

Trying to Make Marriage Work the Wrong Way

Introduction:

1. Most people enter marriage with very lofty expectations. Yet, most couples end up very disappointed and frustrated in their marriage.
 - The divorce rate is around 50%.
 - This does not include the people who have stayed married, but are miserable.
 - What would be the statistic of people who are really, truly happy in their marriage and completely fulfilled? 5%, maybe 2%?
2. What is the problem in marriages today? Generations of relational "experts" have come and gone, yet marriages continue to suffer.
3. The root problem is that couples have attempted to build their marriage on an entirely faulty premise.
 - A bad foundation leads to a shaky building. **Matthew 7:24-27**
4. The only foundation that will work in marriage is a foundation that is constructed according to God's Word.
5. Tonight, we will examine two faulty premises that many marriages have been built upon and then look at the biblical alternative.

First faulty premise - the roleless marriage

1. What do I mean by this? What is the philosophy of the roleless marriage?
 - Couples strive to achieve equality in their relationship by equally sharing all responsibilities, duties, and privileges.
 - You both pursue careers of your choice.
 - Parenting - you share equally the duties involved (feeding, diapers, bedtime stories, baths, etc.)
 - Household chores you split 50/50.
 - In decision making, you both have a say and nobody has the final decision.
 - Finances - it is his and hers.
2. Here is the problem. Many couples confuse equality with sameness. The idea of a husband and wife each having separate and distinct roles is repudiated.
3. In the roleless marriage, husband and wife have identical roles and they simply share the duties that come with those roles.
4. Why won't the roleless marriage work?
 - First, it makes little sense organizationally.
 - God is a God of order and structure. **1 Corinthians 14:40; Colossians 2:5; Titus 1:5**
 - Satan loves chaos and disorganization. He is the author of confusion. He loves the roleless marriage because he knows it is an organizational nightmare and disaster.
 - The roleless marriage is a recipe for envying, strife, and confusion. **James 3:16**
 - Second, it contradicts the plain teaching of the Bible.
 - The Bible is very clear about how marriage should be organized. It points to distinct roles. We will talk more about this later.

- Instead of diminishing gender distinctions or blending them, the Bible insists on them. **Genesis 1:27**
- Genesis 2 goes on to describe in detail the creation of Eve as both the complement to Adam and as the final completion in creation.
- Maleness and femaleness mean something very important in the Bible, something non-negotiable. There is no notion of a unisex, roleless marriage in God's Word.

Second faulty premise - the traditional marriage

1. What is the philosophy of the traditional marriage?
 - It is the "Leave it to Beaver" model.
 - The father works long hours, while the mother stays home and cares for the home and children.
 - Many have assumed that the traditional marriage model is the biblical form of marriage.
 - It is a return to the good old days of the 1950's and 1960's.
2. But what was the traditional family really like? Frankly, it had major structural flaws. It looked appealing on TV, but it wasn't reality.
3. What are the problems with the traditional marriage and family?
 - Absentee fathers - **Ephesians 6:4**
 - Dad was conspicuously absent. It became normal and even expected for a man to park his family in a suburb home and indulge himself in the city earning a living.
 - Devalued women - women were neither esteemed nor challenged.
 - Mutual tolerance - there was a basic misuse of the institution of marriage itself.
 - Too often, the marriage became nothing more than a contract that kept two people together in a legal and financial partnership.

What is the biblical alternative?

1. There is an alternative to offer and it is one that will meet our heart's desire for love, trust, fairness, and mutual fulfillment. It is found in the Bible.
2. The Bible stresses the importance of roles in marriage.
 - A role is the essential function that God has designed a man or woman to fulfill in a marriage relationship.
 - While these roles differ, it does not mean that one is superior and one is inferior. Both are of equal value and importance.
 - As far as Scripture is concerned, roles address one's responsibility, not one's rank.
3. God created man and woman, not to have the same functions, but to have complementary functions. Each partner must fulfill his or her God-given role.
 - In a Biblical marriage, the husband's role revolves around leadership, the kind of leadership Jesus described in **Luke 22:24-26**.
 - It focuses on responsibility, not privilege; service, not being served; support, not superiority.

- What about the wife? What is her role in the marriage? Many present the wife's role in terms of submission, but a wife's role revolves around helping, loving, nurturing, and supporting.
4. We will study all of these issues in detail as we go through the series.

In Conclusion:

1. God created two different genders, male and female, to fulfill two different roles.
2. The two functions are unique, but both are critical to the success of a family.
3. So many times, men know how to exploit or intimidate, but they don't know how to lead.
4. So many times women don't know how to nurture. It is an act they have never seen. Having children scares them. Managing a home and children seems foreign and alien, maybe even repulsive.
5. Many wives have buried their instincts of nurturing. They had to in order to protect themselves and their children. They don't want to depend on exploitative men who use them, abuse them, and abandon them.
 - The result is that we see fear increasing and intimacy is decreasing.
6. There will be no reversal of these trends until men begin to lead as God intended. When they do, women will feel the freedom to do what is instinctive within them, and that is to nurture, love, help, and support.

Message Series: Making Marriage Work

“The Husband’s Core Role in Marriage”

Introduction:

1. God created _____ different genders to fulfill _____ different roles in marriage.
2. A “role” is the essential _____ that God has designed a man or woman to fulfill in a marriage relationship.
3. Each partner must fulfill his/her God-given role. The understanding of this will determine the _____ of life the couple will enjoy.
4. Here’s what we want to explore from the Scriptures in this lesson:
 - What is the man’s core role in the marriage relationship?
 - How does God expect him to fulfill that role?

I. The husband’s core role: providing _____ in the home

A. The Scriptures are very clear that the husband’s core role in the home is one of _____.

Ephesians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 11:3

B. The Bible paints the idea of male headship with:

1. Responsibility, not _____.
2. Sacrifice, not _____.
3. Duty, not _____.

II. Two different leadership styles that husbands employ:

A. The _____ leader in Genesis 3:16

B. The _____ leader in Luke 22:25-27

1. _____ taught and lived the concept of servant leadership.
2. In God’s kingdom, to be the “_____” is to be this unique blend of leader and servant.

