

THE REAL REASON TO LOVE AND RESPECT

It's an eternal perspective

We have just 2 weeks left and I have really enjoyed doing this series with you all. I am so proud of all of you and your attention and your discussions and I really think that you all have a very good understanding on what God expects from us as Christian couples and hopefully we have given you some tools to enrich your marriages.

Over the next two weeks we are going to discuss what the real reason to love and respect each other is and that is to improve our relationship with our Lord and Savior

HUSBANDS; ASK YOURSELVES THESE QUESTIONS

We are going to review the COUPLE/CHAIRS ideas one more time. We have given you each cards with questions that you can refer back to in order to check yourselves with how you are doing with each other. If you can memorize and use just 1 or 2 of these each day you can do your part in improving your relationship with each other throughout your married lifetimes

We are going to start with the husbands. I would like it if for each example someone could tell me over the past 12 weeks how the men exemplified this attribute in a concrete way. We can all learn from each other and this will help all of us through each of your experiences.

CLOSENESS

- Am I always remembering to move toward her and accept her need to talk and connect with me to be assured of my love?

Closeness – Our verses for this was Genesis 2:24 (leave and cleave) and Deut 24:5 – man won't go with army but will be home for a year and make his wife happy. Remember she wants to connect to you. She is looking for you to “dwell” with her.

Face to face = heart to heart

OPENNESS

- Do I share my thoughts with her?
- And am I sure I'm not resisting her efforts to draw me out?

Openness – Verses here are SOS 5:2 – my darling... open the door for me, and Col 3:19 – love your wives and don't be embittered. Remember she is expressive responsive where all things are connected within her. Men are compartmentalized. Men need to be aware of her sensitivity and desire to be hear about your thoughts and fears.

UNDERSTANDING

- Am I careful not to try to “fix” her every time she talks about one of her concerns or problems?
- Am I remembering that she is an integrated personality and whatever happens affects all of her, especially her emotions?

Understanding – Verses 1Pet 3:7 – live with your wives in an understanding way; Jam1:19 – be quick to listen and slow to speak. Understanding means know WHY she is coming to talk to you not needing a problem fixed necessarily. She is like a porcelain bowl and can be broken if not treated gently. Ask if she needs a solution or just a sympathetic ear.

PEACEMAKING

- Am I always willing to resolve issues and am I careful to never say, "Let's just drop it and move on?"

Peacemaking – Verses – Eph 5:21 submit to one another out of reverence for Christ; 1Pet 3:8 – be harmonious, sympathetic... humble in spirit. Learn to say you are sorry and mean it. It doesn't matter how much fault is yours, you need to take the responsibility for your part in it. God intended some conflict in marriage but only to deepen the relationship when you work it out. Remember that she is going to recognize conflict before you do... Be sensitive to that.

LOYALTY

- Do I constantly look for ways to tell her that I will be loyal to her forever - that she's the one love of my life, the only woman for me?

Loyalty – she needs to know you are committed. Verses Mal 2:15–16 – don't act treacherously against your wife; Job 31:1 – make a covenant with your eyes; Prov 5:15 – drink water from your own cistern and well. Do all you can to let her know that you are her's alone as she wants you “sealed” to her. She wants to know that you will be with her and care for her all the days of your life. Remember Robertson McQuilkin who cared for his wife with Alzheimer's. Remember that almost all women stand by their men, but very few men stand by their women. We don't want to be like that.

ESTEEM

- Do I always let her know that I treasure her and put highest value on her as a person?
- Do I let her know that what she does and thinks are important to me?
- Does she know I couldn't possibly do without her?

Esteem – honor and cherish her; Prov 31:28–29 – Her children will call her blessed as well as her husband; SOS 7:6 – How beautiful and delightful you are; Eph 5:29 – no one hates own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it as Christ does the church. She wants to know that you have her on your heart and mind first and foremost. She needs to know that you believe in her and that she is not being second guessed.

WIVES; ASK YOURSELVES THESE
QUESTIONS?

Wives, your turn. Same rules... you should try to memorize these concepts and use one or two of them per day to let him know how important and vital he is to you.

CONQUEST

- Am I always standing behind him and letting him know I support him in his work and endeavors in his field?

