

Solid Husbands Resource Packet

Do you remember the first time you met? In the first few days/weeks of your relationship, what kind of “chemistry” took place between the two of you? What happened in those early moments of your relationship resulted in a deep love for one another? As you prayerfully work through the activities in this packet, you can stoke the fire of your marriage, keeping it burning hot and strong.

His Needs – Her Needs Survey

Rate these ten basic marital needs on order of importance to you and your spouse. First rank yourself. Then rank for your spouse. For each of you, put a “1” before the most important need, a “2” before the next most important need, and so on, until you have ranked all ten needs.

When you are finished, show each other your answers. Talk about areas where each of you missed an important need to your spouse. Evaluate how well you are meeting each other’s needs. Select activities in this packet that will help you grow in deficient areas.

His **Her**
Needs **Needs**

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--|
| ___ | ___ | <u>Affection</u> : Meaningful, non-sexual touching, hugging, kissing, caressing. Receiving small expressions of love make you feel valued by your spouse (small gifts, phone call, text, “I love you”). |
| ___ | ___ | <u>Sexual Relations</u> : Not just making love, but making love with feeling and interest. |
| ___ | ___ | <u>Conversation</u> : not just superficial, but meaningful conversations. Taking time to communicate. |
| ___ | ___ | <u>Recreational Companionship</u> : Doing things together: hobbies, interests, activities, going places. |
| ___ | ___ | <u>Honesty & Openness</u> : Being able to trust your partner totally. No lying, deception, or hiding things. |
| ___ | ___ | <u>Attractiveness of Spouse</u> : Having a good looking spouse. |
| ___ | ___ | <u>Financial Support</u> : feeling you have enough money to support you, not feeling strapped all the time. |
| ___ | ___ | <u>Domestic Support</u> : Feeling that home is a place to relax and have peace and quiet. |
| ___ | ___ | <u>Family Commitment</u> : Feeling that parenting is a team effort, not one-sided. Feeling that you are partners in raising children and that your spouse is interested in and committed to the family. |
| ___ | ___ | <u>Admiration</u> : Feeling your spouse is proud of you. They recognize and appreciate you for what you <u>already are</u> and for your present achievements, not for what you could become. |
| ___ | ___ | <u>Other</u> : _____ |

*This survey and much of the material in this handout and resource packet is based on the book, **His Needs, Her Needs** by Willard F. Harley Jr. The book goes more in-depth on the above needs and shows a couple how to “affair proof” their marriage and create greater intimacy and closeness. It’s a good idea to talk about how you are doing in meeting each other’s needs on a regular basis. There is also a 6-week DVD curriculum and participants guide for small groups.*

The Love Bank

Each person has a "**LOVE BANK**". The Love Bank is an inner scoring device that you have probably never realized you had. It contains different accounts, one for each person we know. Each person either makes deposits or withdrawals whenever we interact with him or her.

- ⇒ **Pleasurable** interactions cause deposits.
- ⇒ **Painful** interactions cause withdrawals.

As life goes on, the accounts in our Love Bank fluctuate. Some of our friends and acquaintances build sizeable deposits. Others remain in the black but have small balances, perhaps because of fewer interactions with us. A third group builds up still smaller balances because our experiences with them are mixed, sometimes pleasant, sometimes painful. For these people, deposits almost equal withdrawals.

Other people go into the red with us. That means they cause us more pain than pleasure. We never feel good when we think of them and do not want to see them or be with them. In short, their accounts at our Love Banks are overdrawn.

You are not really aware that "banking" has been taking place but this happens all the time. The Love Bank never closes.

The Love Bank in Marriage

When a couple dates, they make a lot of deposits: phone calls, texts, love letters (for those over 40), cards, gifts, dates, flowers. They had many pleasurable experiences. On the flipside, they had very few withdrawals. They built up a big balance in their Love Bank account.

Then They get married and get busy with their careers, demands at work, home projects, paying bills, and running a household. They are involved in ministry at church. Then comes a child or two or...! While they love their kids, they take time, effort, and energy.

As married life continues, many married couples stop making deposits into each other's accounts. Slowly their positive balance dwindles. Couples stop meeting each other's needs due to busyness of their lives. This is where marital unhappiness begins.

The Love Bank Concept accounts for: affairs & divorces, loneliness, isolation, fights, and lack of intimacy in marriage. Affairs come in when a friend, an acquaintance, a colleague, someone we encounter at work, the health club, a team or group we are a part of, begins to make deposits into our Love Bank. As their balance grows and our spouse's declines it causes problems. One feels like he or she is falling out of love with their spouse and "falling into love" with someone else. The truth is, as a couple, you stopped making deposits.

Generally, what "fills" a woman's love bank is the exact opposite of what fills a man's Love Bank. Many times couples try to meet their spouses need through the lense of their needs. We tend to give what we want back in return. The problem is, our spouse generally prioritizes a completely different set of needs so that our efforts don't make deposits. We must discover the needs of our spouse and then intentionally and diligently strive to fulfill them.

Use the survey on the first page to evaluate your needs as a couple. Have an honest conversation about your needs and get ready for the fun to begin!

