

# **Mixtape: The Soundtrack for Marriage - Love and Respect**

Glen Elliott - August 12

**Series Big Idea:** All of us who have been married, at some point, wonder if we married the wrong person. Or we put off marriage because we fear we might choose the wrong mate. Or we consider divorce convinced we got it wrong. Fact is, there are a lot of reasons for these concerns. Nobody will ever be the perfect mate or find the perfect mate. We all have our hurts, hang-ups, bad habits and issues. And compatibility is a fallacy that if relied upon will set up for failure. Trying to change our partner to become the "right" person is also recipe for disaster. God intended marriage to be mysterious. That mystery is that two people become one and stay as one. In this series, we are going to put together a "mixtape" of biblical ideas that can provide a "soundtrack" of songs to help us live the mystery of having a thriving marriage as we learn to stay in love and stay as one.

**Message Big Idea:** God created marriage to be this mystery of two separate different people coming together to become one. But how does this mystery of two become one happen? The Bible says that there are two keys - love and respect. Everyone needs and wants both love and respect. However, wives deeply value being loved while husbands deeply value being respected. And God knew that so he instructs us to love and respect our spouse. There's lots of misunderstanding about both of those keys. In this message, we'll unpack what love and respect are and how they create oneness.

**Main Idea:** Love and respect are the keys to becoming one.

**Main Text:** Ephesians 5:31-33

**Supporting texts:** Luke 6:26, 27

## **Reflection/Discussion Questions:**

1. The mystery of marriage is becoming one. What does it look like to be "one" in a marriage? Why do you think love and respect are the keys to becoming one?
2. Why do you think the Bible and research show that men need and value being respected more than being loved and women value being loved more than respected? How have you seen this lived out in your life, marriage or in others?
3. Why do most people believe that love and respect have to be earned? What are the practical consequences when we believe that love and/or respect must be earned? What does the Bible say about this belief?
4. Why is it hard for women and wives to respect their husbands?
5. Why is it hard for men or husbands to love their wives?

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### Message:

In this series we've called *Mixtape - The Soundtrack for Marriage*, we've been looking at the mystery of marriage which we discovered in the amazing idea of oneness. We found this idea and started this series by looking at Ephesians 5:31-33. The Bible declares that marriage is a crazy mystery - the mystery of oneness. Two very different people becoming one. Oneness is being a team. We are for each other. We want the other to succeed in every way. When one wins, we both win. Oneness is sharing life together as different unique people. Oneness is the unity around how we spend our time, our money, our very lives. God wants us to experience our human marriage as one just as we are to be one with God.

So as we began this series I made this observation; **We all marry the wrong person.** We all have issues, hang-ups, bad habits, and baggage. And it is easy to get fixated on what's wrong with the other person. Then I gave this challenge; if you are married, don't focus on the imperfections of your spouse. If you are single, don't focus on the shortcomings of your potential imperfect spouse. Rather, to have any great relationship, we look at ourselves first. My point was that **The mystery of marriage isn't finding the right person, but becoming the right person.** We have to work on ourselves and deal with our issues if we have any chance of becoming one with God or another human being.

Last week Roger shared his "song" in the marriage soundtrack mix. He reminded us that we learn to be one, and overcome being two through a commitment called covenant. From the scripture, Roger challenged us to **Choose covenant love, for better or worse.** You can catch all those messages online if you missed one. And next week Chris and Rebecca Hamlin are going to talk about how Christ in us is the essential part necessary to experience oneness. In fact, oneness with God is the key to oneness with your spouse. And next week we'll have the opportunity for you to make that commitment to be one with Jesus and declare that through baptism. If you've been thinking about baptism, come prepared to make that commitment next week.

Today we are going to listen, so to speak, to our third song or third principle that helps us experience the mystery of oneness. God guided a man named Paul to write that we are to seek to become one with our mate. That's the goal. But how? And God doesn't leave us in the dark concerning the how. He shows us how. He gives us the two keys to becoming one. We actually already read it when we read **Ephesians 5:31-33 (pg. 801).** Let's read it again. In verse 31 Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 that says - ***For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.*** There's the idea of oneness. Then he says in verse 32- ***This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*** This profound mystery is oneness - two becoming one. That can be experienced in human marriage. It can be experienced in a kind of spiritual

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experience with God - becoming one with God. Unity, connection, sharing life, sharing values and purpose, being for and with each other - that's oneness.