III. What does a lording leader look like, as opposed to a servant leader?

A. Decision-making

1. The lording leader loves to give _____. He makes _____ the decisions and everyone else just carries out his directives.
2. The servant leader seeks to _____ what others in the family think. His chief concern is to do what is best for _____ involved.
 - *“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.” Proverbs 18:13*

B. Understanding the wife’s needs

1. The lording leader knows _____ about his wife’s feminine needs.
2. The servant leader seeks to _____ his wife better.
 - *“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” 1 Peter 3:7*

C. Conflict

1. The lording leader becomes _____ when his wife challenges him with her thoughts and views.
2. The servant leader is interested in arriving at the _____, and values his wife’s input.
 - *“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient.” 2 Timothy 2:24*

D. Strengths and weaknesses

1. The lording leader loves to point out the flaws and failures of his wife.
2. The servant leader focuses on what is right and _____ about his wife. He constantly _____ her, emphasizing her significance and importance in his life. Ephesians 5:25

E. Power

1. The lording leader pushes and manipulates his wife. He _____ her to get his way.
2. The servant leader refuses to resort to intimidation, but has set his heart to _____ what she thinks is best for the marriage.

Ephesians 5:28

F. Spiritual direction

1. The lording leader is conspicuously _____ in this area. The wife must set the spiritual tone of the household.
2. The servant leader sets the _____ tone in his home. Ephesians 6:4

Go to next page for “21 Ways to be a Servant Leader”

21 Ways to be a Servant Leader

1. A servant leader includes his wife in envisioning the future.
2. A servant leader accepts spiritual responsibility for his family.
3. A servant leader is willing to say, "I'm sorry," and "Forgive me," to his family.
4. A servant leader discusses household responsibilities with his wife and makes sure these are fairly distributed.
5. A servant leader seeks the consultation of his wife on all major financial decisions.
6. A servant leader follows through with commitments he has made to his wife.
7. A servant leader frequently tells his wife what he likes about her.
8. A servant leader provides financially for his family's basic living expenses.
9. A servant leader deals with distractions so that he can talk with his wife and family.
10. A servant leader prays with his wife on a regular basis.
11. A servant leader initiates meaningful family traditions.
12. A servant leader initiates fun outings for the family on a monthly basis, or even more often.
13. A servant leader takes the time to give his children practical instruction about life which, in turn, gives them confidence with their peers.
14. A servant leader goes over the upcoming week with his wife to clarify their schedule and anticipate any pressure points.
15. A servant leader keeps the family out of debt.
16. A servant leader makes sure he and his wife have drawn up a will and arranged a well-conceived plan for their children in case of death.
17. A servant leader lets his children into the interior of his life.
18. A servant leader praises his wife often in public.
19. A servant leader explains sex to each child in a way that gives him or her a wholesome perspective.
20. A servant leader encourages his wife to grow as an individual.
21. A servant leader takes the lead in establishing with his wife clear and well-reasoned convictions on issues such as alcohol, debt, child discipline, allowable movies and television programming, and so on. (These and other choices are too often left undefined in today's homes, with consequences.)

The Husband's Core Role in Marriage – Part 2

Introduction:

1. God created two different genders to fulfill two different roles in marriage.
2. A role is the essential function that God has designed a man or woman to fulfill in a marriage relationship.
 - While these roles differ, it doesn't mean that one is superior and one is inferior. Both are of equal value and importance.
 - Roles address one's responsibility, not one's rank. They are equal, but it doesn't mean they are the same. They are to be complementary.
3. Each partner must fulfill his/her God-given role. The understanding of this will determine the quality of life the couple will enjoy.
4. Here is what we want to explore from the Scriptures in this lesson.
 - What is the man's core role in the marriage relationship?
 - How does God expect him to fulfill that role?

The husband's core role: providing leadership in the home.

1. The Scriptures are very clear that the husband's core role in the home is one of headship. **Ephesians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 11:3**
 - The word "head" doesn't mean boss, ruler, or dictator.
 - It carries the idea of life-giver, protector, provider, lover; responsible for, developer of. This is the biblical concept.
 - But it always carries the idea of leadership.
 - **Illustration:** the head of the army, the head of a corporation, the head of the home - The word "head" simply means to be the leader.
2. But here is the key question: What **kind** of leader is the husband to be? The apostle Paul had a revolutionary idea of a different kind of leadership.
3. The Bible paints the idea of male headship with:
 - Responsibility, not rank.
 - Sacrifice, not selfishness.
 - Duty, not domination.
4. Men, our role is to lead in these Christ-like colors, seeking our wife's best, even at our own expense.
5. Headship is a calling to empower another human being, not a license to indulge yourself. It is a historic moment when that concept finally sinks in.

Two different leadership styles that husbands employ.

1. The "lording leader" in **Genesis 3:16**.
 - The word "rule" means "to dominate, to keep beneath, to rule over as an absolute sovereign." Let me remind you that this is a statement of the curse of sin right after Adam and Eve fell and sinned.
 - This is foretelling how fallen mankind will naturally tend to live with their wives. It prophesies that they will dominate them and subjugate them to positions of lower status.
 - As we know, this has indeed been the case. We have thousands of cultures and years of history to document that this is exactly what has happened. Women

have struggled under the harsh dominance of natural men for centuries. But this is not the way of Christ.

- When Paul says that a man is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church, he is not supporting the curse, he is breaking it! He is showing how men can break the cycle of misery and the "me-first" mentality that the fall of man inaugurated.
- Through Christ, a man can become a leader that reflects the grace of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Christ **in us** is living **through us** as we live and dwell with our wives. This brings us to our next leadership style that men can employ.

2. The servant leader in **Luke 22:25-27**.

- We see the benefactor in verse 25. A benefactor is one who receives the benefits. Many rulers would use force and employ their supreme power to enrich themselves at the expense of helpless people.
 - In the home, many husbands tend to lord over their wife and children, receiving all the benefits, perks, and advantages.
- But Jesus taught and lived the concept of servant-leadership.
- Jesus was the greatest leader that ever walked the earth, yet He was also the greatest servant.
- These are not two terms we think of as going together. They seem to contradict each other.
- But in God's kingdom, to be the "head" is to be this unique blend of leader and servant.
- Men, we have the responsibility to lead our wives, but our style is to be that of a servant, not a lord. Our aim is not to suck the life out of our wives, but to be a source of life to them. Only then can we proclaim the title "head," as God proclaimed it in Christ.
- Think about it - we are to love our wives as Christ loved the church. How did Christ love the church? Was it by dominating and forcing His leadership on us? No, He loved us by expending Himself for us and ultimately dying for us so that He could give us life. **John 10:10-11; Ephesians 5:25**

What does a lording leader look like compared to a servant leader?

