

36. Love your closest neighbor – Part 2

January 4, 2009

Last Sunday we learned about loving our closest neighbors – our spouses. Is it easy? Absolutely not. Like I said before, the wedding vow we recited in our wedding ceremonies is impossible to keep without God's intervention.

Today, we are going to learn from the Word of God about the role of godly wives. I know some of you ladies are thinking, "I knew there was a reason why I should have not come to the church this morning." You came here because of a divine appointment with you.

By the way, here is some advice I gathered up from other wives for you, ladies:

1. Don't imagine you can change a man – unless he's in diapers.
2. Never let your man's mind wander – it's too little to be out alone.
3. Women don't make fools of men – most of them are the do-it-yourself types.
4. Best way to get a man to do something is to suggest he is too old for it.
5. Love is blind, but marriage is a real eye-opener.
6. The children of Israel wandered around the desert for 40 years. Even in Biblical times, men wouldn't ask for directions. So don't expect your husband to do so.
7. If he asks what sort of books you're interested in, tell him "check books."
8. Remember a sense of humor does not mean that you tell him jokes; it means that you laugh at his.

Here are additional comments from husbands to wives:

1. Ask for what you want. Let us be clear on this one: Subtle hints do not work! Strong hints do not work! Obvious hints do not work! Just say it!
2. Anything we said a month ago is inadmissible in an argument. In fact, all comments by husbands become null and void after 3 days.
3. If we ask what is wrong and you say "nothing," we will act like nothing is wrong. We know you are lying, but it is just not worth the hassle.
4. When we have to go somewhere, absolutely anything you wear is fine... Really!
5. Don't ask us what we're thinking about unless you are prepared to discuss such topics as baseball, the shotgun formation, or monster trucks.
6. And lastly, you do have enough clothes so don't tell us, "There is absolutely nothing to wear."

Seriously, ever since the Promise Keepers movement started twenty some years ago in the United States, pastors, Bible teachers and marriage counselors have been bombarding husbands as insensitive dumb people and we deserved that treatment many times.

If you have noticed, husbands and dads are portrayed as some sort of fumbling idiots on just about all TV sitcoms, commercials and movies. However, they make wives as complete and faultless humans.

If there is any of you ladies who thinks that you are perfect and do everything exactly what the Bible says, please raise your hands.

Let's find out what God wants for wives to do for their marriages from the Bible.

A. SUBMISSION - A TEN LETTER TABOO WORD

1 Peter 3:1-2 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

Nowadays, the word 'Submission' is some sort of cuss word against contemporary women. However, when we read the Bible, we find God's instructions for wives start in the same consistent way in three epistles in the NT.

Eph 5:22-24 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Col 3:18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

What is the reason the Bible tell wives to be submissive? It goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden. God created the man Adam first, then Eve. According to 1 Tim 2:11-14 and Gen 3:6, Eve, intentionally, reversed the chain of command and took the control over Adam.

Gen 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

1 Timothy 2:11-14 Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

From the beginning stage of the sin, it was a matter of who-takes-control. Since then, the struggle between husbands and wives has been going on.

Ladies, do you remember the time your daddy walked you down the aisle to your bridegroom? Do you know meaning of that?

Gen 2:21-23 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

It was the transition of the authority and the responsibility from God to the man to take care the woman. The father of the bride walks his daughter down the aisle as God did to Adam and Eve. By doing so, the father also was endorsing the groom as God's choice for her.

Does this mean man is better than woman? I didn't say that, nor the Bible ever states that either. Actually, we are equal in God's love for us. However, He is putting more responsibility to man. And the responsibility is based on the seniority.

I asked you to underlined "as to the Lord" and "in everything" in Ephesians 5:22-24. Your submission to your husband should be done in the same manner with a willing heart as you do unto the Lord Jesus in every situation.

B. WHAT IF I AM MARRIED TO AN IDIOT?

Some of you ladies think that you are married to an idiot. Well, we as husbands realize that we do dumb things often. However, before you decided that you've married to an idiot, did you ever think that you were getting married to an idiot at the

beginning? Most likely not. You thought you were marrying a prince charming. What happened? You got to see the real man after all that ooey gooey fog settled down. As a matter of fact, you are not the only one who feel that you got cheated. Your husband thinks that you are not the same person whom he dated.

If you have to compete with your husband to get the things done around the house, you know that you can take him hands down. Does this mean you can treat him like unwelcome in-laws at your home? Absolutely not.

The willing submission command still remains from the Word, even though you are married to an idiotic, insensitive, lazy bum. It is not a matter of what that man can do or cannot do. It is a matter of your obedience to your God's Word. Your husband is not accountable for what you do with the Word of God, but YOU DO.

C. RESPECT IS THE ONLY THING YOUR HUSBAND HAS

A wife needs 'love' from her husband. That is her 'oxygen' she breathes in her marriage. Like you have 'love' as your 'oxygen' in your air tank, your husband has 'respect' as his 'oxygen' in his air tank. Being insensitive that he is, he comes to you like an elephant and standing on your air hose that is connected to your air tank that filled with 'love' you need. He is standing there looking for peanuts to eat, while you cannot breathe because you don't get 'love'. So what does the wife do? She comes to his air tank that is filled with the 'oxygen' called 'respect' and puncture it with her beautiful thorn. And now he is perishing without 'respect' from her.

