

“Created to Relate” Marriages That Relates!

Primary Text: Ephesians 5:21–33

Healthy marriages are built when love and respect meet at the cross.

Introduction

Marriage was God’s idea. In Genesis 2:18, the Lord said, “It is not good for the man to be alone.” Before sin entered the world, God created companionship, covenant, and unity. But because of sin, misunderstanding creeps in.

In Ephesians 5, the Apostle Paul does not start with roles — he starts with reverence for Christ. Verse 21 says, “Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.”

Before we talk about what men and women need, we must remember: **marriage works when both are submitted to Jesus first.**

I. What Women Need in Marriage

1. She Needs Sacrificial Love

Ephesians 5:25 says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

That word love is *agape* — self-giving love.

Notice: Paul does not say, “Love her if she respects you.” He says, “Love her like Christ.” And how did Christ love? He moved first. He pursued. He sacrificed.

In Colossians 3:19 Paul adds, “Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.” Harshness kills emotional security.

A wife flourishes where she feels:

- Safe
- Chosen
- Protected
- Prioritized

When Christ loves the church, He doesn’t humiliate her — He nourishes her.

2. She Needs Understanding

In 1 Peter 3:7, husbands are told to live “with your wives in an understanding way.”

The phrase means “according to knowledge.”

Men often approach marriage like a problem to solve. Women often approach marriage like a relationship to experience.

One husband said, “When she tells me about her day, I try to fix it.”

She said, “I don’t need you to fix it. I need you to feel it.”

Understanding means:

- Listening without interrupting
- Asking questions
- Learning her fears
- Not minimizing her emotions

You cannot cherish what you refuse to study.

3. She Needs Honor

1 Peter 3:7 continues: “Show them honor.”

Honor means:

- Speak well of her publicly
- Defend her privately
- Protect her emotionally

When a woman feels dishonored, she withdraws. When she feels honored, she blooms.

II. What Men Need in Marriage

1. He Needs Respect

Ephesians 5:33 says, “The wife must respect her husband.”

The Greek word carries the idea of esteem and value.

Many women crave love the way men crave respect.

If love says, “You are cherished,” respect says, “You are capable.”

This does not mean silence or blind agreement. It means:

- Addressing issues without contempt
- Disagreeing without dishonor
- Correcting without crushing

2. He Needs Encouragement

In Proverbs 18:21 we read, “The tongue has the power of life and death.”

Men often carry silent burdens:

- Financial pressure
- Spiritual leadership pressure
- Fear of failure
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Encouragement is oxygen to a husband’s soul.

3. He Needs Partnership

In Genesis 2:18, God calls Eve a “helper suitable.”

The Hebrew word *ezer* is used of God helping Israel.

It means strength. Marriage was never designed to be competition — it was designed to be completion.

A husband needs:

- A teammate
- A confidant
- A safe harbor

When he feels alone in the fight of life, discouragement sets in. When he feels supported, he rises.

III. What Both Need

1. Both Need Grace

In Colossians 3:13, we are told to forgive as the Lord forgave us. Marriage joins two imperfect people in a permanent covenant.

You will:

- Misunderstand
- Misspeak
- Miss opportunities

Grace keeps scoreboards out of the relationship.

2. Both Need Communication

James 1:19 tells us to be quick to listen and slow to speak.

Most arguments in marriage are not about the surface issue. It's not about dishes. It's about feeling unseen. It's not about money. It's about feeling insecure. Listening heals deeper than winning ever could.

3. Both Need Christ at the Center

Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, "A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

When both pursue Christ:

- Pride decreases
- Humility increases
- Forgiveness flows

Marriage is not sustained by chemistry. It is sustained by Christ.

In Ephesians 5, Paul says marriage reflects Christ and the church. Your marriage is preaching a sermon every day.

The question is: What is it saying?

Conclusion

What women need:

- Love
- Understanding
- Honor

What men need:

- Respect
- Encouragement
- Partnership

What both need:

- Grace
- Communication
- Christ

Marriage is not 50/50.
It is 100/100.

You cannot control what your spouse gives — but you can control what you bring.
And when two people decide to love like Christ, something supernatural happens.
Homes become sanctuaries. Conversations become kinder. Children see the gospel lived out daily.

Final Challenge

Husbands: This week, ask her, “How can I love you better?”

Wives: This week, tell him, “I appreciate you for...”

And both of you — pray together.

Because the strongest marriages are not those without conflict.

They are the ones where two imperfect people keep running back to a perfect Savior.