But God also tells us how. Did you catch it in verse 33? Two words. **Love and respect are the keys to becoming one.** This is what we'll unpack.

Now, some of you might be a bit distracted that Paul wrote that husbands are to love and wives are to respect their husbands. Some of the women and wives here might be concerned about why they are to respect their husbands. But we live in a time when feminism and the #MeToo movement remind us of a reality that some men, sometimes, have attitudes and act in ways that are so disrespectful of women that this seems like an outdated old fashioned idea. I totally get it. Women, before you check out, give me a chance to help us see that there is a timeless wisdom in God's Word. In fact, I think it is genius! So hang in there a bit.

Paul commands us to love and to respect. He says we "must" love and respect. We are to do both. All humans need both. Love and respect! What's interesting is that no one disputes that husbands should love their wives! I think that respect part is the most neglected and misunderstood of the two. So we'll start with respect first, then move to the love part.

So "wives respect your husbands" seems troubling in our modern world. The idea of a wife respecting their husband seems so 1950ish. Why? Well, let's be honest. The media consistently presents men as idiots, out of touch. Men just don't get it. They are represented as stupid, neanderthal cavemen. Or if not that, they are portrayed as chauvinists. Or they are presented as adolescents in arrested development, sex-crazed, and selfish. Or worse. And there are men who are like that for sure. The jokes, humor, and representations have a reality to them. Further, there are men (and in fact some women) who are physically and emotionally abusive; addicted to drugs, alcohol or porn; have neglected their wives and family and so on. There are husbands who are emotionally distant. In any of these situations, it is really hard for a wife or woman to respect that kind of husband or man. Further, women have been taught to actually NOT respect their husbands. To respect a man who's far from ideal is seen in our culture as a sign of weakness. It is seen as giving up one's natural authority, rights, and dignity.

The Bible gets it right. And I've seen what the Bible says is right lived out through my experience. Husbands and wives need and want to be loved and respected. But here's the wisdom and genius of God. We know from research that women want more than anything to be loved by their husbands. And men, in contrast, while of course wanting to be loved, even more, want to be respected by their wives. And that's why the Bible commands, yes, commands, that husbands love their wives and wives respect their husbands. **Love and respect are the keys to becoming one.** Research has shown that men have a deeper need for and a higher value for being respected than for being

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loved. And women have a deeper need for and a higher value for being loved over being respected.

So what does it look like for a wife to respect her not so perfect husband? Remember, we all married the wrong person - someone who will come up short! Most wives can't get past this belief - "My husband (any person for that matter) has to earn my respect." His behavior, attitude, and actions are not respectful to me so I can't give him my respect. I don't agree with his lifestyle and ways so I can't and don't respect him. The biggest hindrance to respecting is the idea is that respect has to be earned. But I believe that is not what the Bible teaches. Rather the Bible teaches this - **Respect is given, not earned**. I believe the same is also true about two other really important things - trust and love. We think they have to be earned.

But that's NOT what the Bible teaches. Here in Ephesians 5:33 it says "must" and doesn't give conditions. A wife must respect her husband even when he messes up. Now, let me be clear. The Bible is not saying or teaching that anybody has to live in abuse. It doesn't even teach that we have to like or honor or respect bad behavior or sin. I can dislike someone's actions or words but still RESPOND in a respectful way. I can disagree with someone and still respond in a respectful way. In our society as a whole, we've lost the value and ability to respect all people in how we respond. That's the key to respect. **We respond in a respectful way**. And we can respond respectfully and give respect without giving a pass on bad behavior.

Again, let me be as clear as I can. There is never a time when God commands us to give a pass on bad behavior. The overarching message of the Bible is this - **Love and respect all people unconditionally**. I was reading last week in our Bible reading plan from **Luke 6:27, 28 - Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you**. I couldn't move past that as I was reading. It hit me again how unconditional love and respect are. Love, do good, bless and pray for folks who don't deserve it nor have they earned it. And I was reminded by the Holy Spirit that is how God has responded to me. I'm grateful.

That doesn't mean we approve or don't confront the bad behavior. Sometimes we need to physically distance ourselves to protect ourselves. We all struggle with this profound idea. Love and respect are given, not earned. They are unconditional. What Jesus and the Bible teaches is that love and respect are a choice we make and give it to others even when they have not deserved it or earned it. And no one ever said that was easy!

