

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MATE (& YOURSELF)

BUILD & MAINTAIN A STRONG CHRISTIAN HOME
HOW TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL MARRIAGE



I. Difficulties to Face (Being Friends)

HOME BUILDING (Foundation)

1. How to Build a **Godly Groundwork** (heavenly blueprint and earthly location)
2. How to Assure **Preventive Protection** (storm-proofing home against dangers)
3. How to do **Marriage Maintenance** (home repair when damage has been done)

CHILD (Basement - where old memories are stored, under all that is happening today)

4. How to Remove **Past Programming** (affect of family of origin on current life)

FRIEND (Garage for men; phone for women)

5. to be **Bosom Buddies** (friendship with mate first and then others)

HUSBAND - WIFE (Living Room - daily life)

6. How to **Delineate Differences** (Lazy Boy or Rocking Chair)
7. How to Handle **Feisty Feelings** (stereo - 'mood' of the home)

MAIN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

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II. Needs to Meet (Being Lovers)

HUSBAND - WIFE (Living Room - daily life)

8. How to Have an **Understanding Union** (love seat - love tank, love languages)
9. How to be a **Huggable Hubby** (love seat - husband showing love to wife)
10. How to be a **Wonderful Wife** (love seat - understand, support & affirm him)
11. How to Have **Realistic Roles** (mirror - appearances, pressure on men)
12. How to be a **Loving Leader** (desk - man lead)
13. How to have a **Submissive Spirit** (desk - woman submit)
14. How to Have A **Peaceful Palace** (dining area - communication)

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III. Roles to Fill (Being Teammates)

FRIEND (Garage for men; phone for women)

HUSBAND - WIFE (Living Room - daily life)

CO-WORKER (Kitchen - working together)

15. How to be a **Willing Worker** (sharing work load at home)

COMPANION (Recreation room)

16. How to Have **Family Fun** ('play' together, recreation)

INDIVIDUAL (Bathroom - use of own private time)

17. How to Have **Proper Priorities** (using time correctly)

18. How to **Survive Stress** (Jesus' 2nd most stressful day ever)

19. How to Have **Christ-like Contentment** (Paul's example in Phil. 4)

PROVIDER (Office/Workshop for him; sewing room/laundry for her)

20. How to Have **Scriptural Success** (place of career, work, overwork, money)

21. How to Have **Fine Finances** (use of money)

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IV. Children to Raise (Being Parents)

CHRISTIAN (prayer closet)

22. How to Have **Strong Spirituality** (spiritually, church, family devotions)

LOVER (Bedroom)

23. How to Have **Sensitive Sex** (focus on men)

24. How to Have **Sincere Sex** (focus on women)

25. How to Have **Valuable Vows** (Marriage Rededication Service)

PARENT (Family Room)

26. How to be a **Perfect Parent** (what God expects of parents)

27. How to be a **Fantastic Father**

28. How to be a **Marvelous Mother**

29. How to Have a **Christ-like Child** (what God expects of children)

30. How to Raise a **Disciplined Disciple** (discipline and motivation)

TEACHER (School Room)

31. How to be a **Terrific Teacher** (teaching your children)

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(picture of home - plan I drew)

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1. How to Build a GODLY GROUNDWORK

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AND DISCUSS

Before starting to read, husband and wife should think through the following questions and then discuss them together. Remember, the more honest you are the more you will gain.

1. How would you describe your marriage (be specific).
2. How do you think your mate would describe your marriage? (Be specific)
3. List the strong points in your marriage.
4. List the weak areas in your marriage.
5. I am happiest in our marriage when ...
6. We are happiest in our marriage when ...
7. In my marriage I hurt most when ...
8. My mate and I differ about the following things:
9. When we have had difficulty in the past, the following things have helped make it better:
10. List some changes that you need strength from God to make in your home.
11. If I could change 3 things about myself they would be:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
12. If you could change 3 things about your mate they would be:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS Our local football team, Central Bucks West, has won the Pennsylvania State Championship the last two years. Naturally everyone expects them to do it again. Not only are they expected to win, but win big. If another team even scores on them the pressure increases for them to do better. Enjoyment for past and present accomplishments can fade under the high expectations put on them. Unfortunately the same happens in marriage.

We come through courtship 'undefeated' and expect even greater things once married, but then reality hits as we suffer a few losses. Everyone wants to know who's to blame. Whose

fault is it? What has our mate stopped doing that they were doing before? Where have they gone wrong?

Unrealistic expectations doom many relationships. We expect too much of ourselves and our mates. But how are we to know just what to expect? What is too much? What do we have a right to expect and when are we unrealistic? That is one question this series of articles will try to answer. After all, you can't hit a target if you don't even know what the target is, can you? What does God say a wife can legitimately expect of her husband? What does God say a husband can realistically expect from his wife? "Living happily ever after" only happens in fairy tales, but marriages can be mutually satisfying. After all, they are to picture the relationship of Jesus and His Church.

GOD'S ORIGINAL BLUEPRINT Growing a marriage is often like building a house, and that's the analogy we'll use throughout this whole series. You don't just start building, you need a **BLUEPRINT** to follow. God's blueprint for the family is set forth right in the beginning of the Bible: Genesis 2:18-25.

18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone.

This is the first God says things AREN'T good, and it's because man is alone. Even though Adam walks and talks with God he is missing a basic need - companionship. Man is not made to be alone. God didn't give him a pet, a TV or even another man – He gave him Eve.

I will make a helper suitable for him."

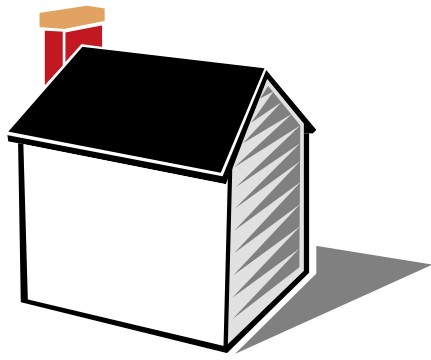
A "helper suitable" is literally someone to "fill up the empty spaces." This same word is used of God who helps us (I Sam 7:12; Psalm 22:11,19; 46:1). Woman is created to fill man's empty spaces. Men have strengths where women have weaknesses and women have strengths where men have weaknesses. As a whole, most men innately have objectivity, hard rationalization but lack subjectivity, soft emotion. Women are just the opposite. (more about this in article 6). They are to be completing each other, not competing with each other. Therefore in a marriage each mate must do their part for the relationship to work.

19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

Matthew Henry wrote that "Eve was not taken out of Adam's head to top him, neither out of his feet to be trampled on by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected by him, and near his heart to be loved by him."

God made the right woman for Adam and gave him to her – God gave the bride away! With a rib gone, Adam is no longer complete in himself. Man is not complete without woman.

TOP TEN REASONS GOD CREATED EVE: 10. God worried that Adam would always be lost in the garden because men hate to ask for directions. 9. God knew that Adam would one day need someone to hand him the TV remote. 8. God knew that Adam would never buy a new fig leaf when his wore out and would therefore need Eve to get one for him. 7. God knew that Adam would never make a doctor's appointment for himself. 6. God knew that Adam would never remember which night was garbage night. 5. God knew that if the world was to be populated, men would never be able to handle childbearing. 4. As "Keeper of the Garden,"



Adam would never remember where he put his tools. 3. The Scripture account of creation indicates Adam needed someone to blame his troubles on when God caught him hiding in the garden. 2. As the Bible says. "It is not good for man to be alone!" 1. When God finished the creation of Adam, He stepped back, scratched His head and said. "I can do better then that."

Someone once said that most marriages are made in heaven. They come in kits and you have to put them together yourself. That's very true. God wrote the blueprint, but man must do the assembly work. The next verses show how the parts fit together.

24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

This very important verse was probably added by Moses as a commentary when he wrote Genesis. God inspired him to write these words here. Jesus (Matthew 19:5-6) and Paul (I Cor. 6:15-16) quote them to show their importance. This is the key verse in the Bible to making a marriage work.

"LEAVE" means to forsake, abandon. While we will always have a responsibility to our parents, we can no longer depend on them to meet our emotional, physical, financial or social needs. The relationship changes. We must transfer our needs to our mate. Failure to totally do this is one of the most common problems in marriage today.

"CLEAVE" refers to clinging, keeping close. It is used of skin on bone. It means marriage is a 100% commitment: 'till death do us part', not 'till disagreement do us part'.

"ONE FLESH" refers to the oneness that comes from first leaving and then cleaving. These must be done first. Then there will be a submersion of two partial selves into the creation of a whole new self. It refers to unity of heart, mind, soul and body. In cooking flavors can be marinated (so each still retains some of its own identity) or married (blend into something new). In marriage we become one new person, incomplete without our mate.

"WILL BECOME" is progressive, meaning this is a process, not an instant act. It takes a lifelong to be complete. How many couples today really attain this?

25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

When a couple leaves, cleaves and becomes one, there is no shame between them. Intimacy (physically and emotionally) is the result. When a relationship is built on physical intimacy it will fall, but when sex is the expression of emotional intimacy its one of God's greatest gifts to mankind.

ALTERATIONS TO THE BLUEPRINT We've seen God's perfect plan for marriage in Genesis 2, but sin entered and altered the plan. Because of her role in leading Adam to sin, Eve is placed under the headship of Adam (Genesis 3:16; I Timothy 2:12-14; I Corinthians 14:34-35). The chain of command is altered. From equal leadership now the man is made leader.

LOCATION OF YOUR HOME Now that we have God's blueprint (and its alteration) we need to find the right place to build our house (marriage relationship). That would be heaven, but that isn't available to us right now so we'll have to settle for this earth. As you know the location of a house has a lot of impact on its value, security and stability. Life on earth in these days is hazardous to marriage. Mortgages last longer than marriages. Most marriages end in divorce. The average marriage lasts 7 years. Even out of those who stay together, only a very

small percent have what would be called a fulfilling, satisfying relationship. Actually the divorce rate among Christians is higher than among non-Christians. It's been said that the marriages are happy, it's the living together afterwards that causes all the trouble. It's bad and getting worse. No society has ever survived after its family life deteriorated. Getting a marriage license is much easier than getting a driver's license, and getting a divorce is easier than getting a point erased from your driving record. Edward Gibbon, in "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" says the first step in a nation's decline is the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home.

One hundred years ago society revolved around the family. People lived on farms or operated small businesses out of their homes. Everyone was together. Then the men went off to factories, leaving the women at home to raise the children and run the family. Later the women went to work, too, leaving day cares and schools to take care of children. The home has become a bus stop – a place to keep ones clothing and grab a quick bite to eat from time to time. Truly this is a very bad neighborhood to try and build a home, but it's where God has put us. Only with His help can we have a successful home.

SIGNS OF TROUBLE Watch for these things, they are signs of trouble in your marriage. Communication is not what it should be. You don't spend much time together. Romance is not a part of your daily life. You quarrel easily, and over little things. You take each other for granted. You don't laugh together or look forward to seeing each other as much as you did. You keep your inner thoughts and feelings to yourselves. You find excuses to avoid emotional intimacy. Sex isn't as satisfying as it could be. Children become increasingly aggressive or withdrawn and have displays of anger and rebellion. These are danger signs.

RESTORING A HOME Don't give up hope! All is not lost. God can and will restore any home that is turned over to His expert home repair service. He will give the wisdom and understanding to remodel your relationship into a thing of beauty. *By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures. Proverbs 24:3-4*

Of course, rebuilding a home is costly. It involves change. You don't just wake up in a totally redone home one day. There is a price to be paid, often a greater price than you thought. Usually more is involved in remodeling than you expected. We underestimate how messy it can be and how it can drain our patience. Still, the end result, once it is reached, is worth it. Start working on your house now, no matter how costly it may seem. Nothing costs more than a failed marriage!

This will mean replacing worldly ways and influences with Godly ones. Trades need to be made. Trade looking ward for looking upward. Trade secular ideas for Biblical principles. Trade quality time for quantity time. Trade corporate ladders for family bridges. Trade materialism for relationships. Trade convenience for commitment.

Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it. Psalm 127:1. Getting married is easy. Staying married is difficult. Staying happily married for a lifetime would be considered among the fine arts. Rebuilding starts with the words of Joshua: *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."* Joshua 24:15.

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2. How to Assure PREVENTIVE PROTECTION

“Why do I need a home? I was born in a hospital, educated in a college, courted in an automobile, and married in a church. I spend my days at work and my evenings shopping or going out. When I die I’ll be buried in a cemetery. I don’t need a home – all I really need is a garage!” This anonymous statement sums up how many feel today. They don’t really need a home, much less a house.

A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME When Christina Onassis died at age 38 her stepsister Henrietta Belber commented: “She lacked a sense of achievement. What she was striving for was just to be a normal human being with normal family relationships, which was virtually impossible in her situation. She had houses all over the world, but she never really had a home.” A home is a house with a heart inside. A house is built by hands, but a home is built by hearts. Money can buy a nice house, but only love can make it a nice home.

A reporter came to a fire one day where a house was steadily burning down to the ground. He noticed that there was a little lad standing by with his mom and dad. The reporter said, “Son, it looks like you don’t have a home any more.” The little boy answered courageously, “We have a home – we just don’t have a house to put it in.” Which do you have: a home or a house?

STORMS WILL COME That which destroys homes as well as houses are storms. A storm from without can cause a lot of damage to a house. A storm from within can cause much damage to a home, a relationship between husband and wife.

How many of you, before marriage, never imagined the fights you’d have after marriage? That’s true of everyone. No one gets married to fight. Still, sometimes it seems impossible to live in a family and still act like a Christian. After all, perfect mates come only in shoes and gloves. Abraham (Genesis 16, 21), Isaac (Genesis 27), Jacob (Genesis 30, 21), Moses (Exodus 4), David (II Samuel 6), Hoses (Hosea) and many others in the Bible all had turmoil in their homes. Living “happily ever after” is a real fairy tale!

Because of the fall, conflict is inevitable. Conflict is the enemy of oneness, leading to separateness in relationships. However conflict can serve as a catalyst to a greater experience of oneness in relationships.

Why does ‘made about you’ often turn into ‘mad at you’? For one reason. before marriage we put our best foot forward, willingly. We sacrifice and serve out of love. But after marriage the real ‘me’ comes out. We begin to put ourselves first. We show a different side of ourselves. At the same time, we are starting to see another side of our mate, one we didn’t see

before – their self-centered side. If love is blind, marriage can be a real eye-opener. In reality a marriage license is just a learner's permit. Much of what we learn, we learn the hard way.

Opposites attract. That's true in marriage. There's an old saying that states that a man has no business marrying a woman who can't make him miserable because that means she can't make him happy. To the extent your mate can bring you pleasure, they can also bring you pain. There are these two possibilities, or nothing. We can't have love without the possibility of hurt. As deep as our love goes, so deep our hurt can also go.

Therefore storms will come. They are an important and necessary part of nature. Actually, they bring growth. The same is true with storms in marriage (within the home). They can clear the air and bring growth. However when a storm is too bad it just brings destruction and loss. It's not the mild disturbances that do lasting damage, it's the hurricanes, the tornadoes, the earthquakes that cause deep and sometimes permanent destruction to homes.

STORM WATCH Someone has said that marriage is a series of rings: engagement ring, wedding ring and suffering. It can be like buying a record. In my youth we bought 45's. You really liked and wanted one side, but you have to take the flip side, too. You only focus on one side and often aren't even aware of what's on the other side – until after marriage. Then you discover the other side plays more and more, until you feel that all you have left is the hole in the middle!

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
LOVERS: fall in love & marry	ANTAGONISTS: children & \$ problems	ALLIES: acceptance, maturity
ROMANTIC - seeing mate answer to all problems	RESENTFUL -power struggles over big and little things -mate intentionally not meeting your needs -hurt each other	HARMONIOUS -recognize own faults, sins -honest self evaluation -balanced view of self and mate
DELUSIONAL mate can do no wrong	CONFRONTATIONAL mate can do no right	TRANSFORMATIONAL accept self & mate with strengths & weaknesses
think you are putting mate first, but really doing it for selfish reasons	put self before mate	able to really put mate before self
commitment UNTESTED	commitment UNCERTAIN good times & bad	commitment UNDOUBTED safe environment unconditional love
conflict AVOIDED	conflict CONSTANT open or below surface	conflict RESOLVED , trust & comfort grow
mate IDEALIZED (focus strength)	mate DISAPPROVED (focus weakness)	mate ACCEPTED
willingly sacrifice to put mate first, like you more	put self first, not sacrifice for mate	sacrifice out of love, for mate's sake, now own sake
GIVE	TAKE	SHARE
Conversation characterized by QUANTITY	Conversation characterized by COMPLAINING , disrespect, bitterness, hurt	Conversation characterized by QUALITY

'FALLING IN LOVE' (Stage 1) Remember when you 'fell in love' for the first time? You were obsessed with the other person and felt you had the love of the century. Did you know that studies show that that 'falling in love' feeling lasts about 2 years – then reality sets in. While it feels very good, it's really a very self-centered time. Something 'clicks' and we don't have to stretch or grow. We coast on surface attraction. We only see the good in the other and only let them see the good in us. We fall in love with the personality they show us, but then we end up living with their true character, complete with strengths and weaknesses. While it lasts, it's great! But what happens when we start having a more realistic view of the other and they of us? What happens then? We enter Stage 2.

'FALLING OUT OF LOVE' (Stage 2) Every relationship goes through stage 2. Let me reward that to say every relationship enters into stage 2. It's up to them if they go through it or stay in it. How bad it is or isn't depends on how much they have been able to really know their mate during stage 1. The more weaknesses as well as strengths are revealed and accepted during stage 1, the easier stage 2 will be. No relationship is always and forever in the 'falling in love stage.' Many don't understand this, and when stage 1 fades instead of working their way through stage 2 and then into stage 3, they separate and find someone else to 'fall in love' with – they just keep doing stage 1 over and over and over their whole life. They never get the depth and maturity of stage 3.

GOING BEYOND LOVE (Stage 3) Stage 3 is the goal most relationships never reach. People run into stage 2 and separate – sometimes physically, sometimes just emotionally. Those who stay together instead of divorcing end up withdrawing emotionally, living together more as brother and sister than as husband and wife. They become efficient coworkers, with each one knowing just what their role and responsibility is. They may function quite well to outsiders, but the romance, the spark, the intimate love they once had is gone. They don't want to pay the price to work through stage 2 so they can enjoy stage 3.

Stage 3 takes a real commitment to forgive, swallow pride, and make a decision to love an imperfect person who doesn't always deserve to be loved. It's not something we are naturally good at, nor something our society trains one for. Perhaps that is why marriages in other cultures, where marriage is based on other things than 'falling in love,' last longer. There is a more realistic approach, a more rational commitment, more down-to-earth expectations. It takes perseverance and hard work to make a go of almost anything in life, and marriage is no different. The rewards are proportionate to the work. No one 'falls in love' and then 'lives happily ever after' – our sin nature makes sure that never happens.

But how can one make the transition from Stage 2 to 3 – that's easier said than done!

STORM PROOFING YOUR HOME Ephesians 5:15-21 gives good, practical advice which, when applied to marriage, can help us enter Stage 3 quicker and smoother.

1. Lean on God's Wisdom Eph. 5:15 *Be very careful, then, how you live-- not as unwise but as wise.* A good marriage can only be built on God's wisdom: service, humility, forgiveness, love, respect, etc. The world's self-centered, me-first approach will never make it. That applies to little things as well as big things in marriages. Most couples are pulled together to face big problems. It's the little things that slowly erode and destroy a relationship. It's the slow leaks, now the blowouts, which we must watch out for. Termites destroy more homes than fire, tornadoes, hurricanes, etc.

Money is one of these seemingly 'little things' – but it brings out the selfishness in all of us. Often it is the surface issue we fight about, when there is a deeper problem of trust and

submission beneath the surface. Money causes many of the problems people face. It's been said that an unbalanced budget makes for an unbalanced marriage.

The number, upbringing and discipline of children is often something that causes marriage problems, as is sex, relatives and responsibilities around the house..

2. Use Time Wisely Eph. 5:16 *making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.* Priorities are of the utmost importance in making a marriage work. Articles 17, 18 & 19 will focus on the use of time in detail, but we must remember that we need time to communicate, to enjoy each other, to do all the things we did during courtship. A relationship must be fed to thrive and grow, and that takes time. Learn to say "No!" to things that take time from your mate. Marriage is our number one priority (after God) and is before children, home school, work and hobbies. To go from Stage 2 to Stage 3 a couple needs time together to talk, enjoy, develop their friendship, and work through difficulties before they get too big. It takes quality time together to prevent marriage 'drift.'

3. Be Understanding, Sensitive, A Good Listener Eph. 5:17 *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.* "Foolish" means "thick, dull, insensitive," like a callus which lacks feeling. We are to be sensitive to our mate's needs, to listen between the lines when they talk. Observe their needs and act accordingly to help them. Learn what to say when. A wife, especially, needs to know her husband is sensitive to her needs. A man needs to listen, really listen, to his wife.

Also, don't nag. Some married people don't pull together like a team because one of them is a nag. *"It is better to live in a corner of the house than in a house with a contentious nagging woman."* (Proverbs 25:24) Women nag because they are insecure and don't trust their husband (and also don't trust God). Men really dislike a nagging wife, for she becomes more like a mother than a wife.

