

STRAIGHT TALK FOR MEN

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THE MAKING OF A MAN (PART I)

By Melvin L. Latimer

What indeed is man? Who is he? Where did he come from? Why is he here? Where is he going? Why do men think the things they do, say the things they say, and do the things they do?

These and other questions are constantly asked in regards to why God made man.

The way in which a man answers these questions can and will determine his success or failure in life.

Psalms 8: 3-5 declares, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor." (Life Application)

Contrary to what scientists believe, man was made by God in his image and did not evolve from a lower form of life.

Genesis 1:26-27 declares, "Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'" So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Life Application)

So, man was made to emulate God to have the nature of God, the intellect of God, and the character and spirit of God. Man was God's crowning masterpiece in all of his creations. God gave man complete authority in the earth. I believe God was more excited about making man than he was about creating the heavens, the earth and even the angels.

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This brings us to our first question. Who indeed is man?

Man was made in the image and the likeness of God. Gen. 1: 26-27.

God obviously did not create us exactly like himself, especially in the physical sense. Instead, we are reflections of God's glory. God is sinless, eternal, and unlimited. Although we are given the potential power to be sinless and eternal, we are also given the choice of free will. We will never be totally like god because he is our Supreme Creator. Our best hope is to reflect his character in our love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness.

Knowing that we are made in God's image and share many of his characteristics, God therefore provides a solid basis for man's self-worth.

Human worth is not defined by possessions, achievements, physical attractiveness or public acclaim. Instead, it comes from being made in God's image. Because we are like God, we can feel positive about ourselves. Knowing that you are a person of infinite worth gives you the freedom to love God, know him personally, and make a valuable contribution to those around you.

For Men Only: A Husband's Personal Checklist

Are you interested in examining a checklist of ways that husbands typically

offend their wives? In this article, Dr. Don Dunlap encourages men who find it hard to identify specific ways that they offend their wives, to read through the list carefully and prayerfully.

Listed below are some of the offenses that husbands typically commit against their wives. As you read through this list you may wish to check any of these offenses that apply to you.

1. Ignoring her.
2. Not valuing her opinions.
3. Paying other people more attention than I pay her.
4. Not listening to her or not understanding what she feels is important.
5. Closing her out by not talking to her or by not listening to her (the Silent Treatment).
6. Being easily distracted when she's trying to talk.
7. Not scheduling special time to be with her.
8. Not being open to talk about things that I don't understand.
9. Not being open to talk about things that she doesn't understand.
10. Not giving her a chance to fully voice her opinion on decisions that affect the entire family.
11. Punishing her by being angry or silent.
12. Making jokes about certain aspects of her life.
13. Making sarcastic comments about her.
14. Insulting her in front of other people.

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15. Coming back at her with quick retorts when we are arguing.
16. Giving harsh admonitions.
17. Using careless words before I think through how they will affect her
18. Nagging her and speaking harshly.
19. Correcting her before giving her a chance to fully explain a situation.
20. Raising my voice at her.
21. Making critical comments that seem to have no logical basis.
22. Swearing or using foul language in her presence.
23. Correcting her in public.
24. Being tactless when pointing out her weaknesses or “blind spots”.
25. Reminding her angrily that I warned her not to do something.
26. Having disgusted or judgmental attitudes in general.
27. Pressuring her when she is already feeling low or offended.
28. Lecturing her when she needs to be comforted, encouraged, or treated gently.
29. Breaking promises without any explanation or without asking to be released from the promise.
30. Telling her how wonderful other women are and comparing her in any way to other women.
31. Holding onto resentment about something that she did and which she tried to make right.
32. Being disrespectful to her family members and other relatives.
33. Coercing her into arguments.
34. Correcting or punishing her in anger for something that she is not guilty of.
35. Not praising her for something that she did well, even if she did it for me.
36. Treating her like a child.
37. Being rude to her or to other people when we are in public (such as restaurant personnel or store clerks).
38. Being unaware of her needs.
39. Being ungrateful.
40. Not trusting her.
41. Not approving of what she does or of how she does it.
42. Not being interested in her personal growth or her spiritual growth.
43. Being inconsistent in my life or having double standards (doing things that I don't want her to do).
44. Not giving her advice when she really needs it and asks for it.
45. Not telling her that I love her in specific ways.
46. Having proud and arrogant attitudes in general.
47. Not giving her the daily encouragement that she needs.
48. Failing to include her in conversation when we are out together with other people.
49. Failing to spend focused time with her when we attend social gatherings.
50. “Talking her down” – continuing to discuss or argue a point simply to prove that I was right.
51. Ignoring her around the house as if she weren't a member of the family.
52. Not taking time at the end of the day to listen to what is important to her.
53. Not paying any attention to her at social gatherings.
54. Not attending church together as a family.
55. Failing to honestly express to her what I think are her innermost feelings.
56. Showing more excitement for work and other activities than for her.
57. Being impolite at mealtimes.
58. Having sloppy manners around the house or in front of others.

