

MINISTERING TO YOUR WIFE

(This lecture is based on some letters a marriage counselor wrote to his newly wedded son.
Letters to Philip: On How to Treat a Woman. By Charlie W. Shedd Christian psychologist)

I. IF YOU LIKE IT, TELL HER!

A. Charlie Shedd advises that a good husband should try to do three things every day:

1. **Tell her, "I love you"**

We mean exactly that, with oral words; not with flowers or gifts but with oral words. Women have a desperate need to hear those words, "I love you", every day of their lives.

2. **Do something nice for her**

That should be easy. You can think of lots of things, right?

3. **Pay her a compliment**



B. Difficulties Husbands Experience

Now here comes the difficult part. The truth is that it sound simple, but as you try these as a regular discipline, you will see that it is much easier to talk about them than to do them. You are going to find yourself running out of ideas, of what to do, and what words to say. Now there are three reasons why husbands have difficulty doing these nice things for their wives every day:

1. **Hostility syndrome**

"I am mad at the whole world. People are absolutely no good. I do not care what people think I do not want to be nice to anybody today. And I have the right to feel this way." That is how men feel. It is a wrong attitude.

2. **We think that saying nice things to people causes embarrassment**

Just tell Andrew that he is an excellent preacher and right away you will see that he will be a little bit embarrassed. So we say, "Oh, we better not say anything." "Well, I better not say anything about this nice meal because I have already told her many times that she is a good cook, and she will feel funny when I say it again." That is another false reason.

3. **People tend to be selfish**

And most of us spend much more time thinking about ourselves than we do about our wives. "Who is number one in my family? Me!" We are too preoccupied with **our** own emotional feelings; about how **we** think, how **we** feel. We do not take the time to really concentrate on the feelings of our precious spouse, or what it would mean to them if we said a good word.

C. Addicted To Masculine Approval

You can believe me, every woman worth the name 'woman' is an addict to masculine approval. God simply made women that way. The best way to let her know you approve of her is to tell her.

D. Created to be a Helper

God created them to be a helper. When the husband says, "That is good" or "Thank you" or "You are wonderful", then she goes into high gear, then she really wants to start doing things. God has made her that way. Because God made her a helper, she wants to be successful in helping, and she wants to know that she is successful in helping.

E. Her Greatest Need — to please you

From the feminine point of view, one of the nicest things she can hear is you voicing your likes and preferences. There are different ways of telling her she is doing a good job, but from her point of view, voicing your likes is the nicest way. Your wife has several different needs, but the greatest need that she has is to please you.

F. Her Thoughts

If things are normal at your house, like they are at other houses, there is a good chance that your wife is spending more time thinking about you than you are thinking about her. That is why if you give her some pleasant things to think on, you are doing something good for her; you are doing something good for you; and you are doing something good for your future together.

The Bible says, "*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.*" (Proverbs 23:7 NKJV). The same thing is true for a woman. So if you give her a lovely idea about herself, for example, "Oh boy you are really a good seamstress", then she will try to become that person. So you encourage her, you put up this picture that you have of her, and she will try to rise up to be just like you are hoping and expecting. What you tell your wife makes such a big difference. If you give her nice things to think about, she will begin to think more nice things about herself, and about you, and the family.

I have seen many an ordinary-looking woman grow into a lovely thing because her husband told her she was lovely. The opposite is also true. Maybe some of you older brothers can recall some people that got married several years ago, and you saw after several years the light go out of the woman's eyes, the smile gone away, and the body change. You can be sure that their husbands did not feed nice ideas to these wives.

G. Good Phrases

Remember the key phrase; "***If you like it, say so.***" Here are a few good sayings that you can use which are successful with every woman:

1. "***You are not a woman, you are a memorable occasion.***"

Now you only say that to your wife. This particular phrase produces fantastic results. It can affect how she does her make-up, how she dresses and how she takes care of herself. It can also affect other aspects of her life.

