

Marriage Lessons Learned Too Late

My beloved wife passed away recently and suddenly, only four months after finding out that she had cancer and only two weeks after entering the hospital in what seemed like relatively good health (she was able to walk in on her own, though she was having abdominal pain and was throwing up pretty bad).

One extremely painful yet extremely important lesson I learned the last week of my wife's life was how selfish I had been. Sure, my wife had her failings too but at the end of my wife's life, God was seriously dealing with me, her husband. God used this painful event as a magnifying glass on my own life. God showed me many things about myself that I should have worked on that I really had not taken seriously, things that would have gone a long way towards making my wife feel more special and making her really confident that I loved her. God also showed me that we both looked at our differences as something wrong with the other person, rather than accepting those differences as the unique weaknesses and personality quirks of the other person created in the image of God. I am just thankful that my wife does not need to care about these failings - being present with the Lord - and I know I can be confident that she forgives me even as Christ has forgiven me. I am also so very thankful that God gave me a wonderful opportunity to confess my failings to my wife just before she died and while we were both able to hug each other and tell each other that we loved each other.

Another lesson learned too late came when I was looking for photos to bring and display at the memorial service being held for my wife. I realized that even though I had LOTS of *digital* photos of my wife at all sorts of outings, I had very few decent portraits of her and of the two of us. But what was saddest for me, was that I had never printed out any large photos of her and of us together to hang on the walls of our home. Then it dawned on me that had I taken the time to put some photos of my wife around the house, she would have had at least a few visual reminders of how special she was to me.

And as I sifted through many photos and photo albums of our life together and even of my wife's life before we met, I realized that we both should have gone through our photos a long time ago, to remind us of the many good times we had together. I think it would have been especially helpful for us to revisit our wedding and honeymoon photos on a regular basis and to post more of them around the house.

In addition, I learned too late that there were things my wife wanted me to do regarding our finances that I was afraid to do because of the trust between us that had seriously broken down several years ago and that we didn't seem to know how to rebuild. What I realized - too late - was that if I had only trusted God with our finances and not worried about my wife mishandling the finances, I would have sent a powerful message to my wife, a message telling her that I forgave her for the things she did in the past that caused me to not

trust her.

I also learned that the times I was too busy doing my own things and engaged in my own interests and hobbies was time lost with my wife that I could never regain and never make up for. And because my wife had some serious insecurity issues with me and others - insecurities that I was helping to contribute to - I was sending her a message that she was not first in my life and that my stuff and my time was more important than she was to me. I would justify what I was doing (avoiding my wife), because my wife was being angry and harsh with me. However, a lot of her attitude issues were only compounded by the fact that I was appearing to her - to enjoy being away from her. Talk about a vicious circle! At those times, I was definitely giving her the impression that I was happier being out of her presence. This can only serve to tell a wife that her husband does not like being around her and does not love her, which only increases the anger and anxiety level that the wife is already coping with. It's OK to walk away from a fight and hostility when emotions are running hot, but its not OK to stay away and not OK to avoid resolving problems and reconciling. Of course both parties need to be ready and willing to patch things up.

And Christian men, even if you think you have the worst wife in the world, you have no excuse to complain. God has given you your wife to conform you to Christ, not to make you happy. The very things about your wife that you think she needs to change are the very things God has allowed to be there in her makeup to deal with YOU and your selfish sinful attitude. Those "rough edges" you see in your wife should remind you that you are just as full of rough edges. And those harsh words and angry moments should remind you that the weaker vessel that you married is full of hurts, anxieties, frustrations and insecurities - many of which you may be the cause of or the contributor to.

VIDEO: Marriage Message To Husbands

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