

## Mike Keller's Thoughts on Romance

- No one will ever have a successful marriage, let alone one filled with intimacy and romance without a firm understanding of what that is supposed to look like from a biblical standpoint. (Ephesians 5)
- Every marriage is unique because couples are unique. Your marriage will not look exactly like mine or anyone else's. But every marriage between two born again believers joined together by almighty God has the ingredients for success if we are willing, each and every day, to work at it. It must become a lifestyle.
- Only couples willing to live within their biblical roles with help and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit will ever build lasting trust in each other.
  - Trust is the fertile ground that intimacy grows out of.
  - Intimacy is the familiar friendship, closeness, affinity, warmth, and confidence that make love so special and that romance celebrates.
  - Intimacy and sex are not the same things!
- Your wife wants and needs intimacy more than she wants and needs sex! No matter how much of a stallion you are.
  - Intimacy will get you through times of no sex far better than sex will get you through times of no intimacy.
  - We don't give our wives intimacy in exchange for sex.
  - We don't cultivate intimacy strictly to promote sex.
    - Some wives feel short-changed by the sex in their relationship because of diminished intimacy afterward.
    - Sex must be an expression of intimacy but not an exclusive expression of intimacy.

### What are some things that can kill intimacy?

- Child-centered homes, husband-centered homes, wife-centered homes
- Over planning in a habitual way
- Not allowing time for each other
- Too much sports, gaming, iPhone, beer, etc.
- And the number one killer is LACK OF CHRIST CENTERED FOCUS

### Intimacy Builders

- Christ-centered homes
- Consistent time for the enrichment of each other in the Lord. Reading, reflection, and discussion of the Word. And of course, prayer.
- Husbands and wives putting the wants and needs of each other ahead of their own.
- Weaving time for each other into all phases of planning.
- More emphasis on things you both like.
- You can always get to know your wife better. Who really is this person God has given me? What are her hopes and her fears? Let her know her back is always covered and you're there to protect her. Something all women fear is being "traded in" on a new model.

**So, where am I going with all of this?**

- Intimacy is the fertile ground from which romance grows. As fellowship is the exclusive domain of gospel-centered believers, romance is the exclusive domain of gospel-centered couples.
- Gospel-centered romance is the feeling of excitement, mystery, and euphoria experienced by married couples living in intimacy as they enjoy the Lord.

### **Things that cultivate the ground**

1. When you get home, let your wife know you're glad to be there and are willing to lend a helping hand to lighten her load.
2. Always, always kiss, touch, squeeze, or bump knuckles.
3. Give her a minute if she needs one – bathroom, a quick phone call, or a walk to the end of the driveway.
4. Let her know that as soon as there is time, by her schedule, you would like to hear about her day.
5. When you're home, be all the way home. Engage her as well as the kids.
6. Be sure that after the kids go to bed that you have time for each other. Don't always expect that time to be uninterrupted. Be willing to pause the resume.
7. Let her talk about things. There is no such thing as small talk when it comes to your wife.
8. Share a time in the Lord together. That may be after going to bed.
9. She was your wife before she was their mother. Let her know often that you don't take her for granted.
10. Mind your manners!

### **Do Special Things Just for Her**

1. Roses or other cut flowers are probably alright occasionally but can be considered over kill and expensive. Small growing flowers in the little cups are cheap, pretty, and last a long time.
2. An occasional magazine, book, or even something you have seen online and printed off for her dealing with something she is excited about.
3. A new pair of socks, gloves, or a hat
4. What's her favorite little morsel? It doesn't have to be candy.
5. Chick flicks are good but let her pick which one. Don't talk about how stupid it was. Remember it's for her!
6. Encourage her to look in the little shops or the part of the department store that has the things "just for girls." Tell her to take her time. You have to mean it!
7. What is a type of music that you both share a liking for? Be on the lookout for something new and meaningful or romantic. Invite her to take a minute to sit with you and give it a listen. (Not in the middle of her getting supper ready). Give her a little twirl around the living room, maybe after the kids go to bed or maybe not.
8. Tell her you love her often. Whisper it in her ear. Tell her as one or the other of you is going out the door. Tell her in front of the kids. It's a good thing for them to hear it!
9. Let her know that whenever you look at her, you see that she looks just like she did on your wedding day...only better! In a million ways, she is enough!!!

### **A few thoughts in closing...**

- To quote Ray Ortlund from his work *Marriage and the Mystery of the Gospel*, “A husband and wife, when they marry, do not become one flesh by their own will or by the pastor’s pronouncement or by some mysterious process. God joins them together.” And in the same vein, Malachi 2:15 says “Did he (meaning God) not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union?”
- A couple joining together in things that serve the Lord develop a better focus of what it means to be Christ-centered. They always grow closer together because of it.
- The picture of you loving your wife as Christ love the Church is a unique opportunity for displaying the gospel for family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors who might never go near a church building. But we have to do it right. You must love her sacrificially, give yourself up to protect her, and put her wants and needs before your own. You must love her with overwhelming forbearance and forgiveness, especially with the little ways that you’re just different.

Oh and by the way, to quote Pastor Ortlund one more time: “Married sex, with its intimacy and desire and pleasure and intensity and adoration and satisfaction and rest, is a glorious metaphor of heaven!”