

## **Your Wife's Need For Caring Conversation**

It's a strange thing. I rarely have a man ask me, "Why doesn't my wife talk to me?" What I do hear is almost always the opposite—"Why doesn't my husband talk to me?" It's something of an axiom that men do not have as great a desire for conversation with their wives as women do with their husbands. Casual observation bears out the fact that women, in general, enjoy conversation for its own sake. As any husband can attest, it's not uncommon for women to spend hours on the phone with one another. Men, on the other hand, rarely call one another just to chat or to be brought up to date. Meetings, activities, and other gatherings where the purpose is to talk about personal concerns seem to bring great pleasure to most women. Unlike women, when men gather they tend to talk about practical matters such as sports, news, and their jobs. They enjoy exchanging jokes and anecdotes but generally do not take pleasure in talking about themselves or their feelings.

What truly amazes women is that this is generally not the case when a man is dating. Perhaps the obvious reason is that he is trying to make a good impression. He is eagerly attempting to demonstrate his ability to be funny, witty, and charming. To her great delight, he may even become uncharacteristically curious about her likes and dislikes, her interests, her feelings, and even problems. He will attempt to learn what makes her happy and content. When he cannot be with her he may even do the unthinkable of regularly phoning to convey his love. Of course, when any woman is on the receiving end of this kind of verbal attention she keenly senses that he deeply loves and cares for her. In her psyche, when this kind of caring conversation is blended with affection, it results in her feeling united with the other person. It bonds her together with him like cement.

As wonderful as the results are the majority of men paradoxically stop one or both of these practices once the marital knot is tied. To make matters worse, when the knot begins to come loose, they are prone to blame everything and everyone but themselves. It's as if they have totally forgotten that it was these very things that brought them together in the first place.

By the time a distressed couple enter the counselor's office, it usually has begun to dawn on the husband that he has let the pressures of life divert him from his first priority: that is, loving his wife. In looking back, he must humbly confess that somewhere along the way he developed an "I can take my wife for granted" attitude. When consistent, loving conversation stopped the marriage began to fade into a humdrum existence that led to disappointment and disillusionment.

To circumvent this kind of marital pain, a husband must be willing to accept the fact that outside of affection, women desperately need loving conversation. It is critical to her sense of security and happiness in the marriage. Secondly, a believing husband must be

willing to embrace the truth that loving conversation is perhaps one of the greatest ways that he practically carry out Christ's command to love his wife (Ephesians 5:25).

For those who may plead ignorance as to what Scripture has to say about caring conversation, the following is for you:

### **DO'S**

- 1) Be a ready listener. Answer only after the other person has finished talking.
- 2) Be slow to speak. Think carefully about what you want to say.
- 3) Speak in such a way that the other person can understand and accept what you say.
- 4) Speak the truth in love; be tactful and constructive.
- 5) Explain why you are hesitant to talk at this time. Assure them that you will address the matter at a later time.
- 6) Use a soft and kind response. Attack the problem and not the person.
- 7) Refuse to quarrel and argue.
- 8) Be willing to show respect for your mate's opinion.
- 9) If you have offended your mate be quick to ask for their forgiveness.
- 10) If you've reached an impasse, agree to involve a godly counselor in resolving the issue.

### **DON'TS**

- 1) Don't interrupt.
- 2) Don't be hasty in your words.
- 3) Don't clam up.
- 4) Don't use silence to punish the other person.
- 5) Don't blow up.
- 6) Don't belittle or name-call when in conflict.
- 7) Don't blame or criticize the other person.
- 8) Don't monopolize the conversation.
- 9) Don't try to get even.
- 10) Don't resurrect the past.
- 11) Don't use sweeping generalities (i.e. never, always, etc.)
- 12) Don't refuse to admit when you are wrong.

It has been said that good communication is the most important thing. I would say that is the only thing! Without it, love cannot be completely expressed. Without it, problems cannot be solved. Without it, a relationship will ultimately be doomed for disappointment and heartache. Husbands, make it a point to take an inventory with your wife. Ask her to honestly tell you how you are doing in this area of your marriage. Ask her if she thinks you are demonstrating love to her through caring conversation. If there is a need for change, be willing to make it.