

“MARRIAGE – GOD’S WAY” (Part 1)

Ephesians Chapter 5:22-33

Introduction: “Wives” – Two types of women (wives) are found in the Scriptures: **(1) the VIRTUOUS woman (wife); (2) the CONTENTIOUS woman (wife).** Our goal is to produce the “virtuous woman” and to contend with and overcome the “contentious woman”.

Let’s read Ephesians chapter 5:22-24:

(v22) **What is the meaning of “submit” and to be “subject to”:** Warren Wiersbe sums it up well in his commentary, “When the Christian wife submits herself to Christ and lets Him be the Lord of her life, she will have no difficulty submitting to her husband (Ephesians 5:21). This does not mean that she becomes a slave, for the husband is also to submit to Christ. And if both are living under the lordship of Christ, there can be only harmony. Headship is not dictatorship. “Each for the other, both for the Lord.” The Christian husband and wife should pray together and spend time in the Word, so that they might know God’s will for their individual lives and for their home. Most of the marital conflicts I have dealt with as a pastor have stemmed from failure of the husband and or wife to submit to Christ, spend time in His Word, and seek to do His will each day.”

HISTORY LESSON: **Genesis 1:26 – 3:24** (Let’s not repeat the same mistakes.)

#1 – CONTENTION begins when there’s NO CONFESSION of sin (Gen. 3:13) -

SIN is a stickler and unless it’s removed through recognition and repentance it will cause pain and separation. Every believer must evaluate their heart before God and ask, “Am I sharing God’s image (love, light & life) or Satan’s image (anger, darkness & destruction).”

What saith the Scripture about a contentious woman without confession: "It is better to live in a corner of a roof, than in a house shared with a *contentious woman*." Proverbs 21:9; "It is better to live in a desert land, than with a *contentious and vexing woman*." Proverbs 21:19; "A constant dripping on a day of steady rain and a *contentious woman* are alike. He who would restrain her restrains the wind, and grasps oil with his right hand." Proverbs 27:15; "The *woman of folly* is boisterous. She is *naïve*, and knows nothing." Proverbs 9:13; "So is a beautiful woman *who lacks discretion*." Proverbs 11:22 (Listen to this real life experience by Dr. Linda Karges-Bone.)

#2 – How to CHANGE a Contentious Nature -

(Here’s Dr. Linda Karges-Bone’s counsel from God’s Word)

> **By your words:** "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word *stirs up anger*." Proverbs 15:1

> **Through your actions:** "The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down *with her own hands*." Proverbs 14:1

> **With your decisions:** "Pride *goes* before destruction. And a haughty spirit before stumbling." Proverbs 16:18 and "Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve....but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15

> **By keeping in The Word of God:** "Thy word have I treasured in my heart that I may not sin against Thee." Psalms 119:11

> **With your loyalty and respect:** "For how do you know, *O wife*, whether you will save your husband?" 1Cor. 7:13

> **With your attitude:** "Put on *the full armor of God*, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." Eph. 6:11

> **By picking your battles:** "Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, But *any fool will quarrel*." Proverbs 20:3

> **In your obedience:** "No temptation has overtaken you but such as in common to man; and *God is faithful*, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it." 1 Cor.10:13

> **By choosing to live in God’s grace:** "For sin shall not be master over you, for *you are not under the law*, but under grace." Romans 6:14

> **In searching your own heart:** "The heart is more deceitful than all else, and is desperately sick. Who can understand it? I the Lord *search the heart*, I test the mind." Jeremiah 17:9

A contentious woman is not a happy woman. There is no peace in it. There is no victory. There is no resolution of conflicts nor control over circumstances. Sin always begets sin. And, as the Word of God tells us, the wages of sin is death.

#3 – LET’S GO VIRTUOUS! – Proverbs Chapter 31:10-31

(v10-31) Portrait of a virtuous wife (Twenty-one Virtues)

Webster’s definition of *virtue*- Morality, goodness or uprightness; a special type of goodness.

