WHEN A
Woman
INSPIRES HER
HUSBAND

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D o you have times when you feel as if you walk alone in your mar-
riage? Are there some things you just don’t understand about your man that might be driving a wedge between the two of you? Would you like to experience a closer connection, but find yourself uncertain about how you can achieve that?

Well, the good news is that you don’t have to feel alone in your marriage anymore. You can be the woman who ministers to your husband in such a way that you draw his heart closer to yours in ways you never imagined you could.

After writing my book *When Women Walk Alone* (now ten years ago), and hearing from many wives who felt alone in their marriages, I started thinking about what we, as wives, could do so that we no longer felt isolated within our marriage relationships. How could we come alongside our husbands and inspire and encourage them and draw their hearts toward us to where they want to walk alongside us?

That’s when I realized that to walk alone in marriage is somewhat of a choice. I must admit that for a number of years I expected my husband, Hugh, to understand me and therefore to be all I needed and
wanted him to be. But in many ways I wasn’t putting forth the effort to know a little more about his world so I could enter it.

As women, we can read all the books in the world about how to grow closer to God so we can survive a marriage. But what about making that marriage really great? What about investing our time in getting to know and serving our husbands simply because we want to love them unconditionally and bring joy into their lives? What about taking ourselves—and all we expect our husbands to be for us—out of the equation so God can work in their lives through us?

For years I asked God to change my husband so he can be all I want and need in a man. But eventually I learned that if someone or something I’m asking God to change isn’t changing, it’s probably because God wants to change me. Upon realizing this, I began to spend time with God asking Him to change my heart, to help me seek Him for the “immeasurably more” that He has for me and my marriage. And as I did, He laid it on my heart to quit thinking about me and my needs—and the benefits of marriage for my life—and start discovering my husband’s needs and the benefits of our marriage for him.

So I asked Hugh—my husband of 23 years—“How can I be a woman who inspires you, who draws you closer, who makes you all you can be?” (Prior to this conversation, my question was usually, “What am I doing that seems to be pushing you away from me?” But that was always too intimidating of a question. My husband didn’t want a long, drawn-out conversation that would illicit my defense or tears. He liked the question that was aimed directly at what he needed, not indirectly at what I needed.)

The list he gave me eventually became the table of contents for this book. And after interviewing many more husbands, I realized my husband’s list was not unique. He was speaking as a male; and many of the things he mentioned are inherently male. I also noticed that Hugh wasn’t asking me to do really difficult stuff. In fact, some of it was even fun. And all of it was worthwhile.

When a husband is happy, his wife is happy. When he is treated like a king, respected as a man, admired like a hero, and inspired to be
all he can be, his wife reaps the benefits. So you see, this book really is about you, in an indirect way. As you come alongside your husband and start living with him the way he wants you to, being for him all he needs you to be, you will end up one fulfilled woman!

Now, you might be thinking, Cindi, you don’t know my husband. How can you say if I start serving him and pleasing him that eventually I’ll be happier? And isn’t that a little one-sided?

I’ve learned that God is one-sided when it comes to marriage. He always wants to change the one asking Him for change. He always seems to want to work on the one asking Him to do the work. The starting point for real change in your marriage—real change in your husband—is you. Are you willing to trust God that as you please Him by serving your husband He will make it worth your while? Look at it this way: If you are laying down yourself so you can please someone else (God and your husband), God is not going to make you miserable in return. Trust Him. Trust the process. Get to know your man and love him more. And you’ll be glad you did.

This book is about embracing the man in your life by understanding and appreciating him for who he is so that he can be all that he was designed to be for God first, and then for you.

But what if your husband isn’t a believer and doesn’t have a desire to live for God? Embrace him anyway. And as you do, you will be releasing his heart to discover who he is in God’s eyes as he sees first who he is in yours.

Perhaps by this point you’re thinking, Why am I reading another book about what a woman can do for a man? When is it gonna be the other way around? Why isn’t my husband reading a book on how to better understand me and meet my needs? Just in case you’re beginning to wonder if the score is even, let me share with you what I believe is God’s perspective on the issue.