Affection

Ways A Husband May Express Love & Affection to His Wife

(How to Convince Your Wife You Love Her)

Evaluate the way you express love to your wife. Circle the ways you are neglecting. Ask your wife to go over the list and put a check mark in front of the ways she would like you to express love, and an x where you are already doing things she likes. Ask her to add other things to the list.

You may express love to your wife by:

1. Functioning as the loving leader of your home.
2. Telling her you love her frequently.
3. Giving her a regular amount of money to spend in any way she chooses.
4. Leading family devotions regularly.
5. Smiling and being cheerful when you come home from work.
6. Helping her wash and dry the dishes at least twice a week.
7. Taking care of the children for at least three hours every week so that she has free time to do whatever she wants.
8. Taking her out for dinner or to do some fun thing at least once a week. Take the responsibility to make the reservations, arrange child care, buy the tickets, etc.
9. Doing the "fix-it" jobs she wants done around the house.
10. Greeting her when you come home with a smile, a hug, a kiss and an "Am I glad to see you. I really missed you today." Spend a few minutes talking to her about how her day went.
11. Giving her a lingering kiss.
12. Patting her on the shoulder or fanny or holding her hand or caressing her frequently.
13. Being willing to talk to her about her concerns and not belittle her for having those concerns.
14. Looking at her with an adoring expression.
15. Sitting close to her.
16. Rubbing her back or feet or _____.
17. Shaving or taking a bath or brushing your teeth before you have sex relations.
18. Wearing her favorite cologne/after-shave lotion.
19. Writing love notes or letters to her.
20. Letting her know you appreciate her and what you appreciate about her. Do this often and for things that are sometimes taken for granted. Make her convinced that she is great and very important to you.
21. Doing the dishes while she relaxes or takes a bubble bath.
22. Fulfilling her implied or unspoken desires and wishes as well as the specific requests she makes of you. Anticipate what she might desire and surprise her by doing it before she asks.
23. Playing with her; sharing her hobbies and recreational preferences enthusiastically; including her in yours.
24. Seeking to set a good example before the children.
25. Talking about her favorably to the children when she can hear you and when she cannot.
26. Bragging about her good points as a wife and in every other area to others; letting her know you are proud to have her as your wife.
27. Maintaining your own spiritual life through Bible study, prayer, regular church attendance and fellowship with God's people.
28. Handling your affairs decently and in order; structuring your time and using it wisely.
29. Making plans prayerfully and carefully.
30. Asking her advice when you have problems or decisions to make.
31. Following her advice unless to do so would violate biblical principles.
32. Fulfilling your responsibilities.
33. Being sober, but not somber about life.
34. Having a realistic, biblical, positive attitude toward life.
35. Discussing plans with your wife before you make decisions and when the plans are made share them fully with your wife, giving reasons for making the decisions you did.

36. Thanking her in creative ways for her attempts to please you.
37. Asking forgiveness often and saying, "I was wrong and will try to change."
38. Actually changing where and when you should.
39. Sharing your insights, reading, good experiences with her.
40. Planning for a mini-honeymoon where the two of you can do whatever you want to do.
41. Giving a low whistle or some other expression of admiration when she wears a new dress or your favorite negligee or ...
42. Gently brushing her leg under the table.
43. Being reasonably happy to go shopping with her.
44. Relating what happened at work or whatever you did apart from her.
45. Reminiscing about the early days of your marriage.
46. Expressing appreciation for her parents and relatives.
47. Taking her out to breakfast.
48. Agreeing with her about getting a new dress or some other item.
49. Thanking her when she supports your decisions and cooperates enthusiastically at times when you know she doesn't fully agree.
50. Asking her to have sexual relations with you and seeking to be especially solicitous of her desires. Express gratitude when she tries to please you.
51. Buying gifts for her.
52. Remembering anniversaries and other events that are special to her.
53. Cheerfully and enthusiastically watching the TV program or going where she wants to go instead of doing what you want
54. Being cooperative and appreciative when she holds you, caresses or kisses you.
55. Being cooperative when she tries to arouse you and desires to have sexual relations. Never make fun of her for expressing her desires.
56. Running errands gladly.
57. Pampering her and making a fuss over her.
58. Being willing to see things from her point of view.
59. Being lovingly honest with her - no backdoor messages - no withholding of the truth that may hinder your present or future relationship.
60. Indicating you want to be alone with her and talk or just lie in each other's arms.
61. Refusing to "cop out", "blow up", attack, shift blame, withdraw, or exaggerate when she seeks to make constructive suggestions or discuss problems.
62. Giving her your undivided attention when she wants to talk.
63. Cheerfully staying up until ? o'clock to solve a problem or share her burdens.
64. Getting up in the middle of the night to take care of the children so that she may continue to sleep.
65. By holding her close while expressing tangible and vocal love when she is hurt, discouraged, weary or burdened.
66. Planning vacations and trips with her.
67. Sometimes helping her yourself instead of telling the children to "help mommy."
68. Being eager to share a good joke or some other interesting information you have learned.
69. Joining with her in a team ministry in the church.
70. Doing a Bible study or research project together.
71. Establishing a family budget.
72. Keeping yourself attractive and clean.
73. Being cooperative, helpful, as a co-host when you have people in for dinner or fellowship.
74. Asking her to pray with you about something.
75. Spending time with the children in play, study and communication.
76. Acknowledging that there are some specific areas or ways in which you need to improve.
77. Refusing to disagree with her in the presence of others.
78. Cooperating with her in establishing family goals and then in fulfilling them.
79. Being available and eager to fulfill her desires whenever and wherever possible and proper.

