



2025 | Week 5

Small But Goes A Long Way

Blog Contributors:

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There are simple acts that we used to share with our spouses, but eventually, over time, they no longer exist. We often underestimate their impact on our relationship as we get distracted along the way. We realize how important these acts were when we face circumstances and suddenly realize we miss them or that things could have been better if we had maintained them.

This week, let's remind ourselves of those simple acts that could impact our marriage. We'll take the path of understanding by analyzing why we disregarded these actions and conduct a heart check to explore why we might find it difficult to do them again.

DAY 1

Whether you've been married for quite a while or are in the very early stages, you will certainly think of the small gestures or actions your spouse does that quickly communicate love and reassurance of partnership. Whether it's a quick hug, a kiss, or gently holding hands, these small gestures steal a few moments of our attention from our usual life routine.

For those still in the early stages of marriage, you might be enjoying these small gestures today. Yet for those who've been married for a while, we may no longer

appreciate these gestures as we once did. They may still exist, but perhaps with much less frequency, and their impact might not feel as significant as before. Reflecting on this, there may still be a part of our hearts that misses those small gestures and their reminders of love and companionship. The saddest situation is finding ourselves numb to any feelings or memories at all.

This week, we're not aiming to identify our spouse's shortcomings, but rather to focus on understanding that could lead to genuine realization. Instead, we'll start nurturing those small gestures that help sustain our marital relationship. Let's begin by remembering those gestures and listing them. Create three columns: in the first column, list the small gestures that you and your spouse do that communicate love and companionship. It's not very often that we take the time to remember or appreciate these gestures, so as we make our list, let it also be a moment of gratitude for our spouse.

Now, we'll take a path of realization. This exercise is not about being critical, but rather about understanding ourselves, our spouses, and the current season of our marriages. In the second column, list the reasons that negatively affect those beautiful small gestures; identify what typically interferes with our communication of love and companionship through these actions. Finally, in the third column, write down things you can do to prevent losing those small acts of love and companionship. This exercise may be a bit challenging when the marriage is facing difficulties. Yet sometimes, a simple exercise like this not only provides a much-needed break but can also shine a light on aspects we often neglect or take for granted.

It takes a lot of humility to be honest and genuinely check our hearts and minds in matters like this. However, there are instances in life that require us to assess the "bad" or "unpleasant" moments to better understand ourselves and develop healthy self-awareness. Acknowledging that we may need to make radical changes in ourselves and our marriage is crucial.

It's not natural for us (humans) to be humble and willingly assess our shortcomings. When circumstances challenge us, we quickly defend and rationalize our actions. It's rare and difficult for us to pause, practice healthy self-awareness, and intentionally strive for

understanding. If we find ourselves struggling with this and not taking action, we risk developing thick calluses that lead to a heart of stone—one that no longer appreciates small gestures of love. In that case, we must take a serious pause and remind ourselves of the need for God to work on our hearts and deliver us from this callousness, as only He can genuinely change our hearts.

“Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. ” (Deuteronomy 30:6)

Keep Journeying with Christ!

Your Fellow Couple,

Rey & Annie

DAY 2

Yesterday, we took some time to recognize the simple actions and gestures that we often ignore. Little did we know that these simple acts could help nurture our marital relationship. Sadly, realization doesn’t always come during the seasons when everything is working smoothly or when we’re receiving those simple acts generously. Realization often starts when we notice that these gestures are slowly slipping away. The scary part is when we realize their importance while simultaneously facing challenges or heavy hesitations in bringing them back.

We hope that yesterday’s suggested exercise led many to a deep reflection on understanding themselves, their spouses, and the current season in their marriage. Writing these thoughts down and analyzing them not only provides understanding but also an opportunity for deeper heart checks. Because of its very personal nature, we can be honest with ourselves. When we start assessing the changes we need to make to revive the exciting, simple loving gestures in our marriage, we’ll often recognize that we need help.