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59. Not inviting her out regularly on special romantic dates (Just the two of us).
60. Not helping her with the children at extra stressful times, such as just before mealtimes or at bedtime.
61. Not volunteering to help her with the dishes occasionally-or with cleaning the house.
62. Making her feel stupid when she shares an idea about my work or about decisions that must be made.
63. Making her feel unworthy for desiring certain furniture or insurance or other material needs for herself and the family.
64. Being inconsistent with the discipline of the children.
65. Not taking any interest in playing with the children and not spending quality and quantity time with them.
66. Failing to show affection for her in public, such as holding her hand or putting my arm around her (As if I seem to be embarrassed to be with her).
67. Not sharing my life, my ideas or my feelings with her (such as what's going on at work).
68. Neglecting the spiritual leadership of my home.
69. Demanding my wife to submit to me.
70. Demanding her to respond to me sexually when we are not in harmony with one another.
71. Being unwilling to readily admit when I am wrong.
72. Being defensive whenever she points out one of my "blind spots".
73. Being too busy with work or other activities.
74. Not showing compassion and understanding for her and the children when there is a real need to do so.
75. Not planning for the future, which makes her very insecure.
76. Being stingy with money, making her feel that she had to beg for every penny.
77. Wanting us to do things sexually that make her feel embarrassed.
78. Reading pornographic magazines or watching indiscreet videos.
79. Forcing her to make many of the decisions regarding the checkbook and bills.
80. Forcing her to handle bill collectors and overdue bills.
81. Not letting her lean on my gentleness and strength (or not having gentleness and strength for her to lean on).
82. Not allowing her to fail-always believing that I have to correct her.
83. Refusing to recognize her uniqueness and her differences as a woman.
84. Criticizing her womanly characteristics or sensitivity as being weakness.
85. Spending too much money and placing the family under financial pressure.
86. Not having a sense of humor and not joking about things together.
87. Not sending her special love letters or hand-written notes from time to time.
88. Forgetting special occasions like anniversaries or birthdays.
89. Not defending her when somebody else is criticizing her or tearing her down, especially if it is one of my relatives or friends.
90. Not putting my arms around her and hugging her when she needs to be comforted.
91. Not praising her to other people.
92. Being dishonest.
93. Discouraging her when she tries to better herself, either through education or through exercise.