80. Beginning each day with cheerfulness and tangible expressions of affection.
81. Planning to spend some time alone with her for sharing and communicating every day.
82. Remembering to tell her when you must work late.
83. Refusing to work late on a regular basis.
84. Taking care of the yard work properly.
85. Helping the children with their homework.
86. Refusing to compare her unfavorably with other people.
87. Handling money wisely.
88. Not allowing work, church or recreational activities to keep you from fulfilling marriage or family responsibilities.
89. Trying to find things to do with her.
90. Being willing to go out or stay home with her.
91. Being polite, courteous and mannerly with her.
92. Refusing to be overly dependent on your parents or friends.
93. Developing mutual friends.
94. Providing adequate health insurance.
95. Trying to the level of your ability to provide housing and some support for your family in case you should die or become handicapped.
96. Being especially helpful and solicitous when she is not feeling well.
97. Being on time.
98. Going to PTA or parent-teacher conferences with her.
99. Letting her sleep in once in a while by getting the children breakfast and, if possible, off to school.
100. Frequently giving in to her and allowing her to have her own way unless to do so would be sinful.
101. Bathing and putting the children to bed at night.
102. Being gentle and tender and holding her before and after sexual relations.
103. Not nit-picking and finding fault, and giving the impression that you expect her to be perfect.
104. Hug and kiss your wife every morning, while you are still in bed.
105. Tell her that you love her, while you're having breakfast together.
106. Kiss her before you leave for work.
107. Call her during the day, to see how she is doing.
108. Bring her flowers/a rose once in a while as a surprise (be sure to include a card that expresses your love for her).
109. Gifts for special occasions (birthday, anniversary, Christmas, Mother's Day, and Valentine's Day) should be sentimental, not practical. Learn how to shop for a woman.
110. After work, call her before you leave for home, so that she can know when to expect you.
111. Hug and kiss her every night, before you both go to sleep.
112. Give her a greeting card or a note expressing love and care.
113. Open the door (cars, houses, restaurants, and so on) for her at every opportunity.
114. Go for a walk after dinner.
115. Have a conversation with her using thoughtful and loving expressions.

FOUR DESIRES A WIFE HAS FOR HER HUSBAND

1. SOMEONE TO BE KIND AND CONSIDERATE TO THEM
2. SOMEONE TO BE ROMANTIC AND AFFECTIONATE.
3. A GOOD FATHER FOR THEIR CHILDREN.
4. A GOOD PROVIDER.

Sexual Relations

Sexual relations is not just going through the motion of the sex act, but it includes the giving of oneself emotionally as well as physically. ***It's not just making love, but making love with feeling and interest.*** This doesn't mean sex has to be wild and passionate each time. Tenderness and gentleness should be intermingled. Respect for your partner is always a must.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT IS THAT THE FOCUS IN LOVE-MAKING IS ON THE GIVING OF ONESELF COMPLETELY TO THE OTHER. It's not like, "Let's just get this over with." It's not that we have to; it's we want to. And it is not, "What can I get from you?" Instead, it is, "How can I give you pleasure and joy?" Making love is the unselfish giving of yourself to your spouse.

Sex...Dirty or Divine?

Some have been taught that sex is dirty. But as we look at Scripture, we see sex is given by God not the devil. The Lord says sex is great when it is done His way! Clearly, God is pro-sex:

- Hebrews 13:4—*"Marriage is 'honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."*
- Proverbs 5:18-19—*"Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth. ¹⁹As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; And always be enraptured [intoxicated] with her love."*
- Genesis 2:25—*"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."*
- 1 Corinthians 7:3-5—*"Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. ⁴The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. ⁵Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."*
- Song of Solomon—*God devoted an entire book on love, romance, marriage and sex.*

The Sex "Drive"

How different life would be if there were no motor vehicles. They produce so many benefits. But when taken outside of the proper boundaries and onto someone's yard, the sidewalk, or the wrong side of the road—cars become destructive.

The same can be said for sex. Our sex drive must be kept within proper boundaries. Otherwise sex becomes ugly and destructive instead an incredible gift from God. And by the way, God decides what the boundaries are for sex, not humankind:

- Sex is for only inside of marriage—between one man and one woman for life – Hebrews 13:4; Proverbs 5; Romans 1:26-27; Leviticus 20:10,13.
- Matthew 5:27-28 applies to:
 - ✓ No pornography in private.
 - ✓ No porn in the bedroom during lovemaking.
 - ✓ No fantasizing about someone besides your spouse while making love –
- Creativity is okay, but do not force your partner to do something they are uncomfortable with – 1 Corinthians 13:5.

