
HEART OF A HUSBAND

Pursue Him. Discover Her.

A husband's guide to leading from intimacy with Jesus

PAUL HARRIS

heartofahusband.com

A NOTE FROM PAUL

The foundation of the heart

I am not a clinical expert, and I don't have a three-step formula for a perfect life. I am a man who leads with his scars because the trophies don't tell the whole story. My name is Paul Harris, and I have been to hell and back in my marriage to my high school sweetheart, Cindy. If you're reading this, you might be going through the motions, or perhaps you're standing at the edge of a cliff, wondering if your marriage is worth the fall.

Years ago, during a busy season of traveling with a worship band, I allowed "ministry" to become my idol. I was leading worship while my own wife felt completely abandoned. I remember the moment I felt the "crack." I was walking out the door for yet another trip, leaving Cindy with a colicky baby and a four-year-old. We exchanged harsh words, and in my selfishness, I decided that was it. I was done. I didn't want to make it work anymore.

I sought to satisfy the needs of my flesh, and that ultimately led to me being unfaithful in my marriage. Ultimately, I confessed and by the grace of God Cindy wanted to work on restoring what was broken but the healing didn't start until I saw the wreckage I had caused.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE HEART

Where the healing began

I came home one afternoon to find Cindy on the floor, her voice broken and her eyes filled with tears, watching our wedding video. Seeing her face filled with that kind of pain—pain I had inflicted through my emotional absence and infidelity—shattered my pride. It was there, on the floor of our living room, that the “crack” began to seal through a grace I didn’t deserve.

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I realized then that being a “good husband” by the world’s standards—buying flowers or showing up for the big events—is a shallow substitute for the biblical calling of Ephesians 5:25. Your ability to love your wife is not a matter of technique; it is a direct byproduct of your intimacy with Christ. This journey is about moving from “going through the motions” to a lifestyle of sacrifice and unity.

01 / IDENTITY BEFORE ROLE

Becoming a son first

Most of us are conditioned to lead through performance. We treat God like a “job” rather than a relationship, and we treat the Bible like a set of instructions rather than a lifeline. But consider the model of Jesus: He spent thirty years in preparation for a three-year ministry. If the Son of God required decades of hiddenness and preparation before He stepped into His role, why do we think we can lead a marriage without daily time with the Father?

As husbands, we often expect our wives to follow us blindly, yet they know exactly how little time we spend with the Father. They see when the Bible remains closed. You cannot lead a journey you haven’t prepared for. To lead her well, you must first learn to be a son who abides.

To shift from a performance-based marriage to a Christ-centered one, you must stop the “mental gymnastics” where you try to align your selfish will with God’s calling. Here is your challenge:

Stop justifying your absence

No success in work or ministry is worth a divided home.

Acknowledge your lack of intimacy

Your wife sees your lack of time with the Father; she shouldn’t be expected to follow a man who isn’t being led.

Surrender the “missions”

If you are saying “yes” to church obligations but your home is in tatters, you are burying your talents in the wrong field.

02 / BREAKING THE SELFISH CYCLE

Relieving her of the burden

If I had to distill my failures into one word, it would be selfishness. Even after Cindy offered me mercy for my infidelity, I was selfish. I wanted to be “healed” instantly so I wouldn’t have to face the discomfort of her pain. I had placed the “pressure of happiness” squarely on her shoulders, expecting Cindy to be the source of my affirmation, joy, and stability.

This is a weight no woman was meant to carry. The more I demanded she make me feel necessary, the less she wanted to give. A wife is meant to be a partner, not a pedestal for your ego. When you find your joy in Jesus first, you relieve her of the impossible burden of being your god.

THE SELFISH HUSBAND	THE CHRIST-CENTERED HUSBAND
Expects his wife to be the primary source of affirmation and joy.	Finds his joy and security in Jesus first, allowing his wife to be a partner.
Dumps the emotional weight of his bad day onto his wife.	Considers her emotional state and carries her burdens as Christ carries ours.
Uses “because I said so” management to demand respect.	Earns respect through the servant leadership Jesus modeled.
Focuses on what he is getting from the relationship.	Focuses on what he is giving to the relationship.

