

The Intentional Husband: We Before Me™

A 7-Day Biblical Challenge for the Christian Man Who Loves His Wife But Knows He Can Do Better

Let me tell you who I am before I tell you anything else.

I'm not a marriage counselor. I don't have letters after my name. I'm not standing on a mountaintop looking down at your marriage with all the answers figured out.

I'm just a broken man trying to love like Jesus.

Right now, as I write this, I'm in my own rough patch. I've spent months reading everything I could get my hands on, watching friends walk through the same valley, and wrestling with God about what it actually means to love my wife the way I'm commanded to. So when I tell you I understand the gap between what you *believe* about marriage and how you're *actually showing up* — believe me, I live in that gap too.

And here's what I've come to believe with everything in me: **people don't fall out of love. They stop intentionally choosing one another.**

That's it. That's the whole thing. Nobody wakes up one morning with the love surgically removed from their heart. It drains out slowly, one un-chosen moment at a time, until two people who still technically love each other feel more like roommates running a household than a husband and wife who can't wait to be in the same room.

If that's you — if you love your wife but you know the spark has faded, and you know deep down it's because you stopped *choosing* her every day — then you're exactly the man I wrote this for.

The good news? What drained out one choice at a time can be filled back up the same way. One choice at a time. Starting tonight.

Let's get to work.

God's Design for Marriage

Here's the first thing you have to understand, and if you miss this, nothing else in this challenge will work the way it's supposed to.

God isn't an addition to your marriage. He is the key.

We tend to treat God like a tool we pull out when things get really bad — the spiritual equivalent of calling a plumber when the basement floods. But marriage wasn't our idea. It was His. He designed it, He defined it, and He knows how it's supposed to work better than any book, any podcast, or any expert ever could.

Think about that for a second. The One who *invented* marriage left us an instruction manual. And most of us are out here trying to assemble the thing without reading it.

When Scripture defines love, it doesn't describe a feeling. Read it slowly:

> "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

> — 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Notice something. Every single one of those is a **choice**, not an emotion. Patience is a choice. Kindness is a choice. *Keeping no record of wrongs* — brother, that is a daily, sometimes hourly, choice.

This is the foundation everything else is built on: **love is not something that happens to you. Love is something you do.** It's a verb. It's a decision you make and then re-make every single day, whether you feel like it or not.

And there's a beautiful picture of what that looks like when it's working:

> "My beloved is mine and I am his."

> — *Song of Solomon 2:16*

That's not the language of two people coexisting. That's the language of two people who have completely, intentionally given themselves to each other. Mutual belonging. Chosen, not stumbled into.

That's the marriage God designed. And the reason yours may not feel like that right now isn't because God's design failed. It's because somewhere along the way, the choosing stopped.

We're going to start it again.

Why You Can't Do This on Your Own

Let me save you some heartache. If you treat this challenge as pure behavior modification — just a checklist of nice things to do for your wife — you'll white-knuckle it for a few days and then quit when she doesn't immediately respond the way you hoped.

Without God, these are just techniques. *With* Him, they become transformation.

The difference is that you're not trying to manufacture love out of your own willpower. You're surrendering to the One who *is* love and asking Him to change your heart so the actions flow out of something real. Your job is to show up with intention. His job is to do what only He can do.

Don't skip Him. He isn't an addition. He's the key.

The We Before Me Philosophy

Here's the core of everything I believe about marriage, and it's three words:

We Before Me.

Not "me first and she'll get her turn." Not "we'll split everything 50/50 and keep score." The hierarchy that makes a Christ-centered marriage actually work looks like this:

We > You > Me.

The marriage comes first. Then her. Then me, dead last. That's not weakness — that's the exact pattern Christ modeled. He put us before Himself all the way to a cross.

> "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself."

> — *Ephesians 5:25,33*

Read how high that bar is. Not "love your wife when she's being lovable." Not "love your wife as long as she's meeting your needs." Love her the way Christ loved the church — *sacrificially, first, and to the point of giving yourself up for her.*

That's the calling. And honestly? It's impossible to do perfectly. I fail at it constantly. But the calling isn't perfection. The calling is **intention**. To wake up every day and choose "we" before "me," even when my flesh is screaming the opposite.

