

God's Home Store: Gifts for Husbands and Wives
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Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

As the scripture says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one." There is a deep secret truth revealed in this scripture, which I understand as applying to Christ and the church. But it also applies to you: every husband must love his wife as himself, and every wife must respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:31-33 GNT)

Our husband or wife represents a choice we made to have that person share in our lives. (So be careful of criticizing them too much, lest you be labeled a poor decision maker! 😊) As circumstances change and the complications of life get in the way of our happily ever after, we must make the conscious decision to choose them over and over again. This week, we will take time to recognize the gifts God gives us through our relationships, and learn how to return those gifts in kind.

Digging Deeper

Gifts for Husbands and Wives...

Friendship

- When you have the privilege of being married to a friend, it can make life's journey so much more enjoyable. Have you ever watched that old TV show, "The Newlywed Game?" The couples who know very little about each other get snippy and angry over their incorrect answers, while those in sync with each other seem to have a genuine friendship and knowledge of their likes and dislikes. What advice would you pass on to a newlywed couple seeking guidance on how to be good friends in marriage?
- If you are single, can you think of a marriage that has served as an example of friendship that you would want to emulate? What are some things they say or do that make you feel this way?

Focus

- People who build their marriages on a solid foundation will have an advantage when life tries to huff and puff and blow their house down. Marriage requires hard work and dedication to thrive. The gift of your undivided attention is a present you can give each other that will strengthen your union. Do you regularly set aside dedicated time for your spouse? What hobbies do you share?
- When you begin dating someone, you place a strong focus on spending as much time as you can with them so you can get to know them better. As your relationship evolves, this tends to become something that gets pushed to the side. What are some things that have worked for you in helping to redirect your attention back to your spouse?

Fidelity

- Most enter into marriage by vowing to love, honor, comfort and keep our partners in sickness and in health, while forsaking all others by being faithful to them as long as we both shall live. These vows communicate our pledge of loyalty in all situations and for the rest of our lives. Is there a particular Bible verse that you have hidden in your heart that you turn to in difficult

times to help protect your marriage from becoming vulnerable to the attacks of spiritual warfare? If you don't, find one that you both feel captures your unique relationship in the best way and commit it to memory.

- Think about the message in Ephesians 5:33 (NLT). Respect and love should be key ingredients in any healthy union. God is honored when we give each other the gift of emotional fidelity. What does emotional fidelity mean to you and have you considered its importance in your relationship? Do you find it difficult to avoid thinking of or speaking ill of your spouse in the midst of a disagreement or a trying circumstance?

Faith

- When we love God first, we are able to love others better. That is why faith may be the greatest gift husbands and wives can give one another. In what ways has your love for God helped you survive the "not so great" periods in your relationship? Does your love story include an example of how drawing nearer to God helped you draw closer to each other?

Conclusion

Friends love through all kinds of weather, and families stick together in all kinds of trouble. (Proverbs 17:17 MSG)

As Christians, we believe in the Trinity (one God in three Persons = unity of three). In marriage, there is a different sort of trinity that makes all the difference. It too is three persons: husband, wife, and God that creates a unity (3 in 1). It also requires three faith ingredients as well: my faith in God, my spouse's faith in God, and OUR faith in God. The Bible says, "A triple-braided cord is not easily broken." (Ecclesiastes 4:12 NLT) That's especially true of a marriage when the three strands include the shared faith of a husband and wife who make Christ the Lord of their home.

Let us visit God's home store and give our spouses the best of all the gifts God has given to us. With our gifts of friendship, focus, fidelity and faith we can set a new modern standard of strong, Christian marriages that stand the test of time. And we are able to do all of these things through the power of our God who loved us enough to recognize and declare that "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." (Genesis 2:18 NLT)