

# Your Husband Longs for These 5 Life-Giving Things From You

So many people look at marriage as a way to get their own needs met. In a godly, healthy marriage you will have many needs met. But as an adult, as a believer and as a wife, you will be much happier, more satisfied and find more success in your marriage if you focus more of your efforts on what your husband needs from you rather than first seeking to get your own needs met.

Your husband is responsible for his own behavior. Always. But as his wife, you have much more influence and “power” in your relationship than you probably realize. You are fully equal to your husband in the sight of God, but He has given you a role and responsibility in your husband’s life that is unique.

For your own sake, pay attention to these five things your husband needs from you. These are needs that no one else can meet to the degree that you as his wife can. Meeting some of these needs may feel unnatural to you, but just do it. Don’t worry about doing it perfectly. But if you proactively seek to understand and meet these needs in your husband, you can be the catalyst God uses to support him in becoming the man God created him to be.

## 1. **Honor and Respect**

A man thrives on honor and respect. He will gravitate to the place where he is most honored and respected whether at work or at home. This does not mean you refuse to see his faults, but it means you look for the best in him and affirm all that is good. Just as you don’t want him to give you conditional love, don’t give him conditional respect. Offer it as a gift, generously. He is likely to do more of any behavior you appreciate and affirm.

You show him respect by honoring his opinion, following his leadership, covering his faults, and allowing him to fail. You are free to—and should—speak up when you see him going in a “wrong” or dangerous direction, but allow God to be the enforcer. Speak well of him in front of others. Be his biggest cheerleader. Magnify his good qualities. Treat him at a level above what you may think he deserves, and he is likely to do all he can to live up to that.

(If there is abuse going on, take it seriously. Get some help. You can do that even while respecting your husband.)

## **2. Affirm His Sexual Nature**

No, you don't have to say yes every time your husband wants sex. This is about so much more than frequency. His sexuality is one of the primary ways your husband experiences and expresses his masculinity. He needs you to embrace and affirm his sexual nature; that's the way God made him. He needs you to accept your role as the object of his sexual desires. Simply “doing your duty” sexually doesn't cut it; your husband feels successful when you are satisfied, when you enjoy yourself, when you show that you desire him. Actively pursue intimacy with him.

A man's sexual needs often get a bad reputation because of how often they have been distorted. Remember, your husband is *always* responsible for his own behavior. But under God you, as his wife, can support and affirm who God made him to be, including sexually. Stretch yourself. Take a mental step toward your husband, and follow it up. Be more sexual than you feel. Have fun. Enjoy yourself. It will keep drawing your husband back to you.

## **3. Create a Home**

This has nothing to do with whether or not you work outside the home, or what level of gifting and desire you have in cooking, cleaning or decorating. Your husband needs to be an

equal partner in home responsibilities. But your husband needs you to be the architect of the home environment. He needs to have a place to come home to, regardless of how humble the physical surroundings.

Think through what your husband's experience is like when he comes home. Is it a place he wants to be? Is he safe there? Is the fragrance of your attitude and demeanor appealing? Does he feel as though home is where he belongs? Although the physical environment has an influence, much more important is the sense of rest, of being welcomed, of safety, of being loved, valued and understood.

#### **4. Be His Friend**

You're not your husband's mother or his child. He needs you to be his helpmeet, his partner, his friend. If you find yourself criticizing, micro-managing, belittling, controlling, begging, demanding or expecting him to "fix" you, quit it. He will end up resenting you if you play his mother, and he will not respect or desire you if you play his child.

Enter his world. Show interest in what interests him. Stretch yourself to understand things he does or values. Ask questions, join him in some activity he enjoys, and choose to find joy in doing things together. Many men will feel much more motivated to communicate from their heart when they are engaging in some enjoyable activity with their best friend—you.

#### **5. Pray for Him**

Your influence on your husband is never greater than when you are on your knees. Countless men have been drawn to God through a praying wife. More than your words to your husband, your words to God about him and for him will make a difference.

Don't pray only that God change him, although you are free to

do that. Also pray for God to show you who He needs you to be to your husband at this season of your marriage. Ask Him to create such an inviting fragrance through you that your husband can't help but respond. Your sensitivity to the Spirit's work in your life, your husband's life, and your marriage can make you an indispensable partner in what God is seeking to do.

**Dr. Carol Peters-Tanksley** is both a board-certified OB-Gyn physician and an ordained Doctor of Ministry. As an author and speaker, she loves helping people discover the **Fully Alive** kind of life that Jesus came to bring us. Visit her website at

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## How Driving a Porsche Revealed the Gospel to This Pastor's Wife

Guess what happened a few days ago? Me and my man in a hot little Porsche. You know—the salaries of a preacher and a part-time teacher. That's how we roll.

Or maybe we have generous friends who let us play with their very nice toy for the day.

