

AWESOME MARRIAGE ~ LESSON 1

UNLEASHED CHRISTIAN CHURCH

GOD DESIGNED MARRIAGE

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone;
I will make him a helper suitable for him." **Genesis 2:18**

Genesis 2:21-25

So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "At last this is bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called 'woman,' Because she was taken out of man." For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, but they were not ashamed.

RECEIVING YOUR SPOUSE

Today's Focus:

Oneness in marriage requires receiving your spouse as God's perfect provision for your needs.

"Most marital difficulties center around one fact men and women are TOTALLY different."
~ Gary Smalley

This session will open up some very sensitive areas, exploring ways we need our spouse. The idea here is that things we lack to make us a complete person can be found in our spouse. In order to see how this can be valuable we need to get an understanding of the differences between men and women. To start with, every cell in a man's body is different than a woman's. The physical, emotional, and mental differences between the sexes are so extreme that without a concentrated effort to understand and appreciate them it is very difficult to have a happy marriage.

Men and women are, for the most part, opposites.

The key is to _____ and _____ your spouse's differences.

Husbands need to recognize the tremendous _____ of a woman as it relates to relationships.

There are two very valuable assets that a woman has that a man needs to utilize.

1. _____

2. _____

Wives need to learn to value their husband's _____ tendency.

“By nature, a man’s “left brain” tendencies can give him important contributions to a marriage. For example, a man’s competitive nature, when turned towards gaining a successful relationship, can cause dramatic growth in a marriage. Once the knowledge and skills of a good relationship are in sight, he can go after them like conquering a project at work. Once a man can see the advantages in making a choice (the facts), he can often commit himself regardless of his feelings.”

Why is it so important in relationships to understand that we are created different?

AWESOME MARRIAGE PRINCIPLE #1

A godly marriage is not created by finding a perfect, flawless person, but is created by allowing God’s perfect love and acceptance to flow through one imperfect person toward another imperfect person.

How can we love an imperfect person?

Because at it’s root, love is a _____ not a _____.

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER! Within each marriage there are differences between the husband and wife that are not necessarily gender related. **For example**, one spouse may be very neat and tidy and the other may not, one may be punctual while the other tends to run late, one may be very structural while the other tends to be carefree, one may be spontaneous while the other needs to plan everything. These are character or personality traits that can be a source of irritation and anger.

Let’s look at what the Bible says about receiving your spouse just as they are.

Romans 15:7

Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us, for the glory of God.

_____ ***one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. The question then would be, how did Christ accept us?***

When we look at our spouse we can focus on their strengths or we can focus on their flaws but it really is a matter of _____.

In order to receive our spouse as God expects we need to focus on their strengths and view their weaknesses as:

1. Opportunities for me to be _____.
2. Tools God can use to help me _____.
3. Only changeable through a climate of _____.

Awesome Marriage Principle #2

Acceptance of my spouse is based on my faith in God's character and trustworthiness.

Let's look at Genesis 2:18 - 23 to see how Adam's faith in God allowed him to accept Eve just as God had created her.

Genesis 2:18 - In this verse we see that God was the one who recognized that it was not good for man to _____ and He took action to _____ the situation.

Genesis 2:19,20 - In these verses Adam becomes aware for the first time that he did not have a _____. *There is no indication that he had any awareness of his need before then.*

Why is this significant? Because it tells us that God knows what we need and plans to provide it for us before we even realize what it is we need. We just need to look to Him to provide our needs and trust Him when He does.

Genesis 2:23 - Shows us how Adam responded to God's provision.

There are two interesting things that occur here.

1. Adam simply _____ Eve as she was (and visa versa) **AND**
2. Neither one of them _____ to earn the others acceptance.

Who did Adam know better at this point and why is that significant?

He knew _____ better, which is important because although he did not know Eve, his _____ of God allowed Adam to _____.

Accepting our spouse as God's provision for our needs frees us of the idea that acceptance is based on their performance.

“Love is a virtue, as long as you also love the unlovable
- otherwise it’s no virtue at all.”

“Be to his virtues very kind, Be to his faults a little blind.”

MEETING YOUR SPOUSE’S SPECIAL NEEDS

Men and women were created by God, different from each other.
These differences generate special needs. These needs are uniquely fulfilled by the other.

“Success in marriage is more than finding the right person:
it’s also a matter of being the right person.”

Special Needs of a Woman

Before we look at what the Bible identifies as the greatest need of the wife or husband - *Let’s see what we can come up with for the “top three needs of a woman.”*

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Now let’s see what the Bible identifies as the number one need of a woman and how.

Colossians 3:19

Husbands, love your wives and do not become bitter against them.

This verse has something special to say about a woman’s needs. By way of a command it urges the husband to be active in meeting the most important need a wife possesses.

That need is _____.

A man may love his dog and he may love his wife but they are different kinds of love (hopefully) .
So the key is not just to love but to learn to love “_____.”

How To Love Your Wife as She Needs

Certainly the word “love” means different things to different people. In marriage however, the Bible says that the love a woman needs is something very specific. **Ephesians 5:25-29** gives us a very specific description of the qualities a husband’s love must consist of.

Three qualities that should define a husband's love for his wife.

1. _____ marks the first characteristic as seen in verse 25. It is the same sacrifice that Christ made when He **gave himself up** for her (the church). In order to love the church the way He did, Christ often had to say "no" to someone - **HIMSELF**. (See also Philippians 2:3-5)
2. _____ also means encouragement to grow and become everything God meant for her to be.
3. _____ this includes the terms found in verses 28b and 29: "**Nourish**" meaning "**to provide for**" and "**Cherish**" meaning "**to protect and take care of.**"

A woman's special need, love, is to be fulfilled through her husband. His love for her should be the kind that specifically declares her importance and worth, seeks her personal development, and provides for a strong sense of security.