Resources:

- Tim LaHaye, *The Act of Marriage: The Beauty of Sexual Love*

- Dr. Ed & Gay Wheat, Intended for Pleasure: Sexual Technique & Sexual Fulfillment in Christian Marriage
- Tommy Nelson, The Song of Solomon: A Study of Love, Sex, Marriage, & Romance

Differences Between Men and Women in Lovemaking
(These are generalities and do not necessarily apply to all men or women)

Men

1. Primarily aroused by visual means.
2. Are aroused easily, as quick as a few seconds. May be aroused to sex many times a day.
3. What lovemaking means to a man: a) It satisfies his sex drive. Men have a stronger sexual desire. Sex is a need. b) It fulfills his manhood.
4. Needs his wife to join him, not just go through the motions to please him.
5. Can climax quickly. Usually does not need near as much physical stimulation as a lady. When the man is inside the woman, he can ejaculate fairly quickly.
6. Afterwards, men are ready to do something else: read the paper, watch TV, go to bed, etc. After climax, they are uninterested in sex. This has ruined many honeymoons.

Women

1. Arousal comes from mindset, an emotional attachment to the man.
 - Aroused more by qualities like: affection, kindness, tender sensitivity, warmth of personality, attentiveness, etc. than by techniques or visual. These qualities make a women feel that the man understands her and knows how to take care of her.
 - Want man to be aware of her as a person, not a sex partner.
 - If guy's been grumpy, in his own world all night, or rough in his physical touch instead of being tender and kind—don't expect the lady to want to make love.
2. She's generally not aroused in an instant. This "arousal mindset" takes time to develop.
 - If there is stress in the home, she may need to first feel that everything is going to be okay. Husband has to talk about it, work through it, give security.
 - If there's conflict between them, it needs to be resolved first so she can give herself to lovemaking.
3. What love making means to a woman: companionship - it reassures her of her husband's love. Sex itself is not a need, but the affection and caring that comes out of lovemaking is a need. ***Sex for a woman is more emotional caring than a physical act.*** That's why the flowers, candlelight, music, little gifts, conversation, tender touching, embracing, kissing need to be sprinkled generously and regularly throughout one's marriage for the sexual dimension to be fulfilling to both. Many times after a while of being married, the men stop showing the affection and then wonder what happened to their sex life.
4. She requires much more physical stimulation to be ready for lovemaking.
Caressing her body--especially breasts and nipples, stimulation of the area surrounding the clitoris.
5. She takes much more time to climax.
Thus, men need to spend a lot of time on #4 to prepare her and even then use restraint from ejaculating too soon. "Men are like microwaves, ladies are like crockpots."
6. Afterwards, women generally have a deep desire for some affection: be held in arms, caress body, talk together.

Conversation

Rarely do you hear men say, “Why isn’t my wife talking to me?” Usually women ask that question. In dating/courtship, you’re trying to get to know the other person and to make a good impression. After marriage, the thrill of the chase is over, the goal has been obtained and one or both partners move on to other goals--career, hobbies, interests (*usually men do this more than women*). They don’t realize that an intimate, satisfying marriage needs continual investment.

Conversation doesn’t mean only sharing about your day. To satisfy a woman’s need, the conversation must focus on the events of her day, people **she** has encountered, and most of all--*how she feels* about them. *It is not just exchanging clichés or superficialities.*

⇒ How often would you like to have your spouse talk with you? _____ time(s) each day/week.

How To Not Grow Apart

1. You Need to Find Areas of Mutual Interest & Develop Them.

If a husband has his sphere of interests & a wife has hers and they don’t overlap, they will only grow farther and farther apart. The more interests they have in common, the more they have to talk about.

2. Balance the Conversation

- Allow time for the other person to talk. It may take a few seconds, but be quiet and give them time to respond. Don’t blabber all the time or dominate the conversation.
- ***LISTEN: Seek first to understand before seeking to be understood.***

Climbing the “LADDER” to Better Listening

L - **Look** at the speaker: Meanings are not in words, but in people.

A - **Ask** questions. Questions clarify their meaning and help us go deeper to see how they truly feel.

D - **Don’t interrupt**: It’s just as rude to step on people’s ideas as it is to step on their toes.

D - **Don’t** change the subject.

E - Check your **Emotions**. Emotions create a storm and others will back away. If you blow up, people will clam up. Or if you start to cry and manipulate with your emotions, people won’t be honest and open in their communication.

R - **Responsive** listening: Respond to what they say, don’t ignore it. Respond with actions. Also, at major intervals in the conversation, sum up what you have understood them to communicate to see if you have accurately heard them.

3. Use Conversation to Inform, Investigate, and Understand Your Spouse

- **Inform** of personal interests, activities, and events.
- **Investigate** each other’s personal feelings & attitudes without trying to change your spouse.
- **Understand** each other’s life motivation--what makes you happy, sad, inspires.

4. Give Undivided Attention

No football games during a conversation.

5. Respect Your Spouse

- Respect is giving words & actions that demonstrate the value and worth you place on your spouse.

- It means causing your spouse to feel more important to you than other people or things.
- ***Showing respect or disrespect is a choice you make.***

6. Be Honest

- Honesty will develop trust between you and your spouse and bring you closer. An attitude of trust requires a willingness to be open with each other--not holding back your feelings just because you'd rather please the other or that you may hurt them. You choose to be trustworthy or untrustworthy.

7. Look for Qualities, Areas, and Achievements to Affirm and Praise

- I appreciate your sensitivity, punctuality, hard work, positive attitude.
- Thank you for the great job you always do with our laundry/keeping the yard kept up.
- You did a fantastic job on that project you were working on.

