

Getting Back To God's Design for the Godly Home

But! How *DO* Ya SLOW DOWN???

Have no idea how to begin slowing down? Have no idea what you could let go? Is it just too confusing? Afraid you or your family will miss something? Go to God with your schedule. Place all activities on the altar. Wait on Him. Share your heart with your husband. Let your husband set your schedule. Look over activities very carefully, evaluating them honestly. Do they work toward the call that God has for your family? Are they necessary? Do they compete for "down-time" that your family really needs to fellowship, rest, and develop a lifestyle of learning? Commit to finding God's plan for your day! Listen to your sweet husband. Look objectively at those tempting activities! Reach for the very, very best use of your day! Then, you will find God pulling you back into a pace that you can continue the journey till the end!

Just Busy...

I know that I am writing this (and you should read this now) during the holiday season, the busiest season of the entire year. But, I write this knowing that we are not just busy at this time of the year alone! We are busy all of the time! How do we guard against "BUSYness" all throughout the year? Well, let's take a look at Proverbs 29:18... **"Where there is no vision the people perish."** You know, I have one problem with this verse. My problem is that this is not something you get ONCE and for all! We must constantly guard our home. We must constantly evaluate whether our homes are in conformity with the vision God has given us for our family. We must constantly check our "gardens" and uproot any weeds or overgrown plants that hinder the growth of our most precious "plants," our children! We have to constantly make sure to have time with God, time with our husbands, time with our children, time within our homes, time to minister to those within our sphere of influence, and time left so we can take care of ourselves!

The Bible says that there are works set from the foundation of the world. Be faithful in YOUR works! Seek God's wisdom for EVEN your lifestyle and schedule! Don't let the enemy distract you by what is "out there" somewhere! Don't feel guilty about letting great things go! Do ALL you can to preserve that home atmosphere from ALL distractions that are out there! Don't get too busy *to build your home* for truly you have much to look forward to—just look again at Proverbs 24: 3-4:

"Through skillful and godly wisdom is a house (a life, a home, a family) built, and by understanding it is established [on a sound and good foundation], and by knowledge shall its chambers [of every area] be filled with all precious and pleasant riches."

Proverbs 24: 3-4

Have a great year!

EASY Homemaking Ideas For The Busy Homeschool Mom!

By Cindy Rushton



Homemaking...The word Homemaking brings back many fond memories of my childhood home. I can almost smell the homemade goodies that mom labored daily to make. I can almost feel the crisp, clean sheets from those Monday washings. Thinking back brings me sweet memories of my home-sweet-home mom!

I began homeschooling much like many of you. I had spent 6 years of marriage modeling after my dear mother. She always had the laundry out on the line, the entire house cleaned, lunch cooking, and dinner laid out all before 7:00 AM!

You can probably imagine my difficulties the first year of homeschooling as I tried to keep up this pace in my home. Oh, beloved! I did it! However, I was wore out... frustrated... and KNEW there must be a change! I prayed about my concerns and as usual the Lord gave His direction...His Plan. It would be to manage my home well but not at the expense of developing relationships with my husband and children or at the expense of homeschooling these treasures. Let me share some tips today that I have learned over the last few years that make homemaking a delight...

♥ Semi-Annual Cleanout...

One thing that you can do today to get a handle on homemaking in your homeschool is to stop what you are doing and do a big clean out! Yes, I am saying stop all that you are doing now...as you begin your new year. Stop and spend some time this week cleaning out and organizing. It will make all the difference in the world in the atmosphere of the home. Also, take a break in the Fall to do another real good cleanout. This helps me to keep overall order...even if our home is "lived in." Of course, another plan you might like better is the "Zone Cleaning" from Flylady. For those of you online, you may want to check out her wonderful website at www.flylady.net for all of her wonderful and easy tips for truly cleaning out and getting into a homemaking routine! I bought her new book *Sink Reflections* and it is better than her website—if that can happen! We have been taking her "baby-steps" to get our home and office completely de-cluttered and ready for another big travel season! It is

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so nice to have those papers in binders...those books organized on the shelf... those closets...well, we are still working! hehe! A semi-annual cleanout (or hitting those Zones!) will help you to get all in order so that your family can only maintain order...this gives you a peace of mind so you can relax and enjoy teaching (and PLAYING!)

♥ Morning Chore Time...

After you have your home in order for the new year, all that will be needed is maintenance. We maintain our home by requiring a morning chore time. When the children were all young, I used to set myself a timer of one hour to clean and do chores. I would set the children's timer for 10-15 minutes and call for *a clutter drill*. (When they were real little I would have clutter drills at different times of the day so we kept their things straightened.) They would have to pick up everything they could before the buzzer went off. Usually all of our cleaning was done in about 5 minutes—it was

Quick Homemaking Ideas...



- ♥ **Utilize your help...**Have a set chore time. Put everyone to work! You will have more time to enjoy your family and your home won't distract you along the way. Plus, everyone will learn how to serve others!

- ♥ **Guard Your Time...** Expect the unexpected...illnesses, bad days, delays, interruptions! Learn to say no so you will have more time for keeping homemaking simple! Turn off the TV--the best way to keep your little ones productive! Plan for free time--IT IS OK!
- ♥ **Limit Your Time Spent on Cleaning!** Let's face it, our homes will never stay spotless, so redeem the time to spend with our eternal treasures! Have "clutter-drills" during the day where the children pick up as much as possible in 5 minutes. Set a timer. In just five minutes most of the house can be cleaned back up! IT WORKS! Do semi-annual cleanout... fall and spring. This will help to get things back in order...to re-organize those places things are to be put...and to de-clutter. Then, the children can help you maintain the home IF THEY ARE TRAINED to help and not become part of the mess. Purchase servants for making your job easier—bread mixer...crock pots...blenders...dishwasher! These will save hours of time and do the job better as well!
- ♥ **Keep meals simple...**Use *easy meals* (Easy dishes like-tacos, burritos, enchiladas, nachos, salads, spaghetti, chicken pot pie, burgers, lasagna, granola and yogurt, shakes, muffins) or

