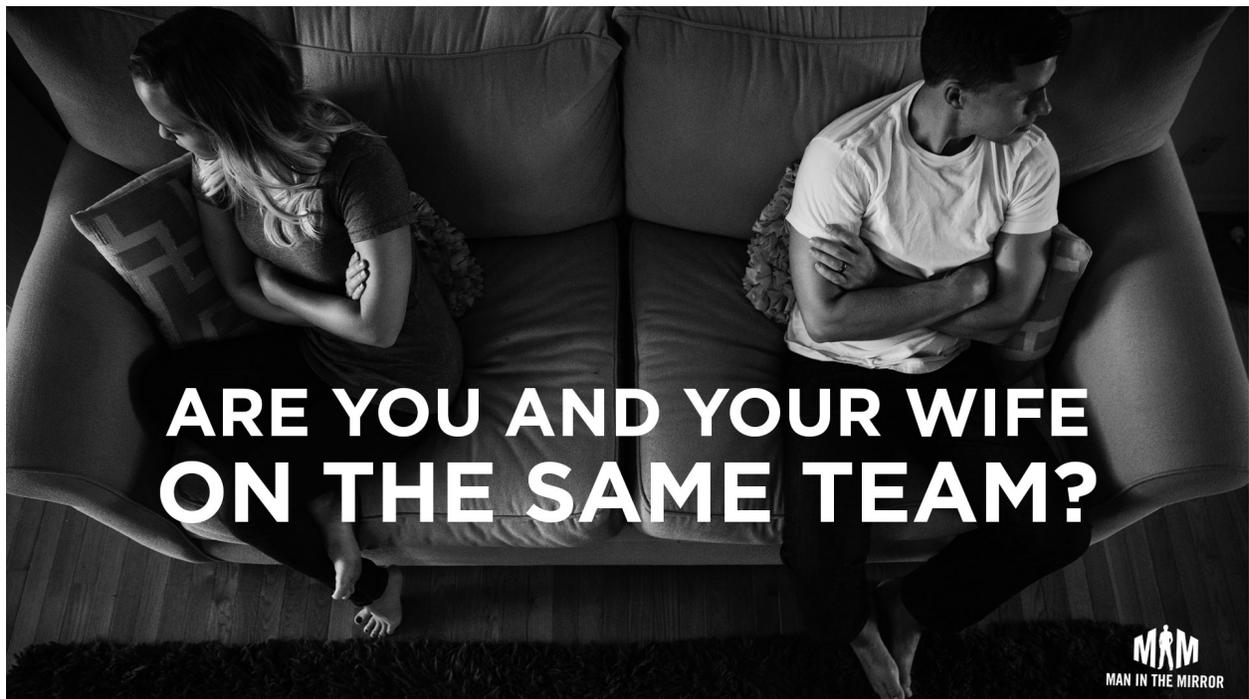


Are You and Your Wife on the Same Team?

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Which best describes your marriage: 1) we're on the same team, or 2) we're competing against each other? This Valentine's Day, here are some tips to get back on, or stay on, the same team—today and in the days ahead, 'til death do you part.



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Yesterday's Super Bowl was a great game. It got me thinking—here's an interesting way to describe football. Football is a game in which both teams use all their skill to deceive the other team to get what they want.

Deception and getting your own way... that can sound a lot like a marriage!

Seriously, are you and your wife both on the same team, or are you like two teams competing against each other?

Getting Back on the Same Team

The Bible describes marriage as the greatest of all human relationships, and there isn't a close second. So which statement best describes your marriage: 1) We're both on the same team, or 2) We're on two teams competing against each other?

No man plans to fail in marriage. No man ever went into a marriage thinking, *I wonder how quickly I can blow this up*. Every man who ever exchanged vows pictured himself heroically [providing for and protecting](#) a woman for whom he would willingly give his life.

Yet easily the number one problem for most men is that their marriages are not working the way God intended.

If you want to get back on the same team as your wife, the starting point is to have a biblical view of a man's primary role in marriage.

Your Primary Role as a Husband

My wife's parents moved to Orlando, and my father-in-law, Ed, and I became weekly lunch buddies and best friends for the last seven years of his life.

Not long after they moved here, my mother-in-law, June, needed to permanently move into the nursing care wing of their retirement community. Ed turned his apartment into a campsite. He slept there but spent as much of every day as he could in his wife's room. For her part, June said, "I just want to be with Ed."

She was his top priority, and because of that, they were best friends. As the shadows of twilight fell across them, the only thing they really wanted was to be together. May I say that again? *As the shadows of twilight fell across them, the only thing they really wanted was to be together.*

Ed's love illustrates the most elegant instruction the Bible offers a man about his role as a husband in [Ephesians 5:25-32](#):

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

The way Jesus loves His bride is the template for how we should love our brides. Notice the exhortation to sacrificially love your bride *just as* (“equal to” or “in the same way”) Jesus loved and gave Himself to His bride, the church (the body of Christ).

If you're married, sacrificial love is your primary role as a husband.

Your wife means everything to Jesus. He held nothing back from her. He sacrificed everything He had to serve her. He was willing to die for her. In short, His bride was His top priority, and that's what Scripture wants us to imitate.

After God, but before all others, make your bride your top priority.

The Marriage Prayer

Imagine: What might happen if you viewed yourself as being on the same team with your wife?

What might happen if every man in your circle of friends or church viewed himself as being on the same team as his wife?

Here's a practical tool to help make that happen. This Valentine's Day, I'm challenging you for the next 21 days to pray The Marriage Prayer—68 words that capture the essence of what the Bible teaches about marriage:

**Father, I said, “Til death do us part.” I want to mean it.
Help me to love You more than her,
and her more than anyone or anything else.
Help me bring her into Your presence today.
Make us one, like You are three-in-one.
I want to hear her, cherish her, and serve her—
so she would love You more and
we can bring You glory. Amen.**

To download a copy of this prayer for you *and* your wife, [click here](#). Print it out and keep it where you will see it daily. Set an alarm on your phone or a reminder on your calendar.

If you're not on the same team with your wife, commit to changing your marriage, with God's help. Pray, seek wisdom from men who are getting it right, and if needed, see a good Christian counselor.

THE BIG IDEA: *After God, but before all others, make your bride your top priority.*

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