

THE
Marriage
MENTOR

Steve and Rhonda Stoppe



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If Your Spouse Would Change, Would You Be Happy?

THE SECRET TO HAPPILY-EVER-AFTER

My dear friend Vi was married for 42 years to Curt, the love of her life. When I asked Vi to tell me about how she and Curt met, she said, “We were in college, on a choir tour. I played the piano and he was going into music ministry, so we were a good fit.” Vi jokingly added, “Although, when you play the piano and you marry a minister, you’re never quite sure if he married you for love or because he needed a pianist!”

Throughout their married life, Vi and Curt served the Lord in full-time ministry. Vi often referred to their marriage as a waltz through life divinely choreographed by the Lord. Their waltz came to an end when Curt was diagnosed with cancer at age 68. As his health failed, Vi never left his side.

On the last day of his life, Curt looked at his sweetheart and said, “Vi, am I dying?” To which Vi tearfully responded, “Yes, dear—you are dying.”

And then in the joyful spirit Curt so adored, Vi whispered, “Curt, you are going home to see Jesus! What is the first thing you want to say to Him when you see His face?”

Curt closed his eyes and smiled as he considered the moment he would stand in the presence of the Lord. And then he looked into Vi's gentle eyes and said, "I am going to thank Him for giving me *you*."

Every time I tell Vi and Curt's love story at a women's event, tears fall all over the room. I think partly because we all love a happily-ever-after love story, but also I think it is because we as wives long to be the kind of wife to whom our husband on his deathbed would say, "I'm going to thank God for giving me you." Rather than, "Thank God it's over! Jesus says we won't be married in heaven, so I'll wave to you if we pass on the streets of gold."

So how do *you* build a marriage like Vi and Curt's? How do you enjoy a love that lasts through the test of time, a love your children will want to emulate? What's the secret to a happily-ever-after love story your grandkids will one day tell their children about long after you are gone?

I'm glad you asked, because we are going to unpack secrets to help you become the wife you long to be—the wife you meant to be on the day you said, "I do." And along the way your husband is going to hear some insights from my husband. So let's get started, shall we?



I love being in love. From the depths of my soul I have had an adoration for my husband that has only grown deeper over the past 30-plus years we have been married. Is this adoration a result of being married to a perfect man? Of course not—even though as a young bride I was convinced all of my happiness would be realized on the day I said, "I do" because my husband had promised to be my happily-ever-after.

On the day of our wedding, I walked down the aisle clutching my father's arm because I was trembling. I could hardly believe the day I had dreamt of was finally upon us! I had spent six months planning our wedding, and by the time we were to say our vows, all I could think of was that I would soon be Mrs. Steven W. Stoppe. (I remember writing my new name over and over again just to establish how I would sign it—did you do that?)

I was so nervous as all eyes turned toward me, the bride, who was wearing the biggest hat-veil thing anyone had ever seen! And then, when my eyes met Steve's, nothing else mattered. It took my breath away to see him looking so incredibly handsome in his white tuxedo. (Big hats for veils and white long-tailed tuxedos were in fashion in the 1980s—so don't judge me!)

As our eyes met, I remember thinking, *I cannot believe I am actually marrying this amazing man. I am going to be the best wife he could ever ask for.* Did you feel that way when you got married?

Steve and I wrote our own wedding vows—a real challenge for my not-so-romantically-inclined guy. But he was a good sport, and he wrote wonderful words promising to love me “as long as God shall give me life”—as Steve so sweetly whispered into my ear that day. As a reminder of our promises to one another, the vows we wrote have hung on a wall in our home ever since that day.

To my delight, for our honeymoon, Steve planned a monthlong trip that included driving to see a number of national parks across the United States. What a thrill it was to have an entire month to enjoy ourselves as husband and wife! (Although I have to admit, the nights that we camped out were a bit challenging when I learned how important it was to be near a restroom after lovemaking—can I get a witness?)

