

# Christian Book Summaries



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## For Women Only

*What You Need to Know About the Inner Lives of Men*

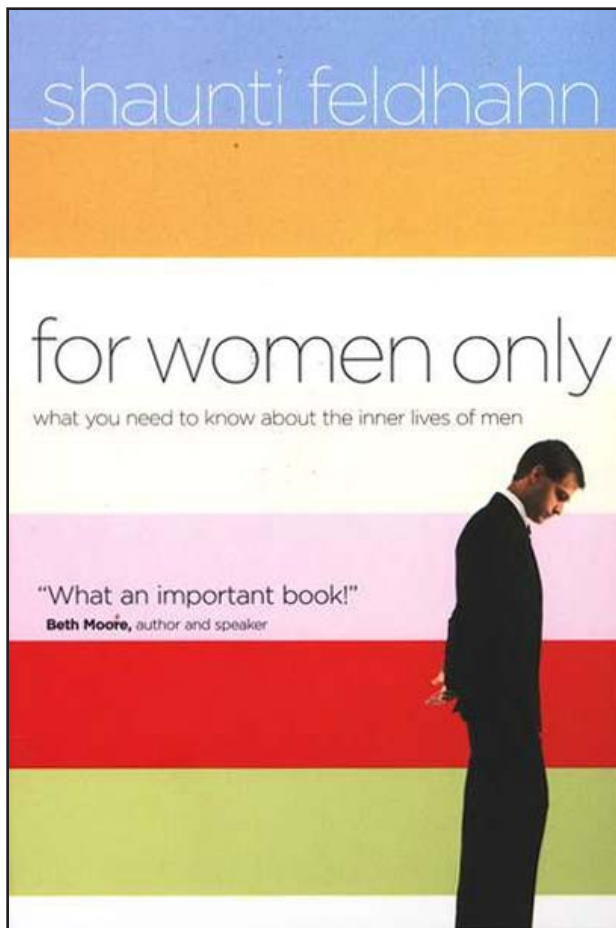
### A Quick Focus

#### The Book's Purpose

- Reveal to women the true inner lives of men
- Offer fresh insight into the mysteries of male behavior and thought
- Help women understand who God created men to be
- Enable women to learn the best ways to love and support their men
- Provide biblically-based, practical ways to build a strong marriage
- Give women hope and joy in their relationships with men

#### The Book's Message

A professional survey of hundreds of men showed amazing similarities regarding the way they think. Women who really want to understand their men will benefit from exploring the findings of this study about the inner lives of men. As women realize what men's heartfelt needs actually are, they will be better able to meet those needs and enhance their most significant relationships.



**By Shaunti Feldhahn**  
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# Lightbulb

My surveys and interviews repeatedly confirmed these truths. Remember, the way your man is wired is something to celebrate.

It's part of why you love him. These discoveries are meant to change us and make us better women for our men. CBS

## Your Love is NOT Enough

As difficult as it is to believe, most men would rather be unloved than be disre-

spected. They have a hardwired need for respect and affirmation. Most women feel the opposite—that being loved is much more critical than being respected. But the truth is, ***“If a man feels disrespected, he’s going to feel unloved.”*** Make sure you respect your man first and foremost, and he will feel loved. Most of us do, but don’t always realize when our behavior or words don’t show it. How can we tell? Anger. A man’s anger very often grows out of feeling painfully humiliated due to a lack of respect.

Have you ever thought, “What was *that* about?” when the man in your life did something you just didn’t get? Have you ever been confused, perplexed, even mystified by something in your relationship? That goes for most of us. Our confusion stems from the fact that we usually don’t understand what’s really going on in the inner world of our men. After completing interviews and surveys with over one thousand men, I have some insights to share with you. There are many things our men want us to know, but haven’t a clue how to tell us. And sometimes there are things they aren’t even aware that we don’t know. The revelations you’ll find in this book will amaze you and perhaps change your relationship forever as you begin to truly understand the man in your life.

It all began as a journey to get into the heads of men so I could create authentic characters for a fiction novel I was writing. As I interviewed various friends and acquaintances, I discovered some surprising common threads about the inner worlds of men. My curiosity led me on to more interviews, more research, and a professional survey. The findings blew my female mind. ***“It turned out that these men shared some surprising common inner wiring. At their secret inner core, many had similar fears and concerns, feelings and needs.”***

There were so many things I thought I understood, but I really had no clue. As the lightbulbs began to go on in my head, I discovered some things that my own husband had always wished I understood but didn’t know how to explain. Now that I’m finally beginning to understand how men think, I’m learning how to love him in ways that truly help him. My hope is that these discoveries will help you, too.

