

What Your Wife Really Wants

No matter how hard we try to understand and love our wives, it'll be a challenge because men are naturally bent toward self-centeredness. There will be days when you won't feel like loving your wife because so many things pull at you to not love her in the way she needs most.

The good news is that God knows this, so He created a way for man to love his family through God's power and strength. The best way to succeed as your wife's lover is to keep growing in your relationship with God. Here are four more keys to loving your wife, leading to the closeness you both desire.

- 1) TIME.** Your wife's world revolves around relationships. She wants your time and attention, and she wants to be a vital part of your life. The most important human relationship to her is the one she shares with you.

I used to tell my wife, Yvonne, that she was a priority in my life, but she claimed I spent time with her only when I was exhausted from a long day of giving out to everyone else. Finally, I realized I was taking my wife for granted. I needed to treat her as a priority in my actions, not just my words.

Remember when you were just getting to know each other? Back then, you'd blow a whole paycheck on a date. You'd hunt for the type of flowers she loves. You'd talk endlessly with her about your goals and dreams. You can recreate those feelings by incorporating some of those early practices into your busy schedule. Don't make your wife compete against work, hobbies, the computer or sports for your attention. You might try asking her to write down five ways you could make her feel like a priority. Use the list as a starting point, then think up new ways to make her feel special. Set aside time just for her in your planner--in ink. Then, when you're with her, be there. Focus on her instead of thinking about all the work you need to do. If you make your wife believe you can't wait to be with her, you'll be surprised to find it's true.

- 2) TALK.** Conversation makes your wife feel connected--it's the glue that binds her to you. I don't mean simply recounting the events of the day. I mean communicating on an emotional level. She wants to share her inner thoughts and feelings with you, and she wants to know your thoughts, doubts and hurts. Need a few ideas for what to talk about? Start by praising your wife. Many women don't feel that what they do or who they are has value. As a husband, notice all the things she does and thank her. Let her know how you and your kids depend on her and appreciate her. I know a man who puts five coins in his right pocket as a reminder to give his wife at least five compliments that day. When he gives her one, he switches a coin from the right to the left pocket. At the end of the day he checks his pockets. Do whatever it takes to trigger your memory.

- 3) TENDERNESS.** Women thrive on being cherished, on the acts of tenderness that prove your love. Maybe you feel you're doing a good job of expressing affection. Some guys say, "She knows that if she wants anything, all she has to do is ask." But if your wife has to ask you to take her out or buy her flowers, she'll feel like a beggar. She doesn't want to beg for your love and attention.

Also keep in mind that women like variety, so demonstrate your love and tenderness in various ways. For Yvonne, I make sure our car's gas tank is never less than half full. I take out the trash every night. I check her computer printer to make sure it's stocked with paper. I change the toilet paper roll when it's empty. I shower before bedtime. These are the little things, but they show her that I love her and cherish her. Remember that special occasions also fall under the tenderness category. Maybe you couldn't care less about Valentine's Day or the anniversary of your first date, but they probably mean something to your wife--so celebrate them. Creating your own special occasion "just because" shows your tenderness too. Plan a date or getaway weekend, or ask to take a walk with her after dinner--these acts assure her that you love her. The key to tenderness is not overlooking opportunities to do the little things for your wife.

- 4) TOUCH.** Think about your own strong desire and need for sex. That same intensity is what your wife feels about affection. Hugs, kisses, pats, hand-holding, sitting close on the couch, snuggling in bed, helping her with her coat--wives want this kind of affection without being linked to sex. If you only show your wife affection when you're "going for the gold," after a while she'll feel used. Loving her with the kind of love Christ has for you means establishing an atmosphere of caring and tenderness. And that includes giving her plenty of physical affection with no strings attached. When you work hard at giving your wife what she really needs--time, talk, tenderness, and non-sexual touch--you'll find that she will become a lot more responsive to you. That's just one of the benefits of becoming the lover your wife needs the most.