

8 Things Your Wife Should Expect From You

More and more couples seem to be writing their own marriage vows these days. Susan and I did the same thing 26 years ago.

Ours included some traditional vows but also reflected the uniqueness of our personalities and commitment before God to one another. Then, after we got married, we discovered our differing gifts and divvied up household responsibilities according to those gifts. For example, Susan is the financial person, so she pays the bills. I can fix things; when something is broken, I repair it.

While wedding vows, personalities, responsibilities and many other things will differ from marriage to marriage, there are nonnegotiable marriage expectations that should be the same for all spouses. Husbands and wives should be able to expect certain things from one another. So here are 8 things your wife should expect from you.

Remember: Each is a way in which you demonstrate your love for her.

1. A relationship with Jesus. If you and Jesus are tight, then you will be close and intimate with your wife as well. The more grounded you are in the Word, the better you will be able to handle the hurdles that come with your marriage.

2. Trustworthiness. As I shared in *Unlocking the Door to Intimacy in Marriage*, being trustworthy means you are who you say you are. That is, you are authentic ... the real deal. It also means you will always speak the truth and don't keep secrets from your wife. Susan knows I don't keep secrets from her. I'm always "open for inspection." For example, Susan knows my computer password and can access it any time to see what I am reading and looking at. She can also see my calendar

at any time. Susan can also pick up my Smartphone any time to read my texts and emails and check out what kind of music I'm listening to.

Being trustworthy also means that you'll do what you say you'll do ... that your wife can "take it to the bank," so to speak. For example, if you tell her you'll pick up some milk on the way home, make a note to remind yourself to do it. Don't forget and dismiss it as not being important.

3. Faithfulness. You're certain you'd never give yourself physically to another woman ... but what about mentally and emotionally? Even if you don't go looking for porn, do you let your eyes and thoughts wander when something or someone alluring comes into view? Just for a moment or two?

Faithfulness isn't just about what you don't or won't do. It's about what you *do* to make sure that commitment is honored. Jerry Jenkins' book *Hedges: Loving Your Marriage Enough to Protect It* looks at the ways we can guard the borders of our marriage garden.

His advice includes avoiding "just the two of you" travel or meetings with another woman whenever possible. No jokey, flirtatious or suggestive talk. And if you pay a compliment, make it about the woman's hair or clothes, not directly about her.

4. Provision. In our homes, we have a clear responsibility to provide for the physical needs of our wife and children. That means that we must work and earn money to provide for those needs. That doesn't necessarily mean we have to be the sole breadwinner. Many couples both have jobs these days. If that's so, where and how are we helping in other areas of home life?

By the way, don't think that putting a paycheck on the counter covers it all either. In addition to financial and physical needs, we must also support our family emotionally and spiritually.

5. Protection. Chivalry may not be dead, but it's in poor health. For me, the growing lack of gentlemanliness in society is a worry. Opening a door for a woman or walking on her outside in the street are marks of respect. Here are the "4 Benefits of Showing Chivalry to Your Spouse and Daughters."

We live in a dangerous world: Someone is sexually assaulted every 107 seconds. Your wife and your children need to feel safe and protected—and not just physically. You may have a home security system to guard against burglars. But what about other kinds of "home invasion," like harmful media? Are you on the alert for your wife and family?

6. Leadership. Some people get a bit bent out of shape over this one, but a man is called to lead his family. A man who loves his family well will lead his family well. When a man's wife and children know that he always has their best interests at heart, they'll follow him. Love is leadership's unseen essential.

7. An attitude of servitude. This is the antidote to the previous leader thing getting out of whack. As leaders, we should not look to be served but to serve in our homes. What does that look like in your home? How are you serving your wife and children? What are you doing to ensure that they are becoming all they can?

Being a servant means that the world does not revolve around you. That her needs and desires, their needs and desires, take precedence over your planned fishing trip, your golf game or your night out with your buddies. When they know they are important, they will follow you.

8. Sexual intimacy. It's easy to think that sexual intimacy is only a priority for guys, but it's important for women too, though perhaps in a slightly different way. Women derive physical pleasure too, of course, but there is also a big emotional component. Your pursuit demonstrates that she is

desired and delighted in, that she is still the one. It is also an active expression of your faithfulness. So don't look at your neighbors' lawn; instead, take the time to water your own grass, so that it's the greenest it can be.

Are you meeting these fundamental expectations in your marriage?

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