

Our marriage will only be six-years-old this June yet it I feel like we've learned a lot on our tumultuous roller-coaster. Many good intentions of mine were never realized because my priorities were misplaced and because I never really let go of self.

So, here are now what I see as fundamentals to being a godly wife. It's not a list of tricks or tips, but the foundations of growth (and I still have *much* growing to do):

### 1. **Desire God**

My marriage changed when I began to deeply love God because of his character, his love, his holiness and power - and as a result, I hated sin, not just the consequences (i.e. hell). But we won't taste that if we aren't filling ourselves with his word. The only way we can find the strength to do any good as wives is if we first seek God and that's why this is number one on the list. Focus your energy into developing a relationship with and understanding of God and everything else will fall into place.

"The kingdom of heaven is like *treasure* hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his *joy* he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." – **Matthew 13:44**

### 2. **Learn Humility**

As Lewis memorably put it: humility is not thinking *less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less*. Thinking of *our* unhappiness or unmet desires and instead thinking of our husbands, can heal a marriage. When we are filled with the Spirit by drawing closer to God (see point 1), he will fill us to the brim with the peace and joy that comes from giving up the service of self – even if our husbands aren't on the same page.

Humility is intrinsically tied to **submission**: if we bear the name of Christ, submission ought to be characteristic of our nature. Sometimes we get so caught up in whether or how a *wife* should submit, we forget that *Christians should submit*. Embrace the one and the other will become clearer; we will look for ways to serve our husbands. Now, spousal abuse should be dealt with seriously and quickly- but in regards to a safe marriage, I guarantee some willingness to yield in the name of Christ will do our souls and marriage good.

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death..." – **Philippians 2:3-8**

### 3. **Take Instruction From the Spiritually-Minded**

Reading through the Proverbs tends to make me squirm. I go through phases in which I don't want advice, don't want to read another Here's-How-to-Be-A-Better-Wife-Mother-And-Human-Than-You-Are, Since-You-Clearly-Can't-Figure-it-Out-Yourself book, get hurt by criticism and become bitter.

Over and over the Proverbs remind us that it's the *foolish* who are hard-hearted, who won't take rebuke or instruction: and their lives and relationships will consequently suffer. The wise are those who receive *godly* teaching even when it hurts. It's an everyday war to keep our hearts soft, so we need to be on the lookout for that hardening. If we are struggling with specific responsibilities as women, this is where we humbly open ourselves to teaching from older, wiser, godly women.

Some of our husbands may be seriously caught up in sin, and we need to try to help them. Yet, each day we must watch most closely over *our own* hearts, recognize *our own* sin, and absorb the hard advice and not get stuck on what our spouses are or aren't doing. It's only our own holiness for which we'll be held accountable in the end.

"Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight." Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, and he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury. Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; *reprove a wise man, and he will love you.*" – **Proverbs 9:6-8**