

# Charlyne Cares

February 9, 2010

*Each Tuesday Charlyne's husband, Bob, shares from the prodigal's perspective more than two decades after divorce and remarriage. Today he writes about prodigals, standers and Valentine's Day.*

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## A Valentine's Gift Guide For Prodigals

(What's Hot and What's Not)

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, 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. Love never fails...And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." I  
**Corinthians 13:1-8,13**

As I reflected on standers and February, this month of love, a question came to mind that we hear often during early February: "Should I give my prodigal a Valentine's gift?"

**Only God can answer that question, because our answer may not be His plan for you, but I can give some general suggestions on what's hot and what's not in 2010 for prodigal spouses.**

### \* Your Prodigal Could Use Your Prayers -

The prayers of a faithful, standing spouse are the best gifts that you can give to a wayward spouse. Don't be like the standers who write us, telling how they pray "all day every day" for their mate. Charlyne could not have done that, for she had to work and care for a home and three children by herself. I was confident that every evening after the day had ended and my wife was alone, that her promises to pray for me were being fulfilled, regardless of how exhausted she might be. Jesus taught us to pray, so may you make time to pray for your spouse.

### \* Your Prodigal Could Use Your Patience -

"Was Charlyne always patient when you were divorced?" No, she was not, but once she had heard from God regarding the future of our marriage, that all changed. Much like you, your spouse is living a turbulent, confused state right now. You showing your spouse patience would be a welcomed gift by them.

### \* Your Prodigal Could Use Your Permission -

I have shared previously about the day that Charlyne told me, "I read something that may help you." The words she then shared about living with one foot in each of two worlds were timely in my decision to come home. She was saying, "I understand . . ." and not, "I demand . . ."

#### **\* Your Prodigal Could Use Your Perseverance -**

From the first time I heard my wife utter the word "standing," about 25 years ago, right up until today, I have known one thing; my wife was not about to give up on what God had promised for her marriage. Along the way, I heard that she would still be waiting in her rocking chair when she was 80 and that I might miss the best part of our marriage, but she was not giving up on me because God was not giving up on me, even when I was living in sin. What an amazing demonstration of love, for me to know that I had an "ex" who was not about to walk away because of circumstances.

If you want a super gift for Valentine's Day to give to your prodigal, determine today that you will never, never, never give up on the one you love. If you give up and stop praying, who will be there to pray for their protection and for them to come to Christ, or to come back to Christ?

I am grieved over good people, whom God has called to stand, giving up because a friend told them to find someone else, or who say they will stand only until the non-covenant marriage is legalized, or until there is a child born into the other relationship. They may be standing today and give up tomorrow, but standing again by the end of the week. If you want a great gift for your prodigal, lock down in your heart and mind, once and for all, that you are standing until God does what He has promised you He will do, regardless of what happens tomorrow.

**Just as there are some "hot" gifts, there are also some "what not's" that you need to avoid handing to your spouse for Valentine's Day:**

#### **\* The Prodigal You Love Has No Use For Your Threats -**

Statements sounding like, "If you don't have that check here on time, I'm going to . . ." or "I will tell my attorney to . . ." should never originate with a serious stander. (By the way, another great gift for your prodigal would be for you to get the term, "I understand" back into your vocabulary.)

#### **\* The Prodigal You Love Has No Use For Your Tongue -**

Believe me, your prodigal spouse knows everything they are doing wrong without your telling them. Each time you remind them, you are stacking more chips on the "Reasons I can't go home" side of the table. The battle for your family will be won on your knees, in prayer and not with a sharp tongue slicing and dicing your mate to anyone who will listen.

#### **\* The Prodigal You Love Has No Use For Your Temper -**

"Did Charlyne have a temper when you were divorced?" In the beginning, she had such a temper that I was afraid of what she might do. Her temper is another area where God touched my wife, after she became serious about standing for our marriage and she has not been the same since.

#### **\* The Prodigal You Love Has No Use For Your Taunts -**

True, you may win the battle if you disrupt your prodigal's plans but in the end, if you don't correct your ways, you

will lose the war for your home. That other person is not your enemy, so even if you manage to manipulate things until they are out of the picture, Satan will send someone else along to take their place.

