as a husband, you didn't have a good example of what a husband and father should be. That doesn't mean you are free to forge your own way, however.

We all have things that were not modeled properly for us. Even parents who left a great example had areas of weakness. Some of those areas of weakness we recognize; some of them we do not. Some of those weaknesses we emulate; some we work hard to avoid.

**The beauty of community is that our examples are not limited to our immediate family. The church is a family.** By design, the church is built up of different kinds of people with different kinds of strengths and weaknesses. God has given us each gifts that are helpful to the church, and He has given others strengths that can help us where we are lacking.

**If we are wise, we will not exclusively look back and learn from our own past, we will seek out the collective lessons learned from the history of everyone in our community.**

## **WHAT IS BIBLICAL MARRIAGE?**

In our highly individualized society where everything is about making yourself happy first and doing for others second, the art of Biblical marriage has been lost.

Marriage is not primarily for your happiness or the happiness of your husband. Marriage was established by God to be a display of Christ's sacrificial love for the Church. The husband is meant to sacrificially love his wife, and the wife is meant to sacrificially serve her husband. We have a marred, sin-filled view of this beautiful picture here on earth, but it is and can be a beautiful picture all the same.

**The secret to happiness in marriage and family is to seek Christ, to be more like Him!** In a society that is constantly looking forward for improvement, by paving their own way, as Christians we ought to be looking backward to grow going forward.

If we are traveling unfamiliar roads, does it make more sense for us to trust our instincts to guide us, or to trust the directions of those who have already successfully navigated their way through?

Contrary to popular belief, we don't need to personally make the mistake in order to learn from it. We can learn from others' mistakes and from others' successes. If we refuse to learn from those whom God has placed around us, we only win ourselves more heartache.

**May we learn to walk forward by first considering the footsteps of those who have gone before us in marriage, in family, and in all of life.**

## NO MORE ANGRY WIVES

Asheritah Ciuciu | [www.OneThingAlone.com](http://www.OneThingAlone.com)

**I**t didn't take much. Just a flippant "good night" as he walked out of the room was enough to set me in a bad mood.

"Are you mad at me?" he asked later, after I had slammed closet doors, yanked on pajamas, and pecked him swiftly.

I lay in bed next to him and sighed. "Yeah," I admitted. "I'm mad."

"Why?" he asked.

"I'm not sure," I said, and my anger began to fizzle. I had no good reason to be mad. I was just offended that he hadn't picked up my subtle messages that I need a cuddle and some face-to-face time at the end of a long day.

"I'm sorry," he offered.

I didn't respond.

## NO MORE ANGRY WIVES

As genetic luck would have it, I inherited a female sensitivity that causes me to shut down at the slightest offense:

- He put the toilet paper roll on the wrong way, and I got upset he didn't remember my preference.
- He walked out of the store, and I was offended he didn't pick up the flowers that were on sale.
- He hung the clothes on the line, and I got mad that he thought my use of the dryer was a waste of money.
- He came home exhausted after a long day of work, and I took offense that he didn't want to go out together.



(Are you beginning to see how ridiculous some of these “offenses” are? The poor man doesn’t even know he’s walking into a veritable war zone strewn with landmines, ready to blow up at the slightest misstep.)

If you’re like me, these real or perceived offenses can quickly build a wall between us and our husbands, making them live in perpetual fear of making us angry.

That’s no way to enjoy a marriage. I want to live a calm life that invites my husband to speak freely and live joyfully without fear offending me.

## FROM ANGRY WIFE TO CALM LIFE

The word *offended* makes me picture a cube balancing precariously on a corner (off-ended, get it?). It doesn’t take much to topple that cube over since it’s not resting on a side. Talk about instability.

Instead of being offended, I want to plant both feet on the ground and keep my emotions in check.

When I find myself toppling into anger, these steps help me navigate back to calm:

### 1. RUN TO THE CROSS.

I’m quick to tell my husband exactly what he did wrong. Maybe you are, too. But the first place we need to take our offense is to our Lord. He’s big enough to handle all our anger, hurt, disappointment, bitterness, and fear.

At the cross we recalibrate our view of the world and our situation. In light of what Jesus suffered for us, our offense often pales into oblivion.

### 2. KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

Sitting at the feet of Jesus and gazing at His beauty, *I’m reminded of all He is... and all I am not*. Usually when I’m offended it’s because my husband didn’t meet my expectations or he did something to hurt my pride. In God’s presence, I am reminded that I, too, am a sinner in need of God’s grace, and God freely extends grace and love to me.

We need reminded often that we’re not the center of the universe—God is. And when He remains at the center of our lives, we’ll be less offended by what our husbands did or said.

### 3. SEE HIM WITH EYES OF CHRIST.

When I see myself as a sinner in need of grace, I'm more likely to see my husband as a sinner in need of grace. And when I realize I'm loved by the God of the universe, I'll acknowledge that my husband is loved by God, too.

Instead of letting our husbands' offenses become the characteristics that defines them, let's remember who they are in Christ and why we fell in love with them in the first place. Chances are, those annoying traits are only visible 2% of the time. We have so much for which to be grateful.

### 4. LOVE AND FORGIVE HIM.

Having been reminded of God's amazing love for me, I am now free to love my husband as well. Sometimes, tough love will require a humble and gentle confrontation in which I communicate how his behavior hurt me. But most of the time, love will mean forgiving and letting it go. As Scripture says, "Love covers over a multitude of sins," (1 Peter 4:8) and "Love keeps no record of wrong." (1 Corinthians 13:5)

As Ruth Graham said, "A good marriage is the union of two forgivers." The best way to get over an offense is to seek a way to serve our husbands and show them sacrificial love. And a little lovin' might go a long way, especially in the bedroom. (Not sure where to start? [Here are a few ideas to ignite passion in your marriage.](#)) As we pour out love, God will continue to pour into us His supernatural love.

### 5. KEEP A SENSE OF HUMOR.

Honestly, when I notice I'm getting more easily irritable and offended, it's a good sign that I'm taking myself too seriously. Toilet paper? Seriously, let it go, girl! Or better yet, make a running joke of it. Find ways to alleviate tension with humor, and laugh at yourself.

When we loosen up, we can let little things roll off our shoulders without taking them to heart. It's amazing how many offenses stop bothering us once we stop being so uptight. Our husbands (and children) will thank us.

I wish I could go back to that night and calmly ask for a cuddle and a few minutes to debrief rather than stew in anger for the rest of the night. But the good news is, I have today.

And so do you.

## 5 WAYS TO HELP THE SPOUSE WHO IS STRUGGLING

Wendy Woerner | [WendyWoerner.com](http://WendyWoerner.com)

**M**y husband and I endured a difficult summer. There were no deaths in the family, no major illnesses for us or our children. To look at us you really would not see that anything has been wrong.

Isn't that the way it is with most things? We struggle with our hurts, sin, and personal difficulties in silence, so often not reaching out to friends or family for help when we desperately need it.

Our difficult summer was not due to a BIG sin or even from either of us hurting the other. Most of the difficulty has been of a personal nature for me. I have been dealing with some things in my own life, things I struggle with almost daily, such as self-worth, anger, depression, and anxiety.

You see, I am a bit of a perfectionist. I have a very high standard for myself and for my family. I don't mean to. It's just something that tends to creep in without me even realizing it, and before you know I am spiraling downward into one or several of the aforementioned emotions.

Getting to the bottom of this problem has taken months. In fact, we still are not to the bottom of it, but we are on the road to finding some help with it. And that is what I want to discuss here.

What do we do when one spouse needs extra help? If our husband or wife is struggling, what can we do for him or her? Let me list five things that may help you to get started on the road to healing if you are currently dealing with a personal struggle within your own marriage.

**Pray.** As Christ-followers there is nothing else, no one else, who is better to turn to than the Lord. Whether the struggling partner is yourself or your spouse, prayer can be the key to turning your day around and getting real answers to your struggle.

**Listen.** If you are the struggling party, then you need to be willing to listen to what your spouse and others have to say about what you're experiencing. This can be difficult. It may hurt your feelings or even make you angry. However, others may be able to see what you cannot. If you are the other party, the one who is not enduring a struggle right now, then it is helpful to your spouse to be a sounding board. As a woman, I do not always want an immediate "fix" for my problem. I often simply want a sympathetic and listening ear.

**Affirm.** When your spouse is struggling with an issue, he or she likely already feels as if he or she should not be struggling. I think that is just our tendency as humans. What is needed is to be affirmed. Be sure that your spouse hears positive and affirming words coming from you about who she is, her abilities, his provision, and your appreciation for him or her. These words may not seem to get through, but they will be remembered by your spouse.

**Love with action.** Love is a verb. Do not simply tell your spouse that you love him or her. Show your love. Simple acts of kindness that are specific to your own spouse will show your love in a way that could not be shown to him or her by anyone else.

**Reach out.** Be willing to ask for help from family or friends. Whoever it is that is a "safe" place for you, let them know that you are struggling. Meet with them, pray with them, ask them to be a support for you however they can. Community can be life-changing for a marriage. Don't try to do life without it!

What have you found to most helpful when you or your spouse struggle with personal issues? Do you have a specific prayer request? Please share in the comments or contact me through Facebook so that I can pray for you and your marriage!



## 3 WAYS TO STAY ON THE SAME FINANCIAL PAGE WITHIN YOUR MARRIAGE

Marlene | *A Diligent Heart*

**O**h, finances. The topic is sometimes followed by an immediate sigh of desperation when brought up in marriages. There are many things in a marriage that can cause strife, and finances is pretty close to being number one.

A marriage is rarely made up of two spenders or two savers. Usually, we find one is a saver and the other is a spender. The saver tends to keep track of finances best, pays the bills on time, balances the budget, and ensures the family isn't overspending in any category.

The spender often feels restricted and like he or she can't do anything without getting permission from the other. This often causes resentment and strife to build up, leading to arguments or carelessness when it comes to considering the budget. Consider these ideas below to ensure [you and your spouse stay on the same page with your finances](#).

### 3 WAYS YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE CAN STAY ON THE SAME FINANCIAL PAGE

#### CONSIDER THE OTHER PERSON.

For the spender: Don't avoid communicating your needs. But be sure to consider the reality of your budget as well. There may be more to it than just "feeling restricted." If your budget doesn't allow for the wiggle room you would like, it's probably time for you to evaluate the heart behind it all. Are there other things you can do that cost less (or are free)?

For the saver: Don't restrict the spender. Make sure that there is a fair pre-set amount in the budget for whatever goes money. Share the why's of the budget. Don't just dictate to your spouse what he or she can or cannot spend. A marriage is about being one, and when you are one you don't try to control the other. Instead, you allow each of you to use your talents and strengths within the marriage to have a successful marriage.

## PRAY TOGETHER ABOUT YOUR BUDGET.

This is so important. This should be the first thing you do before even [setting up a budget](#), even if you feel there is only one logical way to make the budget work. Pray for:

- Patience
- Openness
- Fairness
- Respect

But overall, pray that you both go into budget planning (*even if only one is actively putting it on paper*) with God first.

This means that your will with your budget is to honor Him and serve Him with your finances. After all, He is the one who is providing for you, regardless of whom He provides through.

These are some of my favorite verses to go to when my husband and I are dealing with finances and budget:

*“Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”  
(Philippians 2:3-4)*

*“Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.”  
(James 1:12)*

*This verse is particularly encouraging when the budget is super tight.*

*“Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”  
(Matthew 6:31-33)*

*“Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.  
Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.”  
(Colossians 3:18-19)*

*“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.  
It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and  
pierced themselves with many pangs.”  
(1 Timothy 6:10)*

*“He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves  
wealth with his income; this also is vanity.”  
(Ecclesiastes 5:10)*

### **REEVALUATE OFTEN.**

We commit to evaluating our budget quarterly. This doesn't mean we aren't watching things throughout the month, but instead it means we evaluate each category of our budget to see how it was working for us over the past months.

## 5 WAYS TO CONNECT YOUR HEARTS WHEN YOUR CALENDAR EXPLODES

Teri Lynne | <http://www.terilynneunderwood.com/blog>

Wheh ... I'm sitting here writing this post in between loads of laundry, looking at furniture way past needing to be dusted. We have had a crazy busy month. Four Saturdays in a row, at least one of the three of us was gone. Between church commitments, family obligations, and our daughter's never-ending schedule of cheerleading, homework, and "hanging out" with friends, this seems to be a season of pure chaos in our home. Perhaps you can relate?

I remember when my girl was younger and our life seemed so boring. We spent almost every night at home and the highlight of our weekends was having friends with young children over for cooking out or watching ball games. It's easy for me to get lost in longing for those days again. At the time, I didn't always see how precious the weeks with nothing on the calendar were.

Seasons are a beautiful thing. Here in north Alabama, we are finally experiencing the gorgeous autumnal colors. Just like I appreciate the special beauty of fall, winter, spring, and summer, my desire is also to find the loveliness in the different seasons we face in our marriage and family life.

As I've looked back over the past few weeks and looked ahead to the full schedule that comes with the holiday season, I'm quite aware that staying connected with my husband will require effort in the midst of an exploding calendar. Here are **five ways we've learned to be intentional about heart connection during the busy seasons.**

**1. Take five.** We make it a point to **spend five minutes together every day – just the two of us.** Usually it's over a cup of coffee after I take my girl to school and before he leaves for work. But even when our mornings don't allow that, we make it a point to connect for five minutes as some point throughout the day.

**2. Go to bed together.** The busier our schedule is, the more we make it a priority to go to bed at the same time. Yes, it might be easier for me to stay up and finish a load of laun-

dry, or for him to stay up and do some work in the peace and quiet after everyone else is asleep. But there is great value in lying down next to each other, especially on those days when we've been going nonstop in different directions.