In Genesis 2:18 we discover that we, as women, were created to be helpers to our husbands. The purpose of our existence is to come alongside our husband and be his partner, suitable for him in every way. That doesn’t mean a woman can’t know fulfillment in her life
WHEN A Woman INSPIRES HER HUSBAND

without a husband. But for the woman who is married, it does mean God’s design for her life is to help him.

As you leave more of yourself behind and put more of your husband in front of you, you will find him becoming more of what you wanted in the first place. And you’ll find there’s more about him to love!

Gary Thomas, the author of Sacred Marriage and Sacred Influence, says, “You can’t make your husband serve you or care for you—but you can focus on helping him, and more times than not, that action alone will prompt him to serve and to care. Even if it doesn’t, it will…unleash a great spiritual adventure in your own life.”

Are you ready for that great spiritual adventure? This book will help you see the unique heart of your man, how it differs from yours, and how you can use your strengths, softness, and God-given abilities to inspire your man to be all he was designed to be. This is a book on how to better understand your husband so you can help him reach the heights. It’s a book on how to be the wind beneath his wings, the inspiration in his song, the light in his day, and the spring in his step. It’s also a book on how to draw his heart closer to yours so you will no longer feel you are walking alone in your relationship with him. You’ll be walking alongside your man—and loving it.

Now, I realize you may be reading this book because there are changes you’d like to make in your husband. There may be certain adjustments in his attitude or work ethic or spiritual life that you’d love to see. I want to encourage you to begin praying right now, “God, please change me.” And as God changes you, I trust your husband will change too. You are not the reason he is the way he is. But you have incredible power to encourage, inspire, and support him in a way no one else can. So if you’ve been praying for a transformation or breakthrough in your husband’s life, I want to encourage you to begin praying that the transformation will start with you. Real transformation starts—in our marriages, in our families, in our spiritual lives, and in our personal lives—when we, as wives, are willing to say, “God, start with me.”
I’m right there alongside you, sister, praying that as I write this—and you read it—we’ll be making changes together, and in the process, helping our husbands be all they can be—for God first, and then for us.

So, are you ready for the changes about to take place? Then take a deep breath…and here we go.
“...if you really want to motivate your man and communicate with him, as well as enjoy a fulfilling marriage with him and raise healthy kids with him, stop expecting him to act or think like a woman. He can’t do that. Nor should he.”

Gary Thomas, Sacred Influence
Chapter 1

Understanding His World

Hugh walked into the store past the men in suits who were waiting to show him the latest cell phone. “I just want something that I can make calls on,” he mumbled to himself under his breath. “No Internet. No texting, no music. Just give me a darn phone.”

Then his eye caught a rock-like flip phone that he practically had to pry open. “Feel how heavy this is,” he said as he picked it up and admired it.

I found myself thinking, Wouldn’t a light phone be better, especially if it’s in your pocket? Hugh continued his admiration of the heavy, durable “man-looking” phone.

Just then a man, soiled from head to toe, came into the store in a rush and out of breath.

“Dude, that is an awesome phone,” he told Hugh as he saw him holding the model this guy apparently owned.

“I just dropped mine from a height of thirty feet on a construction site and it landed in a puddle of water. The face cracked a little, but it’s still working!”

That was all it took to sell my husband that phone.
“I’ll take this one,” Hugh said to one of the suited up men he originally didn’t want to address.

I looked at Hugh, wondering what planet he came from. Not only did my husband want a phone that felt like a rock or a heavy tool, and that he had to pry open, but I’m sure he also wanted to go out and drop it 30 feet into a puddle of water just to see how durable it was as well!

“It’s a man thing, Mom,” my teenage daughter said as she observed the expression on my face.

And she was right.

