



To the Newly Married:

Husbands, turn off the TV and exult in your wife!

There is a fascinating verse in Deuteronomy. It isn't marriage advice; it is a marriage command.

When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.

Deuteronomy 24:5 KJV

The command is for a newly married husband to refrain from anything that takes him away from his home for a year. And the purpose of this command is so that he can "cheer up" his wife.

That's an unfortunate translation. It means something in English that it doesn't mean in Hebrew. In Hebrew the basic meaning of the word is to rejoice, to exult. In the form that the word is in, it means to cause that state in someone. In other words, the husband is to "make his wife rejoice."

What makes her tick?

This is where it gets endlessly wonderful. Women are fascinating creatures; each one created just a little different. They are almost like a puzzle to be solved. God created men and women in such a way that you can't really learn about your spouse through a how-to book or even a class. Of course, everyone wants a shortcut, especially since we now live in a cursed world. But God didn't change his creation because we became shortsighted, self-absorbed narcissists. The rule still applies. If you want a blessed and beneficial marriage, learn how to make your wife exult. What makes her of loving a woman is pornography. If you cannot tell the difference between the sexual assault that is pornography and a loving relationship that is marriage, then please do not get married. Instead, repent and deal with your own abuse issues before you inflict yourself upon an unsuspecting wife. Marriage won't cure your pornography issues. Only repentance will. You cannot learn how to cause a woman to rejoice by watching pornography. God did not create either you or her that tick? What does she fear? What does she dream of?

Do you know?

Peter wrote that we are to live with our wives with understanding (1 Peter 3:7), which is also what Moses is saying. Learn about your wife. Understand her. Think of it: God made marriage in such a way that you can only truly be blessed and happy if you learn to get to know someone other than yourself, and there are no shortcuts. You actually have to take the time to do it.

It Isn't Hard Work

But, contrary to millions of self-appointed marriage gurus, it isn't "hard work", any more than sanctification is hard work. Rather, it is growth, joy, love, pressing toward the mark with uplifted head. We aren't slaves drudging through mines, but children on our way to glory! What better way to picture this great truth than the marriage of two lovers, learning to exult in one another.

Oscar Wilde wrote, "*Women aren't meant to be understood; they are meant to be loved.*" But this is the raving of a narcissist who thinks very highly of himself. Guys, do away with the jokes about not understanding women. You are commanded to do just that. But to do that you have to put off your

own self-absorption, and figure out how to listen. Listen with your ears, with your eyes, even with your finger-tips. She'll let you know what causes her to exult, but you have to tune in.

The Bible says that you have a year. I always counsel newly-weds to turn the TV off and hole up together as much as possible for the first year. Don't try to learn about your wife from stereotypes, books (especially of the "women's place is in the home" variety) or locker room gossip. This is your wife you are learning about and she is the only one who can show you what causes her to exult. You are on a wonderful journey of discovery together.

Repentance

In this day, one of the most prevalent ways to destroy the mystery and delight of loving a woman is pornography. If you can not tell the difference between the sexual assault that is pornography and loving relationship that is marriage, then please do not get married. Instead, repent and deal with your own abuse issues before you inflict yourself upon an unsuspecting wife. Marriage won't cure your pornography issues. Only repentance will. You cannot learn how to cause a woman to rejoice by watching pornography. God did not create either you or her that way. There is no shortcut. You must put off yourself and your own lusts and actually learn to care about another person, namely, your wife.

The fascinating thing about marriage is that the learning never ends. Love and friendship and even romance blooms and grows more intense each year — once you learn how to listen.

If you have been married for a while and find your love growing stagnant, it is probably because you didn't heed God's command. Repent and ask your wife's forgiveness for failing to understand her. Then start your year now. Turn the TV off. Give up boys' nights out, and learn how to cause your wife to rejoice. It may not be too late.

Isn't Hebrew fascinating?

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