**3. Use technology.** Last year I wrote a series called [28 days, 28 ways](#) about connecting with your husband in simple ways. One of my suggestions was to [send him a selfie](#). As silly as that may sound, I try to make it a point to do that when life is crazy. With all the technology we have at our disposal these days, why not use it to help us stay connected with our husbands?

**4. Ask this question.** In that same series, I shared [one question I aim to ask my husband every day](#): **How can I help you today?** More than anything else, this question helps me keep my heart focused on him on the busy days. By knowing what he needs from me, whether it's taking clothes to the cleaners or looking for a book he needs, I am reminded of my special role as his helper.

**5. Pray.** Of all the things we do to stay connected when the calendar is crazy, ***prayer is the most important—and often the most neglected.*** It's easy when we're both busy and going in different directions for a gap to form between us. Prayer is the most powerful way we have to keep that from happening.

The busy seasons will come for all of us. But by taking just a few specific steps, we can keep our hearts connected even when the calendar explodes!



## 3 THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU FACE SEPARATION OR DIVORCE

*LaToya Edwards* | [LaToyaEdwards.net](http://LaToyaEdwards.net)

I remember that night so clearly. I'd left so that my boys didn't see their dad packing up his things for good. I didn't want that image burned into their minds and young hearts. So I ran from the house and stayed gone for several hours. When I returned home to put my babies to bed, the silence in the house was almost deafening.

Marriage requires work. Separation is hard, and divorce is devastating. I've been through each of these (some more than once), and I've learned that there are things that help you get through the pain in a God-honoring way.

### 1. Prayer

I want to start off with the most important thing you can do when you go through hard times in your marriage: prayer. For me, [praying for my ex-husband](#) was the last thing that I wanted to do. I was so consumed by my hurts that I didn't want to pray for him. I choked on prayers for reconciliation. I wanted to hold on to my bitterness instead of seeking God's will for my marriage.

### 2. Wise counsel

Wise counsel is also important. Anytime that we go through a tough time (especially when we are trying to deal with sin in our lives), the Bible tells us to seek the counsel of others. You don't want to talk to just anyone, though. You need to prayerfully seek the right person. You want to talk with someone that will point you to God and not just say what you want to hear. You need someone that will help to hold you accountable to God's standards during this time in your life. They can help you to see your situation more clearly as you make tough decisions and choices.

I would caution you to seek counsel from only one or two people. It can be tempting to run to as many people as you can find for prayer and help, but resist that urge. You do not want to go around telling your business to everyone. It can do more harm than good

in the long run. If someone wants to pray for you, they do not need to know every detail of your personal struggles.

### **3. Community**

[We were created to be in community with each other](#) and this is really important during hard times. Sin often drives us into isolation. When we are alone we are more vulnerable to attacks from Satan. Stay connected to the Christian community. If you feel like you can't attend your church, then find a new congregation to fellowship with. Join a small group or Bible study with other moms. Keep meeting up with friends for encouragement and prayer.

I never imagined that I would walk through the number of trials that I had to face in my marriage. I tried to do things my way. I kicked and screamed when God called me to do hard things. But when I yielded my heart to His call I was able to walk through my trials in a way that honored God and proved to be a blessing to others.

If you are walking through the trial of separation or divorce let me encourage you to keep your eyes on God. Follow His plan for your life. He loves you and will never leave you on your own!

## YOU'RE NOT THE WOMAN I MARRIED

Melinda Martin | [MusingsOfAMinistersWife.com](http://MusingsOfAMinistersWife.com)

**Y**ou're not the woman I married," he said to me yesterday. "The woman I married was fearless. What has happened to you?"

"I had children," I said. "They changed me. The only thing I really fear in life is having something happen to them."

This was a snippet of our conversation after an incident with one of our children. (Nothing happened, but it was the whole idea of what could have happened. I know other mothers will understand.) But his question really made me reflect on marriage and how I have morphed in our years together.

I have settled up with a lot of the emotional issues that I brought into our marriage, although there are some battles that will always wage war on my mind and heart. I am much more compassionate. And, though it may be hard for some of you to believe, I am much more guarded in my speech than I was 15 years ago. I am not so prone to arguing these days. I seek peace, not war.

I seek solitude, and I think that may confuse him at times. I was the social butterfly when we met. I was the light in the room. Now, I am happiest at home, creating, knowing that my family is within reach. You see, I don't have a void in me any longer that requires me to seek attention from outside sources. My family is all I want, all I need—that and my quiet coffee time in the morning.

I've also learned that I prefer to be where I can best be myself without facing the judgment of others, without worrying about having my words and my intentions twisted. I've noticed that people just think they want me to change. After they've finally succeeded in changing me, they wonder what has happened to me. When I'm no longer the girl who speaks her mind, who seeks to right the wrongs, who is the champion of the underdog, then I'm no longer the girl they knew. When you take the passion out of me, I am just a shell of that girl.

Thankfully, my husband has always sought to teach me to retain my passion but to control it instead of allowing it to control me. In his youth, he trained horses. He knows the value of controlled passion. He also knows that it is a lot of work and effort, but the end result is so worth it.

They say that when you spend years with someone, you become like them. I believe what my husband is witnessing is that I am portraying some of his own qualities these days. He is my hero. He is who I most want to be like. But he is so different than me—quiet, stoic, strategic.

Between God molding me into the person that I need to be (as a mom, wife, and pastor's wife) and my own desires for who I want to be as an individual, it does result in some breaking down at times. But if you are careful with me, if you are patient with me, I promise that you will be amazed at the butterfly that will emerge. I succeed. That's what I do. I just do it differently than most people.

No, I am not the woman that he married 15 years ago. And that's not a bad thing.

## LOVING YOUR SPOUSE THROUGH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

Annette | *In All You Do*

**M**any people suffer from chronic illness, some visible and some not. As one who suffers from several chronic illnesses, I can honestly tell you it is difficult to be married to me. Some days are good, some are *really* good. Some days are bad . . . and others *worse*. You never know how you're going to feel from day to day, or even hour to hour.

Being married to a person with a chronic illness is not much fun. It's really taking the "in sickness and health" vow to the extreme. I'm not trying to compare my chronic illnesses, which are minor in the grand scheme of things, to a spouse who has lived through ALS or cancer with their husband or wife, but there are days I feel like my husband got the raw end of the deal.

*Did he really mean to sign up for this?*

*Is he sure he wants to stick around and deal with this the rest of our lives?*

He assures me he did and that he's not going anywhere, but I still can't help but wonder what his life must be like from day to day. Never knowing what "condition" I will be in by the time he comes home from work. Never knowing whether or not *this* trip to the hospital will be a week-long stay. It's not easy being married to me – someone with chronic illnesses. These few reminders have helped us through some tough times over the last few years.

### 8 WAYS TO LOVE YOUR SPOUSE WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS

**PRAY.** Pray for your spouse and for your marriage. A chronic illness is something that will stretch the limits of your patience and test the boundaries of your love. It isn't easy and it won't just "go away," so you need to pray. Pray for your spouse as they maneuver the difficulties of the illness, and pray that you will know just how to love them through it all.

**Communication is KEY.** This goes for marriage in general, but especially when the spouse has a chronic illness. Their level of activity can vary greatly from day to day. Their level of comfort in those activities will vary greatly as well. Talk about EVERYTHING.

This is the most important thing I can tell you. Talk about sex. It won't be easy, but it is necessary. Regardless of what your spouse says, they need sex. They *want* you. But running from the issue because it's hard will only strain your relationship and tear you apart.

**Know each other's love language.** This goes in line with #1. If you have a spouse that craves physical touch and you are not fulfilling that need, they will crumble. They may seek other ways to fulfill that need. Agree on ways you can both fulfill each other's love language even when those tough days arise. And talk about them often to see if you need to re-evaluate or change anything.

**It's not their fault.** Although you may tell yourself this, know that it's not (usually) because of anything they did. They didn't wish this illness on themselves and wouldn't wish it on their worst enemy. It stinks. Know that they *want* to feel better. They want to be involved. They want to run and play with the kids; they just can't some days.

**Don't be offended.** Some days will just be more than they can handle, and the best thing they can do is say no. They still love you and want more than anything to be with you, the kids, their family and friends – but sometimes it is better they stay home and rest. Don't take it personally; it isn't you – *really*.

**Don't pressure them.** Your wanting them to feel better won't make them better. And just because *they want* to feel better won't make it happen, either. If they say they're not up for a day trip, don't make them feel bad for not going. If they say they can't take the trip, don't make them feel worse for the change in plans. They are already beating themselves up about it. Know that when they feel better, they will make it happen.

**Be patient.** There will be days, and sometimes weeks (or months), when they will feel sick or just completely out of energy. They will continue to try and keep up for the kids' sake or appearances or whatever other reason they can think of, but they will eventually hit a wall. And when they do, they will go down hard. Be patient with them as they recover. Be patient with them as they find a "new normal" with this illness and balancing their other "duties" as wife and/or mom, or husband and/or dad. It isn't easy for them to admit defeat.

**Don't ignore their issue.** As with anything else, ignoring their issues will not make them disappear. In fact, ignoring them will likely lead to them shutting down and/or depression. And that is a scary, slippery slope. They likely suffer from bouts of depression when flare-ups occur anyway, so don't ignore them when they happen.

Have a friend or family member with a chronic illness, but don't know what to do? Here are [9 ways to help those with a chronic illness](#).



## OVERSHARING ABOUT YOUR MARRIAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

*Renée Gotcher | [A New Chapter](#)*

**O**versharing” has taken on a whole new meaning in a social media world. Think about it: How often are the subjects of your posts things that would have never been seen or discussed if not for a social media platform to tempt you to instantly share?

Before Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, how often did you snap and share pictures of what’s for dinner, show all of your friends the epic kid-produced mess you just mopped up, or pass along that hilarious photo that made you laugh out loud to your entire contact list? (By the way, I’m guilty of all of the above!)

That’s just the tip of the oversharing iceberg. Although much of the oversharing is innocent, it’s getting to a point where almost nothing is off limits to share with the hundreds of “friends” who get a constant, up-close and personal look into our daily lives.

The more we feel comfortable making the most mundane moments into a public spectacle, the more likely we are to impulsively share things that expose our most intimate relationships. This lack of restraint can be especially damaging to a marriage.

How can we resist the urge to overshare about our spouse? Even if you leave your oversharing off Facebook, are you still exposing too much about your marriage to outsiders in conversation? And when you’re genuinely seeking advice, how much is too much to share with others?

### TWO BECOME ONE FLESH

God’s Word makes it clear that one man and one woman become one flesh in a marriage. From the establishment of marriage in Genesis to the teachings of Jesus and discipling letters from the Apostle Paul, we are told that a married couple has left their individual status and birth family behind to become one new entity, one flesh ([Gen. 2:24](#), [Mark 10:8](#), [Ephesians 5:31](#)).

What does this have to do with oversharing about your spouse? Simply put, oversharing about your spouse (especially when it's negative) to people outside your relationship is an act of separating yourself from him. You're singling him out for shallow laughs, outside scrutiny, or even reproach. If you are one entity, then you're really exposing both you and your husband — the entity of your one-flesh marriage — to any consequences from what you're sharing. And when one of you is hurt, you both hurt.

As followers of Jesus, we are to be set apart in all that we do in our daily lives — and that includes our conversations (see [James 1:19](#) and [Ephesians 5:1-33](#)). We are responsible for what comes out of our mouths, including what we type and send out into cyberspace, and how it affects who we're talking about and those who hear what we say. Those words carry even more weight in our marriage relationship because they divide us.

If your marriage is truly suffering, oversharing about that struggle is even more detrimental. Talking about your spouse behind his back is also stabbing yourself in the back: You are still one flesh. When you're oversharing your side of the story, you're getting one-sided advice and leaving others stuck in the middle. What is needed for true healing to take place is a joint solution between you and your spouse before God and potentially a pastor or counselor.

Unfortunately I have witnessed several marriages damaged and even destroyed by what started out as oversharing, both on social media and in person. (See my previous post, [“A Tale of Two Marriages Sabotaged by Social Media,”](#) for social media do's and don'ts for married couples.) Oversharing might seem innocent at first, but it can quickly spiral out of control when the marriage is already weak.

## ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD AND EACH OTHER

Early on in our marriage, my husband and I resolved that we would always come to each other first if we had an issue or concern. After more than 20 years, we still don't discuss private details about our marriage with our parents or close friends, and we most definitely don't share them on social media. It has nothing to do with keeping up appearances: I have no problem telling someone that married life has been challenging, and that I thank God every day for the miracles and growth that He's carried us through over the years. However, being able to encourage someone with that testimony doesn't require oversharing.

Because marriage is a relationship defined by God, He has a lot to say about how that relationship works in His Word. We each have a role and responsibility in the partnership that is unique to husband and wife, and there's protection for us in that accountability

structure. (For more on the freedom we can discover in God's design for our marriage, [see my previous post on this topic.](#))

With the Scriptures as our guide, my husband and I know that we are first accountable to God, and then to each other. If things can't be resolved between the two of us, we can seek Godly counsel the way we're instructed to in the Bible. As believers, who are we instructed to take up our offenses with? First, directly to the person who committed the offense, then to someone who can provide Godly counsel ([Matthew 18:15-17](#)).

In most cases, working through marriage challenges in this way will be enough — keeping the details of those challenges from becoming public chatter. However, there's a difference between showing restraint and avoiding gossip about your marriage, and hiding or suppressing truly abusive behavior. There's nothing wrong with seeking outside help from the proper sources when it's clearly necessary for your safety and the safety of your children.