Another major part of being understanding and sensitive is having victory over anger. Anger will keep a relationship from ever getting to Stage 3. For a detailed treatment of male anger, female anger, anger in children and how to have victory over anger see my series of articles on "Anger Control."

4. Submit to God and Mate Eph. 5:18-21 *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.* Mutual submission is the basis of all relationships: submission to God and to others. It is our pride that keeps us from submitting. Marriage is cooperation (Stage 3), not competition (Stage 2). Lack of mutual submission can turn holy wedlock into unholy deadlock.

Building a good marriage and building a good fire is similar in 3 ways. You build a fire with paper and kindling, and all at once it goes up in a brilliantly burning blaze. Then the primary blaze burns down and you wonder if the fire will fizzle out and leave you in the dark. You blow on it and fan it for all you are worth. Then smoke billows out and almost chokes you, but if the materials are good and if you invest enough energy and interest in maintaining it, soon the big solid logs catch, and your fire takes on new qualities.

How is your fire? How is your marriage? Are you moving into Stage 3, or are those internal storms causing real damage to your relationship? Fan that fire! Lean on God's wisdom. Use your time wisely. Be understanding and sensitive. Submit to God and your mate. Protect your home from damage. You have too much invested in it already.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MATE (& YOURSELF)

BUILD & MAINTAIN A STRONG CHRISTIAN HOME HOW TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL MARRIAGE

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3. How to Do MARRIAGE MAINTENANCE

When John meets Mary he immediately feels something special. She is beautiful, charming, intelligent and full of life. John's Love Bank instantly credits her account with three units. They start to date and find they have much in common. They really hit it off very well. Every time they are together her account goes up until it reaches 250 love units. Only Sarah, an old flame whom John broke up with over a year ago, ever had more units in John's Love Bank. Six months later Mary's balance is at 500 – an all-time high. John is sure he is in love with her.

Meanwhile, John's account in Mary's Love Bank has grown steadily, but not at quite the same pace. She likes John, but not as much as he likes her. His love units accumulate more slowly in her account. She remembers Bob and how much she loved him before he broke up with her for someone else. That painful memory causes her to abruptly tell John she needs a little breathing room. She suggests they suspend dating for a month or two so they can date other people.

John feels devastated. This is the most painful experience of his life. Several units quickly come out of her account. He calls her repeatedly over the next month and tries to talk her into resuming their relationship but she won't give in. Debits in Mary's account total 25.

John tries dating other women, but they get no points because he compares them to Mary and her record high 475 points. None can compare.

Then Mary calls and says she missed him and wants to get back together. Their relationship seems better than ever. By the end of the year Mary's balance in John's Love Bank has risen to 1,000 units. His has risen, too, in her bank and stands at 925. One night John proposes, she accepts and they are soon married.

Their first year of marriage is extremely happy. Without understanding all about it they seem to meet each other's needs quite well. They spend much time together and their love continues to grow. Mary starts playing tennis to spend time with John in his favorite pastime.

John earns an excellent salary as a computer analyst. Mary works part time as a secretary because she likes her job. She trusts John because he is honest with her in everything. He is proud of how she takes care of the house and of how attractive she is.

Interestingly enough, during their first year of marriage they do not accumulate points at the rate they did before marriage, mainly because they share a much wider variety of experiences than they had while dating. Now they are together when they feel good and when they feel bad. Credits and debits in their Love Bank accounts are being posted in accordance with the ups and down of life. They sort of balance each other out, but slow growth in their totals is still happening. They add a hundred credits a year to their accounts.

On their fifth anniversary they are still deeply in love with each other. They start a family and little Tiffany arrives. Changes now take place. They love her dearly, but new demands and

negative experiences start taking their toll on their Love Bank totals. By the end of the year Mary's account has dropped by 100 points – a small percentage, but still a drop. His account in her bank goes up as he helps her with the baby, overlooks her weight gain, and sacrifices for his family.

By the time Tiffany is two Mary is restless and wants to be more than a part time secretary. John supports her in her decision to return to college, finish her degree, and get a masters in business administration. She quits her job to take care of the baby and goes to college in the evenings when John is home with Tiffany.

Mary works hard and makes good grades, but time with John suffers. There is no more time for tennis. She is too exhausted by bed time for their sex life to continue as it had before. Weekends are their only time together, and Mary has to catch up on homework and take care of the house. This pattern continues for two years. Mary's account in John's Love Bank drops slowly but steadily. They live together in harmony (most of the time) but the intimacy they once shared has greatly faded.

John's account in Mary's love bank holds steady for he is helping her meet a special need in her life right now – getting an education. She realizes she isn't the wife to him she had been, and deeply appreciates his sacrifices for the family. She tells herself things will get better when she gets her degree.

Meanwhile at work John spends more and more time with an attractive product manager named Noreen. When Noreen's husband leaves her for another woman John tries to give her as much comfort and support as he can. Over the months his friendship with Noreen deepens daily, and she soon has a few hundred units deposited in John's Love Bank. They talk freely about anything and everything. Their conversations sometimes remind him of the good old days with Mary. Noreen is quite sympathetic about John's frustration with Mary.

A few weeks later Mary is particularly overwhelmed with studying for mid-terms and John gets hit with a special project that forces him to work a great deal of overtime with Noreen. That's when it happens. They find themselves in each other's arms making love. Afterwards John feels very guilty. Noreen admits she has fallen in love with John, who has been making major deposits into her Love Bank for quite some time. She tells him she'll be satisfied to have what she can with him and doesn't want to ruin his marriage. John rationalizes it all so he doesn't feel guilty. Noreen can meet needs of his which Mary can't. No one is hurt. Everyone benefits. That's what he convinces himself.

John and Noreen are together whenever they can be and after a year her account in John's Love Bank is at about the same level as Mary's. Hers increases fast because she never says or does anything that makes John feel uncomfortable. She only gives to John and doesn't expect anything in return. This would have gone on indefinitely except for Jane, who is a friend of Mary's and hears about John and Noreen from a friend who works with them. She tells Mary, who checks things out and actually catches John and Noreen together. This makes John feel extremely guilty and begs for forgiveness and another chance. He explains his rationalizing to her and she feels guilty and responsible for not meeting his needs. Mary tries being a better wife to John and even puts her classes on hold for awhile. John appreciates that a lot.

However John now loves Mary and Noreen. He won't leave Mary, but he can't give u Noreen, either. He tries his best to forget her, but soon is back with her again. Before long Mary is suspicious and Noreen is starting to pressure John to leave Mary to be with her. John doesn't know how he can give up either woman, but he sees how close he is to losing both of them. What can he do? He wonders how he ever got into such a mess!

STORM PROOFING YOUR HOME Everyone has a Love Bank, and each person who touches our lives has an account in that Love Bank. Good experiences bring deposits and bad ones bring withdrawals. When someone of the opposite sex starts accumulating large deposits

quite rapidly we feel we are 'falling in love' with them. On the other side, when someone is in the red we dislike, even hate them. We like to be around people who deposit and keep away from people who withdraw.

When we marry we do so because we have each accumulated a large balance in our Love Bank in that person's account. That is Stage 1 - see article 2 in this series). Then when we enter Stage 2 withdrawals start. If too many withdrawals are made too fast a relationship really suffers. Withdrawals will happen, but an effort must be made to keep deposits coming. When deposits slow or stop and withdrawals continue, it's only a matter of time until disaster strikes. Accidental hurt which is apologized for doesn't cause that large of a withdrawal, but purposeful hurt be words or actions can cause large withdrawals.

THE GIVER AND THE TAKER Before marriage, in Stage 1, we just want to Give to the other. We do whatever we can to make that person happy and avoid anything that will make them unhappy. It comes naturally when we want to make someone else happy. Unfortunately there is another part of us That is the Taker. It's the part that follows the rule: do whatever you can to make yourself happy and avoid anything that makes yourself unhappy. It's based in our sin nature. We all have it. This is what predominates in Stage 2.

Actually when we start out giving and giving, we send the message to our spouse that that's how we are, and they naturally start enjoying that. Then their Taker comes in and enjoys what we give. However they stop Giving back to us, so our Taker kicks in to straighten out the situation. "I've been giving enough, now it's your turn to give" is what we think. When our Taker rouses our mate's Taker it just leads to a fight.

The Giver's instincts deposit love units, but the Taker's instincts withdraw them. We you are in love, the Giver keeps a marriage passionate. But even under ideal condition love can be lost momentarily, and when that happens the Taker can do things to ruin any hope of love returning. To rebuild a love means becoming a Giver, not a Taker.

HOME REPAIR How can we repair a relationship that has cracks and damage to it? Every home needs repair and remodeling from time to time. Weather and time takes its toll. Walls can weaken. Love Bank accounts can gradually dwindle. What can be done?

A new home is like a new marriage. Everything is new and pure, so clean it sparkles. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, the grit of responsibility gets mixed with the grind of routine. Bills come due, weeds sprout, paint peels, windows stick, doors squeak, faucets drip, drains clog and roofs leak. We may fondly remember the way it was when we first moved in. How can we get it back into like-new shape? What can remove spots and stains which mar our home?

APOLOGIZING & FORGIVING Marriage is like a fishing net. Each day fishermen use their nets to catch fish and sell them at the market. One fisherman takes his fish from the net every day but lets debris from the ocean accumulate. Eventually so much debris is caught in the net that he can hardly cast the net out of the boat, and when he does, it's almost impossible to retrieve. Finally, in a fit of anger, he cuts the net loose and goes home without it. He's unable to catch and sell fish again until he buys another net. Another fisherman removes debris every time he retrieves the net with the fish he caught. Each time he casts his net, it's clean and ready to catch more fish. As a result, he catches and sells enough fish to support himself and his family.

What about your net? Forgiveness is the way a net is cleaned. Only a clean net will be able to catch and hold Love Units as they come our way. Movies may succeed with the idea that love is never having to say you're sorry, but I've never known of a marriage to succeed on that premise. Most lovers have to say, "I'm sorry" a great deal. Consider the following quotes:

A woman who can't forgive should never have more than a nodding acquaintance with a man. -- Ed Howe

Forgiveness is giving love when there is no reason to love and no guarantee that love will be returned. -- Walter Wangerin, Jr.

"I can forgive, but I cannot forget" is only another way of saying, "I will not forgive." Forgiveness ought to be like a canceled note: torn in two and burned up, so that it never can be shown against one. -- Henry Ward Beecher

Marriage is three parts love and seven parts forgiveness of sins. -- Langdon Mitchell

A happy marriage is the union of two forgivers.

We are most like beasts when we kill. We are most like men when we judge. We are most like God when we forgive. -William Arthur Ward, *Thoughts of a Christian Optimist*

Forgiveness is surrendering my right to hurt you for hurting me. -Archibald Hart, quoted in James Dobson, *Love Must Be Tough*

We often have a hard time saying we are sorry to our mate because of our pride. We want to be right, to Take. Men often feel they are admitting to being failures as men if they apologize. They see it as a weakness, that she won't love him any more if she finds out he isn't perfect. Also, men avoid emotions and apologizing is an emotional experience. Wives need to understand this and make him feel loved no matter what. The wife must forgive and forget even if he doesn't apologize. Especially if he does apologize women must quickly forgive or he will get the message it doesn't make any difference if he apologizes or not.

Forgiveness always views the offender as being under the control of God (Genesis 45:8). It always views personal offenses as ultimately issuing in God (Gen 45:5-7; Rom 8:28). When you forgive you give up any right to see them hurt for the pain they caused you (Gen 45:19; 50:21).

Charles Plumb, a US Naval Academy graduate, was a jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy lands. He was captured and spent 6 years in a communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learned from that experience. One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!" "How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb. "I packed your parachute," the man replied. Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, "I guess it worked!" Plumb assured him, "It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today." Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent on a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn't know.

Who's packing your parachute? Your mate, of course! Help them do a good job -- your future rests on it! By the way, what kind of a job are you doing packing their parachute? Can they depend on you to be there, Giving instead of Taking, putting love units into your account in their life instead of taking them out? Marriage is a team effort, we rise or fall together.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MATE (& YOURSELF)

BUILD & MAINTAIN A STRONG CHRISTIAN HOME HOW TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL MARRIAGE

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4. How to Remove PAST PROGRAMMING

Talk about the following together. Take a quiet evening or go out to eat and discuss your feelings about the following:

1. Describe your feelings when you first met your spouse.
2. What was the best present you ever received from your spouse?
3. What is one thing you take for granted in your spouse?
4. Other than your wedding day, when did your spouse look the most attractive?
5. What is one thing your spouse does at least once a week that you appreciate?
6. For you, what is a perfect date?
7. Describe your most memorable romantic encounter?
8. What is one area where your spouse is smarter or has more ability than you?
9. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?
10. What aspect of lovemaking do you enjoy the most?
11. What is one area your spouse has grown in since you've been married?
12. If you could relive one day of your marriage, what day would it be?
13. If you were to die before your spouse, what would you hope he/she would say at your funeral?

CRACKS IN THE WALL Our home has a crack in the plaster in the dining room. Periodically we paint over it, sometimes even plastering it up and then painting. Inevitable it reappears. Why? Because there is a fault in the foundation in the basement right under that spot. We cannot cover over or hide the crack, at least not for long, until we get rid of the underlying fault. That isn't an easy thing to do, so we just live with the fault and crack.

That's how a lot of relationships are. Cracks mar them, so we cover them up and put on our best face for awhile. Before long, though, it reappears. It's not until we get to the underlying faults and correct them that we will be able to have the external surface really change.

REPAIR WORK STARTS IN THE BASEMENT Problems we face today are just the symptoms of deeper inner troubles that have started long ago. A basement is where past memorabilia is stored: old papers, pictures, slides, baby clothing, special toys, and favorite

articles from the past. That's is often where our present 'cracks' originate – in our past. Things that were done (or not done) in our childhood are the 'faults' that result in cracks in our nice homes and lives today. To have our home all that God wants it to be we cannot ignore or just paint over these cracks, we must get to the root cause of them so we can be healed and freed.

THE INFLUENCE OF FATHERS UPON SONS What is a man? How would you define a man? Men, when you were a boy what did you see a man as being? When did you become a man? How will you know when your son becomes a man?

Fathers have a tremendous impact on their sons. Yet less than 1% of males have or had at one time what they would call a 'close' relationship with their father. Boys grow up in a woman's world: school, church, baby sitters, etc. – male examples are lacking. A boy needs a father to show him what a man is like and also to let him know that He has become a man himself. Most fathers today are gone – busy at work and play. Thus boys have to turn to others for their male affirmation. Some turn to sports or studies to prove themselves. Others rebel, become macho tough-guys, or turn effeminate.

Jews have their bar mitzva when a boy turns 13 as a turning point. Jungle tribes have a 'calling out' ritual. American Indians seek a vision. For boys in America today sinful activities have become their 'proof' of transition into manhood: first cigarette, first beer, first sexual experience or first car. Consequently boys grow up trying to prove to their fathers (or at least the father-image in their minds) that they are men. Many spend their whole lives trying to prove it, never quite sure if they really are a man or not. Then this unsureness gets passed on to their sons, magnified somewhat, and they pass it on to theirs. On and on it goes. It's time to change the pattern.

What's the solution? How can we repair this major fault in our foundations? First, realize this is typical of most men. Your father has the same built-in fault – that's where you got it. Honestly admit to yourself the hurt from your own father. Allow yourself to feel the pain of his actions (or lack of them). Then forgive him for it, remembering he was a victim of his father and so on. Turn it over to Jesus to heal you. Let your Father-God reveal Himself as He truly is and ask Him to fill the void in your life.

Women, you can help your husband by talking to him about these things in a gentle, loving way. Let him know how and why you see him as a man. Pray for him. Watch your expectations, your criticisms, and your rejection. Make him feel like your hero – he should be.

THE INFLUENCE OF MOTHERS UPON SONS

What is a woman? How would you define a woman? Women, what impact did your father have on the kind of woman you became? How will you know when your daughter becomes a woman?

Jacob, in the Old Testament, is all too typical. His mother, Rebekah, used him to meet needs her husband, Isaac, left unmet by his withdrawal (Genesis 25). Rejected by his father in favor of his more 'manly' brother Esau, Jacob found acceptance with his mother. However her poor view of men spilled over unto him. He grew up needing female affirmation, fearing female rejection and anger, and being dependent on women to tell him he was a man. It wasn't until he, in a very manly act, wrestled with God that he was able to be himself (Genesis 32:22-32). God recognized this change by giving him a new name – Israel. (For more information about this see my series of articles "For Men Only" and "Roadblocks to Christian Manhood.")

THE INFLUENCE OF MOTHERS UPON DAUGHTERS Daughters look to mothers as role models for being secure, confident and feeling good about being female. Mothers can be tempted to live through their daughters. They can take out their own frustrations on their daughter or burden her with too high expectations. If a girl feels rejected by her mother she will

turn to males for approval. Its easy for a mother to pass her own wrong patterns down to her own daughter: wrong expectations, manipulations she uses on men, 'games' she plays with men, etc. A daughter learns how to view and relate men by watching her mother's example and attitude. This forms how a girl feels about and relates to her own husband. Wrong patterns can cause major faults in a foundation which will affect a woman's relationship with all men for her whole life.

THE INFLUENCE OF FATHERS UPON DAUGHTERS Fathers impact their daughters in many ways. How they relate to her forms how she feels about herself as a woman. How he relates to his wife and other women shows her how she, as a woman, can expect to be treated. In effect, a father sets the pattern for how his daughter will relate to God, her own husband, and all men.

If a man doesn't know how to properly relate to the opposite sex he will avoid intimacy with them. A daughter will take this as personal rejection, failure on her part. She'll turn to other males to get male approval, often using her looks or body to get male attention.

On the other hand, some men find relating to their daughter easier than relating to their wife so they turn to their daughter for emotional needs which their wife should be meeting. It can be easier to talk to and show love to a daughter than a wife. This can make a wife envious.

When a father over-protects his daughter he is communicating that he doesn't trust her. A father needs to treat his daughter just the way her future husband should treat her. He sets the pattern.

Thus we've seen that cracks in the house are caused by faults in the foundation – our childhood training from our parents. This keeps one from mature responses to others. Dysfunction replaces godly functioning. David's family is a good example of this (for a complete, detailed explanation of dysfunctionality using David's family as an example see my series of articles "Healthy Relationships in a Dysfunctional World."

DAVID'S FAMILY We don't know much about David's family life, other than his father forgot about him when Samuel came to see his sons and that his brothers treated him quite cruelly when he visited them before killing Goliath. He made a quick marriage to Michal, who was a great catch but shallow spiritually and very self-centered. He sinned with Bathsheba and tried to cover it up, then confessed his sin and was forgiven and restored. However a pattern was set. It seems David didn't face the pain of his sin or the death of the baby. We don't see him treating it in his family. It wasn't something people talked about. Everyone had to bury their feelings. While David had wonderful intimacy with God, he didn't seem to do nearly as well with intimacy with other people.

All children need to know they are unconditionally loved and accepted by their parents. If they don't sense this they will assume it is their fault, they aren't worthy of their parents love. This pain and insecurity is more than one can live with so it is stuffed down inside and covered with any of a number of addictions: alcohol, drugs, smoking, overeating, workaholism, danger, gambling, crime, sex, etc. These don't meet the need, but do distract from the inner pain. They are cracks in the walls of our lives caused by faults down deep below in our pasts.

It isn't long before we start seeing some of these cracks in David's family. Amnon rapes his half sister Tamar (II Sam 13:1-2). Her full brother Absalom figured it would happen but didn't do anything to prevent it. He even lets on to her that it isn't that big a deal and to keep it silent – what will people think of the family? When David finds out he is furious but doesn't do a single thing about it. After 2 years Absalom takes matters into his own hands and kills Amnon, then runs away for 3 years. Finally he returns to Jerusalem gives up on establishing a relationship with his father when David rebuffs his attempts at reconciliation. He then leads a revolt against

his father which ends in his death. When he dies David finally show emotion, being heartbroken about Absalom's death (II Sam 18:33; 19:4). If only Absalom had know his father loved him this much the end might have been different!

Notice some characteristics (cracks in the wall) of dysfunctional families. Instead of facing problems they cover them up and manipulate the situations. Pain is avoided or denied. Emotions are ignored. Pain isn't talked about. Guilt and shame are used to force others into conformity while serious issues are ignored.

SOLOMON'S FAMILY These patterns pass on from generation to generation. Solomon, David's youngest son, was obviously affected by all that had happened even though it was before his birth. He was remarkably wise, wealthy, powerful and gifted. Still, he turned to pleasure, wine and sex to hide his pain (Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:1-16). Typical of a child from a dysfunctional home, he had addictions. Alcohol (Eccl 2:3; Prov 23:29-35), workaholism and sex (he had 700 wives and 300 concubines). He had a hard time with intimacy. He had a hard time labeling and expressing his feelings and emotions. He went from one destructive relationship into another (he married one ungodly woman after another). He knew what was right but had trouble doing it. He passed on the family dysfunction to his son, Rehoboam, and he split the nation in two.'