The truth is, it’s not “all the time” that there is the willingness and generosity to express love and reaffirm

companionship. We live in an imperfect world (a broken one), and there are instances when we succumb to the weaknesses of our flesh, leading us into unpleasant situations with our spouses. If we’re not accustomed to having constant, deep conversations with our partners, processing unpleasant instances that poke at our hearts and create doubts in our minds can be very challenging. Even the simplest issues that could have been prevented can feel overwhelming. Heated discussions often arise, and sometimes the pain becomes the primary means of communication. Collective incidents like this truly affect the simple loving gestures that couples normally share. Losing such gestures impacts love and confidence within the partnership.

When our hearts are heavily burdened by unprocessed pains or the disregarded need for affection caused by too much familiarity, we have a choice: to pause and make radical changes. The most common misconception is jumping immediately to making those radical changes without first seeking understanding. It’s disheartening to witness how avoidance of accepting shortcomings can lead to twisting God’s words, directing attention to verses like Isaiah 43:18-19 and Philippians 3:13, which suggest forgetting the past. Yet, when we consider the entirety of these chapters, the background of the stories, and the author’s intentions, we can see the misconceptions surrounding these messages. God commands us to confess our sins and repent (1 John 1:9; Matthew 4:17; Ezekiel 18:30-31; Proverbs 28:13; John 20:19-24). We cannot genuinely confess our sins if we don’t first understand what “sin” is. We won’t be able to determine the path to repentance if we do not understand the current sinful path we are on. Amidst all our efforts to understand, we recognize our great need for a Savior and guidance as we undergo the process of sanctification toward deliverance. This begins when we restore our relationship with God through Jesus Christ and exercise the power and influence of the Holy Spirit.

In the end, our generosity to communicate love and affirm our partnership with our spouse can only be achieved if we are filled with love and confidence through Jesus Christ. We can’t give something that we don’t possess. You might be surprised how this perspective leads you to be grateful even amidst trials and challenging situations. In such moments, you will still find the generosity in your heart to express love for your

spouse because God shows how blessed you are to have a life partner.

'in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil. ' 1 Thessalonians 5:18-22

Keep Journeying with Christ!

Your Fellow Couple,

Rey & Annie

DAY 3 | For Husbands

Like many couples, Annie and I face days when we struggle to share small gestures of love and instead replace them with evident disappointment (or worse, anger). Sadly, it's only the two of us who witness this sudden shift in mood in our household. Our children see it, too, and since they've known us, they can tell when the atmosphere at home is not well.

It's only through our relationship with Christ that we have recognized the impact of these unpleasant practices, and to this day, we still have room to grow. We are thankful for His grace, which allows us to learn how to handle these situations—not just brush them off as we used to. Instead, we converse and give each other time to express our thoughts and feelings, and most importantly, we pray together. Even when it's difficult to end a certain conversation in prayer, we still choose to do so. Our commitment to loving each other and loving Jesus Christ serves as a constant reminder that we both need to come to His feet for help and guidance.

When circumstances remind us of how far our marriage has come, God's grace humbles us by showing that we still have room to grow. Our ongoing conversations and reflections on God's word help us understand, support, and determine how to respond to each other, particularly when we are triggered and find it challenging to be loving. Annie and I have very different personalities, which affect how we deal with things. It is only by God's

grace that we find ourselves growing in unity and being reminded to appreciate our differences.

For instance, we were in the restaurant and waiting for our meal, I shared a simple business idea with her. She got so excited that even before our food was served, she created a five-year plan for a business idea that was new to me. Her passion turned that sharing of ideas into some pressure on my end. Sometimes, Annie's creativity moves so fast that I feel the need to think things through is swept away. On the other hand, I appreciate our differences because they challenge me to be more mindful of myself.

It's not always that our minds and hearts respond properly to the "triggers" that challenge us to be generous with small gestures of love toward our spouses. Many times, the responsibilities of our roles put significant pressure on us. Today, I can't imagine navigating life without Jesus Christ. In every moment when I find myself challenged by the brokenness of this world, my own weaknesses, and temptations to be unkind and unloving to my wife, I lean on Christ for courage and guidance. Life with Jesus Christ is a continual journey of reliance and dependence on Him.