## THE POWER OF TESTIMONY

It's pretty obvious that we should resist oversharing about both petty and serious challenges in our marriage, but what about the good stuff? Is there such a thing as oversharing about the highs and the breakthroughs? What if our story can encourage other couples who are struggling?

I think the most important thing to remember is the fact that you are one flesh with your spouse, so the decision to share details of your marriage testimony should be made jointly. God's Word tells us that there's power in our testimony when our words give glory to Him and point others to Christ. Pray about it, and be in agreement about how God is leading you to share (and in what medium) when you do decide to give that testimony.

When in doubt, remember what God's Word says about the power of our words and how we should use them: to uplift, encourage, show kindness, extend grace, express gratitude and love, and share truth (see [Ephesians 4:29](#), [Proverbs 16:24](#) and [Colossians 4:6](#)). Let those instructions be our guide as we learn to moderate ourselves and resist the impulse to overshare about our spouse, our marriage, and others in general.

## HOW ROMANCE CAN HURT YOUR MARRIAGE

Kristi | [RaisingClovers.com](http://RaisingClovers.com)

**W**e all dream of romance! Every woman I know desires it. It's fun! It's beautiful! So, what's up with the title?

***Well, to be honest, romance can be a silent killer in your marriage if you aren't careful.***

For the record, it's not that I don't have romance in my marriage. I do. I think it's fun to "keep the romance alive" in my marriage. Being intentional with your spouse is really important. However, being intentional and being romantic are two very different things.

***I know for me it's really easy to slip into the mode of "what have you done for me lately" when it comes to the romance department.*** This is especially true in our romance-saturated society.

Everywhere we look we see magazines, TV shows, movies, books, and more — ALL telling us that we need to have more romance in our lives and telling us what romance is "supposed" to look like. Then throw in a little social media and all the pictures you see posted of friends on romantic get-aways or candlelight dinners, ***and you have a recipe for discontentment!***

***Discontentment is a marriage killer, and there seems to be a lot of discontentment surrounding "romance!"*** So many expectations. So much heartache. So much bitterness.

Years ago, our marriage was going through a tough patch. Life was crazy! We had just moved to a new area, my husband was traveling a lot, we had two little boys close in age, I was serving in four different ministries at our new church trying to make friends, our house was having issues, we had two unexpected surgeries — and the list could go on! I refer to these days as the "dark days." ***Life was a mess, but worse yet, our marriage was a mess.***

We were like two ships passing in the night.

In the evenings when I was too tired to do anything productive and my hubby was out of town, I'd turn to the one thing I thought would cheer me up — TV!

What I found was that all those sweet romantic comedies that I liked so much were not cheering me up. They were fueling the fire. *I became more bitter and discontent. I wanted to be romanced the way I saw on my screen. I wanted to be held, looked at, and adored just like the leading lady.*

Now in my sweet husband's defense, he has knocked my socks off during the years with grand romantic gestures. But it's always in between those moments that I start feeling like we've lost that spark. *I needed to stop basing the health of our marriage on how "romanced" I felt.*

***Love is a choice! It's a commitment!*** It's not based on feelings or circumstances. Well, at least it shouldn't be. I've been learning through the years that instead of slipping into those unhealthy places in my mind and allowing bitterness to take root, I need to focus on what God's Word tells me to do.

Nowhere in the Bible do we see love defined as candlelight dinners, roses, and long walks on the beach. Don't get me wrong, those are all fun, great things. ***But when our pursuit of romance ends up taking precedence over the pursuit of biblical love, then we have a problem.***

*"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."*

*1 Corinthians 13:4-7*

I had a record. I was rude. I was angered. I was not patient. I was not protecting. I was not persevering.

***It all boiled down to the battle of the mind.***

Creating a lasting marriage takes more than a little romance. Guarding our hearts, eyes, and minds from the lies that the enemy is constantly bombarding us with takes hard work. Now when I feel those old feelings of disappointment creeping into my mind, I try to remember to do these three things:

Guard Your Heart!

*"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."*

*– Proverbs 4:23*

I want my heart filled with love and joy. Yet, when I allow those comparative thoughts to bog my heart down, then I have a problem. I know I said discontentment was a killer of marriage, but so is bitterness and the “comparison game.” Don’t compare your marriage to others — in real life or on a screen or page. Those misdirected desires left unchecked can cause serious problems.

Guard Your Eyes!

*“Turn my eyes away from worthless things;  
persevere my life according to your word.”  
– Psalm 119:37*

What kind of a visual environment have I created for myself? Am I watching shows or reading books that could potentially cause these unhealthy feelings to creep in? If you struggle in this area, it may be a good time to fast from romantic comedies for a while — I know I had to for a season.

Guard Your Mind!

*“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right,  
whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is  
excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.”  
Philippians 4:8*

We need to be intentional about what we’re allowing our minds to think about. What am I fantasizing about? What images am I allowing to linger in my mind? Am I allowing anger to stew just below the surface? I pray constantly over this verse when I feel like there are thoughts floating around in my mind that are not helpful for my marriage. If these thoughts don’t stand up to my Philippians 4 check, then I pray for God to remove them and renew my mind.

I pray that the Lord infuses His love into your marriage. May you be intentional in your commitment to love your spouse through the good and the bad — and the “non-romantic” times of life!



## THE ART OF FORGIVING FAST, FREQUENTLY, AND FOREVER

Rhonda Owens | [MitchellAndRhonda.com](http://MitchellAndRhonda.com)

**O**ur first year of marriage was not blissful or beautiful, sweet or serene. One could describe it as passionate, I guess... because we were passionately aggravated with one another a good deal of the time.

You see, we were both pretty stubborn people: me, in a passive-aggressive kind of way; him, in an annoyingly assertive manner. Complicating matters was his introverted tendency to stay quiet during an argument and my extroverted propensity to spew words all over everything.

Sparks flew; people got burned. And then silence ensued... sometimes for days.

Sounds fun, doesn't it? {NOT.}

We've been married almost a quarter of a century now, and we still talk about that horrid first year, marveling over how we ever made it through!

{Can anyone relate to what I am saying?!}

I'm happy to report that with God's grace and ever-patient assistance, we've gone far beyond "just making it through." We've grown deeper in love and smarter in how we deal with one another's shortcomings. I'd say much of our intimacy is the direct result of how we've learned the art of forgiving fast, frequently, and forever.

### FORGIVING FAST

It used to be that if my husband would say or do something hurtful, I'd hold it against him for days. {I'm such a gem.} What I came to realize is that 9 times out of 10, he wasn't even cognizant of hurting my feelings. {Whaaaaat? True. Story.}

I would seriously not speak to him, and after a day or two, his introverted self {who was probably really enjoying the silence from the typical barrage of my words} would say, "Is

something wrong?” and I would let the floodgates fly. wide. open. {I’m telling you, I was such. a. treat.}

Now, though? If he hurts my feelings or if I hurt his? We are quick to recognize the pain we’ve caused, quick to say, “I’m sorry for hurting your feelings. Will you please forgive me?” and quick to say, wholeheartedly, “Yes! I forgive you!”

Because you know what? Ain’t nobody got time for the three-day silent treatment!

## FORGIVING FREQUENTLY

After almost 25 years of marriage, we understand that we are perpetually imperfect people who sometimes snip at one another for no other reason than the day has been long, the strain has been hard to bear, and we’re simply tired. When those moments come — and they come often, can I get an amen? — we blow off one another’s snarky behavior, snuggle in close anyway, and literally feel the fight drain away.

Because here’s the thing: In the end, my husband is FOR me, not against me; and I am FOR him, not against him. Paul says it better: “If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace everyone.” (Romans 12:18) That includes our spouse, too!

## FORGIVING FOREVER

I’m embarrassed to say that I’m not the best at this one, but I’m learning! I’m quick to forgive, and I do it frequently, but there is this sneaky, sinful part of me that brings up my husband’s past offenses, and there is nothing that adds more fuel to the fire.

Thankfully, I have a man who is no less than STELLAR in this area. Not once can I remember a time when he has reached into our past to pull out a “gotcha” during an argument. Not. Once. He is great at seemingly forgetting all the yuck, and he certainly never colors the present with it.

Like God, who literally “blots out [our] transgressions” and doesn’t even “remember [our] sins,” we should strive hard to forget our spouse’s transgressions... forever.

So my advice to growing better in marriage? Learn well the art of forgiving fast, frequently, and forever!

## MAKING MARRIAGE YOUR FIRST PRIORITY

*Miyoshi Walters*

**I**n the busyness of life with everything vying for your attention, it is difficult to keep priorities in order. But there is one area that should stay at the top of every couple's priority list: their marriage.

There's nothing more inspiring than seeing a happily married couple whose vows have lasted from young adulthood well into the golden years. But don't be deceived. It wasn't luck that brought them through. **Great marriages don't "just happen." They are intentionally built one day at a time.** And that takes a shift in priorities.

Bogged down with demands at work, raising children and growing responsibilities, couples often place marriage maintenance on their expendable list, waiting for more convenient times to work on their relationship. **The result to this type of thinking? Years later they find that they're living with a roommate rather than a soul mate.** Keeping your marriage your top priority means making a conscious choice to grow with your partner not away from your partner.

Do you have children? Sure, you may feel pulled in all directions to satisfy their demanding needs. But whether you are dealing with babies or teens, there is no greater gift you can give your child than to provide a healthy happy home with two unified loving parents.

Do yourself and your family a favor. Place your marriage on the same priority level as brushing your teeth. Make it a part of your daily routine and something you wouldn't dream of skipping no matter how busy your schedule gets!

### HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO ACHIEVE THIS:

**Connect Daily.** Whether it is only a few minutes after dinner or longer when the kids go to bed, set aside a period of [alone time to connect as a couple](#). The only rule? Leave problems, decision making and other family matters outside the door and only focus on one another.

Will it be during the day? Set a timer for antsy children and let them know Mommy and Daddy Time is very important and you cannot be disturbed. You'll be teaching your children great life lessons in fostering healthy relationships!

Pressed for time? You'll be surprised how much of a difference 15 committed minutes of stolen alone time can make in developing oneness with your spouse.

**Schedule weekly or monthly dates.** The key word is "schedule." Don't leave this to chance but write it on the calendar. Dates do not have to cost a fortune either. Take a walk, go for a drive, have a picnic on the living room floor, cook dinner together, go to the movies or borrow one from the library and make popcorn at home. There are lots of opportunities to spend time together.

No sitter? Be creative! When our oldest was a baby and we couldn't find a sitter, my husband and I simply plopped him in an electric swing and played dominoes at our kitchen table. Today, after 25 years of marriage that is one of my fondest memories!

**Invest one minute a day in your marriage.** That's right, only one. But what can you do for one minute that will make a difference? Email, "[I love you](#)." Greet your spouse with along kiss at the door. Give an extra long hug. Whisper a sexy message in his/her ear. Give a one minute massage of the shoulders. Say, "I appreciate you." Use your imagination. I'm sure you can come up with more.

**Make new experiences together.** Take up a new hobby or take a class together (such as a cooking class, dance class, flying lessons, scuba diving course, etc.). [Do something out of the ordinary](#) and out of your comfort zones. The new experiences will cause you to bond and you'll have a lot of fun in the process.

**Learn about and participate in one another's hobbies.** It's amazing how much you can learn about people by watching them do what they love. In addition to their sparkling eyes as they are working in their element, you're bound to see them in a new light.

**Don't forget about couple time.** Play dates and family get-togethers are great but don't lose your identity as a couple in the process. Schedule a night out with other couples like you did before children. This will strengthen your connection as a unit and rekindle feelings that started your relationship in the first place.

**And most importantly, pray for your spouse and your marriage.** God makes all the difference in any marriage!

Making your marriage a priority is simply deciding not to take your marriage for granted but to instead treat it as one of the most important relationships you'll ever make with

a person. It is the act of adjusting to life's stages to make sure you are growing older with your spouse every day. And if you ask any seasoned couple if the time investment was worth it, I'm sure the answer will be the same. Taking the time to sow the seeds of togetherness brings an immeasurable payoff of a rewarding marriage that is bound to stand the test of time.

## 10 REASONS YOUR MARRIAGE ISN'T THRIVING

Carlie Kercheval | *Fulfilling Your Vows™*

When you think about your marriage, does it feel like things are slipping away? We've found that making our marriage thrive means working hard to get past some major road blocks that get in the way, and keeping habits that make us stronger. Here are 10 reasons your marriage isn't thriving.

### 10 REASONS YOUR MARRIAGE ISN'T THRIVING

#### 1. You Don't Listen to Each Other

It's important to not only hear what your spouse is saying, but to really listen. Not sure of the difference? Next time he's talking, try to recall what he shared. If you can recap the conversation, then you were actively listening. If not, you were hearing, but not focused on his words. We're all guilty of only hearing sometimes, but with your spouse it's important to set aside other thoughts that may be running interference and really listen. This will help you to communicate better with one another.

#### 2. You've Stopped Courting One Another

When was the last time you gave her flowers or you made his favorite meal? Remember the days when you were working to impress the other...when your only goal was to show her what a great guy you were? As soon as you stop courting each other, you stop showing her that she's worthy of your time and care. Make an effort to show her that she's just as important to you as she always has been (if not more so).

#### 3. Date Night Is a Thing of the Past

One big part of courting is going out...without the kids. Simply getting a sitter and going out for dinner (or really out anywhere) will help you to reconnect and rediscover the connection that you have. Not sure where to go for your next date? Take a look at some of our favorite [cheap date night ideas](#) and [stay-at-home date night ideas](#)!



