

How a Preacher Wrecked This Marital Issue in a Misguided Sermon

If there's one thing I've learned on this lifelong journey of weight gain and weight loss, it is that I cannot lose weight for someone else. We cannot lose weight for our husbands; it has to be for us. We have to want it for ourselves.

So if not weight loss, what does it take to stay married?

He Got It Wrong

Recently I listened to a sermon by a pastor from Malden, Missouri, who essentially said if husbands stray, it's because their wives have gained weight—or in his exact words, “have let themselves go.”

His premise was that men are visual, and they want to desire their wives. But they cannot desire their wives, he says, if they aren't slim and trim like our former first lady. He even put a picture of her on the screen during his sermon. I was livid, and it took me a while to come down off my soapbox.

Friends, he just got it all wrong in so many ways that it's difficult to talk about it in one article or podcast episode.

Can't Lose Weight for Others

When I weighed 430 pounds, I used to think if I lost weight my husband would love me more. The problem really wasn't that he was nagging me to lose weight.

It was that I felt so bad about myself that I was sure he didn't want me—or one day wouldn't want me. I also thought I wasn't a good wife because I was so overweight. The bottom line is this: I was miserable and unhappy with myself.

This made me feel unfixable and unworthy to even try to change. I went on lots of diets, but without learning how to change my emotional mindset about myself, I was never able to go on any lifestyle change plan.

Even with all my negative thoughts, and even though I loved my husband, every time I tried to lose weight for him, I failed. When it was for him, if he didn't applaud my weight loss, I would quit and throw in the towel.

Motivation for Weight Loss

The only motivation for weight loss that worked for me was when I began to want it for myself. When I began to care enough about myself to want to become healthy in every area—spiritually, emotionally, mentally and even physically—change began to happen.

One of my big motivations was to be around for my children and husband, to be in their lives. It wasn't because they were telling me I had to. I would have rebelled against that. It was also so I could fulfill that seemingly elusive destiny God had in store for me. At the time I didn't know what it was, but I did know that I couldn't do anything unhealthy. I constantly felt like my brain was foggy and muddled. I was tired, sluggish, without energy or motivation. These became my reasons why—my motivation.

With firm desire, I lost 250 pounds and have kept it off since 2013.

We all need to know our why if we are embarking on any kind of journey for change. We also have to own our need to allow God to transform us, and then we must surrender to what He tells us to do—no one else.

What Is Important to A Man?

When my husband and I were chatting about the sermon in

question, I asked what he thought was important to men. He said while men are visual, more than that, they have a deep desire for valor.

Although the dictionary defines valor as “strength of mind or spirit that enables a person to encounter danger with firmness,” to my husband, valor is mainly keeping his promises, protecting his family and being the one who provides.

Related to the sermon in question, he pointed out that for a man, valor means staying with his wife no matter what either goes through. He has done this well with me. It is the reason I dedicated my first book to “my husband, who has loved me through thick and thin, more of the former than the latter.”

Commitment in Marriage

Commitment is evidenced in a marriage when your spouse will stay with you and care about you no matter what you weigh or what you are struggling with. We’ve undoubtedly had our ups and downs, but we have learned how to harmonize with each other, which is a definition of submission that has worked well for us for almost 44 years.

By the way, the pastor that preached the dreadful sermon has been put on leave by his denomination and is in professional counseling. The denomination also renounced his views as not of that denomination.

Apparently, this isn’t the first time he has shared these views publicly.

The only verse, the pastor mentioned was Proverbs 31:30. But he interpreted it to mean women should look good but also be godly. Actually, I’m pretty sure it still means exactly what it says. “Charm can be misleading, and beauty is vain and so quickly fades but this virtuous woman lives in the wonder, awe, and fear of the Lord. She will be praised *throughout*

eternity” (Prov. 30:31, TPT). {eoa}

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