On our last movie night, our family watched the movie "The Forge." It was a deeply faith-based film and ideal for families. There's a line that struck me: "Be a fountain, not a drain." It reminded me to be more giving, understanding, and a blessing to others, rather than being someone who takes everything for granted. This also reminded me of Mark 9:35, where Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

Many times, we may overlook the impact of small gestures or habits that make our wives feel loved. Yet these small gestures are equally impactful and serve as ways to care for them. God created us to serve, just as Jesus Christ did. This command should also be consistently practiced in our households and toward our wives. Even when we face over-familiarity, we must remind ourselves that we're not doing this simply because it's another checkmark on our list, but because there is a genuine recognition of our need for constant guidance from the One who can change our hearts and minds—Jesus Christ. Our connection with Him is our

foundation, which is why we can be more loving, patient, and understanding toward our wives. The power and influence of the Holy Spirit continuously fill our love tank, enabling us to share love.

This life journey alongside a spouse who is our direct opposite can only be united through the moment-by-moment guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Keep journeying with Christ Jesus.

Your Fellow Husband,

Rey

DAY 4 | For Wives

One of the very strong ways that can cause us to lose our attention and appreciation for the sincere, simple love gestures of our husbands is the game of “comparison.”

Today’s generation is highly influenced by social media. If we’re not careful, we’ll find ourselves drowning in narratives that are no longer helpful to us. Relating this to this week’s topic, we’ve seen many who boldly share the simple gestures they perform for their spouses. There’s nothing wrong with this. It can serve as encouragement or a great reminder for us to do our part as well. However, when our identity and our marital relationship are not anchored in Christ, Satan’s temptation can bring insecurities, leading us to confusion, and we can no longer determine that we are highly influenced by worldly standards. The next thing we know, sincerity is no longer there; instead, it has turned into merely releasing content that aligns with others in the world of social media.

Before committing our marriage to Christ, I remember many instances when I viewed Rey in comparison to what this world dictates as an “ideal life partner.” This changed when we committed ourselves and our marriage to Christ. I thought we were done with those comparisons, but I became aware of how much time I was spending on social media. The enjoyable content that is quite easy to browse began to creep into my mind, influencing my heart to the point that I neglected Rey’s many simple gestures of love. Thank God for His convictions; I am

reminded to make necessary changes to how I manage my exposure to social media while still being grounded in the beautiful things that God has been doing in our marriage.

We can’t deny that we are living in a very “loud” generation. We underestimate the power of its influence because we only view it on our small handheld screens. Little do we know that Satan’s temptation is powerfully speaking, and we can only be fully aware of this if we keep ourselves grounded in God’s truths and the influence of the Holy Spirit.

I know this may sound cliché, and if you’ve been following our blog posts for quite a while, you may be thinking of how many times we have pointed out the importance of being anchored in Christ and God’s truths. We can’t disregard the new technologies in our generation today, but God has given us the wisdom to rule over these things and not be negatively influenced by those who are displeasing to Him. It is my daily communion with God and grounding myself in His Word that helps me go through my day anchored in Him. As I devote myself daily to reflecting and desiring His presence, I am filled with His love, grace, and mercy. Even in moments when I know I’ve fallen short, God’s love is very comforting and turns my troubled heart to heal and be generous in passing on such love.

As we continue to live in this generation filled with so many means of communicating various standards and perspectives that are no longer pleasing to God, we can still stand firm by keeping ourselves grounded in spiritual habits. Don’t let these entertaining narratives influence how we view our husbands and their sincere ways of expressing love through small gestures. You’ll be surprised when the day comes that your contentment in Christ also brings contentment in the relationship with your husband. In that moment, whatever he does will communicate love and affirmation of your partnership in this life.

'But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. ' 1 Timothy 6:6

Keep journeying with Christ!