Seven revelations may clarify some misconceptions and help you understand the man in your life on a practical level:

1. *“Men need respect.”*
2. *“Men are insecure.”*
3. *“Men are providers.”*
4. *“Men want more sex.”*
5. *“Men are visual.”*
6. *“Men are not unromantic clods.”*
7. *“Men care about appearance.”*

**“Just as you want the man in your life to love you unconditionally, even when you’re not particularly loveable, your man needs you to demonstrate your respect for him regardless of whether he’s meeting your expectations at the moment.”**

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**LOVE IS NOT ENOUGH**

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We tend to believe that while love should be unconditional, people must earn our respect. However, biblically, we are challenged to unconditionally respect our husbands and their leadership. As much as we sometimes want to control things, God asks us to choose to trust and respect our men. He asks us to revere and highly honor them!

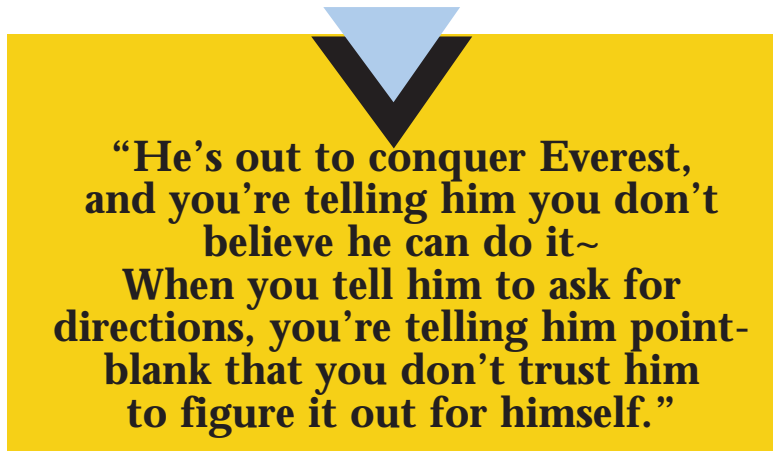
Unfortunately, many of us don't know how to show the respect we feel for our men. ***"Just as a wife would feel dreadful if her husband never demonstrated his love, a husband feels dreadful if a wife never demonstrates her respect. It's not negotiable!"*** How can we do this?

**Need #1:**

Respect his judgment. There is a deep need for your man to know that you respect his decisions and knowledge. They don't want us to question them and argue with them all the time. Not that we are to be brainless doormats, but we must be careful not to order our men around or act like their opinions aren't worth two cents.

**Need #2:**

Respect his abilities. Figuring things out themselves is important to men. They feel affirmed when they've had a chance to conquer something, even if it's just finding the way without stopping to ask for directions! Men want us to trust their abilities and believe that they can do it if they set their minds to it.



We can make the choice to trust our men, even in the little things. And that decision to trust and believe in them means the world to them. What's more important? Being on time to the party or trusting your man?

**Need #3:**

Respect in communication. As women we have immense power to either strengthen or tear down the men in our lives. Our words can either encourage or exasperate them. Even if we don't intend disrespect, the way we communicate can have a negative impact. Reminders tend to sound negative to a man—a signal that you are disappointed in him or think he is lazy or irresponsible. Anything that smacks of questioning his abilities will be taken negatively. We need to be tuned in to how we communicate and how it will be interpreted by our respect-sensitive man.


**Need #4:**

Respect in public. Most women have no idea how painful it is for men when they are ridiculed or criticized in public. What seems like mild teasing can be total humiliation for a man. What most of us don't understand is that men feel a secret sense of inadequacy, and teasing

can be torture. Since guys are always in competition with each other, feeling like their own wives don't respect them can make men feel totally disrespected by everyone. ***“The only time a guy’s guard is completely down is with the woman he loves. So she can pierce his heart like no one else.”***

On the other hand, if you publicly praise him any chance you get, his heart will soar. Take those opportunities to tell the world something great about your man. To him, it's as good as a dozen roses are for you!