What you need to know is that in my mind I was looking like one of those beautiful women in an Elvis movie as we zipped through Glacier National Park in a sports car, but then I saw the photo and realized I wasn't quite pulling off what I had going in my imagination. More like frumpy, 48-year-old schoolteacher in a dorky-looking hat. But I do feel better when I remember the nice mom from Colorado who agreed to take

our picture. She handed me the camera and said, "I can't tell if it's a good picture, because I don't have my glasses on." We laughed, and I wonder now if, on the inside, she ever pretends she's a beautiful actress in an Elvis movie.

Anyway, we spent the perfect summer day driving Going to The Sun Road, all the way to the tip-top of Glacier. At one point, we were slowed down by construction. As we drove past the woman holding the "slow" sign, she looked at us in our little convertible and said, "Fun!" And she just kept shouting as we drove past, "Fun! Fun! Fun!"

Yes, ma'am. All kinds of fun.

Top down and the breeze blowing. The smell of pine trees refreshed our souls. And I've never seen the peaks of Glacier towering *over* my head. (Forever now I will carry a little sorrow when I drive through the park enclosed in a plain ol' sedan.)

Somewhere along the drive, I thought, *Now, this is the gospel.*

Two people living the good life, way above their paygrade and only because of a generous benefactor.

It takes my mind to Jesus' words in John 3:16:

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

During our drive through the park, I kept thinking, "Yeah, this is a dream. We do not deserve to be in this car."

Could be that I'll forevermore associate John 3:16 with our day in the red convertible. I don't deserve that kind of love, that kind of rescue, that kind of promise.

Knowing Jesus means that in our hearts, we become Porsche

people: Power when you need it. Engine in the center so you can make tight turns. Great view of life. Feel the wind. All of it unearned.

You know that's right. {eoa}

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## **2 Vital Questions to Ask God Instead of Wallowing in 'Why?'**

The atmosphere in the auditorium was heavy that day at the seminar I attended with about 200 women from all over the United States.

The speaker had shared with us that when difficult circumstances arise, God will reveal to us the reason He allowed that circumstance in our lives. He then sent us back to our rooms with an assignment to recall a difficult situation we'd encountered and then ask God to reveal the reason behind it.

He couldn't possibly have predicted what could arise from such an assignment.

After a period of time, we returned to the auditorium where we shared our experiences. And then a girl stood up and, crying, said that God hadn't revealed to her why He allowed a man to rape her.

As much as the speaker tried to explain to her what the answer could possibly be, he didn't succeed. And the reason for that is this:

**If you want the right answer, you must start by asking the right question.**

When we lose someone close to us, when we get laid off of our job, when financial reversals send life as we know it into a tailspin, when our children make choices that go against everything we taught them was moral and right, when natural disaster rips away from us everything we own, when a drunk driver hits our car and leaves us injured for life, we are tempted to ask, "Why God? Why me?"

After losing everything except his wife and home, Job succumbed to this temptation in Job 31. He listed all of the good things he had done, as if God only allows good things to happen to us when we do good things to others.

That would be nice, but it's not the way life goes. In fact, bad things do happen to good people (let us remember Romans 3:10—no one is truly good or righteous apart from the blood of Jesus), and good things happen to bad people.

Soon God finally interrupts the dialogue between Job and his so-called friends in chapter 38 to remind Job of his proper place. Job became angry when he didn't get an answer to his question, "Why?" Why me? Why didn't God protect me? Why is God against me? Why must I suffer like this?

And we will never receive an answer to questions such as those, because God doesn't owe us an answer. He is Almighty God. He owes no man anything.

And this is where the speaker at that conference went wrong. He gave us the impression that God owed us an answer to why we must suffer.

**If the right question isn't why, what should we ask instead?**

### **1. What?**

"God, what do you want to teach me from this situation?" "What

do you want to do in me through this situation?”

## 2. How?

“God, how do you want me to respond in this situation?” How can I honor You through this?”

You see, rather than the question “Why?” that accuses God, the questions “What?” and “How?” open our hearts to God.

When we choose to open our hearts to God in these difficult situations, He can do something wonderful in the end so that through our lives and through the difficult situation, He is glorified.

***This post was inspired by the book: Grieving with Hope by Samuel J. Hodges***

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## 5 Damaging Messages You May

# Be Sending Your Child Without Realizing It

Don't let this be your story.

Recently it was my privilege to teach older teenagers and young adults about the Eight Great Smarts. As with other groups, I could tell they were encouraged to discover that they are smarter than they thought they were and that the way they're smart is God's choice.

During some question and answer time, one young man stayed back. He began, "What could my friend do ...". The whole time I listened and then answered him, I wondered if the question was actually about him. Near the end, tears in his eyes confirmed it most likely was. I didn't let on that I drew that conclusion.

What did he want to know? "What could my friend do who is very music-smart and loves being music-smart, but has a dad who doesn't care about it at all?"

I encouraged him to affirm his friend's musical gifts and desires. Peer support matters. I talked about his friend's need to honor his dad even though he didn't value this way his son was smart. I encouraged him to stand up for himself when he could, while still respecting his father.

This young man knew about my musical abilities and that they remained a hobby and joy for me and not a career pursuit. So, I talked about that. We talked about careers and how important it would be for this friend to find fulfillment and success even if he didn't feel free to pursue music because of his dad's opinion.