Conversation Killers

1) Using Conversation to Punish Each Other

This makes major love-bank withdrawals. It's mental and emotional abuse.

- DON'T name-call, blast each other, yell, swear, criticize.
- DON'T use "never" or "always".
- DON'T antagonize: knowing what gets under their skin & focusing on it to make them mad.
- DON'T withdraw communication, give the cold shoulder or the "silent" treatment.
- NEVER LET ANGER CONTROL YOU--when you are angry, say that you are & back away until things cool off. Then come back with a gentle, thoughtful attitude and talk (James 1:19-20).

2) Using Conversation to Force Agreement to Your Way of Thinking

Never force your spouse to agree with you. If you can't come to an agreement, learn to respect their opinion and try to gain a greater understanding of its background. ***[If you run into a major disagreement during courtship--values on children, abortion, God, church--you should reconsider marriage as it could cause you to be divided from the start and not be headed in the same direction.]***

3) Unresolved Conflict

- **DON'T LET PROBLEMS BUILD UP.** Go to them one on one (Matt. 18:15). If they don't know there is a problem, they can't solve it. It will only get worse so share it with them within 24 hours. You may need a cooling off period before talking about it if you're really upset about it. In this case it is okay to withdraw for a while, but "don't let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph. 4:26).
- **HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE WHEN CONFRONTING.** This is often the key to people receiving or rejecting correction. Use a calm, quiet tone of voice (Pro. 15:1). Be humble--not proud, arrogant, self-righteous, or a know-it-all.
- **THINK BEFORE SPEAKING & SPEAK SLOWLY**--don't rush words, this helps keep the emotional level low and helps you phrase your words properly (James 1:19).
- **SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE**--no exaggerating (you always/never), no lies or deception. Be gentle, sensitive, and loving--but be open and truthful (Eph. 4:15). Do this also when you are responding to your spouse's criticism of you. Don't just accept all the blame and ignore their offenses if they committed any. Good communication is a two-way street.
- **DON'T JUSTIFY YOURSELF, SHIFT BLAME, OR BECOME DEFENSIVE.** When

others tell us of our mistakes, we often try to justify our failure or cast blame elsewhere. Don't take it personally, feeling that you're no good or being attacked. No one enjoys criticisms, corrections, or being told what they did wrong, but the truth is that we all blow it. Accept it at face value. Ask how and why? For example, your wife says, "You don't care for me." Ask "Why do you say that? What do I do to make you feel that way? How can I make you feel that I truly care about you?"

- ADMIT FAULT & APOLOGIZE--when you are wrong admit it and seek forgiveness. Make restitution where needed.
- FORGIVE YOUR SPOUSE--verbally and emotionally forgive and release them. Unforgiveness causes you to become critical and negative. With forgiveness, healing comes to both you and the relationship. ***Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling!!***

4) Dwelling on Mistakes, Past or Present

Once something has been worked through between the two of you, let it go. Do not continually bring it up in further conversations or confrontations. Don't even bring it up in jest with your spouse or with others. When God forgives us, He doesn't keep reminding us of our past. We should show our spouse the same kind of love and consideration.

Recreational Activities for Couples

When you were dating, you spent much time doing things together. After a couple is married—jobs, busy schedules, children, etc. all vie for your time. It is important to keep having fun together. Schedule a regular date night weekly or at least every other week. Swap babysitting with another couple if you are strapped for cash, but prioritize taking time for each other.

Below is a list of potential activities you can do together as a couple. Circle any of the following activities that you enjoy. By “enjoy” it means *some* degree of pleasure, not total excitement or delight. However, anything toward which you feel indifferent should not make the list. Be sure to add any other activities you like that may not be listed.

When you are both finished, combine your sheets into one list. Then, both of you should rate each activity on a scale from minus 4 (absolutely hate) to plus 4 (absolutely love). When you are finished, eliminate any activity on the list to which either of you do not both assign a positive score. **The only remaining activities should be those in which both partners will have assigned positive value.** This exercise usually produces a list of 10-15 activities couples can do together. Schedule your dates around these activities.

acrobatics	deck tennis	lacrosse	skydiving
acting	decorating	lawn bowling	snowmobiling
aerobics	dining out	lawn tennis	soccer
antique collecting	diving	metalwork	softball
archery	drawing	model building	spear fishing
art collecting	engraving	mountain climbing	stamp collecting
auto customizing	falconry	movie-going	storytelling
badminton	fencing	needlework	surfing
ballet	field events	operas	swimming
basketball	fishing	painting	table tennis
bicycling	flying	pall-mall	taxidermy
board games	football	play going	television
boating	gardening	poetry	tennis
bobsledding	golf	polo	tobogganing
bowling	ham radio	puppeteering	toy making
boxing	handball	puzzles	track events
bridge	hang gliding	quilting	trapping
camping	hiking	racquetball	trapshooting
canoeing	hockey	rafting	traveling
checkers	horseback riding	reading	volleyball
chess	horseshoe	roller-skating	walking
coin collecting	pitching	rowing	water polo
computer programming	hot rodding	safaris	weaving
concerts	hunting	sailing	weight lifting
cooking	iceboating	sewing	windsurfing
cricket	ice fishing	shooting	woodworking
croquet	ice-skating	shot putting	wrestling
crossword puzzles	jai alai	shuffleboard	writing
curling	jogging	singing	yachting
dancing	judo	skateboarding	zip lining
debating	karate	skeet shooting	
	kayaking	skiing	
	knitting	skin diving	