ABIGAIL One of the more common traits of dysfunction is codependency. A codependent is someone who is dependent on another to have their own emotional needs met. They feel responsible to take care of another person, and this makes them feel needed. Abigail, for as beautiful and wise as she was, obviously took care of her alcoholic husband Nabal. She baled him out when he insulted David's men. The servants knew to come to her for solutions, not Nabal. Codependents suffer from insecurity, so they find their purpose in life in serving others. Abigail married David soon after her husband died, even though David was also emotionally distant and already had other wives. She could have wanted more in a husband. She didn't mind losing her identity in other for she then found her identity in being needed and helpful. Eventually this kind of person burns out, though, for their needs are never met. They get drained and resent the very people they have made dependent upon themselves.

FIXING THE FAULTS These deep foundational breaks need healing. If any of this sounds like you what you must do is face the pain from your past. What childhood hurts and rejection did you feel? It takes a lot of emotional energy to deny and stuff this pain down inside. Let it out. It's like getting an infection cleaned out so healing can take place. Explore your past and admit the truth of it in order to grow past it. That doesn't mean blaming others, it just means recognizing that today's compulsive behavior and addiction is fueled by past family pain and hurt. Learn to replace wrong reactions with new, healthy ones. Reprogram your mind and heart. Let Jesus heal you. *"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed" (Jeremiah 17:14)*

If for no other reason, face and work through these things so you don't pass them on to your children. Are you teaching them to paint over cracks and make the outside presentable? Or are you showing them by example how a mature Christian faces past hurts and lets Jesus remove it and bring forgiveness and healing? Also, what kind of foundation are you building into them? It's much easier to correct a weak foundation now than allowing it to remain and forcing them to face it after it causes cracks in their life and marriage. Many good books about on this subject. I'll be glad to talk with anyone who wants to as well. Get free from the past!

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MATE (& YOURSELF)

BUILD & MAINTAIN A STRONG CHRISTIAN HOME

HOW TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL MARRIAGE

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5. How to be BOSOM BUDDIES

Do you remember Paul Simon's song "*I Am A Rock*" (1965)? Pay close attention to the words. They describe the attitude of many people today to friendship.

A winter's day, in a deep and dark December:
I am alone, gazing from my window
To the streets below
On a freshly fallen silent shroud of snow.

I am a rock. I am an island.

I've built walls,
A fortress deep and mighty,
That none may penetrate.
I have no need of friendship
Friendship causes pain.
Its laughter and its loving I disdain.

I am a rock. I am an island.

Don't talk of love;
Well I've heard the word
It's sleeping in my memory.
I won't disturb the slumber
of feelings that have died.
If I never loved I never would have cried.

I am a rock. am an island.

I have my books
And my poetry to protect me;
I am shielded in my armor,
Hiding in my room,
Safe within my womb.
I touch no one and no one touches me.

I am a rock. I am an island.

And a rock feels no pain;
And an island never cries.

What does this song say about friendship? Is this typical of many today? What kind of a marriage would a person with such an attitude have? How much does this resemble you?

Friendship. It's everything to a marriage. Good marriage relationships begin as friendships and continue as friendships. That's why, in our house plan, like in our own homes, we enter through the garage. Visitors use the front door, but family enters through the garage after parking. Marriage must be entered as a friendship first and foremost. The trust, companionship, respect, care and honest communication for a good friendship are also essential for a good marriage. You can't have a good marriage without first developing and maintaining a good friendship.

There's another way that our garage stands for friendship. That's where men most often develop friendships, while working on a car or home project. I put a telephone in the garage, for that is a more accurate picture of female friendships. Females talk to relate, men work together. It's important to understand how friendship differs for men and for women in order to better understand how to develop our friendship with our mate.

MALE FRIENDSHIPS Jim Mosher and I were the best of friends in high school. We went everywhere and did everything together. He lived down the block. We were on the wrestling team (he weighed 20 pounds more than me), football team (he was a lineman & I a back), and track team (I ran the sprints and he pole vaulted). On Saturday evenings we watched Red Skeleton and did sit-ups (he could do a thousand at a time). We walked to school together and both had shop (he had auto body and I was in architectural drafting). We were best friends, inseparable. Then I was drafted into the army and he wasn't (bad knee from football). I only ever saw him once after that, and it was awkward and empty, with nothing to talk about except the old memories. We don't live far apart but have absolutely no contact.

What had happened? Weren't we really friends? Sure we were -- the kind of friends men have: friends of convenience, location, and common achievement, friends one can walk away from and never see again.

My sister, in contrast, never lost contact with any of her friends. Our family still hears from Margie Patty, her elementary friends of 35 years ago! Although my sister died 10 years ago, I still know more today about her friends growing up than mine! They were entirely different kinds of friendships. Until her death in her 60's mother met once a week with three girl friends she made in the first grade. On the other hand, I no of no close friends my father has ever had.

For men, even our friendships do not come easy. They are complicated, rarely evaluated, and never talked about. After marriage and children, if friendships among men don't develop at work, they don't develop! That's why when men leave a job, they end up leaving their friends. Knowing that will come keeps friendships more on a surface level, too.

Men have a deep-seated need for friends, but there are many difficulties in men initiating and cultivating deep relationships. Could this be why so many, many more men than women become workaholics, alcoholics and drug addicts?

Men have a hard time with friendships because of their aversion to showing emotion. We don't let on that we enjoy another man's company. In other cultures men can hug, kiss, etc. but here such things bring homosexual suspicions -- from within as well as from without.

Men have a hard time with friendships because they often see them just as serving utilitarian purposes. A woman can invite another woman to lunch just to talk, because they miss each other and want to get together. But what if another man called and asked you to meet him for lunch? Your first question is "Why?" Suppose he says there is no reason, he just misses your company and wants to spend some time with you! Now if he said he needed some investment advice, help with his car, input on scheduling upcoming activities, etc., then there'd be no problem! At our church we get a dozen men come to our work projects, but less than half that to our times of Bible study and prayer. I think that's typical of most churches.

The fact that men don't see their fathers or other older males exemplify friendship also contributes to men's inability to develop deep friendships. This is true of their friendship with

their wife as well as with other males. Who was your father's best friend? What about your mother's best friend? See the difference?

Men often can be more open and develop better friendships with women than other men because they feel they have to compete with other men. Having grown up in a female world (mother, grandmother, female teachers at church and Sunday school, female baby-sitters, etc.) I am more comfortable relating to women than men. Often this is the case with men. From puberty on men learn to evaluate themselves by how they compare with other men. They are freer to show their more vulnerable, sensitive side with women. Women respond to this side far better than other men do! Men hide their problems and are afraid of really opening up. I guess that's why they don't like asking for directions or help.

Jesus is our example of how a male can develop friends. He picked 12 special men to travel with Him, then 3 of them as His closest companions. John is called "the disciple that Jesus loved" and leaned on Jesus during the last supper. How often do men touch today?

This is important for men and women to understand for these traits are carried over into friendships in marriage as well. Female friendship traits are very different.

FEMALE FRIENDSHIPS Women develop relationships around communication – talking together. From little on boys playing together often revolves around some form of competition. Girls, on the other hand, play in a way that enables them to relate and talk together. Is it that girls need friends more than boys, or just that they realize more that they need friends?

On the one hand, men are more rational and objective than women. This is part of their 'armor' to be the leaders and protectors of their families. Still, men need friendship as much as women need it.

Since females are more naturally oriented to relate, and since their mates often work hard at developing friendships during courtship, women assume this will continue throughout their married lives. Sometimes it does, but often it doesn't.

HUSBAND-WIFE FRIENDSHIPS Couples who aren't best friends don't have marriages as good as they could. *Men's Life* magazine surprised itself with a survey -- asked its readers "What's the most important thing in your life?" And no, it was not sex, it was not career, it was neither fame nor fortune. The most important things to 63 percent of the men were their wives and ninety percent of married men called their wives their best friend.

Men want and need their wives to be their best friends. Wives want and need their husbands to be their best friends. When this doesn't happen the relationship crumbles. Sex carries it for awhile, but when something goes hollow inside its strength and health is undermined. In my marriage counseling I often tell couples who aren't getting along as they should but want to salvage their marriage that what they need to do is go back to being friends. We all need to keep doing the things that developed our friendships, that first brought us together. Especially in a relationship that is struggling we need to back off of our expectations of ourselves and each other and just start being friends again. We have a perfect example of how this works in the Song of Solomon

FRIENDSHIP STARTS IN COURTSHIP The Song of Solomon is a wonderful picture of married love. Their solid marriage started with a sound friendship. They worked on 'little' problems before marriage, knowing that if they didn't come to agreement then these things would become big problems after marriage (Song of Solomon 2:15-17). Of course, that took time together. They would talk walks and sit and talk. It takes time to get to know another person. Sitting alongside a person in a movie theater date after date won't help you get to know each other very well. Communication is the key.

Friends can and do talk about anything, knowing they will be listened to and accepted, no matter what they say or feel. This must continue after marriage. It comes quickly and naturally

at first, but after hurts and disappointments come, we tend to withdraw and protect ourselves from hurt. We become separate islands in the same ocean, learning to function together efficiently but without the intimacy that we thought we'd always share.

It takes work to reverse this trend, and that starts at working at being friends.

TEMPERAMENTS AND FRIENDSHIPS While it isn't possible to give this subject the time and attention it needs in this article, it is very important to understand the temperaments and how they relate to you and your spouse. I have some articles and tapes on this, but the best source of information is the temperament books by Tim LaHaye that can be found in Christian book stores. Understanding your temperament and your mate's can be VERY helpful in understanding each other and the dynamics between you. That will help you understand your and your mate's strengths and weakness'. This is important for the trust and understanding necessary to grow a good friendship. Make sure you avail yourself of this fine tool!

WHAT ABOUT CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS WITH OTHERS THAN YOUR MATE? Friendships with others are important, as long as they don't distract from your friendship with your mate. That must come first. Your mate must be first and best friend. If other friendships can supplement that then fine. But if they in any way substitute or subtract from that, then that is not good. God didn't make a friend for Adam when he was alone, he made a mate. A mate is to be friend plus more.

Men need friendships with other men to help mature and sharpen them (*"as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another"*). David and Jonathan really helped each other. This can help men talk and work through issues particular to them as men. It can give them a support as well as an accountability factor. These relationships can't take too much time from family, though. These must go deeper than men just enjoying hobbies or work together. That isn't real friendship as we need it.

Women can benefit from friendships with other women in that they can talk about things that are important to them but often not important to men. Women can understand each other better than men can understand. This can't substitute for talking with one's husband, but can supplement it by taking some of the pressure off of him. When handled correctly it can help a woman better give to her husband. These can especially be helpful when a husband travels and is away for some time. Again, she can never go to others to have needs met that her husband should be meeting. Too many wives use children, friends or career to substitute for needs their husbands aren't meeting. Instead those needs must go unmet. Take them to God for Him to help you with them, but don't go to others with them.

What about opposite sex friendships with someone other than your mate? That's OK if it is casual and distant, but if too much closeness develops it can very easily take away from the husband wife relationship. It can also cause legitimate jealousy. If they intrude on your mate's territory in any way they are wrong. Be very careful of these, they can explode on you!

Anyway, make sure you put a priority on developing your friendship with your mate. There is no substitute for it. Friendship is the entrance into a good marriage and home.

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6. How to DELINEATE DIFFERENCES

I don't remember much about kindergarten, but I do remember a few things. I remember the little mats to roll out and lay on to sleep. I remember the cookies and milk. I remember the cloak room for coats. And I remember "the girls." It was my first exposure to them as a group. Miss Berger, our teacher, worked hard to get us to mingle. We sat boy-girl, boy-girl. We stood in line boy-girl, boy-girl. We played games together. But at recess the boys still gathered in one spot and the girls in another. It was that way all through elementary school. In Junior High it was the same thing. During physical education we had dance class in the gym. You've got it – the boys stood on one side of the room and the girls on the other. It's still the same today. Have you been to a wedding reception lately? It's not that we have anything against the opposite sex, it's just that we are more comfortable with members of our own sex.

Many today say men and women are the same, interchangeable, and the only differences are from cultural conditioning. They say woman make just as good soldiers and men just as good mothers. Then Newsweek recently had an article that said no, wait a minute – there are basic differences (and not just physically). God's word has said this all along. God created Adam, then He created Eve to "fill up the empty spaces" (literal Hebrew translation of "suitable helper" in Gen. 2:18). Eve was swayed by her emotions when Satan pressured her to eat from the forbidden tree. That's why Satan attacked her and not Adam first. Thus God says that the woman should be under the man in decision-making responsibility (Genesis 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:11-15). It's not a matter of man or woman being superior to the other, it's just that one is placed over the other in God's chain of command. Because men, as a whole, tend to be more rational man is to be the leader. The more emotional women excel at relationships. Below is a very general listing of the differences.

MEN	WOMEN
Mind	Emotions
Rational comes first	Feeling comes first
Production-oriented	Relationship-oriented
shop to get what needed quickly & efficiently men HUNT FOCUS ON PRODUCT	shop to enjoy the experience, browse women SHOP FOCUS ON PROCESS
long-range sight, distance planning, overall	near-sighted, present details, today's problems
View social distance as safety	View social distance as abandonment
Gain knowledge by trial-error, experimentation, trying to find out for themselves	Gain knowledge by asking others, learning from their experiences.
More independent & less conforming	Conform by relying on social codes

Very little emphasis on interpersonal skills or reading others until work at developing it later in life.	Pick up significant info from voice tones & intensity of expression. Thus interpersonal skills develop early and are maintained throughout life.
Usually very curious	Not as a whole naturally curious
Thrive on taking risks, conquering	Not willing to take many risks
Don't do as well in school	Do much better in school
Don't do as well under stress	Do much better under stress
Present: man's personality often gets lost in the emotional life of the wife	Past: woman's personality often got lost in her husband's vocational world
Church growth important, Success = numbers	Church growth not important, Success = relationships
Turn to Jesus later in life Minority, 40% of members Irregular attendance, involvement	Turn to Jesus earlier in life Majority, 60% of members, Regular in attendance, involvement
1/2 as many go for counseling	2 times as many go for counseling
Competitive	Affirming
Final Product most important	Process most important
Goal: final product right	Goal: intimacy & relationship
Product & Process over Person	Person over Product & Process

Admittedly these are generalizations. I do realize that it can be very frustrating for some people when gender differences are painted in such broad strokes, since there's such a large spectrum of what women are like and what men are like. Simplifying and overstating basic differences can help them to be easier seen. This can be quite helpful in understanding ourselves and our mates. In fact, without realizing these basic differences, though, many painful experiences can happen in a marriage. We **MUST** understand ourselves and our mates in order to better love, support, communicate and get along together.

I do have one disclaimer, though. In 20% to 25% of couples there is a flip-flop of these characteristics and roles. The man is the outgoing, relational one and the woman has trouble expressing personal thoughts and feelings. Everything in the columns is true, it's just the title on the top of the columns that is reversed. If this is your case, never fear – you aren't alone!

To better understand these differences, as well as substantiate them, the following chart uses the Bible to show the basic differences between men and women.



	HUSBAND	WIFE
Because of the Fall	Painful Toil Ground Cursed Gen 3:17	Painful Birth Desire for Husband Gen 3:16
As a Result, Orientation is to:	Task; Doing	Relationship; Being
Therefore, Greatest Need	Significance	Intimacy
Resulting Principal Activity	Providing I Tim 5:8	Nurturing Titus 2:4-5
Creativity directed toward	Work	Home
Principal Concerns	Money; Meaning	Family; Security
Deepest Fear	Failure to Provide	Something Happen to Child
Principal Struggle	Pressure	Worry
Principal Need in Marriage	To be Respected Eph 5:33	To Be Cherished Eph 5:25
Principal Command	Love Wife Eph 5:25	Submit to Husband Eph 5:24
Disobedience is	To Hate, Be Indifferent	To Resist

Principal Strength	Wisdom	Humility
Principal Weakness	Pride	Folly
Principal Daily Temptation	Anger	Fear

MEN COMPETE One example of the differences we are talking about is that men naturally want to win, to be in front. We have a need to prove ourselves and our competency. Women play to relax and relate, but men play to win. Men compete when they drive and park (have to find the closest parking spot). Watch your boys growing up. They compete in everything: burps, gross stories, first done eating, etc.

The following quote from “The H.I.M. Book” by Chris Fabry illustrates this well. “Soon after my wife and I went to counseling I began to see how I was caught in a vicious downward spiral of competition. I competed with her at parenting tasks. Could I diaper faster and with more precision? I competed at driving the car. I competed at being nicer to my in-laws. When I began to see the problem of my competitive spirit, I competed over who was getting healthier faster. I claimed that I had a better handle on the issues of competition, thereby nullifying my claim. That realization was a bitter defeat, but I did realize it first.”

Often this competition to be first and right hurts a women, for she takes it personally. It isn't meant that way. It's just that being wrong is very, very difficult for men for it means we lose. If we lose we feel like we are failures. God has built it into men to be the leaders, protectors and providers of their families. Even minor failure can really devastate us.

MEN WANT CONTROL For much the same God-given reason, men want/need to be in control. We need that to protect and provide for our families. Often we take it too far, though, and exercise control over our families. We try to run them as do our TV's with the remote control. Perhaps that's why there are so many jokes about men and TV remote controls – the TV is one thing in life we CAN exercise total control over, and we don't want to give it up!

Men feel they need control over their environment in order to feel safe. As little boys so many out-of-control things in our families hurt us, so our defense is to be in control and not at the mercy of anyone or anything. We equate control with safety.

MEN DON'T LIKE TO ASK FOR HELP Men have a reputation of not asking for help, counsel, instructions or directions. I read recently that if it had been three wise women instead of men they would have asked for directions and arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole and brought practical gifts.

You must understand that men get their sense of self from achievement. We tend to be task-oriented and being self-reliant is very important. To ask for help is an admission of failure and dependency, and we see that as a weakness.

MEN DON'T LIKE TO SHOP Fridays are our day off. I'll make a list of things to accomplish that day and charge into it, efficiently trying to do as much as I can as quickly as I can. Sometimes, though, I'll need to run to the hardware store to get something. Nancy will get wind of this and, since this is our 'day off,' she'll want to spend time with me and come along. Next thing I know we're at the shopping center or a clothing store, and then its a furniture store or gift shop. We browse and wander. Nancy makes small talk, acting like she's having a good time, holding my hand and drawing the whole thing out. Well, I have my little ways of communicating impatience, after all I do have my list to conquer ASAP. Nancy snaps out of her mood and we rush home and get back to work. Later that evening, when I'm done with my list and feeling victorious about my accomplishments, I'll want to get close and cuddle up to Nancy. However, she's sort of stiff, not much eye contact, friendly





but not warm, even unresponsive to my advances. Why? What happened? Men may not know, but women certainly understand. You see, men are compartmentalized and focus on one thing at a time. What happens at the store has no connection to what happens in the bedroom. Women, however, are not that way. They are connected, and what happens in the morning has everything to do with what happens at night!

We've already seen that men like to be in control of things and don't like to ask for help. Maybe that's why we don't like to shop. Oh, we'll 'hunt' for something specific, making a challenge out of it, something to control and conquer. If we're competing against the clock or the project, we'll go to the store to purchase something. But to wander around, aimlessly talking and wasting time, that usually doesn't appeal to men. Women shop to enjoy the process, as a way of relating with the one they are with. Men shop to get to the final product – having it done. When I go to the mall with my wife to shop, it takes several hours of looking here and there, returning to the first store, making several purchases because she isn't sure which is right (most of which are returned next trip to the mall) and then second-guessing herself while shopping for the next item on the list. When my sons and I go to the mall, watch out! As we drive there we strategize as to where to best park and who should get what on the list. We plan our routes and divide up the list. We then dart through it all, being done in 20 minutes. The first one done 'wins,' the last one is looked down on for holding up the rest of us. Now THAT'S shopping!

WHY DID GOD MAKE MEN & WOMEN SO DIFFERENT? One reason, as we already saw in Genesis 2:18, is to complement each other and balance each other. Together we have a rich spectrum of all that is needed. Often, though, friction comes from our differences instead of smooth harmony. We need to totally depend on God to blend correctly, which is another reason he made us different. We need to keep Him at the center of the relationship for it to function as it should. We can't be all God made us to be without His help, so we absolutely and totally need to depend on Him in our marriages.

Being so different can work one of two ways. We can either blend into one wonderful union (or at least be progressing in that direction) or we can make each other miserable. Couples can make each other happier than anyone else can, but they also can make each other more miserable than anyone else can. The potential to hurt is just as great as the potential to help. The capacity we have to be built up by our mate is the same as the capacity to be torn down. The more they can please and pleasure us, the more they can hurt and frustrate us. That's why a good, solid groundwork of friendship is so important, as we saw last time. That not only provides an understanding of the basic differences between men and women, but it also develops a patience and understanding between us. This is needed to carry through the harder times.

I encourage you to get a good grasp of these basic God-given differences. Understand your self. Understand your mate.

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7. How to Handle FEISTY FEELINGS

Lets say a guy named Roger is attracted to a woman named Elaine. He asks her out to a movie; she accepts; they have a pretty good time. A few nights later he asks her out to dinner, and again they enjoy themselves. They continue to see each other regularly, and after a while neither one of them is seeing anybody else.

And then, one evening when they're driving home, a thought occurs to Elaine, and, without really thinking, she says it aloud: "Roger, do you realize that, as of tonight, we've been seeing each other for exactly six months?"

And then there is silence in the car. To Elaine it seems like a very loud silence. She thinks to herself: Gosh, I wonder if it bothers him that I said that. Maybe he's been feeling confined by our relationship; maybe he thinks I'm trying to push him into some kind of obligation that he doesn't want, or isn't sure of.

