* (title slide) Good morning ladies! My name is LeeAnn Tebben.
* Twenty-two years ago, I fell in love with an 18 year old, pre-med student. (slide) Seriously, I was not going to let this one slip away! Our first date was for a ‘date dash’ with my sorority, and really was somewhat of an accident. I knew Peter’s older brother, Dan, so I called Dan up on the phone to see what Peter’s relationship status was. You know the old fashioned way, before Facebook. Those of you who know me well, know I have a some hearing loss. Well, that day I called Dan, and I asked him if Peter was dating anyone. What I heard him say was, “Yes, but… she’s not a Christian.” I took that as a clear sign that whoever it was, it was not to last and not meant to be so I had full confidence to ask him on the date dash.
* Later that week after our date, I found out that what Dan had actually said was, not that she wasn’t a Christian, but, “Yes, her NAME IS KRISTEN.”
* And the rest is history.
* Well, I like to say I am a pretty organized person, but one thing we have never done as a family is take professional photos, so this is the best I’ve got of the four of us recently. (slide) We’ve been married 20 years and our girls are 14 and 12.
* (Slide) Alright today’s marriage topic ***Provide for your husband through joyful service and unselfishly meet his needs without expecting recognition or equal payback.***
* You may have heard the story of two girlfriends who met for dinner in a restaurant. Each ordered the restaurant’s famous chocolate cake , and after a few minutes the waiter came back with their order. Two pieces of cake, one large and one small, were on the same platter. One of the women proceeded to serve her friend. Placing the small piece on a plate, she handed it across the table.
* The other woman said, "Well, you certainly do have nerve!"
* "What's troubling you?" asked the other.
* "Look what you've done," she answered. "You've given me the little piece and kept the big one for yourself."
* "How would you have done it?" the woman asked.
* Her friend replied, "If I were serving, I would have given you the big piece of cake."
* "Well," replied the woman, "I've got it, haven't I?"
* At this, they both laughed.
* *Today’s Marriage topic is to:*
* ***Provide for your husband through joyful service and unselfishly meet his needs without expecting recognition or equal payback.***
* ***Or… giving him the bigger piece of cake.***
* (slide)
* **Pitfalls to Selflessly serving your spouse:**
* 1) *Expectations and Motivations*- Have you heard someone say that the best thing you can do for your marriage is to lower your expectations? There actually might be some truth in that. If we expect him to deliver a soliloquy about how your balsamic reduction added the perfect touch to the chicken… If we expect a pat on the back for every load of laundry… If we wait in expectation for the thank you for the zillion things we do in child rearing each day… If we expect to be recognized for all the little things we do, we will be extremely frustrated and disappointed. But- and here is the key, if we do our acts of kindness, of thoughtfulness of helping selflessly … and do it with an *attitude of serving God not serving man*, the expectations thing becomes a non-issue. Gals, our husbands couldn’t give us ‘equal payback’ even if they wanted to. There is not enough hours in the day. It all starts with our attitude, ladies. Who are you doing it for? If it is for God, to bring him honor and glory, through your provision and service, then your heart is in the right place.
* **Philippians 2:3-8**
* 3Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.
* (slide)
* 2) *“It is all about me”-* Most magazines, talk shows and best sellers have us hook, line and sinker, believing it is ‘all about me’. It will take intentionality of thought and action to fight this attitude. It will take us being in the word daily and listening to the world less and less. It is laced in everything our modern society has to offer. If you stand up and use scripture as your compass, as your plumb line, you will feel the friction of swimming upstream in this world. How do we know it is NOT ‘all about me’? We continue in our passage from Philippians and see who is our example, who do we imitate…
* **Philippians 2:5-8**
* 5In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:
* 6Who, being in very nature[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Phil%202:3-8&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-29398a" \o "See footnote a)] God,  
      did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
  7rather, he made himself nothing  
      by taking the very nature[[b](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Phil%202:3-8&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29399b)] of a servant,  
      being made in human likeness.  
  8And being found in appearance as a man,  
      he humbled himself  
      by becoming obedient to death—  
          even death on a cross!
* If Jesus, if the Son of God, humbled himself as a servant, knowing he was God’s equal but not using it to his own advantage, how much more are we to have humility in providing for our husbands. It should look like this:
* Not : I’ll get you back!!!!
* But instead: I’ll get your back
* Not: I won’t give because YOU don’t give!!!
* But instead: I’ll give because HE gave
* (slide)
* *Jesus is our example, our model in relationships.*
* Yes, I know, it is not easy. When our husbands are gone away for the home and the ‘to do’ list gets longer and longer. I know it is not easy when many weeks we become single mothers. Yes, I know what it feels like to want to be appreciated and recognized for all I do around the house and for our family. But we are not left empty handed. God gave us His word to study, Side By Side for encouragement and fellowship, and Jesus gave his example to follow and the Holy Spirit to work in us the ability to choose love over grumbling, joyful service over the ‘all about me’ attitude.
* **Final thoughts**
* (Slide)
* 1) Think about and delight yourself in the Lord, not in what the media feeds us. Build a fence around the TRUTH and guard your mind against Satan’s lies.
* 2)Build contentment in your life by frequently thanking God for your circumstances and your marriage, even when it is hard. It is possible you are in the hardest circumstances your marriage may ever face. But a thankful heart that praises God in the ‘storms’ will bring a peace this world can not give.
* (slide)
* 3) Pray and ask God to give you selfless motives for service to your husband. Praying for someone, even someone that has hurt us, or just been ‘absent’ will draw us to love them, unconditionally because we begin to see them as God sees them.
* 4)Make your goal to please the Lord, not man, in all your tasks, big or small
* 5)Be alert to sinful thoughts of selfishness creeping into your mind. (You know those, “He never…! And , “He always…!” statements.) Take captive every thought for Christ.
* (slide)
* 6) Choosing to serve, PROVIDE and give the ‘bigger piece of cake’ to your husband is choosing INTIMACY in your relationship, rather than a PARALLEL YET, SEPARATE relationship. This is huge, don’t miss out on the beauty of a tangled and intimate relationship and avoid selfishness which leads to emptiness and loneliness in marriage.
* 7) Don’t allow ‘feelings’ to rule your actions. Loving and providing for your spouse is a choice based on your commitment to your marriage not based on how you feel. Many times when we don’t feel like putting his needs first but do it anyway, those feelings will follow your actions. Feelings should never be the engine that moves the marriage train but the cars that follow after it.
* 8) Cheer him on in his endeavors. Whether it is running a marathon or deer hunting or studying for exams or writing a grant—whatever he is pursuing, let’s be his biggest cheerleader. Support his dreams and dream together!
* 9) Leave guilt and manipulation out of your marriage. There is no place for it. Period.
* 10)Take the PROVIDE CHALLENGE: Take 30 days, maybe starting January 1st, and do one selfless act a day for your husband that goes beyond what is your norm. Journal it and watch God move in your marriage!
* Let’s pray:
* Father, thank you for the gift of marriage for our husbands who work many long hours. Help us appreciate and honor them by serving and providing for them with a joyful heart. Help us to look to do all things for your honor, for your glory and follow Jesus’ example of humbling ourselves. May we be women who give not to get, but because You first gave to us. Amen