Steve's “Aha Moment”

I'm sure that any illusions of grandeur Steve may have had about me when we got married were dashed during the second week of our honeymoon, while we were in Yellowstone National Park.

After a couple of weeks of travel and a lot of fast food, I had gotten pretty constipated—I'm just keepin' it real. You can imagine how uncomfortable I was whenever it was time to be romantic. So Steve decided to help out his poor bound-up wife by giving me a couple of laxatives—something I had never taken before. He assured me if I took the pills before bedtime, I would have a most satisfying bowel movement in the morning, and all would be well.

At Steve's prompting, I took *two* pills. The next morning nothing

happened. So we decided to just enjoy our day at Yellowstone and try again that night by taking some more laxatives.

When we drove into the park, we went straight to see the geyser called Old Faithful. Both Steve and I were excited to watch the hot water erupt out from the crater in the ground. We were impressed by how high the water shot up into the sky—so much so that Steve decided it would look even more impressive to view the spectacle from a higher vantage point.

So up a nearby mountain we hiked. Old Faithful spouts at regular intervals throughout the day, and we calculated that we would be able to reach the top of the mountain just in time to see the geyser shoot forth before dark.

Well, I probably don't even have to tell you what happened next. As we hiked and I was getting exercise, my innards began to make the most horrible gurgling sounds. As a blushing bride, I attempted to keep my husband from hearing the atrocious noise. However, the more we hiked, the clearer it became to me that the little pills, along with my morning coffee, were beginning to do a mighty work in my intestines.

Ashamed, I had to tell Steve what was happening, but I assured him I would be able to make it to the top of the mountain in time to see Old Faithful in action. But a short time later, I began to realize not only would I not be able to make it to the top, I was also in danger of not making it back down in time to find a bathroom before I experienced my own geyser spouting off!

Poor Steve—I know he was torn over what to do. He really wanted to continue the hike. I am sure he secretly evaluated the possibility of letting me make my way back down to the bathroom by myself, but then realized this was one of those “for better or worse” moments in which he had promised to love me just two weeks before.

In the end, we hiked slowly down the mountain. I had to stop several times to compose myself before I could go on. And all the while, Steve was laughing hysterically. I am happy to report I did make it to a restroom in time!

By the time I got out, the sun was setting and the park was about

to close. So Steve never did have an opportunity to hike back up that mountain.

When the Honeymoon Is Over

Dating, courtship, and planning the wedding are all glorious experiences for most women. But after the honeymoon, when the wedding gifts are in their proper place and life begins to happen, often the glorious experiences fade into the endless routines of to-do lists, juggling finances, and learning to serve one another. Did this happen to you?

It wasn't long before my weekends became consumed with doing laundry and housework. Gone were the Saturdays before marriage, during which Steve and I would spend an entire day at a park lazing by a river, enjoying one another's company. Even as a newlywed, those carefree days already seemed like a distant memory as I washed the dinner dishes and imagined the river running down my kitchen sink.

I remember one Saturday in particular. I was in the house, defrosting our freezer. (They don't even make refrigerators that don't self-defrost anymore, do they?) As I painstakingly chipped away big chunks of ice, I could hear Steve and his brother, Dan, laughing in the garage. Dan had come over to help Steve work on a project. I should have been grateful for the help, but I found myself resenting that they were having a grand old time together while I was stuck in the house thawing out that miserable refrigerator and doing yet another load of *his* dirty laundry. Steve was a carpenter in those days, so his clothes got exceptionally dirty.

It didn't take long before I was annoyed by how much work was involved with being a wife. Soon resentment began building in my heart toward Steve. Even though I had already seen marriages in my family fall apart from resentment, I found myself falling for the mistake of harboring wrong attitudes.