- Let's look at six issues that are common to every marriage. One disclaimer: I am not setting myself up as the example of the guy who has mastered all of this. Just like every other man, I am a work in progress.
1. Decision making
 - The lording-leader loves to give orders. He is the boss, and he has to have control. He makes all the decisions and everyone else just carries out his directives. If anyone questions his decisions, he silences them with another string of commands.
 - He is not interested in questions, suggestions, or better ideas. He is only interested in getting things done his way. There's no flexibility, even when he is obviously wrong.
 - Discussion is always a threat to a lording-leader.
 - The servant-leader seeks to hear what others in the family think. He stays open to better alternatives, even if he didn't think of them. His chief concern is to do

what is best for everyone involved. He takes everyone's needs and concerns into account and considers how his choices affect each one. **Proverbs 18:13**

2. Understanding the wife's needs
 - The lording-leader knows little about his wife's feminine needs. He has never given it much thought.
 - The servant-leader seeks to understand his wife better (**1 Peter 3:7**). He accepts that she is built differently than him, and he doesn't patronize her or demean her because she is a woman. He truly seeks to understand her better. He listens when she talks.
3. Conflict
 - The lording-leader becomes defensive when his wife challenges him with her thoughts and views. He views everything with a win-lose perspective. He can't stand to be wrong and his wife right. He is an expert at manipulating her to go along with his wishes.
 - The servant-leader is interested in arriving at the truth and values his wife's input (**2 Timothy 2:24**). She provides valuable perspective to his blind spots.
 - He wants to know what is right; not who is winning. He is a man of truth, not a scorekeeper.
4. Strengths and weaknesses
 - The lording-leader loves to point out the flaws and failures of his wife. Day and night, he tears her down, as if by criticism he will make her better.
 - The servant-leader focuses on what is right and good about his wife. He constantly affirms her, emphasizing her significance and importance in his life. **Ephesians 5:25**
 - This energizes a woman to grow, develop, and reach new heights. **Proverbs 31:28**
5. Power
 - The lording-leader pushes and manipulates his wife. He intimidates her to get his way (maybe even physically). He never helps his wife with the household chores. He is King Tut and deserves to be treated as royalty. He makes his wife feel like hired help.
 - Because he doesn't want to face his own weaknesses and insecurities, he tries to reassure himself that he is a real man by asserting his power and masculinity in domineering and maybe even violent ways.
 - The servant-leader refuses to resort to intimidation, regardless of whatever differences he might have with his wife. He has set his heart to value what she thinks is best for the marriage and for their lives. **Ephesians 5:28**
6. Spiritual direction
 - The lording-leader is conspicuously absent in this area. He isn't dominating or forceful at all. The wife must set the spiritual tone of the household. "All that spiritual stuff isn't manly."
 - The servant-leader sets the spiritual tone in his home (**Ephesians 6:4**). He tries to keep God's perspective in view and help his family reflect biblically on things that happen in their lives.

In Conclusion:

1. Men, we must look at ourselves honestly and ask, "What kind of leader am I?"
2. Do some of these descriptions of the lording-leader have an all too comfortable fit?
3. The wonderful thing is that we can all decide to change, and we **can** change through a complete trust and reliance on Christ.
4. I have provided a handout for you tonight entitled, "21 Ways To Be a Servant-Leader." Take it home and read it carefully and pray over it.

What Every Wife Needs to Succeed – Part 1

Introduction:

1. Women often baffle men, so God exhorts men in **1 Peter 3:7** to dwell with their wives according to knowledge. In other words, seek to know your wife.
2. Your wife is very different from you. Besides the obvious physical differences, there are vast emotional differences as well.
 - When the Bible refers to her being the weaker vessel, this doesn't mean that she is some fragile little thing and you have to go easy on her. He is talking about something rare and delicately crafted.
 - Illustration of fine china - you don't throw it around like paper plates. You treat it carefully, not just because it's delicate, but because it is valuable. Your wife is the fine china that God has placed in your life as a gift.
3. Because she is a woman, she is very different from you as a man. She has different needs, a different perspective, a different way of dealing with the world, and sometimes, different interests. Women can really confound men at times.
4. Here is what I have found. Most men are not **unwilling** to meet their wives' needs; they are simply **unaware** of what those needs actually are. We are shooting in the dark when it comes to understanding our wives.
5. Tonight I would like to share with you four important terms worth remembering that can forever change your relationship with your wife. These terms represent four all-important needs that your wife has.
6. She has other needs of course, but these four will directly affect the nature and quality of your marriage. Guys, they are a key to a happy marriage, and they should be our core concerns.

Companionship

1. God has made women to be highly relational, and because of this she puts a high value on the quality of relationship she has with you.
 - Why are women the primary buyers of romantic novels and viewers of soap opera-type of shows? These things create a fantasy which conjure up all kinds of romantic images in which two people share an intimate relationship and love.
 - Men, have you ever watched a soap opera? It goes on and on, day after day, and it never ends. You just get to know each character deeper and deeper, and we think, "How stupid and corny can you get?"
2. But here is the lesson we learn. Our wives seek to experience life with their man in a deep, intimate, never-ending way. There is no particular goal in mind; they just want to cherish the experience of the relationship. To them, **being** is more important than **doing**. This mystifies most men.
3. Let's go back to **1 Peter 3:7** and notice that it says, "*Likewise, ye husbands dwell with them...*" Your wife just wants to be **with you!**
4. Here is the way a man and a woman view the wedding ceremony:
 - Woman - she views it as the beginning of a never-ending relationship with a lot of deep sharing.
 - Man - he views it in terms of completing a goal. "We did it," and so after the ceremony and honeymoon is over, he's ready to move on to other things,

especially his career. For a wife, this brings unexpected disappointment and heartache.

5. The more he focuses on interests outside the home, the more his wife hungers to have him back, to share in his experiences, to have him to be with. She wants to talk to him about things going on in his and her life, to enjoy the conversation of companionship.
6. Illustration of going to mall and shopping:
 - She wants to go, not necessarily to buy something, but just to wander around the mall together, hand in hand, enjoying each other's company.
 - That is likely to drive him crazy! What is our attitude toward the mall, guys? We want to get in and get out and do it in record time. We want to check it off our list of chores and go on to the next thing on the list.
7. Men, when we take time to be with our wife, we are paying her the supreme compliment. We are telling her how important she is to us. We are expressing our commitment to her. You are letting her know that you enjoy **her** and enjoy being **with** her. Your wife yearns for that.
8. It is what she expected when you placed that ring on her finger. She took your last name, and that in itself says a great deal about what she expects. More than anything else, she expects to have you - your presence, your interest, your availability.
9. She wants and needs your companionship. That is why Peter says to husbands, "*Ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge...*"
 - One side-note: we can dwell physically in the same house with our wives and still not provide companionship. Physical closeness does not equal emotional closeness.