Wives, you can choose to respond to your husbands with respect even when they are behaving in inappropriate ways. And what you may not know, is that respect is your best shot at reaching his heart. Wives and women - how do you respect a husband or guy who is less than perfect? Okay, maybe far from perfect! That's the question, isn't it? Let me try and help.

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The respect comes in HOW you respond to your husband. You can confront him on something wrong without putting him down. The put down is the disrespect! "I would like you to fix the broken door" is very different than "You're as useless as the trash when it comes to fixing things." You can be right about something but say it in a wrong way that robs him of his dignity. Here's the reality. Ladies, you need to understand this. You might not like it. But you need to get it. When men hear your words that are critical, negative, judgmental and said with contempt, that's all they hear - contempt. And because of how our world has presented men, men are afraid to be vulnerable and tell you how disrespected they feel. When men and husbands are denied respect, they are not as strong or as impervious as they seem on the outside. I speak from first-hand knowledge in my own experience and in many many men who have been vulnerable enough to admit this to me.

Now, if you've been hurt and unloved, it is hard for you to have any sympathy for your husband or guy having his feelings hurt through disrespect. I get it. But I also know that he'll always struggle to love and put you first without the respect. The more he's disrespected, the more he'll pull away, go into silence, or withdraw.

Respect and disrespect are communicated not only by the words you use or don't use but much more in HOW you say what you say. Do you, in your heart, say what you need and should say with respect or with contempt? How do you look when you say what you say -with respect or contempt. Your tone and your eyes will communicate respect or contempt! You can, with love and respect, confront inappropriate behaviors or decisions! So, the fact is that the door needs to be fixed. It won't lock. So here's how it might respectfully sound - "I know you've been overwhelmed and had a lot on your plate lately. I just want you to know that I'm struggling. I'm fearful about our security with the door being broken. But I know you'll take care of us. I'm trusting you for that."

Sometimes wives struggle to offer respect because they think it is fake. True respect doesn't have to be fake! Some women believe that they have to "lie" to give respect to husbands who are not measuring up. No, you don't have to be fake and lie. You give respect in how you have real, honest and even hard conversations. You don't assume they are a dumb or stubborn mule as you talk! You don't treat your husband as a 2nd class citizen - that's disrespectful. By the way, we also need to give respect to our children, especially male children! They are not 2nd class citizens either. We are all 1st class citizens that deserve all the rights and respects of a human created and loved by God.

But God also commands (using the word "must") that husbands are to love their wives as they love themselves. If you think about it, God gives the hardest job and the greatest responsibility to the husband. This kind of love is the most demanding of all commands in the Bible. Husbands are to love an imperfect wife the way they love themselves. It is natural to put ourselves and our needs first. We are to put the needs of

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our wives first! Husbands, put your wives first and seek the best for her. Care for her. Serve her. And if you do that, you'll discover that she will start to respect you!

Now, guys, you might ask: why isn't a wife commanded to love her husband? Here's my opinion. First, we are all commanded to love all people... remember? But in this context, I think the answer is this. Wives naturally love their husbands and children. They do it naturally. And when a wife is not loved well, they don't stop loving, they stop respecting which only sabotages being loved even more.

Here's the challenge. I see it all the time in marriage and ANY relationship gone bad. We get into loops. A wife doesn't feel loved by her husband, so she won't give him any respect. A husband doesn't feel respected by his wife, so he's unwilling to love his wife. They both don't get what they want so they deny the other what they need and they are stuck in a loop that will destroy oneness and eventually the marriage.

So how do you break the loop or the stupid cycle? It only takes one to break it. Only one! If the husband will love his wife, he has a better chance of being respected. If a wife respects her husband, she'll have a better chance of being loved. Someone needs to break the cycle or loop. Be that someone. **Love and respect are the keys to becoming one.**

And if you are stuck, get help. If you can't break out of the loop or cycle - get professional help. Husbands, if you really don't know how to love your wife, get help from others. That's the value of being a part of a small group. Wives, if you really don't know HOW to express respect, get help.

That's why we are bringing an amazing marriage event here on Friday night September 21st. It is called the Love and Respect event by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs. I've read a couple of his books and watched him teach and he's right on. Based on the Bible, research, and experience, Dr. Eggerichs will help us learn how to bring love and respect into our marriage and relationships. Sign up online. There's a table in the lobby with cards you can take to invite others to join us as well as some of his books to look at. Make this event a priority. Why? Because... **Love and respect are the keys to becoming one.**