Men are not from Mars. But they do act and think differently than women. Certain things make your husband tick that you will never understand. I’m not going to elaborate on the differences between men and women. There are hundreds of books already written on that topic. And you are aware of the differences between your husband and yourself more than anyone else. This book, rather, is about understanding your husband’s world. And you start doing that by understanding, accepting, and embracing the fact that your husband’s world is different from your own simply because he’s a man.

I want a light, pretty cell phone, preferably pink and sparkly. My husband wants one with visible screws holding it together and a manly name like The Boulder.

I want it attractive; he wants it functional. I want the prettiest color; he wants the best price. I want to talk it through and really make sure it’s the one I want; he wants to buy it and get out of the store.

And that’s only the picking-out-a-cell-phone part of our day! Add to that our differences on how we like to spend our evenings, what kinds of movies we prefer, and what our idea of an adventurous weekend would be like, and I’ll have enough evidence to present the case to my girlfriends that my husband is indeed from a different world than I am.

What Husbands Can Teach Us

My, how we’d like our husbands a lot more if they were more like women. We don’t really believe that, and we don’t actually want that, but it’s the way we think at times. We want a man who is tender, yet
we also expect him to be tough. We want sensitivity, but we also expect strength. We want understanding from him, yet a practical side to balance out our emotions. We want a man who is both male and female at heart. Yet most men don’t come that way. And they aren’t made to become that way.

Yet admit it. You, too, have found yourself thinking…

If only he’d be more sensitive.
If only he’d be more interested in what I’m interested in.
If only he wouldn’t make such a mess.
If only he’d just listen to me!
If only he weren’t so loud!
If only he’d be more romantic.

If, if, if. What we’re really saying is, “If only he were more like… well, me!”

My friend, Edie, is a licensed marriage and family therapist. In her first couple years of counseling she saw more than her share of women who were unhappy with their husbands.

“So many women want their husbands to be more like women—to shop with them and go to a chick flick with them,” Edie said. But one of the ways a woman can most powerfully influence her husband is to accept that he’s a different person than she is and those differences are intended for her growth.

Our husbands’ differences are intended for our growth?
Exactly.

By coming up against an attitude, behavior, or personality trait we don’t like, we are forced to confront our own ability to be loving, patient, understanding, and forgiving. It’s our opportunity to practice Philippians 2:3-4:

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”
Therefore marriage—that arena in which we are bound to another who is so different from ourselves—is our opportunity to grow. Marriage shows us how selfish we can be, how much more godly we can be when it comes to loving our husbands, and how very much we still struggle with wounds we are expecting our husbands to heal.

I’ve heard some call marriage a “divine conspiracy”—that God uses the marital union to transform our lives. I believe it, too. I’ve seen, in my own marriage, God’s plan to change both me and Hugh by showing us ways in which we know a little of God’s love for one another. And God shows it to me the most when I see ways in which my husband is unlike myself.

But God definitely knew what He was doing when He designed men and women differently.

As a wedding gift to her daughter, Valerie, and son-in-law, Walt, author Elisabeth Elliot placed her book *Let Me Be a Woman* into her daughter’s hands on her wedding day.

The book, subtitled *Notes on Womanhood for Valerie*, provided instruction on femininity in a marriage—and was written in the mid-1970s as feminism was in full swing. In the early 1980s, when I was 16 years old, my older sister placed that book in my hands and said, “Cindi, you need to read this. It will change your perspective on what it means to be a woman and a wife.” My goal at that time was to graduate from college and be an independent career woman in need of no man. I had no desire to marry. I thought a man would simply get in the way of my plans for my life.

Then I read Elisabeth Elliot’s book, and it changed my life. Life wasn’t about me. It was about serving God. And if He should call me to be a wife, it was about serving my husband too.

It still took quite a few years of marriage for me to realize that life and marriage weren’t all about me. They weren’t about getting my needs met or finding my personal fulfillment. Rather, they were about dying to self, giving up my preferences for another, learning what it means to truly love. And doing those things, in return, became personally fulfilling as I was obeying God’s commands to love.
And yet at times I complain, like many wives, that my husband isn’t more like me.