My heart was heavy and concentrating wasn't easy. One of my goals in answering was that this young man would believe in

his ability (or help his friend believe in his ability) even if the dad dismissed it. This was about identity and God's choice in designing him/the friend. It was no small question.

Also, because I sensed that at least part of the question was about how this friend could connect with his dad, we talked about finding something they have in common and bonding over that. I suggested that as they did things together and had fun together, his friend wouldn't feel as much pain from the sting of rejection. He had a strong reaction to this idea. I believe his pain was deep.

When our children don't think we value how they are smart,

- they may question whether we value them,
- they may work to develop a skill they think we value, but resent it the entire time,
- they may choose not to develop other gifts and talents because they feel hopeless,
- they may reject how God made them smart,
- they may question whether God did a good thing making them the way He did
- and ...

What would you add?

What would you say to children you know who are concerned that their parents don't value the way they're smart?

If I asked your children whether you value the way they're smart, what might they say? What if I gave them a scale of 1-10 with 10 meaning "highly value"? What score might you get? What could you do to raise the score?

What if we had your children rate themselves? Do they "highly value" the way God made them smart or not? How can you talk about this with them? When will you? {eoa}

**Dr. Kathy Koch** is the author of *Screens & Teens: Connecting*

with Our Kids in A Wireless World.

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# Move From Lack to Abundance—Start With Cultivating This Attitude

Four years ago, I walked into my new Spanish room —with nothing.

I knew Spanish and I knew teaching, but I had never put the two together until that day in August. Searching the room, I found nothing but a few games and two sets of outdated textbooks. So I started writing curriculum and building my classroom from scratch.

Today I sat back and admired six newly completed and substantial stacks of notecards. On each card is written one teaching activity. A lot of work went into accumulating these ideas, but even more prayer was involved.

Begging prayers.

“God help me,” prayers.

So I stared at those stacks of cards, and then I bowed my head to say a long prayer of thanks.

James gives us this fact:

*Every good and perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights . . . (James 1:17a).*

Every good teaching idea has come straight from above. I have

asked God hundreds of times if he would please help me become an outstanding teacher, and I know every creative game and teaching tool in those stack of note cards is his response to me.

Good and perfect gifts from the Father can stack up one at a time, like note cards and take a person from having nothing to having a lot of somethings.

I am coming to understand that God makes a point of regularly putting his people in positions where they have inadequate resources to live. He does this. On purpose. Here's your rock. Here's your hard place.

When we have empty hands and can see that what we have is a whole lot of nothin', it should cause us to come asking for help in a desperate, clamoring way. Then the Lord opens his hands—his very full, resourceful, generous hands. That's when our story gets good.

King David sings to the Lord:

*"You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing" (Ps. 145:16).*

So let's talk about that area of your life where you are completely lacking—maybe financially or in a relationship or in the knowledge of how to do something. Could I convince you to trade in your frustration and anxiety for prayer and hopeful expectation?

Open up those empty hands of yours and ask for help. Add to that your own elbow grease where you know you need to do your part. Then watch how God will open his hands and give you stacks and stacks of exactly what you need for your situation.

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# 5 Godly Things to Do About Your Spouse's Destructive Behavior

Your spouse's bad behavior can make your life seem as though it's falling apart. Your psyche is stretched to the limit, and you're not sure how much longer you can survive if things don't change. You could really use some concrete ways to move forward or at least a clear way to think about things.

I hear from spouses every day:

"My husband refuses to get help for his gambling and substance abuse. He won't even acknowledge he has a problem."

"My wife is only after me for my money and spends irresponsibly. She refuses to engage in intimacy or conversation."

"My husband has had a mistress for several years. He keeps promising to cut things off with her, but he's back with her again."

"I'm always walking on eggshells around my husband. I never know what will cause him to fly into a rage. I live in fear."

You've tried to change your spouse—unsuccessfully. You've threatened, cried, put up with, tried to let it go, ignored, waited and anything else you can think of. Perhaps you've tried to get professional help and read anything you can find on the subject. You've prayed and prayed, and things are still the same. Am I stuck with this miserable marriage forever? Is this bad enough for a divorce? Why doesn't God fix my marriage when I keep asking Him to?

If you want the same results, keep doing the same thing. If you don't, it's time for a change. Time for you to change.

Feeling emotional, powerless and desperate is understandable. But decisions made from that mindset almost never result in a good outcome.

No marriage is perfect. You and your spouse are both sinners. However, thoughtfully working through the following five areas will provide a framework for you to move forward.

## **1. Get Honest**

Not emotional-honest. What is your spouse doing, really? How is it affecting you? How is it affecting others, such as any children involved? Have you been enabling your spouse's bad behavior in any way? Is your spouse basically a person of good will who is struggling with a specific problem, or do they have an evil heart? Is their heart open in any way, or is it completely hard and closed?

The state of your spouse's heart is often the most critical question of all and not always an easy one to discern. You may need to get some outside perspective from a trusted Christian friend or professional counselor. You may need to spend some time in prayer, seeking God's perspective on the situation.

