

What Wives Wish Husbands Knew
Session 9—Time In a Bottle
“I Wish You Knew How Important Our Time Together Is”

If you don't act like it...how would anyone know? “How would anyone know what?” How would anyone know anything about you if you don't **do something** to show it? It's true about the kind of automobile you prefer, it's true about the foods you enjoy, the music you prefer, your political persuasion, your taste in fashion, your hobbies, your spiritual passion...and it's true about your marriage.

Time In a Bottle

If I could save time in a bottle
The first thing that I'd like to do
Is to save every day 'til eternity passes away
Just to spend them with you

If I could make days last forever
If words could make wishes come true
I'd save every day like a treasure and then again
I would spend them with you

CHORUS:

But there never seems to be enough time
To do the things you want to do once you find them
I've looked around enough to know that
You're the one I want to go through time with

If I had a box just for wishes
And dreams that had never come true
The box would be empty except for the memory
Of how they were answered by you...

Forgive the melodramatics, but I've talked with lots of men who were preceded in death by their wives, and I've never heard a man say, “I wish I'd spent more time at work.” More often than not the regret that men feel is from having spent too little time with their wife, and now having no chance to rectify that. You and I, for now, still have that chance. And I think we ought to take immediate and severe advantage of it.

I'm going to toss several things your way that I believe you can accomplish for your wife if you're willing to invest the appropriate amount of time that being a responsible husband requires...

I. By giving her sufficient amounts of your time you can give her security .

Malachi 2:13-15

Another thing you do: You flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. ¹⁴ You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

¹⁵ Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.

- Marriage is a relational "covenant" between God and *us* as a married couple.
- It's a statement we've made that of all the people on the face of the earth we're promising to do whatever we have to do in order to fulfill the obligations of that covenant.
- If you're married you were probably asked a number of questions about your willingness to honor the marriage covenant.
 - And at some point you were asked this question, or one very similar to it;
 - "Do you so promise?"
- And I know what you said.
 - You said, "I do'.
 - Because if you'd said anything else you wouldn't have gotten married.
- Here's the question...are you taking the time—not finding it, *taking it*, because you'll never find it—to do what you said you'd do?

A. Sufficient time allows you to affirm her.

1. How much power do you think your words carry?

Proverbs 18:21

The tongue has the power of life and death.

QUOTE

"I can live for two months on a good compliment." (Mark Twain)

2. None of us ever gets past our need to know that we're appreciated and that the things we do are appreciated.

B. Sufficient time allows you to be vulnerable, transparent & accountable to her.

Invite her to walk with you through the interior of your life—no holds barred—and that isn't easy.

1. Does she know how you really feel about where you are in life?
2. Does she know that you're concerned about your job?
3. Does she feel like she has equal access to your thoughts, dreams, hopes, fears, insecurities, & etc.?

C. Sufficient time allows you to love her "dark side."

Your wife is a lot like you; she has personality traits that aren't perfect. She may tend toward being moody. She may be controlling. She might tend toward being critical or judgmental. She may have tendencies to be resentful or vengeful. What can we do?

Philippians 2:3-11

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1. We pray for her.
2. We invite her to talk about it.
3. We love her through the process.

D. Sufficient time allows you to listen to her.

1. Does your wife have the privilege of being able to talk to you knowing that you're really listening?
2. Listening is one of the rarest gifts you and I can give our wives.
3. Beware of your body language, don't interrupt, reflect back, make and maintain proper eye contact, ask for some detail and you'll give her a gift she'll treasure for life.

E. Sufficient time allows you to make her your partner.

1 Peter 3:7

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner.

1. Considerate and respectful partners participate in each other's decisions.
2. Considerate and respectful partners don't pull rank or abuse their position.
3. Considerate and respectful partners don't use the hostile takeover maneuver to get their way.
4. Considerate and respectful partners always consider the other person's perspective.
5. Considerate and respectful partners want what's best for each other.

F. Sufficient time allows you to prove that you are a man of integrity.

Psalm 101:2-3

I will be careful to lead a blameless life...

I will walk in my house with blameless heart.

³ I will set before my eyes no vile thing.

1. If you've got problems with dishonesty, exaggeration, lust, pornography, I want you to know I don't think it makes you a bad person...
 - a. I do think you're doing serious damage to yourself and your family.
 - b. If it's a problem for you, would you be willing to call me and give me permission to ask you two things on a regular basis:
 - i. "Have you violated Psalm 101:3" &, following your answer;
 - ii. "Are you lying to me right now?"
2. If you'd rather not use me in that capacity, will you select someone else and resolve this issue?
 - a. I give any of you permission to ask me those questions any time you want to.
 - b. I don't mind giving you access to my life and being held accountable by you men.