As Elisabeth Elliot wrote to her newlywed daughter:

You marry a sinner. There’s nobody else to marry. That ought to be obvious enough but when you love a man as you love yours it’s easy to forget. You forget it for a while and then when something happens that ought to remind you, you find yourself wondering what’s the matter, how could this happen, where did things go wrong? They went wrong back in the Garden of Eden. Settle it once for all, your husband is a son of Adam. Acceptance of him—of all of him—includes acceptance of his being a sinner. He is a fallen creature, in need of the same kind of redemption as the rest of us are in need of, and liable to all the temptations which are “common to man.”

There are so many times I forget that my husband is a sinner. Let me rephrase that: There are so many times I forget that I, too, am a sinner. When my husband does something that is inherently male—or just plain human—I sometimes see it as imperfection, as rude, or as unspiritual. It could be all of those things. But it could also be normal.

Elliot goes on to say,

You marry not only a sinner but a man. You marry a man, not a woman. Strange how easy it seems to be for some women to expect their husbands to be women, to act like women, to do what is expected of women. Instead of that they are men, they act like men, they do what is expected of men and thus they do the unexpected. They surprise their wives by being men and some wives wake up to the awful truth that it was not, in fact, a man that they wanted after all.

Through this book you now have in your hands, I want you to be very glad that you married a man…and your man, at that. I want you to begin to celebrate the ways he is different than you and affirm him
in areas he never imagined you would. I want you to discover a whole new way of living with your man and loving it.

And if your husband is an unbeliever, or he’s just not where you’d like him to be spiritually, I encourage you to stick with me. As you begin to understand his world, become his cheerleader, ease his burdens, make his home a sanctuary, give him breathing room, encourage him to dream, entice him to pursue, and let him lead, you will be allowing him to see how loved he is in your eyes and in God’s. (I will specifically address a man’s spiritual life—or lack of it—in chapter 9.)

I called this chapter “Understanding His World” because there is much to understand and appreciate about it. Yet there’s always the woman who says, “But we’re in the same world. His world is mine, and mine is his.” Yes, to a certain extent. But in a very real way, he is still in a different world than you are. And he always will be. How? He’s a man. And therefore, his world—generally speaking—is a bit messier, and he’s fine with that. It’s louder, and he doesn’t notice (women have more sensitive hearing than men). Some parts of his world smell badly and he doesn’t seem to notice or care (you have a more keen sense of smell than he does, too, by the way). In his world there are only a few colors (and many more men than women are color blind), but in your world there are ten different shades of red, a myriad of blues, and even lots of different greens. (That’s probably why he tends to have only a few pairs of shoes in the closet—a pair of sneakers, a pair of work boots, one set of black dress shoes, and one set of brown casual shoes. You, on the other hand, are likely to have shoes in every color of the spectrum—and that doesn’t even cover the sneakers!)

Although studies now show that men and women both speak about 16,000 words per day (debunking the long-lived myth that women outtalk men nearly 2:1), it is also a fact that men and women experience the same level of emotion. What’s different is that women tend to be more expressive about their emotions than men.5

We as women are all about relationships. When you meet another woman and want to get to know her, you will probably ask if she’s married, if she has children, and what her children’s ages and interests
are. By contrast, when your husband shakes hands with another man, he is more inclined to ask what the other man does. In a woman’s perfect world, she is loved, cherished, and romanced. In a man’s perfect world, he is respected. A woman’s desires revolve around how she feels. A man’s desires revolve around responses to what he does and who he is in the eyes of those around him.

