

**Book Review of *Finding the Hero in your Husband – Surrendering the Way God intended* by Dr Julianna Slattery
Reviewed by Victoria Colgan**

Books on marriage and relationships abound in Christian and secular bookshops. Often the premise of these books is how to make the marriage better by changing your spouse. That is not the starting point of this book written by a psychologist who is a Christian and wife herself. Julianna Slattery starts with what women need to change and where women need to start in their own lives to empower their husbands to be the husbands that God in Ephesians 5:25 calls them to be.

I think the first time I read this book I was home with a toddler and a newborn baby so I found it was a good reminder to lift my eyes to God and see how he wanted me to serve, not just my children but my husband as well. The constant refrain throughout the book is Proverbs 14: 1 *“The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.”* I desired to be a wise woman in the midst of a chaotic household trusting in God’s plan for my life, not the fool trusting in her own worldly ideas.

Dr Julianna Slattery draws on a wealth of experiences as she’s listened to countless women lament about their desire for intimacy in their marriages. So what is refreshing is that she acknowledges that marriage is hard and that a perfect marriage isn’t instantaneous from the wedding day. Her central idea throughout the book is “A woman never marries the man of **her** dreams. She helps the man she marries become the man of **his** dreams.” It is a matter of helping our husbands become the men God wants them to be. So the book is firmly established on a biblical framework of marriage. It encourages women to look to God for help and salvation. If we have unrealistic expectations of our husbands to be the knight in shining armour we are going to be disappointed. Our husbands are human and we need to trust in their fallible leadership to lead us. It comes down to trusting and obeying God in this task as that is God’s plan for our lives.

I found the chapter of submission particularly thorough and practical as a wife empowers her husband as she submits, helps, completes and complements him in their marriage. Throughout the book there are helpful questions for personal reflection. The author uses much of her psychology training pointing out the pressures and difficulties many marriages face but she sets it out under a desire to surrender to God’s plan for our lives. She points out many women’s desire to have their husband lead them but sees their unwillingness to follow him when he does. She helpfully pinpoints different areas to work on in intimacy, both emotionally and physically. She also addresses the impact of money, children, family background, work and expectations on a marriage.

I was challenged again to trust God in my marriage and to allow my husband to lead me and to follow him when he does. I need to examine my motives in all I say and do so that there isn’t even a hint of discouragement or humiliation in my comments to him or about him or in my actions. To always remember that the goal in marriage is not happiness but holiness.