

How to Have a Wonderful Marriage:

Rekindle Love and Revive Your Marriage

KATIE HOFFMAN

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I want to share with you a few tips that have given me a better, sweeter, more wonderful marriage.

In this book you will learn...

- ♥ How to create feelings of love in your husband toward you.
- ♥ How to influence your husband to be more of the man you want him to be.
- ♥ Things you can do if you want to make your husband fall in love with you again.
- ♥ The daily reminders that keep love alive in your marriage.

And much more!

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Chapter 1: A Love Story

I had just returned from a family vacation with my parents and my two younger sisters in Hawaii. I was 20 years old, single, and convinced I would marry the next Billy Graham. You see, while in Hawaii I had voraciously read Billy Graham's autobiography *Just As I Am*. While reading that book, for the first time in my life, I began seriously praying for the man I would to marry. And I was as excited as I could be about this mystery godly man whom God would bring into my life. Up to that point, I never really prayed for my future husband because I thought it was weird to pray for a man I'd never met.

I had been in a serious relationship for over a year which had ended about eight months before this, so I'd never really been single as an adult for more than a year. Singleness was going to be an adventure, and I looked forward to a few years where I could draw near to God and pray fervently for my husband. Well, those prayers for the mystery man lasted only one short week!

And at the end of that week, I was sitting in a prayer meeting at our church when a visitor came walking in.

He sat down across from me and said his name was Todd. His prayer request was for his best friend Alisa who was struggling in her walk with God at that time. And in my mind, I was shocked to meet a guy with a close girl friend.

In our church culture, that just didn't happen—or at least not to people like me.

I'd never had a platonic guy best friend before, though I'd always wanted one. But since this guy's friend was "backslidden," and I knew he believed it was okay for a single guy to have friends of the opposite gender, I thought to myself, "This guy needs a new best friend and I'm going to be that girl." Not even for a millisecond did I think I'd ever *marry* the guy!

But as his new self-appointed best friend, I started to treat him differently than I had ever treated a guy before. Since I wasn't thinking of him romantically, I wasn't the least bit nervous or awkward. I'd just walk right up to him at church and talk like I did with my girl friends.

And that lasted probably less than a week when he started liking me, A LOT. My first clue was at Thursday night church. I saw him talking to another man and they were looking at me and then Todd pointed right at me.

Then he called me over and began asking silly questions, the most normal of those questions being something like, "How was your day?" By the end of that week Todd was involved in every event I went to: prayer meeting on Tuesday, Bible Study on Thursday, and church Sunday morning, and my specific home fellowship Sunday night.

The next Sunday as I was leaving church, Todd said to me, “Katie, I have something for you. Since you’re in college and taking a world religions class, I have a book for you that...uh...talks about the different religions of the world.” He awkwardly began to explain, “I was at the bookstore today and I saw this book and thought of you—not that I was thinking of you. I mean this just reminded me of you so I bought it. But I wasn’t thinking of you or anything before I saw the book...” And he pushed the book into my hands and took off.

I really had my heart set on being single—that, and being the wife of the next Billy Graham. And I was in no hurry to begin another relationship, so it took Todd until December to convince me to be his “official” girlfriend. I think it was December 9th when we became official. And then on December 28th, less than 20 days later, Todd proposed!

We were sitting in his parent’s living room when Todd walked into the backyard. With the engagement ring in his pocket, he thought to himself, If she follows me into the backyard, I’ll propose.

When I walked into the backyard, he asked me, “Why did you come out here?”

I innocently answered, “Because I love you.”

Todd took that as a sign and took my hands in his. I noticed he was shaking. The winter weather in Southern California was mild. I’m not sure I was even wearing a jacket. So I knew something was up.

He began his proposal speech simply and ended with, “Will you marry me?”

I said “Yes!”

Ten months later, I stood outside the church sanctuary waiting for my cue. The pianist began to play the wedding march and in I walked. When Todd saw me, he threw his arms up high into the air and burst out with a loud, victorious voice, “THANK YOU GOD!”

So we were married, and that was the true official beginning of our life together. And now, here I am today, four kids and almost thirteen years later and still married.

WHEN HAPPILY EVER AFTER STOPS

Now, like many marriages, the hope of “happily ever after” dissolved quite quickly. I can honestly say that for the first 7 years of my marriage, I didn’t know how to love my husband. Yes, I loved him. I dearly loved him, but I still struggled with getting frustrated, annoyed and even bitter at times.

I guess in one sense I did know how to love my husband. I knew all the Bible verses on marriage. I’d read a book on marriage and heard women teach on marriage. But there were holes in my understanding. I was already trying to be a good, submissive wife, but for seven years I lacked specific practical knowledge on being better than just submissive.

After we hit the seven year mark, I got desperate. I spent the next couple years with an insatiable desire to read everything I could written to wives about making your husband fall madly in love with you. While some of what I read did nothing for my marriage, I was able to put together bits and pieces of learning and create the plugs for those holes in my understanding, and

filling those holes changed everything.

Another problem during those first seven years of marriage came from my expectation that I would marry the perfect man. He was supposed to be the next Billy Graham, after all. Something had obviously gone wrong. Why didn't anyone sit me down and thoroughly explain to me that I was about to marry a SINNER. And to make it even worse, I am a SINNER too! And when we combined these two sinners—we couldn't get over the hump of frustrating marital problems into marital bliss.

Part of my sin was a tendency to feel sorry for myself instead of being thankful. It's something I must always be on guard against, because my heart can make me think that I need something more to be happy than what God has already given me. When the truth is, God has given me everything I need for my current happiness and contentment. That's why He wants me to be thankful for what I do have and not worry about what I don't have.

Chapter 2: The Secret to Making Your Husband Fall Madly in Love with You

“We love, because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

Once I learned the principle I am about to share with you, I couldn't believe how well it worked. I realized this was the key, the primary strategy to make your husband fall completely in love with you: **Go First.**

In every part of life, if you want someone else to experience an emotion or a desire, you must go first. You must experience it first before you can draw anyone else into that experience.

In marriage, if you want a God honoring husband, you must be desperate for God yourself first. If you want a husband who loves you as Christ loved the church based upon his personal desire to obey God, you must go first and show your desire to obey God by honoring your husband, submitting to him, and

having complete, fervent love and forgiveness in your heart toward him out of your love for God first.

This doesn't mean a husband can't go first and feel these things himself, but if he isn't feeling something you want him to feel, you must go first if you have any chance of him feeling it also.

Whatever it is you want your husband to feel toward you—feel it first. Fall in love with him. Overlook all his faults. Desire to serve him. Delight in hugging him. Find joy in sitting next to him in the car.

Men (and women) go where they feel best. Men will only change when it seems better for them to do so. **People love who or what loves them most.** Your husband will love you most when you love him most. A person will give their heart to the one who loves them most. **Think of it this way: However you feel toward your husband is a mirror, reflecting back how he will feel toward you.**

HOW TO GET YOUR HUSBAND TO WANT TO MAKE YOU HAPPY

Your husband will want to make happy what he feels is already happiest with him. Offer your husband more than anyone else can or will: more admiration, more praise, more approval, and more love.

If you want your husband to change his behavior, and there is something you know he'd like you to change—change first. If there is tension in your relationship, be the first one to freely love and forgive and show fervent kindness.

We love God because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). And just like we love God because He first loved us, this principle transfers to human relationships as well. **If you want your husband's heart, you must give him your heart.** If you want your husband to love you more, you must fall madly in love with him.

At one point in my marriage, when I began to do everything I could to show love and acceptance to my husband, I also began to pray that God would multiply all my efforts—that my feeble efforts to show my husband I love him would be multiplied in my husband's eyes. And God answered that prayer! My husband responded to me with so much love and tenderness, although I don't think my effort deserved such a grand response.

Here are two things to pray. First, pray that God will help you to deeply love your husband. Pray every day that you will be able to fall more deeply in love with your husband. And second, pray that your husband will see how much you love him. Pray that God will multiply your efforts to show your husband love. This love for your husband must come from God, so ask God to give you love toward your husband.

When you give your husband your heart, you get his heart in return. Think of him the same way you want him to think of you. If you want your husband to think you're the smartest woman alive, think he is the smartest man alive. And let me tell you why this works. If someone thinks I'm smart, I automatically think they must be smarter also. Because it takes one to know one, right? Okay, not necessarily. But in marriage, this definitely helps.

Your husband will respond to how you feel toward him and

how you treat him. But especially how you feel toward him, because that will be revealed by how you treat him.

And on the flip side, contempt for your husband results in his contempt for you. In other words, how you feel about your husband will eventually be what he feels about you, whether that is bad or good. If you secretly despise your husband but act nice on the outside, but if in your heart you just don't like him, you may think he doesn't see your dislike, but he's picking up far more than you realize.

A man becomes mean when he knows his wife is bitter toward him. It's the adult's natural response to disapproval. Your disapproval is revealed when you are not happy with him because he is not everything you want him to be. If he senses your disapproval, it won't be long before he begins to trade his time with you for the TV or the internet or his more approving friends.

Here is your opportunity to become a woman with a husband who adores her. The decision is yours. And that is why you must decide today to love your husband the way he is and give your heart back to him. That is why you must release any bitterness against your husband and treat him like Mr. Perfect.

I want you to be excited about your marriage. I want you to lie in bed at night (even if your husband is in another room) and feel awe at how much he loves you. I want you to be filled with gratitude for the ways your husband expresses love to you. And I know you can have these things, if you are willing to go first and give him your heart.

SIMPLY BE KIND

During one of the darkest times of my marriage, when I felt so much pain every day about what I perceived as Todd's lack of love, I learned this truth about going first. I realized this principle was true, and so I began to look for opportunities to show Todd how much I loved him and how happy I was to be with him. He reacted almost instantly, becoming a different man within one week of my attitude change. This didn't make him perfect, but it did make him much nicer. And it made him want to spend time with me in quality conversation, which is my number one love language.

During that dark season, I felt unloved because my husband doesn't express love through quality conversation. He expresses love through serving, doing the dishes, and working hard. Those things are the lowest on my love language list. For me, I was mostly annoyed when my husband did the dishes for me because I saw it as a sign that I hadn't hopped up from the table fast enough to do them myself. And so instead of being blessed, I was even more hurt.

After doing the dishes for me—and thinking he'd shown his love—I'd feel completely alone. And he would wonder why I was such a grouch when he just showed how much he loved me. Anyway, you can see how we were totally missing each other's intentions and both feeling neglected and unloved.

But when I made a point to fall in love with Todd again, to look for the good in what Todd did, and tell him how much I appreciated the things he did, he fell in love again with me too. And I got more of the one thing I wanted most, quality

conversation. And when I've started to dwell upon the things that upset me, I can see Todd pull away from me emotionally. Our behavior reflects upon each other, and influences each other.

That's why, instead of reacting in anger when you are offended, simply react with kindness. I know that it's much easier to react in anger. It doesn't take any effort. It takes a disciplined mind to react in kindness when we are offended. When things keep happening that hurt our feelings or frustrate us, we must keep choosing to react in kindness, overlooking the insult, until that reaction becomes a habit.

But when kindness becomes a habit, not only will our reactions have changed, but we will have changed also. Remember, how we react is a reflection of who we are. When we have developed the habit of responding with kindness, we will be kind people. And that kindness will help your husband to be kinder to you.

The Bible tells us that when we react with kindness and gentleness, we cause the other person's wrath to lesson. But when we react with harsh words, we stir up anger in the other person (Proverbs 15:1).

"So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other" (Colossians 3:12-13a).

We must not only extend compassion to the poor and those

who are suffering, but even to our own husbands. Is he grumpy? Have compassion on him. Did he overreact? Have compassion toward him.

In what type of situations are you most likely to react with frustration instead of peace? Take a moment to imagine yourself in this situation, reacting with patience and kindness instead of anger.

When our natural habit is to respond with gentleness and kindness despite how we are treated, we will create a more peaceful home environment and a better life.

Chapter Two Key Points

- However you feel toward your husband is a mirror, reflecting back how he will feel toward you.
- Your husband will want to make happy what he feels is already happiest with him.
- Your husband will respond to how you feel toward him and how you treat him. But especially how you feel toward him, because that will be revealed by how you treat him. And how you feel about your husband will eventually be what he feels about you, whether that is bad or good.
- Pray that God will help you fall more in love with your husband, and that your husband will see your love for him.
- We need to learn how to react to our husbands with kindness even when we are hurt. This response will help them care about our hurt, rather than closing up or getting angrier.

Chapter 3: Whose Fault is it?

“Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.” (Ephesians 4:2b NLT)

Sally got married because George was in love with her. He took her loneliness away and wanted to spend all his time with her. Marriage to George would mean a new and “better” life.

She didn't think much about George's faults until a few days after the wedding, when she realized with dread, What have I done? Did I really marry this guy? She hadn't realized the problems they would have once they were married.

A few years after Sally's wedding, she was ready to give up. George spent most of his free time on the computer and it drove her crazy.

When George would get on the computer, Sally would feel rage well up inside her. She couldn't believe she had married a

man who didn't even want to spend time with her.

For a while, she tried different things. She dressed up in sexy clothes to get his attention. She yelled at him for being inconsiderate. She ignored him because she was so angry. But most of the time, he seemed disinterested in her. And she would think to herself, Not even 15 minutes! He couldn't even spend 15 minutes with me before getting on the computer!

She was so hurt and miserable she just wanted to be free. Part of her was in shock. She never realized marriage would be so difficult. She wanted a way out—but they had children and she loved her children and wanted to try everything she could, just in case something might work.

But how could things get better unless her husband changed? Even though Sally knew she got angry too quickly, it was easy for her to overlook her own anger by simply seeing her husband's sin as the root of her problems. She assumed that the way she treated her husband and the way she felt toward him were justified by the way he treated her. Was Sally right, or was she horribly mistaken?

Sadly, Sally couldn't see her own sin. The problem was that Sally saw her own anger as the fault of her husband. She didn't take responsibility for how she treated her husband. Instead, she blamed him for how she acted. But who is really at fault?

APPROVING OF GOD'S PLAN

While Sally's husband is at fault for the way he treats her, she is also at fault for the way she treats him. She is responsible for her

own anger and irritation. The answer to why Sally's husband causes her so much frustration is not found in her husband, but in Sally's reaction to her husband. In other words, Sally's irritation and anger toward her husband are a result of her own emotional reactions.

Every time Sally's husband messed up in her eyes, she treated him worse. The main problem was she thought that's how she was supposed to react. All her life, Sally saw people treat others based on how they deserved to be treated. She thought that people should be treated based on how they deserved to be treated, and not on how God tells her to treat them. When she did treat George kindly, her heart wasn't in it. She only did it as a test, to see if he would be nicer to her. And if she didn't see an immediate result, she gave up.

But Sally desperately needed help. Something needed to change. Many of us need something to change in our marriages. But what, exactly, needs to change?

YOU MARRIED THE WRONG GUY

I think at some point (give it 10 years at most), the majority of married women will feel like they married the wrong person, at least for a few moments. We realize our husbands have some flaw or many flaws that begin to feel unbearable. And these personality and preference differences can consume us, if we let them.