I just want to say that it is a smart idea to praise your wife's body. A woman's body is simply very important to her. All women want to look very attractive. And that attractiveness should be for you, her husband. So you should show appreciation and enjoyment. You should show that you notice it, that you are aware of it. So you need to tell your wife what you like about her physical make-up, her physical body. Now that should not be hard. I am sure that there are several things that you like about your wife's body. You should tell her what things are especially appealing to you, and how you feel about these body parts. "Oh, the color of your hair, it is always in my dreams. And your eyes, I have been looking at ladies' eyes today but I did not see anybody with eyes like yours." Or "Oh, your voice, it is music." Or "The curve of your shoulder..." You can think of many other things, but these are important things.

The Bible says that you should 'ravish', that is be extremely deeply happy and excited with the wife of your youth (Proverbs 5:18). She is no longer young, you are no longer young, but you are still supposed to be fully 'enraptured'.

I am reminded of one man who liked music very much, so he married a girl who could sing very beautifully. Well, she was not very good looking, and in the morning when she got out of bed she was downright ugly. So it just made him feel bad to have to look at her. It spoiled his whole morning to have to get up

and look at her. So he would often go to her and say, "Honey, sing me a song." After that he was OK all day long.

You can be absolutely certain that she will respond greatly to a comment about her physical appearance. If you let her know that you think that one of her body parts is one of the most beautiful things in nature that God has made, she will respond, enraptured fantastically and do everything she can think of to serve you and help you.

2. **"Baby, your blueberry pie is in a class all by itself."**

"It is super special!" "It is all by itself; there is no comparison." Charlie Shedd wrote to his boy, "Do you realize, my dear boy, what a tremendous undertaking it is to serve a good meal?" To make a good meal. Think of all the things your wife has to do for that. "Planning, buying, preparing, cooking. Preparing includes cleaning the chicken, setting the table, dishing up, and then the whole messy business in reverse when it is over." Now she has to take all the leftover things and put them away. She has to take all the things off the table. She has to clean it all up, put it away nicely before it is all over. So when you are eating, and she says, "You like it?" do you say "Huh? hum, yes"? This is a crucial issue for a woman, because it is her work. She has to do this three times a day.

To make one good meal is a real accomplishment. In fact, "for you to sit there, devour it, and then hurry on... without ever saying a good word must be a mortal sin." If you forget to say a good word, you are a fool, because mealtime comes every day and presents a natural opportunity to say, "Mmmm this is nice", or "Thank you for that" or "You put a lot of work into this". You are a fool not to say that. You need only seven words to say, "This was a good meal, thank you."

The Bible says of a good woman, "Let her works bring her praise at the city gate." (Proverbs 31:31). Now most women know what they are good at doing, cooking, cleaning, sewing, or working with children. Every woman has some specialties, and you had better study them and study how to build them into your life together, into your marriage.



3. **"You just go on getting better all the time."**

This goes for women of all ages. You need to tell her, "You just go on getting better all the time." There is probably much more truth in that than you realize. Of course, if you do not think that your wife is getting better, then do not say it. However, if you cannot find anything, that you feel is an improvement, you are probably either blind or need to get busy and start discovering. Something is bound to be better than it was last year, or last week or even yesterday. You need to capitalize on these improvements; make use of them, praise them. They are stepping stones to the next thing.

Now there are a couple of times in a woman's life when it is especially helpful to use this phrase:

- a) When she has been struggling for a long time to improve on something.

Maybe she has been working on her temper. Maybe she has been working on a new skill like typing or something like that, and she has been struggling with it, and feels like, "I might as well give up." Or she feels, "I cannot do anything right." Then when you say, "You keep getting better all the time", that is a great stimulation for her to look bright into the future.

- b) When she is moving towards middle age, or old age.

Or maybe simply when you know that she is not feeling the same as she used to be. She is looking at her varicose veins, and other things and you know that she is very conscious that she is no longer the pretty attractive young woman that she used to be. A woman will be forever grateful to the man who really can make her believe it when he says, "You just go on getting better and better all the time."

Some of these words and phrases which you say to your wife, you do not want to make public. They are very, very private. They are just between the two of you. They do something special for both of you, and they leave a special warm feeling when you are apart for some time.