Treat her with the emotional consideration you would want if the roles were reversed. That is the Golden Rule in action.

03 / MODELING THE BRIDE

The dream that changed everything

God once gave me a dream that changed everything. I was in a massive church filled with people celebrating a wedding. When I asked who was getting married, a friend said, “Cindy is!” I was confused—she was already married to me.

Suddenly, I was standing in a black rectangle spray-painted in a desolate parking lot, wearing sackcloth and ashes, mourning the loss of my bride.

When I woke up, I was angry. I asked God what Cindy was hiding. He gently responded, “You were the bride in that dream. I was the Husband. I mourn the loss of our intimacy because you have married yourself to so many other things.”

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You were the bride in that dream. I was the Husband.

This is the turning point: God is jealous for your heart. The dream showed me how much of my heart I had given to other things.

03 / MODELING THE BRIDE

Intimacy from the inside out

When you feel lonely or disrespected by your wife, hear the Father saying, “Now you know how I feel.” Your wife will only feel safe enough to be the bride you desire when you model what it looks like to be a great bride to Jesus.

Devotion

Give Him your heart before you demand hers.

Time

Stop “marrying” yourself to your work or hobbies and return to your First Love.

Representation

When you model devotion to Christ, you show your wife what it looks like to be cherished.

04 / PRACTICAL RHYTHM

The First 10

The first ten minutes of your day dedicated to the Lord.

To anchor your pursuit, you must establish a daily rhythm in “the Garden.” In Gethsemane, Jesus went “a little farther” into prayer to surrender His will. You must do the same. This is The First 10—the first ten minutes of your day dedicated to the Lord before you touch your phone or the world’s distractions.

01-03 Silence & surrender

Enter the Garden. Quiet your mind and explicitly pray. Give up your agenda:

“Not my will, but Yours be done today.”

04-07 Abiding in the Word

Open the Word. Don’t read for a “lesson” to give someone else; read to hear the voice of your Father.

Read slowly. Listen and respond.

08-10 Intercession

Pray specifically for your wife’s heart, her fears, and her day. Don’t pray about her, pray for her. Ask God how you can love her as He loves the Church.

Pray for her by name.

Leave your phone in the other room. This time is for heart-to-heart intimacy with the One who empowers you to lead.

05 / REFLECTION

A heart audit

01

Am I putting my wife in charge of my happiness and emotional stability?

02

Is there a “crack” in my marriage—pornography, an emotional affair, or secret selfishness—that I need to confess?

03

Am I spending more time on my “missions” than I am preparing my heart in the Handbook?

04

When I feel neglected, do I take that loneliness to Jesus or do I take it out on my wife?

A prayer to begin again

Heavenly Father, thank You for the revelation of the Garden. I admit I have tried to lead my home without first following You. Forgive me for my selfishness and for the pressure I've placed on my wife to be my source of joy. Give me "right-mindedness" today. Give me the strength to go a little farther in prayer, to give up my will for Yours, and the grace to love my wife as Christ loves the Church. Teach me to be a son first, so I can be the husband You've called me to be. In Jesus' name, amen.

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Your “no” needs to be as loud as your “yes.”

YOUR NEXT STEP

Begin with the next morning

For the next seven days, practice The First 10. After you pray, choose one small act of attention toward your wife. Ask about her day. Listen without preparing your defense. Follow through on something you said you would do.

Restoring trust takes time, especially where it has been broken. Keep telling the truth and taking responsibility. Let steady, humble actions speak over time.

ONE QUESTION TO CARRY WITH YOU

How will following Jesus shape the way I love my wife today?

I would love to hear from you. Reply to the email that brought you this guide and tell me one thing you are praying for in your marriage.

With you in the journey,

Paul Harris

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