Honesty & Openness

When you are married, you must send accurate messages and receive accurate responses. Many times we feel one way, but respond in another. When you fail to respond the way you actually feel, your mate's adjustment to you will not hit the target. Look at these examples:

- A wife had indigestion and wasn't feeling well. The husband asked how she felt. She replied, "Fine." "Great, let's go to a movie!" was his response. She retorts, "I work hard all day, get sick and now you want me to run out to a movie!"
- A couple is planning a vacation. The options are camping or going to a resort. The wife does not like camping but is willing to do it because her two sons like it. The husband says, "Let's go to the resort, you hate camping." She says, "Why don't we buy the used trailer in the want ads you have been looking at. I might enjoy a camper better than tenting." He replies, "No, let's go to the resort. It doesn't make any difference to me." When the family gets to the resort, the husband is grumpy all week. "We could have bought the trailer for the same amount as going to the fancy resort."

Not being truthful to our spouse with our feelings causes conflict and hurt feelings. Sometimes telling the truth causes pain up front, but in the long run it is better off because it builds trust. And trust is the foundation of intimacy and closeness. If you want a great marriage, be open and honest with each other.

Personal Struggles & Secret Sin

Sometimes we are afraid to share something we have done wrong or a personal struggle that we have. As a result, we keep it locked away. When we hide things from our spouse, many times they can sense something is off. They maybe cannot put their finger on it, but intimacy will be hindered. Withholding things breaks the oneness God meant for us to have.

In addition, keeping issues secret keeps us in a prison which is exactly what the devil wants. Something wonderful and powerful happens when we bring things out of the darkness and into the light. Jesus said,

"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

-John 8:32

Sharing the truth is sometimes scary. We fear what our spouse will think, how he or she will react. Will he/she still love me, want me? And even if they do, will they respect me? These are all valid questions. But answer this—which is better:

- For your spouse to find out from you about it first because you are willing to open up to them.
- For your spouse to stumble upon your secret.
- For someone else to tell your spouse about your secret.
- For someone to coerce you into sharing so you do, but your spouse finds out later that you were forced to do it.

The last three will erode trust. The first one may hurt your spouse and cause some negative consequences, but if the two of you walk in the grace and forgiveness of Christ then healing and wholeness can take place. If you have sinned against your spouse, confess it to God. Then confess it to him/her. You may need to see a reputable Christian counselor to walk through

some things. In time you will find that trust is growing and the Lord has restored your relationship and set you on solid ground.

Building Trust After An Affair

If there has been moral infidelity, a difference needs to be distinguished between forgiveness and trust. Forgiveness is given immediately but trust is earned gradually. Here is a way to start the rebuilding of trust:

- Write down copy of schedule for your husband/wife to see everyday.
- If it changes, try your best to notify him/her immediately.
- Your spouse should be able to call some of the places that have been listed to verify presence.

The Billy Graham Rule

In 1948, evangelist Billy Graham and his staff came up a set of rules to keep them free of scandal as they traveled around the country spreading the Gospel. One of those rules was: **Never be alone with a woman who is not your wife.** Living by this rule is a great way to create trust with your wife. This could apply to:

- Driving/being in a car alone with a woman.
- Going to lunch or coffee alone with a woman.
- Appointments or one-on-one counseling with the opposite sex should always occur in a public place with people in the vicinity. The room you meet in should have windows or leave the door open.

Balanced with Discretion

Honesty and openness does not mean that we just say everything we want to. When we are not controlled by the Holy Spirit, our flesh erupts with unhealthy and sometimes cruel or sinful things. Discretion is key.

Proverbs 29:11—“A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise man holds them back.”

Proverbs 11:22—“As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, So is a lovely woman who lacks discretion.”

Proverbs 3:21-22—“My son, let them not depart from your eyes—Keep sound wisdom and discretion; ²²So they will be life to your soul And grace to your neck.”

Eliminate lying, deception, and hiding things from each other to build a strong and fulfilling marriage.

Attractiveness of Spouse

Stories have been told about a single person who was not very attractive taking great measures to dramatically alter their appearance to snag a husband or wife, only to let their appearance go after having done so. They had no intent of keeping the weight off or taking care of themselves after getting married. That is being deceitful and is a sin. Love rejoices in the truth and does not seek its own (1 Corinthians 13:5-6). If having a good looking spouse is a need for our husband/wife, then we should honestly talk with each other about what that means and strive to please them in this area. Here are some areas to consider:

6 Areas to Evaluate Ourselves

- 1) Weight – calorie intake & exercise
- 2) Makeup – for women – too much or not enough
- 3) Hairstyle
- 4) Clothes – “they make the man and showcase the woman.”
- 5) Hygiene – shower, deodorant, cologne/perfume, fresh breath
- 6) Dental

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). We should be good stewards of them. If we do not look good, our spouse won't look very much. We do not want our appearance to be a turn off to our husband or wife. We are not saying you need to look like Miss America or Mr. Olympia, but we should try to look good to please our spouse.

