

The Intentional Husband



Tools For Men

Lake Highlands Baptist Church
Dallas TX

Building a God-Honoring Marriage

By Kurt Bruner

No man plans to become part of a broken family or a miserable couple. We marry because we yearn for a life-long, thriving relationship. So, how can men become intentional about building a God-honoring marriage?

PRIORITY ONE – Discover God’s Design for Marriage

We must understand that every marriage is intended to be a masterpiece reflecting THE marriage between God and His people. Marriage is the most frequent metaphor used in the Bible to describe God’s relationship with His people. In fact, writing to the Ephesians, Paul called marriage a “profound mystery” because it is a picture of “Christ and the church.”

PRIORITY TWO: Commit to a Covenant Marriage

Today’s civil marriages are much like business contracts—easy to get into and easy to get out of. God’s covenant with His people was a promise to remain eternally faithful even if His people weren’t faithful in return. In covenant marriage, both spouses are committed for a lifetime—in sickness and health, for better or worse. They don’t threaten divorce or consider it as an option.

PRIORITY THREE: Pursue a Passionate Marriage

Couples aren’t supposed to just stick it out and find a way to make their marriages survive. God calls us to pursue a passionate, thriving marriage. The Song of Solomon expresses the kind of love, joy and celebration God designed for marriage. That passion is built on much more than infatuation and sexual desire. It is rooted in the physical, emotional and spiritual intimacy God created couples to experience as a foretaste of the eternal unity, communion and intimacy we can have with God.

PRIORITY FOUR: Become Heroic in Marriage

Christ made the ultimate sacrifice to rescue humanity. Writing to the Ephesians, Paul connected Christ’s sacrifice directly to marriage: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25) and “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands” (Ephesians 5:24). In other words, mutual submission to one another requires giving up our own interests to heroically serve the other person.

PRIORITY FIVE: Fight for Your Marriage

Every couple will mess up. Too often, however, they also choose to give up. Throughout scripture, God fights for His relationship with His people, remaining faithful in the face of unfaithfulness. He forgives again and again. No couple can avoid strife and arguments, but we can avoid giving the “devil a foothold” in our marriages by keeping short accounts and quickly restoring the relationship regardless of what happens.

PRIORITY SIX: Take Initiative

Men are called to move beyond passivity by taking initiative when it comes to nurturing a strong marriage. Take advantage of the *Going Further* ideas below to get started now.

GOING FURTHER

Recommended Books: (**Books marked with an asterisk are available in the Faith@Home Center*)

- ***Marriage 101** is a concise guide to marriage which pulls principles from numerous other books on marriage
- ***The Five Love Languages** (by Gary Chapman) describes how to discover and serve your spouse's unique love languages.
- **A Celebration of Sex** (by Dr. Douglas Rosenau) is a guide to enjoying God's gift of sexual intimacy.

Recommended Websites:

- www.ArtOfManliness.com is a blog dedicated to uncovering the lost art of being a man. Although Brett McKay, the founder of the online magazine, is a Christian, his articles, videos, and podcast cover a wide array of manly topics.
- www.FocusOnTheFamily.com has hundreds of articles and recommendations to strengthen marriages.
- www.NikSchatz.com is Nik's personal blog on family ministry.

At LHBC:

- **The Faith@Home Center**
The center is stocked with resources to help disciple you to be a godly man and prepare you for a God-honoring marriage.
- **Journey Groups**
To get plugged into one of LHBC's Journey Groups, where you can make friends and form accountability, contact the church office at info@lhbc.com.
- **Marriage Mentoring**
Seasoned, experienced couples at LHBC have been trained to mentor other married couples, one-on-one. If you are a member of LHBC, and would like to either (1) Prepare for marriage (engaged couples), (2) Maximize a good marriage, or (3) Repair a distressed marriage, email Nik@LHBC.com to find out more.

How to Pray with your Wife

By Nik Schatz

Many husbands do not pray with their wife. Why? I think it's because (1) they don't know what to say, (2) they are nervous about initiating a prayer, (3) they view their relationship with God as a private matter and not a family matter. But this is one of the most important things you can do as a spiritual leader of your home. If you are unsure how to start, or what to say, here are four tips.

How to Pray with your Wife:

1. Have a regular time to pray. My wife and I pray every night right before going to sleep. It's difficult to establish a daily habit of praying with your wife, but once you do, it will become second nature.
2. Touch your wife while praying. Hold your wife's hand, embrace her, put your hand on her knee - touch her in some way while you are praying to reaffirm her.
3. Ask if there is anything she would like you to pray about. You may not know of some things going on with her at work or at home, or some things she is secretly worried about. Just ask, and she'll tell you!
4. Pray! There are four things you should specifically pray for every time you and your spouse pray (see below).