Family of Origin

How would you describe your parents' marriage? Were they head over heels for each other? Did you have a terrific role model from their marriage or other marriages in your family that were characterized by joy, laughter, and delight? I hope this was true for you. In my own

upbringing, it was not. So when I thought about what I wanted in my marriage, I had a long list of what I did *not* want.

However, I soon learned that making a list of what you do *not* want your marriage to become is not an effective way to move toward having the marriage of your dreams.

Steve's mother loved cooking, cleaning, and serving her family. Her own mother had died when she was only eleven, so her greatest joy was that God had allowed her to live long enough to care for her children into adulthood. She flittered around humming hymns as she joyfully worked around the house. And if there was no work *in* the house, she would go outside to do yard work. You can imagine how overwhelmed I became when I realized Steve had similar expectations for the kind of wife I would be.

How did you come up with the ideals for your “dream marriage”? After the wedding, were you surprised to discover that many of your expectations for your marriage didn't come true? Did you assume the fun and carefree experiences you enjoyed while you were dating would continue into married life? I did.

While life cannot always be one fun experience after another, you can definitely have a truly satisfying marriage with a love that grows deeper as time goes on. Key to making this happen is breaking free of the common myths wives believe—myths that make us look for marital happiness in all the wrong places.

The Peanut Butter Toast Dilemma

In the early days of our marriage, I remember how I would assign motives to Steve's actions. For example, he loved to make peanut butter toast. And not just in the morning for breakfast. Steve would make peanut butter toast several times throughout the day. Why I had not noticed this man's obsession with peanut butter toast while we were dating, I'll never know.

It wasn't the peanut butter toast that bothered me, but the crumbs that were left behind *every time* Steve made this concoction. I have this unexplainable abhorrence to finding crumbs on my kitchen counter and floor. Mind you, I am not a spotless housekeeper, but the

left-behind crumbs seemed to send me the message that Steve didn't care how hard I worked to keep up the house. Although I didn't mention it to Steve, each time he left crumbs behind I felt insulted and betrayed.

Thinking he was saving me the trouble of washing a plate, Steve would invariably make his toast directly on the countertop—the *countertop!* This would leave so many crumbs it was almost unbearable to me.

For the first few months of our marriage, I just quietly wiped up the crumbs while uttering little manipulative—okay, maybe even passive-aggressive—comments about how much I despised crumbs. Then one day I walked into the kitchen and found the countertop covered in crumbs. I must have gasped audibly because Steve came running into the kitchen to see what was the matter.

I burst into tears and explained to Steve how his leaving crumbs behind made me feel like he didn't respect all the work I did to keep the house nice. The poor guy—he just stood there stunned that I would rant so much over peanut butter toast and crumbs. And he wondered why I would feel so betrayed by something as simple as the fact that he left *a few crumbs on the kitchen counter once in a while*.

This story sounds funny now, but when we were first married, the crumb dilemma truly devastated me. Maybe you can relate.

One of the biggest threats to a happy marriage is when one or both parties have unrealistic expectations of each other.

The Danger of Unrealistic Expectations

One of the biggest threats to a happy marriage is when one or both parties have unrealistic expectations of each other. When those expectations are not realized, you might feel betrayed. And this is when you may begin to believe myths that lead you to have unrealistic or incorrect expectations that do harm to your relationship. In this book, we will shed light on those myths. When my expectations of Steve were

not being met, I remember feeling betrayed because I was convinced my happiness would rest in how well he treated me. How self-absorbed I was back then. God used my disillusionment to show me my selfish heart. Have you ever had expectations come crashing down around you when reality set in? How did that experience make you feel? Are you in a similar situation right now? Or maybe you have experienced years of disappointment in your marriage. Whatever the case, let's talk for a moment about how disappointment turns to disillusionment.

You might feel betrayed when you come to realize the man you married is not the man you had perceived him to be. If you have been married for any amount of time, I am sure that by now you have your own secret list of things you wish you could change about your husband.