**Need #5:**

Respect in our assumptions. Do you realize how often you assume something negative about your man? How often do we remind him or prod him because we think he needs that? Or that he sees what needs to be done and is lazily ignoring it? What if we chose instead to always assume the best of our husbands and gave them the benefit of the doubt? We need to choose to demonstrate respect and never resort to public criticism or teasing. With our words and actions, we hold incredible power over the well-being of the men we love. If they feel respected and affirmed at home, they can conquer the world. 

# The Performance of a LIFETIME

Most of us are never aware that men struggle with an overwhelming sense of uncertainty. Even the men that appear the most confident have fears of being exposed as inadequate “impostors.” This performance vulnerability seems to come from the belief that at all times he is being observed, evaluated, and judged. My study showed that most men feel this sense of insecurity and fear of messing up. Men com-

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## THE PERFORMANCE OF A LIFETIME

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pensate by working long hours and putting up a good front so they appear highly competent, but there is an emotional toll. Men are hard on themselves and feel they are under the continual scrutiny of the world.

**“One man put it this way: ‘We think about what others think about us all the time.’ ”**

At the same time, men want a challenge. They want to conquer new and exciting things. As contradictory as it seems, men want the challenge but know they risk humiliation. Especially at work where the stakes are high, our men face the fear that they won’t cut it. But, as a former Green Bay Packer shared, **“Keep in mind that guys can use that fear of failure for good. It gets you out of bed in the morning.”**

Anxiety about performance is felt not just in the workplace, but also when men come home. Men worry about being good providers, good husbands, and good dads. If a wife makes it clear that she feels loved and happy and that she respects him, her husband can breathe easier and feel more secure that he’s doing it right. The opposite is also true. If a man continually faces a miserable, disrespectful, critical wife, he lives in fear that he’s no good and never will be.

**“Affirmation is everything. When a man is affirmed, he can conquer the world. When he’s not, he is sapped of his confidence and even his his feeling of manhood.”**

The most critical place for a man to be affirmed is at home. If we believe in our men and affirm them, they will feel powerful, ready to tackle anything in every area of life. They think like warriors who can go to the battle with confidence if they know they will come home to someone who believes in them. Show your affirmation or he will retreat and seek it elsewhere.

You might be blown away by this, girls, but over and over men mentioned a particular kind of affirmation that means the world to them. Supporting your husband with a great sex life is the best way you can build him up. If you want him under the covers, he can han-

dle any difficulty he’s up against out in the world. The opposite is true as well. If you reject him and criticize him in this area, it will devastate him more than anything else. **“The role of sex cannot be overstated. A great sex life will overshadow and overcome a multitude of impostor messages from the world.”**

As women we have an incredible opportunity and responsibility to understand our men~their weaknesses as well as their strengths~and still love and support them. Our encouragement and acceptance helps them become the men God created them to be. We can give them the confidence they need to slay the dragons. **CBS**

# The Loneliest BURDEN

Your man feels a burden to provide for you. No matter what. The drive to provide is strong, and it is so contrary to our stereotype of the beer-guzzling remote controller permanently parked on his recliner. That God-given sense of duty is always on a man’s mind, even if he has a wife who can provide for herself. The male identity at its core is the role of a provider. Men want to be dependable and depended upon. They want to take care of those they love, and in doing so, they find their significance. It is their primary way of saying, “I love you.”

**“For a man, bringing home a paycheck is love talk, pure and simple. He has something to prove (‘I can take care of you, I am worthy of you’) and he wants to deliver.”**


How ironic that we often complain about how much he works when our man is doing it to say, “I love you!” And how vulnerable your man is when times get hard and what he provides is not enough. Men live with a constant fear of failure and pressure to provide well; they want to do whatever is necessary to protect their ability to provide. Even if the financial struggles are not his fault, a man suffers incredibly inside.

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## THE LONLIEST BURDEN

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Sometimes we are insensitive to this fear men live with, and we make it harder for them by complaining or pressuring them about working too much. Our husbands face anxiety both over the need to provide for the current situation, as well as the future with all its uncertainties. That's why men who lose their jobs or are on welfare struggle with depression and lose hope.