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94. Continuing to practice distasteful or harmful habits.
 95. Not treating her as if “Handle With Care” were stamped on her forehead.
 96. Ignoring her relatives and the people who are important to her.
 97. Taking her for granted; assuming that “a woman’s work is never done”.
 98. Not including her in future plans until the last minute.
 99. Seldom doing little unexpected things for her to let her know that I love her and appreciate her..
 100. Not treating her as an intellectual equal.
 101. Viewing her as a weaker individual in general.
 102. Being preoccupied with my own goals and needs, and making her feel that she and the children are not my top priority.
 103. Threatening to never let her do something again because she made some mistake in the past.
 104. Criticizing her behind her back (This is especially painful for her if she hears about my criticism from someone else).
 105. Blaming her for things in our relationship that are clearly my fault.
 106. Not being aware of her physical limitations; treating her like a man by roughhousing with her or making her carry heavy objects.
 107. Being impatient or angry with her when she can’t keep up with my schedule or physical stamina.
 108. Acting as though I am a martyr if I go along with her opinions.
 109. Sulking when she challenges my comments.
 110. Joining too many organizations that exclude her and the children.
 111. Failing to repair items around the house.
 112. Watching too much TV and therefore, neglecting family time.
 113. Demanding that she must sit down and listen to my point of view when she needs to be doing other things.
 114. Insisting upon lecturing her in order to convey the importance of the points that I want to make.
 115. Humiliating her with words and actions, saying things like, “I can’t stand to live in a messy home”
 116. Not taking the time to prepare her to enjoy sexual intimacy.
 117. Spending money extravagantly without being faithful in giving to God.
 118. Avoiding family activities that the children enjoy.
 119. Taking vacations that are primarily what I want to do.
 120. Not letting her get away to spend time with friends, go shopping, go out for coffee and dessert at a restaurant, etc.
 121. Being unwilling to join her in the things that she enjoys like shopping, going out for coffee and dessert at a restaurant, etc.
 122. Not understanding the challenging responsibilities that a wife has: laundry, cooking, picking up clothes and toys all day long, wiping runny noses, changing diapers, etc.
 123. Refusing to be self-sacrificial by regularly touching her in non-sexual ways, strictly for her pleasure and enjoyment, not leading to sexual intercourse.
- Now go back and write out each offense expanding specially on each one. Then, sit down with your wife and ask her to forgive you for every offense. This is one

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of the most important projects in restoring and strengthening a marriage. Give it your best effort. She will be able to sense any insincerity.

As men read through these items, they should keep in mind that the purpose of this list is to help them begin the process of repentance, reconciliation and marital restoration.

Dr. Don Dunlap, a pioneer in the placement of Pastoral Counselors in the offices of Christian physicians, has conducted over twenty thousand appointments during his ministerial career. His counseling practice includes adults, children and families in crisis. Dr. Dunlap is committed to facilitating a network of telephone counselors. His goal is to provide help for the many people unable to meet face to face with a competent Bible-based counselor. You may make an appointment for personal telephone counseling by clicking on Family Counseling Ministries.

Find Hope Despite Grief this Holiday Season

Holidays are meant to be times of joyful, festive celebration. But when you're grieving, holidays are shrouded in sorrow, and the memories of past holidays with your deceased loved one only magnify your sense of loss.

This year, in a sense, all of us in the United States are grieving. Whether or not we've recently suffered the death of a relative or friend, the recent terrorism in

our nation has dealt a death blow to our spirits, and only Christ can give us the hope we need to recover.

You may be dreading the upcoming holiday season. But if you work through your grief, you'll discover hope rising from the ashes of your pain. And that hope will enable you to celebrate again as you continue your life.

Here are some ways to deal with your grief during holidays:

- Make sure you're getting enough sleep and exercise, eating nutritiously, and drinking enough water. When you take care of your body, you can handle stress much more effectively than if you have unmet physical needs.
- Talk openly about your grief with others, and don't be afraid to cry or look sad. You need to honestly work through your feelings without the pressure of trying to pretend that you feel festive. Accept the love and support that others offer you, and thank them.
- Keep your schedule light, but do participate in the holiday. Although it may be tempting to try to avoid your pain by throwing yourself into a whirl of activities or withdrawing completely from the holiday, neither extreme will prove helpful. Don't try to host a holiday event while you're grieving. But do accept a holiday invitation or two, letting the host or hostess know that you're grieving and may need to leave early. People should understand and be flexible.