#1- Her husband can trust her with the financial responsibility (v11)

#2- She does good things for her husband & not evil (v12)

#3- She’s clothes her family well (v13)

#4- She goes to Safeway, Costco, K-mart, Walmart, NEX, etc. to feed her family well (v14)

- #5- She plans & prepares meals in advance (“The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach.”) (v15)
- #6- She invests wisely (v16)
- #7- She keeps herself healthy through proper sleep, exercise & nutrition (v17)
- #8- She’s industrious even into the evening, if need be (v18)
- #9- She can sew, mend things (v19)
- #10- She cares for the less fortunate (v20)
- #11- She makes sure that her family has proper clothing for the winter (v21)
- #12- She takes care of her own appearance (v22)
- #13- Her husband is well respected because of her conduct & care for the family & community (v23)
- #14- She likes to involve herself in the field of commerce for her family’s sake (v24)
- #15- She’s a pillar of strength to her family, honored for her godly character & she enjoys life (v25)
- #16- She studies answer properly & her speech is filled with kindness (v26)
- #17- She’s concerned, caring & compassionate toward her family (v27)
- #18- Her children & husband praise her (v28)
- #19- She desires to excel in life (v29)
- #20- The LORD is her first love (v30)
- #21- Her life is one of reward & praise in the community (v31)

Leaving the Contentious Woman Behind (Dr. Linda Karges-Bone)

1. It is your duty to love your husband and to respect him. Treating a man like a child by nagging and pushing will challenge his brain-wired need for independence. He will react all right.....by ignoring you.
2. Learn to praise you husband, in clear, natural, authentic words, when he engages in a behavior or practice that you desire. He will feel validated and respond, in time, by repeating that behavior. That includes.....spending time with the children, dealing with your family, or even in the bedroom.
3. This is a tough one. Once is enough. Ask your husband once. Remind your husband once. Mention it, whatever it is, one time. Then allow him the freedom to do it when and how he chooses. to. Resist the urge to **do it yourself**, unless life or limb are in danger. Then wait. Close your eyes if you have to, and wait.
4. Show respect for your husband by listening to him, even if he is not making sense. Do not blurt into conversations to correct him, nor interject when he is dealing with your children. It is rude. It is wrong. It is also the quickest way to destroy communication, period. Research shows that men's brains simply do not process language as quickly as women do. His silence may not be a punishment; it may be a process. Let the process work.
5. Practice looking for the good in your husband. Focus on three good qualities that he has. Tell him about those good qualities. Tell others about those qualities. Thank God for those qualities. Soon, the negative qualities will seem far less visible and you will wonder why they ever mattered so much. So many womenmarried 15-25 years have told me....."I can't believe we used to argue about X.....it really wasn't important." These women had learned to look for the good in their husbands.
6. Guard your sharp tongue. Accusations back men into a corner. The male animal will choose flight, rather than fight. He knows that he cannot win in a verbal engagement with you. You talk faster, better, and you have an amazing ability to recall every low down, sorry, nasty thing he ever did.....Also, guard your sharp tongue with other people. Stop and think before you speak. Adopt the wisdom of my friend Crickett, the wife of an elder in the church who, instead of saying something hard and mean will simply state: "I cannot respond in a way that would edify or build up that person right now."
7. Intimacy, in the form of touching, sexual expression, and gentle words is a form of healing. It is a message....."I accept you as you are." Scripture is clear that we are not to withhold ourselves in marriage. It is because God, who created intimacy and everything elseknew that we needed this form of love in order to stay close....literally and figuratively.
8. Every day, imagine yourself as the Proverbs 31 Woman. "Strength and dignity will be her clothing." Stand up straighter. Look people in the eye. Maintain your dignity. God has given you all the resources you need to maintain your dignity in all situations.
9. Remember to fear God, in a Holy and righteous way. Somehow, we have gotten to the place where we think that if our sin isn't egregious, sexual, violent, or involves breaking one of the 10 commandments, it isn't something that God notices. I don't think so. He notices. Fear Him when you decide to fight over a decision at home just to get your point. Fear Him when you belittle a co-worker, a younger woman under your direction, or a child. Fear Him when you engage in bitter gossip (my personal downfall).
10. Treat every encounter with your husband as if it might be your last. I am cognizant of the fact that time is fleeting. Every minute counts. Your reaction to your husband makes a difference.