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amazing! If the work did not get done, I waited until the next day to do it. This worked well to keep our home from becoming a distraction from the important job of discipling our children. Plus, it trained our entire family in the habit of doing their part in cleaning the house *quickly*. Now that my children are trained, the bulk of the housework is done by them during their morning chore time. Our chore time is first thing after our Quiet times. Everyone just gets busy doing their part...Elisabeth gets the laundry going, cleans the bathroom as needed, puts away any dishes, washes any dirty dishes, helps to feed the chickens and animals, cleans her room, vacuums, and helps with any other chores that need to be done...Matthew takes care of feeding and caring for our bird, helps with the laundry that needs folding or putting away, dusts, straightens the kitchen and helps Elisabeth with the dishes, maintains the vehicles, helps Dad with any repairs or outside chores, and cleans his room. With them pitching in, all gets done efficiently so we can take care of the important things...family life!

♥ **Standard of Excellence not Perfection...**

You can imagine from my childhood that I came into homemaking with a pretty high standard. Actually it was called Perfectionism! I struggled so long with comparing my home to my mother's home... my children's assistance with that of older children... in doing so, I was setting myself up for failure! God does not want for us to compare ourselves. If we do, we find ourselves comparing our lives to the lives of our mothers who tucked the children off in school and **COULD** have a clean house because **NO ONE WAS THERE!** Of course, there are other dangers too. If we do, we find ourselves patting ourselves on the back when we have our homes nicer than "so-and-so." Our standards are not to be based on those around us...but on what brings glory and honor to God. We cannot all have a *Better Homes and Gardens* home, but we can have a standard of excellence. What we do can be eternal not for today! We can focus more on the people than what we have. We can offer hospitality. These are truly the Excellent!

♥ **Bulk Cooking...**

One thing that I learned after that first year of homeschooling was to cook in bulk. Actually I call my plan, "Serve and Store." The first years of homeschooling I had a home business of sewing for the public. I would sew one day, cook one day. On the sewing days, we would have leftovers from my cooking day. In other words, I would cook and **SERVE** on one day...and sew and eat the food that we had **STORED** on the next day! It was a nice balance which enabled me to operate a successful sewing business while homeschooling and

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homemaking! From this, I developed a habit of cooking in bulk that has continued till today. It is easy to just buy double ingredients...usually it is cheaper! I just double my recipes and freeze the extra dish. Yesterday, I had the "fruit" of my labors as we had Lasagna already prepared last week that only needed to be popped in the oven and served with our fresh bread. You can be prepared at all times for those dropping in if you freeze a variety of foods as you cook them! Bulk Cooking redeems the time so you can stay busy with the important things in life...relationships!

♥ **Eliminating the Distractors...**

I tend to battle with two primary distractors in my life...*the Telephone and Too Much Going!* These tend to take the joy out of homeschooling and homemaking! I have waged war on these two enemies! For our telephone enemy, I have set a goal to start my day earlier. I turn the phone off...yes, the ringer is off and there is no answering machine to nag at me either! I only turn the phone on when it is a good time to talk. This has helped me a lot because I find that no matter how much I tell others about our best times, they inevitably call right as we are all snuggled up with a great book...or just as I am in the midst of a great quiet-time! The "going" monster is not so easily maintained without much effort! Because of this, I try to utilize my going time wisely by doing drill work along the way...narrating along the way...or praising God in song as a family along the way! I have tried to limit feeding this monster by doing all my errands on the days that I am already in town. If I need something in between times out, I just give my husband a list or page him with my needs. He helps me to keep this monster under control!

♥ **Do Something Every Day...**

I read in a book by Emilie Barnes a while back that if we take one little job a day that we can keep up our homes better. I have implemented this into my home. I may just straighten one drawer...or the vanity...or a pile of papers... but, this helps to keep the home manageable without requiring me to be a slave to homemaking to-do's!

♥ **Set Up Learning Areas...**

I remember the motto of the mother of one of my best friends, "A place for everything and everything in its place." She was a real Proverbs 31 woman! She maintained her home beautifully and still had time to be a gracious wife of a U.S. Senator. As I began to homeschool, I saw the "stuff" take over! This motto of Mrs. Pickering became my motto. We set up learning areas that could be the "place" for our learning tools. We set up a children's library...game

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area...computer area...dress up bin...Nature Shelf...video area...so on. This has helped me to maintain a semblance of sanity amidst all the "stuff" stuffed into our little cottage!

♥ **Slow Pace...**

The biggest enemy of a relaxed home atmosphere is the fast pace...the hurry! It is key to remember that everything has its season! Plus, remember that you can delegate! You can delegate many of the chores to the children...you can let others take their turns with the church responsibilities...you can do without that extra class or lesson! *Genesis 33: 13-14 in the Amplified Bible says, "... You know, my lord, that the children are tender and delicate and need gentle care, and the flocks and herds with your are of concern to me; for if the men should overdrive them for a single day, the whole of the flocks would die. Let my Lord, I pray you, pass over before this servant; and I will lead on slowly, governed by [consideration for] the livestock that set the pace before me and the endurance of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir."* In this passage, Jacob (God's Man, God's Way) was met by Esau (the world, the world's way). Esau wanted Jacob to go along with him...in that fast pace! Jacob set an example for us to follow! An example of considering the slow pace...the true needs of our children! I don't know about you, but our children would prefer a calm, easy-going mom to the fast paced mom who provides all the "essential" opportunities! Trade in that pace for a slow, relaxed atmosphere...you won't regret it!