Application

Honestly talk about how much this is or isn't a need for each of you. What steps do each of you need to take to be more attractive to each other?

Financial Support

Financial Support is feeling you have enough money to support you, not feeling strapped all the time. If you are just starting out as a married couple, realize that you probably will not have the same lifestyle that your parents have. It has taken them 25 years or more to accumulate the quantity and quality of belongings. You won't have that after a few months of marriage. Be patient and live within your means. In addition to the following tips, it is encouraged to attend Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University.

Keys to Financial Stability

1. Set up a budget using the Estimated Spending Plan on the next page. Review it yearly or when your income or goals change.
2. Establish who is going to be the bookkeeper, write checks for bills, balance the checkbook, make deposits, pay taxes, etc. Set a specific, reoccurring day/date(s) of the month when these will happen

3. Set short-term, medium-term, & long term goals of what you want to save for. List them:

Short

Medium

Long

4. Credit Cards. Only use your credit card when you have the money to pay off the bill. **Good Rule: Pay it off or cut it up.**
5. ****BE ONE FLESH IN ALL PURCHASES! Don't buy bigger purchases or exceed a budget amount without telling your spouse. Also, do not force him/her into getting what they really don't want. Make decisions together!**
6. Prepare a will setting up distribution of finances and guardianship of any children. Otherwise, the state may take the children and decide who gets them.
7. Get life insurance naming your spouse as the primary beneficiary and your children as secondary. Have enough to cover funeral expenses should something happen. Life insurance is a must if you have small children.
8. Make sure no one else has access to your checking and savings accounts, credit cards, etc.

Domestic Support – Fair Distribution of Labor Worksheet

Fair distribution of labor not only means you work the same amount of hours, but that you enjoy equally the responsibilities you both perform. It is recommended that you avoid taking a responsibility that you do not enjoy, but you should not force an unpleasant responsibility onto your spouse. Disregarding each other's feelings depletes your love bank. If a certain job(s) go unwanted by all, then divide up the undesirable tasks evenly or alternate who does it. One person should not end up with all the "dirty" work.

Something else to take into consideration is the energy level of both spouses. Some people are high energy people and can work 10-12 hour days, seven days a week, while others require more sleep. In this case, one spouse should not be expected to work as many hours.

In your determining your distribution of labor, be sure to take each other into account so that when you have finished, **both of you feel comfortable with your part of the package.** In some cases, the total number of hours may be unequal, yet you both agree it is a fair distribution of labor. Fair is what you both think is fair.

<u>Husband's Work</u>	<u>Wife's Work</u>
<p><u>Income Generating Activities</u></p> <p>1. _____ hrs</p> <p>2. _____ hrs</p> <p>3. _____ hrs</p>	<p><u>Income Generating Activities</u></p> <p>1. _____ hrs</p> <p>2. _____ hrs</p> <p>3. _____ hrs</p>
<p><u>Child Care</u></p> <p>1. Entertaining children _____ hrs</p> <p>2. Feeding children _____ hrs</p> <p>3. Dressing children _____ hrs</p> <p>4. Bathing children _____ hrs</p> <p>5. Schooling/transporting kids _____ hrs</p>	<p><u>Child Care</u></p> <p>1. Entertaining children _____ hrs</p> <p>2. Feeding children _____ hrs</p> <p>3. Dressing children _____ hrs</p> <p>4. Bathing children _____ hrs</p> <p>5. Schooling/transporting kids _____ hrs</p>
<p><u>Household Responsibilities</u></p> <p>1. _____ hrs</p> <p>2. _____ hrs</p> <p>3. _____ hrs</p> <p>4. _____ hrs</p> <p>5. _____ hrs</p> <p>6. _____ hrs</p> <p>7. _____ hrs</p>	<p><u>Household Responsibilities</u></p> <p>1. _____ hrs</p> <p>2. _____ hrs</p> <p>3. _____ hrs</p> <p>4. _____ hrs</p> <p>5. _____ hrs</p> <p>6. _____ hrs</p> <p>7. _____ hrs</p>
<p><u>Repair, Maintenance, & Bill Paying</u></p> <p>1. _____ hrs</p> <p>2. _____ hrs</p> <p>3. _____ hrs</p> <p>4. _____ hrs</p> <p>5. _____ hrs</p> <p>6. _____ hrs</p> <p>7. _____ hrs</p>	<p><u>Repair, Maintenance, & Bill Paying</u></p> <p>1. _____ hrs</p> <p>2. _____ hrs</p> <p>3. _____ hrs</p> <p>4. _____ hrs</p> <p>5. _____ hrs</p> <p>6. _____ hrs</p> <p>7. _____ hrs</p>
<p>Total Hours _____</p>	<p>Total Hours _____</p>

Fair Distribution of Labor - Sample

Below is an example of the Fair Distribution of Labor chart for a couple named Ken and Judy who have three small children ages six, three, and one.

