

The Power of a
PRAYING[®]
Husband

STORMIE
OMARTIAN



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All the stories related in this book are true, but most of the names have been changed to protect the privacy of the people mentioned.

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CHAPTER ONE

Her Husband

Once saw a football game where the home team was losing and there were less than 15 seconds left in the game. They needed a touchdown to win, but everything was against them making a score in that amount of time. The game appeared to be over, and the opposing team and fans were already celebrating. Some people were even leaving the stadium. But the losing team and coach didn't give up or let their morale fall. Instead they pulled an unlikely play out of their book, and through the most astonishing sequence of events, the home team made a winning touchdown in the last few seconds of the game. It was so amazing that news reports of it even referred to it as a miracle.

Your marriage is like that football game. You and your wife are a team. And she wants the security of knowing that when things are tough and down to the wire—even when the enemy is already celebrating your demise and all appears to be lost—you have the faith to believe that up to the very last second everything can turn around. She needs the assurance you have a play in your pocket that can take you down the field with the ball for a possible winning score. She wants you to trust that with God nothing is impossible, and because of that you will never give up hoping for the impossible to happen.

When your wife knows you are praying, she is confident of all of these things.

In my survey of wives, 85 percent of them said the most important prayer their husband could pray was that he would become the

man, husband, and head of the home God wanted him to be. This is the most important place for a man to begin praying.

“That Your Prayers May Not Be Hindered”

The good thing about prayer—or the problem with prayer, depending on your perspective—is that we have to go to God to do it. This means we can’t get away with anything. It means that any negative thoughts, bad attitudes, hardness of heart, or selfish motives are going to be revealed by the Lord. Fervent and honest prayer causes the depths of our hearts to be exposed. That can be uncomfortable. Even downright miserable.

If there is one thing I have learned about prayer, it’s that if we have any unforgiveness, bitterness, selfishness, pride, anger, irritation, or resentment in our hearts, our prayers will not be answered. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear” (Psalm 66:18). Our hearts have to be right when we pray. We all—men and women alike—jeopardize our own prayers when we don’t pray them from a right heart.

What is in our hearts when we pray has more effect on whether our prayers are answered than the actual prayer itself. That’s why, when we come before Him to pray, God asks us to first confess anything in our hearts that shouldn’t be there. He does that so nothing will separate us from Him.

The Bible says, “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them *with understanding*, giving *honor* to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being *heirs together* of the grace of life, that your *prayers may not be hindered*” (1 Peter 3:7).

Part of dwelling with your wife *with understanding* means recognizing that your wife is in need of your covering, protection, and love. And because you are *heirs together* of God’s grace, you need to *honor* her in your thoughts, words, and actions. When you don’t, your *prayers are hindered*. This means *all* of your prayers, not just those for your wife. Many men have not seen answers to their

prayers because they have not learned this key step. One of the best ways to honor your wife is to pray for her from a heart that is clean before God.

Ask God to show you whatever you need to see about the condition of your heart. You may have the perfect marriage and be sublimely happy, and still be less than what God wants in your attitude toward your wife. Whatever He reveals, confess it to Him. Once we confess our less-than-perfect attitudes to the Lord, He helps us get beyond them. You'll find that the most difficult part about being a praying husband will not be the amount of time it takes to pray for your wife—rather, it will be praying with a heart that's right before God. That's why praying for your wife must begin with praying for yourself.

Don't worry, God taught this same principle to the praying wives. Many women told me that it was at this point in the chapter they threw the book across the room and said, "Forget it! I'm not doing that!" Of course the Holy Spirit wouldn't let them get away with that for long, and so they eventually picked the book back up and kept reading. So if you would like to throw this book across the room and say, "Forget it! I'm not doing that!" this would be a good time to do it. I know you'll pick it back up again, because you're going to get awfully tired of your prayers not being answered.

It Takes Two to Make One

When God created Adam, in spite of all the greatness that was in him, God knew he still needed a companion, a helpmate who would fit with him, be a complement to him, and complete him (Genesis 2:18). So He created Eve. In spite of all the greatness that is in you, dear brother, God made your wife to be a complement to you and make you complete. You do the same for her.