Security

1. A woman needs the security of a man. She needs to know he can and will provide for her.
2. Even if the woman works outside the home, she needs to know that even if she chose not to work, that she would be provided and cared for. Beyond any shadow of a doubt, she knows her husband is looking out for her.
3. Men, we need to consider what God's Word has commanded us in **Ephesians 5:25-29**.
 - Just as you see to it that your body is cared for, you should care for your wife and see that she is cared for. If our body hurts, we try to help it and relieve it, or if it stinks, we shower and clean it, etc.
 - As Christ sacrificed Himself for our well-being, we should be willing to sacrifice ourselves for our wife and her well being.
4. At this point, maybe you should ask yourselves some questions: "Have you made your marriage financially sound (not wealthy or worth millions)? Does it offer real security for your wife? Can she trust you? Are your finances under control? Men, biblically, these things are **our** responsibility. **1 Timothy 5:8**
5. I realize that some women may have been spoiled, born into a rich home and they are accustomed to luxury, and the husband can never make her happy. This is a spiritual problem on her part that she needs to deal with. This is the sin of

covetousness. But most women are not this way. They simply want to know that their man will take care of them and their basic needs.

6. To be fair, sometimes the woman works outside the home because both she and her husband have a covetous spirit. They have set a standard of living far higher than they need to be happy. If they would reduce their standard of living to a point of comfort, many could avoid husbands working long hours and wives pressured to earn a paycheck.
7. The devil wants you to believe that the more stuff you have, the happier you will be. Is this true or false? The more things you **have**, the more complicated life gets - trying to take care of them, keep them working, and pay for them.
8. Many times you would be happier if you would simplify your life, live within your means, and frame your budget around the husband's income.
9. Here is the Bible principle: The husband should love and take care of his wife just as he would his own body.

What Every Wife Needs to Succeed – Part 2

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9. Here is the Bible principle: The husband should love and take care of his wife just as he would his own body.

Significance

1. Why is this? Because so much of what she does is hidden from view. Her most valuable contributions are primarily relational. She's a nurturer, a friend, a soul-worker. These contributions can't be measured quantitatively, nor will she get paid for them.
2. There is only one person who can really appreciate her unique contributions and honor her accordingly - guess who? Her husband!
3. This is why **1 Peter 3:7** says that husbands should give honor unto the wife. If you don't praise her, who will? Who else knows and values what your wife does during the day?
 - The children don't fully perceive it and certainly aren't inclined to thank her for it.
 - The neighbors don't know.
 - Your employer couldn't care less (unless it impacts your performance at work).
 - If she holds a job, her employer only cares about her performance at work.
 - Society pays little attention to her contributions in the home.
4. So who is there to praise and compliment her for her value and importance as a wife and mother? No one except you! You are the only one.
5. Here is the tragedy: over the last 40 years, so many women have felt unappreciated and insignificant in serving their families that they have given up on it. "It's not worth it," they are saying, so they are going other places in a search of significance.
6. Men, we are to give honor unto our wives. **Proverbs 31:28** says about the virtuous woman, "Her husband '*praiseth her*'." Do you make your wife feel significant and that her life counts? There is no way we can do this if we aren't affirming her on a daily basis.
7. Let me say this to the ladies here tonight. Ladies - you are significant in Christ. Satan will try to convince you otherwise. Satan wants you to look for significance in your work, your relationships, your outward appearance, your education, your visible accomplishments, but these are satanic deceptions.
 - You will end up feeling inferior and worthless. Your significance comes from your position in Christ.

Emotional Responsiveness

1. Husbands, according to God's Word we are to nourish and cherish our wives.
Ephesians 5:29
 - "Nourish" - to feed
 - "Cherish" - to soften or warm with body heat (like a mother bird on a nest)
2. In other words, we are to express tenderness to our wife. Guys, God didn't call us to impress our wives with our masculinity. He called us to be emotionally sensitive to her and her needs.
3. We miss the boat on this a lot. For instance, if Deniece is down or upset, my natural response is to try to solve her problems. Ever try this?
4. What does she say? "You just don't understand." And our wives are right. We don't understand. Most of the time, they don't want us to solve anything, they just want us to listen and be sensitive and caring.
5. You haven't solved her problem, but you've done the right thing. How revolutionary when a husband says, "Tell me about it, Honey." instead of "What you need is more sleep." or "If you would just do this, this, and this, it would solve the problem."
6. Some guys are always emotionally upsetting their wives, and in some sick way, they get a kick out of it. When she hurts, you're supposed to hurt. We are to nourish and cherish our wives.

The Wife's Core Role in Marriage

Introduction:

1. Today's women have a multitude of opportunities and choices.
 - Yet many women feel overworked and overwrought.
 - Many women feel confused concerning what direction their lives should take and what their priorities should be.
 - Many women feel pressured by outside sources vying for their attention.
2. In today's world, what should be the wife's priority? What role does the wife fill in the marriage relationship? A woman cannot afford to guess. She is too important to her husband and her role is too vital in the home.
3. Women need clear principles to guide them as they prioritize and make daily decisions. Understanding your core role will act as a filter. When opportunities, projects, relationships come your way, you filter them through the grid of your core role.
4. Thankfully, the Bible provides clear direction. In **Titus 2:4-5**, God provides a concise summary of a woman's core role in marriage.
 - A core role does not describe everything a person does in marriage.
 - A woman's role is not confined only to what Paul describes here.
 - But a woman dare not neglect this core role in pursuit of other activities.
 - To do so would dishonor God and most likely sabotage her marriage. When women ignore their core role or substitute other roles for it, society will certainly begin to reflect that loss. Families will unravel and marriages will fall apart.
5. Ladies, you are indispensable! Let's examine your core role.

The first part of the wife's core role: love her husband.

1. Does this seem odd? Shouldn't this be a given? Not in first century Crete where Titus was, nor was it in other parts of the Roman Empire.
2. To understand this core role, you need to examine the creation of woman in **Genesis 2:18-24**.
 - The woman was conceived out of the need of man. This doesn't mean that she was secondary or an afterthought. God carries out creation this way and recorded it for a reason.
 - This event reveals that God had a specific purpose in mind for woman.
 - Her support is essential to man's success.
 - Therefore, the woman's creation both exposed a great need within man and at the same time met it.
3. In **Genesis 2:18** God made the woman to be the man's helper. The phrase "meet for him" means "counterpart, mate."
 - Biblically, the word "helper" does not mean a subordinate or assistant. We have the wrong idea of that word. We think of it as somebody who is a "gopher," they do the dirty work - a person with no authority. They just tag along waiting for someone to tell them what to do.
 - Most of the time the word "help" refers to God Almighty and the help that He supplies. **Psalm 33:20, 70:5, 115:11, 124:8, 146:5**

- In biblical context, a "helper" is a strong person who supports and provides assistance to a weaker person or someone in real need.
 - So clearly, we see there is no implication of weakness or inferiority in the woman's role as a helper. God looked at Adam and said, "I see a weakness. I see a dramatic need." And God created Eve to meet that need.
4. The Bible teaches that a wife is invaluable to her man. **1 Corinthians 11:9**
 - This verse is not a put-down, but rather a compliment. He needs someone custom-made to help him and to do what he cannot be and do by himself. Your support is essential to his success.
 - Remember, we talked about a man's core role is leadership and providing for his family, etc.? He can't do it without you.
 - Without a wife's focus, attention, and encouragement, the husband will have glaring gaps in his life.
 - It is not good for a husband to be left alone.
 5. How does a wife support and help her husband? The key is found in simply "being there."
 - Being available to him, giving him time, energy, and priority, providing thought and creativity to building him up, being there to keep him accountable and confronting him when he's off-track.
 6. The issue is not whether you as a wife should or should not work outside the home. Rather, the question is where your primary focus should be.