Awesome Marriage Principle #3

The greatest need a woman has in her marriage is to be loved as she needs.

Special Needs of a Man

What do you think are the "top three needs of a man?" (Let's try and agree on a "top three").

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Let's look at what this verse says about a mans greatest need and how that compares to our list.

Ephesians 5:33

Nevertheless, as for you individually, each husband is to love his own wife the same as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

Throughout the verses in Ephesians 5:22-33 Paul talks about how the husband should **Love** his wife. The one thing that he emphasizes that the wife **must** do is _____ her husband.

Consider the following quote from Robert Lewis
(Christian theologian and marriage expert)

“However a man may appear, his nature is basically insecure. Often a man’s masculinity is more fragile than a woman’s femininity...his self-esteem is more easily threatened. Men more than women, have a need to “prove” themselves, for doubts are always lingering. The view a man has of himself (whether good or bad) is usually a reflection from two sources: his work and his woman. If either of these becomes shaky, so do his feelings and perceptions about his manhood. Depression and anger often fill such times. A wife’s ongoing responsiveness to her husband should be a well from which a husband can draw respect for himself. His self-respect is, in many ways, her respect reborn in him.”

Three Valuable Ways A Wife Can Respect Her Husband

1. By _____ and _____ him. **Proverbs 12:4** illustrates that a wife can be like a crown to her husband but She also possesses the power to shame him. How?
2. By _____ (and not competing with) him. **Proverbs 31:10-12, 23** illustrates how the support of an excellent wife is worth more than jewels, she brings her husband good, **not** evil. **Proverbs 21:9, 19** tells us how awful it is to live with a “contentious”, competing, or quarrelsome wife.
3. By _____ responding to him. **Song of Solomon 7:10-12**

A respectful wife is life-giving to a man. He draws from her a strong and affirmative sense of who he is. Clearly a wife can brighten her husband’s life by her admiration and esteem. She can stabilize his life by her supportiveness. She can also energize his life by her physical responsiveness. In short, she is called to fulfill many of his deepest needs through the simple admonition: “See to it that you respect your husband.”

Awesome Marriage Principle #4

Other than a man’s relationship with God, few things tell a man more about himself than the respect of his wife.

To Do This Week

- 1. Talk with your spouse about your differences** AND then evaluate how those differences are a benefit to you both. **2 Ask Yourself: Husband** - Am I loving my wife "right"? What can I do this week to show my love for my wife? **Wife** - does my husband know and feel that I respect him? What can I do this week to demonstrate that respect?
3. Do your Communication Questions together. 4. Work on your marriage verse.

Answers for Lesson 1

Recognize and value * Worth * An inherent desire to have a good relationship * An inherent ability to recognize a good relationship * Left brain * Decision not a feeling * Accept * Just as we are * Perspective * Needed * Trust Him * Loving acceptance * Be alone * Remedy * Suitable companion * Received * Did anything * GOD * Knowledge * Trust * 3 Personal Answers * Love * as she needs * Sacrifice * Support * Security * 3 Personal Answers * Respect * Honoring and Esteeming * Supporting

Communication Questions Asking About Fond Memories

- What is one of the most adventurous things you've ever done?
- How many times did you move as a child? What was that like?
- Did you have an imaginary friend growing up? What was its name? Did anyone else know?
- What is your earliest memory?
- Did you enjoy PE in school as a kid? Were you the first or last kid picked?
- What was your first grade teacher like?
- Do you remember your first day at school?
- What are your most vivid childhood vacation memories? Where did you go?
- How would you describe your parent's marriage while you were growing up?
- Did you get along well with your parents during your teen years? How about your siblings?
- Did you play tricks on anyone in your family growing up?
- How important were family pets in your home as a child?
- Can you list all the pets you had growing up?
- Has your family ever been superstitious?
- What hobbies did your parents enjoy during your childhood?
- What were your parent's favorite TV shows when you were a child?
- What role did prayer play in your home as a child?
- Do you remember any stories about what your grandparents were like as kids?? Did your family listen to much music when you were a child?
- How important were books in your household growing up? What were your favorites as a kid?

- If you could recover any possession you've lost, which one would it be?
- If you could have witnessed any biblical event, which one would you select?

Asking About Our Relationship

- (Husband to Wife) Since we got married, what have you learned about what it takes to speak "Man" - to communicate in such a way that I really understand you?
- (Husband to Wife) When talking with a woman, what is most important for a man to remember?
- Do I tend to praise you in front of others? How does that make you feel?
- How openly do I communicate my love for you? Our kids?
- How 'together' do the two of us live our lives? What kinds of things would you like to do more of together?
- The Bible described marriage as a man "leaving his mother & father" and "cleaving to his wife" Do you feel we have done both?
- In what ways are we most alike as people? How are we different?
- The Bible teaches that we should consider the interests & needs of other before our own (Phil 2:3-4). In our marriage—do you think I live up to that? In what areas can I do better?
- Do I most often build your self-esteem or diminish it? How?
- When is the last time we sat down & looked through our wedding photo album together?? Would you like to do that now?
- What people in your life are you the most comfortable with? Why?
- Which friendship have influenced your life the most?? In what way?
- Who were your best friends growing up? Tell me about them. What attracted them to you? How did they affect your life?