> "Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves."

> — *Romans 12:10*

Above yourselves. That's We Before Me in Scripture's own words.

The Connection Tank™

Now let me give you the single most important framework in this whole challenge. It changed how I see every interaction with my wife, and I think it'll do the same for you.

Every person in a marriage has what I call a **Connection Tank™**. It's the reservoir of felt love, safety, and closeness between the two of you. When it's full, everything is easier — grace flows, conflict resolves quickly, attraction comes naturally. When it's running on empty, every little thing becomes a fight and you both feel like strangers.

Here's the part that wrecked me when I finally understood it:

There is no neutral.

Every action or inaction, every word or silence, either *fills* her Connection Tank™ or *drains* it. Nothing is insignificant. You are never just "coexisting" or "treading water." That long sigh when she asks you to do something? Drains the tank. The phone in your face while she's telling you about her day? Drains it. The unprompted hand on the small of her back as you walk past? Fills it. The text in the middle of the workday that says *thinking about you*? Fills it.

You are *always* doing one or the other. Every single moment is putting gas in or taking gas out.

Most of us drained our wives' tanks not through some big betrayal, but through a thousand tiny withdrawals we never even noticed we were making. The silence. The distraction. The taking-for-granted. Drip, drip, drip, until the tank ran dry and we wondered where the spark went.

The spark didn't leave. The tank ran empty.

And here's the hope in that: **the same way you can drain a tank one small choice at a time, you can fill it the same way.** That's the entire premise of the next seven days. Small, intentional, consistent deposits.

Before we go further, let's get an honest baseline. Be brutally honest here — this is just between you and God.

Connection Tank™ Honest Baseline

Today's Date: _____

Rate each one as you HONESTLY believe your wife would rate it right now (1 = empty, 10 = overflowing):

How seen and noticed does she feel by me? ___

How often do I touch her with no agenda? ___

How present am I when she's talking? ___

How safe is it for her to disagree with me? ___

How often do I speak words of gratitude to her? ___

How much does she feel chosen vs. tolerated? ___

My honest gut read on her tank right now (1-10): ___

The ONE withdrawal I make most often without noticing:

Fill this out before you begin Day 1, then keep it somewhere private. You'll come back to it at the end of the week and you will not believe the difference.

Don't let this discourage you. A low number isn't a verdict on your marriage — it's a starting line. And every man who's ever rebuilt something started by being honest about where it actually stood.

The Pride Problem

We need to talk about the thing that's quietly killing more marriages than infidelity, money, or in-laws combined.

Pride.

I struggled with this for *years*, so I'm not preaching down at you — I'm confessing right alongside you. My specific flavor of pride was what I call the **justice over peace** attitude. The need to be right. The need to win the argument. The need to make sure she *acknowledged* that I had a point before I'd let it go.

And you know what justice over peace gets you? It gets you a string of arguments you technically "won" and a wife who feels like she lost. It gets you being right and being alone at the same time.

Scripture is blunt about what this should look like instead:

> "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

> — *Ephesians 4:2-3*

Make every effort to keep the bond of peace. Not "make every effort to prove you were right." The godly husband chooses peace over justice almost every single time — not because he's a doormat, but because he understands that being right is a terrible consolation prize when the cost is his wife's heart.

Choosing Peace in Real Time

Here's a simple filter to run every conflict through. When you feel that hot rush of / *need to make my point right now*, stop and walk through this:

The Justice vs. Peace Filter

She just said or did something that stings.

