

5 Ways to Really Love a Woman

Consider the multitude of problems men face—the problems *you* face. Now put the marriage problem in one stack, and all the “other” problems men face in a second stack.

The marriage problem *alone* is bigger than all the other problems men face *combined*.

Easily the biggest problem men face, as a group, is that their marriages are not working the way God designed.

Before we get practical, the reason practical often doesn't work is that men don't, in their heart of hearts, have the right “theology of marriage.” Or, knowing what's what, they either don't believe it, don't want to believe it, or did believe it but lost their faith because it's not going the way they wanted.

The correct theology of marriage is based on Ephesians 5:25. “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.”

“As Christ loved the church” means that we are to love *our* brides “in the same way” or “equal to” the way Christ loved *His* bride.

What's interesting is that it's not the way “Jesus” loved. Rather, the reference is to His title as the Christ—the Messiah.

In theology there are three very well-known, classic offices held by Jesus in His capacity as the Christ: prophet, priest, and king.

So when the Bible tells us to love our brides “equal to” the way Christ loves His bride, that means we are to love our wives, and by extension our children (the fruit of our union), as prophet, priest, and king.

As the prophets of our wives (and children) we are responsible, like Christ, to bring the gospel and the Word of God to our families. Examples include “along the way” discipleship, having them in church, praying before meals, mentoring moments, and/or family devotions.

As the priests of our wives (and children) we are responsible, like Christ, to pray for (and with) our families and mediate with them to the Father.

As the kings of our wives (and children) we are responsible, like Christ, to provide for all of their temporal needs.

Of course much more could be said, but with this better understanding about “the theology of marriage,” let’s now turn it into something we can actually execute. How can we excel at loving our wives as her prophet, priest, and king—practically speaking?

Here are five of the most practical marriage ideas I’ve picked up over four decades of working with men. (These are straight out of my book *Man Alive*).

1. Pray with your wife. Shaun from Bozeman, Montana, asked his men’s group, “How many of you pray with your wives?” Only one of the eight men said that he did. They started holding each other accountable. Here’s what Shaun said about it a year later:

The benefits when we are obedient in this area are amazing. Here are some comments from the men about what happens when they pray with their wives on a consistent basis:

“I feel a closeness to my wife that wasn’t there before.”

“Communication between us is better.”

“The petty things are just not a big deal anymore.”

And I’ll tell you this, it’s pretty hard to be upset with your

wife or to be arguing and still come before God with a clean heart. It forces us to communicate and humble ourselves with each other before we do something as intimate as praying together. It just permeates through the rest of your family and day.

Ask your wife if you can take some time each day to pray together. Patsy and I always start the day with prayer for one to three minutes, and then we pray again when we're together for dinner.

2. Pray for your wife. Not long ago I wrote a book called *The Marriage Prayer* with David Delk. The book is titled after a very specific 68-word prayer that we believe captures the essence of what the Bible teaches on marriage.

One day, a few months after I had started praying the marriage prayer myself, I was settled into my favorite chair and deep into a book when I saw Patsy walking by with the trash. I literally leaped out of my chair and said, "Here, let me get that for you."

Immediately I stopped. *What just happened here?* I wondered, since I was pretty sure I had never done that before!

And then a phrase from the marriage prayer popped into my mind: "I want to hear her, cherish her, and serve her—so she would love You more and we can bring You glory."

This prayer has also been transforming for other men. One man said he started putting his empty Splenda packets in the trash instead of leaving them on the counter. You have to start somewhere.

Here's the whole marriage prayer:

*Father, I said, "Till death do us part"— I want to mean it.
Help me to love You more than her,
and her more than anyone or anything else.*

*Help me bring her into Your presence today.
Make us one, like You are three-in-one.
I want to hear her, cherish her, and serve her
So she would love You more and
we can bring You glory. Amen.*

Think about this: you are likely the only person in the whole world who will remember to regularly pray for your mate. Copy this prayer, pray it every day for your wife, and watch God work. Learn more about the Marriage Prayer—including a version for a wife to pray—at .

3. Spend time alone with her. How we spend our time reveals what is really important to us. Successful couples spend time together. They develop shared interests, such as bowling, reading, hiking, Bible studies, board games, or walking around the neighborhood. Patsy and I have always kept a weekly date night as a top priority.

Early in our marriage, I started hanging out at the table after dinner for about twenty minutes just to be with Patsy. We've done this for decades. A few years ago I also started rubbing her feet with lotion as we talk. I can guarantee you who she'll say is her best friend!

4. Listen to her deeply without giving an overly quick reply. Communication invariably shows up as the number one problem in marriage surveys. And the greatest weakness in communication with our mates is the problem of giving an overly quick reply. We attach high value to our mates when we listen sincerely and patiently to each other. Listening deeply requires that we don't respond too quickly, don't criticize, and don't give advice unless the other person asks for it. (Everyone dreads being "fixed.") Listening lubricates marriage and cuts down on friction.

5. Touch her. Successful couples touch each other. They hug, squeeze, embrace, pat, hold hands, put their arms around each

other, and sit close enough to touch when watching television. Nonsexual touching leads to genuine intimacy. Touching her is like recharging her battery.

Note: This is the first of a two-part series. Tune in Friday for part two. {eoa}

Patrick Morley is the founder of Man in the Mirror Ministries. For the original article, visit [.](#)