

The Gift Your Wife Really Wants This Mother's Day

Men, what your wife wants from you this Mother's Day is to be cherished. Far more than an expensive gift or a thoughtful card, she wants you to lead her family with her best interests in mind. She doesn't want a man who is silent and soft, a man who is passive and withdrawn or a man who is paralyzed by regret over past mistakes. Your wife wants you to be a man of God—a “servant king.”

She wants you to be a *king*—proactive, courageous, generous and humble. A man who embraces his identity as leader with authority and conviction.

She also wants you to be a *servant*—a man who puts his wife and children ahead of himself, who nurtures them and makes sure everything he does is in their best interest and who is ready to lay down his life for them if necessary.

God did not create man to be sufficient in himself. The ultimate intimate relationship a man can have on this earth is with his wife, whom God calls his helper. We see that they are to be “one,” a picture of how the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one. That is, they are to be in such complete unity that they are of one purpose and one spirit.

God gave man the role of leader of his family, but what does that look like? The world often tells us that leadership and authority are the same thing, but this is not so. Authority is that influence that the law gives to a police officer or a military commander. Authority says, “Sir, please exit the vehicle,” or “Grab your backpack and sit down.” Authority offers no reward for obedience, only punishment for disobedience.

We are not called to be in authority over our wives; rather,

we are called to lead them. Leadership creates the space for a person to choose whether or not to follow. Notice that a woman is commanded to submit to her husband, not to obey him. I obey the commands of a police officer out of fear of punishment, but I don't submit to him. This is because submission involves equality and choice. Obedience involves a hierarchy and offers no choice. A slave obeys his master, and a child obeys his parents. But an equal chooses to submit or not, based on the value in the relationship.

Jesus always offers us a choice when it comes to submitting our lives to Him. Submitting to the perfect leader maximizes our fellowship with Him and gives us ultimate joy as a result. In the same way, a wife chooses to submit to her husband or not. *As husbands, it is not for us to judge a wife's willingness to submit. It is for us to be the kind of leader to whom she can gladly submit.*

Therefore, it is incumbent on a husband to be as much like Him as we can be so that her choice is an easy one.

Give Your Wife the Gift of Leadership

"I would have you know that the head of the woman is the man, the head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3, MEV). We seek to lead our families as Christ leads the church. How does He do this? He "gave Himself for her to make her holy ... to present [her] to Himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27, NLT). Someday Jesus will present all His children to the Father, having given everything, including His life by being tortured to death, for the purpose of presenting them without blemish. Whether they will be presented as such will be dependent on the level of their willing submission to Him. Similarly, we will be judged on how we present our wives to the Father. Did we give our lives for them, as Jesus did for the church?

Does your wife see in you the heart for her that Jesus has for His church? None of us will completely measure up, but the closer we get to this standard, the more oneness we'll have with our wives.

Going further, there are three overarching qualities that I've observed in great leaders:

1. **Vision**—All great leaders know and communicate who they are and where they are going, whether in an organization or elsewhere. Your wife must know that your relationship exists to glorify God. Leaders always keep themselves accountable to their people and remain open to constructive criticism. Does your wife feel the freedom to express her opinion in a safe and loving relationship? Leaders are not defensive, and they do not argue. Are your words leading to life and unity or to division and distress in your marriage?
2. **Ambition**—Great leaders focus on the health and growth of their organization (or family). From the moment they rise until they close their eyes at night, they relentlessly pursue the implementation of their vision. Does your wife see that you are seeking to present her to Christ “glorious ... glorious without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish”?
3. **Empathy**—Empathy is the ability to see things from the other person's perspective. There is no more important place for this than in our relationship with our wives.

This Mother's Day, be the servant king your wife is longing for, the servant king your God has called you to and whom you were made for. {eo}

Ken Harrison is the CEO and chairman of the new era of Promise Keepers whose 2020 National Event is coming to AT&T Stadium in Dallas July 31-August 1. Founded originally in 1990 by Coach Bill McCartney, Promise Keepers was one of the largest Christ-

centered movements ever. Today, under Harrison's leadership, *Promise Keepers* is calling men back to courageous and bold servant-leadership by sparking a movement that will mobilize millions of men to follow Christ into today's broken world as changemakers for their families, churches and communities. Ken also serves as CEO of WaterStone, a Christian community foundation that oversees donations of millions of dollars per month to build God's kingdom. After starting his career as an LAPD street cop in South Central, Harrison spent nearly two decades in the commercial real estate arena both nationally and internationally.

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