- |— Is this a genuine safety/sin issue?
 - |— Yes → Address it gently, later, when calm
 - |— No → Keep going down the tree
- |— Do I mostly want to be RIGHT?
 - |— Yes → That's pride talking. Choose peace.
 - |— → Take a breath. Soften your tone.
 - |— → Ask a question instead of making a case.
 - |— No, I want to UNDERSTAND her
 - |— Then lead with curiosity, not defense
 - |— "Help me understand what you meant"
 - |— → Tank fills instead of drains

When conflict heats up, mentally walk this tree before you open your mouth. Nine times out of ten you'll end up choosing peace — and choosing peace is choosing her.

The Attitude of Gratitude

The second face of pride is the nitpicking spirit — the habit of cataloging everything she does wrong while taking everything she does right for granted.

Here's a truth I had to learn the hard way: **it is just as easy to focus on her good traits as her flaws. It costs the exact same amount of effort. You're simply choosing where to point your attention.**

We're not pretending problems don't exist. There are real things in every marriage that need work, and we don't ignore those. But there's a massive difference between *addressing* an issue and *living* in a posture of criticism. The man whose mind constantly runs through his wife's shortcomings is draining his own Connection Tank™ as fast as hers.

So we make a deliberate shift to an **attitude of gratitude** — intentionally turning our attention toward what's good in her. Her kindness. The way she loves your kids. Her laugh. The thousand things you stopped noticing the moment you started keeping a record of wrongs.

Love "keeps no record of wrongs." But here's the flip side that changed me: love *does* keep a record of rights. Start keeping that record. Your gratitude is a deposit, and you make it the moment you choose to see her clearly again.

The 7-Day Daily Practice

This is where conviction becomes action. For the next seven days, you're going to intentionally choose your wife through a set of specific, concrete behaviors — every one of them free, every one of them startable tonight, none of them requiring a single thing you don't already have.

Each morning, before your feet hit the floor, you're going to ask yourself one question:

"How am I choosing her today?"

That question reframes your entire day. You're no longer a passenger waiting to see how the marriage feels. You're the intentional husband, actively filling her Connection Tank™ on purpose.

Here are your daily choosing behaviors. You don't have to nail every single one every day — but you're aiming to be intentional about as many as you can.

1. Wait to eat together. Don't just eat because you're hungry right now. Waiting says *you matter more than my convenience*. A small sacrifice that speaks loudly.

2. Send a random "thinking of you" text. No reason. No agenda. No logistics about who's picking up the kids. Just *thinking about you and I'm glad you're mine*. Out of nowhere.

3. Make intentional eye contact when she talks. Put the phone down. Turn your body toward her. Look her in the eyes while she speaks. Presence is one of the loudest ways to say *you're worth my full attention*.

4. Offer gentle, non-sexual touch. A hand on her shoulder. Sitting close enough on the couch that your legs touch. Reaching for her hand in the car or in the booth at a restaurant. Touch with zero expectation attached — that's the kind that fills the tank.

5. Use "we" and "us" language on purpose. Catch yourself before you say "I" or "me" and choose "we" or "us" instead. It's a small linguistic shift that rewires how you both see the partnership. We > You > Me, even in your sentences.

6. Go to bed at the same time. This one is quietly powerful. Choosing to end your day beside her — instead of in front of a screen — says *there's nowhere I'd rather be*. No setup required. Just a decision.

7. Practice the attitude of gratitude out loud. Each day, name at least one specific thing you appreciate about her — and actually tell her. "I really appreciate how you handled that with the kids today." Specific. Spoken. Heard.

8. Choose peace over being right. In every interaction where pride flares up, run the filter from the last section and choose the bond of peace. This is the hardest one and the most transformative.

Track Your Choosing

This is the heart of the whole thing. Every night before bed, mark which intentional choices you made that day. Seeing the marks accumulate is powerful proof that you're becoming the man you want to be.

The 7-Day We Before Me™ Practice

Day	Meal	Text	Eyes	Touch	We/Us	Bed	Grat	Peace
Day 1								
Day 2								
Day 3								
Day 4								
Day 5								
Day 6								
Day 7								

Each night, put a checkmark in every column where you intentionally chose her that day. Don't aim for a perfect grid — aim for an honest one. By Day 7 you'll have a visual record of a man who showed up on purpose.