How can we respond? We can reconsider our previous conflicts related to this issue and perhaps approach our husbands with more grace. We can appreciate the struggles and tough choices our men face as they try to balance providing enough with being home enough. We can evaluate our own issues, like overspending or criticism, and choose a better path. We can help relieve the pressure by being supportive and appreciative of the burden he carries. 

# Sex Changes EVERYTHING

Did you know that sex unlocks a man's emotions? Did you know that you hold the key? Do you know how strong this need is for him and why? In my study a theme emerged, and it was an urgent one. The men I talked to felt that women had no idea how critical this issue is. ***"For your husband, sex is more than just a physical need. Lack of sex is as emotionally serious to him as, say, his sudden silence would be to you, were he simply to stop communicating with you."***

The media portrays men as sex-obsessed with no emotions involved, but that is not even close to the truth. In the deepest part of his being, your man feels alone and burdened by fears and anxieties about his worthiness. When you make love to him, you are assuring him that he is desired and worthy. Your love and energy give him healing and strength and a sense of well-being like nothing else can. It isn't about getting enough sex; it's about being wanted.

We women hold the keys to either greatly benefiting our men if we provide a warm and wonderful sex life, or wounding them if we do not. Giving a man regular, fulfilling sex is crucial to his feelings of being loved. It is the loudest and clearest way we tell our men how important they are to us.

Why is this so important? So many men, even ones with good friendships, live in a lonely world that is so foreign to us as relational women. The comfort of making love with you eases that loneliness and provides the power of intimacy men need. ***"A man really does feel isolated, even with his wife. But in making love, there is one other person in this world that you can be completely vulnerable with and be totally accepted and nonjudged."*** Sex is the strongest form of support you can give your husband as he attempts to face the world with confidence and a sense of well-being.

We also need to realize what happens to our men emotionally when they don't get what they're hoping for. If we don't want sex, they feel incredible rejection. And if we "perform" out of a sense of duty, they will still feel a sense of rejection. They want us to want them. An attitude

of disinterested compliance says ***"You're incapable of turning me on even when you try, and I really don't care about what matters deeply to you."*** He feels that "no" to sex means "no" to him as a man. If you continually reject him, it can result in him feeling a persistent lack of confidence, sense of isolation, and even a struggle with depression. We can inadvertently undermine the marriages we hope to build by our carelessness in this area. As women we might have no idea we are damaging our husbands this way!

How can we overcome these difficulties? We can choose to love our husbands in this way that is so crucial to their well-being. ***"But once you realize that your man is actually saying, 'This is essential to my feeling of being loved and desired by you, and is critical to counteract my stress, my fears, and my loneliness,' well~that suddenly puts it in a different category."***

What's the best way to respond? By giving your full self and emotional energy when he approaches you, remembering how much it touches his heart. And even if you must decline, allow your words to reassure, affirm, and adore the man God gave you to love. As often as you can, be fully engaged, fully responsive, and fully in love with your man.



## Keeper of the VISUAL ROLODEX

When an attractive and well-dressed woman is giving a presentation at a board meeting, what would be going through the minds of the men in the room? We might be surprised that all of the men, happily married or not, are likely to be struggling with sexual thoughts and finding it hard to concentrate on her words. I was shocked to

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discover how universal this temptation is for men. Being “visual” means that it is instinctive for men to be drawn to images of women, both live and in their memories.

That fact might make us feel betrayed or like failures for not being attractive enough. But through my study I realized that part of a man’s hardwiring includes the compulsion to look at beautiful women. They can’t *not* be attracted. And if they choose not to look out of respect for their commitment to their wives, they can’t help but be very aware of an attractive woman’s presence nearby.

We may not realize that men possess a mental rolodex full of all the sensual images they have observed over time. Some are positive, of romantic times with you, but others are not. ***“They are often images that have been involuntarily burned in their brains just by living in today’s culture~images that can arise without warning.”*** Images are there, ready to pop into their heads at any moment, and they frequently do. Women don’t get this, because for us, it virtually never happens. My interviews confirmed over and over that this is a difficulty. For teenage boys, *all* the time. For guys in their twenties, nearly all the time. As men age, they’re more settled and the thoughts come with less frequency.

