

How You Can Walk in Abundance in Your Marriage

There are many ways you could describe the one you're married to. You might see them as your confidant, friend, provider, support or lover. You might think of them as your project, problem, irritant-in-chief, enemy or "thorn in the flesh." What do you see in your spouse? How you look at them makes a difference.

In the movie *As Good as it Gets*, Melvin says to Carol, "You make me want to be a better man." It was the best compliment she had ever received. Being around some people just makes you better, lifts you up and stirs up a desire in you to step up to another level. That's the way it was for people who spent time around Jesus. They wanted to live up to what He saw in them.

Is that the way your spouse feels about spending time around you?

Being blind to problems is never healthy. (If abuse is going on, get help right away!) When there are serious problems in a relationship, it's absolutely vital that you address them. But you will see more of the things you choose to focus on. You're likely to get more of what you notice, appreciate, respond to and treasure.

As a wife, you can do much to turn your husband into a hero by seeing him that way. As a husband, looking at your wife as your queen is likely to help her become one.

Here are some ways you can help your spouse become the very best version of themselves, the person you were hoping for when you said "I do."

What Not to Do

First a word about what does not work. You are not your spouse's parent, coach or junior Holy Spirit. Your spouse is fully and completely responsible for their own choices and behavior. If there's any "fixing" to be done, that's between them and God.

Imagine if your spouse were constantly pointing out what you're doing wrong, criticizing you, blaming you, telling you what to do. (Perhaps you don't have to imagine.) Does that make you want to be "better?" Not at all. Your defenses go up, and you either run the other way or embark on a program of passive-aggressive resistance.

Jesus' presence was inviting. People—both good and bad—wanted to be around Him. They knew they would be accepted completely.

And even before Jesus said anything they also knew that they could not stay the same. His character inspired them to live up to what He saw in them. That's what you can do for your spouse.

Make Him Your Hero

It's a man's nature to want to be the hero, to come through in a crunch, to achieve, to be successful. That's what validates his identity. A man will be inspired to do more of what he's good at, and will usually stop trying to do something when he's convinced he can never succeed.

You can make your husband your hero. You are amazingly powerful in your husband's life. He almost certainly desires your affirmation more than anyone else's. If he senses you're proud of him, he's likely to try to do more of whatever gets that response. I'm not talking about superficial flowery words; your respect must be genuine, reflective of reality and in response to something he can do something about.

Intentionally look for things in your husband that you can

appreciate. Pay attention and voice sincere appreciation whenever he does come through for you. If he sees your eyes light up when he offers to help, he'll do it more often. If he overhears you brag on him to your friends, he'll want to live up to your assessment of him. If you let him know how wonderful his attempts at romance or intimacy make you feel, he'll want to do more of the same.

Whenever it's appropriate, let him come through for you. Let him be the one to fix things when possible. See him as your hero, and he's more likely to act like one.

Make Her Your Queen

In the legend of Johnny Lingo, a wealthy Polynesian trader offers an exorbitant price to marry a young woman who others saw as only a plain village girl. Because he saw and treated her as priceless she transforms into a woman of beauty and elegance. Or think of the way a male figure skater presents his female partner when skating pairs. Yes, a human being's value is based on God's view of them. But as a husband, the way you demonstrate how you value your wife will make a world of difference in how she sees herself and how she behaves.

If you want a queen for a wife, treat your wife as a queen. Be her protector and provider. Seek to understand her and support her. Treasure and value her opinions and insight. Invite her to do every aspect of life with you. Treat her with the care you would give to your most prized possession. (You don't own her, but that's the kind of care she deserves.)

When a woman truly feels cherished she's likely to do almost anything for you. A marriage counselor once told me that she had never known a woman who would not gladly submit to a man who loved her and cherished her like Christ. I'm not sure if "never" is correct. But the truth is that your wife will respond positively when you treat her as the priceless treasure she is.

Do you want an extraordinary spouse? Treat them that way, and you're likely to get much more of what you wish for.

Your Turn: Have you been treating your husband as your hero? Have you demonstrated that you see your wife as your queen? How might you step up the way you treat your spouse? Leave a comment below. {eo}

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