

10 Myth-Busting Steps to a Regret-Free Marriage

The key truth about marriage is that true happiness is not to be found in your relationship with your husband, but in your relationship with Christ. Let's look at 10 key principles to a more fulfilling marriage:

1. Your Husband Was Never Meant to Be Your Happily-Ever-After

Asking your husband to be the source of your happiness is an unfair expectation. You were created to delight in Christ and to be consumed by your love for Him.

When you resolve to pursue loving Christ with all of your being, you will find the secret to happiness lies in your relationship with God alone. Only then can you enjoy fellowship with your husband in a way that honors Christ and blesses your husband.

2. Respecting Your Husband Will Inspire Him to Love You More

God created your husband with a deep longing to be respected by you. Just as deeply as you long to be loved without condition, your husband desires to receive unconditional respect from you. Notice I said unconditional respect. This means you don't get to hold hostage your respect for your husband when you aren't happy with him. Ephesians 5:33b says to "let the wife see that she respects her husband." This is not a suggestion; this is the Lord's command to us as wives.

Your respect can motivate your husband to accomplish great achievements—because a man who is honored by his wife can do great things.

3. Staying in Love Is All About Your Love for God

Any wife who displays godly character by loving her husband

will tell you that the key to loving your husband does not lie in how well he measures up to your expectations, but in how well you love God.

Before you were married, when you fell in love with your man, you had positive and loving thoughts about him. In marriage; you must work to continue to think such thoughts about him.

If you have not made a habit of thinking the best about your husband, you will need to determine to take “every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” With God’s help, you can gain victory over negative thoughts about your husband and replace them with thoughts that are honorable, lovely and commendable.

When your love for God is right, He will help you to love your husband.

4. Parenting as One Brings Unity Into Your Marriage and Security to Your Kids

Your children’s security lies in the health of your marriage relationship. When you learn to live with your sights upon God’s calling on your life—to know Christ and make Him known—this will influence how you live at home. God intends for you to live in a manner that draws your kids to Christ.

Your kids will be most secure when they observe their parents united, so don’t disagree with your husband in front of your children about certain rules or disciplines he may impose. Determine to bow together united in prayer, rather than stand in conflict with one another, because “the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much” (James 5:16b).

5. The Grass Is Not Greener on the Other Side of the Fence

God created you with a longing to feel loved and valued—by Him. Problems in marriage begin when you look to your husband to find your worth. God wants to fill the longings of your heart with Himself. Only through knowing Christ and living in intimacy with Him will you discover fulfillment.

Because of sin, you and I struggle with self-worship. And when you are in a state of self-love, if you're not satisfied with how your husband treats you, you may fall for the myth that you would be happier with someone other than your husband. When you find yourself toying with that idea, you can know that Satan—who comes to steal, kill and destroy (see John 10:10)—is seeking to ruin you and your family.

Realizing it is wrong to receive your sense of worth from your husband is the first step to setting him free from the burden of trying to give you what only God can give.

6. The Secret to Keeping Your Husband's Attention Is Finding Your Worth in Christ

What's the secret to keeping your husband's attention? Although there are many points I could make to answer this question, I prefer to revisit a statement my husband, Steve, once made:

The secret to capturing your husband's attention for a lifetime is in learning to find your worth in your relationship with Christ. When you spend your life developing your inner beauty and staying focused on the Lord, your husband's affection for you will grow as he observes the lovely woman of God you are becoming. The more consistently you pursue Christ, the more beautiful you will become to your husband, to others and most importantly, to Christ.

7. Pursuing Your Husband Sexually Will Fill Him With a Sense of Well-Being

Don't make your husband apologize for wanting to have sex with you.

God has given you a ministry of affirming your husband's deepest emotional needs through sex. In the same way you long for your husband to romance you with his words and acts of love, he desires to be romanced by you through sexual intimacy.

When you happily enjoy the physical part of your marital relationship, you not only satisfy your husband's God-given physical need for sex, but you bring healing to his weary soul as well.

8. Grow Rich in Ways You Never Imagined

When Steve and I moved to our little house in the country so we could live debt-free, we had no idea how God was preparing us to serve Him in full-time ministry. The people we have led to Christ, taught and mentored in truth and fellowshiped with in ministry are greater treasures than any possessions we may have given up. And the hope of one day, for all eternity, worshipping with those people around the throne of Christ is the greatest treasure we could ever have.

In the same way, the more you keep your eyes fixed upon Jesus, the less you will care about possessions or the earthly issues many couples fight over. Once you determine to daily seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33), you will find contentment and peace in your marriage—as well as God's purpose for your life.

9. Be a Peacemaker in Your Marriage Relationship

The only way to build a marriage free of hurtful discord is through biblical conflict resolution. Here are eight steps to making peace:

- * Admit you have a problem. Take an honest look at why you are in the conflict.
- * Acknowledge your sinful bent.
- * Refuse to be argumentative.
- * Make peace a priority. Learn to talk through a disagreement for the purpose of resolution.
- * Pray without ceasing.
- * Forgive your husband as many times as necessary (Matt. 18:22).
- * Seek godly counsel.
- * Learn to be a peacemaker.

Make yourself so familiar with these eight steps that the next time you and your husband begin to argue, you can stop yourself from fighting and instead, take time to reflect on how you can show Christ's character. By working to resolve conflict in a way that honors your husband, you can begin to live in a manner that reflects the Lord's character to those who are watching how you live—beginning with your children.

10. The Joy of the Lord Is Your Strength

Life is filled with blessings and struggles. Learning to see each experience as an opportunity for the Lord to shine His light through you is the first step to realizing God has a purpose in whatever He allows to come your way—even a difficult marriage.

When you choose joy in each experience you encounter, you can become a vessel for the Lord to reach the lost and encourage others—as well as mold you, your husband and your children more into the image of Christ. When you live with this perspective, you will discover the secret to living above life's circumstances—and the joy of the Lord will indeed be your strength.

*Taken from: If My Husband Would Change, I'd Be Happy. Copyright © 2015 by Rhonda Stoppe. Published by Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon. . Used with permission. **Rhonda Stoppe** is the No Regrets Woman. With more than 20 years of experience as a marriage mentor, pastor's wife, author and speaker, Stoppe leads women of all ages to live lives of no regrets. She is the author of Moms Raising Sons to be Men, which mentors thousands of moms to guide sons toward a no-regrets life. Her latest book, If My Husband Would Change, I'd Be Happy & Other Myths Wives Believe, is helping countless women build no-regrets marriages.*

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Visit her website at www.no-regrets.com for more resources on love and marriage. Follow Rhonda on Facebook (Rhonda Stoppe No Regrets Woman) and on Twitter (@RhondaStoppe).