Your phrases of praise, can give her something beautiful to think about when you are not in town. Maybe you are gone for an evening. Maybe you are fishing for a week. Or maybe you are just off on a ministry trip. But a clever husband can learn how to turn up the temperature of his wife when he leaves, so that everything is nice and cozy and warm when he comes back again. Maybe you have come to a home where the heat was not working and it feels very uncomfortable, until you get the heat going and it gets nice and warm. It can be that way between people. But you can turn up the temperature and make it comfortable by leaving a good compliment before you go away and then it will be so nice to come together, to come back home to be together.

Now here is a warning signal. If she turns her shoulder to you and is looking for a little bit of a pat, or if she says to you, "What do you think of this? Don't you think this looks nice on me?" Or if you see her looking in the mirror often, you know you are in a dangerous place. You have not been taking care of her, because she is nervous, she is conscious of herself. She is thinking, "Well what can I do to make myself more attractive, more pleasant to my husband." If the gleam is out of her eye, you had better get busy. If the gleam is out of her eye, it has been too long since you last sent her heart singing.

Charlie Shedd, the Christian psychologist gave us a crude illustration in his book. He said something like, "You know, my dog will run all the way across the yard just to come to me so I can pat his head and say 'nice dog, nice dog.' The average wife will do just like that. She will come across town, across the house, across the room or across to your point of view, and across almost anything to give you her love if you offer her yours with some honest approval."

II. ASK HER TO HELP YOU TO GROW

A. A Feeling of Worth

One kind of praise from a husband is a real bell ringer in the heart of any wife. It rings loud and clear and it sounds beautiful. It is the praise that says, "I could not have done it without you." Or in some other words you could say, "I owe it all to you." This is successful because a female has an innate longing to be of worth, of value to the male. That is how they have been created. So you need to let them know when they have really helped you to accomplish something.



B. Tell your wife that you know you have faults and ask her to help you grow

Acceptance with kindness, does not mean that you must consider each other just perfect, absolutely perfect. You do remember that there are two kinds of faults to deal with.

1. *There is one kind of fault that you can never remove.*

There is nothing that you can do about that particular shortcoming or that particular problem, so you leave them in your love life, like pillars that you work around. If you want to have nice big beautiful buildings you need to have some pillars. And some times they are in the way, sometimes they are uncomfortable, but that is the way it is.

2. *Then there is the other kind of fault that can be corrected.*

You can make yourself a good steward of your life and your marriage if you face them intelligently together. Now you probably cannot go up to your wife and say, "Tell me what is wrong with me." That probably will not work. It also does not work to have self pity, "Oh, I cannot do anything right. What is wrong with me?" That also does not work, because she will just say nice things to you to comfort you.

This is what you want to communicate: "I love your accolades..." (Accolades are beautiful things that you say.) "...but the truth is, that I do have faults, therefore since I respect your judgment, I am soliciting your help to make me a better man." Now that is a beautiful attitude to create in your marriage. It will make your marriage much better and it will change your whole ministry. Because you will grow in different ways, and you will change in your character, other people will notice it and they will accept you more as a leader.

C. Welcome Her Suggestions

You must convey assurance that you will welcome her suggestions. Once she really understands that you are looking for help from her, she will very likely learn to pace herself as a good wife should. She will learn how much she needs to say, what she needs to say, and she will know you, your mood, and the circumstances. Very quickly she will learn what she can say to help you grow. The word 'pace' comes from sports. Like a runner needs to pace himself. He can run faster but he is not going to. Or a horse needs to be walked first before it begins to race. It is to keep yourself in control and doing the right thing, the right amount, at the right time.

D. Explain that she can help you earn more

You need to explain to her that she can help you earn more money, if she takes off her rose colored glasses. Instead of her always saying, "Oh you are just the perfect husband, you are just so nice", you want her to tell you some of the things you need to improve on. They say that 'money talks'. It is powerful; persuading people to do this or that. This is one place that your wife can hear it.