Take a look at this chart for just an overview of how the two of you, generally speaking, differ when it comes to communication, just because you are a woman and he is a man. These findings, by the way, posted on the Internet by Speechmastery, included the following disclaimer: “The list below is general and based on research. Even so, each individual may have qualities that are of their opposite. Some men will put the lid down, ask for directions and read the instructions.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seek out relationships with others</td>
<td>Tend to seek standing and position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relate to others as equals</td>
<td>Relate to others as rivals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer interdependency, collaboration</td>
<td>Tend toward independence and autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coordination and cooperation</td>
<td>Choose or resolve by force, persuasion or majority rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make decisions based on mutual agreement</td>
<td>Desire space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire closeness, togetherness and affinity</td>
<td>Tend to seek the respect of their peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care for the approval of peers</td>
<td>Express themselves more in public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express themselves more in private</td>
<td>Keep concerns to themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are more open to share problems</td>
<td>Tend to focus on the details of fact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to focus on details of emotions</td>
<td>Often will not ask for advice, help or directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More concerned with feelings</td>
<td>Freely offer advice and analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May mix personal and business talk</td>
<td>Are problem solvers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to ask for help, advice and directions</td>
<td>Tend to look at challenges as a game unless lives are at stake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer sympathy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display empathy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to understand problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to take a more sober look at challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You may find it helpful to know some of these basic male-female differences when it comes to understanding your man—or at least the components about him that you shouldn’t take personally because they are part of his construction, not his attitude!

Incidentally, as I’ve been writing this book, my husband has enjoyed, on occasion, pointing out to me some of the male tendencies he has that I bristle at, and saying, “That was a man thing. Write that in your book!”

His Perfect World

As you begin to understand that your husband’s world is a bit different than yours, the question to ask him is, “What would make your world a perfect place?”

This is how my husband answered that question: “A perfect world for me would be working at a job I completely enjoy, having time for rest and relaxation, and knowing that the people closest to me respect, me, honor me, and love me.”

There it is—he wants to live from his heart and enjoy what he does, have time to play, and know he is respected and loved for who he is.

But to understand your husband’s world isn’t just to understand the differences between a man and a woman. (And I know some of you are married to husbands that aren’t anything like what we’ve read about men thus far.) While men share some general traits, every one of them is different. The key is for you to understand your husband’s world—what makes him tick, what sets him at ease, what he prefers, where he is most “at home,” what he avoids, where he shines, and most of all, what makes his heart beat. There will be times when you need to stay out of his world, and times when he invites you to enter it. But don’t try to change it. Appreciate it, and your husband will appreciate you even more.

According to the surveys I took of married men of various ages and in various stages of life, I concluded (with my husband’s nod of approval, of course) that in every man’s world (and most likely your husband’s world too):
• He needs to feel respected as a man
• He needs to feel successful in all he does
• He wants to feel like a king, but not be your god

The upcoming chapters in this book will, in many ways, elaborate on these three essentials that are so important to the heart of your man. For now, let’s just look at the basics of each one.

He Needs to Feel Respected as a Man

Countless studies have affirmed that a man would rather feel respected than loved. We women long to be cherished and loved and pursued, but there’s a sense in which a man can live without love. It’s respect he can’t live without.

It’s interesting to note that in the Bible, husbands are commanded to love their wives. And wives are commanded to respect their husbands.

That passage of Scripture starts off by telling wives to submit to their husbands, as to the Lord. We would like to think that husbands are commanded first to love us and, as they love us as their own bodies, we will gladly submit. But if we look carefully, we see that in this case, the Bible breaks its usual pattern of laying the responsibility on the husband first. The wives are first commanded to submit to (come under the leadership of) their husbands. And then the husbands are commanded to love. This doesn’t imply we must earn that love through our obedience. But I believe our obedience and willingness to come under the leadership of our husbands makes it easier for them to obey the tall order God has given them: to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

Here’s the passage:

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.
Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her... So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself... each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband (Ephesians 5:22-25, 28, 33).

Have you ever thought about why a woman isn’t commanded to love her husband in return? We are commanded throughout the Bible to love one another, and that includes our husbands. But when it comes to this passage, which speaks specifically about the marriage relationship, God apparently knew a woman desires more than anything else to be loved, and a man desires more than anything else to be respected. God must have known that as we respect our husbands, we are demonstrating love to them in a way they can more easily see and appreciate.

