



## How To Pray For Your Wife

By John Yates

Once or twice a year I prepare a formal list of items that I pray about all year long on behalf of my wife.

I ask God to show me the major priorities, patterns, and purposes in her life.

It's helpful for me to distinguish between the day-to-day concerns and the more long-term, overarching prayers.

When I am considering my annual list of prayers for Susan, I ask myself questions like these:

- \* What are the concerns that she's most aware of in her life right now?
- \* What are issues of character that she's struggling with?
- \* What other relationships does she have in which she needs God's help now?
- \* What particular responsibilities is she dealing with in which she needs God's help?

I want to think of her life from her point of view.

How is she feeling about herself? How is she feeling about our relationship? How is she feeling about our future? What are her deep longings?

Some of these questions might be best answered by your wife directly, but your goal in preparing a prayer list is to walk in her shoes and seek her needs.

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Content taken directly from **How a Man Prays for His Family** by John Yates. Published by Family Life Publishing.



## Trust Your Kids with Responsibility

By Rick Warren

Kids need experiences that stretch them, reveal their talents, and develop their shape for ministry. They need challenges where they develop responsibility. One of the most important life skills that all of us have to learn is how to be responsible.

How do you teach responsibility to your children? There's only one way. Give them the opportunity. Trust them with responsibility. Will they make mistakes? Absolutely. You did, too, when you were growing up. Will they sometimes be irresponsible? Yes. But if you hold on to responsibility, you're actually hurting your children. The goal of parenting from the moment they're born is to move them from parent control in the early years to self control in the middle years to God's control over their lives.

That means you have to give up control! From the moment they're born, you've got to start working on that. When we take responsibility for people, we take it away from people. If you treat your children as babies and you don't let them grow up, you'll have to diaper them the rest of your life. And, you're filling the world with another co-dependent person.

Many parents have said, "If I had it all to do over again, I'd do less for my children and teach them to do more for themselves." The only way we grow is by being given challenges that stretch us, develop us, and build responsibility in our lives.

The Bible says, "Whoever can be trusted with a little can also be trusted with a lot. If you cannot be trusted with things that belong to someone else, who will give you things of your own?" (Luke 16:10a, 12 NCV)

Kids respond to responsibility. Having talked to many parents over the years and seen this in my own life, I believe that it's far better to err on the side of giving too much responsibility than not trusting your kids enough. They're going to make mistakes either way! Your goal is to produce a person who walks not just under his own self control but also under God's control.

### Talk It Over

What is the difference in what you trust your kids with and what you were trusted with when you were their age?

What about society keeps us from more easily trusting our kids with responsibility?

# Marriage Tip

## Things I Wish I Knew Before We Got Married - Part 1

By Gary Chapman

For a number of years, I have wanted to write a book on preparation for marriage. I really believe that if we can help couples prepare for marriage, then they can be more successful. Let's face it most people spend far more time preparing for their vacation than preparing for their marriage. Perhaps that's why they are more successful in their vacations than in their marriages.

The book, **Things I Wish I'd Known Before We Got Married** is my attempt to help couples get ready for marriage. I looked back on my own life and asked, "What do I know now that I wish I had known then?" I think if someone had told me these things, my marriage would have been much easier. I hope you'll learn from my mistakes.

### 1. Euphoric Feelings

Would it surprise you if I told you that "being in-love is not an adequate foundation for marriage?" It is highly possible

to 'fall in love' with someone you should NOT marry.

Many couples believe that if they are 'in love' then they will always be 'in love'. The reality is that the 'in love euphoria' lasts for an average of two years.

That's why many couples stop dating after two years. They have lost the feelings so why keep dating. In fact, they may have much in common, and be very suited for each other, but because they believe that they must retain those 'in love' feelings they give up on the relationship.

### 2. Parental Patterns

Have you ever heard this saying, "Like Mother like daughter." and "Like Father like son?" There's some truth in both of those statements. We are greatly influenced by our moms and dads.

If you are seriously dating someone, I encourage you to spend time with his or her parents. What you see in his dad is likely what you will see in him ten years from now.

Does that mean we are destined to be like our parents? No, but it does mean that if we want to be

different, now is the time to work on it.

Let's identify the strengths and weaknesses of our parents before we get married and then ask: What do I want to change? And, what steps can I take to make sure I don't duplicate the things I dislike?

### 3. Disagreements

One of the things I wish I'd known is how to solve disagreements without arguing.

Karolyn and I had no plan for handling conflicts. So, we spent a lot of time arguing. Arguments always lead downhill. Conflicts are not a sign you have married the wrong person. They simply affirm that you are human.

The key to solving disagreements is to become an empathetic listener. Try to see the world through the other person's eyes. Respect their thoughts and feelings even if you don't agree. "I think I can understand what you are saying, and it makes a lot of sense." Now, you are not an enemy but a friend who understands. Now you can look for a solution that will be good for both of you.

### 4. Apologies

After spending a lifetime counseling other couples, I am convinced that there are no healthy marriages without apology and forgiveness. Apologizing is a sign of maturity. And, forgiveness is a godly response to a sincere apology.

However, what one person considers an apology is not what another person considers an apology. He says, "I'm Sorry," and she is thinking, "You certainly are. Is there anything else you would like to say?" He thinks he has apologized and she is waiting for him to apologize. I have discovered that there are five ways in which people apologize in this country. Learning the apology language of the other person can make it much easier for them to forgive you.

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