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- Reflect on the ways you had previously celebrated holidays, then consider how you might observe them differently this year. Would it comfort you and help you honor your deceased loved one's memory to carry on an old tradition this year? Would it give you a better sense of your present and future to begin a new tradition? Maybe you'd like to keep some old traditions and eliminate others while incorporating some new ones. Remember that you have the power to choose what works best for you and any dependent children you might have. So think and pray about it, then plan in advance how you'd like to observe an upcoming holiday.
 - Trust in God's grace to get you through the holiday. Remember that God is always with you, and that the day will only last for a limited number of hours, then pass. If all you can do is survive it, that's okay at first.
 - Think about the underlying reasons for each holiday rather than just the activities associated with them. For example, when you prepare for Thanksgiving, don't focus on the meal and the fact that your deceased loved one's chair will be empty in the dining room. Instead, focus on what it means to be thankful to God, and consider the ways He has blessed you despite your current pain.
 - Plan some time just to be by yourself, thinking and praying. Although it's helpful to be surrounded by other people who care for you, you need some time alone as well.
 - Use the holiday to sort through your memories of your deceased loved one.
- Be honest with yourself as you recall his or her life and relationship with you, remembering both the good and the bad. Tell others stories about your memories, write a letter to your deceased loved one, go through old photos or letters that remind you of him or her, make your loved one's favorite food or sing his or her favorite song.
- If you know your deceased loved one had a relationship with Christ, celebrate his or her new life with Him in eternity. Pray that you'll be able to reach heaven one day, too, and will be reunited with your loved one.
 - Think about your hopes and goals for the future. Make a list of some of them. Ask God to give you a vision of how He would like you to proceed with your life. Remember that you didn't die – you're still on earth because God still has purposes for you to fulfill here. Discover more about who you are as a person, independent of the relationship you had with your deceased loved one.
 - Find new ways to embrace the people around you. For example, you may have lost a spouse, but you likely still have many other important people in your life with whom you can share love. Work on building closer relationships with those who care about you, whether relatives or friends.

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10 Things Dads Can do to Look Like a Hero To Their Kids

Fathers Know A Secret

Fathers know a deep, dark secret about their side of parenting. Being a father is confusing and often frightening. Bill Cosby once wrote, "If God had trouble handling children, what makes you think it would be a piece of cake for you?" (Cosby was referring to Adam and Eve and their disobedience in the garden.) To make our task even more challenging, somewhere along the way our children develop the firm conviction that Dad never even lived in the real world or his brain is stuck in a malfunction mode! The real clincher is found in the common belief that all world problems are overstatement, but notice how dads are most often portrayed on TV – dumb, out to lunch, mean...). It all adds up to quite a challenge.

Most men want to succeed as fathers. They think they are taking their role seriously. Though many men wouldn't admit it, they are eager for something that will enhance their effectiveness as a father. Dads can become heroes to their children. It takes a lot of work, patience and love, but it's possible. What follows are some suggestions that will help you fight the misperceptions of fathers in your own family by doing some right things with your children.

1. Be Around

Few things are as important as your presence. Dads often make lots of excuses. There is work, there is this project or that. There's the civic club, the golf game, the tickets to the ball game or the hunting trip. Twenty years from now your kids won't care about any of that and neither will you. You'll be wondering what happened to the relationship. Your kids need you. Be there.

2. Learn How to Encourage

Parents, by nature, tend toward the negative. "Don't" and "can't" are necessary tools. They help keep the kids out of the first and help them understand it's not good to eat the whole jar of peanut butter at once. But, kids need to know what they can do. Validate their abilities by telling them when they do something well. It will give them courage to do even better.

3. Admit Your Faults

If you don't admit your faults, you'll be the only one ignoring them. Admit faults and be man enough to apologize. It will make you more sensitive about how you handle your children's faults. It will also make it easier for your kids to forgive you when you need it.

4. Make Trust A Priority

Trust comes two ways. One is earned through dependability and consistency. The other way is a gift. Children need to learn both. Show children they can trust you. Earn their trust. Teach them they must earn trust as well. However, there comes a time when you extend trust as a gift. When you do, you will tap into your

child's increasing maturity.

5. Show Tenderness

Too many American fathers grew up with the "macho-man" idea. Be strong, be tough, be hard, be busy. That's fine if you're a character in a Clint Eastwood cowboy movie, but it doesn't do much for relationships with kids. Children need to see that Dad is touched by some things, that there are emotions inside, and not just angry ones. Little boys and girls need hugs and kisses from big Dads. Many grownups cry because they never heard Dad say, "I love you," or felt a loving embrace from strong arms.

6. Love Your Wife

The single best source of input regarding marriage is from one's parents. Respect your kid's Mom. Be kind to her. Demand that your children respect her as well. Your response to your wife develops a sense of security in your children. Give your kids the security of a loving marriage.

