

INTRODUCTION

These past three weeks we are talking about marriage. Last week we talked about the differences between men and women with, "Men are from Pluto, Women are from Mercury." We are continuing along those lines today. I am particularly going to be talking to women today: Wives and wives-to-be, and even widows, because the book of Titus says the older women, the widows, are to teach the younger women the kind of wives and mothers they are to be. So, guys, I'm going to give you a little bit of time off today. I just want to warn you, before we start the sermon please do not poke your wife in the ribs during any portion of this sermon. Also, you will never hear me ask this again, but this is the time I'm going to ask you to refrain from saying, "Amen!" (laughter) because an "amen" in the wrong place today could really cause your trouble when you get home this afternoon. Next week, I'm going to point both barrels at the men and talk to you about how to be the right kind of husband. Today I want to talk to you about, "What Every Man Wishes His Wife Knew about Him."

Ephesians 5:22-24. "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything." Paul summarizes it in verse 33. "However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

Marriage is a difficult proposition at best. At best it is a precarious journey of two totally different individuals who come into a marriage bringing their own individual problems.

There was a very shy girl who never dated. She had a problem with extremely bad breath and she knew it. There was this guy who was very shy and he hardly ever dated because he had a terrible problem with foot odor. They never dated anybody. They struck up one of these internet romances over email and got to know each other, responding back and forth. Actually, they fell in love over the internet, and began to date, but they never got really close to each other and they never revealed their problems to each other. They dated without even kissing and getting close. They even married without ever kissing! During the wedding ceremony, they didn't kiss, they hugged with their heads turned. Neither knew the other's problem. On their honeymoon, the bride thought, "I have to tell him about my problem but will he still love me?" She rushed into the bathroom and brushed her teeth several times and gargled with mouthwash and brushed her teeth again. She opened the door and as she walked out, he walked into the bathroom. He closed the door and washed his feet several times and poured mouthwash all over them, thinking, "I know I have a problem, I just have to tell her but will she still love me?" He opened the bathroom door to find her standing on the other side. He says, "There is something I have to tell you!" She says, "What is it?" He says, "Have you been chewing on my socks?"

I think that's a great story because that's what marriage is. It is two individuals coming into a marriage, bringing their own sets of problems and marriage is loving your spouse even when you find out those little secrets and problems they may have.

Men are frustrating creatures, and you really want to try to please them and meet their needs, but sometimes when you try, you think they just don't appreciate it. Some of you remember the song

“Men” by the Forester Sisters that went like this about men: She said:

They buy you dinner, open your door.
Other than that, what are they good for?
Men! I’m talkin’ ‘bout men.
They all want a girl just like the girl,
That married dear old dad: they make me so mad.
Men! I’m talkin’ ‘bout men.
Well, you can’t beat ‘em up ‘cause they’re bigger then you.
You can’t live with ‘em and you just can’t shoot ‘em.
Men! I’m talkin’ ‘bout men.

I know women must sometimes feel very frustrated. I think that is one of the reasons there are so many divorces, because men and women don’t understand the differences between the two sexes. I’m sad to say the United States of America leads the world in one disappointing category: We lead the planet in the divorce rate. More divorces occur in America than in any other nation on earth. Some say one out of two marriages end in divorce. That’s not exactly true, but it could stem from the 1990 statistic that there were 2.4 million weddings and there were also 1.2 million divorces. The problem with that statistic is 80% of that population were still married and in their first marriage. There were millions of marriages that were not divorcing in that year. So the actual statistic is more like one out of seven marriages is ending in divorce in America. That’s tragic enough but the statistics go deeper than that, because for every seven couples who get on board the good ship Matrimony, one of those couples will jump overboard, but two of those couples will stay tied to the mast, lashed to the deck. They are not happy, not enjoying the ride, but because of religious or social reasons they stay in that marriage. Only about four out of seven couples say they are enjoying the cruise, so two out of seven marriages are at extreme risk in America today. I think one of the ways you can be a better wife and better “submit” to your husband is to understand what men really need in marriage. There are three things your husband needs from you.