#### 4. The Kids Are Your Priority

Of course your kids are one of the most important things to you, but in a healthy marriage the pecking order must be: #1 God, #2 Spouse, #3 Kids. Seeing your spouse as a higher priority doesn't mean that you love your children any less. It simply means that you're honoring the relationship that you vowed before God that you would have with your husband/wife.

#### 5. You Have Separate Goals

Some of the goals that we set for ourselves, such as fitness and professional goals, are individual. Others are important to set as a couple. Having a common vision of where you want to go as a couple and a family gives you something to work on together. Talk about where you want to live, the lifestyle that you want to share, and how you'll get there.

#### 6. Your Relationship Isn't Exciting Anymore

There has to be an element of surprise and fun left in your relationship. Maybe it's the comfort of things you do, just the two of you, like watching a favorite show in the evening. Maybe it's notes that you leave each other around the house. Keeping your marriage fun will help it to thrive. Take a look at some of the ways that we like to [keep the romance alive \(even when we're exhausted\)](#).

#### 7. You've Lost Sight of Your Vows

If you're having a tough time getting past a challenge that you're having, or find yourself nit-picking over habits that you find less than desirable, think about the vows that you made before God and your family. You vowed to love one another through thick and thin...even when he leaves his laundry on the floor. [Respecting your marriage](#) will help you to become a stronger couple.

#### 8. You Place More Value on Other Relationships

When you get frustrated with something that your spouse does, do you talk to him/her, or do you pick up the phone to call your closest friend to vent? While we all need someone to talk to, going to the person who is supposed to be closest and working through tough times together will make your relationship stronger and will help it to thrive.

#### 9. Running Your Home Isn't a Combined Effort

Let's face it; you both work (as we do). In our family, she [homeschools](#) our children and manages our home, while he works outside of the house, but we both work...a lot. We have found that working on our home together and making sure that everything is taken

care of (laundry, cooking, cleaning, kids...) helps lead us both to a better understanding of the other. When we both put ourselves into what goes on in our home, there is less resentment for what isn't done and we feel that we're working on the same team.

## **10. You've Stopped Growing Together**

Throughout our entire lives we grow and change. Unless you make a concerted effort to grow together, it's possible that you may grow apart. Take up a new hobby together or learn a new skill as a couple. Grow together in your spiritual life. While it's healthy to have time for you to grow on your own, you must make sure that you're doing the same together.

## NURTURING YOUR MARRIAGE IN A SEASON OF FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY

Chris Taylor | *The Forgiven Wife*

No matter how careful you are with your money, sometimes life throws finances into a tailspin. Medical or legal expenses, unemployment or underemployment, and household or vehicle repairs can devastate a budget.

In 2009, my husband and I began a five-year season of unemployment, temporary jobs, and finances that spiraled out of control. With bleak job prospects for my husband, no hope for promotion at my job, and three teens, we experienced a great deal of stress.

Despite the difficulty of this season, though, it was a time of tremendous growth and joy in our marriage.

A couple in financial crisis may face quite a few unknowns. Despite the instructions in Matthew 10:31 to not fear because we are worth more than many sparrows, many couples find that financial difficulty brings a time of great fear, uncertainty, anxiety, and strain to their marriages.

What can you do to help your marriage thrive in the face of financial difficulty?

### NURTURE YOUR HUSBAND.

Many men feel a deep need to provide for their families; a financial crisis can be unsettling. This is a time to build your husband up.

Respect goes a long way. (See [this post](#) from a previous 31 Days to a Better Marriage series.) Although I'd always handled our finances in the past, during my husband's extended unemployment, I sought his input even more than before. I thanked him for his insight and pointed out ways that his suggestions were good for our family.

Acknowledge his efforts. I expressed my appreciation for my sweetie's willingness to make sacrifices for the good of the family, whether it was big sacrifice (such as selling a

collection) or a small one (forgoing a favorite brand of ketchup). When he applied for jobs or had an interview, I celebrated the effort even if we didn't get the desired outcome.

Look for ways for him to spend time with other men. My husband needed to maintain his friendships. He benefited from the company of other men, and it was good for him to have a break from concern about finances. We invited our best friends over for inexpensive meals as often as possible. When my husband had a tough week with a lot of job rejections, I sometimes asked his best friend to take him out for coffee.

## **NURTURE YOURSELF.**

It's important for us to take care of ourselves, too. I worked hard to support my husband through our crisis, but the fact is that I needed support, too.

My own friendships helped me maintain some sanity. I couldn't do things that cost money, but meeting for a walk in the park or a shared picnic lunch helped a great deal. I had good friends who I could talk to about my fears if I needed to but who could always redirect the conversation when I needed a distraction, too.

Replenish yourself. If walks in nature help you calm down, then head to a nearby park and wander around. If you appreciate the comfort of soaking in a bubble bath, then make a point to do this at least once a week.

Express yourself. I needed to be able to talk through my fears and anxieties. It was hard, though, because I didn't want to add to my husband's stress. I shared with a couple friends. I wrote in a journal. I cried out to God in prayer. I did sometimes talk with my husband, too. It was important that I be able to rely on him for emotional support. I was careful to do this at times when we weren't trying to make a decision or when he wasn't expressing his own concerns.

## **NURTURE YOUR RELATIONSHIP.**

Be intentional about maintaining your relationship with your husband.

Make sure you have times when you aren't talking about finances or decisions. Reminisce about wonderful memories. Do crossword puzzles or play board games together.

Without money, it can be difficult to have date nights—especially if you have young kids and can't leave the house without hiring a sitter. It's time to be creative. Have a picnic. Go out for ice cream cones instead of a full meal. After the kids are asleep, pop some popcorn and watch a movie you already own.

Tend to sexual intimacy. Even if neither one of you is in the mood, sexual intimacy helps to maintain the connection and unity in your marriage.

## **NURTURE YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE.**

One of the best ways to weather a stormy season is to keep your eyes on the horizon of eternity rather than on what is immediately in front of you.

Seek comfort in the Bible. In addition to verses that remind us of the role of money in our lives and God's care for us, the Psalms help us remember that our difficult feelings are part of being human and that God is always there for us.

Pray and attend church together. Holding my husband's hand during our worship service's prayer time helped me remember that he and I were in our problems together and that God was with us.

Let your church family be a source of help. Put your family on a prayer list. Ask for referrals to Christian social service agencies or assistance if money is extremely tight. If others offer help, allow yourself to accept it as one of the ways God reaches out to care for you. Recognize the blessing of letting other minister to you.

Fortunately, it is possible to weather financial storms and come through with a marriage that is stronger than before.

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:31-33)

## WHEN LOVE HURTS

Alvie | *SheWins Project*

I love to journal. It's where I capture my raw, unaltered, innermost thoughts about life. In 2011, a few weeks before our 10-year wedding anniversary, I found my journals that dated back to when my husband and I first got married. Excited to reminisce on how our relationship had evolved, I sat down to travel back into time, hoping to get a glimpse of a special memory, a vintage testimony, or a monumental milestone.

I dusted off these precious time capsules and curled up in my favorite living room chair by a window that provided soft rays of light that lit up the pages. As I sipped my cup of tea, I flipped through the pages, reading word for word, and I slowly began to notice that I wasn't drifting back into time. No, in fact, almost every entry resembled a life I was living at that very moment, 10 years later.

How could this be? It's been ten years, two houses, and three children later. By this time I somehow slithered from my comfy chair to the floor in a puddle of tears.

You see, the truth is, I knew my marriage was in shambles, but the realization that our relationship had sustained this level of dysfunction for more than a decade was like getting the wind knocked out of me. I lived in a home where love hurt. It was disguised under layers of manipulation, isolation laced with deceit, and a for-others-viewing-only façade that included a picture-perfect family living in suburbia. But the truth was, I was living in a twisted tale that could have come straight from a Lifetime movie.

I always knew my marriage was different but I could never put my finger on the problem. What I was dealing with was so elusive and deceiving. The verbal assaults against me were camouflaged as tough love, and the hurt that I felt afterwards was quickly diminished by my husband with a "get over it" attitude. I tried to get over it by praying for and forgiving my husband over and over. As a Christian woman, you have this persistent urge to forgive quickly and instantly pray for your husband and the situation for the sake of the family. Unfortunately, this combination ultimately ends up corroding your sensitivity to the hurt and enabling the bad behavior, leaving you numb, hopeless, and non-existent.

I struggled to understand why I felt so isolated in my marriage and despised by my husband. No matter what I did, I could never satisfy him. So I did what Luke 11:9 says and I went to God on a night after one of my husband's yelling episodes, asking a simple question: "God, what is this spirit that I am battling with?" Ephesians 6:12 tells us we don't battle against flesh and blood but against evil forces.

After saying that prayer, God immediately answered and revealed the culprit to my troubled marriage and the demise of the essence of who I am – my soul. He showed me that I was swimming in a toxic lake of domestic abuse with strong currents of fear, manipulation, and confusion. I finally had a diagnosis with accurate symptoms and promising treatment. Once I realized what I was dealing with, I felt a sense of optimism come over me. I took my findings to my husband and he immediately rejected them and me, and told me to leave "his" house.

I quickly learned that domestic abuse is all about power and control. It is spiritual battle, warfare on a unfathomable and uncomfortable level. It comes in six forms: verbal, mental/emotional, sexual, physical, spiritual, and financial abuse. I was at war, and to survive I had to get mentally smarter in order to stay two steps ahead of my husband. I also had to become spiritually stronger to ensure I was led by the Spirit and not raw emotions.

I decided to learn everything I possibly could about the cycle of abuse. I found countless websites and books that revealed a web of intricate abusive behaviors that entangled me in an unhealthy and ungodly relationship.

God did not create you to be abused. Bishop T.D. Jakes states it perfectly: "Abuse means you are being used in a way you were not designed to be used."

In order to break the cycle of abuse for my children, I had to trek into this mysterious world hidden from most abuse victim's friends and family. There were five things I immediately had to understand and accept about myself and my abusive marriage.

## 5 THINGS TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

**You are not to blame.** It is not your fault. Never. There is no justification for abuse, and although your spouse may want to blame you for his actions, it is only an attempt to manipulate you and justify his behavior. You may think, "If I had not said this.... or done that..." he would have not yelled at or hit me. That is simply not true. Abusive behavior is a choice and you are not responsible for that choice. Deuteronomy 30:19 states that we are given choices and it is up to us to make the right choice.

**You are not responsible for your spouse's needs.** Contrary to you what you have been told, you are not responsible for your spouse's needs and he is not responsible for yours.



Setting the expectation that your spouse will meet your needs is breeding ground for major disappointment. Each of you is responsible for your own needs. Malachi 2:16 says, “For the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I hate divorce and marital separation and him who covers his garment [his wife] with violence. Therefore keep a watch upon your spirit [that it may be controlled by My Spirit], that you deal not treacherously and faithlessly [with your marriage mate].” God instructs each of you to keep a watchful eye on your spirit and your dealings within your marriage because, in the end, you are responsible for your own needs and behavior.

**You are not able to change your spouse.** As I dated my husband, I saw the red flags, flashing caution lights, and big orange “DETOUR” and red “WRONG WAY” signs, but I proceeded on the belief that I could change my husband once we were married. I thought surely the vow I made to love him until death do us apart would eradicate the behaviors that were drawn from a jealous spirit. I was wrong. The only changes came with me changing in desperate attempts to make him satisfied. I was no longer myself; I became a possession. Change is a choice, and it is one led by the Spirit, an internal burning conviction to do and be a better person. Both of those sources exclude you entirely.

**You are not who they want you to believe.** In abusive relationships it is easy to allow your impression of yourself take the shape of what your spouse tells you. Don’t be fooled. The only person who can define you is yourself. You define you. Reading the Bible daily gave me the strength and reassurance my mind and soul needed. Through reading the Word and prayer, God reminded me Who is in control and to Whom I belong. If you start to doubt yourself, go to God for revelation and strength. It is in our weakest moments that God reveals His mighty strength and plans. (Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-11.)

**You are not alone.** I used to think there wasn’t another soul that could relate to what I was going through. I would talk to my friends and family, and all I received was pity. Pity is counterproductive to restoration. Charles Spurgeon said, “But the people used to strengthen us are never those who sympathize with us; in fact, we are hindered by those who give us their sympathy, because sympathy only serves to weaken us.” Instead, you will need validation and understanding. You can find both in a support group. There are numerous online and community support groups. Check out a local women’s shelter or domestic violence and abuse group. I can’t explain how vital it is to have the support of women who understand exactly what you are feeling. “And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works.” (Hebrews 10:24)

If you believe you are in an abusive marriage, please seek help. I share seven steps on how to expose marital abuse on my [blog](#) which is a good starting point after you have prayed and sought God for revelation as to what steps you need to take. God will walk with you every step of the way if you just trust Him.

### 3 WAYS FOR MOMS OF LITTLES TO FEEL MORE SENSUAL

Bonny Logsdon Burns | [www.OysterBed7.com](http://www.OysterBed7.com)

Toddler laughter can create world peace, and their stubbornness can suck the life out of the most nurturing mama. You are exhausted on all levels and can't wait to thank your sister for introducing the three-year-old to the word "fart."

If in the midst of all this, pondering sexual thoughts about the father of said innocents is as likely to occur as your creating an equation to refute  $E=MC^2$ , then read on.

#### GET OFF HORMONAL BIRTH CONTROL PILLS; CONSIDER AN ALTERNATIVE.

I hear some of you saying, "That's brilliant. More kids would be the exact opposite of improving sex drive." Others are saying, "Are you crazy??"

