

Husband, Does Your Marriage Need a Tune-Up?

Maintaining isn't a popular idea here in the United States. We like to hire someone to do this or that for us. We don't even wash our cars anymore; we let a machine do this for us, called a car wash. In a culture that is moving further and further from the reality of maintenance, we can lose the very fabric that life is maintenance.

The fact that all of life is maintenance can be painful or delightful to you. I enjoy having a house, and that house requires maintenance every change of season. I also have a car, and it requires maintenance. If I maintain it well, it is more likely to serve me better and longer over the years. However, if maintenance is a burden or painful, you can employ a technique I have seen many addicts employ in their lives called denial. You can simply deny life or that your spouse needs maintenance and then have those things break down more often and require even more maintenance later on. Let me tell you a story I tell the men in the "How to Really Love a Woman" conferences and DVD series.

As a guy you're driving down the freeway. You're coming down a hill, and you see smoke coming from under the hood of a car that is pulled over on the side of the road a mile or more away. As you get closer it's this year's model of Lamborghini. Being the good guy that you are and because you want a better look at this very expensive car, you want to help, so you pull over.

A 20-something-year-old young man comes out of the car. You're wondering whether this is a very bright fellow or a trust fund kid. You politely ask this young man what's wrong with the car. He tells you the engine is locked up. You ask, when did you last have your oil changed?

The young man says that he doesn't believe in oil changes (maintenance). He thinks it's some government scam or something incoherent like that. Now you're thinking this is definitely a trust fund kid!

Everyone knows to change the oil in the car. You know that a locked-up engine is a result of neglecting the maintenance over a long period of time (denial of maintenance). You and I know it's so much cheaper to pay for consistent oil changes than it is to fix or replace a seized engine.

Marriage is just like that as well. It is cheaper to apply a few principles consistently to maintain your marriage than it is to neglect the God-given maintenance in a marriage. If it locks up due to denial of the maintenance principle, you end up spending so much more on a professional counselor or worse, on divorce attorneys.

Paul, the author of Ephesians, follows the path of the large idea first, followed by the how to's. He states in chapter five with the big idea of "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, and that He might present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27).

Guys, love your wife like Jesus. I have spoken at so many marriage conferences, and this verse never gets an "amen" (at least not by a man), no matter where I read it. I think we feel like a failure when we compare our selfish selves as a husband to Jesus. However, that's the large idea, and when you understand the how to's, it's relatively easy to feel confident when this scripture is read.

If we accept our full responsibility to maintain our spouse, this process leads us into the glorious creation of a godly marriage on earth. When you have a heart of grateful

maintenance, you will just try to meet the needs of your spouse's heart, body, sexuality, finances and parenting needs, without judging their validity against your own preconceived grid. In the beginning of this chapter, we laid down the idea that we are all called to maintain our garden. God has placed your spouse in your garden. You must fully accept your daily maintenance without a negative attitude. To be Christlike is to accept the maintenance of your spouse with a good attitude. {eoa}

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