

LOVE HIM FOR WHO HE IS

Mary have had high hopes for a fulfilled life as wife to Jude. She is intelligent and resourceful, energetic and hardworking, ever determined to make a success of whatever enterprise she embarks upon. However, she is highly temperamental and impatient. Her character and disposition stand in sharp contrast to Jude's. Jude is easy-going and complacent, unambitious and nonchalant, lacking in drive and initiative. Nevertheless, he is good natured, dependable, faithful and cheerful. These seemingly irreconcilable personality differences have time and again created severe tension, frustration and breakdown of communication, threatening separation between the couple. Mary had employed different strategies: nagging, quarrels, emotional manipulation to change her husband – all to no avail. They, however, still manage to get along.

Jude's lifestyle had to a large extent been determined by his family background. He lost his mother in his childhood days. His father, an addict to alcohol, was not only unstable in employment but also lived with another woman. In addition, he had unhappy relationship with his children. Jude felt rejected and did not trust anyone because he did not know what love, care and appreciation mean. He couldn't give Mary what he never had. He takes life easy however, believing he has had the greatest shock of his life: the loss of a caring mother in his tender years. Mary on the other hand grew up under the watchful eyes of warm and loving parents. The tension that these differences generated was instrumental to first, Mary's conversion, and later on, Jude's, but they did not completely solve this problem.

The knowledge that people have different personalities makes us to understand that husband and wife will not always approach decisions from the same angle. But there is strength in diversity. In the scripture, Abigail exemplified a woman who loved her husband, Nabal, despite their differences in personality. She was sensible, intelligent, endowed with practical wisdom, prudence, tact, meekness, modesty and patience, among other excellent qualities of hers. In contrast, her husband was ill-tempered, impolite and proud. These differences notwithstanding, Abigail used her sagacity to avert a bloody tragedy for the family. The statement of David attested to her sensitivity. ***“And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand. For in very deed, as the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the***

morning light any that pisseth against the wall” (1 Samuel 25:32-34).

Love is oblivious of deformity, poverty and hardness of times. That is the way God expects you to live with the only man of your life, your husband. As a woman you should realize the fact that you have to make most sacrifices for the happiness of your family. God has endowed you with sterling qualities of which you dare not boast. ***“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”*** (1 Corinthians 4:7).

You should see your husband as being unique. He is not like any other man. Therefore, love, cherish, care for and appreciate him. He may have some flaws, but you have too. He may have some faults; still love him as he is. The fact is that other men that appear, speak and act attractively have some faults too, which you may not be able to cope with. You cannot know this until you move very close or probably live with them for some time. Meanwhile for believers who married in the will of God, since God cannot make mistakes, He knows and gives His children the best. You should have confidence in His love and ability to have led you aright. Do not compare your husband with any other man, rather adjust and get along with him. Love what he loves, hate what he hates. Do what he likes and do not do what he dislikes, so far it does not contradict the word of God. He is your own husband and different from other husbands, just as you, the wife, are unique and different from other wives. You may not be equally talented. That is why God has brought you into his life – to complement what he lacks. You should as well know and accept that fact that there are some values and virtues that you lack which he will also complement. It takes experience, humility, understanding and wisdom to realize that you are made to complement each other, and not to duplicate qualities that are already in one. Therefore, he can never be you. He was not meant to be. With this understanding, all that used to irritate you and cause arguments would have no more roots in your life.

Marriage is for companionship. Your husband wants you to fulfill this purpose in his life. You have to accommodate him and give him the time to adjust to your values. It is possible you are faster; slow down for him. You may be more spiritual; condescend to his level. You may be more educated; come down to his level of understanding. You may have more disciplined background; do not condemn him for what he was never taught or exposed to. Teach him by your humility and wisdom, like Mrs. Wigglesworth did to her husband. Your prayers can change him to become the husband of your dream. There is no one that God cannot change. It will only take prayer, patience and time. If you trust the Lord, your desire over your husband

shall surely be granted. Things will never continue like this. Things will definitely change. It depends on where you are expecting your change from. Expect it from God. ***“If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come”*** (Job 14:14). Before the change takes place, however, demonstrate your virtues as a godly, understanding and wise woman. An attempt to impose your ideas on him implies that you want to be his boss, a thing which most men detested and would resist. Your good ideas can become his, if only you bring them up at the right time, in the right manner and with prayers. The husband is the head of, not just the woman, but of the whole family. An attempt to subtly or boldly usurp this role will be quickly noticed and resisted. God has made him the head. ***“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body”*** (Ephesians 5:23).

Some wives do not know how to treat their husbands to win their love. *“Some wives,”* wrote an author, *“insists upon keeping them (husbands) in a pickle, others are constantly getting them into hot water. This makes them sour, hard and sometimes bitter. Even poor varieties may be made sweet, tender and good, by garnishing them with kisses, wrapping them in a blanket of love, keeping them warm with a steady fire of domestic devotion, and serving with peaches and cream. Thus, prepared they will keep for years!”* Although she wrote in idioms, it is an eye-opener on how to preserve one’s husband. Apart from changing him by prayer, your attitude, prudence and action would go a long way in transforming him into the kind of husband that your heart desires. You should also remember that whatever you do to him will be reciprocated. This is illustrated by the story of a little boy who was playing one day when there was an echo. *“Hullo!”* he shouted. *“Hullo”* said echo. *“Who are you?”* he asked. *“Who are you?”* was the reply. And he fancied that some other boy was mocking him, and became very angry. *“Why don’t you come out?”* he cried. *“Come out,”* answered echo. Quite exasperated, he shouted: *“I’ll fight you.”* And the voice replied: *“fight you.”* Then the little fellow ran home and told his mother that there was a boy in the forest who mocked, made fun of, and threatened to fight him. His wise mother, who knew all about the echo, smiled, and said: *“Run out again and shout: “I love you, and see what answer comes.”* So, the child ran out and shouted: *“I love you.”* And echo replied: *“I love you.”* Is it not a beautiful lesson? If you make faces before the mirror, you see all the ugly looks reflected on its bright surface. And so, the people around us (including your husband) often reflect your own temper and speech. But we hardly know we are shapening the life and attitude of the people around us ***“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled***