I find it interesting that frequently the very qualities a woman was attracted to while dating her man often become the rub in their relationship after they are married. For example:

BEFORE MARRIAGE

"I love his spontaneity."

"We can sit for hours just holding hands."

"He's a hard worker."

"He is frugal."

AFTER MARRIAGE

"He's irresponsible."

"He doesn't talk to me."

"He works too much."

"He's a tightwad."

I could go on, but you get the picture.

Are You the Wife You Meant to Be?

Are you the wife you meant to be? It's easy to focus on areas where your husband has not met your expectations, but have you considered your husband may have his own secret list of disappointments about you as well? Rather than dwelling on what you wish your *husband* would change, what if you were to make a list of how *you* have changed after marriage? And instead, work to be the woman your husband had hoped you would be—the wife you meant to be—on the day you said, "I do."

Stop for a moment and evaluate the type of wife you had hoped to be...and the kind of wife you actually are. When your husband looked at your beautiful face as you cascaded down the aisle, what kind of wife did *he* expect you would be? Have you measured up to your own expectations—let alone his?

In more than 30 years of ministry, Steve and I have listened to countless couples reveal how disappointed they were in the person they married. Whenever a wife can persuade her husband to come in for biblical marriage counseling, she often secretly says to herself, “Oh good. Now my husband is going to find out all the ways he needs to change to be a better husband so that *I* can be happy.”

Can I let you in on a little secret? Looking to your husband to make you happy is an unfair expectation. And no matter how “perfect” he is, he will never bring you true joy. Because the purpose for which you exist is *not* to find happiness in your marriage relationship—contrary to every fairy tale you ever heard as a little girl.

This is key, so listen closely. You were created to delight in your Creator. God made you to long for intimacy with *Him*—to delight in Him. So any other relationship that you pursue to fill the void only God can fill will always come up short. In the same way, you can never be your husband’s source of true joy. That’s kind of a relief, isn’t it?

What’s Their Secret?

Do you know a godly couple who have been married for a long time and are still deeply in love? Doesn’t your heart long to have a marriage like theirs? What’s their secret?

As you observe such a couple, you may be tempted to say, “Oh, that wife is so lucky to be married to such a wonderful man. I wish my husband were more like him.”

Upon closer observation, however, you might be surprised to learn that the secret to their happy marriage isn’t related to how “ideal” they are as spouses. Rather, it’s because their relationship is grounded in a love that is deeper than their love for each other. A marriage flourishes when both husband and wife love Christ more than any other person in life—including one’s own spouse.

In Mark 12:30, Jesus declared that the priority of life is to love God with all of your being—*all* of it. Do you love God like that? As a young Christian, I would have answered, “Yes, of course I love God!” and pointed to my busyness in serving God as evidence of that love. However, every once in a while I would meet someone who straight-up loved Jesus. A person whose life wasn’t about *doing* things for God; rather, they *lived to love God* so much that they couldn’t help but love others. Have you ever met anyone like that?

You know what kind of people I am talking about. You have to spend only a few minutes with them to realize they have an authentic love deep in their heart for their Savior.

This kind of wholehearted love is available to anyone who has a relationship with God through His Son, Jesus. When you learn to *devote* your heart to loving the Lord, there will be a natural outpouring of God’s love spilling out of your heart and onto those around you—especially to your husband. (To learn more about a relationship with God through Jesus, please turn to the article in the appendix of this book, “How to Have a Relationship with Jesus.”)

It all comes down to this: the key to having an all-out love for your husband and experiencing fulfillment in your marriage does not lie in how well your husband measures up to your expectations, but in how well you love God.

It is humanly impossible to love selflessly because we are all born with a sin nature that seeks our own good above anyone else’s. The only people who are able to love the way Jesus intended are those who have a personal relationship with God through Christ, are filled with the Holy Spirit, and are pursuing a deeper love for the Lord. Because God provides His supernatural love to those who love Him, He offers hope for true love to anyone who would follow Christ. Romans 5:5 says, “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (ESV). We will talk more about hope for a happy marriage in chapter 10.

