

Recommit to Your Marriage Vows

Men, are you taking your wife for granted? Let me take care of that for a moment. A while back I was privy to a conversation regarding a wife telling her husband of an infidelity in their marriage. Can you imagine that man waking up one day when he thought things were OK in their marriage, only to learn he was not the only one in his wife's life? The man broke down and wept with this major pain and loss in his life.

Men who have lost their wives in any way would give anything to go back and do things just a little better. Maybe they'd change their priorities, or make better use of the time they do have. Men who have been through a divorce often have similar feelings. You wake up one day realizing you have lost your wife. Perhaps one of you has replaced the other emotionally or sexually with someone else? But what if the outcome was good? What if she saw you change and love life differently, she saw you love yourself differently and even love her differently? She may have left for a while but not forever. Some, many, never have this happen. Death comes, divorce comes and you just die for what you could have been and maybe what you wanted to be but it just got all messed up. You can do something about it if this message is hitting home. It brings home the marriage vows, "for better or for worse."

Sometimes you hear about couples renewing their marriage vows, and I think that's a useful idea whether it's a formal ceremony or a verbal recommitment "from this day forward, 'til death do us part" while laying in one another's arms. Guess what, I bet neither of you are mind-readers so it is critical to speak the words.

What about that line, "in sickness and in health"? I don't think the bride and groom fully appreciate what they're saying. What if the marriage ceremony actually listed some of the possible challenges, sicknesses and tragedies? What if one of the spouses will get cancer, be paralyzed, or have mental problems? Maybe they'll have a miscarriage or two. Tragedy almost always takes us by surprise. And suddenly we've forgotten the vows made many years ago. Perhaps we never realized what the vows meant in the first place.

I think about these kinds of challenges. In my story, when I had my oldest son drop off the face of the world in gangs, drugs, jail, and the list goes on; I realized that I was a pretty dismal excuse of a husband. I was so wrapped up in myself; I couldn't help the love of my life. We slowly drifted a part in so many ways. Now, I try to love her with every inch of my soul and I have fallen more madly in love with her; despite the hurts we caused one another. Now, I want to serve her in small ways every day—getting her something from the kitchen, or washing the dishes, or carrying dirty clothes down the stairs, or just making the bed or fixing her a hot bath. You could probably list a hundred ways to serve your wife—from arranging a second honeymoon to just putting down the toilet seat. It all adds up.

Let me confess, when I invest in my wife, I'm getting something in return. She's an extension of me wherever I go. She gives me great feedback and encouragement on all the things I do. She makes me a better dad and a better husband. She loves me through my brokenness and weaknesses. And that makes me love her even more. I can love her through her brokenness and weaknesses.

Even if it doesn't always feel like it, your marriage is a great gift from God. I hope you'll renew your commitment to those vows you made to your bride. And guess what, your kids are watching and learning what commitment is all about. It is called "loving your child's mother" or what we refer to as one of the 7 Secrets of Effective Fathering.