



THE GAME PLAN

INTRODUCTION: What the Heart of Your Man Wants You to Know.....	12
<i>Your husband needs you to support him spiritually.</i>	
Chapter 1: Even a Great Husband Makes a Poor God.....	17
Chapter 2: The Submission Mission.....	21
Chapter 3: Praying for Your Husband.....	26
<i>Your husband needs you to encourage him emotionally.</i>	
Chapter 4: The Great Masculine Adventure	31
Chapter 5: Touching the Heart of Your Tender Warrior	35
Chapter 6: Boys Will Be Boys	39



Your husband needs you to enjoy him sexually.

Chapter 7: The Makings of a Better Lover	45
Chapter 8: An Amazing Banquet.....	50
Chapter 9: Encounter or Experience?	55

Your husband needs you to appreciate him vocationally.

Chapter 10: Your Provider: Puffed Up or Pooped Out.....	61
Chapter 11: Don't Clip His Wings.....	65
Chapter 12: Home: Haven or Headache?	69

Your husband needs you to engage him intellectually.

Chapter 13: Husbands Are Hunters, Not Hinters	75
Chapter 14: Dangers of the Leaky Faucet	80
Chapter 15: The Power of the Shared Dream	84

Your husband needs you to connect with him relationally.

Chapter 16: Discovering What Makes Him Tick Without Ticking Him Off.....	89
Chapter 17: Understanding His Compartment Department	93
Chapter 18: The Key to Becoming Your Husband's Friend . . . Laughter!.....	98



Your husband needs you to affirm him physically.

Chapter 19: God Designed Us Physically Different	103
Chapter 20: Loving the Love Handles	107
Chapter 21: Becoming His Beauty	112

Your husband needs you to stand by him permanently.

Chapter 22: For Better or Worse	117
Chapter 23: Even If	121
Chapter 24: Happily Ever After	124
Conclusion: No Marriage Is Picture-Perfect	129

CHAPTER 1

EVEN A GREAT HUSBAND
MAKES A POOR GOD

I got in my car and started down our winding driveway. Tears fell in a steady flow. My chest was tight, my eyes puffy, and every muscle tight with stress. *Why does it have to be so difficult? Why can't he just love me the way I am? Why does everything have to be such an issue? What am I doing wrong?*

Can you relate? If you've been married for any time at all, I'm sure you can. At times I've gotten so consumed trying to figure out how to make my husband love me and how to make everything all right between us that he in some strange way became my God. If we were doing well, I was doing well. If we weren't doing so well, I wasn't doing so well either.

Now, understandably, because my husband and I have come together as one, we are close enough that when he hurts, I hurt. But, my spirit should not vacillate between joy and sorrow based on how Art and I are getting along. Instead, my soul should always rest in the safety of Jesus' unconditional love and acceptance.

Jesus laid this principle out clearly in John 15:5–6, which says, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is



like a branch that is thrown away and withers.” Jesus is our life-giving vine; our husbands are not. If we remain in Christ and let Christ be the only one who holds our souls and determines our identity, then we can bear much fruit. We know from Galatians 5 that the fruit of God’s Spirit in us is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Can you see why it is so important to get your every deep, spiritual need met by God alone? My husband can’t give me this type of consistent love, joy, peace, etc. And I can’t give him love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control apart from Christ. Apart from Christ I can do no good thing, because apart from Christ I wither as I try to make my husband fill me. When I do this I drain my husband and my marriage.

John 15:9 continues, “As the father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.” Now, my sweet friend, I know what it is like to walk the rocky paths of a difficult marriage. I understand the loneliness, the desperation, the frustrations. But I also know what it’s like to have a wonderful, fulfilling, romantic, awesome marriage.

My husband is basically the same man today as he was when things were not so good. God has worked on his heart and made some changes in him but nothing I’ve ever done had the power to change him. The main thing that has transformed my marriage is my letting God be my God. Instead of focusing on all the things my husband didn’t do right or letting his approval and disapproval consume me, I learned to



go to God and say, “Lord, I know You love me and You love my husband. So please either change him or change my heart toward this issue we are facing.” Sometimes He’ll soften my husband but more times than not God will change me.



I often share at conferences and retreats that God has taught me what it means to live for an audience of one. Instead of trying to be a good wife to win my husband’s approval, trying to be a good mom to win my kids’ approval, and trying to be a good friend to win my friends’ approval, I now simply try to please God. I seek only His favor and follow His precepts. In doing this I am a good wife, a good mom, and a good friend.

Faithfully spending time with God every day and asking Him to fill me and give me my identity and security has transformed my marriage. It has freed me to take the focus off of my needs, my wants, and my desires and turn more attention to giving of myself to my husband’s needs, wants, and desires. It is only through God’s strength working in me that I can give to my husband in this way and feel more fulfilled in giving than receiving.

Survey after survey that I received from men had a common thread: husbands said their wives were missing something in their life that the husbands had no idea how to fulfill. “I wish my wife knew that I love her,” or “I want to give her what she needs but I’m not sure even she knows what that is,” or “I wish so much my wife could see my inner feelings—how much I do love her—I just don’t know how to make her see



and believe that,” and “I’m doing everything I know how to do to make her feel loved and it doesn’t seem to be enough.”

These husbands want their wives’ hearts to be secure enough to freely receive the love they were already offering. The only way this can happen is when a wife’s heart rests safely in the Lord’s hands and she’s at peace with who her God is. Then and only then can a woman of tender strength emerge with the capacity to be the wife she was created to be.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDER—*Spend time in prayer today asking God to change any wrong attitudes in your heart. Ask Him to make your marriage all He intends for it to be.*



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY—*As the father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.*

—[JOHN 15:9]