
Cherish Your Spouse

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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Printed in the United States of America



VIDEO 1: WHAT IS CHERISHING?

Jim notes that the first – and perhaps *last* – time that many of us thought of the word *cherish* was when we repeated our vows on our wedding day.

1. If you can, think about another married couple (or several) whom you admire, who appear to demonstrate the ideal of cherishing each other. Talk with your spouse about what you see in those people – you might have the same couple(s) in mind, or you each might think of different people.
Share what you see in them that inspires you.
2. Gary says that the time most of us “get” the idea of *cherish* is that moment in the wedding when the bride walks down the aisle toward her groom. Think back to that comparable moment on the day you got married. What were you thinking about your soon-to-be spouse? Share your memories with each other; concentrate on the positive feelings you had and the things that drew you together in the first place.
3. Gary quotes Song of Songs 6:9 and says that a marriage will take off when a wife hears from her husband: *"My dove, my perfect one is the only one."* But it also applies the other direction (wife to husband). Gary explains that this verse is saying: *"I don't want you to be anyone else. I'm never comparing you to anyone else. I love you for who you are."*

Talk with your spouse about at least three things you see in them – and appreciate – that are unique; no one else you know has those positive qualities.

4. Gary remarks: *"It's so sad that we often think of cherishing things more than cherishing people."* But that may be the only context in which some of us have ever thought about *cherish*.

Think about a “cherished possession” from your childhood or pre-marriage life. What was it, how did you feel about it, and why? Describe it, and your feelings, to your spouse.

Now, using those same types of words, try telling your spouse what you cherish about them (it's OK to start small/simple if you need to).

VIDEO 2: A HUSBAND CHERISHING HIS WIFE

1. Gary uses the illustration of male and female ballet dancers, and summarizes by saying: “*His job is to help her be more than she could be on her own.*” A good marriage is a team effort: husband and wife are equal but different, supporting one another.

Talk together about how you might each help your spouse be more than they can be on their own. (For example, is there a goal that your spouse would like to accomplish? How can you start to help them achieve it?)

2. Gary encourages men to adopt the attitude of “how can I showcase my wife?” A simple dictionary definition of the verb *showcase* is “to display to good advantage.” In practical terms, that means highlighting your spouse and her qualities in front of other people.

For the man: try to identify at least one way in which you can “display your wife to good advantage” this week (it’s OK to ask her for suggestions). Then tell her what it is *and follow up*. And if you think of more ways – surprise her. (Hint: public compliments or social media posts highlighting what she does well).

For the woman: tell your husband what it has meant/would mean to you to be “displayed to good advantage” in front of others.

Now, switch roles.

Wife, identify how you can showcase your husband this week and make a commitment to do it.

Husband, tell her what that can/does mean to you.

3. Gary quotes Romans 12:10: “*Outdo one another in showing honor*” (ESV). A little friendly competition can be fun in marriage – as long as we don’t keep score. Talk about times when you have noticed other couples honoring each other, and discuss how you might follow their example.
4. Gary says: “*My marriage changed when God gave me a heart that took pleasure in my wife’s pleasure.*” And he emphasizes that it didn’t happen overnight. Pray aloud together that God will help each of you to learn how to take pleasure in pleasing and cherishing your spouse.

VIDEO 3: A WIFE CHERISHING HER HUSBAND

1. Gary says that a wife who understands cherishing has made “*a commitment to contentment*. No guy has it all.” Again, that goes both ways. While we can always encourage our spouse to grow, we need to concentrate – and build – on the positive qualities we saw in each other that drew us together.

For the husband: men often feel pressure from others to constantly perform. Knowing that your wife cherishes you for *who* you are can be a huge confidence boost. Tell her about that now.

For the wife: many of us have enough of a problem comparing ourselves to other women. Knowing that your husband cherishes you for *who you* are can also be a huge confidence boost. Tell him about it.

2. Gary tells a story about a college swimmer whose girlfriend commented favorably about a more muscle-bound guy. So the swimmer changed his workout routine to become what he thought she wanted – which adversely affected his chosen sport.

Step back from your marital relationship for a moment. Think of a time when someone else – *not* your spouse – has voiced an expectation for you to be something/someone you’re not. How did that make you feel? Share those emotions with each other (this might be a bit difficult).