The second part of the woman's core role: love her children.

1. Isn't it amazing that women have to be admonished to love their children?
 - In our day and culture, it seems that more and more women view children as an imposition rather than a gift, as a liability rather than an asset.
 - But to fight against the maternal instinct is not only unnatural, it is unbiblical.
2. Children, especially young ones, need tremendous doses of personal attention, support, and love.
3. Children need the awesome power of "being there" to be unleashed on them, too. It is not good for a child to be left alone. **Proverbs 22:6, 29:15**
 - Children need training (**Proverbs 22:6**) and lots of time (**Proverbs 29:15**).
4. Healthy, normal child development requires a close, loving, and sustained relationship with at least one person during the formative years.
 - Titus 2 teaches that the mother should provide that. Mom should be that person, if at all possible.
 - Without mom exercising the power of "being there" for her children, the next generation will be even more dysfunctional than the present one.
 - In practice, this means that if you are a mother with younger children, you belong at home with your children more than you belong outside the home earning money at work. I understand that there are exceptions and situations where it cannot be helped.
5. Career opportunities will always be there. But children grow up only once. Can you afford to forego that once in a lifetime investment?

6. Scripture does not forbid a woman from working outside the home, but you need biblical guidelines and perspectives. You can't leave these major decisions to guesswork.
 - Think it through according to God's Word. You have to prioritize. The husband, as the spiritual leader of the home, should sit down with his wife and discern these important issues. The issue is not making the decisions that are easy, but making the decisions that are right.

In Conclusion:

1. Your core role as a wife is to:
 - Love your husband
 - Love your children
2. They desperately need your touch and your support to stabilize and energize their lives.
3. For their sakes, **be there!**

What Every Husband Needs to Succeed

Introduction:

1. **Genesis 1:27** states that God created them male and female.
 - Men and women were created to be different.
 - Did you know that even a man and woman's brain is unique? They function differently.
2. As you begin to understand that men and women were created differently, it helps you to exercise patience with one another.
3. We must learn to celebrate our differences rather than resent them. God has uniquely designed men and women to complement one another.
4. God's original plan involved mankind reproducing, multiplying, conquering, and subduing, but God knew it would take the teamwork of man and woman.
Genesis 1:28 (Notice the word "them.")
5. We've already examined the greatest needs of the wife, but what about the husband? What are his greatest needs? In this lesson, we will answer that question from God's Word with four key words or phrases. They represent his core needs.

First core need – admiration.

1. Every man needs a wife who will admire him.
2. Most men want to feel that their life means something – that it counts – that it has true meaning. A man's wife can give her husband that sense that his life counts. He longs for her respect and admiration.
3. **Ephesians 5:33** reveals this need in man.
 - The word "*reverence*" means "to be in awe of." This is speaking of respect. He yearns for your respect.
4. When a wife beats her husband down and demeans him constantly, she does damage that goes beyond the surface straight to the heart. Ladies, here is a little secret you might not have known about men – we are basically a very fragile and insecure bunch.
 - Then Satan sets up some little gal at work who pours on the admiration.
5. You may be thinking, "But I have a sorry husband!" I'm not talking about false flattery or patronizing him in his bad habits or wrong actions, because that is detrimental.
6. But if you pray and tell God that you want to follow the admonition of **Ephesians 5:33**, God will show you ways that you can do this and show your husband that you genuinely admire him. Let him know it – it will mean more to him than you will ever know.

Second core need – support.

1. I am not speaking of financial support, but personal and emotional support.
2. A virtuous woman understands her husband's need for her loyal support. **Proverbs 31:10-12** (Can you hear the support in that?)
3. He needs you to be his most loyal supporter. As you cheer him and back him, you inspire him to new heights. He has no doubt that you believe in him.
4. Listed below are those crucial areas where he needs your support.

Support his work

- This is vitally important to him. If you encourage him in his work, your support will stabilize and energize him.
- If your attitude reflects that you care little about his work, you will hurt him and your marriage.

Support him in public

- When a wife embarrasses or humiliates her husband in public, she is emotionally cutting his heart out. **Proverbs 12:4**
- Nothing will wound a husband more than when his wife sets him up for public humiliation. It ignites in him a deep resentment and it is difficult to forget it. (Bitterness is not right or justified though, guys. **Colossians 3:19**).
- There is definitely a place for a wife to confront her husband's wrong actions or unbiblical behavior, but that place is in **private, behind closed doors**.

Support him through the seasons of life

- As men grow older they pass through various stages, each one demanding something a bit different.
- A wise wife will recognize these stages and respond to her husband's needs appropriately.

Third core need – companionship

1. Many couples are married, but they are not best friends. **Song of Solomon 5:16**
2. **Ephesians 5:29** declares that a husband and wife are one flesh – two separate lives are fused together into one.
 - Marriage is when two people leave their singleness and independence and come together as one.
3. There should be a daily, intimate closeness that exists in a healthy marriage. There should be mutual interests, mutual concerns, mutual hobbies, etc. It should be two lives going in the same direction.
4. Too often couples build separate lives and have little in common. They drift apart. He continues to do the things he loves, but without her. The companionship has stopped.
5. **Ecclesiastes 4:9-11** expresses the companionship marriage was meant to give. It speaks of the wisdom and warmth of two people staying close.
6. Wives, your involvement in the things he loves is extremely important to your husband. He loves to have you with him. So often it is there when dating, but after marriage, it stops. He thinks, "Man, it sure isn't as much fun being together as when we dated."

Fourth core need – physical responsiveness. 1 Corinthians 7:5

1. Few things affirm a man in his masculinity as does his wife's sexual responsiveness.
2. The Bible recognizes the need for regular, physical intimacy in marriage.
3. It is absolutely crucial to maintain that closeness and oneness.