Loving your husband amounts to so much more than your emotions and feelings for him at any given moment. Love is a choice. And

God's love gives you the ability to love your husband even when he doesn't measure up to your expectations. Listen to what the Bible says:

Above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony...Above all, keep loving one another *earnestly*, since love covers a multitude of sins (Colossians 3:14; 1 Peter 4:8 *ESV*, italics added).

Did you know God loves you in this way? Psalm 139:17-18 says, "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand."

Are you really taking in what this scripture says? The perfect Creator of heaven and earth makes it a point to think *precious thoughts* toward you — *you!*

Let's be honest: you and I both know that if God wanted to, He could write a long list of all our flaws and the ways we fail Him every day. Yet because of His great love, God says, "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins" (Isaiah 43:25).

What kind of love is that? A love that chooses to forget your sins and focus on precious thoughts toward you. I know I do not deserve this kind of love. Do you?

Do you see where I am going with this? If God loves you so overwhelmingly even though you don't measure up to His expectations, and you are called to love others as He loves, then you are to have that same kind of love for your husband.

Your Marriage Is a Light

Jesus said, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Why do you think Satan works so hard to destroy Christian marriage relationships?

Your genuine love for each other will be a light that tells your children — and a watching world — that knowing the Savior really does make a difference in your lives. Letting this light shine does not

happen by accident. In fact, if you make marital love all about your feelings, you will certainly miss the opportunity to shine Christ's light.

When life is hard, your hormones are acting up, the bills pile up, and the kids get sick—this is when the light of God's kind of love has the potential to shine the brightest. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

As a young bride, I was drawn to some happily married couples in our church because their love shone as a bright light to me. As I began to look to more mature couples who seemed to delight in one another, do you know what I found? An untapped resource of wisdom that was exactly what I needed to teach me how to have a happy marriage!

Titus 2:4 instructs older women to teach the younger how to love their husbands. The Greek word translated "love" in this verse is *phileo*, which refers to a friendship love. And that is just what these older women taught me—how to enjoy my husband for who he is, not who I wished he would be. Through these godly mentors, I learned how to become his closest and dearest friend. Isn't that what you want for your marriage?

In writing this book, it is my sincere desire to be a godly mentor woman in your life. Because when you learn the secret of becoming your husband's closest friend, you will become your husband's greatest treasure—and he will become yours as well.

So Much More Than Happily-Ever-After

Happy marriages are one of the greatest tools
God uses to draw unbelievers toward Christ.

The world is longing to see married people who grow more in love over time. When Christian marriages do not exude true love, it hurts the name of Christ. God wants the love between you and your spouse to be a testimony of His love to a watching world, and happy marriages are one of the greatest tools God uses to draw unbelievers toward

Christ. The effect of that testimony begins in your home, especially to your children.

While writing this book I laughed and cried over the love stories we have included. And the truths that I discovered as I researched and studied God's Word have forever changed the way I relate to my husband. I cannot wait to share these stories and insights with you!

From a Husband's Perspective

A Word from Steve

So far Rhonda has outlined for you the premise of this book. As you read it you will learn very important and helpful information to help you become the wife I think you hope to be. You're likely going to get excited to be learning so many great things about building a better marriage. And as you learn, you may get charged up to make some major changes right away in your relationship.

If you are like most wives, you'll likely want to talk with your husband about all that you are learning. And in your zeal, you may expect your husband to get on board and *feel* the same excitement you do. While it's a good thing to be motivated to make changes for the good in your marriage, allow me to give you a little insight from a husband's perspective. At first, your hubby may not share your enthusiasm. If this is the case, please don't be discouraged by his lack of excitement. Realize that we men are unbelievably different animals than our wives. Men are usually slower than women to process what they learn. Please try not to hold it against your man if he takes a while to warm up to an idea—especially when he is faced with making changes.

