52 Things Wives Need from Their Husbands

JAY PAYLEITNER

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52 THINGS WIVES NEED FROM THEIR HUSBANDS

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NEED #1

Wives Need Their Husbands…

To Kiss the Girl

A husband and wife are driving down a country road. They’re a few years older than you are now. He’s behind the wheel. The pavement and cornfields are passing by. She breaks the silence with a sigh and says, “Remember when we were younger and we used to sit right next to each other in the car?” “I remember,” the husband replies after a moment. “But you know, I haven’t moved.”

It’s a story from way before seat-belt laws, but the sentiment still carries a bushel of truth. Men—the good ones like you and me—travel down the road of life with a sense of stability and direction. We’re not out drinking every night. We do our best to bring home a paycheck and be a good father. An affair is not an option. Neither is divorce. Our deepest need is for our bride to sit close to us and tell us—just once in a while—that we’re doing a good job. That we’re appreciated. That they look up to us and need us.

Our wives, on the other hand, slide back and forth. Like many women these days, they are getting mixed messages and giving mixed signals. They don’t seem to know what they want. A career or a houseful of babies? A new washer/dryer or a week in Aruba? A bigger house or just bigger closets? Do they want a husband who is sensitive and tender or a tattooed bad boy riding a Harley? While they’re daydreaming about what they want, we’re just two feet away and hoping they’ll ask us for it. We want to fill their every desire. We want to be their shining knight and perfect man. If only they’d slide next to us and tell us what they want.

How did we get here? Two feet and two miles apart.

Think back to not too long ago. Remember that girl you married? The girl who caught your eye. The girl you couldn’t keep your hands off. The
girl who taught you to love in brand-new ways. Romantic love. Committed love. Crazy love. Eternal love. Silly love. You may be thinking, *Where did that girl go?*

Gentlemen, she’s right there. That girl is inches away. She’s looking down the same road and going the same direction. She’s committed to sharing your life and sharing your bed. By the way, she’s asking the same question. *Where did that boy go?*

Men of courage, follow your impulse. Pull the car over. Look into her eyes, maybe for the first time in a long time. Tell her she means everything to you. Be the boy. Be the girl. Expect no less than to memorize each other’s hopes and dreams.

Steam up those car windows. With conversation, of course.

**Takeaway**

You did not marry to live separate lives.

> “Love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away.”

*Song of Songs 8:6-7*
NEED #2

Wives Need Their Husbands…

To Push the Right Buttons

Here are some things my bride likes: fireworks, parades, a company bathroom that’s welcoming, babies, cute babies, goofy-looking babies, well-produced television commercials with cute or goofy-looking babies, scones, sparkly glassware on her Thanksgiving dinner table, hanging out with her children, bling for Christmas, warm feet, lying on a beach with a book, fresh flowers, fresh snow, frozen Cokes, lightly buttered popcorn, drinking straws, craft magazines, etcetera.

It’s a good list. And I’ll probably think of a few more things in the normal course of life. I’ll have to make sure my editor checks with me right before going to press to see if there are a few more things to add. Actually, just writing this list has been a valuable exercise. Thinking about what my bride likes literally strengthens my marriage.

A couple of things worth noting about this kind of list. It focuses on the positive. I could have included items such as “chili that’s not filled with cayenne pepper” and “kitchen countertops without a bunch of appliances.” But that would essentially be a list of things she doesn’t like (spicy chili and cluttered counters). Everything on the list gives off mostly positive vibes. Of course, we husbands should be well aware of what our wives don’t like, but that’s not the point of this chapter.

The other thing about this list is that these are not emotional needs or love languages exclusive to the husband-wife relationship. These are things Rita likes anytime, anyplace, no matter who provides them. If a scone, fresh flowers, or craft magazine mysteriously appeared on our kitchen table, she would enjoy that thing simply because she likes it. Sure, part of the fun of parades and fireworks is sharing them with others, but I’m pretty sure Rita would enjoy them in the company of strangers.
You probably know where I’m going with this. A wise husband will make a similar list particular to his own wife. Using it and updating it frequently. In random order, provide one of those items to your bride once a week for the rest of your life. Be intentional about it. Find a scone bakery on the way home from work. On movie night, make sure you have some microwave popcorn in the cabinet. Book a beach vacation.

Or better, keep the list at the top of your mind and allow it to trigger spontaneous moments when you provide your wife one of her favorite things. While you’re waiting for a prescription, if you notice a craft magazine, pick it up. If one of those cute-baby commercials comes on when she’s in the kitchen, pause the DVR and play it for her when she returns. If you notice the sun glinting off a fresh snowfall, stop what you’re doing and share the moment with your bride.

The goal here is not selfish. It’s easy to think, *If I give her what she likes, she’ll give me what I like.* That’s not it at all. The goal is to fully integrate into your marriage the “two becoming one” idea from Matthew chapter 19. Maybe think of it this way: *If I give her what she likes, it gives me joy as well.*

Making sense? No? It makes total sense to me, but perhaps that is because I started this chapter out with a list specific to my bride. I’m pretty sure that if you make a similar list for yours, it will all be clear. Don’t just do it in your head. Get out a yellow pad or open a new Word doc and just start thinking about what makes your wife smile. Your mind may start to wander to the stuff that ticks her off or launches an unwelcome bout of nagging, but don’t go there. Stay positive.

I promise, just making that list will give you all kinds of fresh insights, warm fuzzies, and a new appreciation for your bride. You’ll begin to see her as only a devoted husband can. There are things you know about her that no one else does. Which means only you can intentionally and regularly provide those moments of joy. Only you can prompt that intimate smile that makes marriage different than any other relationship in the world.

**Takeaway**

The longer you’re married, the more you know how to push your wife’s buttons. Which ones to push and how often is really your choice.
“Despite my thirty years of research into the feminine soul, I have not been able to answer the great question that has never been answered: What does a woman want?”

SIGMUND FREUD (1856–1939)