

Men: Date Your Wives

While there is not a biblical mandate to have a date night every week with your spouse, there is the command to love your wife as Christ loved you (Eph. 5:25).

And how did He love us? He pursued us when our hearts were cold to Him. He continually wooed us to Himself. He offered Himself fully for us to establish an everlasting relationship, one that will endure for all time.

Men often stop pursuing and dating their wives with the same passion with which they initially pursued them. And this is a poor reflection of the greater marriage we have with Christ.

When God confronted the church at Ephesus, He rebuked them for losing their first love (Rev. 2:4) and challenged them to do the things they did at first (2:5). They had lost their intimate walk with the Lord, and He was calling them to repentance. There is a connection between losing your first love and stopping the things you did at first (time with the Lord, sensitivity to His Spirit, daily repentance, etc.).

When applied to a marriage, the same is true. There is a connection between drifting from love expressed to our spouses and the stopping of things we did at first.

In other words, men, date your wife.

Early in our marriage, as a newlywed couple in college, Kaye and I committed to have a date night every week and a vacation together every year. I made 12K a year as a student pastor, and she worked part-time at a bank, so funding was the main challenge for our date nights. Thus, our two favorite places to eat were the Pizza Inn buffet and the Shoney's breakfast bar (our metabolism was a lot higher back then).

We didn't have a comfortable couch, so when it was cold

outside, we would rent a movie and snuggle on a twin mattress we placed in front of our TV. When it was warm, we often spread out in a hammock we had hanging in our yard and talked.

With kids, the challenges change, but our commitment to a date night is the same. Here are five tips we have learned.

1. **Schedule it.** If we don't schedule the date each week, it won't happen. So we plan several days out and block off the time. Sometimes she initiates and reminds me in a loving and subtle way, without making me feel like a loser husband for forgetting. Other times I am the one to say, "Hey, what night do you want to go out this week?"

2. **Start again.** Some weeks we miss. Instead of assuming our marriage is falling apart or letting that miss become a habit, we simply pick back up the next week.

3. **Kid swap.** We have never enjoyed the luxury of living in the same city as our parents, so we know the babysitting cost can be a challenge. When we lived in Miami, we had a weekly kid swap with another couple. One week they would go out and my wife would go to their house so their kids could go to bed on time in their own beds. The next week it would be our turn to go out. On the weeks when it was the other couple's turn, we would have an "in-house date" with takeout and a movie.

4. **Explore.** It is easy to fall into the same routine with the same restaurant each week. For us, we have enjoyed exploring new parts of the city where we live, eating at local places, and checking out areas we have not yet conquered.

5. **Romance.** You don't have to wait until you are home to kiss and hold your wife. Find some places where you can talk, embrace, and enjoy each other. In Miami, we would pull the car up next to the water on Key Biscayne, snuggle while listening to jazz at Van Dykes, etc. I am not giving away my Nashville spots.

Men, dating your wife is spiritual. Do the things you did at first. And enjoy it!

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