#### **\* The Prodigal You Love Has No Use For Your Trespasses -**

No matter how many times my wife teaches about not spying on a wayward spouse, people who call themselves standers continue to do so, often at the expense of their marriage. For the sake of your family, please stay out of your prodigal mate's personal property and activities.

There were times during our divorce when I baited Charlyne to see if she would snoop. I remember one weekend leaving a note from the other woman inside our son's suitcase. I had folded the note in a particular way so that I could tell if it had been opened and read. The note was returned to me without having been opened. Charlyne passed every sordid test I sent her way, to the glory of God.

#### **\* The Prodigal You Love Has No Use For Your Tough Love -**

How many times have you and I blown it in our Christian walk, yet each time our Heavenly Father forgives us and allows us to start over again? Jesus demonstrates unconditional love, not tough love, to His children. When standing for marriage restoration, we have an opportunity to be like Jesus by showing unconditional love to a spouse who has wronged us. Tough love is saying to a spouse, "If you don't do right, I will do wrong." That does not sound like words from Jesus.

Well, there's my list of what's hot and what's not for prodigals this Valentine's Day. Did God give you any ideas on what to give the one you love? I pray that He has.

Even though so very painful at times, this Christian walk called "standing" is so basic. It is no more than living and walking as Jesus would. It is responding to each of the Enemy's tactics as Jesus would respond. Standing is basic Christianity with feet, but at the same time it is the most difficult walk you may ever do as a Christian. My wife and scores of others have also said that in the end it is also the most rewarding spiritual thing they have ever done.

Do you know why it is so difficult for you to stand strong? The evil one hates families so much that he is throwing every conceivable obstacle at you, to convince you that your beloved will never change; that God has someone better for you; that He wants you to be "happy" and all the rest. (By the way, God's concern is that you be holy before you are happy).

This is the time of year when tourists we call "snowbirds" invade South Florida by the tens of thousands, escaping frigid northern winters. Along with the snowbirds, come the con artists, always attempting to make a fast dollar. One way they do this is by peddling knock-off merchandise at our local flea markets. Their counterfeit products may look much like the real item, but they are always constructed so cheaply they will not last for long, if they work at all.

Where are you going to get your prodigal's Valentine's gift? Granted, you can pick up Prayers, or Patience, or Permission that look (and sound) like the real deal at a low price but once the test of the storms of life are applied, your gift will last about as long as a brand name purse purchased at a discount from the swap shop.

How, then, do you get gifts that last for your prodigal spouse? By your first having a close, personal walk with your Lord Jesus Christ. Your counterfeit gift may even be enough to draw your prodigal home but it takes the real thing to have a mate home, happy and ready to work on rebuilding a damaged marriage.

Regardless of when you read this, there is still time to get the perfect Valentine's gift for your prodigal spouse. You can obtain it on your knees. The price has already been paid at Calvary, by our Lord Jesus. Today, ask the Lord to give to you the Fruit of the Holy Spirit.

"But I never see my spouse. How will they even see the changes in me?" Trust me, the one you love will see (or hear) about the changes in you, once you totally sell out to Christ and to your marriage.

It might be like the day, when I was picking up our children, that I asked Charlyne what had changed about her. She replied, "Nothing's different." I walked away from our door thinking it must be her hair that had changed. Months later, I would learn that it was her heart, not her hair, that was different. I pray that your prodigal spouse may have reason in the days ahead to make that same discovery.

May you have a blessed Valentine's Day, even if you are alone today. Remember God loves you with an everlasting love and He asks us each to share that love with others, even when they seem not to deserve love.

*"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." **John 13:34-35***

Your prodigal needs your love,

**Bob Steinkamp**

**Rejoice Marriage Ministries, Inc.**

**Post Office Box 10548**

**Pompano Beach, FL 33061 USA**

<http://rejoiceministries.org> (Ministry web site)

<http://rejoiceministries.org/r.php?num=tizwl> (Bookstore)

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P.S. If you have read this Valentine's shopping guide and thought, "That's just being a doormat," or "That enables sinful actions," you have missed the entire point of standing for marriage restoration God's way. I urge you to listen to Charlyne's free audio teaching from any of our three sources -

[http://rejoiceministries.org/stop\\_divorce\\_radio/](http://rejoiceministries.org/stop_divorce_radio/)

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Rejoice Marriage Ministries, Inc.

Post Office Box 10548

Pompano Beach, FL 33061

<http://rejoiceministries.org>