**Combined Oral Contraceptives** (having both estrogen and progestin components) have been proven to lower testosterone levels significantly. Testosterone is a factor in creating physical sexual craving.

Most hormonal birth control (HBC) pills work by stopping ovulation. Ovaries actually produce a small amount of testosterone. Shut them down and this bit of testosterone doesn't get made.

Also, the estrogens in HBC increase the production of a molecule called Sex Hormone-Binding Globulin (SHBG). SHBG binds to testosterone circulating freely in your blood stream, making testosterone less available in your body. A 2006 study showed that HBC users had four times the amount of SHBG in their bodies than non-users. This study also showed that even after HBC was stopped, SHBG did not return to normal range for some. That means HBC can negatively affect you even after you quit taking it. It can cause a permanent change in your body chemistry.

I don't mean to scare you; I just want to make you aware. I knew none of this when I was taking it.

All HBC work generally the same way. However, research your specific brand because some are more testosterone-friendly than others.

And remember, there are other methods of birth control that do not contain synthetic hormones. Discuss these options with your doctor.

## **BREASTFEEDING? EMBRACE THE DUAL NATURE OF BREASTS.**

Your baby weight is falling off. Finally, your figure is looking more like an hourglass than a pear. You have the best set of “girls” of your life.

So why do you feel more like a milk cow than a sex kitten? If you feel this way, you are not alone.

The reward is to see your baby’s sweet, sated smile when he looks tenderly up at you while nursing, knowing he is getting so many wonderful health benefits from your milk.

God’s divine wisdom provided recovery time for a mama’s body after pregnancy while sustaining the life of the child. He accomplished this through breastfeeding.

The hormone prolactin maintains mother’s milk (literally “for lactation”). Prolactin promotes maternal behavior, counteracts dopamine (sexual arousal hormone), and suppresses ovulation (remember the ovulation and testosterone correlation).

Prolactin also suppresses estrogen which normally keeps vaginal walls lubricated.

In a show of God’s efficient design, he chose oxytocin, the bonding hormone, as the hormone which triggers milk release from the ducts and as the hormone which is released during orgasm. For many breastfeeding women, the moment of climax not only results in exquisite sensations, but also a geyser of milk.

In a nutshell, nursing your baby ramps up your nurturing behavior, squelches sexual desire, causes drought in the nether regions, and makes gushers of your breasts during the ultimate moment (i.e. orgasm). And still, I’d do it all over again!

*So, how does a low-libido breastfeeding mama get back in touch with her sensual side?*

*It’s OK to not know how you feel about your breasts.* They have been connected with sexual pleasure for a long time and now they are connected with nourishing a child.

*Understanding what’s going on physically can help you sort through the vast array of emotions.* Unfortunately, the way I dealt with this internal conflict was to turn off all sexuality. That was not healthy for my marriage.

*Talk with your husband about how you are feeling.* Let him know what you are working through. Your breasts can belong to both your baby and your marriage bed; it just takes time to get used to the idea.

*To rehydrate the southern arid region, I suggest coconut oil.* It's cheap and feels luxurious.

In the meantime, if breast touch during sexual intimacy is weird for you, *buy a sexy nursing bra and wear it during lovemaking.* Don't forget to insert absorbent breast pads for leakage. As time goes on, experiment with your husband and see how much breast touch you can tolerate both physically and emotionally during lovemaking.

## MANAGE SENSORY OVERLOAD.

A roaring three-year-old playfully head-butts your back side. Cherub #2 clings to your legs like a dryer sheet and sings happy songs. Lots of noise and uncoordinated touching are the language of littles.

When their dad gets home, he also wants to bestow kisses upon you, pat your fanny, and playfully yank your ponytail. And truly, you benefit greatly from the touch of the man who wants to be your biggest fan.

If you are overwhelmed by the sounds and feel aversion to touch by the end of a toddler-town day, sensory overload may be something to consider. It truly is a thing. However, not everyone experiences it, and if you do, it's not a flaw. It's how you were wired.

*The solace for sensory overload is silence.* Sensory overload usually isn't remedied by a girls' night out. Sensory overload needs decompression, not more stimulation.

*Carve out 5-7 minutes each day when you can quiet your mind through prayer, journaling, or Bible study.* Even if the only few minutes you can capture are while you are in the bathroom, be intentional about clearing your mind, exhaling all the stress out, and reciting your favorite Scripture.

*"After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper."  
(1 Kings 19:12)*

## FINAL THOUGHTS

I was so serious about my mothering that I forgot about the flirty woman that still lived inside me. Young mothers, your flirty sensual identity still lives inside you. It just may be overshadowed by hormonal birth control, breastfeeding, and wrangling small children.

*Pray for the Lord to lead your body, heart, and soul through this journey toward understanding how motherhood and wifedom can mesh together. Ask your husband to pray with you as you sort it all out.*

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”  
(Philippians 4:6)*

## DON'T LET PRINCE CHARMING ROB YOUR MARRIAGE

Alicia Michelle | [YourVibrantFamily.com](http://YourVibrantFamily.com)

Sometimes as I'm going throughout my day, I hear a man's voice talking to me. This voice gives the perfect response to my feelings: **"Oh, honey, you're so right. Let me draw you a bath and give you a neck message as you tell me all about it."**

He is pure charm and devotion: a man who is at my beck and call without any exceptions.

And although impeccably dressed and always carrying a flower bouquet, **this Prince Charming figure is probably one of my worst enemies. Truly.**

**You see, for years, this fantasy man has tricked me and given me the wrong impression about how my husband "should" treat me.** Prince Charming has whispered impossibilities into my ear—falsehoods about what marriage "should" be about and about how my husband "should" respond in each situation.

He has established unrealistic expectations in my heart about how my husband "needs" to react. He has told me that, if my husband really loved me, he would answer me in this specific way or do this specific thing.

**For years, these expectations robbed me of the true joys of my husband and severely limited our marriage.**

And yet, I was the one who let these falsehoods take root in my heart! I was the one who said, "Prince Charming, you're right and he's wrong. Why can't he respond the way you do?"

Do you hear this voice, too?

Proverbs 14:1 says, "A wise woman builds her home, but a foolish woman tears it down with her own hands." Oh, how true this is.

In those moments when I'd chosen to label Prince Charming's words as "correct," **I'd been slowly and inadvertently destroying the beautiful walls of our home's foundation—our marriage.**

## **"THIS IS MY WAY"**

Have you ever seen the movie *Spanglish*? Throughout the movie, we witness the undercurrents of one couple's marital troubles (mainly rooted in the wife's unrealistic expectations and her desire that he communicate with her in an idealized way). She is always talking about her need to share certain things or to express things in a certain way (in what she would term as her attempt to achieve marital closeness).

Her poor, good-guy husband (played by Adam Sandler) puts up with this drama throughout the movie, doing his best to please her unending list of unpredictable needs. Finally, in one pivotal scene at the end of the movie, he finally is able to communicate his frustration to her. When she is shocked at how he responds, he shouts, "This is my way!!"

I'm not necessarily endorsing the movie itself (I've only seen an edited version), but I have to admit that Adam Sandler's refrain of "This is my way!!" challenged me and brought new light onto the unrealistic expectations I'd placed on my husband.

The reality is that my husband is his own person. He has good days and he has bad ones. He doesn't live inside my head. He won't ever respond in the "perfect" way that I think that he should!

And here's the kicker: *I shouldn't expect him to respond this way, either!*

I realized that this kind of "he should respond this way" thinking resulted from a warped version of what marriage is. Marriage is not about working my hardest to get my husband to meet my needs or to act the way I've deemed is "correct" in a certain situation.

Instead, marriage is about *acceptance*. *Accepting—with open arms—the entirety of who a spouse is and loving them regardless.*

How selfish of me to think that my husband loves me only if he responds in some random, predetermined way that the Prince-Charming-voice in my head tells me is correct!

**Every time that I think "I wish he'd said this," or "How come he didn't 'know' that this was how he 'should' have responded?" I am tearing down my house with my own hands.**



## REFRAMING AND ACCEPTING THE LOVE

God continues to heal my heart in this area. In those moments when I want to tell my husband, “Why didn’t you respond in ‘this’ way,” God gently reminds me, “*This is his way, and rest assured he loves you.*”

On a daily basis, God gives me new eyes to see the wonderful man I married, allowing me to see the ways my husband deeply and richly loves me:

- my husband tucks the kids in bed by himself on those days when I am exhausted
- he never complains about watching the kids so that I can go out with a friend
- he takes the time to listen to me and hear what I have to say
- he regularly encourages me in my homeschooling efforts
- he tells me “you’re beautiful” in those moments when I know I have bags under my eyes and my hair is a mess

And I can think of more amazing things he does! And imagine—for a long time I missed out on being able to see these blessings (“his way” of loving me) because **I was so caught up in insisting that he could only love me in the ways I’d deemed “correct.”**

While I am truly a blessed woman to be this man’s wife, I still know that my husband will never love me perfectly... *and that’s the way it’s supposed to be.*

My husband can not and will not ever complete me, and I should never expect this of him. That is God’s job.

**I must first allow God to fill up my need to be loved and accepted, and then whatever else my husband gives is pure bonus.**

God is also giving me new insights into how my husband best feels loved so that *I can truly have a servant (instead of a selfish) mindset.* This has been a wonderful avenue of blessing in our marriage as well!

After all, true love is about serving, not about expecting to be served: “For even the Son of man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)

## YOUR TURN

Dear friend, I encourage you today to ask yourself: “Am I expecting my husband to love me in this false, Prince Charming way? How are my own expectations of his love limiting our closeness and shutting off the true purposes and blessings of marriage?”

**Instead of seeing what he *isn't* doing, discover with new eyes the ways that your husband *is* trying to show you love.**

## HOW FASTING AND PRAYER CAN BLESS YOUR MARRIAGE

Kaylene Yoder | [KayleneYoder.com](http://KayleneYoder.com)

I didn't understand the power of fasting and praying until I had no where to turn but to God. The enemy had had his way with much of my life. My marriage was painful; many dreams had been shattered. My health was sliding downhill, and my faith was right behind it.

I was in a desperate place.

I dug into the Lord's Word, longing for comfort and hope. I prayed. I cried.

I threw rocks at the sky. I screamed on the inside at everything and on the outside at nothing. And I sat in dirt refusing to move until the Lord spoke to me.

When my anger and frustration were spent, the Lord surrounded me. He comforted me, He quieted me with His love, and He gave me strength to breathe.

Through all the pain and heartbreak life can hold, we are not left to flounder about like lost sheep. We have a Great Shepherd who feeds us and pursues us. He longs to bring us to comfort and rest.

My two favorite ways of petitioning the Lord's heart are through prayer and fasting.

I didn't pray much in great detail until **I needed someone to talk to who understood my pain better than I did.**

I definitely had no great interest in fasting until **I was desperate enough to have a divine intervention.**

In fact, when I heard that prayer softens my heart toward others, I was a bit indignant at the thought that I might be the one needing a spiritual heart transplant.

But I prayed anyway. I prayed for my husband. I prayed for my marriage. I prayed for our home. I prayed like I had never prayed before.

Then, for an added measure, I started fasting...

**...with the attitude of “*that man has to change!*”**

And he did.

But not before the Lord did a beautiful work in my heart.

You see, fasting and prayer, even when done with wrong attitude, can open the door just enough for the Lord to do His work of giving us a new heart.

That first half hour of knee time with the Lord did exactly what it was supposed to do – it softened my heart toward my husband.

It gave me the perspective that my husband is a sinner, and as such he will sin.

I am not his mom, nor his God. I am his wife, and **I get to choose whether I want to be a nagging force or a powerful force by standing in prayer.**

I chose the power of prayer, because the power of nagging and manipulation doesn't work so well.

When I prayed **I became so blinded by the Lord's goodness and graciousness toward me that I couldn't focus on my husband's failures so much anymore.** When I did see them, I was able to be more forgiving and gracious toward him.

The added measure of fasting did a far greater work.

Isaiah 58 promises that fasting will ***“loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free...then your light will break forth like the dawn and your healing will quickly appear.”*** (v.6,8)

While prayer softens hearts and moves mountains, **fasting is intended to deepen our dependency on God.** It isn't just some activity we put ourselves through in hopes of a granted prayer.

God is not a genie. We cannot manipulate Him into fixing things the way we want them fixed. However, He is in the business of fixing things in better ways than we could imagine.

Long story short, **fasting changed my heart. Not God's mind.**

In the Bible, fasting was most often associated with the removal of food. Today we can fast from many different things.

The intent is that when we remove something we regularly depend on, we come face to face with the fact that we are not self-sufficient. We are forced to look at how frail our lives are and Who sustains us.

Fasting helps recenter us on our faith. It helps us return to the initial awe of His greatness and produces a greater thanksgiving for His sovereignty.

**Through fasting and prayer, God has healed the many broken pieces of my heart and given me a true love and appreciation for my husband and our marriage union.**

If you, too, are needing some divine intervention, **get on your knees and pray like you've never prayed before.**

**Then fast and trust God to fill your needs** both physically and spiritually.

For added motivation and encouragement you could also use this [FREE 7-day Fasting and Prayer Guide](#) for wives.

You can also find [Forty Prayers to Pray over Your Husband on this Pinterest board](#).

**God is in the business of healing hearts.**

Yours is one of them.

Claim it today.

## TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Jennifer | [www.claffs.com](http://www.claffs.com)

**I**t was still early this morning, but my body woke me up on autopilot since our normal rising time is around 5 am. But today is Saturday and my mind started rolling through my to-do list and what I ought to get up and start doing. Instead I forced myself to slow down, turn down the thoughts, and go back to sleep.