1. EVERY HUSBAND NEEDS A LOVER, NOT A MOTHER

Number one. Every husband needs a lover, not a mother! Guys, I told you not to say, “Amen!” I said do not say “Amen!” but I know you are thinking “Amen! Preach it, brother!” Men are not outwardly romantic most of the time. In fact, my wife speaks at a lot of women’s conferences and she likes to tell men jokes. For example, “How many men does it take to change a roll of toilet paper?” They don’t know. It’s never been done. Her favorite is this, “How are men like parking places?” All the good ones are already taken and when you find one, it’s handicapped. She told that at a singles group the other night and some guy came up to her after the singles meeting and said, “How’s a woman with PMS different from a bulldog?” He said, “Lipstick!” And my wife bit him. I am the first to admit men are romantically handicapped. We want to be romantic, but we just need a little help from you. We really do want to have wife who is a lover instead of somebody who mothers us.

Example: Solomon’s wife

I want to give an example for all three of these pictures today. The first example is Solomon's wife. In all fairness let's say *one* of Solomon's wives, because when he wrote the "Song of Solomon" to one of his brides, he already had about sixty wives. We know that, because he says in verse 6:8, "Out of all sixty, you're the best." I don't know how pleasing that would be for a woman to hear that. Let's focus on what he saw in this wife that really attracted him. My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely. (Song of Solomon 2:14)

Some of you women are saying, "I wish my husband would talk to me like that." Your husband is a "closet romantic." Every man really is, it just takes a very intelligent woman to draw us out of our romantic handicap. Notice the things that really turned Solomon on. It's the same thing that turns husbands on today. He said "Your voice is sweet!" Ladies, the way you talk to your husband can be a romantic attraction to him. Notice I didn't say "*what* you say," I said "*how* you say it." We all know men don't really like to communicate. For most men, talk is a four letter word. He may not be interested in the content of what you may be saying but men really plug in on *how* you say something.

In 1957 there was a song called "Love is Strange" by Mickey and Sylvia. The lyrics go:

[MICKEY:] Silvia...

[SILVIA:] Yes Mickey?

[MICKEY:] How do you call your loverboy?

[SILVIA:] Come 'ere loverboy!!

[MICKEY:] And if he doesn't answer?

[SILVIA:] Ohh loverboy!

[MICKEY:] And if he *STILL* doesn't answer?

[SILVIA:] I simply say Baby, Oohh baby, My sweet baby you're the one

Most men listened to that song and thought, "It would be so nice to have my wife call me like that and say, 'Baby you're the one!' If she would just talk to me like that she could have anything she wanted." Instead what most men hear is, "Come in here and pick up your dirty socks off the floor!" Sometimes your husband really feels like you are mothering him when what he wants to hear is a lover's voice saying, "Baby, you are the one!" That's what Solomon said, "Your voice is sweet. It's something I want to hear." So ladies, you can make your husband more romantic by the way you talk to him.

The second thing Solomon says is attractive that shows he wants a lover is, "Your face is lovely!" Physical attractiveness is important to your husband. I recommend this book to a lot of couples whether they are having marriage problems or not. It's by Dr. Willard Harley entitled, *His Needs, Her Needs*. In this book he says there are certain needs every husband has that only a wife should meet. For men it is sexual fulfillment, how they really want a lover and how they want recreational companionship. One of the things he says is very important to a husband is the physical attractiveness of his spouse. Most women are smart enough to understand that men love with their eyes. They appreciate physical beauty. So that's why you ladies take such pains to have your hair look nice and to put on makeup and to wear attractive clothes.

A lot of times problems are caused in marriage because the spouse doesn't understand that. In his book Dr. Harley gives an example of a lady he called Nancy. She weighed 190 pounds and was very lonely. She decided she would never get married looking like that, so she did what a lot of women have done. She began to diet and exercise and whittled herself down to 110 pounds. Sure enough, men began to notice and were attracted to her. She married a fine Christian man. But after she got married she let herself go. (She had her husband!) Dr. Harley said her weight ballooned to over 200 pounds in the first year of marriage. That caused her husband, Brad, a lot of problems because he said, “This is not who I married. You didn't look like that when I married you!” She got upset and said, “Don't you love me for who I am? Because that's who I am.” It caused some real problems in their marriage and they came to Dr. Harley for counseling. Dr. Harley just had to tell her “Physical attractiveness is important” Nancy understood that and in his book he says she began once again to discipline herself so she could look good for her husband. I just want to say, ladies that is important to a man! How you look! That doesn't mean you have to look like Bo Derek, but as somebody once said, “You don't need to look like an oil derrick either!” Beauty is just making the most of what God has given you. Any woman can be beautiful! I have done hundreds of weddings and I've never seen an ugly bride. I've seen a couple that came close—honestly I haven't. They make themselves beautiful. It is very important to your husband to stay beautiful!