<u>Ken's Work</u>		<u>Judy's Work</u>	
<u><i>Income Generating Activities</i></u>		<u><i>Income Generating Activities</i></u>	
1. Account Executive	45 hrs	1. Sales Clerk	10 hrs
2. Financial Consultant	15 hrs		
 <u><i>Child Care</i></u>		 <u><i>Child Care</i></u>	
1. Entertaining children	5 hrs	1. Entertaining children	10 hrs
		2. Feeding children	20 hrs
		3. Dressing children	10 hrs
		4. Bathing children	10 hrs
		5. Schooling/transporting kids	8 hrs
 <u><i>Household Responsibilities</i></u>		 <u><i>Household Responsibilities</i></u>	
1. Taking out garbage	¼ hr	1. Cleaning house	5 hrs
2. Washing dishes	¼ hr	2. Washing clothes	2 hrs
		3. Washing dishes	3 hrs
		4. Cooking meals	10 hrs
 <u><i>Repair, Maintenance, & Bill Paying</i></u>		 <u><i>Repair, Maintenance, & Bill Paying</i></u>	
1. Washing Car	1 hr	1. Repairing other items	2 hrs
2. Mowing Lawn	2 hrs		
3. Repairing Car	¼ hr		
4. Repairing House	¼ hr		
5. Repairing other items	1 hr		
6. Paying bills/balance checkbook	2 hrs		
<hr/>		<hr/>	
<i>Total Hours</i>	<u>72 hrs</u>	<i>Total Hours</i>	<u>90 hrs</u>

After finishing their lists, Ken wanted to know how Judy could possibly spend ten hours bathing the children. So Judy suggested that Ken bathe the children once and multiply his time by seven, the number of times she bathed them each week. When he found it took him two hours just to bath each of them once, he decided Judy's ten hours was a bargain.

Ken also took a whole Saturday and was responsible for dressing the kids in the morning, at night for bed, and any other times during they when they made a mess and need a new change of clothes. He found that 10 hours was about right.

To get their time more even, they decided that Judy would use the money she earned as a sales clerk to pay a high school student for cleaning and cooking. She wanted the job for her own sanity. Ken cut out 5 hours of consulting and gave that to pick up some of Judy's tasks. This helped them both feel better about their home life and not so stressed.

Family Commitment

Family Commitment is feeling that parenting is a team effort, not one-sided; feeling that you are partners in raising children and that your spouse is interested in and committed to the family. Wives want their husbands to take a leadership role in the family and commit themselves to the moral and educational development of their children.

This is also God's desire! Most major passages on raising and discipling children are addressed to dads (Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Malachi 4:5-6, Ephesians 6:4, Colossians 3:21). Proverbs chapters 2-7 are a father's moral instructions to his children. All throughout the Old Testament, it talks about the God of your fathers, not your mothers. Men are to be the leaders of the home so rise up Man of God and lead!

- 1) **LOVE** - your wife and kids. Take time for them. Play. Read. Help with homework. Go to their events. Have a weekly/bi-weekly family night to play games, ride bike, etc. Go on weekly or bi-weekly dates with your wife (see recreational companionship). Go on regular one-on-one "dates" with your kids.

- 2) **LEAD**
 - By example in your devotions and your character.
 - In family devotions - start when they are infants using picture Bibles. As kids get older use kid devotional books and biographies of great Christians. It doesn't have to be eternal to make an eternal impact. Small amounts consistently make a bigger impact.

- 3) **LIMITS** - Place boundaries on your children and discipline them when they disobey.

Suggested Parenting Resources

The New Dare to Discipline by Dr. James Dobson, Tyndale House Publishers.

Four Pillars of a Man's Heart (*Bringing Strength Into Balance*) by Stu Weber, Multnomah Books. (A must read for every dad.)

Preparation for Parenting (*Bringing God's Order to Your Baby's Day and Restful Sleep to Your Baby's Night*) by Gary & Anne Marie Ezzo, Growing Families International Press.

Preparation for the Toddler Years From 5 to 15 Months (*The Next Step In The Practical Development of Your Child's Moral, Academic & Physical Health*), by Gary & Anne Marie Ezzo, Growing Families International Press.

Growing Kids God's Way (Bible Ethics for Parenting) by Gary & Anne Marie Ezzo, Growing Families International Press.

On Becoming Baby Wise (*Giving Your Infant the Gift of Nighttime Sleep*) by Gary Ezzo & Robert Bucknam, Parent-Wise Solutions, Inc.

Note: This is the same as Preparation for Parenting but without the scripture references.

Parenting with Love & Logic by Foster Cline, MD & Jim Fay, Pinon Press. (Good for older children, but disagrees with biblical chastising. We do not recommend their teen version of this book).

Passport2Purity by Family Life (Dennis Rainey). A weekend getaway that helps a parent talk about "the birds and the bees" with his/her child. Dad take the sons; mom takes the daughters.

Admiration

Praise is a major motivator to men. A man needs his wife to be proud of him and specifically tell him why. But never fake your admiration. To have any value, praise must genuinely reflect your feelings. Look for ways that your husband meets your needs and list them. Also list those characteristics that destroy your admiration and write them down so he knows what he needs to change.

Characteristics I Admire

Affection

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Conversation

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Financial Support

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Honesty & Openness

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Family Commitment

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Characteristics that Destroy My Admiration

Affection

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Conversation

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Financial Support

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Honesty & Openness

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Family Commitment

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.