The Bible instructs wives how best to motivate a husband in spiritual matters. And growing your marriage to be more honoring to Christ is certainly a spiritual matter, wouldn't you agree? Let's look at the apostle Peter's exhortation to wives in 1 Peter 3:1-4 (ESV):

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won *without a word by the conduct of their wives*, when they see your

respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious (*italics added*).

If your husband sees you working through the book yourself and applying the biblical principles to your marriage and sees how God is transforming you, he may be won over without a word. As 1 Peter 3:1-4 suggests, he will see the beauty of your gentle and quiet spirit that God says is precious in His sight.

And to spark your husband’s interest, here’s a little secret: Wives tell Rhonda that when they read to their husbands what men wished their wives knew about sex from chapter 7, it draws their husband into the book and sparks some pretty great discussions—as you might imagine! So if at first your husband is not interested in working through this book with you, you might want to read to him some tidbits out of chapter 7 just for grins!

Pray

As you work through this book, ask God to show you how He would have you respond to the biblical principles you will learn. If the Spirit convicts you of something, be willing to repent and turn from any sinful actions that are hurting your marriage. And if you’re secretly thinking, *I’ll change when he changes*, you may want to begin there by asking God to soften your heart and help you obey Him regardless of how your husband responds.

Pray for the Lord to grow in you His selfless love for your husband, a love that draws him toward you and to Christ. (If your husband is not a believer, don’t beat him over the head with Scripture; rather, let your respect, holiness, and gentle spirit do the work as you simply pray for God to make him not only interested in learning how to be a better husband but ultimately want to know Christ.)

Together, Rhonda and I are praying that what you and your

husband learn in this book will transform your marriage and start some great conversations about how your marriage can grow stronger. May God bless you as you read this book and apply the life-changing truths you discover.

Wives, listen to chapter 1 audio “Old Faithful” at
RhondaStoppe.com/marriage-mentor

Man to Man

Hey, guys. I’m sure you are just thrilled that your wife is shoving yet another marriage book under your nose. If you’re like me, reading a marriage book isn’t at the top of your priority list for an evening at home—or anytime, for that matter! But I’m betting you *do* want a happy marriage, right? So hang in there with me and let’s see if we can help you get there.

Think of this book as a time you get to hang out with a couple who has walked ahead of you in this journey of marriage—and they’re willing to share with you all the secrets they’ve learned to help you build a marriage with no regrets. Our goal is to provide a resource where your wife can read all the fun stories and insights in the opening section that Rhonda has written, and then you can read the “CliffsNotes” from me in these short sections I’m writing to you.

With that being said, let’s get started. As I read the first chapter, what stood out to me is that Rhonda blames me for her unexpected bathroom needs while we were hiking in Yellowstone! I’ve heard her tell this story a hundred times before. Why did I just now get that? (You can ask your wife to tell you about the hiking story in this chapter. It’s actually pretty funny.) When you got married, you likely had great hopes of what you thought marriage would be like. And you probably had a specific idea of the kind of husband you would be too. Let me ask you: How’s

that working out for you? Are you the husband you intended to be? Is your marriage all you had hoped it would be?

Your ideal of marriage was probably influenced by your parents' marriage. If it was a good marriage, you likely wanted to emulate it. And if their marriage was difficult or nonexistent, you probably had a list of what you did *not* want your relationship to become.

My idea of marriage was what I had seen modeled by my parents. They had a loving relationship. Rhonda referred to them as Mr. and Mrs. Cleaver. My parents were committed to each other, served one another, and rarely quarreled in front of me or my brother. I can count on one hand the times I experienced any real stress in our home. My parents were older when they had kids, so I think they had worked out a lot of their marital stuff before I came along. When Rhonda and I got married, I figured our marital experience would be like my parents'.

