

Developing an Attitude of Service

Before marriage, I dreamed about how happy I would be when we got married. I had visions of all the wonderful things my wife would do for me. Sausage and eggs together in the mornings. Candlelight dinners at night. Holding hands all day long and sex every night. I assumed that she had the same visions.

But, after marriage I found out that my wife didn't do mornings. So much for the sausage and eggs. She anticipated that I would take her out to romantic restaurants for dinner, not as a prelude to sex, but simply because I loved her.

I expressed my disappointment with her and she expressed her disappointment with me. We succeeded in being utterly miserable. Our marriage didn't turn around overnight, but it did turn around. And so can yours. I want to share the secret. It all has to do with attitude.

Jesus' life and teachings focused on sacrificial service to others. He once said, "I did not come to be ministered to, but to minister." It is a theme that all truly great men and women of the past have affirmed. Life's greatest meaning is not found in getting, but in giving. This profound principle made a significant difference in my marriage. Developing an attitude of service is not easy but the rewards are overwhelmingly positive. Few people will run away from someone who is serving them.

My wife was no exception. When I reached out to serve her, it wasn't long before she was reaching out to me. Jesus had it right! Why did it take me so long to learn?

How would a wife respond to a husband who sincerely sought to serve her? In my desperation I was determined to find out. I set myself to discovering her needs and desires and sought to fulfill them. I began quietly and slowly to do some of the things she had requested in the past. You see, by now we were too estranged to talk about our relationship, but I could choose to take action on some of her previous complaints.

I started washing dishes without being asked. I volunteered to fold the clothes. It seemed to me these were the kind of things Jesus might have done had He been married. When she made specific requests, I determined to respond cheerfully and if possible to do them.

In less than three months, my wife's attitude toward me began to change. She came out of her shell of withdrawal and began to talk again. I think she sensed that my days of preaching were over and that my attitude toward her was changing. Genuine acts of service seldom go unrewarded. Before long, our hostility was gone, and we began to have positive feelings toward each other.

You see, if I believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive; that serving my spouse is more important than being served; that my best end is found in making her life better, then it will affect the way I treat her. When she sees this attitude expressed in my behavior she knows that something has changed. If I am consistent, then service becomes a lifestyle.

Most wives and husbands are attracted to someone who shows genuine concern for them. The person who follows the example of Jesus - in serving others, is on the road to greatness and to a growing marriage relationship.

Adapted from [The Family You've Always Wanted: Five Ways You Can Make It Happen](#) by Dr. Gary Chapman. To find out more about Dr. Chapman's resources, visit www.fivelovelanguages.com.