And Roger is thinking: Gosh. Six months.

And Elaine is thinking: But, hey, I'm not so sure I want this kind of relationship, either. Sometimes I wish I had a little more space, so I'd have time to think about whether I really want us to keep going the way we are, moving steadily toward . . . I mean, where are we going? Are we just going to keep seeing each other at this level of intimacy? Are we heading toward marriage? Toward children? Toward a lifetime together? Am I ready for that level of commitment? Do I really even know this person?

And Roger is thinking: . . . so that means it was . . . lets see . . . February when we started going out, which was right after I had the car at the dealer, which means . . . lemme check the odometer . . . Whoa! I am way overdue for an oil change here.

And Elaine is thinking: He's upset. I can see it on his face. Maybe I'm reading this completely wrong. Maybe he wants more from our relationship, more intimacy, more commitment; maybe he has sensed even before I sensed it that I was feeling some reservations. Yes, I bet that's it. That's why he's so reluctant to say anything about his own feelings. He's afraid of being rejected.

And Roger is thinking: And I'm gonna have them look at the transmission again. I don't care what those morons say, it's still not shifting right. And they'd better not try to blame it on the cold weather this time. What cold weather? Its 87 degrees out, and this thing is shifting like a garbage truck, and I paid those incompetent thieves \$600.

And Elaine is thinking: He's angry. And I don't blame him. I'd be angry, too. Oh, I feel so guilty, putting him through this, but I can't help the way I feel. I'm just not sure.

And Roger is thinking: They'll probably say its only a 90-day warranty. That's exactly what they're gonna say, the scumballs.

And Elaine is thinking: Maybe I'm just too idealistic, waiting for a knight to come riding up on his white horse, when I'm sitting right next to a perfectly good person, a person I enjoy being with, a person I truly do care about, a person who seems to truly care about me. A person who is now in pain because of my self-centered, school-girl romantic fantasy.

And Roger is thinking: Warranty? They want a warranty? I'll give them a warranty. I'll take their warranty and stick it right up their . . .

"Roger", Elaine says aloud.

"What?" says Roger, completely startled.

"Please don't torture yourself like this", she says, her eyes beginning to brim with tears.

"Maybe I should never have . . . Oh, I feel so . . ."

(She breaks down, sobbing.)

"What?" says Roger.

"I'm such a fool", Elaine sobs. "I mean, I know there's no knight. I really know that. It's silly. There's no knight, and there's no horse."

"There's no horse?" says Roger.

"You think I'm a fool, don't you?" Elaine says.

"No!" says Roger, glad to finally know the correct answer.

"It's just that . . . It's that I . . . I need some time", Elaine says.

(There is a 15-second pause while Roger, thinking as fast as he can, tries to come up with a safe response. Finally he comes up with one that he thinks might work.)

"Yes", he says.

(Elaine, deeply moved, touches his hand.)

"Oh, Roger, do you really feel that way?" she says.

"What way?" says Roger.

"That way about time", says Elaine.

"Oh", says Roger. "Yes."

(Elaine turns to face him and gazes deeply into his eyes, causing him to become very nervous about what she might say next, especially if it involves a horse. At last she speaks.)

"Thank you, Roger", she says.

"Thank you", says Roger.

Then he takes her home, and she lies on her bed, a conflicted, tortured soul, and weeps until dawn, whereas when Roger gets back to his place, opens a bag of Doritos, turns on the TV, and immediately becomes deeply involved in a re-run of a tennis match between two Czechoslovakians he never heard of. A tiny voice in the far recesses of his mind tells him that something major was going on back there in the car, but he is pretty sure there is no way he would ever understand what, and so he figures it's better if he doesn't think about it. (This is also Roger's policy regarding world hunger.)

The next day Elaine will call her closest friend, or perhaps two of them, and they will talk about this situation for six straight hours. In painstaking detail, they will analyze everything she said and everything he said, going over it time and time again, exploring every word, expression, and gesture for nuances of meaning, considering every possible ramification. They will continue to discuss this subject, off and on, for weeks, maybe months, never reaching any definite conclusions, but never getting bored with it, either.

Meanwhile, Roger, while playing racquetball one day with a mutual friend of his and Elaine's, will pause just before serving, frown, and say:

"Hey, Norm, did Elaine ever own a horse?" (Reader's Digest Jan 1996, p 109-111)

AH, YES – EMOTIONS They make life great. They make life miserable. We love them. We hate them. They set the 'mood' for a relationship. Unfortunately the mood isn't always as peaceful as we'd like it to be. Men can't understand what women are feeling. Women can't understand what men are thinking. Thus feelings get hurt and emotions explode.

MARS & VENUS As the books says, men are from Mars and women are from Venus. Once they got together they respected and enjoyed their differences, until one day when everybody woke up completely forgetting that they had once come from different planets. Ever since men

have mistakenly expected women to think and communicate the way men do, and women expect men to think and communicate the way women do. These unrealistic expectations cause frustrations.

LOGIC & INTUITION Men and women are wired differently. They both think and feel, but not the same. Men live in black and white while women live in Technicolor. Men are more logical (objective), women more intuitive (subjective). Now in about 25% of relationships the male fills the role we are calling the 'woman's' role, and the woman fills the 'man's' role. No matter how it is, though, we find these patterns are present. Victor Hugo said men have sight, women insight. Women have a predisposition to be more intuitive and feeling-oriented than men. Men have a predisposition to be more reason and logic-oriented than women. Men are fixers. Women are feelers.

LOGIC & EMOTION Almost all marriages have a Mr. Impeccable Logic and a Mrs. Raw Emotions. Man says "give me the facts," "what are the pros and cons?" "let's think rationally," and "let's define the problem." Man operates by impersonal, objective, intellectual reason. Emotion just gets in the way and confuses things. Pure, beautiful logic keeps the mind clear and leads to right decisions. He is the calm, detached scientist applying rigorous and precise logic to every situation. "A plus B plus C must equal D."

Women are different. "I'm upset and I don't know why yet," "I'm sensing," "I'm angry ... sad ... frustrated ... happy." "There's definitely A, and I guess there's T. Yeah, T's good. Maybe F, but I'm not sure. Wait, something's coming in. Yes. Q. Here's Q. W is definitely a problem. I hate W. I have no idea how it all adds up. I'm still working my way through the alphabet."

Women definitely do have and use logic, but it is secondary. Most conversations end before women get to that point. Men, let them work through their emotions and they'll get logical. By the same token, men definitely do have and use emotion, but to them it is secondary. Women, let them be logical long enough and they'll start to connect with their emotions. It's just that most conversations don't do that long.

MEN FEAR EMOTIONS Men aren't naturally as emotionally-oriented as women. On top of that, they often draw away from the emotions they do have. Society seems to communicate to men that emotions show weakness. "Big boys don't cry." "Be a man." And so instead of shedding tears, men secrete stomach acid. Many more men will show up for a work day at church than a Bible study where feelings are shared and needs are prayed for.

One reason for this is that men often associate emotions with pain: being abandoned by their father, shunned by a friend, criticized by their mother or rejected by a girl. Women associate feelings with girlhood friends, pets and closeness (unless they have big hurts in the past in which case they, too, shut down emotionally). Men avoid getting emotional because of their experience that emotions bring pain – and who wants to hurt? Besides, men believe that logic is the answer to all life's problems. It can take care of anything.

Women, watch how you use your emotions. Many women have learned as little girls how to use their emotions to defend themselves against and actually control stronger, more physical boys. It's their 'ace in the hole.' Unfortunately women don't understand the shattering impact their emotional intensity has on a man. He learned with his own mother how to not show it, how to do the turtle thing. But inside he's shaking, cringing, confused, angry, hurt, wishing he were anywhere but here, sometimes even thinking that death is preferable to what he is going through.

EMOTIONAL NEEDS We all have emotional needs for love and security. Ever since sin entered the human race acceptance has been replaced by rejection. Innocence was replaced

by guilt and shame. Security and a sense of worth have been undermined by guilt and shame. We are all hurting and looking for someone to take away our hurt.

A MAN'S EMOTIONAL NEEDS Men need to be loved and accepted, as do women. They feel loved and accepted when they are needed and when they provide for the needs of their loved ones, and their loved ones recognize this and thank them for it.

A WOMAN'S EMOTIONAL NEEDS Women need to be loved and accepted, as do men. They feel loved and accepted when they are shown love, tenderness and affection. They need to connect, and do that by conversation (that's why they seem to talk so much). She needs a husband she can trust to put her first, and he shows this by putting her needs before his own (Ephesians 5). She wants someone who wants and needs her more than anything else, even himself. This sacrificial, unconditional love is what a woman must have from her man.

Men, remember your goal is to understand your wife, not to give her answers. She wants to get her message across to you (and she uses emotions to communicate how she feels). Don't just think about getting your message, your wonderful solution to all her problems, across to her. If she doesn't think you understand how she feels she'll keep talking and repeating herself, going into more and more detail, until she feels understood. Unfortunately that makes it harder for a man to understand. Before long, he feels he's buried in the massive mud slide of repeated details! Then his brain registers full and he can't listen any more. His eyes glaze over and he gets that "deer-in-the-headlights" stare. She'll notice and he'll be toast. "Are you listening to me?" "Sure." "What did I just say?" Suddenly the smell of burning toast fills the room. He wasn't listening, he lied about it, the conversation is over, she is hurt and angry, and he's in serious damage-control mode. He throws himself into his logic, but that just makes it all worse.

Men, your first responsibility is to listen, not to give answers. She knows the answers. She doesn't want your answers, she wants your caring, as shown by your understanding. Women, watch your response to his insistence on using logic. You'll feel rejected, but if you push too hard for a response you become the Great Nag. If you back away too far you become the Ice Queen. Either way you lose.

SO WHAT'S THE ANSWER? There is not one answer, no quick solution, no magic formula. First, realize your mate is very different than you, so don't evaluate what they say and do by what it would mean if you said or did it. Men and women are married differently. Men are from Mars and women are from Venus. No matter how sincere you are, or how hard you try, if you aren't shooting at the right target you'll never hit it. The best you can do is forget your own emotional needs and concentrate on meeting your mate's needs. Study them, focus on them, do anything for them while forgetting yourself. Let God take care of your needs, be it through your mate or directly by His Spirit. Make sure you communicate with each other. Take any unmet needs to God. Pray for Him to fill you with His peace and patience, His wisdom and love, and His power and strength. Then you'll be able to better meet your mate's needs.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MATE (& YOURSELF)

BUILD & MAINTAIN A STRONG CHRISTIAN HOME HOW TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL MARRIAGE

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8. How to Have an UNDERSTANDING UNION

WHAT HAPPENS TO LOVE AFTER THE WEDDING? Every couple I marry is convinced theirs is the love of the century and will last through anything. But usually in a year or two they are either divorced or living with emptiness and distance between them. Everyone wants a love that will last a lifetime, but few find it. Why? What happens after the wedding?

EVERYONE NEEDS TO BE LOVED Love is a basic human need. When we feel unconditionally loved and accepted we feel we can accomplish anything. When we don't have love we feel empty and lost. If we don't have the real thing we latch onto a substitute (which doesn't meet the need). We try to impress others with our appearance, build, brains, personality, skill, accomplishments or possessions. We use sex as a substitute for real love. None of these really satisfy our need for total love and acceptance.

'FALLING IN LOVE' Today we have glamorized a phenomena we call 'falling in love' and seek to have that meet our love needs. Remember when you first 'fell in love'? You were obsessed with the other person, that's all you thought about. Nothing else in life mattered but being with and pleasing that person. Today that feeling is used as our criteria to decide if we are in love and should marry. But look at our divorce rate today, too. What is there about this 'falling in love' that dooms relationships based solely on it?

'Falling in love' isn't the kind of love it takes to make a lifetime relationship work. Often we are more taking with loving or being in love than with the other person. We see the other person as perfect and our love as having arrived. It's an unrealistic time that requires no real sacrifice or facing the self-centeredness in ourselves or the other person. It's like our sin natures go on hold until we are lured into the trap of thinking life will always be like this. This 'falling in love' emotion doesn't motivate us to stretch and grow for we feel we have already arrived. It gives an euphoria, an illusion, of a close relationship with the other when the fact of the matter is that we really don't know ALL about the other for we don't know their weakness' and sin patterns. It's an escape from reality, a temporary emotional high. It first hits in early teen years and, since it feels so great, we keep looking for it over and over the rest of our lives.

Unfortunately it isn't real love. Real love is a free will choice, not something that sweeps us off our feet. That doesn't mean we can turn love on or off at will, but it means our minds and our rational process is in control, not some vague feeling. Just because something 'clicks' between two people emotionally and physically doesn't mean it is real love. To equate it with true love and seek after it the rest of our lives is to be mislead and disappointed in one relationship after another -- exactly what is happening today! Often this 'in love' emotion is used as the criteria to determine if we are still in love and should stay married. Of course that feeling doesn't last, all studies show it lasts two years at the most. Then what?

Real love has at its foundation a deep friendship between two people and grows from there. Real love takes sacrifice, pain, effort. 'Falling in love' requires nothing of us. We are pushed by an emotional force to act differently than we normally act. We become other-centered, attentive, sensitive, yielding, only thinking about meeting their needs. We don't realize that our real motive in doing this is because it

makes us feel good, especially when the other responds to it and we think our love is 'growing.' Real love is other-centered, if I get anything out of it or not isn't the issue. Mistaking 'falling in love' for real lifelong love is dangerous, especially when a person married to another imagines themselves 'falling in love' with someone else.

Don't judge your present married love by the unrealistic and temporary emotional euphoria you first experienced when you 'fell in love' in the past. Don't assume you must always have that feeling for your mate. Don't be alarmed if that feeling has gone. Don't use that as your judge of real love. That's not how God loves us, and it's not how He requires us to love each other. He expects us to love others we don't even like. Love is a free will choice to stay loyal and faithful to the person God has shown you He wants you to be married to. Real love means humbling yourself, putting the other first when it hurts, confessing sin, apologizing, changing behavior, forgiving hurts done you without waiting for an apology, overlooking sin your mate is blind to in their life and allowing them to see your faults. No, 'falling in love' is not our standard to go by.

HOW FULL IS YOUR EMOTIONAL LOVE TANK? Inside each person is an emotional love tank which much be full for the person to function as he or she should. That's easy to notice in children. You can tell when their tank is empty for an extended time. Extreme rebellion and bitterness develops, substitutes abound, an very unloving person appears. Adults are better able to hide it when their love tanks are empty, knowing that wrong behavior just brings more rejection and hurt. We put up walls to protect ourselves from further hurt, all the while making a real love relationship with another impossible. Deep inside we await the 'right' person to come along so we can safely 'fall in love' and live happily ever after. That just leads to one intense but short relationship after another. Living with an empty love tank is miserable. It's also dangerous. It's like driving a car with out oil! If You car's oil container is empty and you drive damage will occur. How full is your emotional love tank right now? How full is your mate's?

If 'falling in love' isn't the way to permanently and totally fill our love tank, what is? How are we to get our love tank full? How can we fill our mate's love tank?

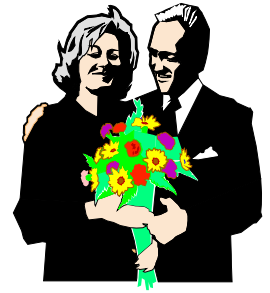
COMMUNICATING LOVE There are different languages one can use to convey information between people and even between computers. The same is true of conveying love. Unless both people or computers speak the same language, the information being sent won't be received. Many times a person's love tank isn't full because they aren't picking up on the love being communicated by another person. There are five main ways of communicating love:

1. Words which speak love - telling the person you love them
2. Worthwhile time spent together - showing love by spending good time together
3. Receiving a gift - giving something to convey love
4. Sacrificial Acts of Service - sacrificially doing something for the other person
5. Physical Touch - touching conveys love

1. WORDS WHICH SPEAK LOVE Mark Twain said, "I can live for two months on a good compliment." This was his love language. Words are powerful (Prov 18:21; 12:25), but some people need to hear good things said more than others. If this is how love is communicated to you, you pick up on good things said to you and thrive on them. Little criticisms and negative comments hurt deeply.

For some reason, after marriage people often have trouble telling their mate how they love them. Why is it sometimes so hard to say words which speak love? Often it is our pride that makes us unable to say things we once would have said. We don't want to humble ourselves, we are afraid of opening up and being hurt. Maybe we are embarrassed by intimacy and see it as a weakness. If we have an unforgiving attitude to our mate we will withhold complements and positive comments. Then, too, if this isn't the way we like having love communicated to us we won't realize how important it may be for another person.

2. WORTHWHILE TIME SPENT TOGETHER For some people, 'talk is cheap' and they need to be shown love by quality and quantity time together. Having another's undivided attention is what speaks love to them. This doesn't mean watching TV together, but focusing on each other or just sitting quietly together doing nothing. It means sharing on a deeper level than just talking about what to have for supper or what the dog did on the rug today. There is a price to pay to have this kind of time: put the children to bed early and don't answer the phone, or better yet get a baby sitter and go some place where you can spend good time together (not a movie or bowling).



Let me give some suggestions to make sure you 'connect.' Give the other person eye contact and keep your mind from wandering. Don't be doing anything else with your hands, eyes or mind but listening 100%. Listen behind and between the words: what feelings are they conveying. Observe body language, learn to 'read' your mate (more true, honest communication takes place this way than with words). By the way, watch your body language. Things like looking at your watch convey volumes. Never interrupt. That is like saying that what you have to say is more important than what they have to say. Don't contradict, argue, deny, defend yourself, etc. Just listen and then talk when it is your turn. Ask leading questions such as: "How did that make you feel?" Give them plenty of time to connect. Remember to follow up later, asking them how something developed or turned out.

3. RECEIVING A GIFT "For God so loved the world that He GAVE..." Some people convey love by giving gifts, others have their love tank filled when given something. This is their love language. It doesn't have to be something expensive or large -- it truly is the thought that counts. Married couples often do this before marriage and then stop. It doesn't affect most couples, unless one receives love through having gifts given to them.

4. SACRIFICIAL ACTS OF SERVICE Another way love is seen by people is having someone do an act of service for them: rake leaves, do dishes, cook supper, change diapers, shop, clean bathroom, take trash out, paint a room, take care of the car, etc. Jesus washed the disciples feet. All Christians are called to "serve one another in love," but some people really need to have this done for them in order to hear love being spoken and their love tank filled.

What makes this hard to do? Again, our pride stands in the way. Down inside we feel others should be serving us instead of us serving them. We are self-centered. We don't want to do something nice for someone who hasn't been perfect in their actions or words to us. We feel inferior if we serve someone else. Still, this is very important to do.

5. PHYSICAL TOUCH The last but not least way of communicating love is by physical touch. Some people hate being touched while others really, really need it. For these people sex means much more (in a different way) than it does to others. Jesus touched children who came to him. Today this is a hard love language to communicate. Touching those of the same sex or strangers is really discouraged and often misinterpreted. Someone who needs touch to feel love but has been physical abused may be afraid of the very thing they most need. We must be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others in this aspect, but always remember that, for some people, touch is their life-line to feeling love.

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR LOVE LANGUAGE Each person has one of these as the primary way they perceived being loved. Knowing this can show why some things mean more to you than others and why you better respond to some people than others. It can help you tell your mate how to better communicate love to you. How can you know what is your language?

What makes you feel most loved by your mate? What do you desire above all else from them? What most quickly and sufficiently fills your love tank? What are the best memories you have of being loved as a child or in marriage?

What does your spouse do or say or fail to do or say that hurts you most deeply? How do they hurt you most deeply? What would you quickest to change about them if you could change anything?

Throughout marriage, what have you most often requested of your mate? They may see it as nagging, but you know how much it means to you?

How do you most naturally show your love to your mate? The way you naturally show love is usually the way you want to be shown love.

WHAT BEST FILLS YOUR LOVE TANK? In order to discover what best fills your love tank fill in the following blanks. Do it for yourself and your mate.

<u>YOUR LOVE LANGUAGE</u>	<u>MATE'S LOVE LANGUAGE:</u>
_____ Words of Affirmation	_____ Words of Affirmation
_____ Quality Time	_____ Quality Time
_____ Receiving Gifts	_____ Receiving Gifts
_____ Acts of Service	_____ Acts of Service
_____ Physical Touch	_____ Physical Touch

What implications and benefits does this have for your relationship? What can your mate do to better fill your love tank? What can you do to better fill theirs?

REPAIRING DAMAGED LOVE What about the couple who has said and done things that have deeply hurt each other? We can't go back and undo the past, but we can change the future. The "in love" feeling is totally gone, and it won't be back. Can love return? Yes it can. Love is a free will choice, not a gushy emotion that sweeps us off our feet. God choose to love us despite all we did to hurt Him. His love for us is a free will choice, not a gushy emotion He gets when He thinks of us! Loving someone has nothing to do with liking them -- that would be conditional love. Love "if," "when," or "because" isn't real, unconditional, agape love. You don't have to like someone to love them. Love doesn't always come easily or naturally. Showing love often takes effort. Jesus on the cross is the ultimate example of that. That's why He can tell us to love our enemies (Lk 6:27-32). Real unconditional love is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5) and not something we can work up. We can choose to allow God to produce that fruit in us. Only by asking for God's help and love can we have real love for others.