But here's the thing. We are not called to love our husband's

as we feel love, but as God calls us to love. In other words, when we love our husbands, it means we continue to love them as if we were not irritated by them. Part of loving each other means we must accept each other's faults. We must—for the most part—overlook them in love. Now, that is often one the hardest things to do in marriage.

And I think that part of why overlooking our spouse's faults is so difficult is because we have a natural desire to make the most of our lives. After all, we only get one life on earth, and we don't want it to be wasted. And when we are married, because our husbands play such a huge role in our lives, we want to see them make the most of their lives too, especially since their success and the quality of their life affects us hugely.

But the problem with wanting our husbands to change is fourfold.

- ❖ First, we take away precious time and energy from our own growth when we spend it on improving our husbands.
- ❖ Second, when we “help” our husbands become better people, they feel pressured and instead of improving them, we can damage our precious marriage relationship and make everything worse.
- ❖ Third, when we try to change our husbands, it usually stems from discontentment with who they are. In other words, we are not thankful for everything about our husbands.

- ❖ Fourth, when we try to change our husbands, we often treat them with less respect because we are focused on their faults.

OVERLOOKING HIS FAULTS

As I sit and reflect on marriage, thinking over the past fifteen years of my own marriage and the ups and downs, one thing I am sure of is this. It's perfectly reasonable for a happy wife with a wonderful marriage to have a husband who is very imperfect. In fact, in every case where I've seen a wonderful marriage, there has never been a perfect husband or a perfect wife. Like my husband says, "There are no Christian heroes." What he means is, everybody has faults once you get to know them.

Neither Todd nor I are anywhere close to being perfect. But we stick together and love each other anyway, appreciating the good things about each other. We are two failures deeply in love and on our way to heaven.

Here is one thing I know for sure. You can't change your husband by nagging. Can you change him by other means? Yes. But if you try to change him by nagging or telling him to change, he probably won't. Or while one part of him may change for the better, another part of him will change for the worse.

For instance, if you get him to change his appearance, and he does it because you've pressured him into it, another part of him will change for the worse. He will change his appearance to appease and quiet you. But he won't cherish you as much. His love toward you will cool down a little bit every time you nag

him. And while his outward may change for the better, his heart toward you has changed for the worse.

So if we can't change our husbands by nagging or pressure, what works? First, we must change ourselves. You may say, "But I do everything right. I keep the house clean. I make him dinner every night. I do his laundry. And he still yells at me and the kids. He still spends too much time watching TV. He is still mean even though I am doing all I can."

Sometimes a husband will treat his wife poorly, or be a druggie, or have an affair, and his actions will not at any point be a reflection on the wife or how well she loved him. Sometimes a loving, godly wife will have to love a husband who is mean, uncaring, and inconsiderate. Sometimes that husband may even say his behavior is her fault when it isn't.

So what is a wife to do? First, pray her heart out! And even fast and pray when she feels compelled.

But then, the answer is not always in doing more for him, but in doing less. You want to see him change for his benefit, right? You want him to be a better man because it will help him, right? It hurts to see our husbands fail. But in this area, do less for him. And by that I mean, try to change him less. Worry less about his failures.

Keep cleaning the house and being a good wife in the physical realm. But in the inner realm, do less for him. Don't obsess over his faults. Instead, accept him for who he is. All men have faults. Accept yours the way he is. Don't talk about the things you want him to change. In other words, overlook his temper and his time wasting or whatever it is he does wrong, and instead, think of how you can love him more.

And here is another key to making your marriage wonderful:

❖ **Love your husband just as much now as you would if he were perfect.**

If you want to make your marriage amazing, begin to treat your husband like he is already perfect. This is of huge importance. **Treat him like he is already the man you want him to be.**

And here is a big secret: if you're willing to treat him like he is already everything you want him to be, you will be amazed by how this makes him relax and open up. If he deeply believes that you love him just the way he is, and that you have no ulterior motive to change him, and that you think he is the greatest living thing on earth, that love he feels from you will take the edge of his bad mood. It will make him treat you like his greatest treasure. It will cause him to look forward to spending time with you.

Instead of yelling at you and treating you badly, your kindness will help him spend his days planning how he can make you happier. It will help him want to work longer hours just to buy you things and take you to dinner.

This may take a few weeks or more to really begin to take effect, but then again, don't be surprised if you notice an immediate difference in your marriage.

When a woman loves and respects her husband the way God calls her to, he will often want to trust her, confide in her, work

hard for her, make her happy, and lead her spiritually, beyond even her wildest dreams.

Chapter Three Key Points

- Instead of focusing on how to change your husband, focus on how you can love him more.
- Do this by treating him like you would if he were everything you want him to be.
- Overlook your husband's faults because of your love, accepting him as he is.
- People should be treated based on how God tells us to treat them, and not based on how they deserve to be treated.

Chapter 4: Learning to Love

“Encourage the young women to love their husbands...”

(Titus 2:4)

I remember sitting in a woman’s Bible study one time when the teacher said, “I will be teaching on how to be an outstanding wife. I know all about what not to do. And I will be teaching you all the things that you shouldn’t do as a wife. I don’t really know **how** to love your husband, but I do know what not to do!” I think she meant that last line as a joke—although there may have been some truth to her statement.

Many women don’t really know how to show love to their husbands. We know it’s important, that loving them well is the key to an amazing marriage, but we don’t know **how** exactly to love.

When I was newly married, I would have said I didn’t know how to love my husband either. I could have answered this question somewhat well, but looking back now, I can see my idea of how to love my husband was very incomplete at that time.

Yet through the years, God has mercifully allowed me to learn so much on this subject. As I learned, I made notes. At one point, I wrote down a list of many of the ways I could show Todd love. When I did the things on this list, our marriage flourished and things went well. But I would sometimes forget to purposefully love Todd, and I would notice more tension and division in our relationship.

When I would stumble upon the list and begin implementing these tips, things would again revive. This list stayed in my dresser drawer for many years, and every time I would read over these things, I would walk away with vision for how I could improve my marriage. Even though I had written the list myself, I still needed the reminders it contains.

When I follow this list, Todd responds to me with love and sweetness. When I stray from these things, I find our house becomes tense and I wonder what's happening. I've learned that how great your husband is has very little to do with you. But how great your marriage is has almost everything to do with you. In other words, your husband will generally be the same guy. But you can have an amazing relationship with that guy, or a painful relationship.

I hope this list will bless and revive your marriage as much as it has helped mine!

The Daily Reminders List to Keep Love Alive

Get the printable page of this list at
www.katiehoffman.org/dailyreminders/

“Am I doing these things daily?”

- 1. Being understanding? Giving my husband time and space to relax, to have his own hobbies and freedom?**
- 2. Keeping the house clean and serving my husband? Managing my home well, including diligently training and teaching our children?**
- 3. Speaking my appreciation of my husband and all he does, including complimenting him, at least 3 times a day?**
- 4. Not talking about money and other stressful subjects (unless absolutely necessary)?**
- 5. Being cheerful and sweet every time I see or talk to my husband?**
- 6. Being affectionate, hugging, kissing, and massaging him?**
- 7. Talking highly of him to others?**
- 8. Pleasing my husband with my appearance?**
- 9. Being reverent?**
- 10. Entrusting my husband to God, and knowing that God is on the throne even in the hard times? Being diligent in prayer?**

Some of these things may sound easy, but yet doing them with kindness often takes practice. The coming chapters will cover the specifics of **how** you can implement these guidelines in your own marriage.

I also must add that each husband is different. Numbers two through four on the list are huge to Todd, but number eight is generally unimportant to him. Each husband will vary in what is most important to him, so if you are unsure of his priorities in this regard, take a few moments and ask his opinion. You may be surprised by what he values.

Chapter Four Key Points

- There are specific things we can do as wives to keep love alive in our marriages, and referring to a list can often remind us of what to do.
- Find out what your husband values in your relationship—what attributes or actions you take would bless him most.
- Add more.

Chapter 5: Being Understanding

1. Am I being understanding today? Am I giving my husband time and space to relax, to have his own hobbies and freedom?

A man's work is usually hard. If you work a full time job, you know how much is required to get up every morning and do your job. Even though I am mostly at home (homeschooling), I begin to feel a little crazy when I haven't had some time by myself to recuperate—those moments to read, or write, or do whatever it is that recharges me.

And my husband is the same way. He needs time to relax each day, time to himself that he can just do what he wants to do, without having to do anything he must do.

Part of my job as a wife is to willingly and gladly give my husband this time. That means, if he wants to spend his time playing computer games, I need to be understanding of him and his world of stress and pressure.

If I am always needy for my husband's attention, when he does give me his time it will feel to him like he is doing me a

favor, with nothing in it for him. I want us to spend time together because we both want to.

I've found that many times, when I feel desperate for my husband's love and attention, it's really a deeper call on my heart to spend time with God. In other words, when I've lacked spending time with the Lord, I begin to feel needy, and I take that neediness out on Todd.

Here is what I've found bring peace to our marriage: When I am able to accept Todd the way he is, giving him space to do what he wants without having to control his time and actions, to the point of being happy for him that he gets to spend his time how he wants.

LEARNING TO LOVE

Ruth Bell Graham, the wife of Billy Graham, wrote a poem that I love so much, I've about memorized it. Her poem ends with these words,

“Love without clinging
Cry if you must
But privately cry
Your heart will adjust

To being the heart
Not the forefront of life
A part of himself
Not the object

His wife

So love!”

When I first married, I expected to be the object of Todd’s life. I assumed that he would always be as interested in me as he was in our pre-marriage days. I was in for many nights of crying myself to sleep, wondering what went wrong. How did this man who just weeks ago couldn’t spend a moment without me, now find the TV more interesting than anything I could offer him? I was devastated.

But in the words of this poem, I find wisdom and comfort. I’m not going to be the object of Todd’s attention as a matter of lifestyle. But I’m his heart. He loves me next to him, not in front of him. I want to be on the TV he watches. He just wants me next to him while he watches TV.

It’s when I begin to feel entitled to Todd’s time, to his attention, that problems and pain arise. What I’ve learned is that men focus on one major goal and keep focused on that until they complete it, and then they focus on something else. So when you were engaged to your husband, he was fascinated by you. That was because you were the goal of his life at that moment. His current goal may be far less noble than winning a wife—like beating a video game or something—but he is now working on something else.

In addition to the bigger goals, men have little goals, like internal checklists.

- Fix the sink

- Love my wife
- Call the cable company
- Relax

And men go through those lists, checking one thing off at a time, and then moving on immediately. Did I fix the sink?

Check. Did I love my wife? Well, I hugged her this morning.

Ok, check. Did I call the cable company? I can probably do that tomorrow. Ok, check. Now I get to relax.

And that checklist man goes somewhere and does what he wants and you're wondering why he's not spending time with you or helping you around the house or taking you someplace fun. In his mind, he fulfilled his obligation to you. And he thinks you should be happy with him.

But we wives are so different. And so, we must adapt to our husband's differences, and accept them the way they are.

And on this subject, one more way to accept your husband as he is means not living your spiritual life vicariously through him. What this means is, don't focus on your husband's sins and try to make him godlier. Don't overly concern yourself with God's timeline for your husband. Leave the sanctification of your husband in God's hands. And instead, focus on being a godlier woman yourself.

Don't look to his ministry or godliness to bring your spiritual satisfaction. For me, it was very helpful to realize that my heavenly rewards won't be based on Todd and what he does with his life, but that God will judge me for my life, my thoughts, my labor—not Todd's. This means I focus on my walk with God and my own opportunities to use my gifts, instead of worrying about

how to change my husband because he's not quite what I want him to be.

LET THANKFULNESS REPLACE EXPECTATIONS

Have you ever felt like your husband takes you for granted, that he doesn't really care anymore that you stay in shape, or that you're always organized, or that you're funny? He may seem to overlook all the things that first attracted him to you. And I know that the desire to be appreciated, to be noticed and admired and considered fascinating is deep inside each of us women. But we must always remember— those things that make you fascinating, possibly your looks, your brain, your personality, or whatever it is—those are not your excuse to be loved.

Rather, those things are your excuse to be thankful to God. Whatever it is that you wish your husband would love and admire more, instead of wanting those things to get you attention, they need to remind you to thank God and give Him attention. Seek honor for the gift giver and not the gift. Whatever it is about you that might be a source of pride—an excellent singing voice, a great figure—is just the gift. God is the one who gave you that gift, so praise Him instead of seeking praise for yourself.

In addition, beauty or a successful career or self-control are never reasons to think you are better than your husband or deserving of a better husband, or deserving of more praise, more attention, etc. They are simply reasons to praise the gift giver and enjoy the gifts you've received from God with thankfulness.

Chapter Five Key Points

- gf
- Do
- Ovedf

Chapter 6: Life at Home

2. Am I keeping the house clean and serving my husband today? Am I managing my home well, including diligently training and teaching our children? Is the car clean? Am I completing all the specific duties my husband has asked me to do? Am I keeping his work clothes clean and ready? And am I keeping on top of my other house related responsibilities?

For my marriage and my husband Todd, this one thing is make it or break it. He feels loved when I get a lot done. If I am the nicest wife in the world, and if I shower Todd with appreciation, and if I make his favorite dinner and buy him a gift and cover him with hugs and kisses and spend the whole night wanting to spend time with him—he will be a complete grouch and feel like I hate him if the house is messy.

Keeping the house clean is make it or break it in my marriage.

Todd doesn't care what I weigh, if my legs are toned, or if my skin is clear. To him, the house is king. The cleaner the house, the happier my husband. And for him, this is most true of the kitchen. If the dishes aren't done and I have stuff out in the living room, I can expect Todd to be grumpy.

Your husband probably has things that are important to him, and when you fail in these areas, he is far more unhappy than if you failed at something else. For my husband, a clean house is number one on my list. What is your husband's number one issue or desire for you? For some husbands, they want their wives to be in a good mood when they come home from work. Other husbands may want their wives to respect them more. Some husbands want an amazing dinner ready when they walk through the door at night. Some husbands want to hear your appreciation of them.

If you're not sure what husband most wants, ask him! You can simply say, "If I changed in one area, what would that be?" Or, "What is the one thing that I can do that is most important to you?" These type of questions will help you learn what your husband most wants and needs from you.

In my own marriage, my husband most wants me to run our house like a ship. He wants me up at a certain time each day, sticking to a routine, and keeping the house well run and organized. This can sometimes be a battle since my strengths lie more in the, um, being happy and easygoing and spontaneous category. So I have to work hard, fighting against my flesh, to bless my husband in this way.

As wives, we help our husbands by supporting them, and honoring their preferences. Part of this includes giving them the

time and freedom to be more of what they want to be. Each day when Todd goes to work, I make sure he has clean work clothes ready to wear. On many days I also make a lunch for him. While he is gone, I homeschool our kids and take care of them.

Before he gets home, I try to make sure the house is presentable and dinner is close to being complete. My goal is that any messes the kids made that day get cleaned up before Todd walks through the door.