Conquest – his desire to work and achieve – Gen 2:18– God made a helper for the man... not the other way around. 1Cor 11:9 – man was not created for woman but woman for man. Remember that men frequently feel they are defined by what they do. He wants his wife to be his cheerleader in all that he does.

HIERARCHY

- Do I let him know I respect and appreciate his desire to protect and provide for me and the family?
- What have I said recently to communicate this?

Hierarchy – protect and provide – 1Tim 5:8 – if he does not provide for household he is worse than unbeliever; Eph 5:22–24 – husband is head of wife as Christ is head of the Church. Wives are to place themselves under the protection of the husband. Because this is voluntary, it is the ultimate form of respect to another.

Men are sensitive and vulnerable to “headship” issues.

AUTHORITY

- Have I gone on record that, because he has the primary responsibility for me (even to die for me), I recognize him as having primary authority?
- Do I let him be the leader?
- How have I helped in that regard recently?

Authority – serve and lead – Eph 5:22–23 – wives be subject to your husbands as Church and Christ. 1Tim2:12 – I do not allow a woman to teach and exercise authority over a man. He wants to lead. Quiet, gentle spirit from the wife can speak much louder than words. Because of his authority, he also has greatest responsibility, including dying for you. Appreciating and respecting your husbands desire to serve you and lead the family takes courage and strength on your part.

INSIGHT

- Do I trust his ability to analyze things and offer solutions and not just depend on my “intuition”?

Insight – analyze and counsel – Prov 3:7 – don’t be wise in your own eyes; 1Tim 2:14 – it was not Adam who was deceived but Eve. Don’t be blinded by your own “intuition”. Know that your husband has some talent in the ability to have insight and usually an innate ability to analyze a situation more objectively with less emotional input. A marriage needs her intuition but it also needs his insight.

RELATIONSHIP

- Do I spend shoulder to shoulder time with him whenever I can?
- Do I let him know that I am his friend as well as his lover?

Relationship – shoulder to shoulder friendship – Phillip 2:14 – don't look out for only your own interests but also interest of others. SOS 5:16 – this is my beloved, my friend. Remember to be your husband's friend and to like him as well as love him. You like to connect by talking. He likes to connect by doing... and sometimes that means doing nothing!

SEXUALITY

- Do I honor his need for sexual release even when I don't feel like it?

Sexuality – his desire for sexual intimacy – 1Cor 7:2 – have lots of sex... because of sexual immorality; 1Cor 7:3 – husband must fulfill duty to wife and wife to husband. Your body is not your own, it belongs to the other. Just as he should minister to your spirit to have access to your body, you should minister to his body to have access to his spirit. Remember men are visual creatures. You may have to feel and be close in order to share with him sexually but it is the reverse for him. He needs the act of sex to bring the two of you close. Sex is a gift from God to be treasured and used only in the marriage covenant.

THE REAL REASON TO LOVE AND RESPECT

It's an eternal perspective

Last week we reviewed our COUPLE and CHAIRS principles and we are going to be ending this week to remind us why all we have covered is so important.

We all want great marriages and following the biblical principles that we have been outlining for the past few months will give us that but what we should really be desiring is to improve our relationship with Christ so as to keep the vertical perspective which will in turn help us in our behavior toward our spouse.

Today we are going to discuss what the real reason to love and respect each other is and that is to improve our relationship with our Lord and Savior

- If you meet a need in your spouse, it will come back to you as your spouse meets one of your needs

By men practicing COUPLE principles and women practicing CHAIRS, we can meet each other's needs and this will start a cycle of reciprocating needs as well. Remember that we are talking about meeting each other's needs on a human level but the real reason to do so is that it is biblical. There are verses backing up each and every principle here. As I have said before, to get the horizontal relationship correct will improve the vertical one and having the vertical relationship with our Lord intact will improve the relationship with our spouse.

REWARDED CYCLE

*His love blesses regardless of her respect;
Her respect blesses regardless of his love*

Combining your faith with everything we have learned so far can bring you the reward of a happy marriage.