Understanding Submission in Christian Marriage

Introduction:

1. "Submission" is a Bible word and a God-ordained concept.
2. Everywhere in society, God has established authority and expects submission to that authority.
 - Governmental authority - **Romans 13:1; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13**
 - Parental authority - **Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20**
 - Church authority - **Hebrews 13:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 2:15**
 - Christ's authority over the church - **Ephesians 1:20-23**
3. The biblical principle of authority and submission are also found in marriage. **Ephesians 5:23-24; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1**
4. Submission is a wonderful Christian virtue that applies to every Christian in many different ways. **Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5**
5. Christ is our ultimate example of a submissive spirit.
 - Christ voluntarily submitted to the Father in all things. **Philippians 2:6-8; John 4:34, 5:30; 6:38**
 - This same spirit is to be found in us. **Philippians 2:5**
6. When we rebel against the biblical attitude of submission, we are manifesting a non-Christ-like spirit.
 - I'm not just talking about marriage, but in every area of life (work, school, government, parents, church).
7. Many women recoil at the very mention of the word "submission." It is simply because they do not possess a proper understanding of this wonderful, Christian attribute. Also, many men abuse and misuse this word.
8. The purpose of this lesson is to bring clarity and insight to the biblical principle of submission.

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A wife's submission affirms her husband's role of leadership. Ephesians 5:23-24

1. Clearly, the husband is the God-appointed leader of his home, just as Christ is the God-appointed leader (head) of the church. This entire text really revolves around the husband and the kind of leader he is supposed to be.
 - This is a difficult task, with the flesh, the world, and Satan fighting men every step of the way.
 - On top of this, when the wife demeans him, competes with him, criticizes him, most men will not respond with anything resembling servant leadership.
 - They will retreat from their high and holy calling and start concentrating on themselves and their own desires. They shrug off their leadership responsibilities and move on.
2. When a wife takes the leadership role in the home, it is one of the worst mistakes she can ever make.
3. Submission means that the wife recognizes her husband's leadership and responds to him in a way that empowers him to lead.
4. A man is naturally a protector and a provider and wants to lead the way. It is inside of him. Men are typically built that way.

- By the way, these are the characteristics of Christ, our leader!
- So when a wife has an attitude of submission, it says, "I fully expect you to lead in this relationship." This really does something for a man. Ladies, there is no way to describe it.
- It is the same way that the church should respond to Christ. I don't expect to lead Christ.

A wife's submission affirms her respect for her husband. Ephesians 5:33

1. In verse 33, this entire text is summarized into two commands:
 - Husbands love your wives.
 - Wives respect your husbands.
2. A husband has an inherent need for his wife's respect.
 - Submission is a way of telling your husband, "I believe in you! I'm with you! You can do it! I have confidence in you."
 - It's a way of keeping him the leader, even when he doesn't want to be the leader anymore. You're helping him become what God wants him to become.
3. Ladies, what about a situation where the husband is **not** a godly leader and you really **don't** respect him. It is okay then to go ahead and run over him and take the leadership, right? Wrong!
 - The Bible never says this. In fact, we will see later how your submission is a testimony for Christ to him, that may end up bringing him to Christ.
 - Even though you may not respect the person, you respect the position. You say, "God has put him in the position as my husband and I am going to show respect for that position by maintaining a submissive heart and spirit."

A wife's submission affirms her faith in Jesus. Ephesians 5:22

1. Notice the phrase, "*as unto the Lord.*" cf. **Colossians 3:18**
2. Any time we submit to the leadership of another person, it is a faith issue.
 - By faith, we recognize that God has placed that leader in our life and therefore we are to submit to their leadership as if Christ Himself were leading us.
 - Examples: employer (**Ephesians 6:5-7**), governmental leaders (**Romans 13:1-2**)
3. One important note: A biblically submissive wife's focus is not on enabling wrong behavior, but on empowering her husband to pursue right behavior - to become the man God wants him to be, and the leader God wants him to be.
 - Ultimately, we serve Christ, and Christ never asks us to disobey God's Word.
 - No husband has absolute authority, only Christ and His Word does.
 - A wife should never submit to her husband's evil demands or sinful schemes. She has a biblical duty to confront her husband's sin and admonish him to obey God (as a loving and submissive partner).

A wife's submission affirms the oneness of their relationship. Ephesians 5:22, 24, 31

1. Notice that God's Word commands wives to submit to their **own** husbands.
 - She does not have to submit to anyone else's husband - just her own.

- Her submission says, "You are my man and nobody else. You are the one I am one with. You are the one I respect and listen to."
2. **Illustration:** Many times a wife lives to please the boss at work more than her husband. This is not healthy and very dangerous. She's not one with her boss, but many times her sense of value is coming from her job, and her boss's desires take precedence over her husband's.

A wife's submission is a powerful testimony to her husband. 1 Peter 3:1-5

1. A wife's godly life and submission speaks volumes above her spoken words. vs. 1
 - Notice, she doesn't influence her ungodly husband by lecturing, criticizing, nagging, preaching, and being a boss.
 - This will not influence a man towards God.
2. Verses 3 and 4 are a picture of a woman with a beautiful heart.
 - This goes a long way with a man. She doesn't have to be an outward beauty queen. **Proverbs 31:30**
 - Proverbs describes a woman who is in contrast to the 1 Peter 3 woman. 21:9, 19; 25:24, 27:15
 - Do you want to win the heart of your husband? Show him respect, honor, and try to please him (not by disobeying God).

In Conclusion:

1. Submission is not the wife's core role in marriage. It is her Christ-like response to **his** role that energizes him to be the leader God wants him to be.
2. Submission is not the result of a forced dictatorship.
 - True submission is a choice that begins in the heart.
 - Christ never forces His will upon us, but rather He invites us to follow Him and His example. **Ephesians 5:1-2**
 - Guys, you can forget using this thing of submission as a billy club to bully your wife around. It won't work. Even if you achieve the desired result, in her heart she will resent and despise you.
3. Submission is not subjecting one's self to abuse and sinful behavior.
4. Next week we will examine the husband's counterpart to submission.