I seriously expected my wife to flitter around the house happily cleaning—keeping it tight and tidy, all the while humming hymns while she worked. (My mom seriously did that.) After we were married, I learned quickly the image I envisioned was not at all consistent with reality. I thought wives *liked* to defrost the freezer. Can you imagine my surprise when my young wife tearfully—more like hysterically—informed me that activity was not really in her wheelhouse?

Time to Grow Up

Before Rhonda and I were married, she was a ton of fun. We would water-ski almost every Friday. During the summer months I would impress my lady with my abilities on the skis. I would dip my shoulder close to the water and throw up a giant rooster tail of water. That action would cause her to squeal with delight.

After we were married, I thought it was time to put away all of the fun adventures and get down to the business of life. I figured it was time to move toward being more responsible and serious about what needed to be done.

I even sold my 1969 Ford Mustang Mach 1 at the prompting of my father, who said, “Son, you’re getting married now. It’s time to grow up.” We used the money from the sale of the car for our honeymoon. The car is now worth over \$100,000, so Rhonda gets to tell people I took her on a \$100,000 honeymoon! (I’m pretty sure I heard some of you audibly groan at the thought of selling my car. I hear ya!)

The other misconception I had was about who I thought I’d be as a husband. When we were dating, Rhonda was a real chatterbox, and I enjoyed her zeal to share with me *every* single detail about her day. However, after we were married a while, I grew a bit disillusioned by the reality of what life was really like with this young lady who had such a gift for gab. That might be a bit of an understatement; Rhonda wanted to talk to me *constantly*!

Rhonda’s less-than-joyful response to housework and such, coupled with me feeling a bit smothered by her need to always be with me and wanting to talk through *everything* that rolled around in her head, led me to respond in ways that revealed what kind of man — what kind of husband — I would become. Basically, I wanted to be the guy who preferred to work in the garage and veg in front of the television at the end of a hard day of work. Maybe you can relate?

For some men, arguing or demanding their way is the natural response to stress. For others, withdrawing is the way to escape a less-than-satisfying marriage. But there *is* a way to make your marriage great! When you learn the basic biblical principles for building an amazing marriage, you’ll be surprised at how happy your life can become. I’ve seen it work hundreds of times, and I know it will work for you too.

What’s the Purpose of Your Marriage?

God wants your relationship to bring glory to our Savior. God’s plan for you as a husband is to serve and love the woman He has given you.

It’s easy to look at your wife and wish she would change,

right? But you cannot change her. You only have control over your own thoughts and actions. The best way to help your wife grow more Christlike in how she interacts with you is to step up to God's plan for husbands. For example, God has ordained for you to be her spiritual leader. How are ya doin' with that?

When you determine to daily draw closer to our Savior through prayer, Bible study, and fellowship with other believers who emulate Christ-honoring marriages, you will begin to become the husband you hoped to be. And you will be equipped to lead your wife to do the same.

If you are struggling with some of these things, stay tuned. Together we may be able to work through some stuff that will put your life, your spiritual life, and your marriage in a direction that will result in a happy marriage that glorifies and exalts our Savior—which is the purpose of life for every believer!

From a Wife's Perspective

A Word from Rhonda

Hey, guys—wanna score some points with your wife? How about you take the initiative to set aside time to watch the video together? It may seem like a little thing to you, but gestures this simple will speak volumes to your wife that you care and are interested in growing your marriage to be the best it can be.

Together, watch chapter 1 video at
RhondaStoppe.com/marriage-mentor

Thinking It Through

Do you remember the first time you laid eyes on each other? Take some together time to remember the story of how you

met and fell in love. Sharing your precious memories with one another is a great way to rekindle the romance in your marriage because it can remind you of sweet times when your love was young.

For fun you can watch Steve and Rhonda trying to recall their love story. It was more than 40 years ago, so some of the details may or may not be accurate!

Watch: Real Life Romance Steve & Rhonda at
RhondaStoppe.com/marriage-mentor