Notice that neither of these things depend on the results of the other. Each is given no matter what the other is doing. The word “regardless” is key here, and we have hit on this before that you don’t love **if** you get respect and you don’t **respect** because you get love. You do each regardless of the other.

DON'T GIVE UP BECAUSE IT IS NOT WORKING

- “My fear is that I am going to move forward in good faith but my spouse will mistreat me”... or won't change... or...
- 1PET 3:6 - ... *do what is right without being frightened*
- 1PET 3:9 - *not paying back evil for evil or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing since you were called for this, so that you can inherit a blessing*

Now as with any suggestions, it may seem easy and that it will be successful because it makes sense but that may not be the case. Many times we can try something once or twice and if it doesn't work then we move on and consider it a failure. I have patients that do this all the time with meds. The key is that we are to practice these principles because they are the right thing to do and we should not give up because they are not “working”. Your definition of “working” may not be God's definition either so we need to be aware of that. He may not be bringing you flowers, but he did mow the lawn without being asked. She may have a HA as much as before but the negativity has died down a bit. You should not be afraid to move forward because you won't get what you want in return.

See 1Pet verses. These are commands to us as Christians no matter what our spouses are doing. You must trust God to work in these situations because it is He who is in control, not you.

Continue showing love and respect unconditionally.

- When you love or respect unconditionally you are following God and his will for you - ultimately your spouse and your marriage have nothing to do with it

Following God and his will is what we are to be doing. The way our spouse acts and our marriage are actually secondary to following the Lord's will and commands. Having said that, I am convinced that if we are following his commands, it is more likely that our spouses will respond positively to that. Maybe not on your time schedule but eventually.

EPH 6: 7-8 - Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

Unconditional love and respect will be rewarded.

Paul is telling us to serve each other as if we were serving the Lord. He is describing the slave/master relationship but notice at the end of the passage he is describing those of us who are free as well.

When we talk about reward, remember that it is eternal reward that we are talking about. That is not to say that an earthly reward such as a wonderful marriage is not in the cards, but it is the heavenly reward that we should be keeping our eye on and our heart directed to.

WE LOVE AND RESPECT FOR HEAVEN'S REWARD

Matt 25:21 - *Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your Master's happiness*

- Use your actions toward your spouse to be “faithful” in a few things
- Our reward *may* be a good marriage... and *will* be eternal happiness with our Lord

In the parable of the Talents, a master has given his slaves some money to watch over while he is gone on a trip. Each of the slaves did what they thought was best with the talents, but the slaves who were most faithful with the money were subsequently rewarded and invited to share in their master's happiness.

What will it be like to be considered a good and faithful servant to our Lord and to share in his happiness as well. Know that your actions toward your spouse will be considered being “faithful in a few things”.

Our reward **MAY** be a good marriage but for sure it **WILL** be eternal happiness with our Lord

WHAT MATTERS TO GOD, MATTERS

1 COR 3:19 - *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before
God*

- Does it make sense for a wife to give respect to a husband who is harsh and unloving?
- Does it make sense for a husband to love a contemptuous, disrespectful woman?
- IT MAKES SENSE TO GOD!

Notice that the wisdom of the world is foolishness to God.

In this world it makes no sense for a wife to give respect to a husband who is harsh and unloving. Think about some of the conversations you have been involved with or overheard regarding this issues. To the world it makes no sense to act this way

Same for the husband of a contemptuous and disrespectful woman. The world says it makes no sense to love this woman.... **But it makes sense to God.**

That is what should matter to us. What God thinks of us... not the world.

IT'S ABOUT YOU AND JESUS CHRIST

- “Marriage crisis” vs “faith crisis” in the Christian community
- PROV 24:16 - *A righteous man falls seven times, and rises again.*
- Successful couples get back up with each fall
 - Unsuccessful want it easy, now, needs met, to be “happy”

There is not so much as a marriage crisis in our Christian communities as there is a faith crisis. Think about it. Do we or do we not believe in what Jesus Himself said to us. You can't do love and respect unto each other, unless you do it unto Jesus Christ.

We are going to fail. That is because we are human....but as it says in Proverbs, a righteous man will rise back up. Successful couples know that times can be hard but they will tackle those tough issues and get back up after being down.