For instance, I have heard of people not getting a promotion because they were cracking their knuckles. Another man did not get a job because he had the habit of always cleaning his fingernails when he was talking for an interview and talking to the boss. Another husband dropped his cigarette ashes everywhere and he lost his job. So if that is your problem, quit doing that. Another man had to leave his job because he was always slouching, he never sat up straight, he never looked proper, he always sat there slouching. These are all facts. Another man lost his job because he was always sucking up his tea. Another man was always chewing on toothpicks. The list goes on. One pastor was given an interview to preach at a very big church, but when he talked to people he had a bad habit of rolling his eyes up and showing the whites of his eyes, so they decided they wouldn't hire him. These are some things that your wife can help you with.

E. Say the First Words Right

Now here is what you need to do once she starts offering you items for improvement; you need to train yourself to say the first word right. So she tells you, "Well, you are always patting your head." And you need to train yourself to say, "Thank you, I was not aware of that. You and I make a great team."

My daughter has just come from Canada, and she brought with her some special vocabulary. She has been here for a week and a half and already three members of the family are using the same words that she's been using. So we do pick up habits. Habits that are not comfortable for other people.

F. Rectify the Past

Now of course your wife has already tried to help you in the past, and what was your response? "I do not do that very often, just once in a while." You rejected her, so she learned to keep her mouth shut.

You will find that when you start receiving her advice, you want to argue about it, you want to pout about it; you want to retaliate to her comments. That is a normal reaction that we want to go through. Now only after you have gone through those emotions, can you say to her, "I did not know that I was doing that."

- 1) So the first thing you need to learn to do is to **say**, "**Thank you.**"
- 2) The next thing is to make sure you **do not argue** about it.
- 3) And the thing after that is **do not pout** about it.
- 4) After that you need to make sure you **do not retaliate**.
(e.g. "Yes I do pat my hair a lot, because you break all the combs in our house.")
- 5) **Admit your bad habit.** "I did not know I was doing that."

G. Team Work

Finally, use the following phrase, "You and I make a good team." All of a sudden you will hit success. The word 'team' is a winner. She realizes that you are not only the pastor, or you are not only the director, or you are not only doing spiritual work, but "together we are doing it."

Home. The word home means many things. Home is a haven. A haven is like a harbor where ships come in. A home is for relaxing and for letting down. Just relaxing, totally relaxing. No front. No officialdom. You can just be yourself. But home is at its best when it is also a place where two people are sharing the thrill of becoming finer persons together.

H. She will ask your help

Now here is the best part for you. A woman is so constituted, so designed, that she longs to be worth something to her mate. So something special is going to happen when you lead out by asking her to help

you improve to become a better person. If you receive that help and if you thank her for that help, then one day you will discover that she will turn the whole thing around, and she will ask you to help her.

When she sees you growing, and sees that you are becoming a better husband, a better man, a better leader, a more spiritual person, she begins to look at herself, and she begins to develop a desire to grow along with you. This is because she senses that she is married to a growing man and she wants to grow with him. This is not a stagnant life. This is not, "Well, this is the platform that we are on. That is the way it is." "That is how he will live the rest of his life and that is how life is going to be and so that is the way I am going to have to live. He does this and I will do that." She will discover that she has opportunity to grow, to develop.

What you do not like.

Now we have talked about telling her what you like about her. We talked about getting her to help you become a better person. And now we want to talk about how to tell her what you do not like.

III. HOW TO TELL HER WHAT YOU DO NOT LIKE

Let us say there are some things you want to change around here. You do not want an out and out fight about this, and you have a hunch there must be some better way of doing this thing. But you have decided you are going to lay it on the table, and you are going to discuss it and you are going to solve this thing. You need to have this thing settled for your personal peace and for the future of your marriage and just in general, to declare yourself that you are the husband and the leader of the home. Well there are some simple rules to get this change moving, to get this change started. To get it started that is the crucial thing, to get it going. Of course you could tell her by saying, "I do not like this. I do not want to see it any more. Quit it", what ever. But we are pretty sure that that is not going to work. So let us look at how to tell her:

A. Begin by telling her something that you do like

Let us say maybe you have a grown daughter, and she is starting to wear make up, and you are not very happy about that. You could say, "I forbid it. You live in my house you will not use that." If you say this, I can tell you that right now, winter has just arrived in your family. Now you can actually get the job done quicker and have her feeling good about it. She is all fixed up in her face, and she is looking for compliments and you say, "This is very interesting. It is a nice experiment. If I was a young girl maybe I would like to experiment like that also. But you know I just feel a little bit sad that you are hiding so much of your natural beauty. You cover up so much of your natural beauty." If you say it something like that, she will understand that you have given her a compliment and she wants to act upon that compliment. She realizes that she is not inferior in beauty to other girls. There is also a good chance that the next day she will not put on make up. You have assured her that you like her the way she is, and by doing that you have just touched upon one of nature's strongest desires. One of nature's strongest desires is that we want to make the best possible appearance for other people. That is how God made us. We all want to impress others to our maximum.