The Husband's Counterpart to Submission

Introduction:

1. We learned that while submission is not the wife's core role in marriage, it is a godly response to her husband's role as a servant/leader. It energizes him in his role.
2. We also learned that the wife's core role is one of helper, husband-lover, and child-lover.
3. Does the husband have a godly response to **his** wife's role that will affirm and energize her? The Bible clearly teaches that the husband's response should be one of **praise**.
4. Husbands must understand its importance and power as a response to their wives' role.
 - **1 Peter 3:7** teaches that husbands are to honor their wives. What does this mean in practical terms?
 - You treat her with respect and dignity. Nurture, encourage, and praise her as a person with thoughts, feelings, and volition. Place her right beside you, equal in value and importance.
 - Stand by her, and remind her that apart from her, you and your family could not make it - not well. She is the critical difference!
5. **Proverbs 31:27-30** is a key passage that describes the husband's response to his wife's core role.
6. Just as her submission frees the husband to carry out **his** role as a godly leader in the home, his praise of her will free and empower her to fulfill **her** role.
7. Both responses - submission and praise, are life-giving to your marriage.
8. A wife needs and deserves praise - and a lot of it.
 - She should constantly receive honor and affirmation from you for the "husband-loving" and "child-loving" support that she imparts.
 - Nobody can really appreciate or know her value like you can.
 - You had better constantly tell your wife how important she is and how significant is her awesome power of "being there" for you and your children.
 - If not, she will most likely feel the way too many women feel - that her support is either not needed or not important.
9. A lack of submission is not the root problem in most marriages today.
 - Men, you are the leader and your wife responds to **your** leadership. If you provide selfish, dictatorial, self-serving leadership, don't be surprised if you get a less than godly response from your wife.
 - But when you strive to exemplify servant/leadership and respond to her role with praise, you will be surprised at how many of your marriage problems will disappear.
10. You may be sitting here thinking, so what do I do? How do I go about praising her (flowers, touchy-feely notes, buy her candy, shopping day at the mall, etc.)?
 - These ideas are great, but random and occasional acts of kindness cannot substitute praise on an everyday basis.
 - Without an everyday form of praise and honor, special moments can ring hollow, and maybe even appear a bit manipulative.

- But when it's present every day, then it's obvious you really do mean it.
11. So, how can a husband praise his wife on an everyday basis? **Ephesians 5:28-30** offers two specific ways a man can honor and praise his wife in the day-to-day living of married life.

Equal treatment - the everyday way to honor.

1. **Illustration:** living from the head up.
2. **Ephesians 5:28** teaches that Christ-like love means treating your wife with the same respect, concern, and care as you give yourself.
 - "As your own body" means to love your wife by treating her equally.
 - It doesn't mean treating her like a man.
3. So what does equal treatment look like?
 - Compare the vehicle you drive to the one she drives.
 - How about the time you have to yourself versus the time she has to herself?
 - What memberships is she able to enjoy? What hobbies is she able to pursue? How much money is budgeted for her personal use as compared to yours? What opinions is she free to express? What kind of language are your children allowed to use with her?
 - How are the in-laws and your friends permitted to treat her? What limits are placed on the amount of stress she has to put up with? What preference is given to her tastes in music, sports, decorating, furniture, vacations, food, etc.?
4. So often a husband will order the family in terms of **his** priorities and preferences, but neglect his wife completely. He treats her like a second-class citizen.
5. This is unequal treatment, and no extravagant material gift for a birthday or anniversary will make up for it.

Constant comment - the everyday way to honor.

1. **Ephesians 5:29** teaches that a man gives ongoing, regular care and attention to his body (shaving, brushing teeth, combing hair, etc.). Try neglecting to do these things for the next 40 years.
2. With the same constancy and regularity, a man should express love and appreciation to his wife. **Illustration:** combing hair.
3. A woman not only needs constant love, she needs to be **told** she is loved constantly.
 - One night of celebration and affection (a note on your anniversary or an arrangement of flowers on her birthday) isn't going to cut it.
 - It's not that she is psychologically weak or emotionally crippled. Not at all. Rather, that affirmation opens and nourishes her soul, and helps her grow and develop into all that God intends for her to be.
 - It keeps her encouraged to keep doing what is right and best for the family.
4. Husbands, your wives will thrive on praise, but not on manipulation. If you try to butter her up with sweet words so you can get your own way, she'll see right through it. Even if she doesn't, that is no way to treat her. It is deceptive and unhealthy.
5. Christ-like love is not manipulative. Instead it means treating your wife equally and constantly with the same care and concern you give yourself.

In Conclusion:

1. Nobody can give the wife the honor and praise she deserves except the husband. No one else's praise matters quite as much.
2. By our everyday words and actions, we must communicate to our wives that we value who they are and what they do.
3. They have perhaps the most awesome assignment under heaven - to "be there" for us and our children. They need to know we sincerely believe that, too.

Common Leadership Styles That Hurt Families

Introduction:

1. Christ is clearly every husband's example concerning the leadership we are to employ in our homes. Ephesians 5:25
 - Christ provides tender, yet strong, leadership.
2. No husband will ever live up to that ideal perfectly, but perfection is not something God expects of us. God does call us to learn and grow as husbands so that we begin to reflect Christ in the way we lead our homes.
3. Many men have a distorted concept of biblical headship. It may be due to ignorance, spiritual shallowness, emotional damage, poor modeling, or selfishness. Nevertheless, they are hurting their families. (We can't just go through life making excuses.)
4. In this lesson, we will examine two of five common leadership styles that drive wives into discouragement. Then we will discover the biblical solutions.
 - Look with an open heart and mind for any similarities between the way you treat your wife and the patterns described here. Maybe even talk to your wife and give her permission to be completely honest with you.
 - Your wife is probably paying an immense price for any unhealthy behavior you identify with in this lesson. Of course, you **can** change. But the first step is to recognize that the problem exists. So take a hard and honest look.

Irresponsible headship

1. Characteristics:
 - He is lazy, irresponsible, and unreliable.
 - He is a master at conning and manipulating others.
 - The wife has to take responsibility for him.
 - He makes big promises, but doesn't keep them.
 - He is a little boy in a man's body. He uses his wife as a mommy.
 - Thoroughly self-centered, but manages to appear to others as a loving and devoted husband.
 - Maybe the wife lacks the personal strength to force him to grow up and take responsibility for himself, but as her respect dies, the pain grows.
2. Biblical solution: He must grow in temperance and diligence.
 - Temperance carries the idea of being able to control your actions, attitudes, and emotions. You are able to restrain your carnal, selfish desires.
 - It describes a person who does what they ought to do, not what they want to do.
 - Temperance leads to godly Christian character. Remember, irresponsible headship is a character problem. 1 Corinthians 9:25; Galatians 5:23; 2 Peter 1:5-6
 - The irresponsible leader needs what the Bible refers to as diligence.

- Webster's defines diligence as "steady in application to business; constant in effort or exertion to accomplish what is undertaken; attentive; industrious; not idle or negligent."
- A diligent person:
 - Is successful in his work - Proverbs 10:4, 13:4, 22:29
 - Rises to leadership - Proverbs 12:24
 - People have confidence in him - 2 Corinthians 8:22-23

Emotionally detached headship

1. Characteristics
 - His relationship with his wife is cold, stiff, and formal.
 - As a father, he is detached and emotionally unavailable.
 - He withdraws from emotionally charged situations. Maybe he was raised in a home in which emotions were not allowed to be displayed.
 - Even when he says the right words (I love you, good job, I am proud of you), the feelings are absent.
 - He appears to others as the ideal husband and father.
2. Biblical solution: He must grow in the love of Christ.
 - Your emotional responses demonstrate your love. John 11: 35-36; 2 Corinthians 2:4
 - As you grow in Christ's love, you become more comfortable demonstrating that love to others. Ephesians 3:16-20
 - You must reawaken your capacity to listen to, own, and express your feelings.
 - If not, you will remain distanced from your family.