♥ **Don't Forget Ministry...**

One of the greatest means that we have for influencing our world for Christ is through our homes! Surprised? Well, think about those who have influenced you the most...How many ministered to you from their home? I treasure the lessons I learned about God's design for me as a wife and mother while sitting at the feet of Mamaw! I saw true submission modeled before me. I saw a love of homemaking. I even learned to sew at her knee! It was sitting in her kitchen that God confirmed His call for me to write! All of the characteristics of the Proverbs 31 woman were modeled perfectly before me from the precious home of Mamaw. Much of who I am has been instilled through her quiet ministry...yes, the ministry within the home does reap fruit! You can minister to the world through cooking... card-making... sewing... crafts... just by using those practical skills faithfully to teach and minister to others. You can fully utilize the spiritual gifts of everyone in your family. These gifts are a wonderful opportunity to minister to one another and to those who come into your home. Using gifts through practical service from your home-base is the per-

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fect training ground for your little disciples!

♥ **Take Time for the Beautiful...**

All of these tips are designed for one purpose...to give you ideas which will help you to have time for the Beautiful! It may be more time for reading aloud... time to snuggle up with beautiful poetry...time for a long walk observing God's nature...time to take a long-hot bath and relax to Classical Music... or even time for tea! Homemaking in the Homeschool can be simplified so it is EASY! It can be simplified to give you time for the things God designed to nourish you and your family—treasured relationships and sweet, sweet memories!! Blessings!



Tips To Help Make Managing the Kitchen EASY (Well, Easier!)

By Cindy Rushton

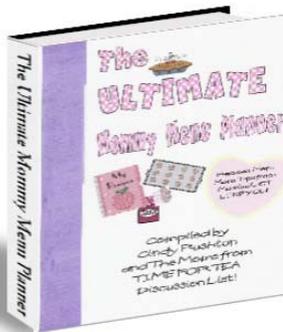
Excerpted from our ULTIMATE MOMMY MENU PLANNER (NOW AVAILABLE AS AN EBOOK!!! See information below or see our website: <http://www.cindyrushton.com/UMMPEBOOK.html>)



- ♥ Set up "Work Centers" for each step of the cooking process—for example, have a work area for preparing your homemade bread, another for mixing "wet ingredients" and yet another for chopping, etc.
- ♥ Buy measuring spoons and cups to leave in your storage containers for staples like flour, sugar, baking mixes, etc.
- ♥ Need menu ideas (EVEN after all we include here-ha!)? Keep your favorite take-out menus in a notebook. Plan homemade versions of your favorite take-out meals!
- ♥ Try EASY Bulk Cooking! Yep! All you have to do is double your recipe when you are preparing a meal. Serve half, store half. Then, you will have a complete meal, ready-to-warm later on a busy day. No more eating out on those stressful days!
- ♥ Keep kitchen cleaning supplies and tools in a bucket all together. You won't waste time hunting for what you need and you will also be able to glance to see when you need to re-stock your essentials.
- ♥ Don't forget Crock-pot cooking! Not only are your meals easy to prepare, but the nutrients are preserved in the dish! Be sure to use your crock-pots for your stove-top dishes. Less mess. Less work. And, for those like me—less likely to burn! Try out your soups, stews, meats in your crock pot! You will LOVE IT!
- ♥ Leftover veggies? Meats? Keep in baggies for your soups! Easy, fast, and you don't waste those bits!
- ♥ Clean as you cook! Use that time waiting for your meal to cook so you do not have that after meal mess awaiting!

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- ♥ Make your own recipe book! Why not work through all of those old cookbooks and recipe books to collect your favorites (the way YOU cook them/like them) into your own recipe notebook? Not only can you save space in the kitchen, but you can also save space in your schedule hunting up those recipes when you are in a pinch. OH! And also less boo-boo's with those recipes that are not exactly what you like. OH! And...what an heirloom for your family members!



Need MORE help AND fast with Menu Planning?

WE CAN HELP YOU!

Introducing Our Newest E-Book!

The Ultimate Mommy Menu Planner!

See details here: <http://www.cindyrushton.com/UMMPEBOOK.html>

We are SO excited to be able to introduce our NEWEST E-Book and CD Book! Yep! THE ULTIMATE MOMMY MENU PLANNER is now available either as an E-book or a CD-Book!

Bored with the same old, same old meals? Just wish you could get just ONE fresh idea? What if you could link up with over 40 other moms for menu plans...meal ideas...recipes...shopping lists... and even planner pages?

Well, YOU CAN! THE ULTIMATE MOMMY MENU PLANNER includes over 280 pages full of great recipes, meal ideas, and menu plans from over 40 REAL-LIFE moms, printable planning sheets, tips sure to make managing meals easy, plus much, much more!

Inside This Book:

Develop Your Own Plan for Easy Meals; Our Favorite Easy Recipes; Cindy's Tea Time Recipes; Easy Candy Recipes; Our Cookie Favorites; Our Holiday Favorites; Our Holiday Meal Menu Plan; Our Bread Recipes; At Home with our TIME FOR TEA Gals (recipes, menu plans, meal ideas, and shopping lists from over 40 other moms!); Websites You're Going to Love; Printable Pages for YOUR OWN Menu Planner; How to Make Your Own Family Organizer; Quick Tips To Help Make Managing The Kitchen Easy (Well, Easier!); PLUS Much, Much More!

You will LOVE IT!

So, whether you are struggling with those blank stares into the refrigerator...wondering about how to make meals more nutritious and yummy...needing some practical tips for managing your kitchen...or just needing a little help making your own menu plan, this is your book! In this book, you are guaranteed to find your ULTIMATE Mommy Menu Plans!! We think that you will turn to this book for years!!

What About Children and Chores???

A Clip from Our Mom2Mom Discussion Board

Check it out today!

<http://www.mom2momdiscussion.com>



Cindy said, "I agree with the chores--although I DO find that my children have the same tendencies to slide by if I am doing something else! UGH! Whereas they REALLY enjoy chores more if we all work together. "

I imagined before I had children, that we would have a together kind of lifestyle. I imagined that my children would be helping me prepare meals, get the kitchen ready, etc. - that we would work together and read together, and generally be together in the same room most of the time.