G. Sufficient time allows you to provide her with passionate spiritual leadership. (see lesson one)

H. Sufficient time allows you permission to tell her: "I love you."

1. It's nice to hear it—and most of our wives can't hear us say it too much...
2. But it can become a hollow sound to them if we don't prove it...

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What would you say has been the greatest “loving your wife” moment in your marriage?
2. Why would you say it’s been your “greatest moment or victory in loving your wife”?
3. In your opinion what made it “great”?

II. By giving her sufficient amounts of your time you can understand her better.

A. Your wife has a past— sufficient amounts of your time will allow you to understand things about what’s behind that you might not have known.

It’s never going to be finished, and you’ll never figure her out...but you can learn to understand some very important things about her.

All of us has a past. Some of our wives are dragging theirs around like a ball and chain.

1. Family issues.
2. Abuse of all kinds.
3. Indiscretion of all kinds.
4. Bad Faith Syndrome.
5. Infertility.
6. Chronic Illness.

If it’s there...you have to be proactive in learning to understand her and helping her to deal with her past redemptively.

B. Your wife has a present— sufficient amounts of your time will allow you to understand things about what’s happening that you might not appreciate.

The Seasons of Life...

1. Newlywed season—requires patience and great commitment.
2. Motherhood season—needs help, support, appreciation, and value.
 - a. Our culture won’t give it to her because culture doesn’t value motherhood.
 - b. So it’s up to us...

*INFERTILITY

- Mother’s Day is a killer for these ladies...
- Baby showers tear their hearts out...
- Three pregnant ladies leading our worship every Sunday...

3. **Teenage** season—The reason I separated this from motherhood is that very often when it comes to raising teens you feel less like a parent than you do a referee. But there's good news. Teenagers do grow out of it...until then your wife needs you by her side and on her side.
 - a. Teenagers have a strategy...and if you think yours is going to be different I'll be here for you when you discover how absolutely normal your kid is...and they'll try to "divide and conquer" so they can get what they want.
 - b. You need to be a team and present a united front to your kids.
 - c. If you and your wife can't agree about an issue, get alone and figure it out; then deal with the situation in agreement.
 - d. Do not side against your spouse. Do not go behind your spouse's back and tell the kids, "Now don't tell your Mom..."
 - e. If you need counseling to get your marriage on track...then get it...but don't let your kids divide you.

C. Your wife has a future— sufficient amounts of your time will allow you to understand things about what's ahead that you might not have ever considered.

1. Empty nest season—She needs to know that:

- a. ...she's in a marriage that's been built to outlast the children...
- b. ...you love her.
- c. ...you love being with her.
- d. ...you love being with her, and that even though the kids don't need her as they once did, you need her more than you ever did...

2. Menopause season—it's very, very real.

ILLUSTRATION

During menopause a woman's skin begins to lose moisture, weight gain is almost automatic, hormones challenge her every thought, she can't decide if she's hot or cold and her entire existence is throttled with emotional spikes.

James Dobson says he was counseling with a lady during her early days with menopause and she was so confused. Nothing felt right and everything hurt. He asked her, "Do your teeth itch." She ran her tongue across her teeth and said, "You know...I think they do."

You're going to have to be patient, accepting, accommodating and forgiving.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read through the following statements...

- “My wife wishes I knew that my ‘time’ with her is far more important than the ‘things’ I give her.”
 - “Those who are married to their jobs usually wind up unmarried to their wives.”
 - A man’s wife will always need to know that he loves her more than he loves golf, fishing, hunting with his favorite dog, and particularly that he loves her more than he loves his mother. She wants to know that she is loved more than anything else in your life. And it is impossible for a man to prove any of the above without giving massive amounts of his discretionary time to his wife.”
 - “Our couple time is the only time, just don’t tell anyone else, especially the kids.”
 - “Tell your men that it’s not about how much money they earn, how big the house is, or how exotic the cars are, how fast the boats and airplanes are, how big the diamonds are, how expensive the clothes are, or how much she can spend just because she’s bored...it’s about you. She wants you—and that means she wants what you can’t give to her if you give it to anyone else—she wants your time.”
1. Which statement do you identify with most?
 2. Which statement can you take with you today that you believe, if you act on it appropriately, has the power to transform your marriage?
 3. What’s keeping you from doing it?