Learning to love is like learning a foreign language -- it takes time and practice. Unfortunately we don't always work at love. Instead of making an effort to show love to our mate, we act worse to them than to anyone else. We are short, rude, critical and often withhold love. We treat strangers nicer, in fact we often treat everyone else nicer than our mate. I Corinthians 13:1-8 describes true love. Read it. Think of each word used to describe love: patient, kind, not jealous or envious, not proud, rude or self-seeking, not easily angered or keeping account of wrongs, etc. These descriptions of love are not emotional feelings but rather mental attitudes and actions which we are to control. It takes a free will choice to be nice to another instead ignoring them or unkind. We need to make that choice and action with our mates.

SPEAKING YOUR CHILD'S LANGUAGE OF LOVE Children, too, have their own individual language of love. Knowing what it is helps to be able to accurately convey love to them. It helps to avoid discipline that will wound them without your being aware of it as well. Harsh words to a child whose love language is words which speak love can be damaging. So can violent spanking to a child who needs physical touch. Isolating a child who craves quality time can really hurt them, too. This doesn't mean we aren't to discipline, but we are to be aware of how it affects them. Temperament, birth order and other factors enter into this, too. Looking at one's childhood in light of this can be very revealing.

A good way to see what your child's love language is is to sit on the floor and see what they do. Do they crawl on you or sit on your lap (touch), get a book to read (quality time), ask you to play with them (sacrificial act), sit and talk (words of affirmation) or give you a gift (giving gifts)?

GOD'S LOVE LANGUAGE Now that you understand the love languages, think about them in connection with God. Which does God use to show love to man? Which are we to use to show love to God? The answer, of course, is all of them. Usually it is done directly between God and man, but sometimes (especially with touch) God meets our needs through another, and we show Him love by showing it to others. He affirms us (Bible), is always available (time), gave the best gift ever (salvation), is always ready to help us (acts of service), and touches us spiritually and emotionally (physically, too, through others). What a great, wonderful, loving God we have to create such great ways to show love!

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9. How to be a HUGGABLE HUBBY

Did you know that women file for divorce TWICE as often as men? It is women who are more concerned about their marriages. They buy most of the books on marriage and initiate most marriage counseling. Why do women seem so dissatisfied with marriage? What do they want from their husbands? What bothers them so much about marriage that many are willing to risk their families' future to escape it?

Simply stated, women leave men when they feel neglected and unloved. Consider these quotes from women: "I hurt all the time because I feel alone and abandoned." "My husband is no longer my friend." "The only time he pays attention to me is when he wants sex." "He is never there for me when I need him the most." "When he hurts my feelings he doesn't apologize." "He lives his life as if we weren't married; he rarely considers me." "We're like ships passing in the night, he goes his way and I go mine." "My husband has become a stranger to me, I don't even know who he is anymore." "He doesn't show any interest in me or what I do."

THE NEED FOR LOVE Everyone needs to feel loved. That is a primary human need. When we feel loved we can attempt and accomplish most anything. When we don't feel loved we feel empty and want to quit. Some people will do virtually anything for love. Many substitutes abound, but they are just that – substitutes. They don't really meet the need.

Women especially need love from their husbands. Trusting and responding to a man makes them feel vulnerable, so they need the security of knowing they are totally and completely loved. The way a woman gives herself so totally in love for her husband leaves her open for hurt. Knowing and feeling his love makes her feel safe in loving him. Thus it is of the utmost importance for a man to make sure his wife knows he loves her.

LOVE DEFINED I Corinthians 13 is the main chapter in the Bible about love. Love is patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not proud, not rude or self-seeking. It is not easily angered and keeps no record of wrongs. What a standard to reach for!

There are 3 Greek words for love. *EROS* refers to sexual 'love' (lust). Our word 'erotic' comes from it. *PHILEO* is the Greek word which has more the idea of friendship. Philadelphia, 'the city of brotherly love,' is based on this word. It refers to a warm emotional response to that which is attractive to us. It is love dependent on the recipient, conditional love, "I love you because...", or "I love you if..." *AGAPE* is the word used to describe God's love for us. It is an unconditional love. It is love in spite of, love despite, love no matter what.





Dwight Small defines it this way: "Agape is not born of a lover's need, nor does it have its source in the love object. Agape doesn't exist in order to get what it wants but empties itself to give what the other needs. Its motives rise wholly from within its own nature. Agape lives in order to die to self for the blessedness of caring for another, spending for another, spending itself for the sake of the beloved."

Agape love is a picture of God's love for us. This love is reflected in the husband who lovingly and faithfully cares for his wife after she has become a vegetable and can meet none of his needs – just because he loves her. We all need to be loved this way. Women especially need this kind of love from their husbands. It's their greatest need. It is a **MUST** for a woman.

Somerset Maugham tells of his mother. She was lovely and charming and beloved by all. His father was not by any means handsome, and had few social and surface gifts and graces. Someone once said to his mother, "When everyone is in love with you, and when you could have anyone you liked, how can you remain faithful to that ugly little man you married?" She answered simply: "He never hurts my feelings." There could be no finer tribute.

Though I speak of my love with all the poetry of an Elizabeth Barrett or a Robert Browning and sprinkle my daily conversations with "Darling," "Sweetheart," "Honey," and "I love you," but have not agape for my spouse, I'm just making a lot of meaningless noise. And though I read all the how to have a good marriage books I can and attend numerous marriage congresses, conferences, seminars, enrichments and encounters; and though I have the Ph.D. in marriage and family counseling so that I can help other couples toward wedded bliss, but have not agape for my mate, I am nothing as a partner. And though I dutifully perform my marital responsibilities as my culture, my church and my conscience dictate even to the point of being fatigued, ruining my health or dying in the process, but have not agape for my partner, all these grand actions don't amount to a wad of chewed gum.

MEN MUST LOVE THEIR WIVES Men, read I Corinthians 13 but instead of the word 'love' insert your name. I am is patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not proud, not rude or self-seeking. I am not easily angered and keep no record of wrongs. How does it sound? Where do you need work?

Ephesians 5:25-33 commands men to love their wives. Wives aren't commanded to love their husbands, but men are commanded to love their wives. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (v. 25)." Our standard of comparison for how we treat our wife is how Jesus treats us. It makes no difference if we are better to our wife than our neighbor to his. The bar is much higher than that!

When a daughter heard about how Jesus loves her, her first comment was "That's just how Dad loves and treats Mom!" Wouldn't it be great if every child could say that about their father? Could your child say that about you?

As we said, women need to know they are unconditionally loved, so that is what a man is responsible to do. This is the key to the whole family functioning as God made it to function. "The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother" (Theodore Hesburgh).

	MAN	WOMAN
NEED		SECURITY, LOVE
DUTY	SACRIFICIAL LOVE	

What does it mean to 'love your wife'? It means to love her as Jesus loves you. His love is unselfish – think of all He gave up to come to earth and die for you. Husbands are to be that unselfish. His love is also a humble love. There is no big ego problem in his love. His love is sacrificial. Our love must be as well. Do you love your wife enough to die for her? Do you love

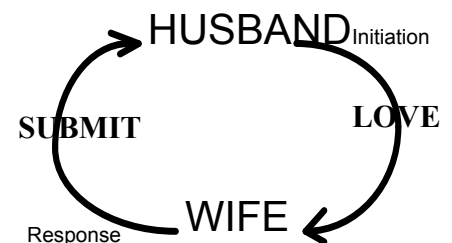
her enough to live for her each day? Will you sacrifice your time, emotional energy and resources to meet her needs before your own?

D. L. Moody said: "If I wanted to find out whether a man was a Christian, I wouldn't go to his minister. I would go and ask his wife. If a man doesn't treat his wife right, I don't want to hear him talk about Christianity. What is the use of his talking about salvation for the next life if he has no salvation for this? We want a Christianity that goes into our homes and everyday lives."

SERVING One of the main reasons men give for leaving their wives and families is that they aren't meeting their needs any more. That is all backwards. A man is to do the serving, not be served! That's part of loving our selves as Jesus loves us. "Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave--just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matt 20:26-28)." Or to use John Kennedy's words: "Ask not what your wife can do for you, ask what you can do for your wife."

Serving others doesn't come naturally or easily. We have a sin nature that makes us self-centered. In addition, our wives have a sin nature, too. Perhaps we could serve a perfect wife, but to serve a wife who is far from perfect? Well, one would have to be like Jesus to do that! And that's the whole point! Loving your wife as a saint isn't really loving her with agape love. But loving her as a sinner is where we become like Jesus in our love. That the first responsibility of a man – to unconditionally love his wife and make sure he communicates that to her. Women are responders and will react to how they are treated.

The following diagram shows that it is up to the man to initiate in love and then the wife to respond with submission. The wife is a mirror which reflects what the husband had built into her: love and security or lack of it. The loving must come first. Jesus loved us first, and now we respond to Him in submission.



In "How the World Began," Helmut Thielicke writes "I once knew a very old married couple who radiated a tremendous happiness. The wife especially, who was almost unable to move because of old age and illness and in whose kind old face the joys and sufferings of many years had etched a hundred lines, was filled with such a gratitude for life that I was touched to the quick. Involuntarily, I asked myself what could possibly be the source of this kindly person's radiance. In every other respect they were common people, and their room indicated only the most modest comfort. But suddenly I knew where it all came from, for I saw those two speaking to each other, and their eyes hanging upon each other. All at once it became clear to me that this woman was dearly loved. It was not because she was a cheerful and pleasant person that she was loved by her husband all those years. It was the other way around. Because she was so loved she became the person I saw before me."



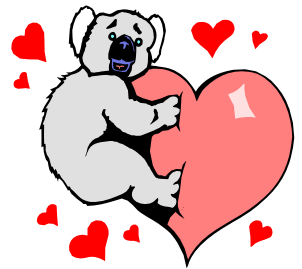
"AS HE LOVES HIMSELF" Ephesians 5 not only tells a man to love his wife as Christ loves Him, it also says he is to love his wife as he loves himself. "In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church" (verses 28-29).

The right kind of self-love is a realistic love. I know I'm not perfect, but neither am I worthless. I don't like everything about myself, but I still take care of myself. Just because some parts of me aren't the way I'd like doesn't mean I have to destroy the rest. I can rationally and objectively list my strengths and weaknesses. I don't expect perfection. I don't excuse the weaknesses but continually focusing on them is no good, either. This is the way I must be with

my wife, too. I know she isn't perfect, but I love her anyway – as I do with myself (and as she does with me). It's the Golden Rule in operation!

The husband's love has been compared to a warm coat which he wraps around his wife. As long as she feels encircled and sheltered in his love, she can give herself completely to him. In this safety she can accept herself as a woman and value her femininity. Then she will be able to entrust herself to her husband in the sexual relationship as the bird gives itself to the air or the fish to water.

Richard Halverson, Chaplain of U S Senate, said: "It is my deep, settled conviction that 100% of the responsibility for the sustenance of the marriage relationship belongs to the husband. The scriptures tell us that as husbands we need to model ourselves after Jesus Christ, who gave Himself up in every way in order to present His bride to Himself without blemish or stain or spot or wrinkle."



WHY DOES ROMANTIC LOVE DIE? Ironically, all we are talking about doing is something most husbands have done, and quite well. We all do it before marriage, while trying to win her love. We do it all and do it right then. Why have we stopped? Is it just because we now have her love and don't have to do a lot of stuff that isn't natural to us? Were we only doing it to catch her? That's awfully self-centered, isn't it! No wonder wives get upset!

Oh, sure, if a wife threatens to leave, or does leave, a man can turn on all that stuff again – until the danger is over. Wouldn't it be better to be doing those things BEFORE there are problems in the marriage? Wouldn't it be nice to do them just for love? Think how happy that would make her. Think what that would do for her as a wife. Doesn't she deserve it? After all, think of what she puts up with from you, yet faithfully continues to love and serve you. Think of all she's done for you over the years. Remember her faithfulness during the times when you only threw her occasional scraps of affection? Where would you find someone to be as good a wife as she's been, especially in light of how you've changed since marriage?

HOW TO LOVE How can you have more love for your wife? Take your eyes off your needs and look at hers. Focus on her strengths and your weaknesses instead of vice versa.

Ask God to increase your love for her and look for ways in which He does that. Remember that love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). That means we can't win up agape love. We have to allow God to produce it in and through us. That also means we must start doing again the things we used to do when we were trying to win her love. Put her and her needs first.

A woman and her husband who came to a pastor and said, "We're going to get a divorce, but we want to come to make sure that you approve of it." There are people who come to the pastor hoping that when they say there is no feeling left in their marriage, the pastor will say, "Well, if there's no feeling left, then, the only thing you can do is split." Instead, the pastor says to the husband, "The Bible says you're to love your wife as Jesus Christ loved the church." He says, "Oh, I can't do that." The pastor says, "If you can't begin at that level, then begin on a lower level. You're supposed to love your neighbor as you love yourself. Can you at least love her as you would love a neighbor?" The husband says, "No. That's still too high a level." The pastor says, "The Bible says, Love your enemies. Begin there." Begin where you must, but make sure you begin!

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MATE (& YOURSELF)

BUILD & MAINTAIN A STRONG CHRISTIAN HOME

HOW TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL MARRIAGE

By Jerry Schmoyer © 1999
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10. How to be a WONDERFUL WIFE

“Only Jesus can be Jesus,” states Ruth Graham. Everyone would assume that Billy Graham would be the perfect husband. Not so, says his wife. No one is perfect. How many of you wives secretly expect your husbands to be like Billy Graham and hold it against them because they aren’t? How many of you men feel you are expected to be like Billy Graham, and you just can’t do it?

UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS – how often they trap and defeat us. Sometimes we expect too much, other times too little? What do we have a right to expect of our mate? What should we expect of ourselves? The purpose of this series is to discover what realistic expectations are. They are what God expects of us – those are the only realistic expectations there are.

Women especially have to be aware of setting unrealistic expectations for their men. Women assume that their man will meet all their needs and be all they want him to be. That is impossible. Only God can do that, and since He is a jealous God He will make sure no one else takes His place. Expecting a man to do so is unrealistic.

Another reason women have to be careful about expecting too much is because they often have very large needs they expect their husbands to meet. Often they come into marriage with hurts from their father and rejection from other boys. They are fearful of more pain so they hold back, expecting their man to sweep them off their feet so thoroughly that they don’t have to work through their past hurts. They expect their husband to make up for father and boyfriends in the past. That is unrealistic.

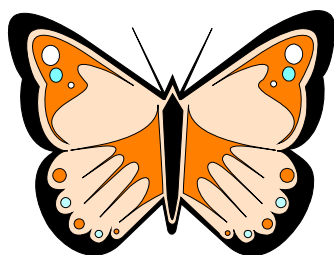
Wives, you can’t change your husband. I’m sure you’ve already realized that. Therefore all you can do is accept him as he is. That means you must understand him as he is. To help you do this think of him as a 10 year boy with dreams and ideas. He really isn’t much different than that now. The shell is older, larger and more refined, but at the core he’s still that same little boy. Understand his visions and try to help him achieve them. Don’t compare him to others, don’t assume he knows your mind and don’t focus on his weakness. Go to God with your unmet needs and let Him meet them.

EMPTY SPACE FILLER Women, remember that you are created to fill up your husband’s empty spaces (Gen 2:18, 20). Learn what those needs are and how you can meet them. He needs you. And you need Him. Let him know you need Him. “I need you” goes to the depth of a man’s soul. He will do anything for a woman who needs him. Just as God built into a woman the need to be loved, so He built into a man the need to be the provider and guider of his family. She needs to know she is loved, he needs to know he is needed.

MEN NEED TO BE NEEDED Look what happens to men when they are unemployed or retire – it's as if they aren't worth anything any more. That's why they often throw themselves too far into their work. If a man doesn't feel needed at home, he'll find someone or some place where he is needed. That's as critical to men as love is to women. Women, make sure your husband knows he is needed. If you don't, some other woman will, either on purpose or accidentally. You'll leave him open and vulnerable if you don't meet his need to be needed, just like he leaves you open when he doesn't meet your need for love.

	MAN	WOMAN
NEED	PROVIDE, GUIDE	Security, Love
DUTY	Sacrificial Love	SUBMIT, RESPECT

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE This means that you need to love him like you want him to love you – unconditionally. Don't ever withhold love or affection (I Corinthians 7:4-5 prohibits that). Like your husband, you, too, need to have a servant attitude. Go by the Golden Rule – treat him the way you want him to treat you, even if he isn't doing as well as you think he can. Watch what you expect of him – just love him and let him know you need him.



BUTTERFLIES AND BUFFALOES Understanding the differences between men and women can help women have more realistic expectations of men. It's been said that women are like butterflies and men are like buffaloes. A butterfly has keen sensitivity to even the slightest breeze. It notices beauty even in the tiniest of flowers. It is constantly aware of all the changes going on around it and able to react to the slightest variations in its environment. Tape a tiny pebble

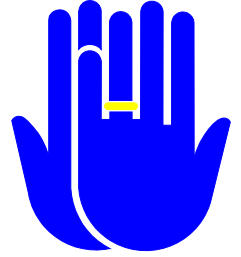
to its wing and it would be severely injured and die. Men aren't like that, though – they are like buffaloes. They are rough, callused and don't react to breeze. They aren't even affected by a 30 mph wind, they just go on doing what they were doing, unaware of the smallest of glowers. They are insensitive to slight changes in atmosphere. Tape a pebble to its back and it won't even feel it. But notice, this doesn't make him inferior to the butterfly, it just makes him different. They are each made the way they need to be for their role and purpose. The buffalo's toughness is necessary for him to survive. His strength can do many good things. Men need their toughness to be the ones who lead and protect their families. Women can't expect their men to be both butterfly and buffalo, instantly changing from one role to the next at their slightest whim or fantasy.

MEN	WOMEN
Mind	Emotions
Rational comes first	Feeling comes first
Production-oriented	Relationship-oriented
shop to get what needed quickly & efficiently	shop to enjoy the experience, browse
long-range sight, distance planning, overall	near-sighted, present details, today's problems

As seen before, men and women are different. Don't expect your husband to be like you. Remember the things you loved in him when you met and married him? They haven't changed, they are still there. But your expectations may have changed.

Instead of focusing on his failures, look at his strengths. Be his main cheerleader. Encourage him. Complementing him is like throwing a drowning man a life preserver. Be his support and help, not the one who makes things harder on him. Pointing out his weaknesses won't help him improve. Does it help you to have your faults pointed out by him, or do you respond better when he encourages and complements you on what you do well. There's the Golden Rule again. That is especially true if his love language is verbal affirmation.

MIRRORS A man has two important mirrors in his life to show him how he's doing: his wife and his work. Both reflect messages about his manhood, worth and meaning. What he receives from these two spells the difference between satisfaction and frustration. Of the two, the wife is the most important. If what he sees in that mirror isn't good, though, he'll turn more and more to work to find meaning and satisfaction.



If a wife is to focus on herself and not have unrealistic expectations of her husband, then just what can he expect of her? What does God expect of wives? He makes that clear in His Word.

1 PETER 3:1-6 “Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. 4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.”

The focus is on a woman's internal beauty, not external. Outer beauty is fine, but inner beauty is much, much more important. Think of the women in the Bible. We don't know how they looked for no accounts of their appearances were given. However we do know a lot about the kind of women they were. The person a woman is is more important than how she looks. Spend more time on your inner being than you do on your outer being. Your husband wants you looking good, but he needs the real you inside even more.

When his wife died John Roebling, the builder of the Brooklyn Bridge, wrote in his Bible: “Of those angels in human form who are blessing this earth by their unselfish love and devotion, this dear departed wife was one. She never thought of herself, she only thought of others. No trace of ill-will toward any person ever entered her unselfish bosom. And, oh, what a treasure of love she was toward her own children! No faults were ever discovered, she knew only forbearance, patience, and kindness. My only regret is that such a pure unselfishness was not sufficiently appreciated by myself.” Would your family say that about you?

WATCH WHAT YOU SAY As I said, you should be building up and encouraging your husband. Let him know you need him. That's the ‘gentle and quiet spirit’ Peter talks about (v. 4). “A woman who tries to be outwardly attractive but says the wrong things at the wrong times is like putting gold jewelry on a pig's snout” (Prov 11:22). “A continual dropping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike” (Prov 27:15). “In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything” (1 Tim 3:11).

GOD'S EXPECTATIONS OF WOMEN “Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. 4 Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God” (Titus 2:3-5). “Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. 14 So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander” (1 Timothy 5:13-15). “No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, 10 and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children,

showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds" (I Timothy 5:9-10).

THE EXAMPLE OF SARAH Back to I Peter 3. Peter closes this passage with the example of Sarah and Abraham. "Like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear" (v. 6). Now Sarah isn't the first one we'd pick for an example. Abraham said she was his sister instead of his wife to protect himself. When Pharaoh took her to be part of his harem, Abraham was well paid instead of being killed. That event changed Sarah, though, for from then on we see her taking care of herself, looking out for 'number one.' Can you blame her? She obviously didn't feel unconditionally loved and she responded as would be expected. It was Abraham's fault. How could a woman overlook those faults and go on to love and encourage such a husband? Without God's help it couldn't be done! But that's just the point! She was able to do just that, with a husband that didn't deserve it, because she had God's help. It took her until she was 90 and Abraham was 99, but she did it! When she did God changed her name from Sarai ("contentious") to Sarah ("princess"). Then Isaac ("laughter") came into their home.