Many of today's couples whether your age or ours want it easy, want it now and want their needs to be met. They think that this is what is going to make them “happy”. What they don't know is that they have their attention on the wrong thing. Our attention needs to be on Christ and his example and commands. THEN we will know that we are doing the right thing and will experience the contentment that one can only find in HIM.

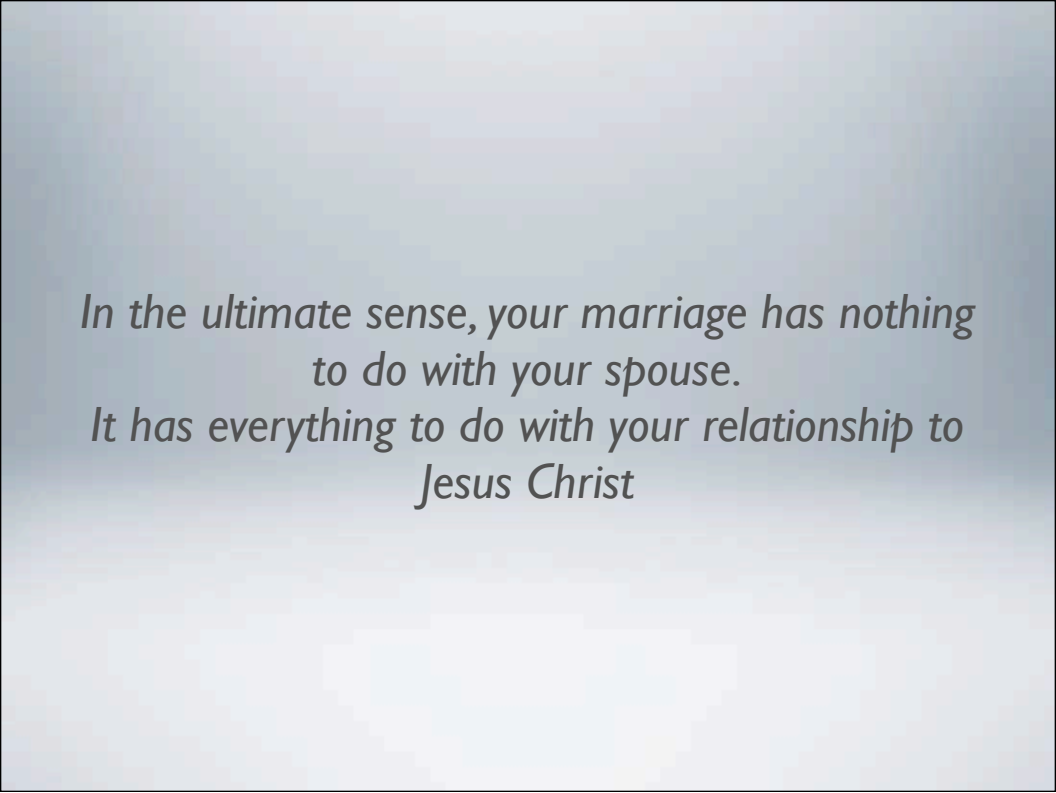
IT'S ABOUT YOU AND JESUS CHRIST

- Parable of the last judgement - MATT 25: 31-46
- Whatever I do for my spouse, I do for Christ as well
 - husband's unconditional love for wife reveals his love for Christ
 - wife's unconditional respect for her husband reveals her reverence for Christ

Read Matt 25:31–40.

Read the slide as well.

Remember that your spouse is your brother and sister in Christ and whatever you do to/for them, you are doing for Christ.. your attitude toward them is a mirror of your attitude toward Jesus Christ. This is the real reason that we love and respect. We do this because we want to show those same attributes to our Lord



*In the ultimate sense, your marriage has nothing
to do with your spouse.
It has everything to do with your relationship to
Jesus Christ*

Read the slide. Despite all the past weeks, it all boils down to our relationship with Christ Jesus. He is the real reason to love and respect.

When you stand before Him at the final judgement, you will realize that your marriage was really a tool and test to deepen and demonstrate your love and your reverence for your Lord.

Let's all be able to say that we were good and faithful servants to HIM and to each other as well in the mean time.

