

HOW TO HAVE A GROWING MARRIAGE, PART 1

EPHESIANS 5:21-33

Ephesians “What I Do” part 6

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“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Eph. 5:21

“Jesus... was heard because of His reverent submission.”

Heb. 5:7

“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men...” 1 Pet. 2:13

“Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older.” 1 Pet. 5:5

“However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”
Eph. 5:33 (NIV)

The one thing that makes relationships work...

- What does God ask of us? He asks us to be unselfish.
- What is the motivation? Reverence for Christ!
- Who is the object? One another – every other believer.

How are we to submit to “one another” as believers?

- Love one another (John 13:34)
- Be devoted to one another (Rom. 12:10)
- Live in harmony with one another (Rom. 12:16)
- Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another (Rom. 14:13)
- Accept one another. (Rom. 15:7).
- Serve one another in love. (Gal. 5:13)
- Be patient, bearing with one another in love (Eph. 4:2)
- Be kind and compassionate to one another (Eph. 4:32)
- Bear with each other and forgive... one another (Col. 3:13)
- Therefore encourage one another and build each other up (1 Th. 5:11)
- But encourage one another daily (Heb. 3:13)
- Live in harmony with one another (1 Pet. 3:8)
- Greet one another with a kiss of love (1 Pet. 5:14)

We should give to the most important person in our lives that which we are commanded to give to every believer.

The one thing that makes marriages work...

Ephesians 5 gives some specific direction to the unselfishness in our marriages

Wives – Give to your husband the gift of
Unselfish Respect

Husbands – Give to your wives the gift of
Unselfish Sacrifice

This is the attitude that meets the #1 need in our husband’s or our wife’s life!

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“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world. But be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how His ways will really satisfy you.”

Rom. 12:2 (TLB)

“Where jealousy and selfishness are, there will be confusion and every kind of evil.” James 3:16 (NCV)

“When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves. Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others.” Phil. 2:4 (NCV)

4 Strikes against this marriage changing truth. (What is it that makes this simple truth sometimes hard to hear?)

1. The way that this scripture has so often been misapplied
2. The Culture that we live in.
3. The way most marriages are now patterned

3 kinds of relationships:

1. Dictatorship: One person controls everything
2. Partnership : Returning favor for favor
3. Fellowship: Unselfish Love

4. The fact that I am a SELFISH person!

“The root of all marital problems is sin, and the root of all sin is selfishness.” Warren Wiersby

We can make one of two choices

- We can try to build a successful marriage on our selfish nature.
- OR ... we can ask God to change our nature!

The Big Question

How do I get my needs met in my marriage?

The Big Answer

I must give myself to meeting MY SPOUSES needs if I’m to get MY needs met!

But ... What if I serve them and they can’t serve me. Even more, what if I serve them and they WON’T serve me?!

Your needs will always be better met by following Christ’s plan and direction for our lives... regardless of what other people do.

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“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.”

Eph. 5:22-24 (NIV)

“Wives, fit in with your husband’s plans; for then if they refuse to listen when you talk to them about the Lord, they will be won by your respectful, pure behavior. Your godly lives will speak to them better than any words.” *1 Pet. 3:1 (TLB)*

“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” *Rom. 15:7 (NIV)*

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?” *Matt. 7:3 (NIV)*

“Brothers and sisters, think about the things that are good and worthy of praise. Think about the things that are true and honorable and right and pure and beautiful and respected.”

Phil. 4:8 (NCV)

WIVES:

HOW TO DEVELOP THE ATTITUDE OF RESPECT

An example to empower your respect

The way the Church loves Christ

“As to the Lord” – This is the #1 key to a great marriage

Barriers to respect:

“There’s nothing to respect”

“But I disagree”

“Our marriage might not last”

“Then he’ll never change”

Reasons to motivate your respect

God commands it

My husband needs it

I need it

Actions to show your respect

1. Prayerfully release my expectations and “rights” back to God.

2. Decide to totally accept him.

3. Check Out my own faults first

4. Focus your thoughts on the positive

5. Tell him and Show him.

Unhealthy “respect”

Resignation – When I blindly follow

Flattery – Faking respect to get what I want

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“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”

Eph. 5:25-27 (NIV)

“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, for we are members of His body.”

Eph. 5:28-30 (NIV)

“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!”

Phil. 2:8 (NIV)

“Keep your eyes on Jesus, our leader and instructor.”

Heb. 12:2 (TLB)

HUSBANDS
HOW TO DEVELOP THE ATTITUDE OF SACRIFICE

Examples to empower your sacrifice:

The way that Christ loves the church
The way that I love myself

Reasons to motivate your sacrifice:

It helps my wife to grow in Christ!
It draws her towards me!
It makes me happier!

Barriers that hinder our sacrifice:

“My needs will go unmet.”
“My sacrifice will go unrecognized.”

Actions to show your sacrifice

1. Pray for an attitude of humility.

2. Start with the little things

The BIG sacrifice... Jesus died for the church

The DAILY sacrifice... Jesus cares for the church

The daily sacrifice is often harder to make than the big sacrifice!

3. Recognize my responsibility to be a

Spiritual Leader

The one responsibility I cannot ask my wife to take for me is the responsibility to be the spiritual leader in our family.

This answers the question... “Who gets things started?”

Unhealthy “sacrifice”

When I’m giving in order to get.
When sacrificial love turns into martyrdom.

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“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” Eph. 5:31 (NIV)

*“This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church.”
Eph. 5:32 (NIV)*

*“However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and his wife must respect her husband.”
Eph. 5:33 (NIV)*

Question... HOW DO YOU CHANGE YOUR SPOUSE?!

What are some of the methods that we generally try?

You cannot _____ someone change!
You can _____ someone to change!

The most powerful way you can invite your husband to change is _____

The most powerful way that you can invite you wife to change is _____

“If they really loved me they’d change no matter what!”

Our #1 struggle with respect and sacrifice... they make us _____

WHEN WE ALLOW CHRIST TO WORK IN OUR MARRIAGES

- It makes us happier!
- We give encouragement to the body of Christ.
- We give a witness to the world around us.

Next week – how the attitudes of respect and sacrifice make a difference in...

Making Contact – Communication

Making Decisions – Problem Solving & Decision Making

Making Love – Sex

Making the Bed – Roles, who does what

Making Mistakes – When your spouse errs or sins

Making Peace – Handling our Differences

HOMEWORK

Wives: Make a list of things you respect about your husband... at least one for every year you’ve been married.

Husbands: Write down three small sacrifices you can make for your wife this week... and then carry them out.