A woman has the power to form and mold her husband by how she treats him. She can't change him by nagging or pointing out his failures. She can change him by being there to meet his needs, unconditionally. A man went to the doctor after weeks of symptoms. The doctor examined him carefully, then called the patient's wife into his office. "Your husband is suffering from a rare form of anemia. Without treatment, he'll be dead in a few weeks. The good news is, it can be treated with proper nutrition." "You will need to get up early every morning and fix your husband a hot breakfast--pancakes, bacon and eggs, the works. He'll need a home-cooked lunch every day, and then an old-fashioned meat-and-potato dinner every evening. It would be especially helpful if you could bake frequently. Cakes, pies, homemade bread--these are the things that will allow your husband to live. "One more thing. His immune system is weak, so it's important that your home be kept spotless at all times. Do you have any questions?" The wife had none. "Do you want to break the news, or shall I?" asked the doctor. "I will," the wife replied. She walked into the exam room. The husband, sensing the seriousness of his illness, asked her, "It's bad, isn't it?" She nodded, tears welling up in her eyes. "What's going to happen to me?" he asked. With a sob, the wife blurted out, "The doctor says you're gonna die!"

Is your husband dying? Is it because you aren't doing all you can to be a wonderful wife? Maybe these Ten Commandments for wives can help you. 1. Honor thy own womanhood, that thy days may be long in the house which thy husband provideth for thee. 2. Expect not thy husband to give thee as many luxuries as thy father hath given thee after many years of hard labor and economies. 3. Forget not the virtue of good humor, for verily all that a man hath will he give for a woman's smile. 4. Thou shalt not nag. 5. Thou shalt coddle thy husband, for verily every man loveth to be fussed over. 6. Remember that the frank approval of thy husband is worth more to thee than the sidelong glances of many strangers. 7. Forget not the grace of cleanliness and good dressing. 8. Permit no one to assure thee that thou art having a hard time of it; neither thy mother, nor thy sister, nor thy maiden aunt, nor any of thy kinfolk, for the judge will not hold her guiltless who letteth another disparage her husband. 9. Keep thy home with all diligence, for out of it cometh the joys of thine old age. 10. Commit thy ways unto the Lord thy God and thy children shall rise up and call thee blessed.

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11. How to Have REALISTIC ROLES

Do women expect too much of men today? Do they expect too much of themselves? Do men expect too much of women? Do they expect too much of themselves? Do we sometimes expect too little of ourselves or our mates?

WOMEN'S VIEW OF THEMSELVES - Focus On Appearance In our day and age girls often grow up learning to view themselves by their appearance. They see this all around them growing up. TV and movies teaches this, both commercials and the programs themselves. They notice the importance of appearance to their mothers and other women with whom they come in contact. Other girls their age reinforce this. When they become interested in boys, it becomes obvious that this is important to boys (including their own fathers). This easily leads to an over emphasis on appearance to get attention, and can lead to promiscuity.

No wonder women are so often preoccupied with if they are 'fat' or not. Many feel they are, even if others disagree with them. The pressure is on to have the perfect body and appearance. As a woman ages and has children, she naturally moves further and further from the world's 'ideal' for a woman.

To make this even worse, often women learn to eat to feel better, to relieve stress, to comfort themselves when they don't feel good about themselves. This just makes them gain weight. Thus the thing that brings them pleasure ultimately brings more pain. What a predicament. Some battle weight gain all their lives, others just give in and let go. Neither feel good about themselves.

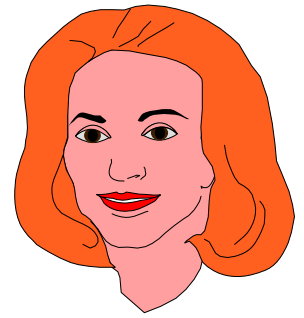
Then when women ask their husbands what they think, they don't believe what the husband says. It puts a husband in a hard spot, too. If he says she's as thin as when they met, she knows he is lying. But if he says anything other than that she gets upset, the last thing he wants to do to her. It's a no-win situation for everyone.

Whose fault is this? Ultimately the fault rests with males. Women don't seem to judge men this way. They can see through shallow appearances better than men can. Most women would rather have a plain man who loves them and makes them feel loved than someone who is good looking to others but doesn't meet her needs.

Still, it's also the fault of women who go along with this external emphasis of men. Often, however, it's the ONLY way they can get male attention, starting with their own father. Not all, but many men need a good-looking wife, one who takes care of herself and presents herself as he best likes her. Women don't like their husbands to be sloppy, for that reflects on them – they feel responsible for their husbands appearance (one way where their mother-role spills over into other areas of life).

We all know that real love isn't based on appearance. Six minutes to six, said the great round clock over the information booth in Grand Central Station. The tall young Army lieutenant who had just come from the direction of the tracks lifted his sunburned face, and his eyes narrowed to note the exact time. His heart was pounding with a beat that shocked him because he could not control it. In six minutes, he would see the woman who had filled such a special place in his life for the past 13 months, the woman he had never seen, yet whose written words had been with him and sustained him unflinching. He placed himself as close as he could to the information booth, just beyond the ring of people besieging the clerks... Lieutenant Blandford remembered one night in particular, the worst of the fighting, when his plane had been caught in the midst of a pack of Zeros. He had seen the grinning face

of one of the enemy pilots. In one of his letters, he had confessed to her that he often felt fear, and only a few days before this battle, he had received her answer: "Of course you fear...all brave men do. Didn't King David know fear? That's why he wrote the 23rd Psalm. Next time you doubt yourself, I want you to hear my voice reciting to you: 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for Thou art with me.'" And he had remembered; he had heard her imagined voice, and it had renewed his strength and skill. Now he was going to hear her real voice. Four minutes to six. His face grew sharp. Under the immense, starred roof, people were walking fast, like threads of color being woven into a gray web. A girl passed close to him, and Lieutenant Blandford started. She was wearing a red flower in her suit lapel, but it was a crimson sweet pea, not the little red rose they had agreed upon. Besides, this girl was too young, about 18, whereas Hollis Meynell had frankly told him she was 30. "Well, what of it?" he had answered. "I'm 32." He was 29. His mind went back to that book - the book the Lord Himself must have put into his hands out of the hundreds of Army library books sent to the Florida training camp. Of *Human Bondage*, it was; and throughout the book were notes in a woman's writing. He had always hated that writing-in-habit, but these remarks were different. He had never believed that a woman could see into a man's heart so tenderly, so understandingly. Her name was on the bookplate: Hollis Meynell. He had got hold of a New York City telephone book and found her address. He had written, she had answered. Next day he had been shipped out, but they had gone on writing. For 13 months, she had faithfully replied, and more than replied. When his letters did not arrive she wrote anyway, and now he believed he loved her, and she loved him. But she had refused all his pleas to send him her photograph. That seemed rather bad, of course. But she had explained: "If your feeling for me has any reality, any honest basis, what I look like won't matter. Suppose I'm beautiful. I'd always be haunted by the feeling that you had been taking a chance on just that, and that kind of love would disgust me. Suppose I'm plain (and you must admit that this is more likely). Then I'd always fear that you were going on writing to me only because you were lonely and had no one else. No, don't ask for my picture. When you come to New York, you shall see me and then you shall make your decision. Remember, both of us are free to stop or to go on after that - whichever we choose..." One minute to six - he pulled hard on a cigarette. Then Lieutenant Blandford's heart leaped higher than his plane had ever done. A young woman was coming toward him. Her figure was long and slim; her blond hair lay back in curls from her delicate ears. Her eyes were blue as flowers, her lips and chin had a gentle firmness. In her pale green suit, she was like springtime come alive. He started toward her, entirely forgetting to notice that she was wearing no rose, and as he moved, a small, provocative smile curved her lips. "Going my way, soldier?" she murmured. Uncontrollably, he made one step closer to her. Then he saw Hollis Meynell. She was standing almost directly behind the girl, a woman well past 40, her graying hair tucked under a worn hat. She was more than plump; her thick-ankled feet were thrust into low-heeled shoes. But she wore a red rose in the rumpled lapel of her brown coat. The girl in the green suit was walking quickly away. Blandford felt as though he were being split in two, so keen was his desire to follow the girl, yet so deep was his longing for the woman whose spirit had truly companioned and upheld his own; and there she stood. Her pale, plump face was gentle and sensible; he could see that now. Her gray eyes had a warm, kindly twinkle. Lieutenant Blandford did not hesitate. His fingers gripped the small worn, blue leather copy of "*Of Human Bondage*", which was to identify him to her. This would not be love, but it would be something precious, something perhaps even rarer than love - a friendship for which he had been and must ever be grateful. He squared his broad shoulders, saluted and held the book out toward the woman, although even while he spoke he felt shocked by the bitterness of his disappointment. "I'm Lieutenant John Blandford, and you - you are miss Meynell. I'm so glad you could meet me. May...may I take you to dinner?" The woman's face broadened in a tolerant smile. "I don't know what this is all about, son," she answered. "That young lady in the green suit - the one who just went by - begged me to wear this rose on my coat. And she said that if you asked me to go out with you, I should tell you that she's waiting for you in that big restaurant across the street. She said it was some kind of a test. I've got two boys with Uncle Sam myself, so I didn't mind to oblige you."



An old proverb says to choose a wife rather by your ear than by your eye. To marry a woman for her beauty is like buying a house for its paint. Men, remember that God looks at the heart, not the outer appearance (I Samuel 16:7). Make sure you do the same thing. Pray and ask God to have you be more attuned to your wife's inner beauty than outer.

Wives, follow Sarah's example in making inner beauty a greater priority than outer beauty (I Peter 3:1-6). After all, we know what women in the Bible were like, but we don't have the account of the appearance of one (except Jezebel - II Kings 9:30).

A woman of God withdraws herself from the evil ways of the world and seeks out and follows after what is good. (I John 2:15-17, Titus 2:12). She values the cultivation of her mind and diligently seeks after wisdom and knowledge. (Prov. 22:17-21, 2:2-6). She realizes her imperative need to allow the Holy Spirit to control her emotions and expressions of them. (James 1:19-20). She does not wallow in self pity or make a habit of voicing complaints, but radiates cheerfulness and joy. (Prov. 15:15, 17:22). She does not relate to members of the opposite sex in a flirtatious or forward manner, but instead saves all her passion for her future husband. (I Thess. 4:3-8, Prov 6:25, I Cor. 7:1). She encourages and builds up those around her instead of criticizing and tearing them down. (I Thess. 5:11, Eph. 4:29). She does not have a nagging, contentious or manipulative manner in which she deals with others. (Judges 16:16, Prov. 21:9,19, 26:21). She is not boisterous or loud in her speech or actions but is characterized by a gentle and quiet spirit. (Prov. 9:13, I Pet. 3:4). She dresses and does her hair in a distinctly feminine manner, modestly and discreetly (Deut. 22:5, I Tim. 2:9, I Cor. 11:15).

MEN'S VIEW OF THEMSELVES - Focus on 'Success' Men aren't as conscious of their appearance or personality. For men it's more important to achieve, to be 'successful' as the world defines it – income, family and possessions above average. The more above average they are the more 'successful' he is. God, however, judges success in terms of obedience to His will. If we are obeying Him and in His will we are successful. If not we are failures, no matter how we compare outwardly to others.

Men put too much stress on themselves competing and comparing themselves with others. That may be why men have twice the heart disease women have, 4 times the suicide rate, and comprise 90% of those arrested for alcohol and drug abuse.

Unfortunately, like men contribute to women's focus on appearance, women contribute to this false standard in what they look for in a man. If a woman isn't content with what her husband provides, (Philippians 4:10-13), she will communicate this same unbiblical standard of success' to him. It is built into a man to need to provide for and protect his wife and family, but we must realize that this must be done spiritually and emotionally, not just physically.

A man of God understands and lives according to the basic purpose for which he was created: to worship, honor, and serve God (Rom. 12:1-2). He isn't embarrassed to worship God and pray in a group setting. (Mark 8:3-8) ...is wise, yet humble (Prov. 2:1-10, I Pet. 5:5 & Rom 12:16). He takes leadership in a self-sacrificing way (Eph. 5:25-28). He doesn't put others down with his actions, attitude, words, or his strength. But, on the contrary, he affirms and builds others up (Prov. 15:4 & Eph. 4:29). He recognizes the appropriate use of his strength as a protector of those who cannot protect themselves. (Neh. 4:13-14). He isn't ashamed to identify himself with his family (Eph. 6:2-3). He shows by his actions that he loves children (Matt. 19:13-14).

WOMEN'S VIEW OF MEN - One Extreme or the Other Often women have a view of men that isn't as good as it could be. They've been disappointed or hurt by men and wear the scars. Recently I saw an ad for a tee shirt with the words, "Ever notice how all our problems begin with MEN? MENTAL breakdown, MENopause, MENstrual cramps, MENTAL fatigue." The ad goes on to say "Men tee shirt for the woman who has experienced more than her fair share of MENTAL anxiety from all the MENacing men in her life." Unfortunately many women fit that category.

Many women view men as self-centered, immature, insensitive boors. Often they are correct. Consider the following quotes by women: "I know more about sea anemones than I do about my husband's feelings." "My husband's priorities seem to be work, sports, his car, the yard, church, the kids,

and then me.” “My husband would rather floss with razor wire and gargle shards of glass than discuss our marriage.” “My husband would rather jam his head on the end of a sharpened pencil than go to counseling.” “Sometimes I feel alone in this marriage.

6. My husband is a great person and I love him, but I’m frustrated because we don’t seem to be on the same team.” Sadly, this is too often the case.

Still, from a man’s side, I would say that women often judge men by their own female standards. Granted, a man makes a terrible woman when it comes to relating and feeling as a woman does. Women need to understand men as they are and learn what goes on in them, then they’ll realize we are different in these areas, but not inferior. Consider how the expectations on husbands have changed recently. Women, what did your grandmother expect from your grandfather? Probably just to bring home a paycheck and stay sexually faithful. Not much more. She took care of the home, meals, cleaning, children, etc. Now consider what you expect from your husband. See the difference? The trouble is that no one taught men how to fulfill this new role! Our fathers were caught in the change and didn’t set a good example for us. Our mothers often made things worse by using us to meet needs their husbands weren’t meeting. So what can we do? We try, but it isn’t easy!

Women want men to be both strong and gentle, in various degrees at different times. When you want us to be John Wayne and just take charge, we are trying to be sensitive and supportive like Alan Alda. Then when we do the John Wayne thing is when you want Alan Alda. They aren’t easy roles to fulfill, and it’s very hard to know which you need when.

You women expect us to perfectly fulfill the role of protector, friend, father, lover and knight in shining armor. I guess we convinced you before marriage we could and would be all these things. The truth is we lied. We can’t. Thus women either withdraw from trusting men and don’t expect anything from them, or have impossibly high expectations of perfection.

MEN’S VIEW OF WOMEN - Difficult to Please We expect too much of you, too. We want a combination mother, lover, friend, assistant, child-raiser, social director and all around good joe. We want Helen Gurley Brown, Ceryl Tiegs and Mother Teresa all wrapped up in one energetic package. If women are disappointed in men, I would say that men are confused and frustrated over what women expect. It’s often like walking a tight rope in a fog.

Too many boys grew up needing their mother’s love and approval because their busy, distant father didn’t give his. Thus they feared their mother’s criticism and rejection. Often our mothers, through anger or other means, manipulated us by threatening or showing rejection. Thus we learned we had to do whatever we could to have their love and acceptance. We learned how to read a woman’s emotional reactions to us and which hoops to jump through to avoid or appease her. These roles often carry over into marriage. Women become controlling, manipulating, scolding, nagging mothers – and hate themselves for it. Men become cowering, hoop-jumping, resentful little boys – and also hate themselves for it. Then men use passive-aggressive ways to hurt their wives back. Since men can’t take their wife/mother on head to head in an emotional verbal exchange, many use passive-aggressive ways of hurting her back: withholding love, critical comments, little ways of pointing out her mistakes and failures, or humorous or sarcastic comments.

In “Healing the Masculine Soul,” Gordon Dalbey writes: “If a boy’s physical bonding with mother wasn’t healthy he will carry the wrong idea of physical bonding over to later life. He can become compulsive about sex (playboy or demanding husband) because he is fearful of rejection. Only a stronger bond that the mother-son can draw him apart from her - the father-son. If it isn’t the earthly father then must turn to Heavenly one.”

The only solution is for the man to be the man, take over leadership of the relationship with his wife, and initiate instead of respond. By better understanding the things these articles have talked about, along with my series “For Men Only,” men can better understand themselves and women, and thus fulfill their roles better.

Thus if men and women are more realistic and Biblical in their expectations of themselves and their mates, their marriages will be a lot more fulfilling for each.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MATE (& YOURSELF)

BUILD & MAINTAIN A STRONG CHRISTIAN HOME HOW TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL MARRIAGE

By Jerry Schmoyer © 2000
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12. How to Be a LOVING LEADER

Who makes most of the decisions in your marriage? Who would your spouse say makes most of the decisions? How do you decide who decides? What procedures are followed when there is an impasse but a decision must be made? When you must make the decision, do you feel free to make what you feel is the best decision or do you feel pressure to make the decision your mate wants?

WHO MAKES THE DECISIONS TODAY? A recent USA Today survey shows that women decide what to have for dinner, how to manage the household budget and how to raise the children. Both decide about vacations, major purchases and insurance. What do men decide? Get this. The survey showed all they decide on their own is what to watch on TV. Still, people seem to think that being the man is great because you get to make all the decisions and everyone has to do what you want! Nothing could be further from the truth. When a man wants to be the leader God wants him to be, it is an awesome responsibility.

MEN AREN'T THE LEADERS TODAY Unfortunately in many families the men aren't taking the leadership role. Another recent survey showed that 80% of the women polled said that men were not carrying out their role today. Often the wife has taken over, usually by default. Roles become reversed. He is everything she wishes to be, and she is just what he would secretly like to be. There's the old joke about the man being the head of the family but the woman being the neck that turns the head. There's a lot of truth to that!

A young man asked an older man how he and his wife managed to avoid arguments. "When Betty and I were married," he said, "I laid down the law. I told her that I would make all the major decisions and that she could make all the minor decisions." "What's your definition of a minor decision?" asked the young man. "Well, what school are kids are going to go to, should I look for a better job, shall we take our savings and buy stocks, should we buy a new house or car, where to go on our vacation ...those are the decisions that Betty handles. "Then what are the major decisions?" "Oh, things like our opinion about America's foreign policy, what's wrong with the economy, etc."

Lyndon B. Johnson said, "Two things are necessary to keep one's wife happy. One is to let her think she is having her own way, and the other, to let her have it."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY? The Bible clearly says that men are to be the leaders in the home today. *To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."* Gen 3:16

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and **the head of the woman is man**, and the head of Christ is God. 1 Cor 11:3-5

For **the husband is the head of the wife** as Christ is the head of the church. Eph 5:23

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the **head of the woman is man**, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head-it is just as though her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; **neither was man created for woman, but woman for man**. 1 Cor 11:3-10

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. **I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man**; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing-if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety. 1 Tim 2:11-15

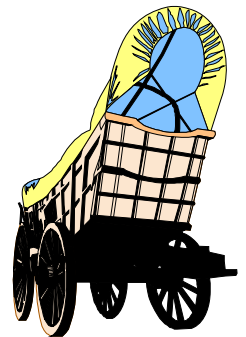
He must be one who **manages his own household** well, keeping his children under control with 1 dignity (but if a man does not know how can he manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?). 1 Tim 3:4-5

HUSBAND IS MANAGER The word 'manage' in 1 Tim 3:4 summarizes a husband's role. He is to MANAGE - preside over. The picture is of one who does not do everything himself but guides and directs to oversee that it all get done. A pastor is to manage, as is a school principle or a president of a company. They have the total picture in mind, but depend on others to keep them informed and carry out much of the work. The company does not exist to serve him, he serves his interests by best serving the company. This is quite a responsibility, but is doable. God was pleased with Abraham for he carried out this responsibility (Genesis 18:19). That is the responsibility of every husband today, too.

THE SCOUT I grew up watching westerns on TV. I knew all about roundups and wagon trains. Of all the different roles portrayed by men of the west, my favorite was the wagon train scout. He rode miles out in front of the wagon train and everyone depended on him. He checked out the trail, looked for Indians, scouted water holes and scanned the horizon looking for potential enemies. He was the first to face the danger, dodge the arrows. He was committed to picking the safest and best trail for the train, so all could reach their destination quickly and with good health. Everyone depended on him. Their futures were in his hands. He was the 'eyes' of the train, the one who had the overall picture and knew how to travel. But what if he had gotten distracted doing his own thing: hunting buffalo, prospecting for gold, painting nature scenes, digging dinosaur bones, or just laying around taking it easy? His first priority in life had to be the band of pioneers following him through the wilderness. The same is true for a husband and his family.

Picture your family bumping along in a wagon: wife, kids, all your possessions. You are all rolling toward a destination in the hazy distance. What is the destination? How will you get there? Suppose, men, you just loaded up your family in a wagon and started heading in the same general direction everyone else was going? Or as a Christian you headed in the opposite direction? How far would you get? Where would you end up?