God’s perfect design is that as a husband is being respected, he will readily love his wife. And as a wife is being loved, she will readily respect her husband. In a perfect world—which we, unfortunately, don’t live in—that would be the case. In our world—which is marred by selfishness and sin, which come more naturally to us than sacrificial love—one of you, you or your husband, must make the first move. Yes, in the second reference of this passage (verse 33), the command is given to your husband first. But the bottom line is that we both (husbands and wives) are given the command 12 verses earlier in Ephesians 5:21 to “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Before any instruction is given to the wife or husband in that chapter, we see the words “submit to one another.” And why? Out of reverence for Christ. Show your reverence to the One who gave His all for you by giving your all—your love, your respect, your honor—to your husband. And when you do, see if his love doesn’t truly follow!

*He Needs to Feel Successful in All He Does*

For a man, being productive or successful at something is important. And if your husband isn’t, in reality, succeeding at something, he
at least needs to feel like he’s winning. I noticed for a few years after we got married that Hugh would join a game of football without any persuasion. As an all-league wide receiver in high school (having the most yards per reception in the league during his senior year) and one who received letters of interest from several colleges to play ball for them, football was his game. But on one occasion, when my cousins and brother-in-law wanted to play an impromptu game of basketball, it took some persuasion to get Hugh on the court.

“You don’t like basketball?” I asked him. He’s six feet tall. He’s athletic. I couldn’t figure it out.

“I’m not very good at basketball,” was Hugh’s response.

It wasn’t that he didn’t like the sport. He was simply not eager to do something he didn’t feel he could excel at. Some would call that male ego. Others might call it pride. I saw it as a man thing. A man would rather not enter an arena in which he doesn’t feel he can excel. We can learn much from that. A man will gravitate toward the areas of life in which he feels successful. If he is a master at his work, he will spend much time there. If he knows the computer well and can feel successful there, it will occupy much of his time. If he is a whiz with a wrench under the hood of a car, that’s where he’ll want to be. If gaining knowledge through reading makes him the one who can repeat the facts about any topic of discussion at a party and make him feel more socially comfortable, then he’ll keep reading.

Men want to succeed. So what can we, as wives, do with that information? Let your husband know he is succeeding in the areas that are most important to him and you. And if what is important to you isn’t necessarily important to him, let him know every now and then that he is succeeding in that area, and it just may become an important area to him after all.

Many a man will give up altogether and go passive when it comes to parenting if you are insisting your parental skills are better. Many a man will stop communicating if you have let him know he is a failure at communication. On the other hand, if you are praising his efforts—even if at this point they are just efforts—he will want to continue to
please you. Treat him like a winner at home, and he’ll want to be there more often. Praise him for his handiwork around the house, and you’ll find him offering to be your handyman. Encourage him and tell him how good he makes you feel in the bedroom, and he’ll be more likely to initiate. Encouragement goes a long way…and making your husband feel like a winner will make him want to be around you—especially if you’re his No. 1 fan. (We’ll look more at this concept in chapter 2.)

**He Wants to Feel Like a King, but Not Be Your God**

There’s a difference between treating your husband with the respect and loyalty you would give a king, and depending on him like he’s God. Many women marry with high expectations, only to be gravely disappointed shortly thereafter when they discover their husband can’t possibly meet all of their emotional needs.

Edie, my counselor-friend, sees this a lot in her practice: “There’s a lot of anger on the part of women toward their husbands,” she said. “We get focused on our spouse as the one who needs to take care of our needs, and the media adds to that by romanticizing relationships, and we end up projecting our anger onto our husbands for not being the way we expect them to be.”

Because your husband is human, he can’t possibly meet all your needs. Because he’s a man, there are certain ways he will never be able to meet your needs for sensitivity and understanding like another woman. Because he’s not your dad, he can’t make up for what you might feel was lacking in that relationship. And most importantly, because he’s not God, he can’t possibly fulfill you in every way.