I know some of you ladies are saying, “Doesn't the Bible say over there in 2 Peter 3, where it is talking to wives about how “inner” beauty is most important?” Yes, it does and it does say that inner beauty is a meek, gentle and a quiet spirit. But it also says those things are of great value to God. God appreciates inner beauty, but most men are so ungodly they can't look below the surface. They don't notice that inner beauty as much as God does. As it says in 1 Samuel, “Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” So ladies, when you give attention to that outward appearance, it means a lot to your husband. I am saying to you that every man wishes his wife knew he really wants a lover not a mother! You are saying, “He acts like a little kid and I have to mother him!” He is a little boy on the inside. All men are but he does not want you to mother him. He'll resent that. He already has a mother or he had a mother. He wants you to be his lover! The tragic fact in America today is when that man doesn't feel like he is getting that, he oftentimes goes elsewhere to look for that lover.

2. EVERY HUSBAND NEEDS A FRIEND, NOT A CRITIC

The second thing every husband needs is a friend, not a critic. Have you heard the title of that old country song that says, “My wife just ran off with my best friend and I sure do miss him!” What's wrong with that title? I believe husbands and wives ought to be best friends with each other. In a good marriage the man does not have another best friend other than his wife and in a good marriage the wife doesn't have another best friend. It is her husband. In our own church I look around at some of these marriages that have been going on for forty, fifty and even sixty years and I have noticed in those marriages that really survive and those marriages that thrive the husband and the wife are very best friends! Ladies I just want to say to you your husband really wants you to be a friend to him not a critic.

Example: Job's wife

I want to give you an example from the Bible of a wife and it’s sad to say this is a bad example. She was not a friend—she was a critic. It is Job’s wife. Remember all the terrible things that happened to Job? He lost his business, he lost his income, he lost his family, he lost his health, and all of his other so-called friends came around and said, “Job, you must be a terrible sinner! You must be awful! God is punishing you because you are some kind of a secret sinner.” He needed support but look at what she said to him. In Job, 2:9, his wife said to him, “Are you still holding on to your integrity?” that word *integrity* literally means “your innocence.” “Job, how can you keep saying you are innocent? I agree with what your friends say. You are guilty of something, buster! You had better ‘fess up! What is it? How are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!’ He replied, ‘You’re talking like a foolish woman! Shall we accept good from God and not trouble?’ In all of this, Job did not sin in what he said.” When the chips are down and things are tough, your husband needs a friend. He needs support. He needs to know you are going to be there with him not doubting him but believing in him.

Maybe you have heard about “male bonding.” It’s like when men go off to a football game or go play golf or go hunting. Male bonding is no deep, dark secret. Men tend to be with other guys that they feel like won’t criticize them and won’t shoot them down. There can be bonding and the best kind of bonding is male/female bonding in marriage, when they are best friends. Sometimes, your husband creeps around walking on eggshells, afraid you are going to criticize him for the way he is doing things. Frankly, that is a turnoff to your husband. Proverbs 19:13 says, “A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping [of water].” Have you ever heard a drip in the middle of the night? The first drip doesn’t bother you, it’s about the thousandth drip that bothers you and then the ten thousandth one just drives you crazy! The Bible says a quarrelsome wife is like that—very irritating! Proverbs 21:9 says, “Better to live on the corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.” Most men who read those verses in Proverbs underline them and put a little star in the margin. “That is true. Man, I agree with that! Amen to that!” But it’s also true, according to Proverbs 31:10 where it says, “A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value...Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.” The Bible has the ability to either tear her husband down or to build him up. You can build him up, ladies, by being his friend.

