

Invest in Your Spouse's Personal Growth—It's Worth It

I want to take a few minutes to talk to you about the gift of your spouse.

If you have kids, as a good parent, you take the gifts of your children very seriously. You realize God gave you that child or children as gift(s), and that each child has several gifts inside his or her little being.

That is the way I think it ought to be, at least. Proverbs 19:14 tells us, "Houses and riches are the inheritance of fathers, and a prudent wife is from the Lord." Therefore, your spouse is a gift from God.

Lisa and I, perhaps like you, have spent incalculable hours on bleachers, pews, grass or in classrooms and churches watching our children grow in some area of talent (or wannabe talent). However, not every parent invests in his or her child's talent.

Lisa and I observed other parents who had the exact opposite view of investing in their children. They had very specific financial goals and saw investing in lessons or sports for their children as a total waste of time and money. Sadly, these parents often denied extremely gifted children an investment from which they could have benefited tremendously.

You may be old enough to remember the old *Star Trek* series and movies. If not, you are surely aware of the reboot of the series in theaters recently. Regardless of your introduction to *Star Trek* you have been introduced to the main characters, Captain Kirk and Spock.

Captain Kirk did life from his gut, based on hunches and emotion. Spock, on the other hand, used logic to solve

conflicts, which at times limited him from solving the crisis at hand. Just like them, in any marriage, one person is better at handling money and the other more or less skilled in emotion. This often due to no fault of either spouse.

If your dad did not teach you how to change the oil in your car, you simply did not know how to change oil. However, emotions are part of our everyday life. Learning some basic emotional skills is a great way to serve your marriage.

Lisa and I did this by investing years of our lives (and lots of money) into letting your children experiment with activities and sports. The morning I wrote this, Lisa and I discussed our son, Jubal, and how he played almost every sport during his school years.

Our daughter, Hadassah, did cheerleading, piano, teen court and debate in high school. Every summer, Lisa had the children take lessons for something they never tried before: fencing, horseback riding, golf, baseball, tennis and so on. By doing this, she was trying to let the children experience different activities to see if they had a gift in those areas.

As a parent, you almost instinctively think like this because you want your child to be all that God called him or her to be. As servants toward our spouses, we should be excited to support their gifts.

These are gifts God has given to them. Now, I am not talking about running off and abandoning you and the family. I am talking about within reason, allowing your spouse to explore new things or engage in things they already enjoy.

Lisa and I are recent empty nesters. Throughout her life, Lisa has had a gift for art.

When we dated, I remember encouraging her to take art classes, and she did amazing work. As we had children, they utilized her talent for art regularly with their projects. Now that the

children are gone, Lisa got interested in painting on old windowsills. She is very good at it, so some Saturdays, we shop for old windowsills. As a servant spouse, you want to be aware of your spouse's talents and encourage them to experiment in life with various interests to discover latent talents.

In taking this approach, you may have to invest some time and money, just as you would have for your children. My experience is, it is worth it to see my wife grow and become the woman God wants her to become.

As a couple, you will have to decide how much time or money is appropriate to invest in your own development. This will definitely shift as children become part of your servant marriage and as they leave and will shift depending on the season of your marriage.

However, you can use these principles of viewing your spouse as a gift and investing in them to allow continual growth of your spouse and your marriage.

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