

John and Jay, love your wives “equal to” the way “Christ” loves his church (Ephesians 5:25-33). As Christ—the “anointed one,” Jesus was a prophet, priest, and king. *Your highest duty is to love your wife as a prophet, priest, and king.* Proclaim the gospel, consecrate yourself, intercede, sacrifice, serve, lead, protect, provide. Yes, you are task and mission oriented. Therefore, the final Big Idea is: *Your relationship with her is your task, and your marriage is your mission.*

APPLICATION

1. If married, how are you doing at making investments into your wife’s Emotional Bank Account? How would she answer that question? Why not ask her and making a concerted effort to make concrete investments during the next week.
2. Is your wife your top priority after God? Think about your schedule over the last weeks and months. How have you shown her that she is a priority to you? What are one or two tangible ways you should reinforce your commitment to her?
3. What is the level of intimacy in your marriage right now? How closely connected to you does your wife feel? What are some practical steps you could take to create more of an emotional connection between the two of you?

Business leader, author, and speaker, Patrick Morley helps men think more deeply about their lives, to be reconciled with Christ, and to be equipped for a larger impact on the world.

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Thoughts for Newlyweds

Patrick Morley

My son, John, was married to Kristie on June 22, 2002 and my daughter, Jen, was married to Jay on November 2, 2002. These were two of the happiest days of my life! I’ve been asking myself, “What are the most important things John and Jay need to be successful in love?” This open letter to them is a start at answering that question.

Dear John and Jay....

You have pledged yourself to a Christian marriage. It will be wonderful, but not easy. As Christian writer Florence Littauer said, “We are attracted to each other’s strengths, then go home to live with each other’s weaknesses.”

It is often said that the family is disintegrating. Indeed, this is true. Tonight 40% of America’s 72 million children will go to bed in a home without a biological father. However, a deeper problem is that the Christian family is disintegrating. Statistics bear this out. And why is that?

The sanctity of marriage was long ago abandoned in culture—“for better or worse, as long as love shall last.” In my opinion, though, the sanctity of Christian marriage has also been mutilated. Sometimes we Christians try so hard to be relevant that we lose our distinctive salty flavor. You will find too few committed to helping you make it, and no stigma if you don’t.

As important as your commitment to your wife is, it is even more important to be committed to the institution of marriage. If not, what’s the moral glue to help persevere when it’s rough? Regularly affirm your commitment to the sanctity of a Biblical marriage.

Here are some of the ideas that have helped Patsy and me keep the sanctity of our marriage for 30 years.

HOW CAN YOU GIVE HER WHAT SHE NEEDS?

The first Big Idea—and the best practical idea to manage a marriage—is the Emotional Bank Account (sometimes called Emotional Bank, Emotional Tank, Love Bank, etc.).

Your wife has an Emotional Bank Account. Every contact with your wife, verbal and non-verbal, is either a deposit or a withdrawal.

For example, suppose you've had a tough day. You send your wife a signal. You slam the door when you get home, let out a grunt that imitates the sound of a large zoo animal, and drop your briefcase or lunchbox loudly on the counter. Now, is this a deposit or withdrawal into your wife's Emotional Bank Account? Starting to get the picture?

Let's say the next morning you realize what a jerk you were, so you bring your wife coffee in bed and say, "I'm sorry I was so grumpy last night. Will you forgive me?" Deposit or withdrawal? See how it works?

Suppose your wife has a tough day teaching school. One child in particular has stretched her patience to the limit. She starts to tell you about this after dinner. You, tired from your own day, fold your arms and stare out the window. Is this a deposit or withdrawal?

No idea is more practical for marriage. Make deposits of time, conversation, touch, humor, friendship, recreation, praying together, and unconditional love.

The single biggest problem we see at Man in the Mirror is that men's marriages are not working like they should. Most of these problems would go away if they would every day apply the concept of the Emotional Bank Account.

Your wife needs emotional love. She's going to "bank" somewhere. She has to—that's the way she's wired. Get her account number, and make sure your deposits exceed your withdrawals 10 to 1. By the way: Deposit numbers are longer than withdrawal numbers—so remember it's easier to withdraw than deposit.

WHAT IS HER GREATEST NEED?

Let's talk about your greatest need. A man is made for a task or mission. His greatest need is to be significant, to do something with his life, to leave his mark. You want it to matter that you walked the face of the planet. No man wants to be a shooting star that streaks across the sky one night then disappears.

Take a moment and focus on your need to do something significant. What is it that gets you out of bed? What is it that turns your crank? What is it that gets you juiced? Where does your intensity come from? Get a handle on that right now. Got it? Now hold that feeling....

Your wife also has a greatest need and she feels just as strongly about her greatest need as you do about yours.

Your wife's greatest need is for intimacy. Your wife's core motivation is to love a man and nurture a family. Your wife needs you to give her the first place in your life in the same way she has already naturally given you the first place in hers.

You are the only two people who are really in this thing together.

The second Big Idea for marriage is this: *After God, but before all others, make your wife your top priority.* Trust me, when you have been married 30 years like Patsy and I have, you will realize that you are the only two people who are really in this thing together. Everyone else—and I mean everyone—will phase in and out of your life.

WHY IS SHE LIKE THAT?

Marriage is the mysterious, mystical fusion of two separate lives headed in two separate directions into what the Bible calls "one flesh."

The Bible says that God created a woman to be a companion and helper (Genesis 2:18). A man leaves his mom and dad and "cleaves" to his wife and they become "one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Cleaving is like gluing two pieces of paper together—you can't tear one without tearing both.

After the Fall, God said to the woman, "Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you" (Genesis 3:16). This "desire" is best understood as a desire "bordering on disease." In other words, it is a desire subject to corruption. You know this is true because you can manipulate her to get what you want, or she may seem to get crazy over silly little things.

John, you gave Jay this advise, "Keep your sense of humor. Girls are weird." That's funny. I would use the word "different." Here is a chart that makes some generalizations about those differences between husband and wife....

<u>GENERALIZATIONS</u>	<u>HUSBAND</u>	<u>WIFE</u>
greatest need...	significance	intimacy
principal drive...	to be respected	to be cherished
orientation...	task	relationship
principal command...	love Eph 5:25-33	submit Eph 5:22,24
principal activity...	providing 1 Tim 5:8	nurturing Titus 2:4-5
creativity directed to...	work	home
deepest fear...	failure to provide	something happen to child
risk orientation...	take a risk	seek security
principal concerns. . .	money, meaning	husband, children
principal struggle...	pressure	worry
negative emotion...	anger	fear