## **2. Get Out of the Way**

"Behaving badly" and "not meeting my needs" are two very different things. Marriage is not primarily about your happiness; it's about learning to love well. If you're emotional, frustrated or angry because your spouse isn't communicating well, keeps refusing sex or is not as spiritual as you would like, your relationship may need some serious work. But that is very different from them being destructive.

Put your own needs aside, and let your emotions cool down. Although your feelings are important, they will not form the

basis for wise decisions. If he/she is engaging in addiction, abuse, pornography, infidelity or is otherwise clearly being destructive, your spouse's bad behavior is the issue, not your unhappiness.

### **3. Care Enough to Confront**

If your spouse is destroying themselves or the marriage, you are not loving them by ignoring the situation. Only your spouse and God working together can change their behavior, but that does not mean you are powerless. There are many ways to confront; you may need to use several.

If your spouse's heart seems open at all, begin with a conversation. Don't blame them; talk about the behavior, the problem. If you're enabling them in any way, stop! If you or others are in danger, you may need to remove yourself to a safe place before confronting. You can write your spouse a letter. You can take a trusted friend, pastor or counselor with you as you confront. Such interventions are well known as an option for substance abusers; the same principle applies for any bad behavior.

### **4. Set Healthy Boundaries**

It's a mistake to believe there are no boundaries in a healthy marriage. If your spouse has an open heart, they may respond to healthy boundaries. Such boundaries could include such things as requiring marriage counseling, anger therapy, rehab for substance abuse, an accountability group or partner, software/TV/internet controls.

Setting healthy boundaries includes being prepared to follow through with action if your spouse does not do what is required. You have choices in what actions you take. Your position should be something like this: "For our relationship to continue you will need to do ... If you do not, then I will ..." Simple, clear, firm, unemotional. There's more on these ideas in *Boundaries in Marriage*.

## 5. Care for Your Own Heart

You get worn out physically, emotionally and spiritually when your spouse is behaving badly. You need to proactively get filled up again regularly. Take care of your body with healthy food, rest and exercise. You'll make better decisions when you do. Spend time with healthy godly friends who can speak positive things into your life. Read or listen to uplifting encouraging books, podcasts and other media.

And most of all keep seeking God's perspective on your own heart, your spouse's heart and your marriage. Don't stop praying. If your marriage fails anyway, you will most certainly need His grace to make it through. And if He calls you to stay, you will need His wisdom and courage to be the catalyst for Him to use in restoring your spouse and your marriage.

Your spouse's bad behavior should spur you to take action. My prayer is that your action will be the means God uses to bring a new level of healing and growth to both you and your spouse.

*Reprinted with permission from Dr. Carol's blog. Dr. Carol Peters-Tanksley is an OB-GYN, minister, author and speaker.*

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## 3 Practical Ways to Raise Your Children Into Leaders

There are numerous programs available geared toward developing dynamic leaders, and some can be beneficial. Although I have helped develop many leaders during my career as a university teacher, IHOPKC's marketplace ministry leader and as a coach, my most valuable lessons about developing leaders have come

from God. As He entrusted my husband and me with two daughters to love, raise and usher from babyhood to adulthood, I have learned invaluable lessons in leadership from being their mother.

Over the years, people have asked how we raised our daughters to become such effective communicators and leaders in their lives and in their careers, despite life's hardships.

You may never feel fully qualified to be a parent or a leader of others. The weight of shaping another life is huge! We certainly didn't know what we were doing. In desperation, we latched onto this verse early in our parenting days: "Look, children are a gift of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is a reward" (Ps. 127:3).

Since God gave us gifts in the form of human lives to develop, we expected He would show us how. And He did.

In this blog, I will unpack three keys to raising up courageous leaders based on experiences we have had both at home and professionally—but mostly at home.

## **1. Develop Courageous Leaders in Real-time; Life Lessons Speak**

Include young leaders as you go about your life. They are watching and listening.

Whether you are a parent, a teacher, a youth minister, a pastor, a community mentor, a worker in the church or a business owner, you can be sure potential young leaders are being influenced by your life. The first question to ask is, "What does my life and example say about how to make a difference in the world?"

One day, I became keenly aware that my children were being molded by what I said and what I did. I was working at Brazosport College in Lake Jackson, Texas, at the time, and

our young girls often overheard me conducting business as a teacher and leader of business programs. As children do, they would dress up like Mom, put on my pumps, confiscate some lipstick from my bathroom and set up their offices at the kitchen table, complete with play phone, assorted papers and a stapler.

One day I overheard our youngest daughter pick up her phone and answer.

*"Businessport College. How can I help you?"*

*"Oh, I see ..."*

*"Well ... "*

*"Let's just 'pay' about that."*

The r's weren't rolling just yet at the age of 3, but more importantly, she had the courage and confidence to pray with her "team member" who had a problem because she had heard Mom do it.

The power of example—a life lived out loud—speaks volumes, beyond any parenting or leadership book or seminar, molding young leaders around us who are forming opinions, receiving impressions and drawing conclusions about life and all the possibilities.

