

Mother's Day Tribute to Gigi Spires – amazing wife and incredible mother

The timing of this worked out well, despite the fact that I had planned to write it for a while now well in advance of Mother's Day. A quick search through the men's lessons archives of this ministry reveals a tribute I wrote three years ago that esteemed and blessed our mothers and the mothers of our children. This one needed to be written specifically to and for Gigi, my wife and mother of our children.

Some will think this is personal with no purpose being a blog that gets posted, and that's fine. But most men do not know how to bless and esteem our wives and mothers of our children. Perhaps your dad was a poor example of this biblical mandate to honor the women He placed in our lives. Or maybe you have simply become, like so many of us men, consumed with everything else in your life that receives more honor and attention than it should-displacing our wives as second only to Christ in our lives.

The women God placed in our lives very often demand from us less than is due them and serve tirelessly without calling attention to themselves or seeking affirmation we should so obediently heap upon them. So let this meager attempt of mine serve to help or encourage you do that which, for many, may be overdue.

Wife. Gigi Rook entered my life in 1982 through an introduction at a Singles' group at Central Church in Memphis, TN. She is a native of that city and graduate from what was known at the time as Memphis State University. We dated about four months, were engaged six more, and married August 6, 1983.

Gigi took the biblical role of a wife and 'helpmeet' very seriously. The old KJV used the phrase *helpmeet—a helper (eve) suitable for Adam*. Gigi was (is) that in my life. While I took my role equally seriously, I am certain she filled hers better than I did. Gentleness and grace are among her virtues that stood out most and filled some of the many gaps in my life.

[I have spoken to thousands of men over the last four decades and share the following as often as it fits and sometimes when it does not. *"Marriage is God's hardest assignment this side of Heaven."* It really is. It takes commitment and hard work to stay married. The commitment is to God first and then our spouses. The hard work is required to build a biblical marriage. Even harder work is required to maintain it or repair damage caused by attacks of Satan, our fierce enemy, and selfish remnants of our carnality that insists it is all about me.]

Gigi has been more than accommodating, forgiving, and unselfish over the course of our thirty-four years of marriage. There is a great verse toward the end of the book of Proverbs that is attributed to Solomon. He asked the question:

"An excellent wife who can find?" (Proverbs 31: 10a ESV)

In the margin of my Bibles, I wrote many years ago, "I did." And then wrote in the date of our wedding.

Mother. I could write another book on the early years of our marriage dealing with serious, painful issues related to becoming parents. In less than two years, we went through three miscarriages and a full-term stillbirth of our first daughter. The pain was excruciating—overwhelming and unbearable except that Gigi and I are believing believers. Enduring all of that was our first real test of faith and our marriage.

Many marriages crumble after such hardships. But the Holy Spirit intervened. He brought healing and forgiveness to our brokenness, and

filled the holes in our hearts because He alone could. Finally, despite the expert medical opinions that we would never have children, the Lord God Who is our Father blessed us beyond hope with three amazing children.

I always knew Gigi would be an amazing mother. All that happened to bring her to that point only strengthened her resolve. My children have the best mother, hand-picked by the Lord to love and nurture them as only she could and did. I am thankful that they know this and esteem her. Yet, I hope they read this every Mother's Day and remember to do as the Bible commands—honor her and rise up and bless her.

For all my shortcomings as a husband and father, I can say that I did my best to do that and make sure my children did so as they grew up in our home; even in the difficult teen years. Dads, it is critical that you do that for your wife and teach your children what it means and looks like to honor their moms.

I cannot move on without a couple of comments on the second-most difficult time in Gigi's life—her battle with Lyme Disease. The physical and emotional toll this took on her for several years was so painful to watch, much less endure as she did. Yet, she grieved more over the time away from and events missed during the high school years of our youngest son more than the pain she experienced. We praise God that after years of trying so many possible helps and treatments, she did find freedom and deliverance from the continual pain and many of the side effects. She has only minor flare-ups these days.

Dedicated Homemaker. Despite what you think, this is not about how well Gigi made our houses into homes and a safe, loving nest for our family because she did that so well. She had more practice than most. We recently moved into our twelfth home together in thirty-four years of marriage. I always tell men I am just glad to still be married to the same women after such a journey. She has been an amazing pillar of support through what has at times been very

exhausting, mentally as well as physically.

www.gigisellsnashville.com The context in which I use the phrase, *dedicated homemaker*, now refers to another stage of life in which she pours her time, talents, and gifts into helping others find and establish their homes. I never nagged Gigi about anything during our many years of marriage except for one thing. As our kids got older and hit the driving (we don't need you around now, Mom and Dad) years, I strongly encouraged her to become a realtor. She was born for this helpful role.

Gigi's dad was a home builder and spent many years in the building supply business in Memphis. She majored in a related field in college and used her talents in our twelve homes spread out across the southeast. She is the most conscientious people person I know, despite my bias. So I knew that if she ever chose to do this on her own, she would be the best at helping others do what she had done for us so many times. I gladly toot my own horn here because I was right. She does an amazing job.

So my dear Gigi, here we are thirty-four years into our marriage, having successfully raised three kids who are in Christ, and now not so patiently rocking babies in the nursery as we wait on grands! I am so thankful for your life as my wife and the incredible mother of our children. Here's to many more (years, that is, not children except grands!) I love you.