I also follow the advice of my friend Melissa, who taught me, "It doesn't matter how much time you actually spend cleaning. If the house is picked up and there are lines vacuumed into the carpet, it will look like you spent the day cleaning." In less than 10 minutes I can vacuum lines into the carpet and make the whole house look cleaner.

I enjoy doing these things for Todd because he feels so cared for. And now Todd doesn't have to worry about what happens at home while he has to deal with the troubles and cares of his job.

When God created the woman, it was so that Adam (the first man) could have a helper. The Bible says in Genesis 2:18 "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'" (NIV). Do you go out of your way to find what needs to be done, and then do you do those things to help your husband? 1 Corinthians 11:9 says, "And man was not made for woman's benefit, but woman was made for man" (NLT).

Though it took awhile, I've finally begun to develop some idea of what is important to Todd. I had so many misconceptions about marriage that I believed for years even after I got married. I now know better. Each husband is different and different things are important to them. I thought all husbands wanted their wives

to look good when they come home from work. Not my husband. He could care less what I look like when he comes home, as long as I'm dressed. He wants a spotless house.

But another friend of mine, her husband could care less about how the house looks. He just wants her to be relaxed and happy. Her good mood is the most important thing to him.

The point is: A good wife will do what she knows her husband wants. She is motivated to find out what is important to her own husband. And the man whose wife does what he likes will think he has the best wife in the world, and possibly tell his friends how wonderful she is.

After all, she has become exactly what he wants.

It is one of my goals as a wife to do my responsibilities well, including paying the bills, cooking good food, stretching the money, and so much more.

One morning before Todd left for work, a few years back when we lived in a townhouse, we took the kids to a local park. While at the park, the sky turned dark and it started to rain. We packed up and left.

When we pulled up at our home, Todd sweetly said, "Stay here while I unlock the door." Then after he unlocked the door for us, he ran back to the car and unbuckled James from his car seat and brought him in the house. He then went back to the car a third time to park it in our parking spot. By the time he finally came in the house, his shirt was completely soaked. Yet the kids and I were able to stay dry because Todd was so considerate, doing everything he could to make things easy and comfortable for us.

Chapter Six Key Points

- New
- List
- Of
- Key Points

Chapter 7: Expressing Appreciation

3. Am I speaking my appreciation of my husband and all he does, including complimenting him, at least 3 times a day? Am I showing great joy and appreciation for everything my husband buys or does for me?

Here is how you can influence the type of man your husband becomes. Tell him what he does right. Praise him and thank him for everything he does well. Encourage him and he'll want to keep receiving your encouragement. He wants you to be proud of him. Show him what he needs to do to make you proud, and encourage him generously with every little step he makes, and he'll work hard to make you happy. Your praise has the power to make your husband a better man.

Your husband will never get tired of hearing your appreciation for him. He will never grow weary of hearing what you admire about him. So tell him each and every day something you love about him!

My goal is to give my husband Todd 3 sincere compliments or appreciations each day; to remember each day to tell Todd how appreciative I am.

Make it your goal to show great joy and appreciation for everything your husband does or buys for you. Be thankful—letting him know every day what you're thankful for and what

you appreciate that he does for you.

Imagine how hard it would be from the point of view of a husband whose wife isn't thankful:

Your unhappy wife is always angry about something. You've long since realized it takes far too much to make her happy, so you've just given up. When you bought her flowers, she complained about the cost. When you loaded the dishwasher to be nice, she was upset with how you placed the dishes. When you tried to hug her, she thought you wanted something else, so she acted annoyed. When you told her she looked pretty, she complained about the 10 extra pounds she gained and started crying. When you surprised her with donuts, she'd just started dieting, and got mad at how you sabotaged her good efforts. When you bought her a Starbucks, it was the wrong flavor. So you decided to stop trying. Nothing seems to work anyway. Then she started nagging you about how you don't care, but you don't care about that anymore either. Oh, the quiet, peaceful corner of your roof sounds so nice! At least the TV (computer, beer, whatever) is always happy with you.

If you want your husband to start trying again, you have to be happy with him. Praise him and thank him every time he makes even the smallest effort. Tell him what a great husband he is and he will become a better husband. If he does something nice, even if he messes up, just be thrilled that he tried, and don't mention what he did wrong unless you can do it almost unnoticed.

For example, if he brings you home donuts while you're on a diet, you could say, "Oh, you are such a thoughtful husband! I am so blessed to be married to you. Thank you so much for being so nice to me. I love you so much!" Then, after taking a bite of a donut, you could add, "Wow, these are good. I also love the fruit cups they sell. Have you ever tried those? They are perfect for me when I'm on a diet."

Then smile the rest of the day, and when he catches your eye, add, "You made my day, babe. You are so sweet for thinking of me this morning."

While serving Todd trumps all things—keeping the house and car clean, making him great meals each day, waking before the kids and spending my day productively—he also really appreciates when he is appreciated.

Think of a field with exceptionally fertile soil planted with different seeds. The field is your husband, and from childhood, seeds have been either carefully planted or carelessly thrown upon him. Some boys grow up with encouraging, loving parents who train their sons and plant good things. Other boys may have been left alone and not much besides weeds grew up for many years. Or they have some good things and some bad habits, weeds that sprung up as children and were never pulled out.

Though whatever was planted 20, 30, 40 years ago may have roots that remain, this field is still being sown everyday. Everyday, every hour, every minute, you are planting seeds into that soil. Depending on whether you honor your husband and speak godly things to him, or whether you despise your husband and speak harsh, nagging words to him—you may be reaping poison or beauty.

If I took a patch of land and planted some blueberry bushes, some orange trees, some strawberry seeds, and some tulip bulbs, I will reap those exact crops. If, however, I occasionally drop seeds of poison ivy, I will grow poison ivy.

You are always sowing into your relationship with your husband by how you treat him, how you talk to him, how you talk about him, and especially how you think about him.

If you want to keep reaping a good harvest, you must keep sowing, weeding, watering, and working. And then the harvest comes. But the cycle doesn't stop. It would be nice if you could just rest and let your husband do all the work, but most husbands are not that godly. And so you must labor for your own farm, your own marriage, because you will eat the fruit of your labor, and your children will be blessed because of your work. And God will be glorified.

Expressing thankfulness to your husband helps keep you from discontentment. Discontentment is thinking that some change in life will make your life better. It's thinking that "If only I had a backyard, tanner skin, thicker hair— whatever—then I would be happier, then life would be better." The opposite of discontentment is contentment, and that is believing that God has given you everything you need for your present happiness.

But when you have discontentment, that feeling is deeper than just where you live or what you have. The feeling that life would be better "if only..." won't go away even if your "if only" comes to pass. Because eventually your initial excitement over what you've got will wear off, and your moods will return to your standard level of thankfulness and contentment. Those deep feelings and longings don't change even when your circumstances

do. If you feel like something is missing in your life, you'll still feel that way even if you get everything you want. The feeling is deeper than just the things you have. Being content is who you are and not what you have.

A thankful woman says, "Yes, my house is small. But I'm so thankful to have a place to live." Or "Yes, I may be 30 pounds overweight, but I'm so thankful to have such an abundance of food. I could be starving instead!" Or, "Yes, money is tight and we've barely had enough food to eat, but I'm so thankful that I'm getting to lose weight without having to try!" There is a way to be thankful in every circumstance.

I have a friend named Brandie who can't help but to express thankfulness. In the 14+ years I've known her, she always finds a reason to be thankful. When she talks about the years she had to work 60 hours a week, she always mentions how thankful she was to have a job. When her relatives moved in with them into their apartment, and I mentioned, "It must be hard having people living with you." She answered, "Oh, but I'm so thankful that my children are getting to know their relatives better."

While I know people who continually feel sorry for themselves and nothing ever changes, her life seems to get better each year. But it wasn't those blessings that bring her joy. She already learned how to have joy without the blessings. She already knew how to be happy with what she had, far before she had anything.

If you ever start to feel sorry for yourself, anxious about life, bitter with the lot you have—immediately start listing the things you have to be thankful for. And when it comes to thankfulness for your husband, keep written reminders about what you love

about him so that during the times he is grumpy and less lovable you can read what you love.

I'll make a confession here. I used to hesitate to show thankfulness to Todd because I wanted him to feel horrible for things he had done. And these were not giant sins, only silly things like spending money on a Coke when I thought he should be saving the money. I couldn't stand his "foolishness." I wanted him to feel guilty. So I would purposely withhold my thankfulness from him. I didn't want him to think I was proud of him when I was so angry over his sin. And all this did was create a horrible cycle:

- Todd does something I disapprove of.
- I punish Todd by withholding my approval and thankfulness.
- Todd knows I'm acting distant toward him and he becomes defensive.
- I react to Todd's cold spirit by withdrawing and feeling sorry for myself.
- We both feel alone in a marriage when we should be rejoicing as "Heirs together of the grace of life."

Instead, I now choose to express my thankfulness and appreciation for what he does right, and overlook his faults in love. Eph. 4:2 says, "Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love" (NLT). As a wife, I must make allowance for my husband's faults because of love, and instead focus on the

things I can be thankful for.

You can also express your thankfulness to your husband with a little gift, especially if this is something that blesses him. I remember when Todd and I were engaged, and I'd gone to Old Navy with my friend Nicole and bought him some clothes on clearance. When I gave them to Todd, I couldn't believe how blessed he seemed to be that I bought him clothes. Your husband may also feel really loved if you go out of your way to give him gifts.

Chapter Six Key Points

- New
- List
- Of
- Key Points

Chapter 8: Being Quiet When Appropriate

4. Am I not talking about money and other stressful subjects (unless absolutely necessary)?

Today I was rubbing Todd's feet. I was thinking about money worries for a few moments, but I knew I shouldn't talk about them so I thought of other things we could talk about. I had one conversation idea after another, but all of them were things I knew my husband wouldn't want to talk about. I just couldn't figure out anything to say! So I kept massaging and feeling a little awkward that we had nothing to talk about.

Well, what I thought was awkward, Todd thought was wonderful. He spontaneously started praising me, "You're like an angel. You're the best wife in the world..." I was so caught off guard. But I learned something significant:

- My husband is happy with me when I'm quietly serving him. He thinks I'm wonderful when, if "I can't say anything nice, I don't say anything at all."

When we finally did start talking, it was about my husband's friends. He likes to talk well of people he likes. When we first met, Todd kept telling me how great his dad was, then how great his grandma was, then back to his dad, and then some stuff about his mom, and so forth. So today he started talking about each of his friends and what distinct characteristics made each of them a good leader. I would say a name and then he would tell me about that friend's strengths as a leader. I was blessed by listening to him, and it was a conversation he was able to enjoy.

Chapter Eight Key Points

- New
- List
- Of
- Key Points

Chapter 9: Smiling—A Game Changer

5. Am I being cheerful and sweet every time I see or talk to my husband? Am I smiling at him often?

A couple years ago I finished speaking at a MOPS group and began answering questions from the audience. Immediately the topic of smiling at our children came up, and one of the mentor mom's shared her experience with how smiling at her husband makes such a huge daily difference.

I've been spoken on the importance of smiling at our children at many speaking events, but since I don't often get to do Q&A after I speak, I don't often also get to hear a whole group communicating together about what most impacted them. Women will share with me individually, or discuss the message in groups, but to have a whole room giving their insights on smiling was really cool.

As the younger moms listened carefully, the older moms confirmed that smiling can impact so much. Even the friend who came to the event with me, who has been married twenty-three years, was impacted by the agreement in the room and committed herself to smiling more at not only her children but also her husband.

Smiling communicates approval. Make sure your husband feels that you approve of him. When a wife is joyful and kind to her husband, when he knows that she loves being married to

him, that she is happy in the life he's given her—whether she is married to a godly man or a foolish man—he will be kinder to her for her love.

He will love her more because of her love for him. And she will have more joy because she is doing what is right, pleasing God with her contentment and joy in the Lord.

Very often, a man gets angry when he is hurt. If a husband is rude or unkind, he has likely first been hurt, and he automatically reacts with anger. A wife can't expect her husband to be kind to her and feel in love with her when she is always mad and upset with him. He will react to anger with anger, to kindness with kindness, and to love with love.

He will withdraw from you if you are bitter or unforgiving. He will close up his heart to protect himself from getting hurt by your bitter poison, which is unhappiness with him.

Your joy and acceptance in marriage frees your husband to love you. It makes it safe to love you. That's why it's important to show happiness—especially being happy with

him. And avoid expressing your disappointment about your life or about something he did/does. Disappointment is not our job!

Plus, when you disapprove of your husband, you are showing disapproval with God's plan for your life and His plan for your sanctification. Instead of holding a grudge, strive for humility. Humility means not being easily offended, forgiving quickly, and admitting your own wrongs and saying sorry (even if it was mostly the other person's fault). It means not thinking more highly of yourself than you ought. And it means not seeking great things

for yourself or becoming bitter at how life turned out or bitter about who you married.

I need to be filled with joy, thankfulness, praise, and approval of God's will for my life and where he has me in life.

When you are happy and cheerful in your home, your mood will influence how your husband feels and even how he treats you.

Being a happy wife is essential to a good marriage. Your husband wants you to be happy with him. When you are unhappy, he feels like it is a reflection on his performance as a husband. This is why, when you may be bummed about finances or something else, suddenly your husband begins treating you horribly.

He feels your unhappiness is a reflection on him. And then he gets mad at you for being so hard to please. His anger comes out to you as either indifference (he goes for the TV or a computer game or something else) or he may even act disgusted with you. This leaves you feeling like the unloved, "desperate housewife." And then you lie in bed at night, silently crying yourself to sleep, and wondering how it all went so wrong.

Maybe your husband just needs to feel like you love him, and your reassurance that you are happy with him. You could try saying something like, "Thank you so much for taking care of our family. I know you work hard for us. I love you babe. I'm so thankful that God gave me you for my husband. I'm not upset with you. Something else is bothering me."

Chapter Nine Key Points

- New
- List
- Of
- Key Points

Chapter 10: Affection

6. Am I being affectionate, hugging, kissing, and massaging him?

I always make it a point to give Todd a big, long hug when he comes home from work. We all need to be touched. You may have heard the study done in hospitals, that when patients were touched by the nurses—maybe a squeeze of the hand or a rub on the shoulder—their recovery was significantly faster than patients who were not touched. You are the main source of human touch for your husband, so be sure you give him extra hugs and loving each day!

Multiple women have said to me, “My husband never hugs me like your husband hugs you,” and “We don’t hug like you and Todd,” and similar comments. Maybe Todd has always been a hugger and I just don’t remember it. But I do remember when I committed to hugging Todd on a regular basis.

I just determined that I would initiate regular hugging and the habit stuck. We are huggers. Again, maybe we were always

huggers. I've just become aware in the last few years of people mentioning that our marriage must be great because they see us hugging.

All that to say, it's okay for you to be the one to always initiate hugging and cuddling. I have another friend who always climbs under her husband's arm when he is sitting on a couch watching TV or begins kissing and hugging her husband when they are in a pool together, but when people see them together, everyone says, "Oh, they are so in love." No one ever says, "Hmmm, the wife always initiates their cuddling." No one even notices how it begins.