7. Respect Authority

Most fathers want to fill the role of authority. However, if you want your children to respect authority they must see it in you. Show respect for your own parents, if they are still living, or speak of them in ways that show respect if they are no longer around. Your example will instill the right attitude in your children's minds.

8. Be A Christian

Take the lead in spiritually nurturing your children. Plant spiritual values in your children's hearts. Teach them about God, Christ and His church. Show them it's important. Talk about

death and eternal matters, but illustrate the importance by your own life. God will become important to children when God is important to Dad.

9. Teach The Bible To Your Children

Fathers spend thousands of dollars educating children for a job. They often spend little educating them for a life. The Bible will help your kids know how to live. You should be the primary instructor. One simple way to do this is to get a children's Bible and read 1 story a night with your children when they are young. As they grow older, simply go to more grown up Bible stories until you are actually reading the Bible with them, or discussing what they have read in Scripture on their own.

10. Be Fun

There are plenty of times for seriousness. Your kids need to know that you can laugh and have fun. Lighten up! Everything is not earth-shatteringly important. Laugh at jokes, mistakes and yourself. Let some things happen with a smile instead of a frown. Your kids will think that you're great fun to be with. Bet you'd like that, wouldn't you?

By Bill Denton

Start a Home Business

You may want a job to earn extra income or to put your unique talents into action. But you may also be hesitant to take on a traditional job that requires you to work a fixed schedule in an office outside your

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home. What you want is flexibility, which is just what a home business offers.

Even if you've never thought of yourself as an entrepreneur, you can be successful if God leads you to start a home business and you rely on Him for guidance and strength as you do it.

Here are some ways you can effectively start a business based out of your home:

- Pray about a potential home business venture, asking God to make it clear to you whether it is His will for you to proceed. If God calls you to undertake the effort, have courage. Remember that, although it won't be easy, it will be worthwhile and an enriching adventure for you. Have confidence in your potential to succeed, and commit yourself to doing your best.
- Set boundaries so your business doesn't overtake other areas of your life. Be sure to allocate the proper time to your relationship with God, your family and friends, your health (through enough sleep and exercise, for example), etc. Decide how many hours you would like to work per week, and don't work any more.
- Consider what you're interested in and what you have the talent to do before choosing a specific type of home business. Don't waste your time starting a business in a field that isn't right for you because you're simply trying to make money. You must love what you do to do it well, and if you do it well, the money will follow.
- Ask yourself how the product or service you're planning to offer will be unique. Think about the type of people who will be in your market, and how your product or service will meet their needs better than any products or services currently available to them.
- Research as much as you can to prepare for your business. Find out what zoning regulations govern your neighborhood so you'll know whether it's legal for you to operate a business out of your home, and if so, what rules you need to follow. Obtain appropriate trademarks, patents, or copyrights for your work. Study tax regulations and follow them when setting up your financial system. Be sure to keep your business finances completely separate from your personal finances.
- Study what your costs will likely be and figure out how much you should charge for your product or service.
- Seek support from people with experience. Talk to others who are operating businesses in the same field – for example, other accountants if you're planning to start a tax preparation business – for advice. (Once you've established your business, be willing to give others advice.) Contact your local Small Business Development Center, county extension office, or other organization dedicated to providing support – often free! – to small business owners. Ask lots of questions.
- Get your family's support before proceeding, and make sure they know what you expect of them. For example, let your spouse know your office hours so he or she will know not to interrupt

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you during those times.

- If at all possible, keep your home office separate from other areas of your house, and install a separate phone line for business use only.
- Start out small, and work diligently from there. Don't go into debt from buying expensive equipment or supplies you don't need, and don't hire employees until you absolutely have to do so.
- Persevere. Realize that it will likely take a while to build your business to the level you would like to achieve. Learn from your mistakes, and keep moving forward.
- Be professional. Don't treat your business like a hobby just because you operate it from your home. Strive to give your customers your best and to make a profit.
- Publicize your business. Network with people through your local chamber of commerce and trade associations. Send press releases to the business section editor of your local newspaper.

