



# OAK GROVE ENCOURAGER

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works” Hebrews 10:24

APRIL 29, 2007

## CULTIVATE YOUR WIFE!

-by Willie Quan

In his series, *The Purpose of the Male Man*, Dr. Myles Munroe (one of my favorite motivators) expounds on how God has created and designed the 'male' man to be a cultivator. Genesis 2:15 says, "And then the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it."

Cultivate means to make something grow, produce, and increase. Dr. Munroe says that the original assignment God left for Adam was for him to make the garden better.

In this, we men also find our assignment. God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden. Where has God placed you? Who has God placed you with?

As husbands, I want to encourage us all to cultivate our wives! Brothers, let's rise to the occasion to help our wives bloom and blossom into something much more than they are today—that both their inner and outer beauty would continually increase.

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9203 Thixton Lane  
Louisville, KY 40291

### Oak Grove

### Church of Christ

(502) 749-9209

#### Sunday

Bible Class: 9:30 AM  
Morning Worship: 10:30 AM  
Evening Worship: 5:00 PM

#### Wednesday

Bible Class: 7:30 PM

#### Evangelist:

Bruce J. Dehnt  
Home Bible Studies Available  
Upon Request

[oakgrove.churchofchristonline.org](http://oakgrove.churchofchristonline.org)

And, I do not mean trying to 'change' her. But when a gardener tends his garden, he gives to it. He tills the soil; he waters it regularly; he doesn't allow weeds to grow; he applies the right fertilizers (nutrients); and he kills off all harmful pests.

Because he loves his garden and wants its beauty to flourish, he'll do anything it takes, and do it faithfully.

How can we cultivate our wives? I want to recommend something from Dr. Gary Chapman. In his book, *The Five Love Languages (How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate)*. He encourages us to understand the "love language" spoken by our spouse. He highlights five ways people express and receive love:

- \* **Words of Affirmation:** encouragement through words (can be verbal or written).
- \* **Quality Time:** focused and intentional time spent together.
- \* **Receiving Gifts:** gifts are visual symbols of love.
- \* **Acts of Service:** doing something to meet a practical need for the other person.
- \* **Physical Touch:** hugs, rubs, kisses, strokes, and touch that conveys warmth and affection.

Dr. Chapman says that it's important for us to know what our spouse's primary love language is—and not to just use the expression that *we* naturally favor, but to relate to our spouse in the language that is *their* primary language.

Some ways you can discover your wife's love language are: by observing to see how she expresses love; or by experimenting to see which of these expressions of love she best responds to when you use it on her. Another way is by simply asking (don't be shy to ask).

#### *How's her love tank?*

Dr Chapman also borrows a term from Dr. Ross Campbell, a child psychologist, who says "Inside every child is an 'emotional tank' waiting to be filled with love." This is likened to the oil tank in a vehicle. In

order to run smoothly, it needs to be full and well maintained. The same is true for our marriages. How's your wife's emotional love tank?

Brothers, it might be time for all of us to check on that tank! It's easy for us guys to get caught up in cars, sports, hobbies, and television. Hopefully, we are not spending more time on these than we are making deposits into our wife's love tank! Chapman says that we can expect "people to behave differently when their emotional love tanks are full."

Let's really surprise and bless our wives by using her primary love language, filling up her love tank, and making a commitment to ourselves to cultivate her all year round!

Also commit to telling one friend about your cultivation pledge and plan. And, then call out the cultivator in him as well!

## THE IMPORTANCE OF AFFIRMING YOUR HUSBAND

-By Shaunti Feldhahn

Have you ever noticed how the adulterous woman in the book of Proverbs seduces the unwitting young man? It's not with sex (okay, it's not *just* with sex); it's with flattery. "She threw her arms around him... and with a brazen look she said, "I've offered my sacrifices and just finished my vows. It's you I was looking for!" ...With her flattery she enticed him. He followed her at once" (from Proverbs 7).

Flattery is simply a seductive counterfeit for affirmation. As one marriage counselor told me, "Affirmation is everything. When a man is affirmed, he can conquer the world. When he's not, he is sapped of his confidence and even his feeling of manhood. And believe me, he *will*, consciously or unconsciously, seek out places where he receives affirmation."

Home is the most important place for a man to be affirmed. If a man knows that his wife believes in

him, he is empowered to do better in every area of his life. A man tends to think of life as a competition and a battle, and he can energetically fight it out if he can come home to someone who supports him unconditionally, who will wipe his brow and tell him he can do it. As one of our close friends told me, "It's all about whether my wife thinks I can do it. A husband can slay dragons, climb mountains, and win great victories if *he* believes his *wife* believes that he can."

### **Don't tear him down!**

If instead of affirming, a wife reinforces her husband's feelings of inadequacy, it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. For example, if we focus on our attention on what he is doing *wrong* in the relationship, we can unwittingly undermine what we most want—for him to do it right.