People just see them together and think their marriage is awesome (which it is). But they don't see that she is always willing to put herself out there and hug first, cuddle first, and kiss first.

KEEPING THE BEDROOM SPARK

This is about the sexual side of marriage... give "tips"

Chapter Ten Key Points

- New
- List
- Of
- Key Points

Chapter 11: Talking Well of Your Husband

7. Am I talking highly of him to others?

I have to make a horrible confession. Saying nice things about Todd to others, without mentioning the things he does wrong, is probably (and sadly) the hardest item for me on this list. My mouth is my greatest downfall. If I've seemed preachy at any point in this book, here is where I fail. I just do a horrible job of speaking well of my husband and seem to put my foot in my mouth so often.

If someone compliments me, I have to keep myself from pointing out something negative in response. When I hear someone talk about only the good side of something, I feel like I have to interject the truthful (and negative) side.

Unfortunately, this isn't something I like about myself. For instance, if someone says, "I loved your book." I'll want to stop them and say, "Really? I wasn't sure I liked the part about..." If someone says I'm pretty, I will point out every new wrinkle on my face. It's a horrible habit I have, and something I need to work at

not doing.

And especially when it comes to marriage. I know women whom others think are married to perfect men—not because they are—but because those wives perfected how to speak highly of their husbands to others without having to say the bad things.

Now, I'm not talking about confiding in one best friend or accountability partner when you need support. I'm talking about what you tell your new friend at church when she asks how your week was. Or mentions your husband. You can just tell her something sweet your husband has done, and leave out the complaints you have.

I remember standing in the kitchen of a friend of mine, when the subject of her husband came up and she said to me, "He is so dear." I realized I can say those randomly nice things about my husband to others too. Todd is an excellent father, an incredible speaker and talker, he doesn't waver when it comes to doctrine or what he believes, he likes to do nice things for me, and he tells me often that I am beautiful. This is just the short list of wonderful things my husband does and that I can tell others about.

And when a wife speaks highly of her husband, she is honoring him. When we tell others the faults of our husbands, we dishonor them and, in dishonoring our husbands, we dishonor the Lord. I'll end this subject with the ultra-convicting verse I've been meditating on the last two days: "The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin" (Proverbs 13:3).

Chapter Eleven Key Points

- New
- List
- Of
- Key Points

Chapter 12: The Motive for Looking Good

8. Does my appearance please my husband?

When Todd and I were first together and married, his favorite outfit for me was jeans or cargo pants, a t-shirt, and a flannel. Which is kind-of the opposite of looking feminine. But it is what Todd likes, even to this day.

Difference men have different tastes and different ideas of what looks good. So while we as Christians should aim to be modest, our focus must also be on what our husband likes.

I know Todd highly values modesty, so for many years I have worked to find the balance between not drawing attention to my body and keeping myself covered while still looking presentable. For a long time I did not have a clue how I could be modest without being frumpy. So I chose to look frumpy, because I couldn't sacrifice modesty. But in the meantime, I observed other women, and when I saw an outfit that was both modest and pretty, I would try to wear something similar. I even have a file

saved on my computer of cute, modest outfits.

I also try to work out at least a few times a month. I know that's not much compared to hard core exercisers. But it helps to keep my muscles from completely going away. When I do work out, I do high intensity toning exercises— crunches, push ups, scissors kicks, etc.

I also try to get dressed every day and look somewhat okay. Of course, if I'm going somewhere important, I'll try to look nice. I know for some of you, this is basic stuff. But I say it for the women who have stopped caring about looking nice for their husbands.

In particular, I'm thinking of story I heard of a woman who, within a few months of getting married, started wearing nothing but her pajamas all the time, chopped all her hair off real short, stopped exercising, and did just about everything else she could to make it clear she didn't care how she looked anymore.

Her husband was hurt that she had spent so many years before they married maintaining her appearance, and then let herself go as soon as they married. The goal is not to look perfect, but to look feminine, to look like a woman who takes care of herself.

It's important that you show your husband that you care about looking good for him.

How to Look REALLY GOOD

And I'd like to share with you one more secret for looking your very best for your husband. When you are going to be "spending

time together”, the right lighting can go a long way to making your skin look tighter and more flawless. Here is what you do: Get a pink or red light bulb and replace your regular light bulb with this colored one. Make sure the only lights you have on in the room are pink or red. Then light lots of candles. The warmth of the candles combined with the red glow of the light bulb will make your skin look as good as any lotion or tanner can.

Chapter Twelve Key Points

- New
- List
- Of
- Key Points

Chapter 13: Thinking of Your Husband in an Honoring Way

9. Am I being reverent?

Ephesians 5:33 says, “The wife must see to it that she respects her husband.” The original Greek word in this verse is *phobeō*. Like a phobia or a fear, the word itself means “to be struck with fear, to be seized with alarm” and also “to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience.” In every place this word is used in the Bible it is translated as “fear,” or to “be afraid”—except in this one verse where it is translated “respect.”

But the way this word is used in other verses gives us a good indication of God’s intention for wives. Here is one example of this word being used multiple times by Jesus. The *asterick next to a word means this is the Greek word *phobeō*: “I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid* of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear*: fear* the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear* Him!” (Luke 12:4-5 NASB).

So, from these verses we can gather that when you *phobeō*

someone, it means you are giving them your ultimate respect, your ultimate honor and obedience. It means treating your husband as if you are in awe of him.

That's a skill that takes practice!

But you can get better at it by only thinking of your husband in honoring ways. I think the practical secret to respecting your husband is simply treating him as if he is already the man you want him to be.

Part of that is being submissive to him. If a wife doesn't honor her husband by yielding to his requests and desires, it registers as her not respecting his position as the family leader. It derails all the other things she has worked for, because a wife who won't obey obviously doesn't need her husband and she certainly doesn't trust him or esteem him to a man worth respecting.

When your husband asks you to do something for him or he wants to do something, do not say, "Are you sure?" or anything like that unless it is almost a life or death emergency. Instead, when you do give your opinion, show that you trust and support him as the leader so he can hear from God.

Chapter Thirteen Key Points

- New
- List
- Of
- Key Points

Chapter 14: Trusting God and Praying

10. Am I entrusting my husband to God, and knowing that God is on the throne even in the hard times today? Am I being diligent in prayer today? Am I believing that obeying God's commands is the very best choice I can make today, and that God's ways are wisest?

Today I found a book online preparing young single women for the day when they meet their Prince Charming. I wanted to—but I didn't—shatter those young women's hopes by saying, "He's not coming!" Not that they won't meet a wonderful man, but that man will always be a sinner.

And there will be days when your husband is NOT Prince Charming. He will disappoint you. He won't always make great decisions. He probably won't always love you like Christ loves the church, or always lead you spiritually, or be the great husband you hoped he would be. And I fear for those wives that expect their men to be Prince Charming, and don't know how to treat them with complete reverence even when they're not.

For instance, imagine your husband is doing something you wish he wouldn't, or isn't doing something you wish he would. Are you able to treat him with complete respect even in those horrible situations? The real question is this: God has commanded you to respect and reverence your husband at all times—even when he does not “deserve” respect. So... Do you trust God? Or do you feel compelled to force the situation to your will, even if that means disrespecting your husband, treating him with frustration to get your way, and not reverencing him as God commands.

Reverencing your husband is ultimately a fruit of trusting God. It reveals a deep, steady, unshakable confidence in God's goodness. Your obedience to God's commands about how you are to treat your husband is the proof of whether you trust God or not.

In other words, is God right in telling you to always respect your husband? Or did God make a mistake, not realizing that sometimes your husband is going to make mistakes so great they he needs you to treat him with a cold shoulder, and anger, and bitterness to teach him a lesson? Did God overlook that? Or should you treat your husband with absolute reverence at all times, especially when he is least deserving of it? God is either right or He's not.

Here is why you can obey God: because the Bible says God ways are perfect. (2 Samuel 22:31 “As for God, his way is perfect.” NIV) God's ways are not just better strategies than ours. They are not just better ideas than what we might come up with. But God's ways are absolutely perfect.

That means when a husband says something critical or puts

his wife down, and she react with humility, kindness, and respect—admitting our faults quickly, and expressing thankfulness for the criticism, because it is an opportunity to become a better person—that is the better way than angrily returning an insult.

And Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” This means that God is in control of your situation, working and turning all things for your good when you love Him

When you believe God is in control, it frees you from trying to manipulate the situation. Knowing God is in control—that is trusting God. And that is freeing. It frees you in your marriage from worry, from striving to manipulate. It brings contentment even when things aren't “right”. Rather than driving yourself crazy with anger, simply trust in the Lord and put your hope in what is unseen.

Along with trusting God, you can actively pray for your husband. One of my goals is to always be a woman who diligently prays for my husband and kids. For many years I prayed for God to convict Todd's heart, and in doing so, I always kept Todd's “sins” before me, which seemed to fuel my bitterness. But when I stopped focusing on Todd feeling bad for his sins, and began instead to specifically pray blessings and good things for him, my heart toward Todd changed also.

I also have to remember that whatever things may bother me about Todd, it is ultimately my not accepting Todd as he is and letting him stand before God. Instead of battling Todd, when I do

battle, it must be spiritually, not with nagging words but with spiritual weapons: prayer, fasting, and the Word of God. My battle is to keep my arms in prayer like Moses while God fights the battle for me.

Do you actively pray for your husband to be blessed, to have good things come to him, to enjoy his life? Do you think about what you can do to serve your husband? When you decide that you want to see your husband blessed, and thus pray blessings for your husband, you will be able to enjoy your husband and your marriage in a much greater way.

Chapter Fourteen Key Points

- New
- List
- Of
- Key Points

Chapter 15: How to Respond When Your Husband is Wrong

**“The wife must see to it that she respects her husband.”
(Ephesians 5:33b)**

About eight years ago, I read a book on marriage that placed a good deal of emphasis on the biblical rebuke. That night, I determined to treat Todd with utmost respect, and, if he sinned, I would rebuke him very respectfully and kindly. Well, my chance to give a biblical rebuke came, so I carefully worded my reproof while talking in a nice voice. The sin was something along the lines of his talking in an irritated voice or something like that. After the rebuke, I knew I had done it just like the author recommended! So I was shocked when, a few hours later, Todd said to me, “You’ve really been disrespectful tonight.” I’d obviously missed something.

About six months later, after spending a very encouraging day with a friend, I went home determined to show love to Todd. The idea of respect hadn’t crossed my mind. I was just going to make

a point to be loving. Well, big shock #2 came at the end of that day when Todd said to me, “You’ve been so respectful toward me today. I really appreciate that.”

I realized that my “respect” came off as coldness, which Todd translated into disrespect. And my love and affection toward him caused him to feel respected.

So here's the big question: Should a wife accept her husband the way he is or be her husband's personal “holy” spirit, by gently rebuking her husband when he sins. I've learned from experience that this is a loaded issue. I want to address it from both sides. There are verses that support both views. I think that because husbands are different, a wife needs to use love and common sense.

One side teaches that a wife has a responsibility to point out sin to her husband if she notices it.

There are some marriages where the husband wants his wife to hold him to such a high standard that he appreciates it when she brings his attention to a sin or fault in his life. I'd say men like this are the exception and not the rule. If your husband receives your rebukes with joy, and if he seriously reflects on what you've said, and if he asks you to tell him if there is an area in his life that needs change—then in this case, honor your husband by pointing out his sin.

But if your husband speeds while driving to church, should you gently correct him? Here is your answer: “Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you” (Proverbs 9:8). You probably know your husband well enough to predict how he would react if you said something like, “Sweetheart, when you speed on the freeway, you are disobeying

God's Word, which says, 'Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men' (1 Peter 2:13 NIV)." If your husband would get angry or annoyed with you for the rebuke, it's probably better to let love cover a multitude of sins.

In most marriages, I'd say the wife needs to accept her husband the way he is. Ephesians 4:2 says we are to make "allowance for each other's faults because of [our] love" (NLT). Most husbands don't find it thrilling when their wives correct them. Most husbands react defensively when their sin is pointed out. Often, they are already well aware of their faults. They don't need you to say anything. They need you to win them without a word, bearing with their faults because you love them.

But again, there are a few men in the world who want their sin to be pointed out to them, who appreciate and love rebuke. If you're the wife of a husband like this, a husband who would feel thankful that you cared enough to point out his sin, and if he would love you more because of it, than you can probably let him know when he sins. And even in this case, if you've told him a more than once, it's probably plenty.

I personally don't think that it's prudent for a wife to rebuke her husband for his every sin, like every time he talks to her with impatience or frustration. If her husband has even one character flaw, she will soon become like a dripping faucet!

WHEN REBUKE WORKS

As a wife, you likely know which issues would make your husband defensive, and which issues he wouldn't mind you pointing out.

On one recent occasion, I pleaded with my husband when I needed him to come with me somewhere, "I don't feel like you are considering us (the kids and I) in this decision." And he said, "You're right" and changed his plan of action. Later when I said, "Thank you so much for coming with us. I'm so glad you came." He answered, "It was the right thing to do. I'm not above being rebuked."

In part, I think it worked because: 1. I really did have a very valid point. 2. It was not an attack on his character (You're so lazy! etc.) 3. There was a specific and immediate way for him to change. 4. God is good.

When the rebuke is really a disguised attack on your husband's character, not only will the rebuke not be effective, but his heart will likely harden toward future "rebukes." Examples would be: "You're so mean. You never spend time with us." "You have no self-control. That's why we are having these financial problems." These kinds of statements are made in anger, and a harsh word will stir up anger in your husband. While some of these issues may need to be addressed, the way to do it is in absolute reverence, as if you worked for a president and had to deliver bad news to him.

SERIOUS SIN

Galatians 6:1 tells us when to rebuke:

"Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a

one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.”

The phrase “if anyone is caught in a trespass” has also been translated “if a man be overtaken in a fault” (KJV) and “if another Christian is overcome by some sin” (NLT). The word “caught” reminds me of a fly caught in a web. The person in the sin is trapped and bound by the sin.

Sins that overtake people can include pornography addiction, drunkenness, habitually lying, illegal drug use, or any other repetitious, serious, and clearly sinful behavior. These scandalous, and/or very clear, repetitious sins should be addressed differently than the simple faults that many husbands share.

Matthew 18:15-17 teaches us how to approach a person who has fallen into a repetitious, clearly forbidden sin according to Scripture. And this is only when that person calls himself or herself a Christian. If your husband does not claim to be a Christian, these verses do not apply to him. And, of course, if you or your children are in a dangerous and/or life threatening situation, common sense says to remove yourself and your children (and even call the Police when necessary and press charges). But you know that.

The steps in Matthew 18 passage are severe, culminating in excommunication from the church. So it only makes sense to directly rebuke your husband if his sin is in the excommunication category—sins which are clearly sin according to the Bible, and that are committed on an ongoing, unrepentant basis.

For instance, if your husband is involved in looking at pornography, you would first show him his fault in private. This

would be done humbly, respectfully, and with reverence. A wife could address her husband by saying something like, “I know that you are looking at porn. You are breaking my heart with this sin. It is destructive and poisonous. I love you too much to let you ruin our marriage with this. I am asking you to please never look at porn again. I also want to say that if I do ever find out that you have looked at porn again, because you call yourself a Christian, I will be calling our pastor and telling him what is going on.”