Cheri Fuller has authorized numerous books and magazine articles. A wife and mother, she also writes a regular column for Homework, a national business magazine.

“Men, We Must Take A Stand!”

Oh what a might God we serve. God has really been good to us and for certain, if there were ever a time that we needed the Lord it is indeed now!

When we consider the traumatic and horrific events of terrorism that our country experienced on September 11, 2001, we know that as men we must once again reclaim our rightful places as the heads of our families. The terrorist attacks have caused many to turn back to God, and I can really hear the call for men to take a stand to the glory of God.

Sure, men are the providers and supporters of their families in most cases, but we now must take the lead spiritually. We must take a stand and go back to the times of men leading their families in prayer and in family worship. Our children need to see strong Christian men standing up and defending the things of God.

One may ask, how do we stand? First of all the word stand in this instance means posture, or to take a position. Let me suggest a few ways:

- Worship with your family
- Pray and read the scripture together
- Have regular family outings and activities
- Be supportive of your spouse and encourage her
- Be an active part of your children's activities
- Assure your family that God is in control

Most of all men, let's stand for right and righteousness. God is indeed on our side!

By: Pastor Herbert H. Jackson, Jr.

What Married Men Need to Know About Sex

QUESTION: If men and women were created to be compatible sexually, why do we have so many sex problems in marriages today?

ANSWER: After working for more than 20 years as sexual therapists, the answer to that question becomes clearer to us each day.

The enemy of our souls will do whatever he can to distort sex and rob the beauty from it. He knows that a God-breathed view of sex is a threat to his domain.

This is clear:

To understand and experience sex as God intended can reveal amazing clues about spiritual truth.

And the converse is true:

To understand spiritual truth will send the sexual relationship into orbit.

But few people enjoy out-of-this-world sex. Why? Because few men understand what it means to love their wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. Ephesians 5 reads,

“Husbands, go all out in your love for your wives, exactly as Christ did for the church – a love marked by giving, not getting” (The Message, emphasis ours).

Giving. It is a key word for great sex. As the husband moves in the direction of his wife’s needs, he will discover greater love, passion and intimacy in his sex life. Let’s

look at 10 specific ways to give to your lover.

1. **Give of yourself rather than claim your rights.** Scripture tells spouses to give their bodies to each other for mutual pleasure and enjoyment. This command is for the giver to give his/her body, not for the getter to demand his/her rights. The Message, Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase of the bible, has a beautiful express in this passage.

“The marriage bed must be a place of mutuality – the husband seeking to satisfy his wife, the wife seeking to satisfy her husband. Marriage is not a place to ‘stand up for your rights.’ Marriage is a decision to serve the other, whether in bed or out” (1 Corinthians 7:3-5).

2. **Go for enjoying rather than scoring.** If you like sports, you like your team to win – and you like to win. You learned early in life to be in the game for the score. You probably feel the same way when you have sex with your wife: you want to be a winner. Rather than enjoying her body like you would enjoy a Boston Philharmonic concert with its crescendos and decrescendos, you go for the goal!

Your wife’s responses are the scores you make. The faster and more often you get a response, the higher your score and the more your excitement builds. You go for the hot spots. If she doesn’t respond, you get tense and rub harder. You get frustrated when something does not work like it should. After all, if you were a real man, you could bring her to orgasm, or

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more than one orgasm, during intercourse. If you can't see yourself as a loser.

Now hear this: Sex is not about conquering, achieving or scoring. Sex is about relating. No woman wants to be a conquest, a goal achieved or a win scored. Results-oriented sex leads to pressure, demand, self-consciousness, and detachment from the good feelings of the moment.

Try something new. Enjoy the process. As you focus on mutual pleasure rather than response, you will discover a deeper ecstasy than you ever anticipated.

3. **Affirm rather than pursue.** Now let's learn something from the greatest lover of all time: King Solomon. Read through the erotic poetry of the Song of Solomon to find the model of how sex works best between a husband and wife.

First, King Solomon adores her. "You are altogether beautiful, my darling, and there is no blemish in you" (Song 4:7, NASB).