Ladies, listen to me carefully. Whenever and wherever you read what husband and wife are supposed to do in the Bible, it says, "Husband, love your wives." But it never says, "Wives, love your husband." Why? Because you ladies already know how to love your husbands. You are built that way by your Maker. But the Bible tells you to submit and respect your husbands.

Some of you are thinking, "How can I respect him when he does nothing right?" Are you his judge? Are you his Maker? You are not. God's command for you is to respect your husband whether he is worthy of your respect or not.

Ladies, please be careful how you talk to your husband, especially in front of others and your children. He is not your child, sometimes he may not act whole lot different than them. You must not talk down to him. If you do, you are removing his only emotional shield that we call 'RESPECT' from him. If you do that, he will come back at you with ugly comments or simply withdraw.

When that happens, the communication you ladies want so bad will completely go south. Because of his silent withdrawal, the wife tends to think that it is an act of hostility toward her. That means you will change your tactic from "Talking Down" to "Nagging" which will lead to a cycle of criticism and more withdrawal.

In a Christian family seminar, J. Allan Petersen analyzed the syndrome of nagging in this manner:

"Nagging is basically a woman's weapon used against the man in her marriage. The recurrent irritation of nagging is designed to get the wife what she wants. When her husband surrenders out of exasperation, he secretly hates himself for doing it and then sets his feet a little more so that the next time around she has to nag more than she did before to accomplish the same purpose.

This state of affairs continues until finally the woman has formed a habit of nagging, nagging to get what she wants. She really is achieving her selfish purpose at the expense of her marriage."

Let's go back to the Scripture to get what God wants from you, ladies:

1 Peter 3:1-2 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

Don't try to change your husband the way you want, but ask God to change him the way He want in your prayer. God's way is far better than yours.

Here are the five basic rules for communication:

- 1) **Never repeat the things your husband shares with you privately to anyone else.**
- 2) **Give your husband your total undivided attention and listen with interest while he becomes more comfortable in expressing himself. Remember, it may not be easy for him.**
- 3) **Do not interrupt him or jump to conclusions about what he is saying.**
- 4) **Acknowledge that you understand even if you disagree, and repeat his thoughts and feelings back to him so that he is sure you understand. Do not let your disagreement sound like disapproval, but make it like a suggestion. Let him think that it is his idea.**
- 5) **When you are sharing your thoughts, be careful never to sound as if you are heaping blame on him. When either of you goes on the defensive, your communication goes too, and rapport must be reestablished.**

D. FORGIVE AND FORGET

When it comes to "Forgive and forget," you might say, "No way. You don't know what he has done." You are absolutely right. I don't.

But please think this way with me: How would you like for God to treat you or not forgive you for your sins the same way you treat your husband's many same goofs and faults? Extend mercy to your husband as much as you want mercy from God. Do not put your husband's faults, mistakes and shortcomings into your permanent memory, if he asks you for your forgiveness with a sincere heart.

One husband said, "Whenever I get into argument with my wife, she becomes hysterical, not hysterical." Please do not bring back what happened before. As God does to you, forgive and forget.

Mark 11:25 And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

In light of this, I must mention a couple of things:

- 1) **If any of you ladies is a victim of domestic violence, you need to get to safety for yourself and your children.**

Find a shelter where you can be safe. If you don't have, call the church at 256-6688. We will do everything within our power to help you. Of course, everything will be handled with confidentiality.

Some of you may think, "How can you say that? This is a church. No Christian would beat his wife." If you think that, you are naive. Most unfortunately, even among born-again Christian men, some are wife-beaters. Men, if you are one of them, you are a coward. You should pick on your own size. If you really want to spar, come see me anytime.

2) If your husband cheats on you, you do have a biblical ground to divorce as an option.

If he truly repented and the Lord told you to take him back and you have willingness to work with him in your marriage, God bless you. If that is the case, you need to forgive him and do not bring up what he had done in the past in your future conversation as some sort of leverage to corner him when you are upset with him for something else. The Lord can bring joy and peace from your past difficulties.

If the things didn't work out, you still need to forgive him and move on. Forgiveness is a mandatory to all believers in Christ Jesus.

E. KEEP YOURSELF ATTRACTIVE TO YOUR HUSBAND INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

1 Peter 3:3-6 Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-- rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with (1) the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, (2) being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

It is extremely important for you, ladies, to understand that your inner beauty outlasts your outer beauty. I have seen many women who only care about their outer beauties and could care less about their inner beauties.

How can you increase your inner beauty? By following the Word of God and having deeper relationship with Jesus your Savior:

1) The incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

2) Being submissive to their own husbands

Some ask me that if it is right for Christian woman to wear make-up. Late Dr. J. Vernon McGee said, "If the barn needs painting, paint the barn." I believe she should keep herself attractive for her husband.

F. DO NOT USE SEX AS YOUR WEAPON

The Bible is so straight forward that sometimes it is uncomfortable for me to teach. This is a case in point. But I must talk about it.

1 Cor 7:3-5 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another

except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Ladies, please do not use sex to fight back against your husband or make your point. If you do, you are the one who is allowing satan and his cohorts to tempt your husband.

G. APPLICATIONS

1) Remember that your husband does not read your mind. Please communicate to him clearly with respect.

2) Instead of nagging at your husband to do what you want him to do, encourage him to do the things you want with respect for him.

3) Do not use sex as your leverage to get what you want.

Because your body does not belong to you alone any longer as the wife of your husband.

4) Respect your husband, so that you can win his heart for God's glory.

It is not whether your husband deserves your respect or not. It is a command from God to you, not a suggestion.