So this is a roundabout way that gets you much better results with your wife. Let us say you have an extremely modest wife and she is very afraid that you see anything above her knee, or anything. So when she changes in her night clothes, she makes sure the lights are turned off and it is dark. You can say to her, "What do you think this is, the Middle Ages?" Perhaps, you may not get a very good reception on that one. But if you tell her, "My dear with a body like that, you have to hide?" You may get quite a different response. So begin with a compliment. Do not attack. Do not shoot arrows at her.

B. Make sure that you do it sincerely

Some people say, "Well you can tell a woman anything, and she will believe it." That is not true. The truth is, the female has more native, natural intelligence than the male. You will see it in school with many children: the girls do better in class than the boys do. That is so in Canada, and it is not different in our country," I think.

Women may forever out think us, and know ahead of time what somebody else is going to say or do, or they may out maneuver us in some way. However, there are certain places in a female's life where you always can get her attention, every time! One of these is: There is not a woman in the world in her right mind, who would flatly reject any suggestion that may solidify her relationship with the man she loves.



So psychologically speaking we are so put together that we are most likely to act on the advice of people, if:

1. If you respect the source of this suggestion as a person of wisdom.

Now you know that your wife thinks that you are smart. How do you know that? She thinks you are smart because you chose to marry her.

2. If we care about our relationship to this individual and we would like to strengthen it.

So we are most likely to act on the advice of somebody if we care about our relationship with that person and want to make that relationship stronger.

3. If their thoughts for our improvement are presented in a positive manner.

This makes us feel good before we have a chance to feel bad, so we are more likely to act upon these suggestions, if their thoughts for our improvements are presented in a positive manner.

IN CLOSING:

I want to share how you can begin to rebuild your relationship instantly with this lecture.

All you need to know is this basic formula.

MEMORIZE IT!

You need to have it memorized for instant recall.

So let's go!!!

1. Tell her what you like about her.
2. Ask her to help you become a better person.
3. Tell her what you do not like.

1. Tell her what you like about her.

- a) Three things to do daily:
 - Tell her, "I love you,"
 - Do something nice for her.
 - Pay her a compliment.
- b) God made her:
 - Addicted to masculine approval.
 - Created her to be a helper.
 - Her greatest need is to please you.
- c) Good Phrases
 - Eulogize her body.
 - Praising her meals
 - You are getting better all the time.

2. Ask her to help you become a better person.

- a) Tell her you know you have faults — ask her to help you to grow.
- b) Welcome her suggestions.
- c) Explain that she can help you to earn more.
- d) Rectify the past.
- e) Emphasize team work.

3. Tell her what you do not like.

- a) Begin by telling her what you do like.

b) Do it sincerely, positively.

Well men! Let's get busy. Let's become better husbands. Let's build a **heavenly** home. Let us make a team with our wives. After all that was God's intention in the first place.

Praise be to his holy name. He knew best all along. Amen

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by **New Life for Churches**. You have the privilege *upon completion of your practical assignment* to use this lecture with others.

Practical assignment

Completed

- Do three things for your wife every day:
- 1. Tell her you love her.
- 2. Do something nice for her.
- 3. Pay her a compliment.

- Make a calendar to track how well you are doing. The calendar may look like you want it to, but it must contain three things. Each day must show whether you:
- 1. Told her you love her.
- 2. Paid her a compliment.
- 3. And what nice thing you did for her.

Bring the calendar with you to the next meeting.

- Do a special activity with your wife that you have not done in a very long time. Then ask her what small thing you could do for her on a more regular basis that would delight her very much. Make a brief report.