In reality, I have found this to seldom be the case, though I'm not sure why. The children would be playing or reading somewhere when I went into the kitchen to prepare the meal and so I would do it mostly alone - or due to the fear of tripping over a little one on the way to the sink to drain a pot of spaghetti, the children would end up in the next room with one of the older ones watching the younger ones while again, I worked alone. There didn't seem to be a desire to stick around and talk to or work with mom - except in the case of baking in which case EVERYONE wants to be there.

Cleaning has been mostly "delegate and divide and conquer" in method. I spend a few days training a child in how to do a chore, then that becomes their daily duty. When chore time comes, the girls empty trash cans then go off to clean their room, the boys go wherever they need to, to accomplish laundry, dishes, taking out the trash, vacuuming, and general pick up. I am supposed to go clean the bathroom (which somehow never seems to get done properly otherwise no matter who I delegate it to, or how much time I take for their training) but also need to make sure the 2yo isn't taking that opportunity to get into mom and dad's room or other places she shouldn't be - and make a mess or worse. Not to mention the boys starting to argue or irritate each other (probably subconsciously to avoid the chores).

Every once in a while, I get it into my head to do something completely different and require everyone to work together in one room until a room is done. Trying to supervise the 2yo to be doing something semi-productive - keeping the 4,6, and 8yo's on task - dealing with the "but Mom, so and so isn't helping!" - directing those who are really helping as to what needs to be done next and trying to do enough cleaning my-

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self so as to get things done in a semi-reasonable time period and to not give the impression that I'm a lazy slave driver. Needless to say, this idea never lasts long. But I keep coming back to this, imagining that this is how it's "supposed" to be - the ideal that I long for. So why doesn't it work? What am I doing wrong?

- Heidi



Hi There!

What GREAT posts! Heidi, you ask the very best questions! This is SOOOO good! AND these great answers give such a wonderful peek into all of your homes--HALLELUJAH!

To give you a bit of help from our home...each of us has our own chores each day. We began these when the children were little. Out of SURVIVAL for ME!

Of course, one thing that I still stress heavily with my children is that although a chore may be usually for someone in particular, WE are always there to help that person if they are overwhelmed or too busy to do their part. This is mainly because I have a high school junior who works for MY business, HIS DAD'S business, AND has his OWN business. Sometimes the biggest blessing he could have is for his chores to just be done for him. Elisabeth has more of a tendency to not grasp that he is very busy...but, she is growing up too! She is SO touched when she is running low on time and Matthew washes her puppy...or I do the dishes for her. This is a lesson that we are trying to teach them now--the beauty of blessing others by doing something *beyond* what is on OUR to-do list.

Back to chores though...we began when they were young dividing up the to-do's each morning so that after quiet time, each person could do their chores so the day would be ready for school, business, ministry and family time. I simply could not concentrate or relax to enjoy the other aspects of life with a messy house. Now, mostly we have everyone do their things to get ready for the day before we sit down to lessons.

On BIG cleanouts (pretty much time for that again!)...we usually take a day off from the rest of life's demands and work together going through a room. That works SO well for us. We can hit a room and come out with it sparkling clean in a portion of the time that we normally could work apart. I turn up the praise music and we dig in! Of course, it helps to have all of our cleaning supplies and tools together. (another great reason for working together)

We also work together in the business. Things go much easier and faster when the whole crew works at the same time. We kinda "assembly-line" it! It is SO much better than running around and trying to remember each step of the process! Even when we take orders to the Post Office, each of us has a job to do and it goes sooo much more smoothly! Our postal workers laugh when just Elisabeth and I take things to the post

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office--we will forget major things like the delivery confirmations, etc! ha!

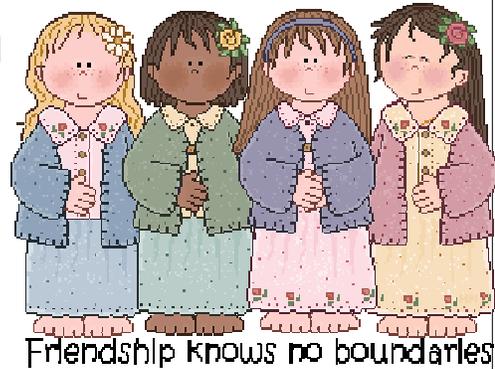
You sound like you are doing a great job! PLUS! I love the counsel in all of these other posts too (*take a look at them on our Mom-2-Mom Discussion Board: <http://www.mom2momdiscussion.com>*)!

Thanks for the great discussion. If you need more help, just ask! I love getting down to the nitty-gritty!

Love ya!
Cindy

Check out our Mom-2-Mom Discussion Board Today!

Have questions? Need a bit of encouragement or mom-2-mom fellowship? That is what Mom-2-Mom is ALL ABOUT! Join us online today! All you need is a few quiet moments and a BIG CUP OF TEA!



Friendship knows no boundaries

Destressing the Stressed Out Mom!

By Cindy Rushton



Stressed? Been stressed a little too long? Too often? Need some help? Well, try the following and see if they don't help a bit!

- ♥ **Go on a Prayer Walk—regularly!** Praise and worship the Lord. Pour out your heart. Talk to Jesus the whole way! Listen to His sweet "conversation" with you! Be refreshed!
- ♥ **Use a Daily "To-Do" List** to operate from. List your TOP FIVE things. Keep in your own "Brain-in-a-Binder" so you can rest your mind...find your list as you need it...and keep everything else in a spot!
- ♥ **Turn on Praise Music—LOUD!**
- ♥ **Begin a new hobby!** Learn something new each and every day!
- ♥ **Organize ONE thing each day!** Make a list of all you want to see done. Keep the list so that you can add to it as you find other needs. As you work through it, mark off what IS being done. This will show you how much you ARE doing. Continue to work on one thing per day. The difference will not take long!
- ♥ **Do ONE thing each day JUST FOR YOU!** Yep! You read right! How long has it been since you have done ANYTHING for you? There is one common denominator in the lives of many who are totally stressed out—they RARELY do anything for themselves. For real! You are created with a need for a daily quiet time...with a need to be nurtured, encouraged, inspired...with a need for something to look forward to. YOU need something special just for you each day! What are you doing? What fills your cup? Are you operating from a very dry, parched vessel? Do just ONE thing today just for you. Then, do just ONE thing tomorrow just for you. Just a little thing. Maybe spending 5 minutes reading from your Bible. Maybe adding bubbles to your bath water. Maybe going for a quick 15 minute walk. Maybe taking your children's lessons outside to just bask in the sun for a few minutes while they work through their math lessons. Maybe join Curves or a local fitness gym. Maybe get a bottle of bubbles and go outside to play! Do SOMETHING each day for you! See the stress levels lesson!

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- ♥ **Purpose to laugh more and more each day!** I read a quote a few years ago in a devotional by Dennis and Barbara Rainey. It has become one of my personal life goals. In fact, it is ONE thing that we can do to de-stress every day! Here it is: "Laughter is the medicine intended to cure the disease of self-importance. It's hard to puff yourself up to weather balloon size if you can deflate yourself with a good prick of self-directed humor. How many laughs *are* you having--some at your own expense? Have you, as a couple, claimed the promise, "*He will yet fill your mouth with laughter, and your lips with shouting.*" (Job 8:21) Before the wedding ceremony, many couples need to have a bold objective for their first year of marriage: **Over the next year, we will be found guilty of having too much fun rather than too little fun.** That is not a bad objective for any year of marriage." So, what about you? Will you laugh more today than yesterday? Tomorrow than today? Purpose to laugh more and more...the stress will run away!
- ♥ **Declutter!** Don Aslett, famous organizing expert, says that 80% of what we own, we don't even use. It is only clutter. I completely agree! In fact, I step out on a limb and make a completely un-researched assumption, but I would also imagine that 80% of what is on our schedule is clutter as well. We are sooo bogged down in clutter! Clutter can never be organized. Clutter can never be managed. It simply must be exterminated from our lives. So, why not de-stress a bit by getting rid of the "stuff" in your life. Stuff has a tendency to bring on unneeded stress! Go ahead—get rid of it! Simplify! Simplify the clutter in your schedule! Throw away that stuff in the house! Copy quotes from those magazines and get rid of that bulky mess—journals are more precious than that clutter anyway! Jot down ideas in your journal. Get rid of those old clothes—you know that if you lose weight you will want NEW clothes then anyway! (HOOT!) Over-run by cookbooks? Begin a "girl-time" to copy those that you love or those that you want to try into a special cookbook of your own. Sell or donate the rest! Your very own cookbooks will be more helpful and way more special anyway! So, get busy getting rid of that clutter! Talk about instant de-stressing!
- ♥ **Get On PJ's...Cuddle Up...Watch Old Movies or a Comedian!** Pull out the chocolate...popcorn...old fluffy quilts! Make a sweet memory just "jelling" out with your precious family!
- ♥ **Read a book!** It is amazing the power in a great book! Pull out a book with your little ones—something neat like *Winnie the Pooh*, *Make Way for Ducklings*, *Dr. Seuss*. Or...dig into a classic like *The Hiding Place*, *The Little Preacher*,

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Clean Your Boots, Sir, etc. Or read an old biography on someone neat! See if a family read aloud doesn't breathe life into your home. BUT! That is not ALL! How long has it been since YOU have read a book JUST FOR YOU???. Grab something inspirational...something helpful...or something fun. OR ALL THREE! Just 10 minutes in a book will relieve some of that stress that can wipe you out!

- ♥ **Simplify!** Simplify everything! Simplify stuff (yep, I said that again!)... commitments...curriculum...housework...meals! Completely simplify! No one will remember later all of those hours you spent on the stuff. They will remember your spirit.



Scheduling Tips...

- ♥ **Look at how other families get it done!**
- ♥ **Find what works for YOU and YOUR FAMILY!** With your children, your family activities, your personality, your husband's schedule, your home life, your way of teaching, your academic goals, the best time to teach your children.
- ♥ **Set up your day to balance LIFE.** Some days are not going to go well, but a balanced schedule helps to guard against going through a whole year without doing the things on your heart.
- ♥ **Create margin in your schedule for interruptions.**
- ♥ **Always be willing to CHANGE if necessary.** Be open to growth and change. Don't be afraid of not being perfect—you can always tweak out what doesn't work.
- ♥ **Be consistent so your children know what to expect!**

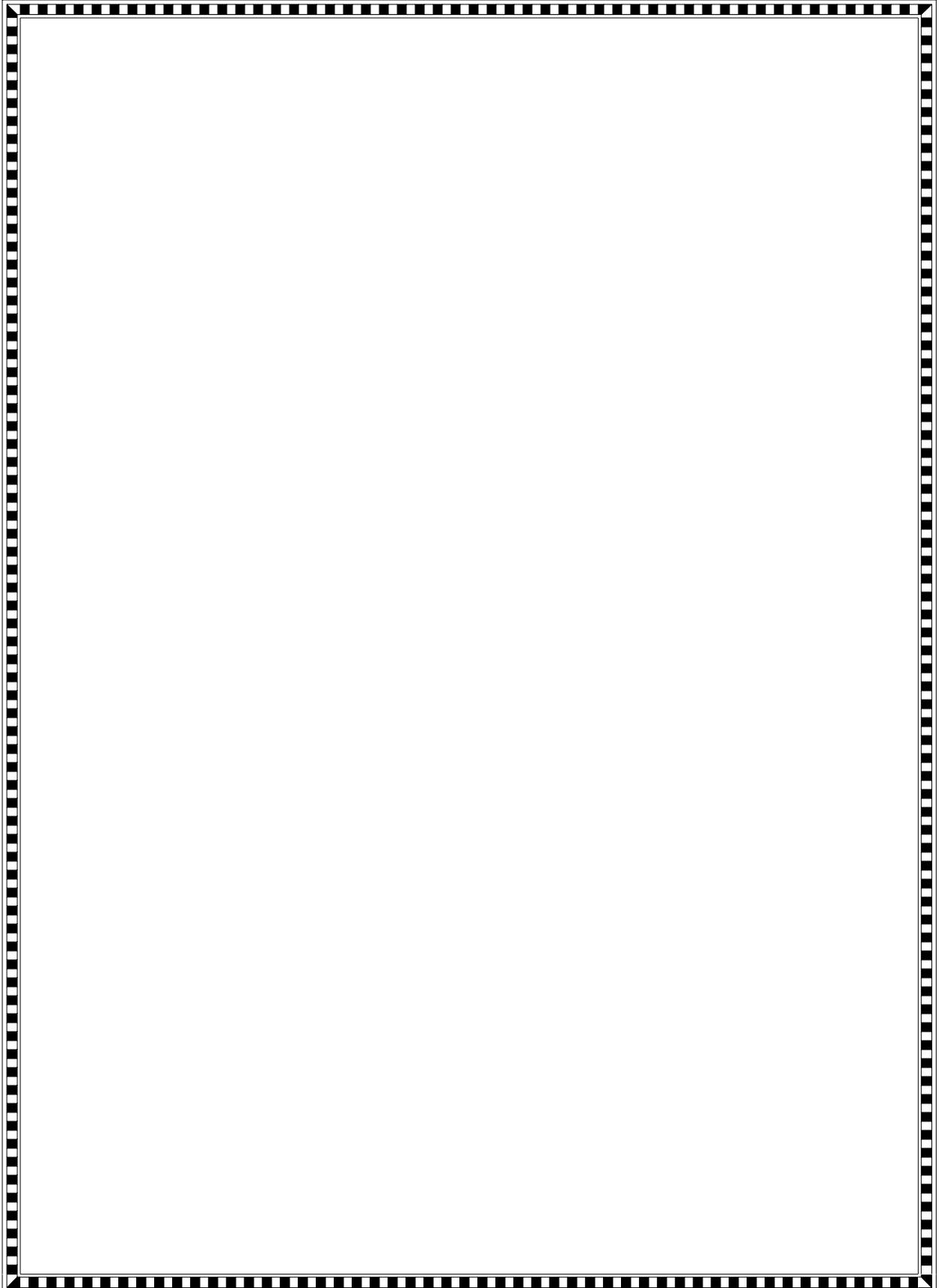
The Godly Marriage...



"The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs
in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose
waters never fail."

Isaiah 58:11

Getting Back To God's Design for the Godly Home



How to Destroy Your Man In Just Five Years!

By Cindy Rushton



OK! Got your attention? Wondering if I have gone off the deep end? No...this one is JUST FOR FUN!

No ideas shared in this article are intended to be used in any way! We guarantee results—so beware of implementing them unless you want to fail in marriage and totally ruin that man of your dreams!

- ♥ Make it your ambition to NOT notice him!
- ♥ Disregard what he says- Look the other way, bring something else up to talk about, DO NOT listen!
- ♥ Reject Him...his ideas, his love, his protection, his wisdom, his opinions, his leadership!
- ♥ Tell him ALL of his inadequacies AND how YOU can correct them!
- ♥ Feed any of his insecurities WITH TRUTH about his weaknesses!
- ♥ Each night when he comes home, go about your own business-it helps to be on the phone and keep right on talking! Don't even get dressed, wear makeup, or brush your teeth!
- ♥ Belittle him in private and especially in public! Let him "have it" when you think different than him!
- ♥ Compare him to other men AND your daddy!
- ♥ Get on the phone and tell ALL about him! Don't forget to complain and belittle!
- ♥ Dishonor him in public and private! Let the whole world know what a wimp he is!
- ♥ Disobey him—what do guys know anyway?
- ♥ Don't put much value in him or in what he has to say—you know best!
- ♥ Correct him in front of others—especially the children!
- ♥ Find all his faults and tell him about them constantly!
- ♥ Push him to get your way!
- ♥ Never let him know he satisfies you (physically, spiritually, emotionally, mentally...)—don't ruin a good thing!
- ♥ Lead him on!

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- ♥ Frustrate him ANY way you can!
- ♥ Nag! How ELSE do you get a man to do anything? How ELSE will they ever HEAR you?
- ♥ Complain! Make him suffer too!
- ♥ Whine! Isn't he SUPPOSED to encourage you?
- ♥ Don't waste your time understanding him!
- ♥ Respond to him! ESPECIALLY to his offensive behavior!
- ♥ Despise him for being such a weakling!

Don't want this? Well, look on the NEXT article!! We want to help you as you seek to help your husband become ALL he can be!!!



How To Help Your Husband to Be All He Can Be!!

By Cindy Rushton



NOW we are talking! OH! Beloved! If there is ONE person that has made ALL of the mistakes on the last page and can only thank God for His grace, it is ME! I praise God every day for the blessing that I have as the wife of my very best friend. It can only be described as AMAZING GRACE! I am so thankful that Harold KNOWS me inside-out and still chooses to love me. Just TOO awesome! Makes ME want to help him to become ALL he can become. Well, that is exactly what these tips are all about—helping our husbands become all they can become. Check it out and see if you find some ideas along the way!

- ♥ Become VERY BEST friends! Enjoy his companionship. Endeavor to become a good companion!
- ♥ Find things that you can enjoy TOGETHER. Breakfast each day...walks at sunset...hobbies...work...etc. Constantly tie strings!
- ♥ Look for his strengths...share them over and over! He can never hear them enough!
- ♥ Show gratefulness! Let him KNOW that you really appreciate what he does for you and your family.
- ♥ Get rid of any seeds of disrespect, jealousy, and comparison! You are in this thing together!
- ♥ Help him! God created woman to be a "help meet" for man—meaning that she is the one who "completes" him and is "fit" for him. Find ways that you meet your husband's needs. Find ways that you help him to fulfill his life purpose from God.
- ♥ Pray for him! Circle him in prayer. Pray and fast when things are tough. Celebrate and praise when God breaks through. Seek God with him. Constantly build hedges of protection around him through prayer.
- ♥ Support him! Become his personal cheerleader! Believe in what is on his heart. Cheer him along when things are tough and not looking too good! Cheer him on when he makes the mark!
- ♥ Respect him! Respect comes through in little things: our tone of voice, our facial expressions, our words, our behavior. Respect your man! You will in

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turn build your man!

- ♥ Admire him! Let him know the things about him that you really love. Let him see how you admire him by the way you look at him! Enjoy him!
- ♥ Encourage him! Literally INFUSE courage into your sweetheart! You KNOW the things that really mean a lot to his heart. Be sure to do and say those things that will bring courage and strength into his heart and soul!
- ♥ Promote him! Become his very best marketing agent! Be the one who knows his worth, his gifts, his talents, his strengths and shares them with others! When the whole world "feels" as though it is crashing in, be the one who believes in him and continues to help him keep on keeping on!
- ♥ Inspire him! Be his sounding board of ideas. Listen and help him brainstorm when he is void of ideas. Ask God to help you see all that he IS and all that he is becoming!
- ♥ Catch his vision! See those things that are not existing now! Be the one person who can see what God has in store for him!
- ♥ Strengthen him! When he is tired and weary, be the one to undergird and support him. Pour all you have into giving him his second breath! Use all of your gifts, talents, and strengths to make him whole!
- ♥ Work with him! Be his "partner." Find ways to help him work and build the family name and legacy. Constantly consider ways that you can help him make the most of the finances that you have. Follow the Proverbs 31 model by creatively finding ways to make the most of the resources that you have.
- ♥ Submit to him! Submission has great power! It unleashes your husband to take the lead and become the man God created him to be. It also unleashes God to use your family in a mighty way. Submission is not weakness. It will not create a monster in your husband. It will bring the peace and unity that will make your relationship everything that God had in mind when He designed marriage! Plus, submission will help your husband to become all that God designed for him to become!
- ♥ Defer to your husband! Always defer back to your husband. Have a decision to make? Unsure about what to do? Need help pruning your life and your schedule? Defer to your husband. Let him be your first place that you run to for counsel. Let him give you his wisdom and viewpoint. Not only will you become all you can be and find great contentment, but you will find that he will show himself as your knight-in-shining-armor!
- ♥ Reverence your husband! See him as precious! Fall passionately in love with him! Revere him and his position as your precious husband. Watch him blossom!
- ♥ Pour all of yourself into him! There is no accident that YOU are married to

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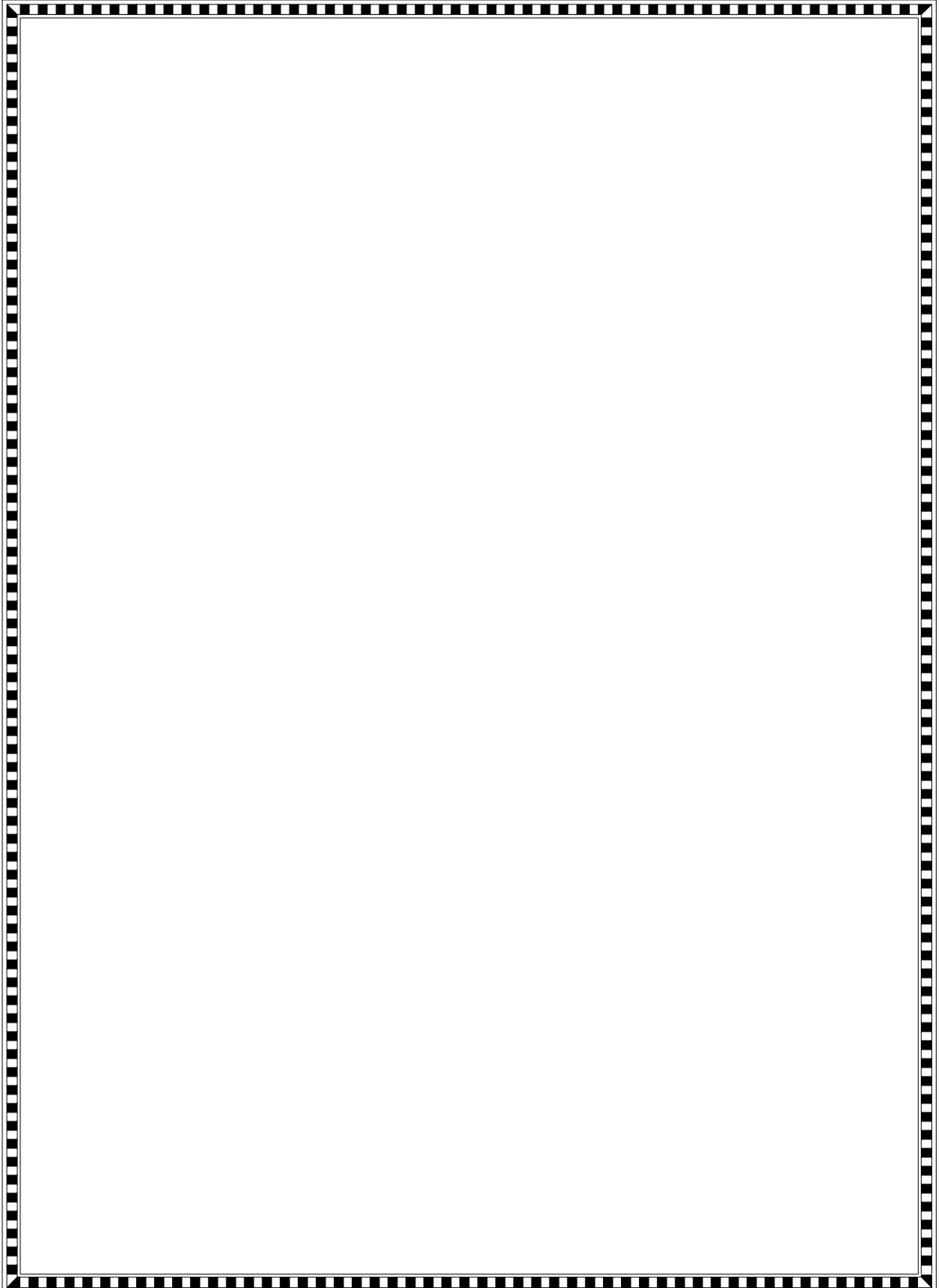
your husband! So often it is easy to focus on what they are not—probably because that is what WE ARE. Yet, as we pour ourselves into them, we find how incredible we are TOGETHER! Pour all of yourself into your husband-- Your spirituality, strength, power, prayer power, support, lifting him up, gifts, personality, intelligence, insightfulness, communication skills! The true secret to building a godly spiritual leader is to pour all of yourself into him. To get under him, to support him, to build him! Pride will want to push ahead or push him aside. God's Spirit motivates us to get behind our husbands and let him succeed as God's mighty man!

So, what do you think? Ready to build your man? Oh! Become the student of your husband and watch him become ALL God created for him to become! You will DEFINITELY enjoy the journey!



Don't forget! Check out our Romance Toolbox for even MORE articles!
<http://www.cindyrushton.com/RomanceToolbox.html>

Getting Back To God's Design for the Godly Home



101+ HOT Ideas for Romancing Your Sweetheart!

By Cindy Rushton



How are you doing in your marriage? I remember when we began homeschooling. For the first time in my life, I had finally found the fulfillment that God had planned for me from the foundations of the earth. The only problem was that I found myself either entirely too child-centered, talking about the children and homeschooling with every breath OR simply too exhausted from the pull on my time and energy as I balanced homeschooling, homemaking, and motherhood! I found myself in awe of this good-looking man I had forgotten along the way.

How are your home-fires? Are you finding that good-looking love-bug to be a stranger and you don't know where to begin romancing him? Want some fun ideas??? Here are 101+ ideas that are SURE to make your (AND HIS) heart patter with that same passion from your honeymoon days! Have fun!

- ♥ **Plan a daily Pow-wow time!** Whether it is coffee in the morning...coke over a mid-morning break...afternoon tea (coffee!)...or bedtime cuddles, set aside a time for the two of you to keep up with one another! Share your plans, dreams, vision, struggles, concerns, ideas. Get to REALLY know one another! Be sure that your children learn to respect this time. They will LOVE to watch their Mommy and Daddy as they deepen the romantic love for one another!
- ♥ **Make him a "CD" of "your" love songs from your dating years!** Download songs from the Internet. Compile and burn onto a CD. You will BOTH love this!
- ♥ **Pull out your Wedding Album!** Snuggle up! Listen to the audio of your wedding (or your CD of love songs!) or watch your wedding video. Celebrate!
- ♥ **Make homemade candies for him!** Try your hand at making Millionaires, Peanut Butter Cups, Peppermint Patties!
- ♥ **Plan a Midnight Picnic In Bed (or outside under the stars)!** Pack up your favorite foods, your "love song" CD, Sparkling Cider or Hot Chocolate with Mugs, flowers, candles (Vanilla!!), games, dessert, and a sexy gift! Light candles around your room and turn down the lights. Sprinkle rose petals around

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the room or in a trail to your bedroom for them to follow. Float helium balloons around the bedroom. Greet him in your robe! Share a sweet picnic, play games, watch a movie, or.....

- ♥ **Read the SONG OF SOLOMON together!** Privately!
- ♥ **Turn OFF the phone!** Have a quiet day together!
- ♥ **Go for a walk in a stream!** Play in a waterfall...mud puddle...so on!
- ♥ **Make homemade cookies together!**
- ♥ **Set Up a Treasure Hunt!** Put riddles and notes that give him keys for how to find the next treasure...and the next...and the next...and ultimately YOU!
- ♥ **Write Out a Love Note!** Let the theme be, "How I Love Thee! Let Me Count The Ways..."
- ♥ **Send a Romantic Postcard to Him Everyday for a Week (or a Month) Leading up to a Special Date (Birthday, Anniversary, Valentine's Day, Anniversary of When You Met!**
- ♥ **Fax him a love letter to his office.**
- ♥ **Go for a ride together!** Any of you Harley babes out there? Yes! We have a Harley! It was bought JUST for our love-life! It is the one thing that we do that means that we take time JUST for one another! What about you?? Is your RIDE a Harley? Sail-boat? Car? Convertible? Get out there for that TIME together!
- ♥ **Make a ROMANCE Calendar for the Two of You.** Buy a calendar of your choice or make one on your computer. Put it somewhere private for you and your sweetheart ONLY. Pencil in romantic notes or special dates with each other. Keep it updated with surprises for each other!
- ♥ **Write or copy a love poem for him!** Frame or add to their journal!
- ♥ **Go watch a ballgame with him!**
- ♥ **Pick a bouquet of Wild Flowers for your bedside or dinner table.**
- ♥ **Go skating!** Old fashioned roller skating...ice skating...or roller blading! If you have a church skating rink, request to go late at night JUST THE TWO OF YOU. Turn down the lights. Put on a CD of "YOUR" love songs. Skate hand-in-hand!
- ♥ **Plan a Day of Pampering Him!** HIS FAVORITE WAY! Whatever HE wants!
- ♥ **Let the children prepare "tea" goodies for Daddy!** Let them serve the two of you as you cuddle together!
- ♥ **Plan a Movie Night!** Feed the kids and put them to bed. Stay up watching movies and munching on popcorn, chocolate, and giant cokes!
- ♥ **Build a snowman!** And...and Mrs. Snowman. Ahh...have a snow fight!
- ♥ **Write out love notes for your sweetie!** Leave them all around the house... in his lunch box...in his brief case...in the car...send by mail to his office!
- ♥ **Plan a campfire!** Roast weiners...marshmallows...LAUGH! Back Rub??? How