Common Leadership Styles That Hurt Families – Part 2

Introduction:

1. Christ is clearly every husband's example concerning the leadership we are to employ in our homes. Ephesians 5:25
 - Christ provides tender yet strong leadership.
2. No husband will ever live up to that ideal perfectly, but perfection is not something God expects of us. God does call us to learn and grow as husbands so that we begin to reflect Christ in the way we lead our homes.
3. Many men have a distorted concept of biblical headship. It may be due to ignorance, spiritual shallowness, emotional damage, poor modeling, or selfishness. Nevertheless they are hurting their families. (We can't just go through life making excuses.)
4. In this lesson, we will examine the last three of five common leadership styles that drive wives into discouragement. Then we will discover the biblical solutions.
 - Look with an open heart and mind for any similarities between the way you treat your wife and the patterns described here. Maybe even talk to your wife and give her permission to be completely honest with you.
 - Your wife is probably paying an immense price for any unhealthy behavior you identify with in this lesson. Of course, you **can** change. But the first step is to recognize that the problem exists. So take a hard and honest look.

Irresponsible headship

Emotionally detached headship

Dictatorial headship

1. Characteristics:
 - He demonstrates a high need for control.
 - Nobody dares question his authority or decisions.
 - He will resort to intimidation tactics and go into a blind rage.
 - He's always giving orders.
 - Anger is his chief emotion, and he bullies his family. He uses fear to keep them in check.
 - He appears as a "nice guy" to the outside world.
2. Biblical solution: He must grow in meekness.
 - What is "meekness?" It means "mild of temper; gentle; not easily provoked or irritated; given to forbearance under injuries."
 - Moses and Jesus (two of the strongest leaders in the Bible) are both said to demonstrate meekness. Numbers 12:3; Matthew 11:29

- Meekness demonstrates humility (Colossians 3:12), is commanded by God (Ephesians 4:2; Titus 3:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; 1 Timothy 6:11), and is fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23).
- The opposite of the meek man is the angry man. Proverbs 14:17, 22:24, 29:22

Workaholic headship

1. Characteristics:
 - He prides himself on being a self-made man.
 - Work is an obsession, an addiction. He outworks everybody else at his job.
 - He is admired in the community for his savvy and success. He's grown famous for his exploits. Others admire how he can work on 4 or 5 hours sleep.
 - Home is a place to crash and burn, but is certainly not a place of involvement. He doesn't have the time or energy.
 - He manages his household from a distance, providing his family with first-class material possessions. He feels this makes up for his lack of involvement. He prides himself on being an outstanding provider.
 - He feels uncomfortable relating to his children or pursuing a deeper relationship with his wife.
 - He never takes time to evaluate or reflect on the meaning of his life, or ask significant questions about his motives.
2. Biblical solution: He must grow in contentment.
 - Workaholics are never content. They constantly want more (money, power, acclaim, etc.).
 - The word "content" literally means "held, contained within limits; hence quiet; not disturbed; having a mind at peace."
 - A content person has a biblical understanding of work. Its purpose is to meet your basic necessities and enable you to give to God and others. Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12; 1 Timothy 6:9-10
 - A content person is at peace within himself. He understands that he stands complete and sufficient in Christ. Colossians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 3:5
 - A content person understands that the true meaning of life is found in relationships, not material possessions or worldly accomplishments. 1 John 2:16-17, 4:7-12

Spiritually apathetic headship

1. Characteristics
 - He may be a believer, and even a church attendee, but beyond that he is unresponsive to spiritual things.
 - He never exercises spiritual leadership in the home.
 - He never reflects on life in terms of its spiritual dimension.

- When a conversation turns to God or the Bible, he tunes out or walks away. The wife is hurt and frustrated and feels helpless to change him.
 - She feels a deep loneliness in not being able to share this special part of her life with the person she loves the most.
2. Biblical solution: He must grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.
- God's plan for every Christian is to grow in Christ. 2 Peter 3:18
 - But growth never happens by accident. It begins with a spiritual desire. 1 Peter 2:2
 - Spiritual apathy is due to a cold and indifferent heart (Matthew 13:15), and must be repented of. Revelation 2:4-5
 - Spiritual revival must begin in the individual's heart.

In Conclusion:

1. Here are some questions every husband should ask himself:
 - How am I doing as a leader in my home?
 - Am I a lording leader or a servant leader?
 - Do I exhibit any of the five negative leadership styles?
 - Are there changes I need to make in the way I treat my wife and kids?
2. It is not that the men described in this lesson are evil, but they are inflicting great evils on their wives and children by their unbiblical behaviors.
3. As men, we hate to admit that the problem is in us. It is easier to make excuses, blame others, and evade responsibility.
4. But, when we finally face ourselves squarely, and accept responsibility for what we've become, then we are ready to take steps toward growth.

Message Series: Making Marriage Work

“Helper Does Not Mean Enabler” – Part 1

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.
5. Why do wives many times enable their husbands in their sin or disobedience? Why do family members so often become enablers? Next week we will learn why, and how they can overcome this.

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.
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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 **enabling** wrong behavior in the husband, but on her affirming her husband's position of leadership, and **helping** him to become the man and leader God wants him to be.
- B. Because she feels the truth is too **painful** to face.
- Satan is the author of deceit; God is the author of **truth**.
John 8:32; 44-47
- C. Because she is concerned for herself and her children's **security**.
- 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 **shame**-based identity.
 2. She is unaware of the right to set personal **boundaries**.
 - Boundaries are those invisible barriers that tell others where they **stop** and where you begin.
 - It's okay to expect others to **respect** your boundaries.
 3. She always feels that **she** is the problem for thinking there is a problem.
 - She has conditioned herself to **ignore** problems, **excuse** them, or take **blame** for them.
 - The Bible clearly teaches that each person is to take personal responsibility for his or 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 **sinful** 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 **eyes** of your heart. Psalm 139:23-24
1. God can help you work out any problem, but not if you **pretend** that problems don't exist.
 2. If any of the following conditions apply to you, seek **help** 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 **spirit**.
1. Confrontation is **very tough**, but **very biblical**.
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 **expects** it.
- C. If he does not respond, seek help from **others**. Matthew 18:15-17

In Conclusion:

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