We often held small groups in our home in which our own daughters would be included. They overheard discussions, prayers and mentoring conversations. Now we see our grown daughters exercising the wisdom of leadership, first learned as children, in their lives and work as communication/training professionals today.

These lessons apply to our teams, churches and work. I make it a practice to include emerging leaders in settings where they could observe leadership in action, complete projects that stretched their skills and learn in real-time.

## **2. Identify Opportunities to Make a Difference; Set Goals**

Those who understand that they can affect outcomes are prone to lead with a courage that overcomes circumstances.

One of the most important lessons any young leader needs to experience is the power of recognizing an opportunity and doing something productive to make a difference.

When our oldest daughter needed money beyond her allowance for a special purchase, instead of telling her to wait until the next month, we helped her set a goal for the extra income. Then we showed her how to figure out how many extra hours of babysitting she would need. Together we prayed for the jobs to come in. The phone started ringing, her eyes lit up and she not only knew God answered her prayer, but she learned a lifelong principle of goal-setting with prayer.

I teach goal-setting as a basic life skill for leaders at every age; many times even a seasoned leader needs to go back to the basics of identifying opportunity, making a plan and creating a solution.

The difference between a visionary and a leader is that while a visionary dreams dreams, a leader executes the vision. Vision without implementation is exhausting: "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life" (Prov. 13:12).

We are living in a time where the misuse of technology threatens to rob our young leaders of creative thinking and problem-solving experience by substituting reality with a make-believe world of movies, games, internet searching and other distractions.

The battle over the destiny of a life is real, and the enemy will employ any and all tactics to separate us from the belief that our children have a destiny and that we can shape

outcomes with God. The developing leader learns to access technology merely as a tool and a valued resource but to reach for God as the source of all wisdom and understanding.

Empowering young leaders to move a goal or a dream into action and bring results is a core principle of leadership that travels with a leader over a lifetime.

### **3. Protect Identity; Build Courage to Process Hard Things**

It is essential to help emerging leaders view life's challenges in a redemptive way; this perspective helps to protect identity.

Whether experiencing hardship, hearing difficult and conflicting messages from those around them or facing trials, the young leader needs a set of beliefs anchored in the truth of God's love and upon His Word.

A foundation or mindset that God is for us—that He has insight to share in every situation—equips and informs a young mind to figure out the world, understand who they are in it and know how to respond in life's challenges with peace and courage.

Jesus is a good leader and tells us, "I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Troubles and suffering in life are opportunities to know God better. It's not that we won't have any trouble—quite the contrary. We will have trouble, but God is with us.

Our youngest daughter was diagnosed in first grade with a medical condition that required her to perform a blood test several times a day. Disease is something that strikes at the core of identity every time. We soon heard from her teacher that she was exercising her entrepreneurial bent by giving her

friends blood tests for \$1 at lunch every day. This was an empowering decision in such a little girl, made for a mighty woman who knows how to face adversity and find opportunity today.

We are entrusted to develop leaders who know their identity in Christ and can recognize opportunity to make a difference in the world. These are the leaders people are searching for today.

For more on biblical leadership lessons, [click here](#).

*Linda Fields, director of the Joseph Company, blends her humble upbringing as a preacher's kid and her wealth of experience in business, training and ministry to serve believers who are called to fulfill their mission in the marketplace. With True Tribe, a simple mentoring system designed to unlock and launch one's next level, Linda helps train men and women to live out their spiritual destinies within their professions. As a woman, a wife, a mom, a glass-ceiling smasher, business owner and coffee aficionado, Linda is at home in the boardroom, the classroom and the prayer room doing life with Jesus, her mentor and friend, as they help others pursue their dreams.*

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## **Dousing the Fire of Conflict When Your Family Gathers**

Ten people. Two bathrooms. One fridge. Five nights. That's a recipe for something.

Fourth of July forever and always means a trip to my mom's in Wyoming. This year, we threw my daughter and her husband in

the back seat for the 12-hour drive that turned into 14 hours because of two unfortunate meal stops in cowpoke towns.

My brother and his wife always come, with their three young girls, and we crowbar ourselves into mom's house.

This year, the entire town blew up fireworks on their driveways as usual on the 4th, but one of the pyromaniacs on our driveway lit a spectacular display that proceeded to tip over facing the garage.

Now I know my brother has some fantastic dance moves.

Some young guys riding by on bicycles stopped just as this happened and said, in between colorful expletives, that there was a fire in the garage. That got my brother moving even faster. Great save, bro'!

Our family vacations together are a lot like that night.

With 10 people in the house, that means 10 personalities, 10 hearts wanting their own way and 10 mouths speaking their mind, some more than others, and I'll kindly ask you not to look at me like that. All of this is like a well-packed canister of pyrotechnics aimed straight toward the belly of the home.

Sometimes one word or act can spark a fire that can quickly do a lot of damage in a family.

But you know what we have in my mom's house? Peace.

There is peace in our family because we have Jesus in our hearts, and He moves fast like my brother.

So yes, there are sparks. Someone throws somebody's hamburger away because she thinks he's done with it. Good grief, brother, how many times do I have to say I'm sorry about that! Somebody beats you to the shower. Some sister touches some other sister.