The quickest way to run your marriage into the ground is to expect your husband to be God in your life—to fill your every need, to know what you’re thinking and feeling and be able to respond accordingly, to be your joy, to be your all-in-all. He is a man. He is not able to be all of that for you. He is human, and that means he has weaknesses and will let you down at times. Finally, he is a sinner (as all of us are), and that means he will disappoint you, anger you, and even hurt you more times than he or you would like. So don’t look to your husband to be
God in your life, or to fulfill your every need. Instead, look to God as
your spiritual husband.

In Isaiah 54:5-6 we read God’s words to His covenant people
of Israel: “Your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is his
name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God
of all the earth. The Lord will call you back as if you were a wife
deserted and distressed in spirit.”

God’s Word frequently uses the marriage relationship to illustrate
God as our husband. God desires to be a husband to us and have us
respond, in return, as we would respond to a husband—to forsake all
other gods and love only Him, to respect Him, to dwell intimately
with Him, to look to Him for our provision, and so on. There is noth-
ing that will free up your husband to love you more than taking your
emotional expectations off of him and leaving them with God. Your
husband can then love you in the best way he is able, without feeling
he has an impossible task in front of him. (For an in-depth look at this
subject, see my book Letting God Meet Your Emotional Needs.)

It’s pretty simple isn’t it? Your husband needs to feel respected. He
wants to feel successful. He wants to be treated like a king, but not be your
God. His world is simple. Ours is the one that is so often complicated.

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**From His Perspective**

“We’re really simple, men are.”

Recently, Bill gave his wife Edie—my friend who is the licensed mar-
riage and family therapist—some wise insights into the heart and world
of a man.

“We’re really simple, men are,” he told her.

“I like having a car. I like having sex with my wife. I like good food.”

Bill spoke volumes to his wife—and to us about men, in general—with
those three sentences.

1. **He likes having a car.** He wants to be the driver. He likes the feel
   of being in control of a piece of machinery that can get him from
one place to another. For some men, the nicer or more powerful
the car, the better. But ultimately, he just likes having a car.

2. **He enjoys sexual pleasure with his wife.** Men are designed, phys-
ically and physiologically, to enjoy sexual pleasure with their
wives. Your husband wants to enjoy that activity and experience
with you. And you are the only one he can enjoy that with and
know that he is right and pure before his God. And he knows that,
even more than you do. (More on this in chapter 7.)

In Ecclesiastes 9:9, Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, said
this: “Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this
meaningless life that God has given to you under the sun—all your
meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome
labor under the sun.”

King Solomon wrote a whole book on the meaninglessness of life.
And among the few things he found meaningful for a man to enjoy
were a good meal and pleasure with his wife. Now think about
that! When you prepare a meal for your husband, isn’t it your
desire that he enjoy it? Similarly, will you prepare yourself for him,
physically, as his reward *after* dinner? God paid you quite a com-
pliment when He gave you to your husband as your husband’s
reward. God considered you a great prize to bring pleasure—in
many ways—to your husband. That makes me want to truly be my
husband’s reward, not his consolation prize.

3. **He loves good food.** And get this…enjoying food, too, is biblical!
In Ecclesiastes 2:24, the wise King Solomon says, “There is noth-

ing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his
labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God.”

For a man to be able to sit down and enjoy dinner—or a hearty,
messy barbecue lunch!—is one of the ways God rewards him for
his work here on earth. So let him eat. It’s one of the simple plea-
sures in life he was designed to enjoy.

What About Your Man?

How well do you understand your husband’s world? His prefer-
ences? His likes and dislikes? The more you understand them, the more
you will be able to serve him in his world and make him want to be in no other world than the one you have entered to share with him.

It’s easy for a wife to resent the ways her husband is different from her. But I encourage you, dear friend, to celebrate those differences.

Michelle learned to do just that. Her eyes light up when she talks about Leroy, her husband of 17 years. But, she told me, it wasn’t always that way.