In this situation, you could substitute the word pastor for any one or two men your husband highly respects. It could be his father, his best friend, or a godly man at church. If he repents, the issue is over and you should go out of your way to reaffirm to your husband how much you love and value him.

If he does not repent, then go to the man or men whom you have already chosen, and tell him or them what is happening. Only go to men who will go to your husband, never a man who lets you cry on his shoulder and is really there to comfort you.

Ask those godly men to please address this issue with your husband. Again, if he repents, make a point to be filled with love and kindness toward him. This doesn't mean you trust him again, but the Bible says not to trust in man anyway. Trust in the Lord always. If your husband looked at porn on a computer, it would be wise to put the computer in a central, always visible location of the house. If he uses a fancy picture/video phone, part of his repentance might be going back to an old fashioned, no picture cell phone. Loving him does not mean that wisdom goes out the window. Love him by helping him to protect himself.

If he does not repent, at this point, your pastors need to step in and excommunicate your husband from the church. If he is not

actively involved in a church, I would refer you back to 1 Peter 3, since these verses in Matthew 18 are for men who call themselves Christians and are involved in a church.

Chapter Fifteen Key Points

- New
- List
- Of
- Key Points

Chapter 16: A Gentle, Quiet Spirit

“Let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.” (1 Peter 3:4 ESV)

Psalm 1 describes a tree next to a river, a tree that is solid and unmovable. No storm can blow this tree over and nothing can carry it away. And this tree represents the person who mediates day and night on the Word of God. Our hearts need to be like that tree. Someone can come up to us and they can push us and shake us and no matter what they do, we just stay planted, at rest in God's goodness toward us.

A woman who meditates and night on God's Word can see herself in the light of God's Word. She remembers God's great forgiveness toward her, and so she forgives quickly and easily. And she has peace in her heart. She doesn't fall apart beyond all hope when the hard times come. She may be overcome with sorrow or be pressed beyond measure, but she maintains her

eternal hope in God.

And the hard times will come in life. Most people have some hard times. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 7:14:

“In the day of prosperity be happy, but in the day of adversity consider—God has made the one as well as the other so that man will not discover anything that will be after him.” We don’t know if tomorrow is going to be good or bad. Be ready to praise God either way.

Now here is the answer to the question: How can I avoid getting overwhelmed by emotions like bitterness, unforgiveness, or anger? Just get your roots real deep. Get your roots so deep in God’s Word, so secure in God’s love for you, and so rooted and grounded that when those trials come, when painful things happen, your heart is assured that God is working everything in your life for good.

Especially when you’re in those times when the sun of life is shining, those are the times to stock up your heart with the Word of God and get your roots as deep as they can go. Those are the times of circumstantial rest, when you’re not in extreme trials. Those are great times to store up God’s word in your heart and to not fall asleep spiritually.

This also I’ve learned: When things are hardest in my life, it’s seems to correspond to the times when I am so busy, so overwhelmed that I literally can’t just sit and “wait” on God for refreshing. I have to meditate on what I already know. But when life slows down, and my heart can return to the Lord in rest,

those can be the sweetest times. Even if the storm is raging outside, when my heart is refreshed in the Lord, life is good.

UNEASILY OFFENDED

I love the KJV of Psalm 119:165 which says, “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” This verse reminds me that when I am focused on God’s truth and in love with His promises, I won’t be offended and shaken when things go wrong. This doesn’t mean that Christians who love God will never get their feelings hurt, but that they will be able to forgive easily and bless quickly.

My friend Trisha comes to mind when I think about people who are not easily offended or stumbled. Even if someone were to offend her or hurt her, you would never hear her speak anything unkind about that person in return. She “bounces back” quickly, in such a way that she doesn’t speak bitter words or display lingering anger toward those who “offend” her.

In my own life, I try to make a point to pray that God would abundantly bless those who say or do anything unkind to me. Sometimes I get caught up in the moment and forget to pray for them, but when God reminds me, then I will pray blessings for them right away. My aim is that when my husband or anyone else says or does anything that may seem inconsiderate, I will pray for them to have a great day, to know God’s love for them more fully, to see God’s blessings toward them in their life, and that God would bless them and be gracious to them.

Another good friend of mine confided to me at church that

her husband had been acting grouchy all week. They had been arguing and he was being hard to live with. I suggested she tell him how thankful she was for something he had done that week; that instead of focusing on his grouchiness and being offended by it, to bless him with a thankful heart.

I recommended she say something like, “I don’t think I’ve told you this all week, but I’m so thankful for how hard you worked to help provide for our family.” She thought he might think she was being fake, so I said to add, “I just realized that I hadn’t told you lately how thankful I am for you, but I really do appreciate all that you do for us.”

The next week I asked her how things had gone. “Oh, they are so much better now!” she said. “I started being nice to him and his whole attitude changed. I feel so much better now too.”

When my friend focused on having a gentle, grateful heart that wasn’t easily angered or annoyed, her husband’s attitude changed also. And this heart attitude that wants to bless others—and a gentle and quiet spirit that is not quickly angered—is of great value in God’s sight.

GETTING PRACTICAL

What about your marriage? Do you rejoice when you have an opportunity to love your husband and he doesn't deserve it—simply because you want to obey God? Often, we suffer in marriage because we are consumed with trying to get our own needs fulfilled. Our marriage will never meet our needs, so we will always suffer if this is a pattern.

I can't even count the times I've heard women lament that their husbands do not love them like Christ loves the church. A gentle and quiet spirit doesn't focus on what people can do for us, but seeks to bless others, because this kind of person knows that they are simply the servant of God, and they seek to please Him in all they do.

And instead of expecting their husband to love them perfectly, and feeling angry when he fails, they realize and take to heart that Christ loves them. Because that's the better deal anyway! The greater treasure is a perfect Savior who knows our every thought and loves us anyway, not a human husband that gets annoyed far too easily.

So look to Christ and meditate on His Word so that your heart will be satisfied in Him, and when storms come, your roots stay put.

THE GRACE TO COME

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33 NKJV)

Sometimes a wife really wants her husband's attention or affection. Or she wants him to do or buy things for her, or tell her how much he loves her, which is natural. And sometimes, the husband just doesn't do what the wife wants him to do. And when he's busy doing something else, she might get hurt or angry about what he's doing. And eventually, this can create major conflict and lasting pain. I've learned from trial and error, from

times of pain and times of victory, that I need to take my focus off my husband, and instead place my complete desire on Christ and the attention He already gives me.

That's why a wife must place her hope completely on the grace to be brought to her when Jesus is revealed from heaven. And then, instead of feeling like her life is missing something, she'll be satisfied with joy from following Christ, but she'll also be able to enjoy the times when her husband feels tender toward her, as a special reward from God. Her husband's love and adoration of her will not be something she demands, but because her heart overflows with thankfulness, her husband's love will be one more reason to praise and follow Christ.

SEEKING REAL SATISFACTION

Why did I talk so much about our relationship with Christ when the subject of this book is marriage? Because I truly believe that the women who read this book are those who want wisdom—and if you seek, you will find. As you apply the principles in this book, they have the power to transform your husband and how he treats you and create an amazing, indescribably good relationship with him.

So... if these principles can cause all these wonderful things to happen in your marriage, why am I not focusing solely on your marriage and these principles? **Because even when your marriage is fulfilling and glorious, you will not be satisfied by it.**

There will still be something more you need. Your husband will still be a sinner and sometimes hurt your feelings. And if at

any point on this journey, you start to place your focus on your husband, you won't be happy. It will be like any great experience—after a while, the thrill will wear off. The excitement over your wonderful results will subside. Of course, it is a huge, indescribable blessing to have a husband who loves and cherishes you. And having a great marriage is one of the joys of life on earth.

But God, who created the joy of marriage—and even uses marriage to represent the relationship of Jesus Christ with His bride, still tells us to put our hope on Him and not on our marriages. He says to put our hope completely in the grace to be brought to us when Jesus is revealed. (1 Peter

1:13)

When we have resurrected from the dead, we will awake with the likeness of Christ, and it is this very thing that brings us complete satisfaction! Psalm 17:15 says, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with your likeness." That is what must drive our entire lives and even our marriages.

Our marriages will never satisfy us. Not until we have become glorified in the likeness of Christ—free from sin— will we ever be satisfied. If we forget this, we will only get frustrated by our marriages and all of life. So for this reason, we must live our entire lives in view of eternity.

LIVING UNMARRIED

The Apostle Paul, one of the primary writers of the New Testament, wrote that "those who have wives are to live as

though they had none" (1 Corinthians 7:21). WHAT? How does that happen? Well, it doesn't happen in the practical sense. That interpretation would be wrong in view of other verses that tell husbands to love their wives, give honor to them and dwell with them with understanding. And we can't practically live as unmarried women in view of the verses that tell us to love our husbands, reverence our husbands, and all those things.

Rather, I think this has to do with our mind and thoughts. 1 Corinthians 7:34 tells us that the married woman cares about pleasing her husband—and interestingly, this statement is given as the reason why a woman is better off single.

From my own experience, when I am caring about how to please my husband, it is not so much that I selflessly want to make him happy. Rather, I care about how I may please him for my own gratification. If I am "in the mood," then I want to "please" him so he gets in the mood also. When I cook dinner, I want to get a compliment. I want to hear that I'm the best cook ever. I'm pleasing Todd for me—to satisfy my desire for admiration and awe.

Now here is the connection. When we live as if we are single, it means that our thoughts are not on getting our husbands to think we are the hottest, smartest, most desirable woman alive, but rather on pleasing Christ. And when we understand how to please Christ biblically, our husbands will be far more pleased with us than if we were obsessed with them and getting their attention.

THE CURSE—YOUR DESIRE IS TOWARD YOUR HUSBAND

After reading a book on marriage, a woman wrote: “I’ve left the book in the bathroom and tried to ask my husband to read it—and he refuses.” She went on to complain that her marriage is horrible because her husband won’t change, and she completely missed the point of changing herself. She was consumed with her husband’s reaction to her.

She cared so much about how her husband felt toward her, getting her husband to want to improve the marriage, making her husband spend his time thinking she’s wonderful, and on and on, that she’s missing out on living and enjoying her own life. She’s missing out on enjoying what she does have because she is so focused on what she doesn’t have.

I want you to have a great marriage. I want you to have the absolutely best marriage imaginable. But even more, I want you to put your hope on Jesus and His love for you. I want you to love your husband deeply, but look to Jesus as your source of love.

And then, instead of feeling like your life is still missing something—you’ll have both the love of your Savior who died for you and is coming soon with abundant grace toward you, but you’ll also be able to enjoy the times when your husband expresses his love. Those times when your husband feels sentimental and full of love toward you will just make life even better. Those special moments will just add to the wonderful life you already have in Christ.

You won’t lack when your husband is busy with something else, but your cup will run over when his eyes are on you. So much of the peace you will have in marriage will come from not being focused on your marriage, but rather on Jesus.

HAPPILY EVER AFTER

So why should a book on loving your husband talk about living as though you are not married? Because very soon we won't be! We will soon be with Jesus forever, and all that will matter is whether or not we lived to please Him.

And though we can experience great joy on this earth and in our marriages, and though we can have peace and fulfillment in following Christ—we will never be completely satisfied until we enter heaven. Psalm 17:15 says, “As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.” And because our total satisfaction is really only fulfilled when we awake in the likeness of Jesus, God wants us to keep our hope on that.

Love your husband and give him your heart. Do all you can to make sure he knows that you think he's wonderful. Overlook his faults and admire his strengths. Tell him today how thankful you are for the things he does for you. And as you do these things, put your hope in Christ and remember that Jesus is coming and you will soon be fully satisfied in glory.

Chapter Sixteen Key Points

- Be ready to praise God in both good times and bad times.
- Learn God's Word as thoroughly as possible so that when hard times come, you are like a steady and unmovable tree.
- When your husband or anyone else is inconsiderate of you, pray that God would bless them and show them kindness.
- Since your marriage will never meet your needs, learn how much God loves you and cling to His love.
- Even if your marriage is wonderful, you will not be fully satisfied by it.
- We will not be fully satisfied until we are glorified and awake in the likeness of Jesus.
- We need to focus on pleasing Christ instead of being focused on getting our husband's attention.
- Do all you can to love your husband and bless your marriage, but put your hope on God and your eternity

with Him.

Chapter 17: A Heart of Obedience to God

“But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.”

1 Corinthians 11:3

I was cooking shepherd’s pie for dinner in my kitchen while thinking of something I read in a book, namely, the author was describing the horrible consequences that often come to women who abandon God’s plan and live for themselves. She talked about the horrors that some single mothers face, who think divorcing their husbands will bring them greater happiness, and instead they find themselves far more miserable.

Well, while I cooked dinner, I had an imaginary conversation and responded to what she said. I was looking for a dish in which to cook the shepherd’s pie when I started thinking (partly complaining) about how I don’t own the right kitchen accessories.

Then I thought of my neighbor, a single mom of multiple kids who never married. So my response to this author was something like, "Um, my neighbor who does not live to please God just bought herself new dishes. I've wanted new dishes for a while but haven't got them. (My husband thinks it's a silly purchase and told me no, I can't buy them.)"

Then I thought, this author wants to warn women of the consequences of not obeying God (Which is good. And there are consequences.) But what she doesn't mention is that sometimes it's even HARDER when you do obey God. Sometimes life is easier for those who do whatever they want. Sometimes it is far easier to get divorced and do what you want. That is why the Psalmist talked about the unbelievers who live in ease, who disobey God and never seem to face any consequences. And the Psalmist says this:

"For I was envious of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the wicked... They are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like mankind... Behold, these are the wicked; and always at ease, they have increased in wealth. **Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence; For I have been stricken all day long and chastened every morning**" (Psalm 73: 3, 5, 12-14, Emphasis mine).

Which brings me back to this, I don't obey God simply to avoid consequences. I obey God because I love Him. And because I'm

not living for this life. My goal is to die here on earth. Not physically, but die to myself. Die to Katie and live to God. Die to new dishes and live that I may please God with contentment. Die to getting what I want here and live to serve others.

And so, obedience to Christ is not so much about what happens here and now, but about what happens in those realms I can't see. It's about remembering heaven, that city whose builder and maker is God. It's about being like the saints mentioned in Hebrews 11, who were busy looking at heaven while they lived here on earth.

And then, doing all I do here on earth with joy. Not joy because I'm getting what I want. Not joy because life is perfect. But joy because I want to please God and enjoy serving Him. Joy because my heart is content to do whatever God wants me to do and not what I want.

Now, there is nothing wrong with making decisions to avoid earthly consequences. That is wisdom. The Bible tells us of consequences of certain actions. Adultery, for instance, in Proverbs 7. But my point is, hard times come to both those who live uprightly and those who live in utter depravity.

And so, consequences (on this earth) aren't the only reasons to do or not do something. I think my issue was that the consequences the author mentioned too closely matched my life. She began listing the reasons why divorce is a bad option, and I thought, "I already deal with many things on that list."

Sometimes staying married is the hardest thing you will ever

do. Sometimes divorce is the easier, less painful option.¹ Staying married is not about having an easier life or avoiding certain trials. In other words, follow God and honor Him because you love Him, not because you simply want to avoid hard times.

And, it will be better for those who follow God. Asaph in Psalm 73 (the one I quoted above) continues his thoughts about the wicked by saying:

“When I pondered to understand [why the wicked live in ease], it was troublesome in my sight until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end. Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction... For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You” (Psalm 73: 16-18, 27).

And concerning himself, Asaph says:

“Nevertheless I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterward receive me to glory” (Psalm 73:23-24).

That is also our hope: That whether or not this life is hard, God will never forsake us or let go of our right hand. And very soon we will be received into eternal glory.

¹ Although I have not mentioned it yet in this book, I fully believe God allows for divorce in cases involving adultery. I do not believe a woman is disobeying God in those situations.

So I've said all this because I wanted to point out that yielding to our husbands is really about showing God our obedience and love. I ONLY obey Todd because I want to honor God. But because I so desperately want to honor God, I do all I can to obey Todd and be reverent toward him.

OBEYING GOD BY YEILDING TO YOUR HUSBAND

Annie and Rick began to grow apart. For years Annie subtly attempted to change certain faults in her husband, though she kept those faults a secret from others and appeared to be a happily married wife. This lasted for a long time, but Annie finally grew so frustrated with how Rick lived that she upped her demands. She decided that unless he changed, their marriage would no longer work. When he couldn't or didn't change, things only went dramatically downhill.

Though he had once been considerate and loving, he became irritable and angry all the time—taking his feelings out on her and the kids. He didn't understand why she couldn't just accept him as he was, and she couldn't understand why he didn't just change. With neither of them willing to yield, their marriage ripped apart.

YIELD TO HIM

What causes wives the most frustration with their husbands? I find that most marital problems are caused by a difference of

opinion. The husband wants to spend money but the wife wants to save it—or vice versa. The husband wants more or less sex and the wife wants the opposite. The husband wants to spend his free time doing one thing and the wife wants him to do something else. The wife wants her husband to lead the family in devotions and he wants to watch TV. Because they want different things, the wife ends up frustrated.

Most often this frustration is a result of the wife simply overlooking God's plan for her: "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord... But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything" (Eph. 5:22, 24). God planned for the wife to yield to her husband. Things in marriage work best when the wife yields her desires to her husband's direction.

This is part of the order God established far before you ever married. "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:3). This is the order God designed.

Now, in case you get frustrated thinking that God wants you to yield your will to your husband, first think about how Jesus had to yield His will completely to God the

Father, as He suffered and died on a cross. Isn't Jesus God? Absolutely! It's a truth many Christians have died for. But though He is equal with God, He humbled Himself. You are equal to your husband, but like Christ, we wives seek to please our husbands because God ordained this structure for marriage. Ultimately, you are pleasing your husband to honor God, not because your husband deserves it.

Jesus said that He always did only the things that pleased His

Father (John 8:29). Do you always do the things that please your husband? I think a misconception people have when it comes to obeying your husband is they think submission implies that God made men smarter than women, or at least able to make better decisions than women. This isn't the point of submission. It's a different point entirely.

When we obey our husband's, it's not because we believe they will always make the best choices. They often don't. The deeper heart issue is whether we trust God or not, which is revealed by the degree we obey our husbands.

And as a wife, you may have to follow your husband when he makes bad choices.

Think about this with me. What is one of the hardest things God has ever asked you to do? For me, it's definitely obeying my husband when he makes a bad decision. And in that way, obedience to Todd is one of the greatest tests of my trust in God. Not much in life can be harder.

Chapter Eighteen Key Points

- Sometimes the path of those who live obediently to God is harder than the path of those who disobey.
- We don't obey God to receive an easier life, but because we love Him and understand we will spend eternity with Him.
- When we yield to our husbands, it is because we love God and *trust Him*, not because our husbands always make the right decisions or have more wisdom than us.
- True submission is not concerned with the behavior of the other person—whether they are unreasonable or not. It is done to please God.

Chapter 18: A Test from God

“...the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands.”

(1 Peter 3:4b-5)

God uses Sarah as the biblical example for us in 1 Peter 3. Now, many people believe that Peter's reference to Sarah's obedience to Abraham may be in regards to something the Bible doesn't tell us about, and that may be true. However, since we only have two specific examples in the Bible of Sarah obeying Abraham—both of which required her to trust God as she said Abraham was her brother—I want you to at least consider that this may be what Peter refers to in 1 Peter 3:5-6.

Here's the story: Abraham and Sarah were living in Haran when God told Abraham to pack up and move. When they arrived in Canaan, a severe famine forced them to travel down to Egypt.

As they got closer to Egypt, Abraham tells Sarah:

“See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you” (Genesis 12:11-13).

I wouldn't be surprised if Sarah's first response was, “So you're saying I'm beautiful enough to get you killed? But seriously Abraham, you want me to lie and say I'm your sister?

“Yes, to preserve my life.”

“Okay, you're the boss.”

When they entered Egypt, everyone noticed Sarah's beauty and she was taken into Pharaoh's house. God then sent great plagues upon Pharaoh for Sarah's sake until Pharaoh realized something wasn't right. He called Abraham and asked, “Why have you done this to me? Why didn't you tell me that Sarah was your wife? Here is your wife. Take her and go” (Story taken from Genesis 12).

And this story happened twice! Time passed and eventually Abraham and Sarah travelled to Gerar. This time at least Abraham does the lying for Sarah, saying again that she was his sister. Sarah could have threatened her husband, saying, “Abraham, if you even dare say I am your sister, I will tell everyone the truth!” But instead she complies with Abraham's decision even though she knew from experience that he was wrong (Story from Genesis 20).

The whole point is that Sarah obeyed Abraham when he made a BAD DECISION. Her obedience, then, was a sign of her faith in God, not a sign of her faith in her husband. We must clearly separate the two. God will test your husband in other ways. God will test you by how you obey your husband.

The question is this: Do you trust God enough to obey your husband even when he makes bad choices? Is God sovereign over your life or not? One reason why Sarah obeyed Abraham was that she was not afraid of what might happen. She obeyed without any fear. Here is what the Bible says:

“In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear” (1 Peter 3:1-6).

You see, God doesn't just want you to yield to your husband for no reason. He knows that a wife who respects her husband

will win him over by her behavior, while a wife who dishonors her husband will only push him away.

A wife is able to obey her husband because her hope is in God. God tells us that this hope in Him is the beauty that comes from within—the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. A spirit that honors God at any cost. And God says this is very precious in His sight, of great worth, of great value to Him. Don't you want to be of such great worth to God that you are precious in His sight? I mean really, is there anything worth wanting more in life than this?

Then here is how to be very precious in God's sight—how to have great worth. Have a gentle and humble spirit, which is reflected by your trust in God, especially when it comes to trusting God by following your husband. It's having a heart that says, "God, I will follow you anywhere. I will obey you in anything. I love you Lord, and I know you say that 'If you love me, you will obey my commandments.' So I will obey you Lord, at any cost, even when it's hard. But please Lord, increase my faith. Make me able to obey you. I can't do it Lord. Please, do this work in me."

LEARNING TO ADAPT

For years it drove me crazy when my husband would play video games. I resented the time he spent on the computer so much that I preferred for him to be gone than home playing his game. Finally I learned to yield my desires to him. I found things that I loved to read, and I learned to be thankful for the time I had to sit down, rest, and read a book. Instead of hating my husband's way

of life, I learn to be happy adjusting to it. (But what's even crazier, is that after years of playing video games, my husband doesn't play them anymore. I had finally learned to not mind video games, and within a few years, he completely stopped playing them.)

When a wife yields to her husband, she lets him be the leader. By yielding her will to her husband, a wife is showing her husband that she respects his authority and position. When a man feels respected, he will in turn want to protect his wife and make life better for her. Her yielding may seem harder at first, but it is the path to a much better marriage.

OBJECTIONS

Objection #1—When a wife yields her desires to her husband's desires, doesn't that make the wife a doormat?

Not at all. You can have a say in your house. Your opinion is important. And there are times when you definitely should express your opinion. (There will be times when you should keep silent also.)

And I'm certainly not saying that a wife can't stand up for herself. If Todd were speaking rudely to me, I might say something like, "I'll talk to you when you start talking nicely."

Yielding to your husband does not mean quietly putting up with all kinds of mistreatment. Sometimes the best way to quickly end mistreatment is by quietly leaving your husband alone and talking sweet if he addresses you. But if your husband is rude and attacks you without cause, and if your kindness does not cause

him to stop being rude, you can firmly (and kindly) say, “It is not okay for you to treat me this way.”

If you’ve done something wrong, then apologize quickly. But if a man was just being rude and not stopping, and the wife had apologized for any rudeness on her part, she could walk out of the room and let him know, “When you talk nicely to me, then I will listen to you.” Or she could just sit there and cry if she felt like she needed to. So I’m definitely not saying to silently endure verbal abuse and never “rock the boat.”

I’ve heard stories of women who silently endured a rude husband for years and then finally exploded from all the suppressed pain. This is not what we want. There is a balance between letting your husband have times of grumpiness, but also not putting up with being put down.

Just be sure that when you express your opinion or stand up for yourself, you do it with kindness, love and respect. And when your husband makes a decision, unless you already both agree, your opinion just can’t be the final say.

We treat our husbands with love and respect, again, completely because we are honoring God. It has nothing to do with whether or not the husband deserves respect or has earned respect. It’s simply because we desire to obey God.

“Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in

everything...and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband" (Ephesians 5:21-24, 33).

As the wife, you have a double command to submit, and there are no exceptions unless you would be disobeying God.² While a husband has two commands, submit (the Bible tells husbands and wives to submit to each other—to yield to each other) and lead his family, you have the double command—submit, submit.

So while your husband needs to take your preferences into account when he makes decisions, and, when possible, honor your desires—he still needs to lead the family and do what is best or at least what he feels is best. While your instruction from God is to take your husband's preferences into account, you also need to yield to him as the final authority and leader God has placed into your home.

For example, if you said to your husband, "I want us to move to New York and I want you to be a Politician," he's not obligated to submit to you because he has a second command from God—and that is to be the leader of the family. If moving to New York is not the direction he wants to lead the family, then that is his decision and you would need to follow him and what he decides.

Objection #2—Someone may say, "But you only address the submission of wives. Men are supposed to submit to their wives as well. And they are supposed to love their wives as Christ loves the Church. And they are supposed to lead us spiritually. And they are supposed to do many other things for us." True. There are

² Acts 5:29 "But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men.'"

things I could say about what the husband should do. I could say that he needs to spend time with you or he needs to talk nicely to you, but this isn't a book for husbands.

I was reading a book by a woman whose husband was very different from mine. He did things that Todd doesn't do, things I would love if Todd did. But all it did was create in me a desire for Todd to be more like her husband. It sounds innocent enough, to have a desire for something good for your husband. But that desire quickly turned against me.

That next day after reading the book, Todd took me out to dinner. We were having a wonderful night, when I ended up getting upset by something Todd said on the way home. It was a silly thing, and what he said had nothing to do with me or our marriage. But this incident brought me to tears, and I realized I was feeling a lot of pain right then in my marriage.

The next morning, God clearly revealed to me that the source of my pain the night before was feeling sorry for myself. I wanted Todd to be more like this other author's husband in that area. But I saw that my pain started with my desire. My pain was a manifestation of my self-pity and covetousness.

Even when I wrote that Todd took me out to dinner, I know that some women have never been out to a restaurant with their husbands. And I hesitated saying it because I don't want you to start longing for this if it's not a part of your marriage. Rather, be thankful for what you do have. If you want your husband to have the strengths of other men, it can breed unthankfulness for the strengths he does have.

So if I were to talk about what a husband should do, in a book written strictly for wives, I don't feel like it would profit you

because we can so easily start longing for “better” instead of being content with what God has given us now. Let God be responsible for your husband. If and when God chooses to sanctify your husband in some particular area, you can rejoice. But if not, you are doing what is acceptable to God by doing good even when things may be hard.

Objection #3—What if the husband is abusive?

The Bible does not specifically mention this subject, but it does tell us how to deal with severe sin. Abuse would fall under the category of severe sin. In Matthew 18, ... Now a husband who is physically dangerous may need to be...

Objection #4—What if the husband wants his wife to sin?

Acts 5:29 tells us that we must obey God over obeying man. So if your husband asks you or tells you to do something that Scripture clearly defines as sin, you need to obey God rather than your husband in that case.

Objection #5—Is it unsubmitive to argue?

This is going to answer the question...

WHAT ABOUT UNREASONABLE HUSBANDS?

Of course, I don't know your husband. He may be completely unreasonable. Yet pleasing your husband means you adapt to him and follow him even when he may be difficult to deal with. Listen to the description Peter gives us about what it means to submit to someone. Though this is first written to servants, at the end of this section Peter says that wives are to obey their husbands in the same way that servants are to obey their masters (1 Peter 3:1). So take these verses from 1 Peter 2:18-23 to heart, as they apply to both servants and wives.

“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable” (vs. 18).

Peter tells us that the very essence of submission means we don't take into account if the person is reasonable or unreasonable.

“For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly” (vs. 19).

The motive behind yielding to someone else is to please God. This phrase “conscience toward God,” is the whole and entire motive for everything else this book may say. It is always and only because of the desire to honor God that I want you to love and honor your husband.

Your actions in your marriage are a complete reflection of

whether or not you are living to please Christ. Your conscience toward God will ultimately create a wonderful marriage, or your lack of conscience toward God will create a destructive marriage. God's principles work. I am living proof of that. And I want your motive behind following these principles to be your driving desire to honor God in every capacity you can—including and especially your marriage.

“For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps” (vs. 20-21).

Jesus is our ultimate example of what it means to yield. He obeyed the Father even when the “demands” could have seemed unreasonable. When Jesus yielded His will to the Father, it meant He would be brutally killed on a cross! If your husband hasn't asked you to be brutally killed on a cross, it's really not so bad.

And did you catch what Peter said about our purpose? If not, go back and read these verses again. When we obey, we do it to show a heart of reverence for God, who often allows His children to go through hard times on this earth, because He is preparing something much better for them—a heavenly home.

You see, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, David, Joseph, Moses, Peter, and Paul all suffered on earth—not as a result of their sin, but as part of their calling to God. The idea that anything that leads to

suffering must not be from God is wrong.

That is why I emphasize so strongly in this book that God wants your vision to be on the life to come—because this life will be hard. And part of being a Christian means you have been called to suffer!

Peter addresses suffering again in the next chapter, saying, “But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed” (1 Peter 3:14). It’s the place of blessing! If you suffer because you obey your husband, you are blessed. Maybe in this life. Maybe in the life to come.

“WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously” (vs. 22-23).

In the time of suffering, Jesus did not get angry with God’s plan. Instead, the suffering caused Him to trust the Father even more.

The servants that Peter addressed in the above verses were called to submit to their masters to please God, not because those masters were in any way better than them. And sometimes, yielding your will to your husband may bring some suffering, but this pleases God.