Am I being a “lazy” wife by not following my husband out of bed and getting moving on our day? NO! Not today. There is a place where I do need to get up and get going – but today, knowing the day, knowing our schedule, I knew taking care of myself and giving myself an extra couple hours of sleep was the best thing I could do for my husband (*and children*). ***Because I love him, I am choosing to take care of myself so I can better serve and care for him.***

This was a concept I missed realizing the importance of for many years. That concept of slowing down was of utmost importance to my being the wife (*and mother*) I need to be.

A few years ago I started to struggle with juggling life as a mom to many little ones and being the wife my husband needed. I began to see that concept of needing to be [filled up myself in order to be able to pour myself out for those around me](#).

So, what does this look like? To be honest – for YOU – I have no clue. But I can share what I do for myself and perhaps it will spur you on to think about how it would relate to you and your needs.

First and foremost, making the time to spend in the Word and continuing to **infuse my life and thoughts with the Word of God is incredibly important**. The time spent in the Word, allowing those few minutes of peace to fill my soul, really sets the tone for my day.

Next, knowing that my husband loves me and my body the way it is – even after 6 pregnancies and the “results” of those – I know he also appreciates knowing I am caring for my body physically and doing what I can to strengthen and maintain a healthy body. Again, know that this looks different for everyone. Honestly, I am not where I want to be, but I am faithful to continue to learn about my body, to educate myself on how my body

responds to various foods, and to plan my menus and meals to help me (and the rest of my family) maintain and strengthen their health through good food.

And this continues on to taking the time to exercise and build healthy moving habits – be it a more intense workout, a membership to a gym, or being intentional about walking daily or moving well in our day-to-day life. The key here is being regular and intentional. **It's the creating of a habit of being faithful and caring for your body.**

I have so appreciated the ministry and workouts of Fit2B. It has impacted my life in an incredible way and has really changed my perspective on how I can care for and heal my body. For me, much of this realization impacted my mindset of intimacy and time with my husband. Though this hasn't been an area I have struggled with to the extent that many do, it did strengthen my resolve to heal my body after pregnancies, to be able to be intimate without pain and stress.

May I encourage you, dear wife, if this is an area in which you are struggling, [please look at the these resources](#) and take the steps needed to start healing your body. God designed our bodies for enjoyment and pleasure with our husbands AND they were designed to carry those sweet babies. YES, they were also designed to heal and be whole again as well.

Next, as you look at the concept of caring for yourself and making that time for you to be filled up again, ask yourself – what rejuvenates you? What makes you happy and what brings peace to your mind and soul?

Is it beauty around you? What steps can you take to make your home, your kitchen, your bedroom, more of a space that makes you smile?

Is it getting out of the house all by yourself and enjoying some quiet time? Make plans to do the next round of grocery shopping or errands without the kids.

Is it finding space to read a good book and relax? Put the kids and hubby to bed and go take a warm bath, and enjoy some chocolate and a good book. *(This is something I do alot. I have found it is an incredibly simple and cheap way for me to unwind and relax and allow myself some space to be “me” and then be able to move on to wife and mama again.)*

Think through your day and start with little things that make you happy and see how they start changing your perspective on the rest of your life.

As I finish these thoughts, may I encourage you, sweet lady. Yes, you are called to be a wife and next to your relationship with God, **the relationship with your husband is of utmost importance to make a priority in your everyday.**



But please don't forget that part of making him a priority and showing him honor and respect is your being intentional about making time to take care of yourself. This is not neglecting him; this is showing him that you love him. You know that your joy, happy attitude, and peaceful spirit are important, and taking the time to cultivate and maintain yourself in these areas are truly a benefit and blessing to him.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK IN MARRIAGE

Brittany | *Equipping Godly Women*

**M**y husband and I had only been married a few months when our first child was born. It was a stressful time, and it was made even more stressful by the fact that he was working out of town for the majority of the week. We rarely saw each other, except in passing.

Every week was pretty much the same. My son and I would hang out together all week long until the weekend rolled around. Then my husband would watch our son while I went to work for a few hours on the weekend. Working opposite shifts allowed us to avoid paying for childcare, but it meant we never really parented together.

While I definitely missed seeing my husband during this time, being the “only parent” during the week didn’t really bother me that much. Our son was a very happy baby, and we quickly fell into routines and systems that kept everything running smoothly and easily. Until my husband would come home.

As a type-A perfectionist, I tend to have a certain way I like things done. And the nerve of my husband—he didn’t do everything exactly the way I would have! I mean, I’m the one who was with my son all week long; obviously I should know what’s best for him! And here my husband was doing things his own way!

One time, my husband put the baby to sleep in a onesie and cozy pants instead of changing him into real pajamas. He probably fed him his food out of order, too. The nerve!

Things continued this way for a couple of years. Each of us were doing our own thing.

Now, six years later, life in our household looks quite a bit different than it did when we were first starting out. While I’m still our children’s primary caregiver, my husband is fortunate enough to work a fairly predictable schedule right here in town. He’s super involved with our children, and we make the majority of our parenting decisions together. It’s different, but it’s nice. He’s a fantastic dad, and he takes great care of us all.

Honestly, letting go and relinquishing control has not been easy for me. I still have my ideas about which ways are best. But the more we parent together, instead of me trying to lead a crazy dictatorship, the more I realize just how beneficial it is for both of us to work together as a team.

## FOUR WAYS TEAMWORK CAN IMPROVE YOUR MARRIAGE

### 1. It Brings You Closer Together

After years of doing things myself, I'm used to it and it really doesn't bother me. I don't have a problem with taking the kids to the store or putting them to bed myself.

The main problem with this, however, is that when I try to do everything too independently, I end up leaving my husband out of the loop. Not only does he miss out on all the cute things our kids are doing and learning, but it's difficult for us to stay in touch with how the other is doing as well. Even if we have [regular date nights](#), it just isn't the same as connecting throughout the day.

By regularly communicating and doing our lives together, we stay much better connected to each other and more involved in the ins and outs of each other's lives. Whether one of us is having a great day or is stressed to the max, the other one knows right away and is there to help.

### 2. It Lightens Your Load

How often do you feel stressed out, overwhelmed, or just plain exhausted at the end of the day? What would you give to have help? The fact is, many husbands are more than willing to help and would love to take care of their families in this way, but they've all but given up because their wives criticize their efforts or insist on having things done their own way.

Does it really matter if the dishwasher is loaded the "correct" way or if your husband buys the "right" brand of toothpaste? Sure, you may be out 20 cents, but that's quite a bargain for some great help! Worst case scenario: You run the dishwasher again tomorrow, which you would have had to do anyway.

### 3. It Increases Your Love

Have you ever heard of the Benjamin Franklin effect? Apparently, we don't just do nice things for people we like; we are also more inclined to like the people we do nice things for. While this is especially true for people who have the ["acts of service" love language](#), it's true for anyone. Let your husband do something nice for you, and not only will you appreciate him more for it, but he'll love YOU more as well!

#### **4. You Benefit from Twice as Many Good Ideas**

One of the biggest realizations I had when I started taking my husband's opinion into consideration was, "Wow. He has a lot of really good ideas!" I mean, I have good ideas, too, but it's like he has this knack for always coming up with the fantastic ideas I always seem to overlook.

When you work together as a team, not only are you more likely to come up with a solution you can both agree to, but you're more likely to come up with a great solution, period. And as a perfectionist who always wants to do things the best way possible, that's one big benefit I can definitely stand behind!

## I GAVE UP BEING HAPPY {IN MARRIAGE}

Rebekah | *Sharing Redemption's Stories*

When I first got married, I thought I'd always be happy. After all, I was married to my best friend and we got along well, therefore I should always be happy. Isn't marriage like that for everyone? *No, it isn't.*

The harder I tried, the less happy I became. We had some serious *issues that crept into our marriage*, and eventually I gave up being happy.

You see, I learned a vital lesson:

**Happiness is not the end goal in marriage.**

Somewhere along the way, I lost sight of that.

*If happiness isn't the goal in marriage, what is?*

**Holiness.**

We were created by God for His glory. He has given each of us a unique purpose and calling. He has gifted us in different ways and placed us at the appointed time in history, *for His glory.*

Part of that, in the context of marriage, is the idea of submission. We were created, as wives, to fulfill a role in our marriage. We are to submit to our husbands, and husbands are to love their wives. *(Stick with me here...I know not everyone likes this conversation, but I gained something new out of my studying recently.)*

*Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a*

*radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.*

*Ephesians 5:22-30*

So how do we grow toward holiness in our marriage when we can't even manage some happiness?

### ***Respect.***

Sometimes we just cannot find a way to be happy in our marriage or with our spouse, yet we know we are supposed to submit to our husband's leadership. What I learned for myself, for my situation, in studying this passage was that I didn't have to be happy with my husband in order to submit to him.

What God taught me was that I needed to learn to respect my husband. I did not need to like him or feel happiness in my marriage. But I needed to learn to respect him.

Respect is not an easy thing. *Okay, I'll speak for myself here:* I have a hard time respecting someone I don't necessarily like. And it's so much easier to respect someone with whom I work or have dealings outside of the home, because I can leave my relationship with them and retreat to my home.

But learning to respect my husband took some work [after things went wrong](#). I prayed that God would show me specific ways to build my respect for my husband.

He kept bringing these specifics to mind:

- My husband provides for our family.
- My husband is a good father.
- My husband does many projects around the house.

These were the three areas that God showed me where I should focus my respect. Not only was I to focus on those areas, but I was not to focus on the areas that frustrated me.

I started to thank my husband for going to work, for being a great father, for his continued help in keeping things together around the house.

Focusing on those areas gave me a new appreciation for my husband. I had three concrete situations where I could focus my respect for my husband. As I worked on these areas, I experienced an unexpected blessing: joy.

See, we may not feel happy, but our circumstances don't have to steal our joy.

If you are experiencing unhappiness right now, please know you aren't alone. It can be a very difficult place to find yourself.

I'd encourage you to pray about ways you can respect your husband – to thank him for what he does, to speak kindly of him when you can.

Respecting your husband, even in a small way, is honoring to God. He will bless your efforts in trying to lead a righteous life.

Go ahead – give up on happiness. Work with God to focus on respect, and see how He will work in your marriage!



## 10 THINGS I WISH I KNEW BEFORE I GOT MARRIED

Lindsey Bell | [www.lindseymbell.com](http://www.lindseymbell.com)

**M**y husband and I married young. He was 19. I was 20. Needless to say, we had a lot to learn about marriage. (In reality, we still do...even after 11 years!)

Here are the top 10 things about marriage I wish I had known then that I know now.

### 10 THINGS I WISH I KNEW BEFORE I GOT MARRIED

#### 1. Your husband is never going to complete your life.

I grew up dreaming about my wedding. I couldn't wait to be a wife.

Shortly after my husband and I married, though, I felt disappointed. I wasn't as happy as I thought I would be. As it turns out, my husband (no matter how hard he tried) couldn't make me completely happy.

Even the best husbands can't do that. Don't expect your husband (as great as he might be) to fill the role that only God can fill.

#### 2. Marriage isn't 50/50. It's 100/100.

I went into marriage thinking, "I'll do my part, and you can do yours."

The truth is, our job is to give 100% even if our spouse gives nothing. In great marriages, both parties give 100% to each other.

#### 3. You're going to fight, so learn to do it well.

Conflict is part of every marriage.

The major difference between a great marriage and a marriage in trouble is not the amount of conflict but [the way in which the conflict is handled](#).

The best piece of advice I ever received about handling conflict is from James 1:19 (NIV): "Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry."

#### **4. Sex isn't always going to be amazing...and that's okay.**

After all, you and your spouse have years to practice, so don't put so much pressure on yourself to make it perfect in the beginning.

#### **5. The primary goal of marriage isn't to make you happy. It's to be an example of Christ's love to others.**

I got married mainly for selfish reasons. I married because my husband made me happy. At the time, I wasn't thinking about how important our marriage and our witness was to the Kingdom.

I've since learned that happiness is a fleeting emotion, here one moment and gone the next. Our goal for marriage (and for life, in fact) shouldn't be happiness, but holiness.

#### **6. Your life isn't going to turn out exactly like you planned it, so work on being flexible now.**

I never expected to lose four babies to miscarriage. I never expected to visit infertility clinics on a weekly basis, desperately trying to add a child to our family.

I expected my life to turn out exactly as I planned it, so adjusting to reality was incredibly painful.

Try to learn flexibility now. It will help you later on.

#### **7. Choose to look for the best in your spouse.**

Your spouse isn't perfect. He's going to make some mistakes. When he does, you will have a choice.

You can either choose to focus on his shortcomings or choose to look for the best in him. That choice is going to play a huge part in your attitude toward him and in your marriage as a whole.

#### **8. If you want your marriage to work, selfishness needs to go.**

The #1 cause of divorce in this country is selfishness.

Sure, it might show up in different ways, but ultimately, when a marriage doesn't work, it's often because one or both people are thinking mainly of themselves.

Somewhere along the way, they stopped thinking about what was best for their spouse and started focusing on themselves instead.

For a marriage to be successful, you must learn to be selfless.

**9. Your spouse is going to mess up (and so are you). Be quick to forgive.**

I have a tendency to hold grudges, but I'm learning to forgive more quickly.

After all, the primary person hurt by my unwillingness to forgive is not the offender. It's me.

**10. Marriage is hard...but it's also worth it.**

There are days when I think it would be much easier to be single. There are times when I don't really like my spouse (and I guarantee you he feels the same about me). Marriage isn't always wonderful.