Dr. Harley said one of a man’s basic needs is for recreational companionship.” Sheryl Crowe sings, “All I wanna do is have some fun, I’ve got a feeling I’m not the only one.” She is right. In fact, every husband says, “I want to have some fun and I want my wife to have some fun with me. I want you to be my recreational companion. I want her to be my friend.” So, every marriage ought to find some hobby or interest that you can do together as friends.

Unsolicited advice to your husband really hurts. You think you are helping your husband and he thinks you are criticizing him. You’re trying to make him a better person and he thinks you are tearing him down.

Most men see themselves as a knight in shining armor and when they first court you, they see that there is some dragon that is threatening you. So they do is ride up on their white steed, pull out their sword and slay that invisible dragon and you say, “My hero!” They like that. Then throughout life, life is a series of crises when you are threatened and your husband has a real

feeling and desire to help you out to slay the dragon. But this is what happens oftentimes in marriage when a wife becomes critical. He rides up the next time on his white steed, when you are being threatened and he pulls out his sword and you say, "Wait a minute! Wait a minute! I think you could do a better job with a spear this time." So he puts his sword away and pulls out a spear and kills the dragon and you say, "I told you you would do a better job with a spear!" So he rides off. The next time a crisis arises and you are threatened, he rides up on his white horse but he is a little bit frustrated because he doesn't want to do the wrong thing. He thinks, "She's going to get mad if I do the wrong thing. Sword or spear? I used a spear last time so I'll use a spear this time," so you pull out your spear and the wife says, "Wait a minute! This time use your bow and arrow!" and you say, "All right!" so you use a bow and arrow and slay the dragon and she says, "See I told you that you would do better with your bow and arrow!" He rides off. The next time he hears his wife calling out (it may be a non-verbal call-out), he is not as quick to ride up! He does come, but he says, "I don't know now. What am I supposed to do? Sword? Spear? Bow and arrow? What does she want? I can't please her!" So he pulls out his bow and arrow and she says, "No, this time why don't you poison the dragon? Have you tried that?" So you poison the dragon. Your husband's desire and his intention is good but sometimes when you tell him he is not doing it right, that's something that really tears down his self-esteem. Every man needs a friend, not a critic. Some of you ladies are saying, "If you had to live with the "bozo" that I live with, you wouldn't be saying that! There are so many things wrong with my husband!" The attitude of a lot of women is, "I'm going to change him if it kills him!" So remember he needs a friend not a critic.

3. EVERY HUSBAND NEEDS RESPECT, NOT RIDICULE

Number three. Every husband needs respect, not ridicule. And that's the heart of the issue here, because when God was writing Ephesians 5:22, giving instructions to wives, he didn't say, "There are six things you need to do" or "eight things you need to do." He said, "There's only one word and it is the word *submit*." "Submit to your husbands as unto the Lord." Several weeks ago we learned about mutual submission. "Submit" is the word *hupotasso*, "to line up underneath." Submission is not inferiority; it's not subordination; it is not subjection; it is not servanthood. Submission is when one of two equal partners voluntarily recognizes the God-given position of the other one. So wives, for you to submit does not mean you are inferior to your husbands. In many, many cases, the wife may be intellectually superior or morally superior or spiritually superior or emotionally superior but we're not talking about inferiority. God has ordained and established that the husband is to be the head of the wife, the head of the home and she is to submit to that position God has given him.

Example: Esther

A beautiful example of this is Esther. Esther was a beautiful woman and she was a submissive wife who faced a terrible problem. All of her people, the Jews, were about to be killed on a certain day and she had to go tell the king about it to get something done about it. But she didn't just stomp in and demand he stop it. The Bible says in Esther 5:1-2, "On the third day Esther put on her royal robes," The verses before that say she made herself very beautiful "and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased

with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand.” That was the visible sign of his royalty. “So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.” Anyone who approached the King was required to touch the scepter and by touching it, they acknowledged he was the king. Even though she was married to him, she still treated him like the king, not just like her husband.