Chapter Four Key Points

- When a wife wants different things than her husband, she ends up frustrated. God's solution is for a wife to yield her desires to her husband by submitting to him.
- God established the following order of leadership: Wives submit to their husbands. Husbands submit to Christ.
- Jesus is equal with the Father, and yet He still submitted to Him while on earth. So wives are equal with their husbands even though they submit to them.
- By submitting to her husband, a wife wins him over to herself and to the Lord without ever having to say a word. Instead, her respectful behavior talks much louder.
- When a wife yields to her husband with love and delight, the husband often ends up wanting to please his wife and make her life better.
- A wife can express her opinion to her husband. Her opinion is important. But if her husband still wants to lead the family in a different direction, she needs to willingly yield to him.

Chapter 19: A Commitment for Life

Verse

One morning after celebrating our 11 year anniversary, I began to think, “Wow, I’ve given this guy 11 years of my life. I’ve literally handed over 11 years. And not just for these 11 years, but for the rest of my life or his life, I’ve given myself to this one guy.”

And I began to trip out, to reflect on being that committed to someone. And I thought of how many celebrities never stay married longer than 11 years. How our culture tells us to keep pursuing the very best thing for us. To pursue a better husband if he comes along. And part of this is natural human desire. We all want the best for ourselves. We want to be as beautiful, as successful, as rich, as famous, as accepted, as loved, as we can possibly be. Our society has a hard time committing to something, because in essence you’re giving up having something better.

And that's why I love what Jesus said:

"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?' (Mark 8: 36-37).

What will it matter, when I die: How great my husband was? How I looked? How much money I had? How successful I was?

What will matter is: Did I gain my soul? Did I exchange my soul for eternal life? And you do that by losing your soul. Right before Jesus spoke the above verses, He told His disciples He would have to suffer. Jesus told them that He would be rejected by the elders, by the priests and leaders at that time. And He would experience intense pain and be killed by them. And three days later He would rise again.

And this idea of suffering—of Jesus, God's own, only begotten Son, having to be hated and die—just didn't seem right. So Peter talks to Jesus privately and begins to rebuke him. He might have said, "Jesus, you can't say these things. You're important and people follow you. Don't talk about suffering and dying."

And Jesus tells Peter, "You are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

Then Jesus "summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole

world, and forfeit his soul? "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:34-37).

What will you give in exchange for your soul? What is worth trading for your soul? You may be dealing with pain in your marriage, or a health issue, or a financial burden, or some other trial. But let me ask you this, What will it matter, what will it profit you, if all these things changed? If they got better, and then you lost your soul?

We were driving home from church a few weeks ago, and on the radio came a commercial that said, "If you have brown spots on your skin, it may feel like it's the end of the world." And I wondered, "Really? If having brown spots is the end of the world, there really isn't much to live for, is there?"

But this life is not about those things. It's not important if you have brown spots or not. Whether or not your life mattered won't be affected at all by whether or not you had brown spots.

What will matter is, Did you live to please God? Did you praise Him in the times when you suffered? Remember, when Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always" in Phil. 4:4, he was writing that from jail!

LOOKING AT MOTIVES

Remember, the whole motive behind yielding to your husband is to show reverence to God. The question is, Are you submitting to the Lord in everything? Once you've submitted your hopes, dreams, desires, passions, longings, wants, and needs to God, you

will live with a constant desire to only do what pleases Him.

If you're not completely surrendered to Christ, then it will be easy to reject the idea of obeying or submitting to your husband, because you are rejecting the idea of completely obeying God.

When a wife lives with eternity in mind, this helps her do what is right even when it's hard. You must keep this eternal perspective and here is why. As a wife, you are married to a sinner. Life will be hard. Things will go wrong. If you were married to a different man, he would still be a sinner. Women who have been married 3, 4, 5 or even more times can tell you that all their husbands were sinners. All men will have faults. And all men have the potential to act horribly and wickedly. And those same men have the potential to be kind, considerate, brave, honorable, romantic, sweet, and loving.

There's a good possibility your marriage will see both good times and bad. In those bad times, you may feel that living for right now seems like the only thing you can do to survive. That is when you MUST keep your heart on the return of Christ.

In some sense, this is black and white. Either a wife lives for Christ and in doing so, loves and yields to her husband. Or she lives for herself. And if she is living for herself, why shouldn't she just get divorced if things get hard? Why not try to find a better husband? Why not try to find a man who will love her more, provide better, and appreciate her more? Why not? If someone is living for just this present time, shouldn't she just live to make herself happy? What is the point in staying in a hard marriage if living for Christ doesn't matter?

Here is what Paul said, "If there is no resurrection, 'Let's feast and get drunk, for tomorrow we die!'" (1 Cor. 15:32). In other

words, there is no point in living for Christ or trying to live uprightly if eternity doesn't exist. If this life is all we have, then Christians who deny themselves and live for Jesus are the most miserable of all people, and wives who love and reverence their loser husbands are the most pathetic of all women.

But this life is not all we have! And since this life is just a vapor compared to forever, and since how we live now is shaping our eternity, then we must do absolutely everything we can to make this life count. This life is the only chance we will ever have to establish everything about our next life in heaven.

When I honor Todd by respecting his decisions and doing what he wants, even when I disagree, I am doing it because this is what God tells me to do. I don't know if I can emphasize this strongly enough. The motive for honoring, loving, and even obeying your husband must be to please God, longing for the day when He says to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

When a Christian woman disrespects her husband, she is showing—at that moment—a lack of love for God. When your thoughts are on eternity, then obeying and honoring God becomes more important than serving your own desires. And your desire to honor God is seen by how you treat your husband, your children, and the other people in your life.

When you live for eternity, life is worth living. You will want to please Christ with all you are because you are not just living for the here and now—you're not just pleasing Christ for five minutes—when you please Christ in this life, God remembers it

for all eternity.³ This life counts for forever. What you do right now counts for or against your forever. It counts for or against eternity. How you spend the next minute and the next hour and the next day will determine—in part—your eternity. Wow! Wow! It's a sobering thought.

I've read people online or heard them in person, people who call themselves Christians, and they don't want to honor God more than anything else.

I read a Facebook post the other day written by someone who claims to be a Christian. The post said something about how sometimes he wants to commit some specific sin and he wishes he could. And then he said, "And don't tell me that you don't want to do this too." And when I read that, I almost felt sick to my stomach. I thought, No, I DON'T want to do that. I would much rather be holy. I would not even enjoy doing that because I would feel such grief in dishonoring my Savior. And this isn't legalism. I just desperately want to be holy. I want to please God. And I absolutely believe you can love honoring God without being legalistic. In fact, those two are hugely different.

What we want is to love God by obeying His commandments. And I'm not saying I am holy or perfect, just that I WANT to be. Oh how I wish I was far more holy than I am! There are so many times, each and every day, that I wish I didn't fail so much, that I wished I did better. It is my LONGING to be holy, but I certainly haven't achieved it. Yet I keep trying, because my life is Christ,

³ "For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints" (Hebrews 6:10).

and even though I sin, my goal is to be pleasing to God.

Now I know some people think it's a little fanatical to be so devoted to Christianity. But my question is, "Why even bother to be a Christian if you're not serious about it?" Jesus said that if anyone wanted to follow Him, they had to be serious about it and count the cost first.

If you were going to build a large building, wouldn't you first make sure you had enough money to complete the project? Otherwise, if you ran out of money, people would begin to make fun of you for starting something you couldn't finish.

In the same way, anyone who begins to follow Jesus as a Christian needs to make sure they've counted the cost. Before a man builds a tower he sits down and calculates the cost. Jesus says that, before we follow Him, we need to decide if we are going to complete the journey, if we are going to go all the way and finish the race and win. (Luke 14:27-33). Jesus said that if anyone would follow Him, they would have to deny themselves. (Mark 8:34). A woman who denies herself no longer makes demands. She is completely surrendered to God's will, having given up any cherished sins, so that she can serve her God without hesitation.

A Christian who denies herself does not retain the "privileges" that come with life outside of Christ. Even if your husband isn't the man you wish he was, you don't retain the "privilege" of divorce. (Except for the few exceptions I talk about later.) You've counted that loss when you chose to follow Christ. You've denied yourself that privilege when you decided to follow the God who says He hates divorce. Counting the cost means recognizing in advance that you have surrendered your own rights and

privileges and comforts.

LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN

Jesus told the story of a man named Lazarus and a rich man. While Lazarus was alive, he lived in suffering and poverty. The rich man lived in luxury. But in the course of time, both men died, and the rich man went to hell while

Lazarus went to be comforted in Abraham's bosom (awaiting heaven). The rich man, being tormented in hell, called up to Abraham and said, "Could you please send Lazarus to me to put a drop of water on my tongue? I am in torment here." And Abraham answered, "Remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony" (Story from Luke 16:19-26).

Though Lazarus had great suffering on earth, he traded just a vapor of bad things for an eternity of good things and comfort. But the rich man traded just a second of wealth and abundance and doing whatever he wanted in exchange for an eternity of torment.

So what are you exchanging your life for? Are you going to take the good things now—the comfort, the pleasure, the ease, the sinful desires, and getting what you want now— or are you going to deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Jesus in exchange for the glorious eternity to come? When I want my life to count for eternity, I don't worry so much about the hardships of this life. I don't get easily discouraged when other people seem

to have things I don't. Those things aren't bothersome anymore because it's all just a vapor.

Chapter Nineteen Key Points

- If you're not completely surrendered to Christ, then it will be easy to reject the idea of obeying or submitting to your husband, because you are rejecting the idea of completely obeying God.
- When a Christian woman disrespects her husband, she is showing—at that moment—a lack of love for God.
- When your thoughts are on eternity, then obeying and honoring God becomes more important than serving your own desires.
- Your desire to honor God will be revealed by how you treat your husband, your children, and the other people in your life.
- Because how we live this life determines everything about our next life in heaven, we need to do everything we possibly can to make this life count.
- Jesus said that if anyone wanted to follow Him, they would have to count the cost, because the cost is everything. But the cost of not following Christ is also everything. The investment of your whole self to follow

Christ yields a return that is valuable beyond compare.
Keeping your life and not following Christ is the greatest
loss ever.

Chapter 20: The Perfect Life Awaits

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (Romans 8:18)

Back when my husband Todd and I were younger and had only been married a few years, I found myself in this useless habit of pouting when he didn't pay attention to me. I'd get so focused on trying to get his attention that I'd become upset if he was occupied with something else. And because he wasn't giving me the attention I thought he should, I wouldn't be happy with our marriage.

Most of the time I didn't pout openly, but inside I'd get upset. And when I'd get upset, I would sit on the couch hoping Todd would come spend time with me. Sometimes I'd just stare at him while he was on the computer, and on occasion I even made

sarcastic comments about what he was doing.

During those times, my thoughts were focused on Todd instead of on eternity. I didn't even think about how I could think of something other than Todd because I was so caught up in my ideas of the ideal life and the ideal marriage and all those things. And my idea of the ideal marriage was a husband who wanted to spend all his time with me. And when I didn't get my way, I would feel sorry for myself and go find somewhere in the house where I could sit and stew on my husband's faults, or plot a way to change him, or wonder how I could hurt him enough to make him change.

It was a horrible way to live. I am awaiting future glory, and all I could think about was getting Todd to find me fascinating or beautiful or desirable or whatever it was that day.

I'm at the point now where I can share this with you because I've learned that my hope can't be on Todd, on my marriage, on my success, or on a ministry—my hope must be on the grace that will be brought to me—not now, though I live by grace now—but the exceedingly huge amount of grace to come at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

I realized I needed to do what I could do and stop wasting my energy longing for what I didn't have. I decided I needed to completely reroute my current unbiblical thinking and reacting pattern in this situation. And when I changed this, everything else changed too.

It started with conscience thinking. I decided to think differently. I made the decision that when I sat on the couch, instead of waiting for Todd to think I was the most interesting woman in the world, I would read my Bible and seek the Lord. I

may not always have my husband's undivided attention, but I can have God's attention, which is like trading a few cubic zirconium stones for a 1,000carat diamond.

SETTING THE MIND ON THINGS ABOVE

I believe one biblical concept is key to keeping our minds focused on what is true, without replaying the hard times of our lives or thinking on any other unprofitable thing. 1 Peter 1:13 says, “Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

I love this verse so much that I’ve put it on the wall above our kitchen table. It’s far too easy for me to hope in something other than that grace which will come to me when Jesus returns. I need the reminder to put my hope— to put my expectation, my anticipation, the source of my joy and excitement—completely on God’s grace toward me at Christ’s appearing.

You see, this world is full of distractions that can take our mind, our thoughts, and our focus off the things of God. We may even be thinking about things that pertain to God—ministry, worship, Bible study—we may think of those events without actually thinking of God Himself. We can easily be excited about something that has to do with being a Christian without having our hope on Christ’s return.

If I were coming over to your house for dinner, and you had spent the whole day cooking and getting things ready, and when I arrived at your house, imagine if I could not take my eyes off the

beautiful plates you planned to serve dinner on.

Imagine if I was so excited by the plates that while everyone else was eating, I was writing down where I could buy the plates and the directions to the store where you bought the plates. And instead of enjoying the food and your company—the real reason to be excited—I was completely preoccupied by the plates.

And when dinner was over, imagine if I left hungry because my focus was so misplaced. I would be hungry because I couldn't enjoy or pay attention to what was truly important.

HOPING IN CHRIST

When we neglect to put our hope on the return of Jesus, we become like guests invited to a feast who foolishly preoccupy themselves with plates. Since Peter tells us to fix our hope completely on the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, it's important for us to have some understanding of the return of Christ. I think there is a lot of vagueness in general on this subject. I think many people don't understand exactly why the return of Christ is so important that ALL our hope should be given completely to this one event. And without knowing why the return of Christ is important, we as wives miss out on hoping in Christ's return.

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope

fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:23).

I want us to notice three important points in these verses.

1) Part of the significance of Jesus appearing is that we will be like Him when He appears.

What remains of our sinful nature will be exchanged for a glorified body and the very nature of Christ Himself. We will put on incorruption and take on the attributes of Christ. Our new bodies will not die, will not sin or be dishonored by sin, and will not be weak and limited by weakness. Becoming like Christ at His return is the ultimate prize of our earthly lives.

2) When Jesus appears, we will see Him just as He is.

We walk by faith now. But at the return of Christ, we will see exactly Whom we have believed. We will see Jesus with our own eyes!

3) When we have this hope, it causes us to purify ourselves, because Christ is pure.

We are promised that if our hope is on the return of Christ and our being made like him—this hope, this thought in our minds, this meditation—will work within us and purify us. Hoping for the day when we are purified and made like Christ will cause us to be more and more like Christ now.

And this is why we must fix our hope completely on the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus. There are going to be a lot of things in life that will fight brutally for your attention, but one thought should consume you, and that is your hope of becoming like Christ at His return.

Because all those other things you might desire—your husband to pay more attention to you, more money, a beautiful home, whatever it is—those things will not prepare you for the return of Christ.