Your Fellow Wife,

DAY 5

A study conducted by researchers at Penn State University [1] found that small, non-romantic gestures topped the list of what makes people feel loved. Meanwhile, controlling behaviors—such as someone wanting to know where you are at all times—were seen as the least loving. The study also noted that the majority agrees you don’t need grand gestures to show your partner love. The team found that small gestures, such as hugging, holding hands, and regular acts of kindness, top the list of how most Americans feel loved and appreciated.

We couldn’t agree more with the findings of this research, particularly those of us who are married and have experienced firsthand how these small gestures are very helpful in nurturing our marital relationships. There are countless such gestures, and the internet is filled with many ideas that we can still explore and experience. Licensed therapist and author, Terry Gaspard, shared five ways to make small gestures count in marriage via the Gottman Institute Blog [2]. They are:

1. Look for ways to show love with small gestures, like writing an endearing and charming love note for your spouse, holding their hand, or giving a simple hug.
2. Create daily rituals of connection, like having a stress-reducing 15-20 minute conversation with your spouse.
3. Make a habit of using kind and polite words, such as please, sorry, and thank you. As Dr. Gottman said, apologizing and taking responsibility is an antidote to defensiveness, which is one of four negative behaviors that consistently lower the quality of relationships.
4. Take action and offer support to your partner, such as helping them complete tasks, run errands, or finish projects.
5. Remember the saying, “Actions speak louder than words,” which is often heard but challenging to put into practice. The Penn State University research team discovered that actions indeed speak louder than words. “We found that behavioral actions—rather than purely

verbal expressions—triggered more consensus as indicators of love.”

Giving our partner the gift of love and appreciation in small ways every day will surely have a significant impact on marriage. If we understand God’s design and purpose in marriage, our commitment to these small gestures goes deeper, becoming significant contributors to the foundation of our marriage, which by God’s grace can withstand the challenges that continuously pressure the wonderful blessing of marriage.

After this week’s discussion about these small gestures, how will you improve the habits of “small gestures” toward your spouse?

Your Fellow Couple,

Rey & Annie

NOTES

[1] *Love actually: Americans agree on what makes people “feel the love”* | Penn State University. (n.d.).

<https://www.psu.edu/news/research/story/love-actually-americans-agree-what-makes-people-feel-love>

[2] Gaspard, T. (2024, June 24). *5 ways to make small gestures count in your marriage*. The Gottman Institute. <https://www.gottman.com/blog/5-ways-make-small-gestures-count-marriage/>



Let's embark on a comprehensive learning experience with this week's topic by following the **D.R.A.S.H. - 5 Steps of Learning Method!**

Step 1 | Discover the Truth

- From the shared Biblical truths, perspectives from experts, and testimonies, what struck you most about being intentional in sharing small gestures of love with your spouse?

Step 2 | Reflect and Meditate on the Truth

- How does this week's topic relate to your current season in marriage?

Step 3 | Apply the Truth

- After this week's discussion about these small gestures, how will you improve the habits of "small gestures" toward your spouse?

Step 4 | Share

- Using a storytelling concept, compose a short story about how you will share the truths you discovered in this week's topic with your spouse or other married individuals journeying with you. You may want to consider a 1-minute or 5-minute storytelling technique.
- You can use the following guiding questions in your composition:
 1. What truths did you discover and reflect on in this week's topic?

2. How are these truths and reflections related to yourself and your current marital status?
3. What actions do you plan to take in the coming days that relate to this week's learning?

Step 5 | Help in Navigating the Truth

- Besides your spouse, identify another person (or member/s of your small group) who will journey alongside you as you take intentional actions based on this week's learning. Consider what additional help you may need, such as further discussion or a regular prayer partner.

We pray that you encounter God through this week's topic. May His grace turn your learning experience into a transformative journey, leading to testimonies of breakthroughs that further strengthen your walk with Christ Jesus!

Let us know how this guide has helped you!

May this study tool be effective and helpful for every fellow seeker and believer who is intentionally journeying with Jesus Christ. We would be grateful to hear how this tool has significantly impacted your journey and your relationships with your spouse and others. Please share your feedback or experiences through this [link](#) (or scan QR Code)



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