In that context, what could the *unconditional* support of your spouse mean to you?

3. Gary tells a humorous story about a young husband who tried to compliment his wife, but it came out awkwardly; thankfully, she understood. Talk about a time when you found yourself in a similar situation – you meant well, but your best intentions went sideways in a way that you could laugh about later (hopefully you have some fun shared memories).
4. Gary notes that the wife in this situation made a choice to give her husband “the benefit of the doubt.” Talk about what it means to you when someone else does that for you – understanding that what came out of your mouth might not have been what you *meant* to say, and giving you the benefit of the doubt.

VIDEO 4: THE ABSENCE OF CHERISHING

No matter how long we've been married, and how strong our relationship is, we can all improve in this area of cherishing.

And if we haven't been doing so well – when cherishing is absent in your marriage – that can be a very hard place to live. But as Gary put it in the first video in this series: *“The good news is that cherishing is a skill that can be learned. It can be practiced. We can choose to cherish.”*

1. We've all probably heard of the Golden Rule – “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” – which comes from Jesus' teaching in Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31. A more direct way to say this is: *treat other people the way you want to be treated yourself.*
 - Talk about what that would look like to you – how you want to be treated by other people (not *just* by your spouse, but everyone).
 - We can't change someone else's heart – only God can do that, if the person is open to Him. But each of us can begin to influence the climate of our relationships by treating others how we want to be treated. In light of what your spouse just shared about how they want to be treated, try to identify (at least) one area where you can choose to practice cherishing them. And do it.
2. Gary emphasizes that *“it serves no purpose to express disdain or disrespect or contempt... never in the history of the world [has that] produced a more intimate, more fulfilling and happier marriage.”* Read Ephesians 4:31-32. Do you need to ask your spouse's forgiveness for something? And do you need to forgive your spouse?
3. Gary ends this video by saying *“cherish is the strategy we can use to bring our spouse to their glory.”* Read Philippians 2:3-4. In the context of what you have seen in these videos and discussed together, try to identify at least one way in which you can strategically look to your spouse's best interest this week.

If your marriage is struggling in this area, it can be very helpful to seek professional assistance. Focus on the Family offers a range of counseling options – from a one-time complimentary phone consultation with one of our staff therapists, to an extensive nationwide referral network, to the Marriage Intensive programs offered through our Hope Restored® outreach.

focusonthefamily.com/lifechallenges/promos/counseling-services-and-referrals
1-855-771-HELP (4357) weekdays 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Mountain Time)

VIDEO 5: GIVING COUPLES HOPE

Jim mentions couples who “love each other but don’t always like each other.”

Sometimes we can get distracted by the little things and lose sight of the big picture – the love that drew us together originally.

1. Marriage is about being part of something bigger than ourselves. It’s a classic example of a scenario where “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” *Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil* (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

Consider just a few things that sociological research confirms about marriage:

- Married men and women report less depression, less anxiety, and lower levels of other types of psychological distress than do those who are single, divorced, or widowed.
- Married men and women have higher survival rates after being diagnosed with cancer, regardless of the stage of the cancer’s progression.
- Married families generally earn higher incomes than stepfamilies, cohabiting families, divorced families, separated families, and single-parent families.
- Marriage increases the likelihood that fathers and mothers have good relationships with their children.

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/socialissues/marriage/why-care-about-marriage>

In light of research like this, talk with your spouse about how *you* benefit from being married to them. Focus on the positive.

2. Gary emphasizes that *cherish* is a *mindset*. He ends this video by saying “*Regardless of what your spouse does, if you cherish your spouse, I believe you’re gonna’ have a happier marriage.*” Talk with your spouse about this video series. What is one thing that stood out to you from any of the five video clips? How can it change your own personal mindset?
3. One of the most powerful things a couple can do to draw closer is to pray together. You don’t have to be eloquent or deep – just tell God what is on your hearts. Will you commit to pray with your spouse regularly? (You can start with, say, once a week and work toward once each day).

For more resources for your marriage, see [focusonthefamily.com/marriage](https://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage)

Thanks again for watching this video series. If there is some way in which Focus on the Family can be of further assistance to your relationship, [please contact us](#).