What Should I Pray For?

1. Pray not only with your wife, but also for your wife. Pray for her to have wisdom, be protected, to excel at work, to become a better woman, to flourish in all areas of her life. Let her hear you pray for her in very specific ways.
2. Pray for your children and grandchildren, or your future family. Ask God to mold your children's hearts, ask Him to help you form good character qualities in them, and ask for wisdom and discretion in your parenting.
3. Pray for your future.
4. Pray for specific things going on in your marriage and family right now.

Start Tonight

That's it - it's that simple! Just start praying with your wife every day, no matter how awkward or forced it may seem at first. After a few short weeks, it will become second nature, and your wife will love you taking the spiritual lead!

Love and Respect in Marriage

Advance Preparation

- Schedule a dinner or coffee date
- Each spouse should listen to track 2 of the Faith@Home audio CD's, "Love and Respect in Marriage", available in the Faith@Home Center.
- Each spouse should spend a few minutes writing down answers to the questions below. On your date, discuss your answers.

HUSBANDS

Read aloud Ephesians 5:25-28 and answer the following questions...

- Do you agree that your wife's primary marital need is to be cherished by you?
- What are some of the ways you try to show her sacrificial love?
- What are 2-3 ways she needs you to show love but that you might find difficult?
- What do you think your wife would say if invited to offer a few "baby step" suggestions on better meeting her needs?

WIVES

Read aloud Ephesians 5:22-24 and answer the following questions...

- Do you agree that your husband needs to feel respected?
- What are some of the ways you try to show that you admire and respect him?
- What are 2-3 things he would appreciate but might be more difficult for you to do?
- What do you think your husband would say if invited to offer a few "baby step" suggestions on better meeting his needs?

TOGETHER

Read aloud Ephesians 5:31-33. Then hold hands and pray these words...

Dear God:

Help us to better fulfill the purpose of our marriage by modeling the relationship between Christ and His Bride.

Amen

New Marriage Connections

Time of Celebration

Whether you are celebrating a wedding anniversary or just want to become more intentional about fostering intimacy, take time to dream up one new thing to do together for each year you have been married. For example: If you are celebrating your 8th anniversary, plan 8 new dreams or things that you want to do together during the coming year. Plan them out on the calendar to make it happen!

1. **Dream storm:** Make a list of dreams or activities that you would both like to do together. Some items may be something you both want to do and some might be sharing activities that you know your spouse wants to do. Ex: You know that your spouse would love to take a cooking class, find a cooking class that you can both go to together and enjoy. Make sure your list includes some good free options and ideas that are not too difficult to pull off. Aim for fun, realistic ideas.
2. **Make it happen:** As part of the date, go ahead and start the research and calendar out when you will go do these activities together. This might be as simple as calendaring one activity a month and deciding on details later. As part of your planning, identify some necessary steps towards making each happen.

Optional Extra Credit: Get a journal or scrapbook that you can use to save ticket stubs, pictures and special memorabilia from all of your times together. Celebrate your next anniversary or date night after you have completed all of your dreams by going through your journal/scrapbook and thanking the Lord for all of His blessings in your relationship.

Honey-Do List for Romance

Every house demands attention: dirty windows, squeaky doors, broken blinds, and the like. These projects end up on what your wife might label a *honey-do list*: tasks she wants you to handle that may or may not match your own list of priorities. Conflict can emerge when things on her list aren't as important to you as they are to her. In like manner, every husband and wife has a different honey-do list when it comes to romance.

What expressions of love carry the most meaning for your wife? How does her list differ from yours? Things that seem romantic to you may not spark the same feelings in your wife and what might "turn her on" may have little effect on you.

Assignment #1: Take turns identifying "gifts" that make you feel loved.

- Give me a hug
- Kiss me goodnight
- Kiss me before work
- Pray with me
- Come home on time
- Call during the day
- Say you're proud of me
- Wink/whistle at me
- Come to bed when I do
- Text you're thinking about me
- Make my favorite meal
- Show interest in my work
- Bring me flowers
- Write me a note
- Take a walk with me
- Flirt with me
- Play with the kids
- Surprise me with a small gift
- Compliment me
- Ignore phone while with me
- Help me around the house
- Nibble my neck
- Rub my feet
- Hold my hand

Assignment #2: Take turns identifying the *three* most meaningful expressions of love to add to one another's honey-do lists. Suggestions can come from the above list or not. If your spouse says cleaning a cluttered kitchen shows love, write it down! Keep the short list with you to trigger simple, positive and practical ways of saying "I love you" in the weeks ahead!

Assignment #3: Hold hands and pray this simple prayer together...

Lord, thank you for making us unique. Help us to communicate our love for each other more often and in meaningful ways. As we do, remind us that loving each other is one way that we show our love for you. Amen