Adapting to Your Real Life

This works no matter what your week looks like. A few situational notes:

- **If you travel for work** this week, the physical behaviors (touch, shared meals, same bedtime) get swapped for their long-distance cousins: a goodnight phone call you both stay on until she falls asleep, the random text becomes a voice memo, the eye contact becomes a video call where you actually *look* at her instead of multitasking.
- **If you work opposite schedules** and overlap is thin, concentrate everything into the small window you *do* share. Ten intentional minutes beat two distracted hours.
- **If things are tense right now** and she's skeptical of a sudden change, don't announce the challenge. Don't make a speech. Just quietly start choosing her and let the consistency speak for itself. Actions she can feel will always outrun words she's learned to doubt.

A Word for Day 3

Let me be straight with you about something. Around Day 3 or 4, you may hit a wall. You'll have been pouring intentional effort in, and she may not have visibly responded yet. Your pride will whisper, *"See? This isn't working. She doesn't even notice."*

That whisper is a lie, and I need you to keep going right through it.

Here's the truth: a tank that took months or years to drain doesn't refill in 72 hours. She may be cautiously watching to see if this is real or if it's another short burst that fizzles out. **Your consistency past the point where you stopped seeing immediate reward is exactly what proves it's real.** That's where pride dies and genuine love is forged. Push through Day 3. It's worth it.

Surrendering the Outcome

We've come to the most important part, and it's the part our pride hates the most: **you are not the one who saves your marriage. God is.**

Your job for these seven days is to show up with intention and surrender. His job is to do what only He can do — soften hearts, rebuild trust, rekindle what's gone cold. You cannot manufacture a changed heart in your wife, and brother, you can't even fully manufacture one in *yourself*. That's His work.

So we pray. But notice *how* we pray.

The prideful prayer is "God, fix her. Change her. Help her see what she's doing wrong."

The intentional husband's prayer is different. It's "**God, change us. Soften me.**"

That's it. That's the whole posture. You're not asking God to be your attorney in the case against your wife. You're asking Him to soften your own heart first, and then to draw both of you closer to each other and closer to Him.

Each morning or night this week, pray something like this in your own words:

> Father, soften my heart toward my wife. Strip away my pride and my need to be right. Help me choose her today the way Christ chose the church. Draw us closer to each other and closer to You. Do what only You can do in our marriage — and give me the humility to get out of Your way. Amen.

When you pray for *softened hearts* — both hers and your own — you're inviting the only One with the power to actually change things into the center of the work. You're admitting you can't do this alone. And that admission isn't weakness. It's the strongest, most Christlike thing a husband can do.

Then you trust His process and His timing. Maybe you'll see your wife respond this week. Maybe it'll take longer. But the transformation that matters most is already underway the moment you start choosing her on purpose and surrendering the rest to God.

Looking Back at Your Week

When you reach the end of Day 7, do two things.

First, pull out that Connection Tank™ Honest Baseline you filled out before you started. Read it again. Then ask yourself honestly where those numbers sit now. Most men are stunned by how much can shift in a single week of intentional choosing.

Second — and this is the one that matters most — look back over your tracking log and the whole week, and answer this for yourself:

Did I choose her, every day this week?

Not perfectly. Not flawlessly. But *intentionally* — did you show up and choose her, day after day?

If the answer is yes, then something far bigger than a checklist just happened. You stopped being a husband who's quietly drifting and you became a husband who actively, deliberately chooses his wife. That's not a technique you performed. That's an **identity you stepped into**.

"I'm an intentional husband. We before me. And I chose her every single day this week."

That's the man your wife needs. That's the man God called you to be. And the beautiful thing about an identity is that it doesn't end on Day 7 — it's simply who you are now. Day 8 is just another day you get to choose her. And Day 9. And every day after that.

You were never a bad husband. You were a convicted one — a man who loves his wife and knew he could do better. Now you've proven you can.

Keep choosing her, brother. We before me. Every single day.

You've got this. And more importantly, *He's* got you.