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GrowInGrace Marriage Newsletter

Issue No. 9



Life Lessons I'm Learning by Laurie

Do I Boo You?!

Do I "BOO!" Aaron? I hate to admit it, but yes I do. Not in the literal sense, but figuratively, I do every time I roll my eyes, or respond in a sarcastic manner. Everytime I interrupt him, or sound frustrated when he is asking me something ... even if he has asked me the same thing multiple times, and I am giving him the same answer ... again. You're probably thinking, "Wow Laurie, I can't believe you treat Aaron that way!". But truth be told, if we humble ourselves and examine our hearts before the Lord, you know that you do the same thing, or something similar, to your spouse.

As many of you know who read our monthly newsletter, we just lead a retreat called Vertical Marriage. In the third session called "To Cheer and To Cherish", Ann and Dave Wilson share about a time when during a speaking engagement, Dave shared that when he and Ann first met, she cheered him, but after a while, after they were married, she started to "BOO!" him with her constant criticism that she thought was "helping him". Because Dave shared this, Ann started looking at how she responded to Dave. She started **acknowledging things he did** and was much **more supportive**. He felt more confident knowing she believed in him. **She spoke life into him**. There are so many details to this, and I am barely scratching the surface of what they shared or the detail that Ann decided to write about in her book "How to Speak Life To Your Husband When All You Want To Do Is Yell At Him!!" (great book, get a copy!)

Study your spouse, learn what they need to be encouraged or what frustrates them. Early in our marriage, I asked Aaron questions about his job, and over the years, I have learned a lot about IT support. He is amazed at times, that I remember as much about his job as I do. I know it's important to have someone to be our sounding board and I have taken on that roll, and if you ask him, Aaron will tell you that it has helped him immensely in his job as a manager.

Do I always do it right? No. But am I trying? Yes! God has given wives the ability to take their husband from being *Clark Kent* to *Superman* with our words and actions ... but most of all by our prayers.

"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." .. The prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results." Jam. 5:16 NLT

Check out **Wifely Wisdom** for more on this thought

I want to close with..... Go Aaron! Go Aaron!!



Featured Podcast

- Fierce Marriage -

Ryan & Selena Frederick

The Unstoppable Power of a Grace Filled Marriage

[<listen to podcast>](#) .. (July 2, 2025) [transcript](#)

**The most important
marker of every
marriage is GRACE**

*Marriage is the union of two imperfect people, **held together** by grace. Today, we reflect on the grace we've received—and the grace we're called to extend in love and forgiveness. I don't know that we can realize this side of heaven how much we've been forgiven. But shouldn't that prompt us to be even more grateful, even more willing to stay in the ring with each other?*

Grace & Gratefulness are foundational aspects of a Christian marriage... we know GRACE because of Christ, which enables us to extend grace to our spouse.

A grace-filled marriage means that you are fighting the same enemy. You're not fighting against each other. You're fighting back the darkness, shoulder to shoulder. And a grace-filled marriage means you have the same Savior. So you're fighting the same enemy.

THINK ABOUT IT – DISCUSS IT – APPLY IT

- 1.) If a Christian marriage is based on our promise & commitment [covenantal], why is it so easy to fall into the tit-for-tat contractual mentality?
- 2.) When our spouse gets on our nerves, how could remembering their value in Christ change our perspective?
- 3.) **TIP TO DIFFUSE CONFLICT** - say to each other "**We want the same thing**". Instead of facing off, say "**We want a healthy marriage that honors Christ**"

*I'm sorry ...
what did you say?*

Earth to My Wife? Come In, Wife

'I Do Everyday' Family Life® - By Janel Breitenstein (9/3/25)

Ever get that feeling the person in front of you is there-but-not-there?

I'm totally guilty of this. My husband's trying to tell me something and then I hear, "...but you're not paying attention, so ..." Oops. I'm too often multitasking. And it might even be for his sake, but still, I'm not present in the moment he cares about. I might make the right gestures or expressions or noises, but I'm actually being a little duplicitous.

As a culture, we don't do *presence* well.

What stands in the way? It's usually psychological noise of some kind:

- Our own agendas and desires (to feel valuable or heard; to have control, approval, security)
- Our distraction (by fatigue, multi-tasking schedules, our own keenly felt needs and hunger for care)
- Technology
- Our tendency to lapse into what's comfortable for us rather than what the other person needs

Unfortunately, it results in emotional hunger all around us. Because *presence* is a precious form of love. Presence is taking out my mental earbuds so whoever's in front of me gets 100% of my mental pie graph (or at least a good 98%).

I think of the God who wasn't content with never being seen, never touching, with a lack of nitty-gritty engagement: "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood" (John 1:14, MSG).

Sometimes this means asking our spouses for answers we may already know. God models this for me. I think of Him in the Garden of Eden: "Where are you?"

I believe God asks questions not for information. He's asking to connect. To welcome. To allow expression. Desire. Interpretation. Co-journeying.

We can ask questions like, "What was that like?" or "What were you hoping for?"

We can make a distinctive effort to forsake putting on with our spouse: I need to be a good spouse. I want to talk about what's important to me. Gotta make sure we talk about this.

Take a beat to put down whatever's in your brain's hands (or your real ones). Right there, endeavor to fully receive your spouse. To act as Jesus to them, our God-in-the-Mess, who came fully into our world.

Be all there.