But I discovered a dismaying fact. Of the men I surveyed, only one man in four felt actively appreciated by his family. And 44 percent of men actually felt *unappreciated* at home. More pointedly, men in their prime years of responsibility for home, children, and work—men between their ages of thirty-six and fifty-five—felt even less appreciated.

I'll bet that many of the wives or girlfriends of these men would be surprised to learn that they didn't feel appreciated. My guess is that most of us *do* appreciate our men but don't show it enough.

### **He'll seek affirmation somewhere**

If a man isn't convinced that his woman thinks he's the greatest, he will tend to seek affirmation elsewhere. He may spend more hours at work, where he feels alive and on top of his game, or he may spend too much time talking to the admiring female associate. He may immerse himself in watching or playing sports, feeling the thrill of the competitive rush. Or he may retreat to his workshop or his home office, feeling like he can control things there even if he feels inadequate and clumsy elsewhere.

"Why else do you think," one man asked me, "so many men take sports so seriously? It's something they feel good at, something they've practiced. They are admired and encouraged by other men on the field. People say 'good hit?' or 'good shot!' or show by tightening their

defense that they know you're about to smoke them. There's nothing like that feeling. But I feel that same way at home when my wife applauds me for bringing in a big business deal or brags to her friends about what a good father I am. It's that same feeling."

During my clinical research for *The Lights of Tenth Street*, several experts told me that a chronic lack of affirmation is one reason so many men slip into pornography addiction. For whatever reason, they feel like less than a man, so they seek—and find!—affirmation in pornography. As one man pointed out, "All those women in the men's magazines convey one message: 'I want you, and you are the most desirable man in the world.' My wife may be nagging me at home, the kids may be disobedient, and I may be worried about messing up at work, but look at the woman in that picture makes me feel like a man."

If affirmation is indeed everything, why should a man have to look for it in other places when he has a wife who loves and respects him? There's nothing wrong with work, sports, or hobbies—it's wonderful for him to feel alive and encouraged in those pursuits—but they shouldn't have to be a retreat from an unaffirming home life.

### **Create a safety zone**

Obviously, if many of our men spend their workdays feeling like they are always being watched and judged, it is no wonder that they want to come home to a totally accepting environment, where they can safely let their guard down. Men need a place where they can make their mistakes in peace and not constantly worry that they are one misstep away from being exposed.

If we don't realize this and are perhaps too attentive to their mistakes at home, we risk creating a situation that is the opposite of what we want. Most of us *want* our men to be able to relax and truly open up to us. But in many ways, it is up to us to create the intimate, safe environment that makes that possible.

We may think that the adage, "his home must be his haven" is antiquated and unnecessary these days, but that is far from the truth. In fact, as the workplace has gotten harsher and less loyal, more demanding and less tolerant of mistakes, I'd say it's *even more* important that a man's home be a haven. Most of the men I talked with

crave a retreat from the daily pressure of always having to perform.

### **The gift of confidence**

I heard from many men, "Men put a lot of pressure on themselves." On the survey, one husband pleaded, "I want my wife to know and understand my weaknesses, failings, short-comings, and still want me. I need her to be my number one source of encouragement to become the man God created me to be."

We might think we wouldn't have the ability to change our man's feelings of workplace inadequacy, but we would be wrong. By staunchly supporting our men, showing that we believe in them, and providing an emotionally safe environment to come home to, we can help give them at least the emotional confidence they need to dive back into the daily workplace fray.

In his autobiography, *Jack: Straight from the Gut*, Jack Welch, the famous chairman and CEO of General Electric, provides an insight for businessmen that is important for every wife—and mother—to hear. Speaking about his mother, he wrote:

Perhaps the greatest single gift she gave me was self-confidence. It's what I've looked for and tried to build in every executive who has ever worked with me. Confidence gives you courage and extends your reach. It lets you take greater risks and achieve far more than you ever thought possible. Building self-confidence in others is a huge part of leadership. It comes from providing opportunities and challenges for people to do things they never imagined they could do—rewarding them after each success in every way possible.

A wife can give her husband that confidence (just as, hopefully, a husband can for his wife). It's not about being the supportive "little woman." It's about realizing that despite their veneer of confidence, our husbands really do "carry their treasures in fragile containers," and they crave our affirmation for how they did on that play. It's about sending the man we love into the world every day—alive with the belief that he can slay dragons.

## **THE LORD'S DAY PRIVILEGE LIST**

### **Sunday Morning Service**

Announcements: **Arvil Young**

Song Leader: **Greg Walker**

Opening Prayer: **Mike Shepherd**

Lord's Table: **Mark Smith  
Brian Shepherd  
Larry Runner  
Randall Alford**

Scripture Reading: **David Shepherd**

Sermon: **Bruce Dehut**

Closing Prayer: **Doug Smith**

### **Sunday Evening Service**

Announcements: **Arvil Young**

Song Leader: **Greg Walker**

Opening Prayer: **Chuck Sharp**

Sermon: **Bruce Dehut**

Lord's Table: **Mark Smith**

Closing Prayer: **Bill Milliner**