“My husband and I met while very young. We were not walking with the Lord in our youth. In our twenties we headed back to church and got married. It is amazing the grace God has shown on both of us. We haven’t had the perfect marriage, but God has brought His wisdom and guidance at crucial times. I have learned my husband’s love language, that he doesn’t really think about anything at times, that we have different temperaments, and to be his cheerleader. In applying this wisdom to my marriage, I have learned to appreciate my husband. For example, my husband loves to be outside. He is not a homebody. That means we are never home. I have learned to love this about him because I am always experiencing a new adventure. We hike, bike, rollerblade, kayak, travel, eat at different restaurants, and basically sight-see every weekend.

“Now some of you may be wishing this was your husband, but there is a downside to all this. Things do not always get fixed or cleaned at my house. So I think as women we have to learn to accept our husband for who he is. That does not mean you should never address any problems. On the other hand, if you are constantly nagging, you need to think and pray. God may need to change your perspective. During a funeral I attended for a young mother in our Moms group, I was reminded of how short our time can be. Live life with the man you love, not the man you think he should be. Life is too short to be unhappy over silly issues. I learned to be happy with the godly man God gave me. My car may not be clean, but I am out enjoying the adventure along the way.”

As Robert Jeffress says in his book Say Goodbye to Regret, “God gave us a mate to complement us, not to duplicate us (see Genesis 2:22).
Don’t try to become like your [husband] and don’t expect [him] to morph into a clone of you. It won’t happen. And it shouldn’t happen.”

Rather, celebrate his differences. They make him a man; they make him who he is. Keep in mind as well that women tend to outlive men, so there’s a good possibility you will one day bury your husband. When you do, all those differences about him will become precious. And you will wish you could have them back again. After your husband is gone, the things that annoy you now—the way he shouts over a football game on the television, or he throws his clothes in a pile in the bedroom (even though you’ve asked him a billion times to please put them in the dirty clothes hamper)—you will someday look back on and think, If only I had him around again. I’d be far more patient about all those little things that really weren’t such a big deal after all.

Live without regrets by living well now. Look for those things about him that are different from you and smile. That’s what makes him a man. And you are the one he has invited into his male world to share it with him. Love him for letting you in. Live there with appreciation. And know you are more cherished there than you realize.

Entering His Masculine Mind

How well do you know what makes your husband tick?

At an appropriate time (usually after he is well fed or done with dinner at one of his favorite restaurants) ask him the following questions, and listen thoughtfully as he answers. You may discover some precious things about him that you didn’t know before.

1. Ask your husband how he relates to the “big three”: “I like having a car. I like having sex with my wife. I like food.”
2. Now ask your husband what he feels about the essential three:
   - He needs to be respected as a man.
   - He needs to feel successful in what he does.
• He needs to be treated like a king, but not be your god.

Ask him if anything comes to mind with regard to how you can better help him in those three areas.

3. In light of what you have just learned about your husband, write a sentence or two about what you will now do differently in your interactions with him.

A Prayer for You and Your Husband

Lord, Help Me Enter His World…Lovingly

God, You have designed my husband as a unique person and I praise You for that. Help me to see his differences as something to celebrate—that he is uniquely made the way he is to complement and balance who I am. Show me how I can grow and become more loving, more patient, more understanding, and also to be more like You, God, through the differences I notice between him and myself. Help me to walk in his world carefully and responsibly, not trying to change him into someone who is more like me, but appreciating Your handiwork in who he is. Give me the eyes to see unique and wonderful things about my husband that I haven’t noticed before, and give me a heart to love him in ways I hadn’t thought about. Grant me words, Lord, to
express to him, at just the right time, what he means to me. May I learn what it means to love him out of a love and reverence for You, O God.

And as I begin this journey of seeking to understand and affirm my husband in a greater way, give me a steadfast spirit and an enduring heart to see this through, to complete this book faithfully, not giving up if it seems like there’s too much to wade through or he’s not noticing my efforts. Help me to face each day, each truth, each chapter as a new opportunity to bless his life in ways that I haven’t been aware of before. And may You be pleased to draw our hearts closer together along the way.