God says that when you and your wife were married you became one flesh (Genesis 2:24). Isn't it amazing that we were created to be one with our mates? That feels possible when we start out. There is

the *anticipation* of oneness in that first moment when you sense you were destined to be more than friends. There is the *sense* of oneness in the courtship. The *promise* of oneness in the engagement period. The *declaration* of oneness in the wedding vows. The *thrill* of oneness on the honeymoon. The *excitement* of oneness as a home is established. Then somewhere along the way, the oneness gets eroded by a subtle separateness.

How does that happen?

The answer is the world, the flesh, and the devil. The world creeps in, along with raising children, pursuing careers, and dealing with the busyness of life. We begin to find more fascination or distraction in *it* than we do in our mates. Our flesh takes over when we decide to be self-centered instead of self-sacrificing. Then there is Satan.

God created marriage at the beginning. Satan has been trying to destroy it ever since. You and your wife are created in God's image (Genesis 1:27). Satan wants to make you over into *his*. Satan doesn't want your marriage to succeed and has in fact set up a plan for its destruction. He is even now making plans to destroy your marriage. But you, my precious brother, have been given the power and authority to put a stop to this through your prayers. When you pray for your wife, it keeps the world at bay, it transforms selfish hearts, and it derails the devil's plans. If God has asked you to pray for your enemies, how much more does He want you to pray for the person you are supposed to love and with whom you have become one? But first you have to pray for *yourself*.

Five Ways to Be the Husband God Wants You to Be

In the Bible, God commands, "All of you be of *one mind*, having *compassion* for one another; *love* as brothers, be *tenderhearted*, be *courteous*" (1 Peter 3:8). Paying heed to these five directives can change your life and your marriage and make you the man and husband God wants you to be. It's definitely something well worth praying about.

1. Be of One Mind

It's horrible to have strife in a marriage. It makes us miserable. It affects every area of our lives. And it's probably the closest thing to hell we'll ever know on earth. If it goes on long enough, it can destroy everything. Jesus said, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand" (Matthew 12:25). Those are frightening predictions. But prayer is the key by which unity in the marriage relationship can be maintained.

A man and wife cannot live entirely independently of one another without paying a steep price for it. It makes them incomplete. "Neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:11). But because men and women are different, it's quite easy for them to get off onto completely separate paths. Even in the closest of marriages, the two partners are still not joined at the hip. You and your wife may have separate work, interests, and activities, but if you are praying with and for one another regularly, it will keep you in tune and on the same path. Without this unity of mind and spirit that prayer provides, it's too easy to get used to the other one not being there. And if resentment about that creeps into the heart of either one of you, you can begin to hold yourself apart from one another mentally, physically, or emotionally, without even realizing it.

It is especially important to be of the same faith and beliefs. In fact, this is a good place to begin praying. Your entire relationship is compromised if you are not on the same page in this area. For example, going to separate churches, or going to a church where one of you is not happy, or one of you is going to church while the other one consistently does not, all promote a lack of unity.

If you can think of other issues such as this that have caused division between you and your wife, pray specifically about them. Ask God to change your heart where necessary to bring you into unity with your wife. Where your wife's attitude and perspective need to

change, pray for her to be able to change them. Your marriage will be a strong force for good if the two of you are of one mind.

2. Be Compassionate

Have you ever seen your wife suffering, but you don't know what to do about it? Some men become impatient with that. Others feel so at a loss or overwhelmed by it that it causes them to withdraw. If you recognize that happening to you, ask God to give you a heart of compassion. To be compassionate toward your wife is to have a deep sympathy for any area in which she suffers and to have a strong desire to alleviate that suffering.

Part of being compassionate has to do with simply listening. That means being able to listen without having that faraway look in your eyes that says, "I have more important things to do. Let's get this over with quickly." Your wife is not expecting you to fix everything. She just needs to know that you hear her heart and care about how she feels.

In the past my husband would stand still and listen to me for no more than three seconds (I timed this) before he would walk out of the room. If I wanted him to hear a complete sentence, I either had to run after him or finish the sentence the next time I saw him. Even when I did get him to actually sit down and look at me while I was speaking, I still had to ask him to give me some indication that he comprehended what I was saying. Usually I said something like "Blink if you can hear me." When he blinked, it meant so much to know he had heard my voice. Now he has a heart for my struggles, and he listens with care. Those moments of listening and indicating compassion have been healing to our relationship.

Pray that God will give you a heart of compassion toward your wife and the patience to listen to her when she needs you to do so. It's a fine art worth cultivating. It can get you places with her where you've dreamed of being.