What will prepare you for Christ's return is remembering that God is soon bringing grace to you. There is a feast of grace awaiting you, when Jesus is revealed from heaven. And so often we are caught up looking at the plates. And we go through life hungry, because we are not eating, we are not partaking of our true hope, which is Christ revealed in us, our hope of glory.

GETTING READY FOR THE LIFE TO COME

There are going to be people who are preoccupied with this life, who set their mind on the things of this life, and when Christ returns, they will not be ready. If you read this book and your marriage is revolutionized, and your husband falls madly in love with you, but you still do not long for the return of Christ, what will a good marriage matter when you die and stand before God?

That should be a very sobering thought.

God wants us to be ready for his return. He wants us to long for His coming, so that His return would be our greatest desire in

life, and that being like Christ and seeing Him as He is would be our ultimate goal.

Paul said in Philippians 3:7-11:

“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

Paul’s ultimate goal was to arrive in heaven in the likeness of Jesus. Paul gave up everything for his hope of being like Christ.

Now, I’m definitely not losing sight of those things we as wives must do. While I know we must focus on our homes, our children, our responsibilities, our jobs, and every other responsibility that is specific to our lives, in the midst of these we must still hold the return of Jesus as our greatest desire, because it’s a huge privilege to be counted as one who will receive God’s grace at His return.

And guess what? As you fix your hope on the grace to come, you will purify yourself, which will in turn clean up any thoughts

that should never be in your mind.

In Colossians 3:1-4, we learn that if we are believers, we need to set our minds on things above, because when Christ is revealed, we will be revealed with Him in glory. Our thoughts need to be continually directed toward this idea of being revealed with Christ in glory.

This means we don't let ourselves get caught up in only thinking of things in this life, but we make a conscious effort—and we keep at it constantly—to think of things that are above.

MAKE THIS LIFE MATTER

I want this life to count. I don't want to get to heaven and realize that I spent my life trying to get rich or make my earthly body look beautiful and that my short time on earth was wasted, completely squandered and lost forever. I want my hope to be where God says it needs to be so that my life matters. And He tells me that my consuming thought needs to be on His return!

You know, after all these years are over and I stand before God, the only thing that will matter is what happens on that Day. More than anything, I just want God to be well pleased with my life.

Did you know there is a special crown that God is going to give everyone who longs for His return? (2 Timothy 4:8).

You need to ask yourself, "Do I long for the appearing of Christ? Is my desire in life to be made like Christ at His return?"

Make sure that your motives and your desires are pleasing in God's sight, because He knows what you really want in life—

whether you long for His appearing or whether you long for something else.

I think one of the biggest reasons we don't long for the appearing of Christ more is because we are too preoccupied with ourselves. We are too preoccupied with what people think of us right now. We are too preoccupied with how things are going in life right now. And this preoccupation makes us think that these things are somehow the most important things, when they're not.

Because God knows every detail of your life, if He tells you to concentrate your thoughts on longing for His return, He knows this is absolutely for your good and your benefit.

Make sure you're not worried about what might happen if you spent less time worrying, or less time replaying certain words or regrets in your mind another 50 times. Nothing bad will happen if you spend more time looking toward the return of Christ and less time thinking about the unchangeable past. I guarantee it. It will only make things better, much better.

It's not just that we think about the return of Christ, but that we LONG for it: It means our hopes and our deepest desires are centered on His coming.

And far too many Christians have missed this. We do a lot of things to be godly, and we miss the one thing God tells us to do: Put your hope entirely on His return and He will use that hope within you to purify you and make you like Christ. This hope is God's tool to sanctify you.

I would venture to say that this is one of the most important things I could possibly remind you of. Do you want God to help you control your thoughts? Do you desperately need God's favor

in your life? Then LONG for Him. Long for the grace He will bring you when you become like Christ.

HOW TO LONG FOR JESUS

Even though we haven't seen Christ yet, and we can't completely grasp what it means to long for His coming, we can still say like Job:

“As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!” (Job 19:25-27).

What really strikes me about this verse is the intensity of Job's longing for seeing Jesus. As hard as it is to really imagine what exactly heaven will be like, we can still keep our hearts focused on it by just meditating on the words of Scripture.

When I put my hope on the grace to come, I tell myself something like, “Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. This life is just a vapor. Grace is coming to me. This trial (or whatever it is) is going to fade away when Jesus returns. What do I truly want in this life? I want to attain the grace to be brought at the return of Jesus!”

I will think those thoughts. Whether I understand them fully or not, I will meditate and fill my heart and mind with WORDS that

are true, because the words we continually think lead to emotions and actions and deeper understanding.

God wants you to love Him with your mind by thinking of Him. I know that anytime I lose sight of our hope of glory, it's because I've become too consumed with something happening at the present time.

The Bible says in Romans 8:18, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." While it's easy to focus on our trials and let them consume us, we must never forget that these difficulties are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed.

THE PERFECT LIFE AWAITS

You can't expect things to be perfect on earth, because this is not where God tells us to put our hope. He tells us to put our hope on the time when things will be perfect. You can't experience freedom from frustration when you're obsessed with only the things of this life. Your life will frustrate you because this is not heaven yet. This is the vapor, the quick time that determines your perfect life forever.

If you are overwhelmed with problems in your marriage or with your husband, have you lost sight of the greatness of the coming glory? As a wife, if my thoughts are on Jesus and His return, then I won't be focused on my husband or his problems. I'm not going to be angry if Todd is preoccupied with something other than me. And I'm not going to make him the source of my

hope and fulfillment, because I will have already put my hope on Christ.

Here is another way to think about this. If your mortgage or rent was late, but you had just won ten million dollars, and it was only a matter of hours before the money was to be deposited into your bank account, would you feel stressed out and overwhelmed about the rent? Or would you have peace, knowing that the coming ten million dollars could not compare with the late rent?

Why in the world would anyone be stressed out about paying the rent if they were about to receive far more money than they could possibly need? If we don't keep sight of the greatness of the glory that is to be revealed to us and in us, then we are going to get discouraged by everything that doesn't go the way we want. But when we remember that everything is going to be made perfect sooner than we realize, it helps us keep perspective when things go wrong now.

That is why my hope is not in this present world. It's not the things I see. Those things are perishing, and those things will fail me. What gives me hope is my future with Christ! It's eternity in glory with a new nature and the marriage supper of the Lamb and fellowship with Christians for all eternity without sin—without driving home after a night of fellowship and kicking myself for something dumb I said. It's all the sweetness of fellowship without any of the feelings of being a failure, times a million.

LIVE TO HONOR CHRIST

And I know that there is so much more to look forward to in heaven that I don't even know about. Keep your hope on your perfect life to come. I want you to tell yourself, "My hope is on the grace to be brought to me at the revelation of Jesus." And I want you to find so much joy through believing that glory awaits you. This life is just the rent money for a month. Eternity is the ten million dollars.

Every time you do the dishes or stand at your stove, I want you to remember that Jesus will be appearing soon, and His glory will be revealed, and you will see your Savior's face. And I want this thought to burn through your heart, to quicken your spirit, to fill you with excitement, and to make you long for His appearing, so that you will say like Job, "I will see God's face with my own eyes. My heart faints within me!" (Job 19:27). And I want you to keep your hope fixed on things above, so that you find peace and rest in God's promise of future glory, so that God will purify your heart and your mind through this hope of heaven.

• Chapter Five Key Points

- How you think can potentially affect your entire life.
- Reroute your thoughts away from longing for what you don't have, and instead use your energy doing what you can do.
- God tells you to put your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus returns.
- Part of the reason we hope in the return of Christ is that we will be like Him when we see Him as He is, which includes receiving incorruptible bodies.
- When we hope in Christ, this very hope purifies us and makes us more like Jesus now.
- Longing for the return of Christ helps us be ready when He comes, and it makes us act in such a way that our lives will count for eternity.
- Just because you are preoccupied with something does not mean it is important.
- Fill your mind with words that are true, because the words you continually think lead to emotions and actions and deeper understanding.

- When your hope is placed on Jesus, you're not going to be overwhelmed with despair when your husband falls short, because you haven't placed your hope on your husband to begin with.

Chapter 21: Conclusion

You have more influence over the condition of your marriage than you may realize. Sometimes a wife may think, “If only I were more beautiful, my husband would love me and cherish me more. If I were more attractive (thinner, taller, fuller hair, smaller nose, etc.), he would want to spend time with me more, but these are not the things that make a husband love and cherish and admire his wife.

Rather, it’s your love for him, your service to him, your desire to please him, and your happiness with him that will make you far more beautiful in his eyes than if you lost those extra 10 pounds or kept your nails perfectly manicured.

You were given multiple action steps throughout this book. To help you remember a few of those assignments, here is a very brief list to review on a regular basis.

- **Treat your husband like he is already everything you want him to be.**

- **Be a wife who is forgiving and gracious, who doesn’t hold onto grudges and resentment.**

- **Tell your husband daily at least one thing about him or that he does that you are thankful for.**

- **Keep giving your heart to your husband and loving him, because however you feel toward your husband is a mirror, reflecting back how he will feel toward you.**

- **Be a responsible manager of the home, keeping the house clean, and staying on top of what your husband needs you to do.**

- **Pray every day that you will fall more deeply in love with your husband, and that he will be blessed.**

- **React to offenses with patience and kindness.**

- **Every time you see your husband, give him a big, genuine, “I am so happy to see you!” smile.**

Appendix 1: 10 Daily Reminders to Keep Love Alive

Get the printable page of this list at
www.katiehoffman.org/dailyreminders/



"Am I doing these things daily?"

- 1. Being understanding? Giving my husband time and space to relax, to have his own hobbies and freedom?**
- 2. Keeping the house clean and serving my husband? Managing my home well, including diligently training and teaching our children?**

- 3. Speaking my appreciation of my husband and all he does, including complimenting him, at least 3 times a day?**
- 4. Not talking about money and other stressful subjects (unless absolutely necessary)?**
- 5. Being cheerful and sweet every time I see or talk to my husband?**
- 6. Being affectionate, hugging, kissing, and massaging him?**
- 7. Talking highly of him to others?**
- 8. Pleasing my husband with my appearance?**
- 9. Being reverent?**
- 10. Entrusting my husband to God, and knowing that God is on the throne even in the hard times? Being diligent in prayer?**

Appendix 2: God's Purpose in Marriage

Your marriage relationship plays a powerful role in your children's lives. The question then becomes, what was God seeking when He instituted marriage? What did God want when He joined you with your husband? According to Malachi 2:13-15, the answer is godly children. God declares to fathers His purpose for marriage. Look carefully at these verses:

You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. But you say, "Why does He not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Did He not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? **And what was the one God seeking? Godly**

offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.

It's God's purpose for you to raise children with godly character. Marriage is not just for you—God wants something from your marriage—He wants you to raise children

who will grow up to follow Him, love Him, and obey Him. It's part of why God calls Christians to get married and have kids—so they can raise up a generation who will love and serve God with all their hearts.

Which brings us to the next question: How is your marriage affecting your kids? Are they developing into enjoyable people because of your training and instruction? Are they learning what it takes to make their lives have meaning? Are they distancing themselves from you as they grow older, or are they seeking your opinion because they know you are wise and they want you to be like you?

If you are looking for a resource to help, I have written a companion book called, "When a Mother Follows Christ." This book reveals how we as mothers can train their children to be "godly offspring," and thus fulfill their calling as husband and wife, according to Malachi 2.

While no one can make perfect kids, it's easy to have great kids who will bring you delight and not shame as they grow older. Learn how to develop godly character in your children, be an example for them to follow, and how a few simple, easy changes can make a huge difference in your children's attitudes and actions.

You will learn:

- *How to teach your children to willingly do what you ask the first time-which will reduce anger and frustration

- *What the Bible says is key to raising kids who will not bring you shame as they grow older

- *How to actively train your children so they are a source of delight to you and others

- *How to be an example for your children to follow

- *Why character is key to preventing sibling rivalry, and how you can develop godly character in your children

- *How to be connected to your children so they will want to do what you say, even as they grow up

- *Practical ways to stop sibling rivalry in its tracks

- *One easy way to keep your kids out of trouble

- *The one thing that will keep your kids from resisting you when you try to train them

- *The very simple, very easy thing I do that completely changes

the atmosphere of our home

*How changing one thing made a huge difference in the way my children treat me and others-which makes them much more attentive and respectful

*How to teach your children the most important thing they will ever learn-how to have a relationship with Jesus as their Savior

See the book on Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/Mother-Follows-Christ-Katie-Hoffman/dp/0978856414/>

I hope you will be blessed! 😊

Special Report: How to motivate your husband toward what you want or need with just ONE SUPER POWERFUL PHRASE

Have you ever had times in your marriage when you can't get your husband to do something you want? And you almost want to beat your head on the wall in frustration?

Here is one phrase I've used when I REALLY want something from my husband, and nothing else is working. It has only seven words.

But I save it for the most crucial requests. Meaning, I only use it about twice a year so it doesn't lose any power.

Seven. It's remarkable how effective seven words can be.

I use these seven words followed by request when I need my husband to really **pay attention** to what I need. I think somehow the desire these words produce is hard wired deep into men, and when they hear this from their wives, they take the request FAR more seriously.

So this phrase I'm about to tell you will hopefully solve that

dilemma.

But, let me first give you a few warnings. First off, there are some things men just won't do, and nothing you say will change that.

There are clothes my husband just won't wear. He thinks he has the right—being a grown man and all—to not wear certain shirts if he hates them.

If I say, "Please wear this shirt."

I'll get a matter of fact, "No thanks."

Or if I ask, "Please come with me to my friend's (whom you've never met) parent's accountant's small backyard

BBQ."

I get another, very firm, NO.

Now, you might actually get both those requests with this phrase.

It really is that awesome.

I just don't want you to think it works miracles. It can. Just don't be disappointed if it doesn't.

Alright, drum roll please...

Here are the magic words, to be used in a super sweet voice before in important request...

"It makes me so happy when you..."

Or

"It would make me so happy if you would..."

I've used this successfully multiple times to get things that begging won't get me. There was something recently (clothing related) that my husband was doing that was KILLING me. At first, I thought my husband would just naturally stop this horrible

habit. Nope.

After about two weeks of asking politely and sometimes just asking in a frustrated way, I finally pulled out my secret weapon.

“Babe, it would make me so happy if you...”

Response...“Really? It means that much to you?” (Um... obviously weeks of making small comments does not communicate that something means a lot to me.)

He then says, “Okay, I won’t... anymore, if it makes you that happy.”

And then I make a point to keep saying, “I am so happy that you...”

And with that, you just learned a trick that might just work miracles. Try it and you might be shocked to see just how much this little sentence can get you. Just use it sparingly.

Well—I really don’t know if you can use it profusely. I’ve never tried because I don’t want to risk losing one of my “secret weapons.”

Our goal is not to manipulate or make our husbands do anything, but rather, these words we cause them to realize how important this particular issue is to us. Sometimes we may feel so strongly about something, but our husbands may not realize what a big deal it is. By letting them know they can easily make us happy, we better communicate what we are asking for, and in asking lies the secret to receiving.