

**Cherish Him**

by Deborah A. Biddle

Many of us have attended weddings at which we've heard a man and woman promise "to love, honor and cherish" one another. We probably have no problem understanding why women would need to be cherished. Women are considered to be delicate, sensitive and easily injured. Even the scriptures admonish husbands to "dwell with them [wives] with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as the weaker vessel" (1 Peter 3:7).

The promise "to cherish", in traditional wedding vows, is made by both the husband *and* the wife. For wives, this may be a bit more difficult to put into practice. We don't often think of our husbands as fragile or easily hurt, but rather as dependable and strong. And as such, we don't always think our husbands need cherishing. However, the need is real and we must live up to our promise.

To cherish your husband is not to treat him like crystal, but to hold dear those things that are dear to him. By that I mean you ought to care about your husband's thoughts, opinions, feelings, successes, challenges, joys, secrets, failures and all the things that make up who he is.

Most of us married our husbands because there was something about him that we admired. It's easy to forget those feelings and let them fade over time. Yet, it is just as important to cherish your husband now as it was the day you married him. When was the last time you asked him about his dreams? When did you last tell him what it is that keeps you so in love with him? When have you helped him accomplish something important to him, with no vested interest for you? Have you told him how much you love him lately or that he's a good father and provider? When have you said that you like the way he looks or that you still find him attractive?

One of my favorite passages in the Bible is Song of Solomon 5:10-16, in which the Shulamite bride is asking the daughters of Jerusalem to promise to tell her beloved that she is lovesick. They respond by asking what it is about her beloved that they should make such a promise. The following is her response (New Living Translation):

*<sup>10</sup> My lover is dark and dazzling,  
better than ten thousand others!*

*<sup>11</sup> His head is finest gold,  
his wavy hair is black as a raven.*

*<sup>12</sup> His eyes sparkle like doves  
beside springs of water;  
they are set like jewels  
washed in milk.*

*<sup>13</sup> His cheeks are like gardens of spices*

*giving off fragrance.  
His lips are like lilies,  
perfumed with myrrh.  
14 His arms are like rounded bars of gold,  
set with beryl.  
His body is like bright ivory,  
glowing with lapis lazuli.  
15 His legs are like marble pillars  
set in sockets of finest gold.  
His posture is stately,  
like the noble cedars of Lebanon.  
16 His mouth is sweetness itself;  
he is desirable in every way.  
Such, O women of Jerusalem,  
is my lover, my friend.*

In the New King James Version, it reads, “he is altogether lovely”. I love the passage because it reminds me of the thrill enjoyed in the beginning of marriage. Most of us were like the Shulamite bride. We were so enamored with our groom that in every way we found him to be “altogether lovely”. Whether it was his physical appearance, intellect, sense of humor, work ethic, love for the Lord, or just the way he loved you, you cherished him. The challenge is to continue to do so and to make sure he knows that you do.

The man you married is part of you. You are one. You *know* that *you* are a person with feelings and ambitions. Guess what? So is he. He may not always say so but he also has deep feelings and passions that are waiting for you to uncover. Whatever it was that drew you to him in the first place is still there. Those qualities you admired and even cherished when you first married are still inside your husband. As his wife, you are the one who has to appreciate and encourage the qualities and potential you first loved and honored in him the day you married.

Some practical steps to take in cherishing your husband are:

1. Esteem Him – Philippians 2:3-4  
Honor and respect him. Don’t be selfish. Sometimes, do more of what he needs and wants than what you want.
2. Speak Gently – Proverbs 15:1-2, 21:9  
Be careful what you say and how you say it. Lift him up. Don’t tear him down!
3. Encourage one another and seek harmony – Romans 14:19  
Just as we are commanded to seek peace and unity in the body of Christ, we ought to strive even more for the same with our husbands.

4. Connect with Him

He appreciates the look or the smile only you can give. Be there to support him at important events. Have some fun with him. Laugh at his jokes. Write him a love letter.

As his wife, you have a window to the innermost part of your husband, his heart. No one else can see what you see. No one else can do what you can do. Be careful to protect and love the tender heart that your husband entrusts to you. If he knows his heart is safe with you, the two of you will share intimacy and passion that can last a lifetime. So, cherish him!