How do we understand men and their choices? First, remember it is not a sin to be tempted. How we respond is the crux of the matter. Sensual images hit a man without his permission, and his response to be attracted is involuntary. The powerful feelings of sexual pleasure are involuntary too. But men can at that point make a choice, whether to dwell on the thoughts, or to send them away. Many men are very serious about trying to avoid temptation and come up with various diversions to help themselves, especially those who are committed to a wife and are regular church attenders. It takes strength and great discipline for men to stay committed to purity in this culture, and we need to appreciate that.

I want to reassure you that much of a man’s desire to look is simply admiration of something beautiful, like looking at a painting. Remember also that this struggle is not your fault. There is nothing wrong with you when your man notices beautiful women. And know that having this struggle does not impact your man’s love for you.

**“There is no relationship with the woman who catches your eye. With your wife, you have a deep and long and meaningful relationship. There is no competition there.”**

So how can we be helpful? Pray for him and for your marriage. Check your heart and see if you are supporting and loving him in the way he most needs. Do you love him as he is or for who you want him to be? Be a support by appreciating his efforts to avoid temptation and stay pure. Affirm him and ask him what he thinks will be the most helpful in this area. And be aware of the things that make it harder. Men are more vulnerable when they are ***“Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired (HALT checklist).”*** Be a champion of modesty in your own appearance and help others to be aware, especially your daughters who might not realize how they affect the guys around them. Remember that God created men this way, and it is good.

CBS

## Chocolate, Flowers, BAIT FISHING

Contrary to popular opinion, men are not unromantic clods. My study showed a surprising thing~that men really do want romance and togetherness, but are hesitant to step out in case they fail. The flip side of their success drive is their hidden fear of failure. So instead of risking not getting it right, they often choose to do nothing. Or if they have pulled off a huge romantic success, they might feel paralyzed by their inability to top it.

I discovered also that a man’s definition of romance might be different than a woman’s. Some men enjoy the traditional candlelight dinner type of romance, but many men want to “do” things with their wives, to “play” together~maybe fish, or golf, or hike together. Realizing this helped me view my husband’s requests to do something together in a whole new light. I also realized how key sex is to the romantic experience for men. We women might be content with a cozy candlelit evening to end with just a snuggle, but we need to understand that to our men, the evening is not romantic without the crowning experience of making love. We have so much power as women to bring a wonderful romantic dynamic to our relationship. CBS

## The Truth About the Way YOU LOOK

I urge you to pray before reading this chapter~this is a challenging subject our guys really want us to understand, but as women we find hard to take! However, what I’ve learned through this topic has given me a much needed jolt out of my complacency. I did not realize how important, how imperative it is to men that their wives take care of their bodies. One man put it this way about his own wife. **continued on page 7**

**THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WAY YOU LOOK**  
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**“If she doesn't take care of herself, dresses sloppily around me all the time, never exercises, and has no energy to go out and do things together, I feel like she's choosing *not* to do something that she should know is important to me.”**

It's not that you have to be a size 3; it's that you need to make an effort to take care of yourself for him. It's hard sometimes for women to take this seriously. Life is so busy, and our husbands promised to love us for better or for

worse, and we want him to love us for what's on the inside, not outward appearance. But the outside *does* matter. If we refuse to acknowledge this, we are disrespecting and hurting the men we love.

Realize that his sadness if you don't work at taking care of your body is similar to how you would feel if he never, ever took time to romance you, even though he knew it was important to you. Can you see now how critical this is? Our men want to be proud of us, and a lovely wife helps them fight the battle of temptation to look elsewhere.

Where can you start? Ask for God's help, ask your husband for his help (most are more than willing), and find the resources you need to be successful. It will be worth every ounce of effort.



## Words for YOUR HEART

I want you to know the single most important discovery I made about the inner lives of men~the most surprising thing I found. I gave the men taking my survey one open-ended question, which they could answer however they liked: ***“What is the one thing that you wish your wife/significant other knew, but you feel you can't explain to her or tell her?”***

And beyond all my expectations, the number one answer was: ***“How much I love her.”*** I thought they might vent or complain, but a huge majority wanted to express their love. What we as women need most, is to feel their love, and I discovered that that is what they most want to say.

One man gave me such encouragement in the following words, words that should be an inspiration to every woman who wants to help her man become everything God wants him to be: ***“It is so true, that behind every great man is a great woman. There are a lot of men out there who are mediocre, simply because their wives will not support them and bring them to greatness. And there are a lot of mediocre men who are destined to become great men~who are becoming great men~because their wives love and support them.”***



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