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### **Cooking, again?**

Some of the most wonderful women I know consider cooking mean or a mere waste of time. I think it's a problem with the attitude. "What shall I cook today?" "I'm bored of making the same dishes." "Frowned faces are the rewards of my efforts" — These are a few which colour our perspectives about this messy-looking but powerful job.

An oft-quoted phrase, "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach," is real in varying intensities. Every morning as we wake up, do we walk amotivated towards the cooking room? Does the fact that applause or appreciation is not going to come anyway, cause a psychological paralysis?

Here are some "I-will" tips to change our debilitating attitudes—

- I will pray before I begin cooking.
- I will smile and humm my favourite songs as I cook.

- I will fix encouraging Bible texts in the kitchen to keep my spirits up.
- I will label my containers to save time.
- I will cook something daily. I will not take this discipline lightly.
- I will cook something new every day.
- I will learn new dishes from friends and try them out to escape boredom and monotony. It is human to want variety and novelty.
- I will constantly tell myself that I will be a good cook soon.
- I will not allow negative comments thrown at me to upset me, but will take criticism well.
- I will reform my bad attitudes towards cooking and view it as a God-given ministry.
- I will keep my kitchen clean, fresh and attractive.
- I will make my cooking quick and easy.
- I will plan the dish a day ahead.
- I will make healthy and balanced dishes rather than easy ones.
- I will not whine over the rising prices.
- I will not spend too much time in the kitchen.

Sarah and Rebekah, the Bible says, cooked choice dishes for the home and guests. Cooking, I feel, is a special ministry given to women. How happy and faithful we are

while in the kitchen counts more than the taste. It should be embraced and taken as an opportunity to win hearts. The Proverbial woman is praised for organising her day and for “keeping everyone in the household busy and productive” (Prov 31). Martha, though with confused priorities, made cooking her style of worship (Lk 10).

A picturesque walltext with the words, “Remember the poor,” would be a firm reminder to discourage wastage of food cooked with so much care and been prayed over. It may be depressing to have such a picture over the dining table but I tell you, it helped shape my childhood values. This was my mother’s idea. I’m thankful to her.

A word to the man of the house—

Remember, your words and behaviours are powerful and are taken in the literal sense. Take an effort to eat with a smile and try not to talk about your mother’s cooking. Make your feedback about the dish private and positive. Never complain on the table where your children would learn from you. Refrain from asking for what is not on the table. Offer a helping hand with peeling onions and garlic which will save a lot of time for your wife. Cooking together in the kitchen can be a great time for jokes and for talking about the day’s events. Thank her after each meal. Can you cook one meal a week and treat her with a treat, please? She cooks you 1095 meals each year!

Encourage your teenager to attempt making a dish. Appreciate it without reservations. Allow them to make themselves a drink, an omelette or *dosas*.

The mother need not do everything. Children can set and clear the table and be rewarded for their assistance. They can wash the dishes when the maid doesn't turn up. These save some stress for the ladies.

Wear off gender bias gently. On one occasion Christ fried fish for His disciple friends. My dad still chops the meat, marinates it, makes his own coffee and serves almost every meal for us. He enjoys doing these. Inculcate to the children that involvement of the entire family is a cherishable responsibility. Ownership grows, thus. Pass on this family functioning style into the younger generation by modelling and it will gradually become normal. Try this chaotic thrill! Don't wait for your coffee mugs and used plates to be removed. It's littering! Lift off some burden off the lady's shoulders by doing whatever you can, yourself.

A colleague of mine used to say, "Just to have my husband in the kitchen, doing nothing, is cushioning." She is the queen of the house.

You have the power to bring out the best or the worst in her. The choice is yours.

**(C)**  
**Missions**

