

What Would God Say to You if He Were Your Father-in-Law?

When men and women are intentional lovers toward their spouse, they feel better about themselves. When we're responsible with the blessings God has given us, because all good gifts are from God, we feel better.

If I maintain my car, my house and my toys of any kind, I feel responsible and respectful toward God. Upholding our spouses by being their lovers is one of the greatest feelings you can have.

When you love well, you feel well. When we love our spouse as unto the Father, we're saying from our heart, "Thank you for this amazing person being in my life. I'm happy to bless, encourage and strengthen them."

I have adult children. When they marry, my biggest hope is they're loved well. When you're loved well and loving well, life is just better because you're walking with your best friend who loves you with all their heart.

I feel great when I buy Lisa a card, plan a getaway, give her flowers or just spend quality time giving her a well-deserved foot rub. Being a lover is fun and brings out your creativity, so you feel great about being a lover-spouse.

A spouse who gives the minimum and tolerates instead of celebrates their spouse doesn't feel good about themselves and, quite frankly, shouldn't. Failing at anything or not being responsible doesn't feel good. Failing at marriage feels awful. When we stand before all of our friends and family and promise to love and fulfill that promise, we feel greater. Keeping our word makes us feel a lot better than not keeping our word.

When we don't keep our word to be a lover for a lifetime to our spouse, we know it. We know we're not all in; we're not trying; we gave up and we now have to live with the fact that we are both doing and being less than we promised.

We can be honest and take responsibility for our lack of love, which is healthy. However, such honesty would spur us to most likely change. If we're not honest, we need to blame someone or something, so we feel less guilty for our lack of love.

I have counseled many spouses who had to stop blaming life, the kids, their finances, work obligations, age or culture for their lack of love. When we remain in blaming mode, we can't heal what is wrong in our heart or life.

In my more than 30 years of counseling, I've yet to meet a person who is a functional spouse doing the basics or minimum toward their spouse say, "I feel great about the way I treat my spouse." They don't admit deep down they know they're not giving their marriage or their spouse their best. They know they're not truly being godly because to be godly would be to be a lover. They know they're not all in and are being selfish, which feels terrible.

Such low marriage-esteem can then continue to grow to negatively impact the marriage. Imagine two people who know they're not all in with love with their spouse. They promised God, family and friends they'd "all in" love their spouse but are failing spectacularly on a daily basis. Both individuals feel like failures because they are. They both know they're liars because they are. They both know they're in direct disobedience to the Spirit of God within them.

This scenario creates resentment and hopelessness toward their spouse for being so irresponsible with their heart and spirit. It's also the perfect scenario to build up guilt, shame and lowered self-esteem. The longer they function outside of being in all-in love, the worse everyone feels.

Thankfully, our God is a God of mercy and true love. Regardless of any sin we commit, He's not only willing to forgive us, but He empowers us to overcome sin. I can hear some of you quietly thinking, *It's not a sin the way I treat my spouse.*

For some of you, it's not, because you're already a lover-spouse, and this article is only going to validate you're a lover-spouse. However, many might feel conviction of their lack of loving their spouse as a sin. James 4:17 states, "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, it is sin."

Some of us reading this know a lot about how to love our spouse. We know what blesses them and makes them feel special, yet others often intentionally don't do it. This is a sin.

Logically, if not doing it is sin, then doing it is something really good. As believers, it's a priority to all of us to hear from the Father at the end of our lives, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

We know we want to hear such words said about who we are at work, by our neighbors and by church family. However, I believe the greatest place to hear "Well done, good and faithful servant" is in our marriage.

Our marriage provides a daily opportunity to serve in various capacities, including demonstrating the nature of Christ to our spouses and doing so in such a way that we're "all-in" lover-spouses toward the one we married.

Our Father in heaven deserves our absolute best in being lovers to our spouses. After all, God's not just our Father—He's our Father-in-law. How we treat our spouse deeply affects the way God feels about you.

If you're an "all-in" lover-spouse toward your spouse, this makes Him happy with you. If, however, you're just

functioning, tolerating or, even worse, withholding, He's not happy with you as a son- or daughter-in-law.

Take a moment and really think about God as your Father-in-law. Close your eyes and guess at what He feels about you. What would He say to you as your in-law? Would He be proud, hurt and disgusted?

I've conducted many men's, women's and marriage conferences. Every time I share that God isn't just your Father, but your Father-in-law, light bulbs go on. When I pray, "Father-in-law God" I feel the honest accountability as a lover-spouse to my wife.

God is my wife's Creator and her designer. Her God is huge. Her being a daughter of the Most High elevates Lisa to where she should be in my heart because that's where she is in His heart.

Our spouses are worthy of us being all-in lovers. This isn't based on their performance toward us. They are worthy because our Savior Christ Jesus made them worthy through His death and resurrection. They are worth His blood because He says so. So, they're worthy of us being awesome lover-spouses.

You're worthy of feeling you did your best and loved your best. You're worth the awareness that you were an "all-in" lover toward your spouse! {eo}

Doug Weiss, Ph.D., is a nationally known author, speaker and licensed psychologist. He is the executive director of Heart to Heart Counseling Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the author of several books, including his newest title Lover Spouse. You may contact Dr. Weiss via his website, , on his Facebook, by phone at 719-278-3708 or through email at heart2heart@.