

Cherish Your Spouse

“The real mystery of marriage is not that (two people) love each other so much that they can find God in each other’s lives, but that God loves them so much that they can discover each other more and more as living reminders of God’s divine presence.” **Henry Nouwen**

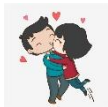


When I was dating my wife, Sue, in college, I enjoyed the words to a new song back then called “Cherish” by a singing group, the Association. The words and song seemed to describe the romance we were caught up in prior to getting married! Only recently have my eyes been open to understand the depth and richness this word “Cherish” has as it applies to a relationship between a man and a woman. First, let’s look at Webster’s Dictionary and the different shades of meaning described there. As a verb, cherish has four distinctly different, but related, meanings:

- 1) *to hold dear, feel or show affection for*
- 2) *to nurture, keep, or care for*
- 3) *to entertain or harbor in the mind/(heart) deeply and resolutely*
- 4) *a special love or care for something or someone*
- 5) Other synonyms include:
 - Value (hold highly for its intrinsic worth)
 - Treasure (jealously safeguard something considered precious) and
 - Appreciate (enjoy or admire a thing’s excellence)

I think that you can start to see that **cherish is very special and powerful word that conveys how our heavenly Father wants us to see and treat our spouse all the time!** I believe that every marriage could be transformed and come alive if we would take to heart the importance of cherishing our spouse. I know from my experience that whenever I make the effort to cherish Sue by something I do or say, she responds very positively and is drawn to me!!! Of course, this does work both ways, and I am drawn to her when she has cherished me too!

So How Can We Cherish our Spouse?



Cherishing our spouse is an outpouring of the “Hesed” or “Agape” attachment love that we receive from our heavenly Father. “Hesed” is the Hebrew word that refers to God’s Love and is like the Greek word, “agape,” used in the New Testament. There have been entire books written about these two words, but to keep things simple, it’s the “sticky” kind of love God has for us, His family. Just like gum, His love sticks to us so well that it is virtually impossible to separate ourselves from Him loving us regardless of whatever we may say, do, or not do! He loves us because that’s just who He is! **1 John 4:16** **However, we don’t have any of His love to give away until we first receive it from Him! You can’t give away what you don’t have!**

We received our first love from Father before our spirit came to earth and we were placed inside our mother’s womb. **Ps. 139:16** From that point forward we begin receiving His love from our parents or caregivers and others, and then for ourselves as we make Jesus our Lord and Savior. It’s this unconditional love from the Father that empowers us to cherish our spouse and show acts of kindness, respect, honor, devotion, affection, affirmation, and appreciation.

What Does Cherishing Your Spouse Look Like?



Cherishing your spouse comes in a variety of ways, looks different for each one of us and our spouse, and may impact our hearts differently. **It's motivated by one of the strongest feelings we have for another person and bonds us physically, spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually to each another.** Cherishing requires us to share time and space together and renews and enhances our relationship and love for each other. When we cherish our spouse, we envelope them with dignity, honor, and respect, avoid any condemnation or rejection, and make a safe environment where we can share our innermost feelings, dreams, and successes without fear of any negative responses.

The one who cherishes another makes room for mistakes, even big ones, is always forgiving, is not demanding, and their actions do not depend on another's merit or worthiness. They express acts of tenderness, appreciation, and devotion, and they affirm the other person's value, presence, and worth. These bursts of expressions of love come from deep within and the cherished one feels peace, contentment, and the assurance of the other's love for them. They smile and feel good inside when touched or held in an embrace by the one who cherishes them. A certain look in their eye fills you up and you can tell they cherish you. A cherished person feels good inside when they are together, and there is a void and they miss the other person when they are apart. Even when there are conflicts and disagreements in the relationship, cherished people find it easy to overlook the other's faults, words, or actions and know that the other person still loves them. I know when I cherish Sue in some way, she is more affectionate and desirous of being close to me!

For more resources on this subject, sign up for this 5-part video series on "Cherish Your Spouse" from Focus on the Family (be sure to download and do the interactive questions for each lesson!) <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/cherish-your-spouse-690904/>

and/or get the book *Cherish: The One Word That Changes Everything for Your Marriage* by Gary Thomas

Dialogue Questions

1. Each of you think of a couple or two who you believe demonstrate cherishing each other. Then write down why you think this is true and express how that makes you feel. Share your results with your spouse and discuss them together.
2. Think about several times when you have cherished your spouse in some way. Write down what you did and express how that made you feel when you did each one of them. Exchange your examples and talk about your answers together.

Fun Night Ideas

1. Write a poem for your spouse or read poetry on love to each other by a fireplace or cuddled up under a blanket on the sofa. Look into their eyes and tell them 3 things you appreciate about them.
2. Go through family albums or old family pictures on your computer. Share how the memories make you feel. Cuddle on a sofa and just hold each other while you listen to romantic music.