Men, its your God-given responsibility to determine the destination and make sure everyone gets there safely. You wife has wonderful vision, but not distance-oriented vision like



a man's. She is uniquely equipped to see things close-up, details of making the wagon secure and comfortable. Women are good at focusing on people and situations. Their 'woman's intuition' gives them good insight into the daily activities going on in and around the wagon. She has lots of wisdom if we listen to her. Trust her insights and instinct in day-to-day living. But realize you are responsible for long-term vision and overall sight. The 'big picture' responsibility is yours. Children are totally unequipped to make decisions about the travel of the wagon, don't direct it in a way just to please them. Everyone is looking to you, men. You're the scout. They're depending on you. God has uniquely gifted and equipped you for this job. He will work in and through you to carry it out.

It's your responsibility to gather information, talk it over with your wife, pray for wisdom, and then go as you feel God is leading you. How should you educate your children? What standards do you expect from them? What church should you attend? How involved should you get? In what areas? Where should you live? Where does your marriage relationship need work and what should be done to improve it? What kind of help does your wife need from you? What is the root cause of the disciplinary problems you have with your children? Are you saving enough money for college and retirement? Etc. Etc. Etc.

PROVISION THAT is the kind of provision families need, not just financial. Most men see their role as supplying provision for physical needs. Those are the easiest to provide, and only a small part of what a man must do. "Provision" is "pro" (before, ahead of time) and "vision" (seeing, sight). Thus the word 'provision' really refers to looking ahead, giving direction, anticipating needs and defining the destination. Man must provide that vision. Woman can make the journey sweet, but man must set the pace and choose the direction of travel.



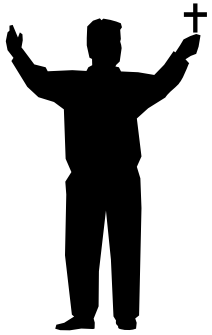
HOW TO DO THIS? This explains the 'what' of providing loving leadership, but what about the 'how'? *"Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers."* 1 Peter 3:7. Let's look at this phrase by phrase to understand how a man is to do this.

"Live with your wives." 'Live' means 'to dwell closely.' Men must wrap their lives around their wife and family. Their primary satisfaction must come from family, not career. When a Jew married he was to stay at home for the first year (Deut 24:5) to make sure his marriage relationship had a good foundation. That takes time.

"Be considerate." Accept your wife and family as they are. Don't try to change her. Look at things from her point of view. *"He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord"* Proverbs 18:22. *"Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them"* Colossians 3:19.

"As the weaker partner." Women are not weaker than men morally, intellectually or spiritually. In some ways they are weaker physically. In other ways they are stronger (like giving birth). Overall men are physically stronger, and that is why they should never bully or abuse a woman with words or actions. That is why, too, men should always help women with hard physical work. 'Weaker,' however, doesn't so much refer to strength as to type of being. Woman has been called the 'tender gender,' because they are more delicate than men. They are more finely strung, like a Stradivarius compared to a barn dance fiddle. Men are like stoneware, women are like fine China. Men are like buffaloes, women like butterflies (see article 10). Women wouldn't make good scouts because they are too finely tuned. They need someone to scout ahead for them. They are intricately tuned to relationships and feelings. That can throw

off their decision-making radar when it comes to making long-range plans. That's how Satan was able to deceive Eve about eating the fruit (I Timothy 2:13-15). Thus a man must be the family scout and ultimately make the tough, long-range decisions because 1) God made him to do it, 2) God directs the family through the man and 3) women are more susceptible to error in this role (just as the man would make more errors of judgment if he was to take over the wagon itself while the woman went out scouting).



“Treat them with respect.” Respect your wife, not for the work she does but for the person she is. Is she a precious treasure to you? Does she know she means everything to you? Do you treat her better or worse now than when you were courting her and trying to win her? Does she know beyond a shadow of doubt that she is the most important thing in your life, or does she feel she has to compete with work or church or hobby? Does she know you'll be there for her no matter what? Does she know you will seek to understand her feelings and take them seriously?

“Treat them ... as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life.” Remember spiritually she is your equal, and together you will spend eternity in God's presence. She is just as special and important to God as you are. Jesus died for her sins on the cross the same as yours. All either of you have comes from God's grace. It's not like men in general, or you in particular, are on a higher level of some sort. You are equal in God's sight, and she has a tremendous, wonderful future with God for eternity, the same as you do.

“So that nothing will hinder your prayers.” If you don't *“be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life”* your spiritual life will suffer. Your relationship to God will fade. Ever notice how, when you aren't getting along with your wife as you should, you don't feel close to God or like praying? Your patience is low and things just don't seem to go right. The solution is to get right with your wife, THEN get right with God. I wonder if this may not be one of the reasons that too many men are spiritually stagnant too often – they aren't the loving leader God wants them to be. Make sure this isn't your downfall!

Building a good marriage and building a good log fire are similar in many ways. You build a fire with paper and kindling, and all at once it goes up in a brilliantly burning blaze. Then the primary blaze burns down and you wonder if the fire will fizzle out and leave you in the dark. You blow on it and fan it for all you are worth. Sometimes smoke billows out and almost chokes you, but if the materials are good and if you invest enough energy and interest in maintaining it, soon the big solid logs catch, and your fire takes on new qualities. That's the story of my marriage, and probably of yours, too. Men, make sure you take the time to fan the flame, put wood on the fire, and give it the tender loving care it needs to grow strong. Left unattended too long it will fade and go out. You keep your marriage fires burning by being the loving leader, the scout, the manager, the one making the pro-vision God wants you to make.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MATE (& YOURSELF)

BUILD & MAINTAIN A STRONG CHRISTIAN HOME *HOW TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL MARRIAGE*

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13. How to Have a SUBMISSIVE SPIRIT

A tyrannical husband demanded that his wife conform to rigid standards of his choosing. She was to do certain things for him as a wife, mother and homemaker. In time she came to hate her husband as much as she hated his list of rules and regulations. Then, one day he died – mercifully as far as she was concerned.

Some time later, she fell in love with another man and married him. She and her new husband lived on a perpetual honeymoon. Joyfully, she devoted herself to his happiness and welfare. One day she ran across one of the sheets of do's and don'ts her first husband had written for her. To her amazement she found that she was doing for her second husband all the things her first husband had demanded of her, even though her new husband had never once suggested them. She did them as an expression of her love for him and her desire to please him.

MISUNDERSTOOD SUBMISSION The Idea of submission is not very popular today. The Bible is often seen as antiquated because of its commands to submit to others and to God. That is because 1) our sin nature causes us to be prideful and self-centered and 2) we don't understand just what God means by 'submission.' Often we think of it as slavery, when that is not the case at all. Let's look at just what God means when He call us all to submission.

MUTUAL SUBMISSION "Submit to one another" (Ephesians 5:21; see also I Peter 5:5; Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3). Jesus Himself exemplified this when He washed the disciples' feet, and then told His followers to do likewise (John 13). God tells all His children to submit to government (Titus 3:1; Romans 13:1), employers (Titus 2:9), church leaders (I Cor. 16:16), one another (Eph 5:21), and especially Christ (Eph 5:24). In addition children are to submit to parents (Eph 6:1-3; I Tim 3:4) and wives to husbands (Eph 5:22). Paul says this same thing several times. He says man is the head of the woman (I Cor 11:3), the husband is the head of the wife (Eph 5:23; Col 3:18; Titus 2:3-5), man is the manager of the household (I Tim 3:4-5), and that women are under their husbands (I Tim 2:11-14; I Cor 14:34-35).

PAUL'S DOMESTIC CODE Ephesians 5:21 - 6:9 contain Paul's detailed admonitions to those in relationships with others; husband-wife relationship (5:22-33), parent-child relationship (6:1-4) and master-servant relationship (6:5-9). In each of these he follows the same pattern. First he talks to the one in the position of submission (wife 5:22-24), child (6:1-3) and servant (6:5-8). Then he speaks secondly to the one in the position of responsibility: husband (5:25-33), parent (6:4) and master (6:9). This was part of a fairly well defined body of teaching given to new converts, and was standard, acceptable teaching.

WIFE'S SUBMISSION "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord" (Eph 5:22). Some might wonder why Paul would have to tell wives to do this when the culture they lived in was very strict about this. It's because Paul added a new twist to this command, one often overlooked today. "Submit" is an imperative (command) in the present tense (continually true, today as well). It is in the middle voice, which means the person doing it is benefited by their action. Thus Paul says a woman submits for HER sake as much as for her husband's sake. She benefits when she follows God's order of things.



If a woman just goes through the motions outwardly, she is a hypocrite. Paul was giving the women in his day a new option, that of following God's command to submit with their heart, not just their body. God, who made us and knows how we best work, says in His 'owner's manual' (the bible) that woman only finds her true happiness and satisfaction in submitting to her husband. She'll never find it in controlling and dominating him. That's the way God designed His male and female models to work most effectively!

The Bible abounds with examples of women who did not submit to their husbands and suffered for it: Eve with Adam (sin entered the world), Jezebel with Ahab (murdered for her sin), Zipporah with Moses (left him and lived alone), Gomer with Hosea (left him for other men), and Sapphira with Ananias (killed by God for lying to the Holy Spirit).

Maybe in school you saw a bottle with an animal fetus in it which had two heads. It was a freak of nature. That's the way it is when a woman tries to be the head of her family. The man is to be the leader (see previous article). Most men would admit that the problem today is as much their lack of leading as it is a woman's trying to lead. When a man doesn't fulfill his God-given role it leaves a vacuum which a woman then fills. She probably saw that pattern in her family of birth and is used to that. In effect there aren't two heads but one, still it is the wrong head on the wrong body and isn't a healthy experience for anyone involved.

That doesn't mean all women would love to submit if given the chance. Many women grew up with bad experiences with the men in their lives. Their fathers, boyfriends and husbands have hurt them and let them down and, like Sarah, they find they have to take their own protection and future into their own hands to be safe. While this is common and understandable, it still isn't right. It isn't God's way and must be changed. A woman like this won't have the peace and security of knowing she is in God's perfect will and that He will bless her through her husband. She will have a hard time trusting and obeying God as well as her husband. She needs to learn to trust both God and her husband for the family to function as God intended it to function.

SUBMISSIVE 'RESPONSE' Much of the confusion about submission today comes from an inability to really understand what the word submit means. In Greek it is made up of two words, "under, below" and "that which is ordered." Thus it came to mean something "ranked, placed in rows," and thus became a military term meaning to "respond." A soldier was to respond to the orders and authority of those placed over him. This is true of a woman, too.

Women are made to respond, they will respond to however they are treated. If they feel unconditional love and acceptance, they will respond with respect. If they don't feel they are unconditionally loved and safe, they will react and protect themselves. Often the hurt of the rejection they feel comes out as anger or bitterness. Women are responders. "Women, respond to your own husband as to the Lord" is really what God is saying.

For a wife to respond presumes that a husband is acting to create an environment of love for her (see articles 8 and 9). She needs love and security. If not she will still respond, but in a negative, withdrawing way to protect herself.

	MAN	WOMAN
NEED	PROVIDE, GUIDE	Security, Love
DUTY	Sacrificial Love	SUBMIT, RESPECT

When she feels loved and secure, a women will better be able to trust and show love to her husband by letting him initiate and manage the family as God directed him. She has a free will to obey God's order of things or not, but it is much harder to do if she doesn't know he is doing his best to put her needs before his own. She will let him do the scouting and trust the reports he brings in. She will depend on him to make the correct adjustments and decisions that affect the family. She knows she can give her opinion (but not nag and force her conclusion on him), and that he seeks and values her opinion.

When a husband shows sacrificial love (as Jesus loves us) to his wife, then she is to respond with submission and respect (as we do to Christ). Of course she has a free will choice to do this or not. Pride, fear, self-centeredness, etc., can hinder it, but God's will for her is to submit.

It's been well said that a truly happy marriage is one in which a woman gives the best years of her life to the man who has made them the best.

Good Bible examples of this abound as well. Mary responded to Joseph's sacrificial love when he was willing to take the loss himself to protect her from criticism of her premature pregnancy. When, in the middle of the night after a long day of company (Magi/wise men) Joseph said they had to get up and move immediately she followed.

Elizabeth submitted to Zechariah's order to name the new baby 'John,' despite the influence of neighbors and Jewish customs. Priscilla, although an excellent speaker and theologian (Acts 18:1-3, 18-19, 24-26; Rom 16:2-5), submitted to her husband Aquilla.

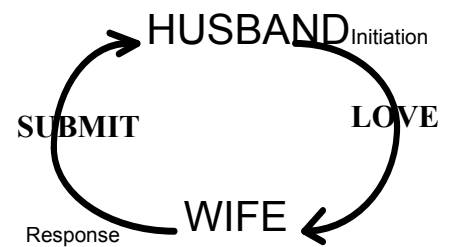
"AS TO THE LORD" "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord" (Eph 5:22). The way a wife submits to God is the way she should submit to her husband as well. Wife: "God, how can I show my love and devotion to You?" God: "By submitting to your husband." Just as the husband is to initiate in sacrificial love as Jesus does for the Church, so the wife is to respond with respectful submission, as the Church does to Christ.

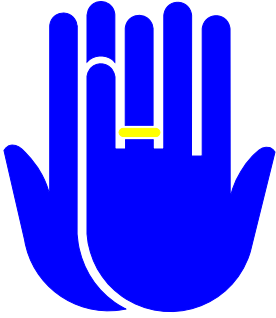
Anita Bryant, in "Bless This House," says "Only as I practice yielding to Jesus can I learn to submit, as the Bible instructs me, to the loving leadership of my husband. Only the power of Christ can enable a woman like me to become submissive to the Lord."

How are we to submit to Christ? That's how wives are to submit to husbands – lovingly, willingly, freely and totally. A woman can't really submit to her husband if she doesn't submit to the Lord, and the opposite is true as well. You can't have one without the other. Again, this is more a mental attitude decision than an outer action. It must start within. Her own motive is the difference between loving response and slavery.

"IN EVERYTHING" "Wives, should submit to their husbands in everything" (Eph 5:24). 'In everything' means there are no exceptions. It's not up to a wife to decide if her husband is right or worthy, and if she thinks he is then she is to submit. She is to submit IN EVERYTHING.

But couldn't this be used by a man to take advantage of a situation. What about the man who forces his wife to commit sin? Of what if a man forbids a wife to follow Jesus? Is she to obey in those things? What does the Bible say about this.





SUBMITTING TO DELEGATED AUTHORITY 'In everything' does not mean a wife should not express her feelings. Esther did and was rewarded for it. Neither does it mean a wife must subject herself to physical or emotional abuse. God says that a wife can separate from her husband for the sake of peace (I Cor. 7:15). Of course it doesn't mean a wife must indulge in sin if her husband demands it. Peter said "We must obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29) when the two conflict. Vashti didn't obey her husband when he wanted immoral behavior from her (Esther 1). Sarah did obey her husband and lie about her marital status, and suffered

the same negative consequences he did (Genesis 20). This happened to Sapphira who, like her husband, lied about how much money they gave to the church (Acts 5). Abigail didn't support her husband when he wronged David (I Samuel 25). Daniel didn't obey the government and eat their food or worship their idols. The Egyptian midwives disobeyed by not killing the Jewish boys, and God rewarded and blessed them for it (Exodus 1:15-21).

You see, a husband's authority comes from God. Men are not in any way superior to woman. Men and women differ, but none is inferior and none superior. Man is the leader because God made it that way. Man's authority is delegated authority, it is not absolute authority. Think of the army. A sergeant cannot order a private under him to assassinate someone. His authority as a sergeant comes from the army, his superior officers. It is only authority to represent them and carry out their orders. He has no authority once he steps out from that chain of command, no authority on his own to give any orders not in line with what the army would want him to do. That is true of a husband and a wife. It is also true of a parent and a child and a Christian and the government. This isn't an exception to be exercised lightly, for one must be very, very sure of his motive and reason for not obeying those God has placed over him (be it husband, parent or government).

WIFE'S RESPONSIBILITY Thus a wife is responsible to submit to and respect her husband. This doesn't mean she isn't to function in her own right as a wife, mother, person and Christian. She is not to coast on his spirituality. She must learn the Bible and grow in her own personal relationship with Jesus. She must live a godly life no matter where her husband is spiritually. God says this is how she is to bring him along to where he should be (I Peter 3). She must pray for him daily, being aware of the awesome responsibility he has to lead the family in God's ways.

A wife must practice what she preaches. She expects him to be patient and gentle, so must she be. The Golden Rule is still in effect. Show mercy to him as you want him to show mercy to you. Don't focus on his weaknesses, for you don't want him focusing on yours. Jesus said we are to take the plank out of our own eye before being able to remove the speck from our mate's eye (Matthew 7:5).

Don't sabotage his leadership. Many men have been dominated and manipulated by their mothers and other women from childhood so that it is hard for them to take over the role of leader. We have been trained to follow, to please, to keep the female in our life happy, to read the signals she sends and follow accordingly. We are the head, but let the neck do all the work. It is very easy for a woman to get her own way, but that doesn't mean it is God's way. Even if it should be a more biblical way, the fact that she usurped her place in God's order makes it wrong. The end does not justify the means. Samson was much stronger than Delilah, yet she wore him down with words. Satan used Eve to wrongly influence Adam and Job's wife to try to influence Job. Watch he doesn't use you, well meaning as you may be.

Remember when you submit to your husband you will be satisfied, secure and in God's will. Your husband will then be able to fulfill his God-given responsibilities as well. There is no room for any two-headed freaks in God's program!

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14. How to Have a PEACEFUL PALACE - I

A mature-looking lady had an appointment with a marriage counselor, and told him flat out: "I would like to divorce my husband." To this, the counselor replied, "Well, do you have any grounds?" She answered, "Why yes. We have almost an acre." The puzzled counselor asked her, "You don't understand. What I want to know is do you and your husband have a grudge?" The lady answered, "Actually, we don't, but we do have a nice carport." At this, the counselor shook his head and said, "Ma'am, I'm sorry, but I just don't see any reason why you should divorce your husband." The lady looked at the counselor and said to him, "It's just that the man can't carry on an intelligent conversation."

Overheard: "Honey, what do you mean, we don't communicate? Just yesterday I faxed you a reply to the recorded message you left me on your answering machine." Peter Drucker, often called the "father of American management," claims that 60 percent of all management problems are a result of faulty communications. A leading marriage counselor says that at least half of all divorces result from faulty communication between spouses. And criminologists tell us that upwards of 90 percent of all criminals have difficulty communicating with other people.

Ann Landers writes: "The most important single ingredient in a marriage is the ability to communicate. If my mail is a fair reflection of what goes on with Mr. & Mrs. America behind closed doors (and I think it is) most marital problems stem from the inability of 2 people to talk to each other. How precious is the ability to communicate!"

Communication is the lifeblood of a good marriage. Yet poor communication either causes or compounds most marriage problems. The American Sociological Review found in a survey that women talk to their husbands an average of 12 minutes a day.

Part of the problem is that men and women communicate differently. A recent Sally Forth cartoon has Ted telling Sally, "I had lunch with Roger Ames. I hadn't seen him in 5 years, and he just called me out of the blue." Sally asks how he is and Ted says he is doing well. She then asks if he and Jean are still married, but Ted doesn't know. "How can you not know?" Sally asks. "What did you talk about?" Ted replies: "Business, boats, Achilles' tendons, you know, the usual stuff." Sally then says, "How can you have lunch with a guy you haven't seen in 5 years and not ask if he's still married?" Ted says "I didn't want to embarrass him. He'd have told me if he wanted me to know." "Amazing: sally replies. "What I?" Ted asks. Sally says, "I keep forgetting that the rules about communication are different on the planet you men come from." And how right she is!

Lets look at some of these differences. Remember, in some marriages the roles are reversed, but in almost all marriages the pattern applies. One does most of the talking and the other does most of the listening.

WHY MEN TALK SO LITTLE A letter to Ann Landers states: "My husband doesn't talk to me. He just sits there night after night, reading the newspaper or looking at T.V. When I ask him a question, he grunts "huh, or Uh'huh." Sometimes he doesn't even grunt uh'huh. All he really needs is a housekeeper and somebody to sleep with him when he feels like it. He can buy both. There are times when I wonder why he got married." Why do men as a whole talk so much less than women?

Studio analogy. Picture a woman with a studio right in the middle of town with a big sign out front with her name on it. When she wants to paint or create, she calls all her friends and invites them to watch. She talks as she paints, telling what she is doing and why. She invites their comments and reactions. She shares the whole experience with them. Their presence and feedback are a vital part of her creative process. In fact, she doesn't paint very well without this dynamic dialogue and interaction. Now a man has a studio as well, but no one knows where it is. It's off the beaten path in a deserted part of town with no sign. When he wants to paint he doesn't tell anyone but sneaks in alone, at the dead of night. He works in private, carefully molding colors and strokes, redoing the picture from different angles. He takes as much time as necessary to get it just the way he wants it. He gets no feedback from anyone, he keeps his work quite secret. When he is finally done and satisfied he lets it sit awhile, then invites one trusted person and shows a part of it, bit by bit. He wants and needs their opinion and approval, but also fears their rejection.

You see, women process as they think, and they like to think out loud. Men keep their thoughts and their thought processes to themselves. Thus their differences as male and female not only mean that they take different paths, but come to differing conclusions as well.