Next, she invites him: "Awake, O north wind, and come, wind of the south...may my beloved come into his garden..." (4:16).

Then, he responds: "I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh...I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk" (5:1).

Remember this order next time you are together: (1) The husband adores his wife, (2) then his affirmation ignites her passion, (3) then her

invitation.

4. **Negotiate differences rather than expect similarities.** Along with Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady*, you may have wondered, Why can't a woman be more like a man?

It certainly would make sex easier. But it's the ever-changing complexity of the woman that keeps sex interesting. Think how boring sex would get if women were as predictable and easy as men. We are convinced that the combination of male constancy, and every-changing, complex femininity is the key to keeping sex alive in marriage.

As you allow your wife to listen to her complex sexuality and you listen to her, you both win. You need to free her to take – to take in touch, pleasure, arousal and passion. Her ability to know what her body hungers for and invite what she needs will work best when you are able to keep your pace lagging behind her pace and allow her to lead in both sexual activity and intensity. Learn how to respect her complexity and make her differences work for you.

5. **Plan rather than wait for spontaneity.** For some couples, unplanned sex and "quickies" are fine. But for most couples, the anticipation of being together builds quality, while having longer time together increases quantity.

Quickies can be fine for variety, but make sure your wife is ready. And make sure you also have quality events that are planned for a time

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when neither of you is fatigued or rushed and both can pursue pleasure without demand.

An occasional smorgasbord is fun. Each of you take turns asking for exactly what you'd like in a sexual experience. The only boundary is that no activity is to violate or be negative for either.

Bottom line: give your love life some variety.

- 6. Express yourself rather than question her.** This advice may surprise you.

Questions are a form of hovering, watching and comparing." Was that good for you, honey?" or "Are you feeling anything?" or "What about tonight?"

Replace questions with "Wow, did I enjoy you tonight!" or "I love touching you there," or "I'd like to play tonight."

- 7. Delight in her rather than watch her response.**

Sex is not a spectator sport!

Watching for how well you are doing in producing a response in your wife (rather than delighting in the enjoyment of her body for the sake of the pleasure it brings you) will interfere with both the pleasure and the result.

Remember, watching is demanding, and demands inhibit.

- 8. Do not bring anger, shame, control and guilt into the bedroom.**

When negative emotions are allowed in the bedroom, sex becomes encumbered with conflict and despair.

Some men bring anger into their marriage because they resent how their mother treated their father. Others take their anger with their wife to the marriage bed. All kinds of shame and guilt can keep men from pursuing passion with their wife.

And some men have a need for control, which interferes with the sexual relationship. It may be that when she approaches him sexually, he cannot respond – while at the same time he complains because she doesn't want sex as often as he does.

Work out your emotional issues outside the bedroom and at a time totally removed from your sexual experience.

- 9. Create erotic adventures with your wife rather than look for passion elsewhere.**

If you are looking for some erotic spark in your life, the best place to look is at home.

It does not matter how long you've been married; you can have an erotic relationship.

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But a deeper and fulfilling passion is a lifelong possibility that must be nurtured.

How do you add passion to your marriage? Plan something new, take risks, have secrets with each other, plan special times together, entice her.

10. **Work to keep sex fun rather than a routine.**

Is sex to be work or fun? Sex is to be fun, but it's a lot more fun when you work at it.

When you think about sex, plan for sex, talk about your sexual likes and dislikes, learn about sex, practice new techniques, negotiate your difference, and keep changing – sex will be fun!

You will laugh together, have fun experimenting and enjoying surprising each other.

Use a little shock to tap new passionate energy, give her treats, tease kindly, pleasure continuously, resist playfully and create new additions to your love life.

Bless you fresh-flowing fountain!

Enjoy the wife you married as a young man!

Lovely as an angel, beautiful as a rose – don't ever quit taking delight in her body.

Never take her love for granted!
(Proverbs 5:18-19, The Message).

Dr. Clifford and Joyce Penner are internationally recognized sexual therapists, educators and authors. They work as a team in full time practice in sex therapy and counseling. They also lead sexual enhancement weekends for couples and lecture on human sexuality at colleges and universities.

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