Is your family getting your whole-hearted attention? Maybe it's time to "[Put Down Your Smartphone.](#)"

The Good Stuff: "Let love be genuine." ([Romans 12:9](#))

Action Points: Which of the bullet points above are most likely to sap your presence from your spouse? Ask God to tap you on the shoulder when you're not fully present with your spouse (or other people).

Wifely Wisdom

- *If you don't pray for your husband, who will? Certainly Satan is not going to encourage you to do so.*
- *Set a **daily reminder** on your smart device to pray for your man.*
- *I set a 2pm daily reminder to pray for Aaron a while ago for something on his work calendar and it still reminds me every day.*



Couples Corner

Send us your
prayer requests

We're in your corner
praying for your marriage!



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Now We're Growing!

Lessons From the Garden - by Aaron Eckard

This year we started a bunch of basil from seed. It was awesome. I documented the process with photos and even posted it on a blog at work to show others how cool it was ... but there were a few of the plants that never found a place in the garden. I never dedicated the space for them, never removed them from the pot, I never provided the opportunity that was needed for growth.

Laurie has been harvesting basil throughout the Summer, making delicious batches of pesto, but not from these poor plants. They sat neglected, begging for the opportunity to take root.

I'm reminded of how I can treat her at times ... not giving her what she needs to thrive. Dormant. Unable to produce a crop that's 100-fold or 10-fold, safely kept, but put away into storage . Kind of like the talents that were entrusted to the servants. Some gave their master back more than they were given because they knew how to invest, rather than burying it or keeping it in their back pocket.

Jesus entrusted my wife into my care expecting me to invest in her and return to Him a precious treasure, way beyond her value than when we first met.

Am I being faithful to God with all that He has entrusted to me? It may be too late for my basil plants, but it's never too late to invest in my wife..

- Aaron

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You have heard it said "Couples that pray together stay together" .. but I say "Couples that pray together go from surviving to thriving" 💖 - AE

I Want What You've Got - The McCabe Life

I recently saw a photo of my grandparents on their 50th anniversary, looking at each other like newlyweds, and asked myself ...

"Why did marriage seem easier for them?"

(Spoiler: It actually *wasn't* easier.)

But here's what they had that we don't:

- * No phones at dinner
- * No Netflix instead of conversation
- * No social media showing "perfect" couples
- * No 24/7 work emails

- Terry & Katie McCabe "The McCabe Life" [web](#) [Instagram](#)

Love in Action!

How to Keep a Marriage Thriving :

- * *Communicate a lot*
- * *Be honest and faithful*
- * *Be there for one another*
- * *Leave the past in the past*
- * *Know that arguments are normal*
- * *Be intentional at making intimacy a priority part of your marriage*
- * *Appreciate one another*
- * *Become and stay best friends*
- * *Forgive quickly*
- * *Touch ... a lot* 💖



Those Three Little Words

'I Do Everyday' Family Life ® - By Tom Davis (9/14/25)

There are three little words I say to my wife that always elicit an energized response: **Let's go out.**

This simple phrase means more than we don't have to cook or clean up. It's a marital sticky note that tells our spouse, "You're still the one I want."

Because a successful marriage is falling in love over and over.

But I haven't always been great in this area. I used to think the purpose of dating was to woo someone. It took a bit of error on my part (and maybe some frustration on my wife's part), but I've learned that long talks into the night and bouquets of flowers "just because" go a long way in showing my wife she's still got it.

**"Let's go out" means more than
'we don't have to cook or clean up'.
It tells our spouse,
"You're still the one I want."**

When she's not wondering about my love for her, we're both happier, both communicating better. (Doesn't hurt in the bedroom, either.)

Dating doesn't have to be complicated (you could probably call off the serenading mariachis), expensive (for us, mini-golf is right up there with a trip to the symphony), or elaborate (it's probably more important I just show up with my whole self, undistracted). But it does take planning and prep (childcare swap, anyone?).

Wanting to take date night a little deeper? Sometimes I like to go with one or two questions in my back pocket, to get us talking about what matters to us, such as:

*What's one thing I do that makes you feel really respected, loved, or connected?
What's one of your best memories of us together?
What kind of activity makes you feel closest to God?
What do you pray about (or for) most often?
What job(s) could you do that wouldn't feel like work?
What do you like—or are most grateful for—about the way God made you?
What's one way I could be more of the person I want to be?
We have a few ground rules: Don't have conversations about finances, household responsibilities, or kid stuff.*

It's amazing what three little words have meant to our marriage.

[Read on for "10 Surprising Ways to Increase Romance."](#)

The Good Stuff: And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. ([Hebrews 10:24](#))

Action Points: Sit down together and plan a month's worth of date nights. Put suggestions in a jar to pick out places to go. Perhaps a lunch date works out better if the kids are in school. Or put together a baby sitters club to watch each other's children while on a date.

✉ Receive the 'I Do Everyday' email daily <[link](#)>

If the last time you
told your wife

"I love you"

was on your
wedding day ..

It may be time to add it
to your vocabulary ❤️



- Husband Hack -

- Can I get me a Reese Cup here?
- What's chocolate without peanut butter? Crackers without cheese? Ying without Yang?
- Be the **polar opposite** of your wife's efforts today. If she made dinner, do the dishes. If she did the shopping, fill her car with gas. If she cleaned the house, pick up your socks and put your shoes away.

- Balance is Beautiful!