with fear” (1 Peter 3:1-2).

It is imperative for every woman to develop the art of listening rather than always talking. As you listen to him, he will listen to you. As you labor for him, he will labor for you. As you love him, he will love you. As you leave parents, people, properties and precious things to cleave to him, he also will leave those things to cleave to you. What your husband and your home as a whole look like depends on you. **“Every wise woman buildeth her house; but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands” (Proverbs 14:1).** To build your house begins with winning the love of your husband through patience, respect and acceptance of him as he is. This could be very demanding as you have to take some practical steps to demonstrate your seriousness in achieving your goal.

Some of the practical things you have to do to foster love, unity and peace in your home include the following:

- (1) **Pardon him.** An author writes: *“forgiveness unlocks the door to healthy, happy relationship with the people we love.”* It means unforgiveness closes the door to health, happy relationship and hinders the favor of God. There is every possibility of offending one another but we should keep on moving **“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Colossians 3:13).** An author says: *“Marriage is a life of forgiveness.”* It is also said to be *“falling in love always with the same person.”* When you love him, you would overlook his offences?
- (2) **Pray for him.** The more you pray for a person, the more you love him or her. **“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another . . .” (James 5:16).** Even if he is not yet converted, you can pray him into the kingdom.
- (3) **Pacify him.** He may be offended by you, the children or any other person in the environment or place of work. Restrain him from grudge, malice, vengeance and “cold war.” Be humble enough to say sorry for your own offences.
- (4) **Please him** by all means, and cautiously and lovingly point out to him where he also hurts you, but do this at the right time. The right time may be when there is no friction and he is happy. You are to please your husband for **“. . . She that is married careth for . . . how she may please her husband” (1 Corinthians 7:34b).**
- (5) **Prepare good food for him.** It is often said that a man’s stomach is the shortest way to his heart. If anything, most men appreciate

good food and see the preparation of it as an integral part of marriage. Study him and know what he likes to eat and do not be too busy to prepare it for him. Some wives delegate this duty to housemaids and growing children, without adequate supervision. The result is that the husband that has little or no grace goes out and falls into the waiting hands of “outlandish” women who know how to handle the “spoon.” This may lead to indescribable consequences. “. . . Teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:4,5).

- (6) **Present your treasures to him.** Your treasures include your money, materials, secret matters and most treasured part of your life. What should you cover from the person whom you love and whose love you desire? Nothing! Behold, what you are trying to cover from him are being advertised to him outside. Give him the unreserved access to what is most precious to you, including your body. “The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise, also the husband hath not power of his own body (and other things), but the wife” (! Corinthians 7:4).
- (7) **Purchase things for him.** You may buy clothes for him and help him with all other needs that will make life comfortable for him: shoes, briefcase, wrist watch,, shaving stick, tooth brush, towel, handkerchief, traveling bag, or box etc. You may discuss together about the change of his car and other things that he needs. It will be appreciated. How about his [people? Respect them. Love hem and show genuine concern about their wellbeing. How about his work and workplace? Give encouraging counsel that would help him to overcome whatever stress and problems he is experiencing there.

As part of your unconditional love for your husband, help him to develop spiritually and socially. See that he gets good Bibles, books and commentaries that would widen his spiritual horizon. If he is the reserved and unsociable type, you can wisely bring him out of his shell and launch him into a sociable life, within the orbit of the Scriptures. As you discover his faults, you should learn to overlook and be patient (1 Peter 4:18). You should not discuss him negatively before the children or outsiders, an example we can pick from mother Slessor who never spoke ill of the drunkard husband to the children till his death as a nuisance. If you sell him out as a bad man, the “buyers” would always have a negative impression of him even when he is a changed person. This is why it is dangerous to make slanderous remarks or cast aspersions on him. You should know your own

kind of husband – his likes and dislikes, his attitudes to things generally and his temperament. Our diverse temperament are divinely designed to complement each other. The Scripture recognizes the differences in gifts which also help to account for the differences in our traits. ***“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another”*** (Romans 12:6-10).

On a final note, you should realize that the source of all grace for righteousness, peace and love is God. There is no way you can love the unlovable without the transformation of your life and heart. This transformation is possible only through Christ. And He wants to transform you, not just to be able to love your husband and have a blissful home on earth, but to prepare you for eternal home of peace and joy. All you need do is to repent of your sins, surrender your heart and life to Him and pray that He would take absolute control of your life, character and emotions. He is interested in saving you and your household, delivering you from earthly and eternal sufferings. If you are already born again, commit your life and home to Him afresh, trusting Him for the grace to accept your husband and love him unconditionally. All will be well by His grace as you depend on Him.

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