Here is an example. After church a wife says something about the church service and the touching moment when a teenager opened up and shared deep feelings for her parents. This reminds a man who is present of how many young people have a difficult time with acne, which causes him to think of a guy in high school, who's now an accountant and making at least twice what he's making, which made him mad, and also reminded him to get to his quarterly taxes. So he interjects, "You know what? I need to send in those quarterly taxes." His wife looks at him with eyes brimming with tears, still thinking about that touching moment in church, and wondering how he can be so insensitive and out of touch. For men, words simply convey facts and information – one computer interfacing with another computer. For women words are much more. They explore thoughts and feelings and pave the way to greater intimacy.

After-church conversation. After church two men are standing in the back of the church. "How's it going?" "Fine, You?" "Fine." "Good." "How's your car running?" "Oh, pretty good. I kept hearing this knocking in the engine a couple weeks ago...." "Really? What was the problem?" "Well, I took it to the shop, and they finally figured out it was the injector pump." "Is that so?" "Only cost \$9.95 to fix!" "Great. I'm glad they were able to fix it." Meanwhile their wives are having a conversation about the same thing nearby. "Hi, Mary, how are you? I've been praying for you." "Thanks, Kim (sniff). I really appreciate it." "Been a hard week?" "I don't mean to complain, but yes, it's been difficult." "Do you want to talk about it, or would you just like me to weep with you?" "I appreciate how much you care. I think I can talk about it." "Take your time." "It's the car, Kim. You know that knocking sound I heard a couple of weeks ago?" "I remember. I prayed about it during my quiet time this morning." "John finally took it to the shop. I thought it was going to blow up or something, and because it's my car, he wouldn't believe me. You know we have this issue of trust between us, and if he doesn't hear the noise, he thinks I'm just making it up." "That's too bad. Want a tissue? It's lotion enhanced." "Thanks for your thoughtfulness. Well, John did drive it to church the other day and heard the same sound. The very next day he took it to the shop, and they found it was some fuel thing that only costs \$9.95 to replace." "Well there's an item for praise!" "But that's just it! (sniff) Sometimes I

feel I'm not even worth the \$9.95 it would take to get our relationship to a higher plane. Thanks for listening, Kim. I knew I could count on you." Now that may be a bit over exaggerated, but you get the picture...

D. L. Steward in the Daily Intelligencer wrote an article entitled "Men don't Have a Clue on Relationships." It contained the following: "When men get together they seldom talk about relationships. There are 7 other guys in my Thursday evening tennis group. We play an hour and a half of doubles and then sit around for three hour and socialize. Which probably explains our bodies. In the 8 or 9 years we have been doing this, I don't remember any of the guys in my tennis league discussing their relationships. I do seem to vaguely recall Tom saying something one time about being married, but he didn't mention any names. Besides, that was a long time ago and you can't really expect me to remember every minor detail about an evening in which Tim and I lost to Joe and Bubba in a three-set tiebreaker, 6-3, 1-6, 6-7 (7-5) when Bubba hit a cross-court overhead dropshot for match point. After which we watched the Lakers play the Knicks on TV and Shaq fouled out with 3:17 left in the fourth quarter after scoring 17 points and pulling down 12 rebounds..."

10,000 to 20, 000 Studies show that men use 10,000 words in a day and women double that. When in pain men isolate and withdraw, women tend to reach out and open up. Men identify the problem then move to a solution. Women need to discuss it until they are satisfied they are understood. The process is as important as the final result. Men think, then talk. Women talk as they think. After a movie a woman will go on for 30 minutes sharing reactions in detail. Finally she'll ask her husband what he thought of it and he'll say, "It was OK. I liked it."

Some say that women are in touch, men out of touch. Women share, men suppress. Women relate, men retreat. Women wing it, men mull it over. It's important to understand these basic communication differences about each other so a wife will understand when a man slips away to his studio alone. It's nothing personal, it's the way he paints best. Men must understand that women need to paint in public, especially in front of them. Let her do it. Listen and enjoy the process. Sure, she's not like you – but isn't that why you married her?

WHY WOMEN TALK SO MUCH A born Loser cartoon shows Gladys talking to her husband. "Have I got some gossip for you! Bea just told me, well, in fact, Agnes told me, because my line was busy when Bea tried to get me, well, it seems Joe – you know Joe, don't you? Oh, maybe you don't – he's Bea's cousin on her mother's side. At any rate, Joe had to go to Albany on business.. Actually it was Syracuse he had to go to but he stopped in Albany on the way for a nice steak dinner, but he had to settle for a burger joint to save money ... You see, Joe lost his expense allowance at work because his sales were down – of course, that wasn't his fault, because his dentures didn't fit properly... Anyway, to make a long story short." To which her husband replies, "I think we missed that opportunity about 10 minutes ago."

Then there was the fellow who had a nagging wife. "Talk, talk, talk, talk," he said to his friend. "That's all my wife ever does is talk, talk, talk." His friend responded, "Well, what does she talk about?" "I don't know," he said, "she doesn't say." Talking is lifeblood to women. It is their way of relating and connecting. To men it is just a way of conveying information so decisions can be made and problems solved. To a woman it the first step in connecting with her husband, in knowing he understands her, or at least cares enough to try to understand her.

Then why does it seem men talk so much more before marriage? They are motivated to do whatever it takes to win this woman they love and need. They are interested in getting to know her better and have her know them. They show off how skillful they are, how funny and witty. After marriage the more real person comes out and communication fades.

"Let's talk" a woman says and the husband replies "What do you want to talk about?" That shows he's already missed the point. It doesn't matter what they talk about as long as they talk for that is connecting. Reverses it and have a man say "Let's make love" and the woman

responds with “Why? Are we ready to have a baby?” Talking to a woman is like sex for a man, a way of connecting. The process is the important part, not just the end result.

WHY MEN SHOULD TALK MORE It’s been said that if men were self starters in the area of communication, fewer wives would be cranks. Men, it’s our responsibility to talk more, to open up to our wives and share when is going on in our hearts. It’s our responsibility to understand their need to talk, for it means they want to be close to us. It is truly a complement.

I can imagine Adam and Eve leaving Eden and her talking about it, expressing her feelings and wanting to find out how he feels about it. Adam, meanwhile, doesn’t want to talk. It’s been a bad day and he just wants to forget the whole thing. “Let’s just find a place to camp.”

Picture this: a man comes home from work and says to his wife, “Honey, I had a bad day and I need to pour out my heart to you about it!” The wife would love that! She’d feel needed and could connect. That’s very hard for men to do. Oh, we do it, but in such small, camouflaged ways that most wives never notice. So we shut up entirely.

Men, carry a pencil and paper around. Write down things during the day that happened to you, feelings you had, etc., -- things to talk about at home. You probably did this before marriage, do it again! Then initiate conversation at home, don’t send up signals that you want to be left alone. Listen. It means she loves you and you love her.

WHY WOMEN SHOULD TALK LESS I’m not implying women talk too much, I am saying that sometimes it is hard for a man to talk because his wife has so much to say and does carry most of the communication load. I have a cartoon that shows Janis talking when she realizes Arlo is no longer listening. Arlo says, “I’m sorry! I can’t help it. If you don’t come to the point in 10 minutes go on “standby.” It’s like the screen saver comes up in our minds, nothing registers.

It does help if women understand how men listen and let them know why they’re talking about something and what they expect from their husband. A man is a person who, if a woman says, “Never mind, I’ll do it myself,” lets her. A woman is a person who, if she says to a man, “Never mind, I’ll do it myself,” and he lets her, get mad. A man is a person who, if a woman says to him, “Never mind, I’ll do it myself,” and he lets her and she gets mad, says, “Now what are you mad about?” A woman is a person who, if she says to a man, “Never mind, I’ll do it myself,” and he lets her, and she gets mad, and he says, “Now what are you mad about?” says, “If you don’t know I’m not going to tell you.” Women, when you push a man to open up he will close up even more. You can’t force feelings out of him, especially positive one. When a woman becomes intense it scares a man and then her emotions become the issue, not the subject at hand. When someone stands too close to us physically we back off to have a little safe space. Men do the same thing emotionally. When this happens women tend to become more resentful and hurt and things just get worse for both. No one wins, everyone loses.

Women, don’t initiate all the conversations, only about half. Let him start the others or let there be silence if that is what he chooses. Let him run to his studio to do his painting. Wait until he is ready to show it to you. Don’t carry the conversation when you are talking. Make sure you stop and let him respond. Don’t fear quiet spaces and try to fill them in with more words. There is a current book that is entitled “Men Are Clams and Women Are Crowbars.” That pretty well says it all. Don’t pry but do be genuinely interested. Ask questions like “how did that make you feel?” Listen between the lines to see what is important to him. It won’t be important to you, but then the things that are important to you aren’t important to him and you expect him to listen and care. Treat him the way you want him to treat you.

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14. How to Have a PEACEFUL PALACE - II

When baby sea turtles are hatched on a beach they have a real struggle to survive. They must crawl about 40 yards to the sea with no protection, and many get picked off before reaching the water. They in the water there are other dangers and predators. Studies show that only 1 in 10,000 make it to adulthood. Conversations in marriage are much the same. He will say something and she'll be busy and distracted. She'll start something and he'll be tired and empty. Keeping a good conversation going is like fanning a small spark into a roaring fire. It takes work, patience, skill and sensitivity – but the result makes it worth it!

Men and women don't have too much difficulty talking to each other during courtship. That's a time of information-gathering for both partners. Both are highly motivated to discover each other's likes and dislikes, personal background, current interests and plans for the future. But after marriage, many women find that the man who would spend hours talking to her on the telephone, now seems to have lost all interest in talking to her, and spends his spare time watching television or reading. If your need for conversation was fulfilled during courtship, you also expect it to be met after marriage.

Great marriages are a series of great conversations. Look at your marriage, it's only as good as the conversations you have, isn't it?

How can we improve our communication? Let's turn to God's Word for help. Ephesians 4:25-5:2 give 10 principles for good communication.

1. BE HONEST, TRUTHFUL Eph 4:25 "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body."

Honesty and openness gives us a sense of security. To feel secure, we want accurate information about our spouses' thoughts, feelings, habits, likes, dislikes, personal history, daily activities and plans for the future. If a spouse does not provide honest and open communication, trust can be undermined and the feelings of security can eventually be destroyed. We can't trust the signals that are being sent and we have no foundation on which to build a solid relationship. Instead of adjusting, we feel off balance; instead of growing together, we grow apart.

"Speak truthfully" means what we say must be truthful. It doesn't mean we always have to dump the whole, entire truth on our mate right away. We are to "speak" for silence can frustrate and cause much hurt. Don't purposefully keep secrets, but check your motives before you say something that will hurt. Check your motives when you don't reveal all the truth, too. The more you keep back from your mate the more your relationship will suffer. The goal is to reveal your thoughts, feelings, habits, likes, dislikes, personal history, daily activities and plans for the future as thoroughly as you understand them yourself.

Men will naturally lie to avoid trouble. When under pressure he will give the answer he thinks his wife wants to hear, if it is the truth or not.

To be honest with your mate you must first be **honest with yourself**. Ask yourself why that thing your mate does (or doesn't do) bothers you, not just look for proof why you are right

and they are wrong. Are you being selfish? Are you jealous? Are you just using your mate's imperfections as an excuse to cover up your self-centeredness?

When you have some deep down honest answers then plan what you are going to say. Rehearse the exact words in your mind, even write them down. Ask yourself how your mate will respond to this, and if that is the desired response. How can you say this to get the response you want? What is your goal in saying this? What to REALLY you want to accomplish?

When you do talk, be very careful of **nonverbal communication**. Watch your body language, tone of voice, etc. Men are very attuned to this because often much of what their mothers communicated was done in this way. Women are attuned to this because they have been learning to read others since they were little girls. Studies show that 7% of what you say comes from your words, 38% from your tone of voice and 55% from your body language.

“Speak truthfully to his neighbor” We don't just talk, we speak directly TO the person we are communicating with. Literally this could be translated “WITH” for communication is always a two-way street. We aren't to lecture or give a monologue, but talk back and forth, directing what we say specifically to the person we are with.

There are different levels of conversation. SMALL TALK is shallow, entry level communication. FACTUAL CONVERSATION is when information is shared but there are no personal commitments. We tell what has happened but not how we feel about it. This is where many men live. Next comes IDEAS AND OPINIONS, where we risk exposing our thoughts, feelings and opinions. Intimacy begins, for we get to know each other because the real person is starting to be revealed. Then comes FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS where we reveal what is going on inside us, how we feel. We honestly express our frustration, happiness, anger or joy. Finally there is DEEP INSIGHT something deeply personal is shared. This is what it means to be “one” in marriage.

“For we are all members of one body.” This is our motive for speaking the truth in love. We are all one in Christ. Our homes are to be a picture of heaven.

2. BE SELF-CONTROLLED Eph 4:26 “In your anger do not sin” Sinful anger is always an expression of not getting our own way and feeling pain because of it. When we are hurt, when our desires are thwarted and when we are afraid or insecure we often show it as anger. Instead we need to analyze what our root emotion is – what is causing the anger? Then that emotion must be dealt with (see my series on Anger control for more detailed information).

3. KEEP IT SHORT Eph 4:26b-27 “Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.” Problems not resolved before going to bed ‘settle in.’ Then they cause long-term damage. Walls are built, cracks form, and Satan can use them to cause other problems which can ruin a good marriage.

4. WATCH THE TIMING Eph 4:26-27 “In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.” Most quarrels occur around evening when everyone is tired, busy and vulnerable. It is the easiest time to get into a bad argument for energy is low and frustration high. We must be sensitive to this.

Be alert to when is a good time and when is a bad time to bring up something that may cause hurt or negative feelings. Most men come home tired, that isn't a good time. Neither is it a good time right before falling asleep. Women have their own good and bad times. Be sensitive to that when starting a conversation that will take a lot of emotional energy.

5. TAKE POSITIVE ACTIONS Eph 4:28 “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something

to share with those in need.” Take positive action to solve the communication difficulty. Don’t just go on the offensive and fight to win. Don’t fight each other, fight the problem. Your mate is not your problem, your mate is your solution. They may show you the problem, and if they weren’t there or if they were absolutely perfect, you might not have the problem, but they don’t cause it. They just bring it out, for the real problem is in you. How many people leave one relationship to avoid a problem and find the same problem surfacing in their next relationship?

Taking positive action means that, when the problem is your fault, you are to go to your mate to apologize and make it right (Matthew 5:23-24). When the problem is your mate’s fault you are still to go to them first and initiate reconciliation (Matthew 18:15). In other words, it’s always your move first!

Another way to take positive action is to **prevent problems** in communication. “You Don’t Send Me Flowers Any More” (Barbara Streisand and Neil Diamond) summarizes what often happens. We don’t consider little things important, but they communicate a lot. If there is hurt instead of security it becomes much harder to talk about painful or difficult things. We are more apt to notice and point out each other’s faults.

6. BUILD UP, DON’T TEAR DOWN Eph 4:29 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” We are to build each other up by words (v. 28) as well as actions (v. 29). Wholesome talk is commanded. This means our words are to be kind, considerate and positive. We aren’t to have critical or negative thoughts or words. If we are attacked (or feel we are being attacked), we aren’t to attack back. Build each other up, others will do the tearing down!

A man needs his wife to be his number one cheerleader. If she isn’t, then she leaves the door open for some other female to inadvertently step into that role. That brings disaster and pain all around. The same is true for men meeting their wife’s needs.

Don’t withhold compliments, love, thanks, appreciation, apologies, spending time together – anything that can build up. Don’t let your pride get in the way. When you hurt your mate you hurt yourself, for we are truly ‘one flesh.’

Don’t let **any** unwholesome talk come out of your mouths – not a single word, not a sigh, not a rolling of the eyes, not a teasing remark that hurts. Don’t fight to win, fight to be understood and to understand. Liberally sprinkle your conversations with “I love you” and “I’m sorry.” You can’t be saying that and fighting at the same time!

The sad truth is that we often treat everyone and anyone better than our mate. We show our worse side to them. We have more patience and understanding for the bag boy and the bothersome neighbor than the one we pledged to love for better or for worse forever.

7. KEEP CLOSE TO GOD Eph 4:30 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” As you relate to your mate you will relate to God and vice versa. If you distrust and fear being controlled by one you may well feel the same way to the other. Mature, godly communication takes God’s help. There are needs only God can meet. We can only be the servants God wants us to be with His help, through the power of His Holy Spirit. We can’t do it in our own strength.

Prayer before, during and after discussions is very important. Before even bringing up a subject that can cause trouble pray and ask for wisdom and guidance. Ask God to show you your own sins and confess them. Be open to what God wants to teach you. Pray for your mate to be able to accurately communicate what they feel and for them to understand what you are trying to say without being hurt. It is good to kneel and hold hands, praying together for wisdom, before or during discussions. If you can’t pause and pray together, you’re fighting to win, not working together to defeat whatever problem may be between you.

8. DEVELOP CONSTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR Eph 4:31 “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.” It takes time to form bad habits and patterns, and time to break them and replace them with more healthy ones. Specifically warned against here are bitterness (ill temper, animosity, internal anger), wrath (self-centered temper), anger (passion against someone/something to harm them), clamor (anger coming out in evil speech), slander (purpose of the clamor – to put another down) and malice (purpose of hurting another). These we are to “get rid of.” The Greek here states that this must be done by a force outside ourselves. We can’t stop these without God’s help. We must allow God’s Spirit to work in and through us to do it.

One positive constructive behavior we can all work on is the skill of **listening**. Henry Thoreau said that it takes two to speak the truth: one to speak and another to listen. No matter how well someone communicates, if the other person isn’t listening nothing good will come of it. Listening is a lost skill today. Much time and effort is put into learning to communicate, but almost none in learning to listen. Men and women must both learn to ‘listen between the lines’ when their mate speaks. We can’t listen to words, we must listen to feelings behind them. Good listening means maintaining eye contact and not letting your mind wander. Assure the one speaking you are with them, and ask for clarification when you aren’t sure what they are saying. Don’t rush them. Let them think when things become silent. Be quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19).

9. BE FORGIVING Eph 4:32 “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Our goal is more than just stopping the fighting, it is to create animosity. Silent fighting is as bad as loud, verbal clashes. Forgive and restore the relationship. Don’t forgive and keep your distance, for that isn’t forgiving. Forgiving means giving up your right to be avenged, to have the other suffer. You agree to take the hurt in order to spare them. That’s what Jesus did for us on the cross.

10. LIVE BY LOVE Eph 5:1-2 “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” WWJD. To be like Jesus means to ask yourself what Jesus would do in your place – and then do it! Unconditional love, sacrificial service, and forgiveness would characterize all He would do. That should characterize us, too, then.

To summarize, good communication isn’t something that just ‘happens.’ It takes work. Maybe only one in 10,000 sea turtles reaches maturity, but we need a better average in marital communication. The better, stronger communications we have the better and stronger will be our marriage. It’s that simple, but it takes hard work.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MATE (& YOURSELF)

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HOW TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL MARRIAGE

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23. How to Have SENSITIVE SEX

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fill when needed)

RELATIONSHIPS When a relationship ends, a woman will cry and pour her heart out to her girlfriends, and she will write a poem called "All Men Are Jerks". Then,... she will go on with her life. Men have a little tougher time letting go. 6 months after the breakup, he will phone her at 3:00 AM and say, "I just wanted to let you know you ruined my life, and I'll never be the same again."

MATURITY Women mature much faster than men. Most 17 year old girls can function as adults. Most 17 year old men are still trading baseball cards and giving each other wedgies after gym class. That's why most high school romances don't work out

BATHROOMS A man has 6 items in their bathroom - a toothbrush, toothpaste, shaving cream, razor, a bar of Irish Spring and a towel from Best Western. The average woman bathroom contains approximately 492 items. The average man can't identify most of them

GROCERIES A woman makes a list of things she needs and then goes to the store. A man will wait until the only thing left in his cabinet are stale fruit loops. Then he goes to the store and buys anything that looks good

CATS Women love cats. Men say they love cats,... then kick the cat when she isn't looking.

CHILDREN A woman knows everything about all her children, including dentist appointments, immunization schedules and blood type. A man is vaguely aware of some short people living in the house

LAUNDRY Women do laundry every couple of days. A man will wear every article of clothing he owns,... twice. He will then rent a u-haul truck, head to the Laundromat and expect to meet beautiful women

EATING OUT: When the bill arrives, Mike, Phil, Rob and Jack will each throw in \$20, even though the whole bill is only \$22.50. None of them will have anything smaller, and none will actually admit they want change back. When the girls get their bill, out come the pocket calculators.

MONEY: A man will pay \$2 for a \$1 item he wants. A woman will pay \$1 for a \$2 item that she doesn't want.

ARGUMENTS: A woman has the last word in any argument. Anything a man says after that is the beginning of a new argument.

FUTURE: A woman worries about the future until she gets a husband. A man never worries about the future until he gets a wife.

SUCCESS: A successful man is one who makes more money than his wife can spend. A successful woman is one who can find such a man.

MARRIAGE: A woman marries a man expecting he will change, but he doesn't. A man marries a woman expecting that she won't change and she does.

DRESSING UP: A woman will dress up to: go shopping, water the plants, empty the garbage, answer the phone, read a book, get the mail. A man will dress up for: weddings, funerals.