

# Take Care of Your Spouse



*January 14, 2020*

Valentine's Day is only a few weeks away. For many couples, February 14 is their chance to express or show their love for each other, which could be a heart shaped box of candy, flowers, or a romantic dinner out. These are all fine, but why wait? For some, why are you only doing this on a greeting card holiday? Expressions of love, honor, and appreciation should be an all year affair.

Several years ago, my wife and I decided we simply weren't going to participate in "Hallmark Holidays." Many men are thinking, "Hey, why didn't we do that?" However, I must caution you that with great freedom comes great responsibility.

I probably didn't handle it all that well when we started skipping greeting card holidays. However, something has changed over the years as I think less of myself and so much more about the gal who has selflessly shared her life with me. Sure, Chris is my wife, the mother of our children, the grandmother to our precious grandbabies, but she is so much more than all those things. She is also my helpmate, my co-laborer in ministry, my confidant, my companion; she is my best

friend (Proverbs 18:22). So how do you take care of that special lady who shares absolutely everything she has and is with you?

To start, speak to her in her love language, not yours! Don't know what her love language is? Then read *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman. Those five languages are words of affirmation, acts of service, receiving gifts, quality time, and physical touch.

All too often we men think that physical touch must be our wife's primary love language. Chances are that is your primary love language. The times of intimacy are extremely important for husband and wife. This is something that only the two of you can share, but there is so much more. (Pssst...speaking her primary language could lead to physical touch.)

When was the last time you complimented her hair, her outfit, her ability to make a delicious meal, or those savvy decisions she made at work? Do you help with the laundry or do the dishes? Do you pick up that special little something she just loves and give it to her for no reason at all? Do you spend time with just her, maybe even watching a Hallmark movie? (Yes, I watch Hallmark Christmas movies with my wife.) When was the last time that physical touch was a loving hug done just because you are glad to see her and not done with an ulterior motive?

I mentioned I didn't think I quite handled all this very well in the beginning. Truth be told, I'm still learning. My job requires some travel. In late fall, I share my expected travel calendar with Chris. I ask her if she sees any conflicts or issues. We also discuss the outpost and district Rangers events that I would like to attend in the upcoming year. In other words, I'm seeking her input rather than simply telling her when I will be on the road or at a Rangers event. For me, this is a big win.

We've all arrived home from a Rangers outing tired, dirty, and smelly with a truckload of gear. I'm ashamed to say that for too many years I got home, unloaded my gear into the house, and then took my much-deserved rest. Keep in mind I didn't say that I had put my gear away.

Now, regardless of how tired I am, the goal is to put everything away as soon as I can. Often, I arrive when Chris is not yet home, and my goal is to have everything squared away, including being showered, before she arrives home. Yep, I'm speaking her love language on that one.

Do you date your wife? What about sitting on the back porch on a Saturday morning sipping coffee and talking about your week? Get that ice cream cone that

neither of you need and walk along the sidewalk holding hands and talking. I try to take Chris out on special dates as often as I can, especially if I'm getting ready to be on the road for more than just a night or two. I send her a meeting request in Outlook for this special night out. Cheesy, right? You bet, but it works for us, and that is the key. What works for you two is what matters. However, don't fall into the lie that we're just fine and that we don't need to do anything special with or for each other. That is baloney!

We've all heard the story of the old man who says, "I said love you on our wedding day, and if it changes, I'll let you know." We chuckle, but what a moronic statement. We should constantly romance our spouse. There is a country song that part of one of the verses states: "Oh now that she's left, I keep kickin' myself whenever I start thinkin' back. He says he needs her, tells her he loves her. Why didn't I think of that?" Don't be him.

Lastly, I want to encourage you to pray together as a couple. This is one of the quickest things you can do together but has the biggest return on your investment. It doesn't have to be a long prayer. Thank the Lord for something about your spouse and then ask for something for them. Then, your spouse does the same thing. When done in this manner, we're talking about 60-90 seconds. There is something special about hearing Chris thank God for something about imperfect me and then asking Him for something for just me. Trust me on this. We've been doing this for years and our marriage has never been better.



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