Lots of sparks shooting every which way.

Dangerous beginnings of flames licking their way through relationships.

But we're a group of people all trying to obey Jesus, and this individual work, to act and speak the way he wants us to, is what infuses peace into our family.

So apologizing happens. Faults get overlooked. Except for the hamburger incident, apparently. Grace extinguishes hot spots before too much damage is done, which is why we all still love getting together and why we feel sad when the time is over. The grace of Jesus is the reason hugs are long before our car pulls away for the drive home.

Paul says: "Let the peace of God, to which also you are called in one body, rule in your hearts. And be thankful" (Col. 3:15a).

Think of what this mandate means for family gatherings: the peace of Christ has to rule in the hearts of individuals before it will ever show itself in the greater family.

There's still lots of summer left. Trips and company. Family get-togethers. What is your heart bringing to the mix? And what if you're the only follower of Jesus in your family? What a great contribution of peace you can bring, better than a bowl of cold watermelon!

*While we're talking about the home, I'm happy to announce I'll be one of the speakers in an online homemaking conference coming up this fall, so I get to invite you to put your name in the hat, for this valuable giveaway of homemaking resources that's happening through tomorrow night: [Click here](#) for the giveaway. {eoa}*

*Reprinted with permission from Christy Fitzwater's blog. **Christy** is an author, Spanish teacher and pastor's wife in*

Montana.

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# Is It Sin to Be Angry With God?

All of us, at one point or another, will experience pain.

Pain is an equal opportunity inflicter; no one escapes its touch. The question is: how will we respond when pain touches our lives?

Many people, at some point in their pain, realize that they are angry with God.

When I received the shocking news that my best friend had passed away, a dozen different emotions washed through me: disbelief, agony, denial and for a moment, distrust.

The logic goes like this: God is all-powerful, God is sovereign, nothing is impossible for God, therefore, God should have been able to rescue my friend and stop her death from happening.

He didn't, though.

Why didn't He? Why didn't God help my friend, her husband and her two children get out of the house on time?

These questions make me squirm just typing them out, but to deny that these questions ran through my mind a time or two would be lying, because they did.

And I am 100-percent certain that they did for others as well.

When questioning God's sovereignty, we can ignore that

questions exist, resolve the questions so that our trust in God remains intact or allow the questions to overwhelm us in our grief.

If left unchecked in our heart, these questions will cause us to doubt God's sovereignty and love for us and will inevitably lead to anger against Him.

Is it wrong to be angry with God in our grief?

Many times I have heard people comfort a grieving person in their anger by saying things such as:

- It's OK; God understands your anger
- God is a big God, big enough to handle your anger
- Go on, get that anger out. Don't hold it in; God isn't offended by it.

And I have always wondered if these statements are really true. How do we really know that God is OK with our anger against Him?

We may rationalize that the angry person isn't truly angry, just hurting. People express their hurt in different ways, and sometimes their expressions look like anger when they're really just pain.

But do we really know that deep inside, they aren't angry at God?

I think these are valid questions, because anger—at its heart—is rooted in distrust, and if our distrust of God's love and sovereignty are not dealt with properly, it will destroy our relationship with Him.

We are mortal, and thus we can only view the physical realm in past and present.

God, however, created time. He is not limited to time, He is outside of time and therefore is able to view all realms in

past, present and future all at once.

In fact, Scripture tells us that before He even created the world, He already knew everything we would face in this life: "Your eyes saw me unformed, yet in Your book, all my days were written, before any of them came into being" (Ps. 139:16).

If this is true, why would God allow pain into our lives?

I believe God allows pain for two reasons:

### **1. Pain matures us.**

Think of a caterpillar in his cocoon. After metamorphosis has occurred, the butterfly must exit the cocoon.

Have you ever watched a butterfly exit his cocoon? It's a long and painful process to watch, and our sympathy toward the butterfly tempts us to reach over, rip the cocoon open and set the butterfly free.

However, doing this doesn't help the butterfly; it actually harms him and will eventually lead it its death, because the struggle he faces exiting his cocoon strengthens his wings so he can fly.

Without the struggle, he wouldn't exist.

The grief process will strengthen us if we allow it to. When those questions arise in our hearts that threaten to disrupt our faith and we choose to take them to God and allow Him to help us deal with them in such a way that strengthens our faith and trust in Him, we mature.

But more than that, having experienced pain enables us to be a blessing to others.

We can't empathize with those in pain if we haven't walked through pain ourselves.

## **2. We live in a fallen world.**

This world isn't our home. And thank God for that!

When sin entered the world, God could have destroyed everything and started all over, but He chose from the beginning to allow man to express his free will.

He did that because He wanted our trust and adoration of Him to be sincere expressions from the heart, not robotic reactions void of volition.

This was risky because it allowed man to choose not to love and adore Him but to rebel against Him, which is exactly what happened.

As a consequence, evil exists in our world.

Is God powerful enough to eradicate evil? Certainly, but He chooses to limit His power to man's will.

