

Men, Care for Your Marriage BEFORE it's too Late - by Chris Garner

There have been a flurry of emails recently from men whose wives are intent on divorcing them. They are pleading, begging, promising to change, praying, seeking God – anything to save their marriage. They point their finger at their wives and say, “I want to save this marriage, but SHE doesn’t.” These men want hope that their marriages are going to come back together, but it is impossible to know if it will or won’t. Yes, divorce is sin and yes, these wives shouldn’t divorce their husbands, but the problem usually is that the wife has put up with some sin or neglect or abuse for so long, they have checked out and emotionally are not willing to put themselves back into the marriage. If I could speak to the wives, I would challenge them to consider 1 Corinthians 7:10, “To the married I give this command, not I but the Lord: A wife must not separate from her husband, but if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband.” But I don’t often get a chance to talk to the wife; I am with a broken husband grasping at what is no longer there.

This article is for the husband whose wife is still engaged in the marriage to at least some degree. Perhaps, his marriage is great or maybe, it’s not so great. He might see his wife as a nag; always on his back about something, critical, ungiving, and loveless. Either way, there are things this husband can do to protect his “great” marriage or bring life to the unhappy marriage. Another article addresses the issues faced by men whose wives *have* checked out and intent on divorce. There *are* things these men can – no things they *must* do for themselves and for their wives and children. If you’re your wife has left, take a look at the article, *Hope When Your Wife has Left*.

Many of the “experts” say that finances are the number one reason for divorce. Just last night it was repeated again on television by the leading television psychologist, but I disagree. My wife and I have counseled numerous couples over the years and when you scrape through the layers of crud in their marriage, it *always* boils down to unmet needs. One spouse or the other has gone for a very long time of having an insensitive and uncaring spouse. They may argue about finances, sex, the children, or working long hours, but the bottom line always comes down to the husband or wife having needs that are not met in the marriage relationship.

Along these lines, a friend recently sent me an email referring me to a website about men being in the “dog house” for various reasons. The video depicts a husband being banished to the dog house because he purchased a vacuum cleaner as an anniversary present for his wife. Humorous as this video is, it is also sadly true. At the end of the video, the man who finally was reprieved purchased a diamond necklace for his wife. Men, it’s not about the vacuum or the necklace! It is about your wife feeling that she is loved! Ephesians 5:25 tells men to love their wives as Christ loved the church and Matthew 6 says that we do not have to worry, God will take care of *all* of our needs. Men, do you take care of *all* of your wives’ needs? Do you seek to bless and take care of her?

If you do not know your wife’s love language, you must discover it today. Purchase Gary Chapman’s book, “The Five Love Languages” and learn what speaks

love to her. If you know your wife's love language, when was the last time you spoke it? What are you doing on a daily basis to demonstrate that you love your wife as Christ loves the church? Do NOT tell me that you are going out to earn money to fuel her insatiable spending habits! I have heard this from too many men whose wives divorced them, took the jewelry and nice cars, crying because they *never* felt emotionally connected to their husbands. You must discover what your wife needs and then fulfill those needs; it IS what being the spiritual leader of the home is all about.

The husband is the prophet, priest and king of his home. The prophet brings the truth, the word of God to his home and he lives by it. The priest leads his family in prayer and worship, taking his family to church and demonstrating a deep love for Jesus Christ. The king protects and provides for his family. He protects them from the evils of the world and protects his wife from emotional entanglements by being emotionally open and connected with her. Providing for your family includes meeting their physical, financial, security, emotional, mental and spiritual needs. Men, this is an enormous job! But this is what it means to love your wife as Christ loves the church. We cannot do this on our own, but in Christ we can do it.

YOU - yes you, are YOU the husband God wants you to be? Are you the prophet, priest and king in your home? Or are you faking it? Are you saying that everything is fine because your wife is not complaining? Have you asked your wife if everything is alright? Have you sat down this past week and asked her about her day and how she is feeling? If you haven't, you need to do this TODAY!

Or are you pointing the finger at that critical, demanding, nagging wife and wondering why you aren't sitting on the corner of the roof? Biblically, YOU are responsible for the direction of your home. If it is not right, you need to make changes and quit waiting for her to change. Men, marriage is NOT to make you happy, but to make you holy. Too often men expect their wives to make them happy and take care of them. Kenn Kington responds to this well; "If you are looking for someone to meet your needs, make you happy, and make your life worthwhile, you will be greatly disappointed, quickly discouraged, and basically unhappy the rest of your life. But, if you will just be the person God has made you to be, and find out how you can give your life to someone else by meeting their needs and making them happy, you will discover fulfillment, joy, and peace in ways you can't even imagine."

Do not become another statistic; whether your marriage is good or headed in the wrong direction, you can make it better or turn it around. Invest in your wife; do something radical to make a difference by demonstrating love in ways your wife will hear and feel. Get the book, *The Love Dare*, or *Simply Romantic Nights* from FamilyLife ministries; there are a lot of resources available to enhance your marriage! Our workbook is great way to connect with your wife and give her insights into you. Do not be one of the men who neglect their wives and then wonder why they are leaving. Care for your marriage now.