

How to Make Your Spouse Feel Appreciated

Headline: Ever heard of Employee Appreciation Day (3/7/2025)? How about International Plant Appreciation Day (4/13) or National Squirrel Appreciation Day (1/21)? Seriously?? When is Wife Appreciation day? Maybe the answer is EVERY day? There actually is a day (3rd Sunday in Sept), but probably EVERY day is more appropriate. Engage your humility and selflessness, and genuinely make your wife feel loved today.

Objective:

Your wife is your “bride”. You love her more than anybody (if you don’t, you need to) – more than your kids, more than parents, family, and friends. You are united with her in Christ.

I heard someone once say that, “we are all married to the same woman.” Obviously, not true, but the point is each wife has the same basic needs from us. The key thing is figuring out how to uniquely deliver against her specific needs. All of us need to get much better at listening to our spouses, affirming their goodness, recognizing their efforts and loving our spouse unconditionally, the way that God loves us. How good are you that? Speaking for myself, I still have plenty of work to do.

This session is geared to get us thinking about how we might take the time to really understand those needs and make the effort to fulfill them.

Song Suggestion: Prayer of St. Francis

Bible and Catechism Readings

Ephesians 5:25-30

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. So [also] husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

1 Thes 5:11

Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Ephesians 4:1-3

... live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace:

Catechism 1644-45

The love of the spouses requires, of its very nature, the unity and indissolubility of the spouses' community of persons, which embraces their entire life: "so they are no longer two, but one flesh." They "are called to grow continually in their communion through day-to-day fidelity to their marriage promise of total mutual self-giving." This human communion is confirmed, purified, and completed by communion in Jesus Christ, given through the sacrament of Matrimony. It is deepened by lives of the common faith and by the Eucharist received

together. The unity of marriage, distinctly recognized by our Lord, is made clear in the equal personal dignity which must be accorded to man and wife in mutual and unreserved affection

Catechism 1661:

The Sacrament of Matrimony signifies the union of Christ and [His Bride] the Church. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved His Church; the grace of the Sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life

Saint: Saints Louis and Zelig Martin - Louis and Zelig Martin are the first married couple to be canonized together. They lived humble, ordinary lives, in which both suffering and joy played important parts. Together they bore nine children, but only five survived childhood. Each of these five daughters would eventually enter the religious life. One of them is well known to us: Saint Therese of Lisieux, called "The Little Flower."

Usually we allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the lives of "great saints"; we feel that they are super-humans whom God has called in a special way, and that He does not mean for us to attain such a level of sanctity. The Martins prove that, simply by cooperating with God's grace in our particular state in life, we can be deeply purified and closely aligned to Our Lord and His loving will.

Louis and Zelig are excellent examples for us. They faithfully fulfilled their roles as spouses and parents and through their quiet lives of love, service, and self-sacrifice, God brought them home to Himself.

Although it has not been officially stated that they are patron saints of married couples, they are beautiful examples of the vocation of marriage expressed in all its fullness, and we can certainly imitate their virtues and seek their intercession.

Vignette:

My pastor told a story about a man who decided to make a vow to be the best husband and father he could be. When he returned home from work, instead of just plopping down on the couch, he complimented his wife.

"That's a beautiful sweater on you," he remarked. The next week, the family went on a vacation. There were activities scheduled that he really didn't enjoy but before complaining, he thought, "I'm going to be the best husband and dad." He simply smiled and didn't complain all week. After days of star treatment, his wife looked at him with a very sad look on her face.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I went to the doctor last week for some tests. Is there something you know that I don't know? Am I dying?" she asked with tears in her eyes.

"Why would you think that?" he asked.

"You've been so nice to me all week, so I thought I must be dying."

The husband laughed and wrapped his arms around his wife. "No honey, you're not dying. I'm just learning how to live."

How should we be living? I asked a few women what their husbands do (or should do) to make them feel appreciated. This summarizes the responses:

1. Active listening – listen full attention (no phone, TV, etc.). Do you really listen, or are you listening while formulating a response, or jumping to problem solving? Do you value/seek her opinion? Practice affirmation!
2. Fulfilling her needs – Some of these are spoken - Do you act on them? Some unspoken – How well do you really know your wife and what she longs for? Ever heard of the 5 Love Languages?
3. Self Sacrifice – Sometimes we need to put her needs above ours. Do you ever do something (vacations,

other activities) that she wants to do that perhaps you don't like doing? Or, doing chores that she doesn't like doing?

4. Love the people she loves – Kids, relatives, friends. Sometimes this is easy. Sometimes not so easy.
5. Be affectionate in ways she needs – an unprompted hug, holding her hand. When was the last time you told her you loved her?
6. Leave any pressure and guilt out of the bedroom – Intimacy is one of the most important ways of feeling valued and appreciated, but if not cared for by both individuals it can most destructive to the relationship.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

What is something unique that you have done that made your spouse feel appreciated?

What are the root causes that may make your wife to feel unappreciated by you?

What will you do in the next week to show your wife she is appreciated by you?

Action Plan:

Rate yourself, 1-10, on how well you do at loving your wife the way she deserves to be loved.

- If you gave yourself a good score (and feel brave), ask your wife for her own rating of you. If your wife gives you a good rating, keep it up. If she has a particular recommendation for behavior change, try it out and see how well it works toward your goal of being a better husband.
- If you gave yourself a low score, what might you do about it?

References:

1. How to Make Your Wife Feel Special (this is a good one)
<https://955thefish.com/articles/family/marriage/how-to-make-your-wife-feel-special-a-cheat-sheet-for-husbands>
2. Small but powerful ways to make your wife feel loved
<https://www.crosswalk.com/slideshows/10-small-but-powerful-ways-to-make-your-wife-feel-loved.html>
3. Five ways to make your wife feel valued
<https://www.allprodad.com/5-ways-to-make-your-wife-feel-valued/>
4. 25 (Specifically) Catholic Marriage Tips
<https://fathersofmercy.com/25-specifically-catholic-marriage-tips/>
5. The 5 Love languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts by Gary Chapman
<https://5lovelanguages.com/>

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