

Joyce Meyer: One Golden Rule for a Happy Marriage

I think most people would agree that a good marriage isn't just going to "happen." It requires some give and take. And more than anything, the key to having a great relationship is a commitment to do things God's way.

For example, one major way I've discovered I can improve my marriage is by having an attitude of *giving*, rather than *getting*. Our natural inclination is to focus on ourselves—what we want and how we can be happy. But Acts 20:35b (NIV) says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

If you enter marriage with the mindset that your spouse should make you happy all of the time, you're setting yourself up for disaster. However, if you instead focus on choosing to be a blessing to your spouse—if you set your mind on thinking about what you can do for them—then you'll not only strengthen your marriage, but you will also become truly happy.

I admit, I used to be an incredibly selfish person. To be honest, I just plain wanted my way, and I got upset when I didn't get it. In fact, I can still remember many mornings when I would lie in bed, thinking about how I was going to get Dave to do what I wanted him to do. I was wrapped up in myself, thinking all about what *I wanted* and what others could do *for me*.

Well, one morning, as I was formulating my plan for how I was going to get everyone to do what I wanted them to do that day, the Holy Spirit interrupted my thoughts and spoke something to my heart that I'll never forget. He said, "Joyce, sometimes you remind me of a toy robot that someone winds up every morning. Then, after you're wound up, you walk around all day long, saying, '*What about me? What about me? What about me?*'"

That really got my attention! I realized then how selfish I was and began seeking God's help to change. As I started making progress, little by little, He showed me practical ways to be a blessing to my husband, Dave, rather than expecting him to always do something for me.

For example, a great place to start is learning your spouse's likes and dislikes. I discovered that Dave really values spending quality time together. So even though I'm more of a multitasker, it's important for me to give him my undivided attention when he wants to sit and talk about something.

Likewise, Dave has made an effort to learn what I like. Many times he will clean up the kitchen in the evening just because he knows how much it blesses me. It may seem like a little thing, but it goes a long way toward sustaining a healthy relationship!

Remember Acts 20:35b: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." For many years I could quote this Scripture, but I obviously didn't believe it because I spent my time trying to *be blessed* rather than *be a blessing*. But God showed me that we don't even know what "happy" is until we forget about ourselves, start focusing on others and become generous givers in every way.

I remember a few years ago when I planned a birthday party for Dave. I spent an entire day running errands, making plans and consuming myself with how I could make it a great event. By the time his birthday arrived, I was absolutely filled with joy and couldn't wait to see his reaction.

I actually think I enjoyed his birthday more than he did! Why? *Because I got my mind off myself and focused on being good to someone else.*

The truth is we can never out-give God. Even if you feel right now as if you're doing all the giving and your spouse is doing all the taking, rest assured that God will always take care of

you and bless your obedience to His Word.

Galatians 6:7 says, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." I love this! When we make a decision to be givers and spend our time focusing on how we can be good to others, God says He will find ways to bless and take care of us.

I want to encourage you to begin taking a few minutes each morning to "set" your mind in the direction of giving instead of getting. Purposely think of something you can do for your spouse that will be a blessing.

As you choose to spend time making their life better, you'll begin experiencing more happiness yourself ... and truly have a marriage you both enjoy! {eoa}

*For more on this topic, order Joyce's CD and DVD resource **Marriage**. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting .*

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times' bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries Inc. She has authored more than 100 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and *Your Battles Belong to the Lord (FaithWords)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit .