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Loving a Man

Last month's newsletter explored the topic of loving a woman. So, this month, it is time to turn the tables and talk about loving a man. Ladies and sisters in Christ, here are some thoughts on loving the man in your life...

1...Let God father you. First and foremost, a woman needs to bring her identity and brokenness to God. Let Him father you, bringing you the love and validation you need. Man was not meant to complete you but to complement you. (For some women, relating to God as Father can be challenging due to the brokenness of earthly dads. If you want to explore this...check out *A Dad-Shaped Hole in My Heart* by H. Norman Wright or *Father Hunger* by Robert S. McGee)

2...Know His story. Do you know about his early years? His childhood adventures? What about his relationship with his Dad? How did his dad show love, affection...did he get validated from his dad...did he hear the words "I love you" and "I am proud of you"? And what about his mother? Was she merciful or controlling? What did she show him about relating to a woman? And what was their marriage like? What about his relationships with women prior to you? And...his wounds, hurts, struggles in masculinity?

3...Know his core fears. Every man's life is asking some form of the question, "Do I have what it takes?" As men, we want to come through and our deepest fears are around failure. Whether career, finances, relationships, or simply mowing the yard, we don't want to mess it up and fail you, fail God, or fail others. As a woman, this helps you understand the lens through which a man sees life and makes decisions.

4...Respect and Trust. As a man, I feel loved when I feel trusted. Trust my decisions and trust my leadership. A man's *validation* comes through the Father and through a company of men. But a woman carries a primary role in providing *affirmation*. A man will often feel disrespected when treated like a boy or "mothered." To try to tame a man or mother him is to say "I don't trust you."

5...Need him without being needy of him. Both sides of that are important. This frees him up to grow as a man without all the pressure. Give him space to be a man. When he wants some adventure, time alone...let him go. A man needs places in his life where he has room to be a man. Most men find their hours filled in a cubicle or office, grinding at the job, meeting deadlines, and trying to muster up a living...this can suffocate a man's heart. A woman loves a man when she says "Go" and doesn't "keep score."

6...Submission versus vulnerability. I fear that we have butchered Ephesians 5 over the years...the whole "submission" thing. Let me offer a more fitting term for what Paul was getting at. "Be vulnerable" with your husband. One of the greatest gifts a woman gives to her man is her vulnerability. To be vulnerable is to entrust your heart to him. And that's really what he wants.

7...Challenge him privately...not in front of the kids. But yes, do challenge him. Be strong and confident enough as a woman to challenge something in him. But be wise in choosing the right setting.

8...Sexually...how does a man want to be loved? It is such a gift for Eve to offer her beauty to her man. He wants your heart, your vulnerability, your strength, and your beauty. This is true in the context of sex in marriage. To offer her body is to offer her beauty. The euphoria, transcendence of sex for a man...never gets old. What a man most enjoys and yearns for with sex...it is a celebration of intimacy and life together. Not just 2 bodies coming together. Not just a physical act. If he hears the words... "OK, let's get this done... I got laundry to put up" or "I just don't feel like it"...it shuts a man down and crushes his spirit. Entice him...lure him...

A woman brings beauty into a home, into relationships. Don't shy away from your beauty. Be playful with your beauty. (Obviously, a woman has to be comfortable in her own skin and confident in her loveliness and daughtership with God. This goes back to the first point of being fathered by God.)

9...Be a student of his heart...his masculine heart. Take some time to read and study the masculine journey. If you have sons, that's an added incentive for doing this. A man's core desires, fears, and brokenness are uniquely different from a woman. God meant something when He created man. Know and be familiar with the masculine journey. (If you want some specific recommendations on resources/books, shoot me an email randy@lifeministriesnow.com.)

Thanks for hearing our hearts...and for loving your man well!
Randy

*Over the years, we have asked men to answer the question, "How do you want to be loved, as a man?"
Here are some of their answers...insights into a man's heart...some of these will surprise you...*

Chase after dreams with me
Feeling appreciated for going the extra mile and providing for the family
Respected, valued, and appreciated
Know my heart and my dreams
Allow me to be a leader
Light up when she sees me
Encouragement, affirmation...smiles and laughter
Understand that I can't flip a switch and be "emotionally-ON"
Physical touch...non-sexual and sexual
Pray for me and trust me
Respect my ideas and opinions
Don't expect me to read your mind
Openly discuss life together
Intimate sex on a regular basis goes a long way
When I am her focus...not her job and not facebook
To know she thinks about me, even when we are not together
Affirmation that I'm a good husband and father
Please don't mother me...I'm not another child in the home
Present a united front to the kids...discuss disagreements behind closed doors
Affection
Understand the weight I carry...of providing for the needs of our family
I want to be her knight in shining armor
I want her to be proud of me
Know that I am trying really hard...extend grace and forgiveness
I want her to desire me
Initiate intimate time with me
Be my true partner through thick and thin
Encourage...don't attack or accuse
Relax some and don't feel like you always have to accomplish something
Love me enough to allow/encourage me to pursue some manly adventures