When you show your husband respect, you can get a whole lot more out of him than making demands upon him. So what happened in the story of Esther? When she acknowledged his position, the king said, “Esther, good to see you! You look wonderful. Is there anything I can give to you? Anything at all. All you have to do is name it, and it is yours.” She was very shrewd and very intelligent, because she didn’t ask for what she wanted to start with. She said, “I just want to feed you supper.” He said, “That sounds good to me!” That night he said, “This is so wonderful, Esther anything you want. You just tell me what you want and I’ll give it to you.” She said, “I just want to feed you supper tomorrow night again.” You know the end of the story. She ended up getting exactly what she wanted, even more than she even asked for, because she showed him proper respect!

Submission does not mean you crawl up to your husband with a newspaper in your mouth and with his slippers in your hand. “Here, master!” It does mean you acknowledge he is the head, even if he doesn’t act like the head you acknowledge he is according to God. I believe most women hold this secret fantasy from the time they were a child that they could be a princess or that they could be a queen like Esther. There are only two ways I know of to become a queen. Number one is to marry a king. I don’t know that there are a whole lot of single kings going around looking these days. There may be a few, but there are not too many of those. But there is another way you can become a queen, ladies. You can treat that man you have like king. When you treat him like a king, immediately, he’s going to start looking around for somebody to treat like a queen. Guess who will be his first obvious choice? You! That’s what it means to respect your husband rather than to tear your husband down and to ridicule him.

Dr. Harley says, “Honest admiration is a great motivator for men! When a woman tells a man she thinks he is wonderful, that inspires him to achieve more, while criticism causes men to become defensive admiration energizes and motivates them. A man expects and needs his wife to be his most enthusiastic fan. He draws confidence from her support and can usually achieve far more with her encouragement.” So give that man respect and honor him. As Paul says, “Respect him and even reverence him in the position that God has given him. You say “I don’t have any respect for him!” It says, “Submit unto your husband as unto the Lord.” If you have a problem submitting to your husband, it may be because you have a problem submitting to the Lord. Only when you submit to the Lord Jesus as your personal Lord will you have the power to submit to your husband.

In the words of that great theologian, Tammy Wynette, sometimes it’s hard to be a woman, but ladies, what do you need to do? “Stand by your man and show the world that you love him. Stand by your man, keep giving him all the love that you can.” He needs respect from you and not ridicule. God did not say, “Men, submit to your wives.” If he had, I promise you I would submit to my wife in everything! He said, “Wives, submit to your husbands.”

This is how submission plays out in my own marriage. Most of you who know my wife Cindy know she is a very strong-willed person. She is her own person! She has strong opinions about many things. But I also know she is one of the best submitters I’ve ever known. How does that play out in our marriage? Whenever we face an important decision, she’ll tell me what she thinks and I’ll tell her what I think. Most of the time we agree and there is no problem, but if we disagree, she’ll try to convince me of why she thinks she is right and sometimes she convinces me and I change my mind. Sometimes we still disagree and many, many times in our marriage there have been times when my wife has very consciously, she doesn’t have to say, “I’m submitting to you according to Ephesians 5:22.” But there is always a point at which she simply says, “If that’s what you think we ought to do, I’ll support you in that.” And that’s the end of it. Sometimes, I was wrong and later we know I was wrong but I can promise you she never says, “I told you so!” Because although I was wrong, she was right to submit to my decision so she was right in what she did.

Submission is just a daily acknowledging that your husband is the head and it is an occasional giving in to what he thinks you ought to do. That’s what submission is all about, and you can only do that in the power of the Holy Spirit. Some wives are looking at that list and you are saying, “I’ll tell you. That’s what I need from my husband too. I wish he was a lover. I wish he was a friend to me. I wish he would respect me.” Of course you do! You cannot change your husband’s behavior. The only person’s behavior you can affect is your own. I think Paul started with wives in this passage kind of like “ladies first.” Then, he turns his big guns on the men, because men have a much more awesome responsibility, which we’ll talk about next week. Wives, your husband needs a lover, he needs a friend and he needs respect. You give those things to him and see if there is not a change in his attitude and a change in his behavior.

OUTLINE

EVERY HUSBAND NEEDS:

1. A LOVER, NOT A MOTHER

Example: Solomon's wife

My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely. *Song of Songs 2:14*

2. A FRIEND, NOT A CRITIC

Example: Job's wife

His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said. *Job 2:9-10*

3. RESPECT, NOT RIDICULE

Example: Esther

On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the top of the scepter. *Esther 5:1-2*



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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes