

Message Series: Making Marriage Work

“Helper Does Not Mean Enabler” – Part 2

Introduction:

1. A healthy home should be a place that builds up and affirms the **value** of each member. Ephesians 5:25, 28, 33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21
2. But, many families have become dysfunctional.
 - “Dysfunctional” describes a state of not **working** correctly.
 - A dysfunctional family has gotten **stuck** in unhealthy relationship patterns, and actually begins **breaking** down its members emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.
 - Because everyone is affected when one member experiences a problem, it is possible for the entire family to become unhealthy in **response** to the hurt, broken, dysfunctional behavior of one member.
3. Family members can begin to **over**-compensate for the dysfunctional family member.
 - Once this happens, the irresponsible member does not have to resume his proper place in the family.
 - He is allowed to **remain** irresponsible because other members of the family have **enabled** him to do so. This is not God’s way.
2 Thessalonians 3:11-15
 - *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”* Galatians 6:1
4. When a husband’s behavior has severely damaged the marriage, many times the wife has had a hand in creating, or at least perpetuating, the problem. She became an **enabler** to her husband.

I. Why does a wife enable her husband?

- A. Because of a misunderstanding of biblical submission.
- The clear focus of Ephesians 5:22-33 is not on the wife _____ wrong behavior in the husband, but on her affirming her husband's position of leadership, and _____ him to become the man and leader God wants him to be.
- B. Because she feels the truth is too _____ to face.
- Satan is the author of deceit; God is the author of _____.
John 8:32; 44-47
- C. Because she is concerned for herself and her children's _____.
- Is your trust in your husband or in God? Psalm 118:5-8
- D. Because she has developed some very unhealthy patterns of her own.
1. She possesses a _____-based identity.
 2. She is unaware of the right to set personal _____.
 - Boundaries are those invisible barriers that tell others where they _____ and where you begin.
 - It's okay to expect others to _____ your boundaries.
 3. She always feels that _____ is the problem for thinking there is a problem.
 - She has conditioned herself to _____ problems, _____ them, or take _____ for them.
 - The Bible clearly teaches that each person is to take personal responsibility for his/her sinful actions.
Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:20-21; Romans 14:12
 - Each member of the family must take personal responsibility for his or her _____ actions, and the rest of the family is right in expecting and demanding that he or she does so.

II. What is the biblical solution for wives who enable their husbands?

- A. Open the _____ of your heart. Psalm 139:23-24

1. God can help you work out any problem, but not if you _____ that problems don't exist.

2. If any of the following conditions apply to you, seek _____ immediately:

- If there is physical abuse of any kind, either by you or your husband, toward any member of the family.
- If you are afraid to speak your own mind or express your feelings.
- If you take responsibility for your husband's behavior or his feelings (for example, if you blame yourself when he gets angry).
- If you make excuses or "cover" for your husband's behavior (for example, if you call in sick for him when he is hung over).
- If there is any sexual infidelity.
- If you feel guilt or shame over the way your husband treats you.
- If there are addictions or substance abuses of any kind (for example, alcohol, drugs, pornography, sex, gambling, even work).
- If there is chronic debt, chronic unemployment, or frequent changes from job to job.
- If there are constant, chronic arguments and conflict.
- If weeks or months go by without serious, heart-to-heart talks between you and your husband concerning any serious problems you believe are present in your relationship.
- If there are weeks or months that go by without intimacy between you and your spouse.

B. Confront your husband with a right _____.

1. Confrontation is **very** _____, but **very** _____.

Galatians 6:1-2; Leviticus 19:17; Matthew 18:15-17; Titus 1:13;
Galatians 2:11-14

2. Here are a few questions to ask yourself:
 - Is his sin dishonoring God?
 - Is his sin damaging your relationship?
 - Is his sin hurting others?
 - Is his sin hurting or jeopardizing himself?
3. If the answer is yes to any of these questions, confrontation is essential and God _____ it.

C. If he does not respond, seek help from _____. Matthew 18:15-17

In Conclusion:

1. Husbands, if you are distressing your family, get _____.
 - Have the courage to accept responsibility for your behavior, and seek out someone to help you make _____.
2. Wives, be on guard against _____ your husband to “get away” with irresponsible, abusive behaviors.
 - God doesn’t expect you to _____ in silence.