

MARRIAGE BY THE BOOK

1. LOYALTY - SHE NEEDS TO KNOW YOU'RE COMMITTED

A. When your wife asks, "Do you love me?" she's not asking for information; she's asking for reassurance.

1. A woman always likes to hear her husband exclaim, "You alone are 'my love'" - Song of Solomon 2:10
2. Your wife must have reassurance.
3. When a woman KNOWS that her husband has made a COVENANT WITH GOD and that he's trying to make Jesus the Lord of his life in every area, including his marriage, she feels more SECURE. When she is assured of her husband's love and loyalty, she is energized and motivated. This is the way God has made her, and this is why the covenant of marriage is based upon LOYALTY - until death do you part.

B. SHE IS ASSURED OF YOUR LOYALTY WHEN . . .

1. You speak highly of her in front of others.
2. You are involved in things important to her.
3. You help her make decisions, such as ones regarding the children.
4. You don't correct her in front of the children.
5. You don't look lustfully at other women.
6. You make her and your marriage a priority.
7. You are never critical of her or your children in front of others.
8. You include her in social gatherings when others may leave their spouses home.
9. You tell the kids, "Don't speak to your mother that way!"
10. You call and let her know your plans.
11. You keep commitments.
12. You speak positively of her and the children at all times.
13. You PRAY for her and with her.

2. ESTEEM - SHE WANTS YOU TO HONOR AND CHERISH HER

A. God has made women so that they want to feel ESTEEMED and HONORED

1. HONOR (respect - esteem) for women is a different kind of honor from what you seek as a man. For her, HONOR/RESPECT/ESTEEM is a part of LOVE.
 - a. Respect, honor, and esteem are not qualities in and of themselves for your wife; they are components of the LOVE she wants from you.

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- b. To put it another way, **LOVE** has many parts, and we are looking at six of them here with the acronym **C-O-U-P-L-E**.

Ephesians 5:22-33 (NASB) Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. **FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.** This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

- c. In Ephesians 5, the **HUSBAND** is the **CHRIST FIGURE**; Christ died for the church. The **WIFE** is the **CHURCH FIGURE**, and her husband is to die for her.
- d. Your wife does **NOT** want to **C-H-A-I-R** the relationship, but she **DOES WANT TO BE FIRST IN IMPORTANCE TO YOU**.
- e. Your wife wants to know that you have her on your mind and in your heart **FIRST AND FOREMOST**. This is what is meant by **"ESTEEM"**.
- 1) When **ESTEEM** is there, your wife will feel treasured as if she's the most loved woman on earth.
 - 2) Also, she will want to **RESPECT** you in a similar way that the church reverences Christ.
 - 3) Remember that your **LOVE** motivates her **RESPECT**, and her **RESPECT** motivates your **LOVE**... **"THE ENERGIZING CYCLE"**

B. USE SYMBOLS TO SHOW YOUR WIFE THAT YOU ESTEEM HER

1. Anniversaries, Birthdays, Valentines, No reason at all!

- a. **A KEY TRUTH**: the **EXPENSE** of a gift is **SECONDARY** to the **THOUGHT** your wife senses you put into the gift, card, or activity.

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- 1) God designed your wife to be touched by things that **SYMBOLIZE** your **LOVE** and show that you **TREASURE** her.
- 2) She wants to know you **THINK** about her.
- 3) She wants that to **COME FROM YOUR HEART** without any prompting.
- 4) Truly... it is the thought that counts!

C. Another way to **ESTEEM** your wife is to let her know you really **APPRECIATE ALL THAT SHE DOES**

D. YOUR WIFE WILL FEEL **ESTEEMED** WHEN . . .

1. You say, "I'm so proud of the way you handled that."
2. You speak highly of her in front of others.
3. You open the door for her.
4. You try something new with her.
5. You give her encouragement or praise with kindness and enthusiasm.
6. You notice something different about her hair or clothes.
7. You are physically affectionate with her in public.
8. You teach the children to show her and others respect.
9. You value her opinion in the gray areas as not wrong but just different - and valid.
10. You choose family outings over "guy things."
11. You make her **FEEL** first in importance.
12. You are proud of her and all she does.
13. You **PRAY** for her and with her.

3. HOW TO ASK YOUR HUSBAND TO MEET YOUR NEEDS...

A. You cannot hope to get what you need - whether it be **LOVE** or **RESPECT** - by withholding what your spouse needs most. But while you are trying to meet your spouse's needs, what happens during those moments when your needs are not being met? Must the **Energizing Cycle** sputter as the **Crazy Cycle** starts to turn? It does **NOT** help to remain mute, hoping your mate senses your deflating spirit and realizes exactly what is wrong? One of the basic skills we have been learning is how to communicate our needs to each other. Here are some "need communicators" wives can use to let each other know how they are feeling. **WIVES** can humbly and softly say:

1. **Closeness**: "When you want to work in your shop all evening and not be with me, that feels unloving. You have a right to your hobbies, but I need some face-to-face time with you too."

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2. **Openness:** “When you said you didn’t want to spend time talking about my concerns, that felt unloving to me. I know we don’t always have time to talk at length, but sometimes I need to feel reassured that everything is okay.”
3. **Understanding:** “When you gave me a quick solution to what I was trying to tell you, that felt unloving. I know you were trying to be helpful, but I really need to feel your care and you can do that by just listening and understanding.”
4. **Peacemaking:** “When you tell me to, ‘Drop it, let’s forget it, it’s over,’ that feels unloving. I know some things need forgetting, but first I need to know that you aren’t angry anymore and that we really are at peace.”
5. **Loyalty:** “When you look at other women, that feels unloving to me. I know temptations are real, but I need to know you have eyes only for me.”
6. **Esteem:** “When you make negative comments about my mothering or homemaking, that feels unloving. I know I’m not perfect and that I fail, but I need to hear from you when I do a good job, and I need your encouragement even when I don’t.”