But it is always beautiful.

It's messy, hard, and painful at times.

But it's also magnificent to be able to share life with another human being. My husband knows me better than just about everyone else on this planet. AND – crazy as it seems some days – he loves me anyway.

Marriage might not be exactly like I thought it would be. Some days, it's better.

## CHOOSE WISELY - YOUR CONNECTION DEPENDS ON IT

Sharon Mavis | [WholeHeartedMarriageOnline.com](http://WholeHeartedMarriageOnline.com)

I have an opportunity to attend a Bible class; should I go? My husband has an opportunity to teach as adjunct faculty at a local college; should he commit? I have a job opportunity; should I accept it?

Important questions! But the most important – and elusive – question is this: How do these decisions affect connection in our marriage?

### OPPORTUNITY COST

Economics includes a fascinating principle: opportunity cost. It's the idea that *everything* comes at the cost of something else. It has huge applications for financial decisions – a dollar spent here cannot be spent there – but it also applies to how we spend our time.

If I shop, I don't do laundry.

If I go to the YMCA, I don't rake leaves.

We live in finiteness. We have limited resources. We spend them one place and they are no longer available to spend in another place. When we spend our time one way, that time is no longer available to spend another way.

### TIME PRESSURE FOLLOWS IGNORING OPPORTUNITY COST

Marriages are stressed by time pressure. Fatigue compounds that stress. We need to connect, but we are tired and busy, overloaded and behind. Our hearts cry out for connection but we struggle for time to connect at more than a superficial level.

Time pressure logically follows ignoring opportunity cost. Each invitation to commit must be carefully considered in light of what it will “cost.”

Some invitations are wonderful! Bible classes, college teaching, or a great job may be exactly what God is offering. If He leads, we accept! But the question remains: What will those opportunities replace?

If I attend the Bible class, what will I not do? How will it impact my spouse? How will it impact our connection? What effects should I consider?

## AN EXAMPLE

Attending the Bible class will require three hours per week of my time. What would I have done with those three hours? That is the opportunity cost of time.

If I would have mowed the grass, does that mean my spouse now needs to mow the grass? If he does, then what does that replace for him? Would he have been paying bills? If he has to pay bills later, maybe that comes out of time when we would have taken a walk together to talk and connect deeply at the heart. In this sequence, my choosing to add a wonderful activity to our joint schedule may ultimately impact my connection with my husband.

This is difficult to grasp and even more difficult to implement.

If we don't consider the opportunity cost, we are prone to overload. Our times of connection suffer. Sometimes the opportunity cost for one more commitment is simply margin in our lives. We need that wiggle room to be spontaneous or to respond to an emergency or to plan something fun to do together.

## REAL STRUGGLE

My husband and I live in beautiful northern lower Michigan where kayaking is popular. But we know several couples who own kayaks and do well to get out on the water even once during the summer. My guess is that when they added their own "one more thing" to their joint schedule, they didn't look at the sequence of opportunity costs that would result in missing this refreshing activity together.

My husband is a pastor. We have also owned a Christian bookstore in a mall. We confess we are intimately acquainted with being overloaded! We have both been prone to commit without seriously considering what that commitment will replace. It is hard.

Those examples at the beginning were real for us. Over the past few months, my husband agreed to teach three college classes as adjunct faculty in addition to his full-time work as a pastor. It was a great opportunity for direct ministry. Two of the classes were a Bible overview; most of his students knew little about the Bible or were misinformed. The third class was "Marriage, Family and Sexuality" for family life education majors. The potential for impacting lives was tremendous. He loves to teach and is skilled.

We went into these months with our eyes open. I knew that this addition to our joint schedule would impact my time as I picked up some of his responsibilities. Ultimately that meant less writing time for me for three months. It was worth it to both of us. It was a decision made fully cognizant of the opportunity cost.

On the other hand, I decided against the Bible class. I could not identify what it could replace. I knew that if I was passive and did it anyway, it would still replace something. Without identifying what I could let go, I knew the opportunity cost sequence would eventually mean less time for my husband and I to spend together. However, some new initiatives at our church give me an opportunity to participate in a Bible class with a Moody graduate as teacher. The opportunity cost of that new class is time I would normally spend waiting and reading – a good trade-off.

I also decided against the job. The first opportunity cost would have been writing time. Writing is a priority for me right now, writing at [Wholehearted Marriage Online](#). It's the fulfillment of a long-time dream. The second opportunity cost would have been time to get home responsibilities done during the day which would lead to doing them in the evening and less evening time with my husband. As appealing as the job was, the opportunity cost was too great.

## COUNT THE COST FOR YOUR JOINT SCHEDULE

The Bible tells us to count the cost. I would be taking that verse out of context to say it was speaking of opportunity cost, but the principle remains and is sound.

We protect our marriages by choosing wisely how we spend our time. We choose wisely by considering the opportunity cost, the specific things that will be replaced if we add one more thing to our joint schedule.

## WORDS CAN BUILD UP A MARRIAGE

Misty | *Year Round Homeschooling*

**W**ords are powerful. They can change the world. **They can change a person's life.** As wives we have the ability to change our husband's life with the words we speak. It will not always be easy, but the outcome will bring about abundant blessings.

**Words can speak love.** They can draw people to us. **They can deepen one's love for another.**

As wives we have the opportunity to reveal our love to our husbands by the words we speak. It can change their lives...**and ours.**

Think just for a moment over the last few days. What have your words to your husband spoken?

Did they bring life? Laughter? Love? Pain? Anger? Resentment?

Often our days are busy and words are spoken in haste rather than being thought out. The result of a day's hastily spoken words can be harmful to a marriage. If we are not careful with our words, we will become like the brawling woman mentioned in Proverbs.

*It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house. – Proverbs 25:24*

Words can build up a marriage or they can be detrimental to a marriage.

## WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SANG YOUR HUSBAND'S PRAISES?

After his latest accomplishment did you praise him for the work he completed?

Throughout the book of love (Song of Solomon), we see praises between a man and a woman. Descriptive feelings, loving words, and admiration for each other abound in



these few chapters! This is the kind of love we all long for, a deep and abiding love between a husband and a wife that nothing can break apart.

*As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.  
As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,  
so is my beloved among the sons.*

*His left hand is under my heart, and his right hand doth embrace me.  
– Song of Solomon 2:2, 3 & 6*

**The question is, are we willing to follow this example to find the deep love we long for?**

Love takes time.

**Are you willing to sing your husband's praises through time?**

Speaking a few words of praise takes only a moment, but their effect can last a lifetime.

We will be remembered by the words we speak. **What kind of words will you be remembered for?**

How we speak about our husbands can cause them to draw nearer to us or to pull away from us. We must learn to truly think before we speak. We must learn to sing their praises more often. If we would take time to be more intentional in singing our husband's praises, then the moments that we do speak hastily will be less harshly received.

## **SINGING OUR HUSBAND'S PRAISES MUST BE BACKED UP WITH OUR ACTIONS.**

We must never forget how powerful words are, but we must also remember that actions often speak more loudly than words. So, while the words that we speak are of great importance, our actions must not represent the opposite of what we speak.

It is better not to speak praise if our actions do not line up with our words, because our husbands will come to doubt the words we speak because of our actions.

*I held him and would not let him go... – Song of Solomon 3:4*

*I will seek him whom my soul loveth... – Song of Solomon 3:2*

In order for us to have the deep love that our hearts desire, we must be willing to pursue it. The deep love between a husband and a wife can be yours, **if** you are willing to put forth the effort to build up your marriage.

Carefully selecting the words you speak and putting them into action will strengthen the love between you and your husband. *It's important that you not fail to make this connection. Your words must line up with how you treat your husband.*

*Some marriages will require patience while God works on your spouse. When you focus on singing your spouse's praises and ensuring your actions line up with those praises, you will be contributing to God's working in him. If you're in a marriage where this applies, do not lose heart, God is able to bring about miracles and beauty from ashes!*

## WHAT MARRIAGE IS REALLY LIKE

Sarah | [SarahTitus.com](http://SarahTitus.com)

**B**eing married is hard work. On the outside, everyone looks so happy. So when **your** marriage is hurting, you sit there and wonder why. You feel completely alone. After all, everyone else is happy, right? In the Disney fairy tale story, love conquers all, love wins in the end, and everyone lives happily ever after.

But it's not happily ever after. Happily ever after will end around six months after you get married. He will do something weird or annoying, like leaving his dirty socks everywhere, burping and making other bodily functions so bad you will swear he's not human...and he'll laugh about it. He will leave his dirty dishes on the counter expecting YOU to wash them. He will pick his nose right in front of you, trim his toenails on the couch, and yell at the TV when his favorite team isn't winning.

After dinner, he will just sit there like a bump on a log with his stomach extended, feeling pretty proud of himself as if HE cooked that meal. He's annoying in every way and knows how to get on your last nerve.

### I'LL TELL YOU A SECRET. TO HIM, YOU'RE JUST AS WEIRD.

And when he holds your newborn baby until she falls asleep, you will look at her in his strong arms and your heart will melt to the floor. You will literally feel yourself a puddle of water.

When you're out on the town across the room from him, he will look your way, flip his hair and wink at you, and you will gush like a little girl.

He will say your name and you will swear angels just spoke. Just looking into his soft blue eyes will make you all dreamy-eyed. That one look, that one hair flip will get you through several months of his disgusting behavior.

Why?

## BECAUSE DEEP DOWN YOU REALLY DO LOVE HIM.

**Listen, men are different than us.** They always have been and they always will be. You can't change that. **You can't change WHO he is.** Isn't that the person that you fell in love with in the first place? Those differences you thought were cute when you were dating are now blaring in your face and you just want to give up.

You lay awake at night wondering what happened to the guy you dated. What happened to the gentleman who took you to dinner and opened your car door? It's two kids later, and he's asleep and you are the one to have to take care of both of them.

You wake up super tired, while he is fully rested; he's headed for work. You look around the apartment and wonder what the heck you're doing with your life. You had plans – big plans – and now what? Now, you're stuck with a seemingly ungrateful man and two kids who cry until you feel that you will lose it.

Welcome to marriage. The good, the bad, the ugly. Welcome to life. The good, the bad, the ugly.

**No matter how bad you think you have it, no matter how awful you think your life is, I guarantee you that someone out there wants what you have.**

In marriage, in life, in your job, at your next PTA meeting, there's always going to be someone who has a better life than you. You'll notice that. **But you won't give a second thought to the woman right beside you who thinks YOU'RE the luckiest woman on Earth.**

## IT'S ALL ABOUT PERSPECTIVE.

You feel justified, so you complain; we all do. But is that really the truth? Is your husband really as bad as you think?

I know that sometimes we can feel like we have the worst circumstances in the world, but that's not the truth.

Six years ago, I was homeless. My ex-husband left us high and dry for affair #2. I had not one penny in cash, 1/4 tank of gas, and after being physically abused, checked into a secret women's crisis center to hide out.

A little while later he'd come back, and I'd let him, because I wanted our marriage to work. I wanted him to give his life to God. I thought, if ONLY he'd become saved, we would live happily ever after. But he didn't. A few years later, he asked me to give up God,

and when I said “No!” he left. After 6 known affairs and 2 other babies with different women, our divorce was final.

But, even as bad as my life was and even as bad as he was, I still didn’t have it as bad!

Some of the women in the secret crisis center had been abused far worse than I could ever imagine. And every couple days, **a new girl would walk through those doors completely black and blue and break your heart.**

Marriage may be tough, but it’s par for the course. **Love – God’s love – is about choosing to love your spouse.** Love isn’t about those mushy moments. **It’s about the life that you create together.**

No, you should not participate in sin. If your husband hurts you physically, get yourself and your children out of the situation. I’m not saying that you should stay in that situation (and I didn’t), but I am saying that most women are far luckier than they think. You are blessed, and even if you don’t see it right now, remember that it’s all about perspective.

You don’t really have it as bad as you think. Your husband comes home to you and only you, not a mistress or two or 6. He’s with you. And he would break through walls to save you or your family from danger.

Yes, he’s disgusting. Yes, he gets on your last nerve. But if you didn’t have him in your life, you would realize that every single thing I’m telling you is absolutely true. It’s not so bad being married. **It’s a WHOLE LOT HARDER trying to raise 2 kids on your own without help.** Believe me! And there are a lot of other women out there who are hurting and struggling far worse than either one of us.

The next time you are tempted to call it quits or give up on your marriage, the next time you find yourself thinking about divorce, remember this article and **how the other side is just the other side. It’s not better at all.**

Remember that love is a choice. A choice to love an imperfect person, a choice to obey the Bible and God. It’s a choice we make every day. *Will you make the right choice today?*

## WHAT MAKES THE HEART GROW FONDER?

Ashleigh Slater | [AshleighSlater.com](http://AshleighSlater.com)

Let's play the game Word Association, shall we? I say, "Absence." You say? (I'll give you a minute to list off one or two words that come to mind.)

If you're anything like me, the first word you thought of was "fonder." As in, "*Absence makes the heart grow fonder.*"

You've heard this old adage. But have you ever wondered if there's any validity to it? I have. Yep, I'm among those who've pondered whether we can take stock in words such as those of nineteenth-century Irish poet Thomas Moore, who said, "Relationship at a distance can do things for the heart that a closer, day-to-day companionship cannot."

Well, if researchers have anything to say about it, the answer would be yes.

In a 2013 study published in [The Journal of Communication](#), L. Crystal Jiang and Jeffrey T. Hancock surveyed sixty-three college-aged couples in long-distance relationships and determined that these type of "romantic relationships are of equal or even more trust and satisfaction than their geographically close counterparts."

How did Jiang and Hancock come to this conclusion?

They discovered that these couples who had less in-person "face time," worked harder to stay connected and communicated more. Not only that, but [Jiang told USA Today](#), "They also adapt[ed] their messages, for example, by focusing on more limited but relationally intense topics."

Now, most of us aren't non-married collegiates in long-distance relationships, right? I know I'm not. I'm going on thirteen years of marriage. So what can you and I as wives learn from these results?

Should we pack up and spend some time apart from our husbands in order to make our hearts grow fonder?

Nope. I don't believe that's the answer.

You see, I did my own “absence makes the heart grow fonder” experiment over the summer and found my personal results not as promising as Jiang and Hancock’s.

What exactly was this experiment of mine?

I spent one month 1,800 miles away from my husband, Ted. Don’t worry, it wasn’t because we were having any marital issues. We weren’t. I was just overdue on visiting my parents, so our four kids and I did just that.

Into weeks two and three, I began to make more and more decisions – whether it came to the kids or schedules or even finances – on my own. Even though Ted and I were communicating on a daily basis, I found myself becoming more and more independent. And that’s when I had a revelation of sorts. It was this:

**Absence fosters *independence*, while presence fosters *interdependence*.**

When you’re not married yet – like the couples in the 2013 study – it’s okay to still be independent. You determine your own schedule; you manage your own finances. So absence can make your heart grow fonder because the truth is you’re still writing separate stories. But when you’re married – like me – your marital relationship is supposed to be one of interdependence.

What do I mean by that?

When Ted and I said “I do,” we made a lifelong commitment to increasingly grow more dependent on each other. We took seriously God’s command in Genesis 2:24 that “a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” We declared that our lives and our stories would slowly and steadily become intertwined.

During my time away, I rediscovered that the independence that comes with absence can slowly eat away at this interdependency. It can leave us thinking more about “me” than “we.”

Yet, interdependence isn’t guaranteed simply because you’re living in the same house, sharing a bathroom, or parenting kids together. Rather, it is presence – the act of being emotionally and mentally present – that cultivates it.

And, honestly, that takes work. A lot of it.

Just like the unmarried couples in the Jiang and Hancock study had to exert effort and energy to stay connected, we have to do the same as married couples to grow our interdependence. Day in and day out, we have to be purposeful to keep writing a mutual story.

How can we do that? I share five great tools to get you started [here](#). These tools are things Ted and I use regularly.

So, let's play another game of Word Association, okay? This time, I say, "Presence." And you say?

"Fonder."

That's right.



## YOUR HUSBAND IS STUCK WITH YOU

Katie Bennett | *Embracing a Simpler Life*

**Y**our husband gets one life to live. And if he fears God, he will keep his marriage vows to you. No do-overs with another woman. So, theoretically, in this one life, you are his one wife.

If that's you, what a blessing to feel secure in your marriage!

Because my husband is a Christ-follower, I have that very security – not because I'm infallibly lovable, but because my husband is committed to following God, which means he's not going anywhere.

**But, to put it in other words, *he's stuck with me!***

*“Fathers can give their sons an inheritance of houses and wealth, but only the LORD can give an understanding wife.” Proverbs 19:14 (NLT)*

**This concept of my husband's “stuckness” has been a significant realization in my life as a wife.** It blows me away to think that, barring unforeseen tragedy, I'm *it* for this man I love. I will greatly influence both the story line and the quality of his life.

He chose me. I don't want that choice to be unfortunate.

**This thinking puts a good kind of pressure on me. It helps me step outside of my selfish self long enough to view things in his best interests.**

How often we wives spin dramatized tales of our woeful plights in marriage, when really there are so many reasons to appreciate and be thankful. We get worked up needlessly. We lose perspective. We make our marriage about us and only us.

This is not God's vision for wives. We should remember that, from the very beginning, *we were created to be our man's helper*. **What's more, the gospel message dictates that we lower ourselves to elevate others, with our husbands being our first and best opportunity to live this type of love.**

The Bible describes a wife of character as follows:

*A wife of noble character who can find?  
She is worth far more than rubies.  
Her husband has full confidence in her  
and lacks nothing of value.  
She brings him good, not harm,  
all the days of her life.  
—Proverbs 31:10-12*

**I want to be a treasure to my husband, and I hope you do, too, regardless of the “worthiness” you assign him of such a wife.** We are to bring good, not harm, every day and in every way.

We should all desire this, not for anything we get out of it, but **because we love our husbands with God’s love, and because in this way God is glorified.**

Being a treasure can look many different ways, but here are a few of my personal applications.

## HOW TO BE A TREASURE-WIFE

Katie Bennett | *Embracing a Simpler Life*

### LIFE-GIVING WORDS

Many times I catch words of reproach or complaint just in time as God brings to my mind these thoughts, *“He’s stuck with you. So what kind of wife do you want him to have?”*

As for me, I want this man I love to have a gracious, forgiving, serving, and *understanding* wife. One who doesn’t keep score, who smiles freely, has fun, encourages, and offers peace and grace.

So I reel the words back in, swallow them, and relax. I’m *always* glad I did. If we need to talk through the thing, it will be better done after having time to calm down and think before speaking.

*“It is better to live alone in the desert  
than with a quarrelsome, complaining wife.”  
Proverbs 21:19 (NLT)*

### LIFE-GIVING SERVICE

My husband loves to play sports. I *know* that this is important to him. I don’t think breaking away to have fun *has ever been more important* than during this stressful season of life with three small children.

But sometimes (most times), the last thing I want to do after being home alone all day with our little crew is to be home alone all night with them.

**I’m tempted to lay guilt on him. Or whine.**

But many times I stop and think, *“Do I want my husband to have a wife who cares for his well-being, or one who will seek to trap him into constant service?”*

It’s a good perspective-shifter. The answer to that question is a no-brainer.

**When I look from the viewpoint of his best interests, I willingly let him play sports. My heart is truly “in” my act of service towards him.** And in his gratitude, he doesn't overdo it. He seeks to serve me in the same way.

*\*Note: If your husband is not self-controlled, you may need to help him actually set boundaries. I'm not suggesting he is always right or that your interests don't matter, but rather that we as wives attempt to get outside our own perspectives.*

*Some of us need that reminder. Others have very different and opposite struggles.*

## HOW GOD REDEEMED MY UNEQUALLY-YOKED MARRIAGE

Jessi Fearon | *The Budget Mama*

Six years ago, a devout Catholic girl married an atheist. She knew the road she was embarking on wasn't going to be easy. She knew that there were going to be struggles when it came to raising children to be followers of Christ while her husband made statements like, "You're forcing religion upon them," and, "They need to understand that Christianity is the biggest con ever."

I know that these are terrible things to hear; they are all things that this girl knew before marrying her Prince Charming at 23 years old. She made sure that her soon-to-be husband signed a "contract" making it clear that their children would be raised Catholic and that he wouldn't argue with her about it.

Many of this girl's friends could not understand why she would even marry him. He was a great man, loving and caring – no one argued about that. He would do anything and everything for his bride, but he couldn't be convinced that Jesus was real. He wasn't raised in a church-going home, and he had no concept of why Christianity was so important.

So what was this girl to do? The only thing she could do, the thing that she had been taught as the only way to really find peace – pray.

She prayed every chance she got.

*"Likewise, you wives should be subordinate to your husbands so that, even if some disobey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct when they observe your reverent and chaste behavior."*

*(1 Peter 3:1-2)*

She knew that in order for her husband to come to Christ, she wasn't going to be able to preach the Gospel or "talk the talk." She had to "*walk the walk*" herself.

In case you haven't already figured it out, the girl in this story is me. My husband is one of the greatest men that I have ever had the honor of having in my life. Many people

thought we wouldn't last – a Catholic girl that goes to church on Sundays, reads the Bible daily, and prays before every meal and bedtime, and an atheist?!

Yep, I most certainly did, and today I can tell you that my husband is one of the most God-fearing men on this planet. He attends church on Sundays, prays with our children before bedtime, prays with me, and loves to ask me questions about faith.

You see, before I walked down the aisle and married my hubs, I prayed a lot. I truthfully didn't know if I was making a mistake or not. **We so desperately want to get this whole marriage thing right that we often forget that marriage isn't just between two people that love each other – it's about two people and their faith in God.**

I knew before [I walked down the aisle on that hot July day in Georgia](#) that my soon-to-be husband was everything God wanted for me. I didn't know how we were going to work it all out, but with my faith in God, I put one foot in front of the other and held on tight to my Daddy's arm as we walked towards the man that would somehow provide the life I had yet to imagine.

I never once forced my faith on my husband, even though there were many, many times that I was tempted to. I knew that if I did, he'd run in the other direction and wouldn't hear a word that I had said anyway. I would just be pushing him further and further away.

1 Peter 3:1-2 says it all, in my opinion, because my husband's biggest complaint about "religion" was that people would "beat their Bibles and tell you how to live, but they were some of the worst people" he had ever met. That's how I knew talking about my faith wasn't going to fly with him. **I had to actually act like God's daughter and not just say I was.**

Actions speak louder than words.

Wives, when you're dealing with an unequally yoked marriage – one believes while the other doesn't, or one's faith is stronger than the other's – I encourage you to live out what you preach. Pray the Scriptures and allow God to tell you what to do and say. If we want to have a great marriage in Christ, we first have to have a great relationship with Him.

I'm a firm believer that the greatest marriages recognize there is something more powerful at play in their lives than each other. Knowing that my husband is just as much God's son as I am His daughter, reminds me constantly that *I must forgive and give grace to my husband* when something goes wrong. It reminds us of our commitment to live through life together.

## 5 REASONS WHY CHRISTIAN WIVES SHOULD HAVE MORE SEX

Arabah Joy | [ArabahJoy.com](http://ArabahJoy.com)

**I** probably don't need to belabor the point that many Christian marriages are lackluster when it comes to sex. We typically believe the world has the edge on how to add sizzle and spice . . . not the church folks we smile and shake hands with on Sunday. Yet the truth is that the Christian marriage bed should be so satisfying that it makes everyone else envious.

If there were ever a time when sex between a married man and woman should be red hot and enviable, that time is now. We live in a culture that sees one man-one woman married sex as boring, bland, and vanilla flavored. Scripture teaches just the opposite: This kind of sex can be passionate, rich, and downright sacred.

As a married woman who appreciates godly reminders regarding the purpose and potential of sex, I'd like to offer a few convincing reasons why we as Christian women should have more sex with our men.

### 1. SEX MAKES A THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT.

Sex reveals the heart of God towards His people. While Scripture reveals God's nature through His many names, attributes, and deeds, sex shows us the raw passion God has for His people like nothing else.

Ephesians 5 teaches marriage is a reflection of Christ and His bride. Sex in marriage shows us the way Christ passionately pursues His bride; how He takes deep pleasure from and with her; how He deepens His union with her in private, mysterious, even holy ways. Sex within marriage reflects this intimate union between Christ and His bride, the church.

**We can hold sex in high regard because it reveals mysteries about God Himself.**

## 2. SEX PROTECTS THE HEART FROM INSECURITY.

A woman's tendency to insecurity is no big secret. That is why being 100% open and vulnerable with another human being—and receiving his acceptance and passionate touch in return—is a huge step in liberating the female heart from insecurity. To find acceptance from someone is a powerful thing, especially when it comes through such a deep, vulnerable activity as sex.

**We can embrace sex as a means to receiving acceptance.**

## 3. SEX DRIVES OUT SHAME.

Two of the deadliest things Satan wants to do with sex is to make “wrong” sex right and to make “right” sex shameful. Many Christian men and women struggle with the latter. To be naked and unashamed is a gift husbands and wives can give one another.

The provision of Christ means that sexual sin, past sexual abuse, sexual imperfections, and shortcomings all have redemption in Christ. In Christ there is a covering for sexual sin and healing for sexual wounds. The godly marriage bed is a place where these wonderful truths play out and become tangible. {If you struggle with shame, I invite you to read my story on [overcoming childhood shame here](#).}

**We can engage in sex without shame and in a way that reflects the redemption of Christ.**

## 4. SEX GUARDS AGAINST LUST AND SEXUAL IMPURITY.

Many men—if not most—struggle with sexual temptation. We serve our husbands in a spiritual capacity when we minister to them sexually (I Corinthians 7:3-5). I'm not talking about being a sex slave; I'm talking about being a willing, frequent participant in sexual activity and allowing ourselves to enjoy it. Even when sex isn't enjoyable (due to physical or emotional reasons), we can still choose to view sex as a way to bless and serve someone we deeply love and in fact are one with.

**We can choose to willingly serve our husband by being his sexual partner.**

## 5. SEX GLORIFIES GOD.

If we are to eat and drink in a way that glorifies God, we are definitely to have sex in a way that glorifies Him (I Corinthians 10:31). Christians often think glorifying God means doing or not doing certain things. But sex that glorifies God is not just monogamous sex that simply abides by a bunch of rules.



Sex glorifies God when:

- It is passionate (Song of Solomon)
- It is pleasurable (Proverbs 5:18-19)
- It is pure (I Thessalonians 4:3)
- It is sanctifying (Ephesians 5:22-30)
- It serves your spouse (I Corinthians 7:3-5)
- It deepens your intimacy with God (Ephesians 5:31-32)

**This kind of sex is our birthright in Christ . . . and this is the kind of sex we should have lots more of!**

***Be sure to sign up** [for this free 7-day guide](#) to praying Scriptures for your sex life. Praying Scriptures will give you a biblical vision for what your sex life can be, transforming it from the inside out. [Grab your guide](#) and start praying today!*