As believers, we live with the hope that one day, when all is fulfilled, He will do away with this sick, evil world, and we will all be together with Him in heaven—a perfect place, void of evil and pain.

That is our hope.

Without that hope. we have nothing.

God understands our anger, but that's not the whole story.

God sees our pain, and He feels our pain.

Jesus, when He hung on the cross, became sin for us. In that moment, He became a murderer, thief, rapist—all of the horrible things on this earth that cause us deep pain.

But He also bore our pain, so that in that moment He also felt all of that hurt, pain and betrayal we feel.

He understands our pain; He understands our anger.

However, He also knows that when we fail to turn to His Word and allow the Bible to act as a filter in those times of pain and questioning, that our pain and questioning of His sovereignty will cause us to sin in our anger.

How we respond in times when we are angry with God is extremely important.

Lashing out at God, questioning His sovereignty and shaking our fist at the heavens only gives Satan an opportunity to plant more doubt and more distrust in our hearts.

And that poison begins a slow, spiritual death for us.

### **How to Respond When You're Angry With God**

#### **Address your questions.**

Don't pretend they aren't there. Pretending the questions aren't there won't make them disappear. Acknowledge them and then allow God's Word to put them to rest.

Perhaps we will never know why certain things happen in this life, but we can trust that God allows things in our lives for a purpose and that He will use our pain for His glory.

#### **Acknowledge your anger.**

Telling God that you are angry doesn't scare or offend Him. What offends Him is what is in our heart when we acknowledge it.

Do we genuinely want to restore our trust in Him or are we lashing out because of hate and bitterness?

This is why the Bible says:

*“Be angry but do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. Do not give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:26-27).*

## **Deal with your anger quickly.**

Paul says in the verses above that when we sleep on our anger, it gives the devil an opportunity to begin taking over parts of our heart.

“Give place” literally means to give him areas of jurisdiction in our heart.

The thing is, he isn't content with just one little area. Once he has won territory in our hearts, he'll just continue to go out and conquer more and more regions until he has completely taken over.

This is why when we feel hurt, pain and betrayal, we must recognize those emotions as signals that we need to act, because the enemy will use those emotions as crawl-holes to get in and start his campaign of conquering our heart. {eoa}

*This post was inspired by the book: Grieving with Hope by Samuel J. Hodges*

**Rosilind Jukic**, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her hero. Together they live in the country with their two active boys, where she enjoys fruity candles and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. She holds an associates of practical theology and is passionate about discipling and encouraging women. Her passion for writing led her to author a number of books. She is the author of *A Little R & R* where she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. She can also be found at these other places on a regular basis. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

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# Are You Befriending the Holy Spirit?

I committed my life to Christ in the summer of 2000. I was 11 years old. Though young, having been raised in a Christian home, I understood the implications of such a commitment. As it goes with conversion experiences, my meeting with Christ, the Son of God, was quite dramatic. However, in the coming months, I was to experience numerous intense and transformative divine encounters.

You see after I was saved, I became increasingly fascinated by the person of Christ. He became my fixation—I read about Him, listened to sermons about Him and prayed to Him. His royal countenance, majestic and alluring, inspired within me a passionate pursuit. Soon enough, my soul longed for one thing, and that one thing was encapsulated in these simple words: “Jesus, I want to know You more.”

Those words began as a whisper but soon grew to be an inner shout. My desire to be drawn closer to Jesus began to demonstrate itself in long hours of prayer and the reading of several Bible chapters a day. My every moment was filled with an immediate awareness of God’s nearness. Throughout my days, I sensed a purposeful pull upon my will; I could sense the guiding hand of God. He used circumstances, conversations and occurrences to speak to me. And I was listening.

The more I knew of Him, the more I wanted to know. There was a beautiful and energizing grace that compelled my every spiritual act. There was a flow to my prayer and devotion.

But then, seemingly out of nowhere, I felt a growing distance between God and myself. The clear image of Jesus, that the eyes of my heart had so clearly beheld, began to fade.

On this point, I must briefly digress to clarify: I do not

believe that God ever abandons the believer. On the contrary, the Scripture declares that He is an ever present help in times of need.

“God is our refuge and strength, a well-proven help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1).

I know now that when God “withdrew” from me, He did so only in regards to my feelings. And He used that sense of distance to cause me to seek Him more, for He loves to be sought. He wasn’t toying with me by any means. Rather, He was testing me and moving me to greater depths. The reward for seeking Him is a revelation of Him. Nonetheless, that reward, at that time, seemed to be negative. I mistook the privilege of His drawing for the punishment of distance. But He was drawing me deeper.

He wanted to show me something greater!

So what was He trying to show me?

I’d soon discover it.

During that time when I felt disconnected from God, I became frustrated. I so badly wanted to close the “gap” and know more of Jesus. Feeling as though something was missing in my spiritual life, I prayed prayers like, “Father, there must be more than this. There just has to be more!”

I agonized and pleaded in prayer. My sense of desperation was so profound that my physical body would tense. Clenching my fists, I would press my face into a tear-drenched carpet and call out to God. Unsettling thoughts intruded my mind—thoughts like, “God, are You angry with me?” and “Lord, did I do something wrong?”

I had applied everything I knew. I had read the books on prayer, attended the church conferences and even had mighty servants of God lay hands on me for impartation. My efforts proved to be of no avail.

Throughout those days, God was rarely far from my mind. Every moment in which I accommodated a pause, I pondered my severe need to connect to God in greater measures.

*Was that all?* I wondered, *Was that all there was to be experienced the I AM – Eternity Himself?* A quiet but deep knowing assured me, “Son, there’s something more.”

It was because of this seeking despair that I began to watch Christian television. As much as was possible, I wanted to take advantage of my time for the sake of spiritual growth. That time included my TV viewing habits. I was trying to fill my days with the richness of biblical revelation.

But what I was longing to experience is not possible to receive from mere learning. What I would come to embrace needed to be caught, not taught. And, through the sovereign use of my frustration and desperation, God had already set me on a path to divine destiny.

Because of what I had experienced, my spiritual hunger pangs grew. And that desire for sustenance placed me before the TV, expectantly watching God’s anointed servants.

It was truly divine destiny.

So there I was, flipping through the various Christian TV networks. Suddenly, on TBN, an image appeared on my screen that pulled me in. The moment my eyes caught a glimpse of the programming, the atmosphere in my room changed—it became alive and energized! Forgive my use of the word, but what I saw was hypnotic!

I watched as slow-paced camera shots transitioned from one peaceful face to another. I immediately could tell that I was watching a worship service.

The people seemed to be captured in a glorious state of euphoric spiritual ecstasy. I watched as tears streamed down

faces. The worship music sounded heavenly as if angelic beings had joined in the melodies. The words they were singing had a rich, lofty depth to them that I, in an instant, came to appreciate. Starting with a soft and gentle praise, the people in this worship service began to raise the intensity with which they worshipped. The choir, accompanied by piano and violin, led thousands in glorious adoration of Jesus.

Suddenly, the worship scenes were disrupted by a transition to another portion of the church service. I expected at this point to hear preaching or teaching, as I had seen on all of the other Christian TV programs. I was pleasantly surprised.

This time, it was different.

A man, elated with astonishment, came to the stage, praising God and claiming to be healed of some crippling ailment. Leaving his wheelchair behind, the man leaped for joy, as the crowd erupted in celebratory commotion.

The pastor was just as excited and went to interview the man claiming to be healed.

At this point, I was already glued to my TV.

Then, as the pastor approached the man and the group that accompanied him, the people fell backward as if overcome by some unseen weight. The moment I saw that, something deep within me ignited. Whatever it was the preacher carried, I wanted it. The presence of God was so heavy upon him that people couldn't stand up next to him while he was under that anointing.

I can't really explain it, but somehow I knew that this was the "something more" I so desperately sought. Not only did I know it was something I needed to glean from, I knew, even as a kid in that divine moment of destiny, that this was the ministry God had for me.

That something more was the in-filling of the Holy Spirit.

That something more was my call to the healing ministry.

That something more was the manifested presence of the Holy Spirit.

After witnessing what I witnessed on TBN, I was forever changed. My prayer life was re-energized, and I knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt, what I was called to do for God.

The Holy Spirit intensified the reality of Jesus with such detail and clarity that Christ became more real to me than my own flesh! But I didn't just see Him more clearly. His person possessed, filled and took over more of my very being!

Soon, my prayer life began to change. I prayed bold and audacious prayers. "Holy Spirit," I prayed, "This pastor says that I can know You as a friend. He tells me that You can use my life for Your glory. Please, Holy Spirit, use me. Give me a double portion! Guide me. Fill me. Empower me. Let my hands be Your hands; heal through them. Let my eyes be Your eyes; let me see through Your truth. Let my feet be Your feet; tell me where to go. Let my ears be Your ears; speak to me! Let my mouth be Your mouth; speak through me! Let my being be Your Being. Let my heart beat as one with Yours. Let my will be crucified; I'll live for your will, not mine!"

It was only after this season of my life that I began to see things shift. There was an ease added to my prayer, worship and devotion. I went from sipping from a cup to being carried by a river! The toil and strain of the flesh were replaced by the simplicity and ease of the Spirit.

That experience with the person of the Holy Spirit radically changed everything about me. After that, miracles began to happen all around me. Total strangers would begin to weep and shake around me for reasons unknown to them. (We know it's the Holy Spirit and God's glory.) Demons began to manifest. I

began to experience the book of Acts!

That something more changed everything for me, and that something more can change everything for all who believe.

It was then that I realized that the glory of God is not something to be experienced in a fleeting moment. It is the fullness of His ever-present being, whole and complete, lacking in neither power nor substance, abiding in you. You are God's dwelling place, His holy habitation, a host of His presence, a carrier of His glory.

Dear reader, you can have that too. I'm writing about a friendship with the person of the Holy Spirit. He will enable you to pray more effectively, live more righteously, worship more sincerely and know Jesus in greater depths than you ever imagined possible.

To learn more about being God's dwelling place, go to .

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