**Marriage Enrichment Session Five**

**His Role vs. Her Role in Marriage (2)**

**The Role of the Wife**

Introduction: *How is your church doing?*

A. *Unconditional love in gentle leadership with a servant like attitude* in a husband is hard to resist! (Song 1:2-3)

B. What is the *way to a man’s heart?*

 1. Designer of Marriage has revealed it in His clear instructions

 a. primary emotional need for the wife: *LOVE*

 b. primary emotional need for man: *RESPECT*

● see Ephesians 5:22-24, 33 & 1 Peter 3:1, 7

c. adjective for both is the same: *unconditional*

**●** definition of *unconditional*

**I. What is Biblical meaning of *submission and respect*?**

 A. To submit: *ranked below - under (military)*

1. not an *inferior* position but *different position* (Luke 2:51)

 2. to submit means: *I embrace my position in the God-*

 *assigned rank under my husband!*

● Gothard: Submission is freedom to be creative

 under the divinely appointed authority

 ● in submission the wife puts all her talents, abilities,

resources, energy at husband’s and family disposal

 B. To reverence: *honor – high esteem – fear (like the holy and*

 *happy reverence for God)*

1. Submission is the ***joyful acceptance*** *of the position*

 while *respect is the* ***godly expression*** *of this position*

 2. Respect is *the man’s* ***primary emotional need***

a. the male ego is *far weaker* than most *women think, and most men know*

b. men interpret their world *through the respect grid*

c. disrespect and contempt break the relationship and

 closes the heart in a man

● 81 % of men feel *disrespected* in a conflict with

 their wife even though the issue the wife raised

 was legitimate

 C. Submission and Reverence doesn’t exclude *need for love*

 D. Hardest part of this *submit/respect* is ‘**unconditional’**

● 1 Peter 3:1 *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the Word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.*

**II. What does this ‘submission/reverence’ looks like?**

 **A. It is the *position of honor* (1 Peter 3:7)**

 1. 1 Cor. 11:7, 9 *but the woman is the glory of the man;*

*neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.*

 a. she is not to *glorify man*

 b. she is *in her role was woman* created as an ornament

2. In the position of wife, she has a major influence on a man

a. in this position you *break or make a man!*

 **B. It is the *beauty of* *respectful service***

 1. What this *beauty of respectful services* does NOT mean?

 a. Not: *Being Less than Mr. Man!* (Luke 2:51)

 b. Not: *Always agree with Mr. Perfect!*

 c. Not: *Keep your mouth shut before Mr. Leader!*

d. Not: *Do laundry, cook and go the bed with Mr. King!*

 2. What this does mean?

a. Show respect by *communication your admiration of*

*and desire for him:* see Song of Sol. 1:2-3; 2:3

 ● Do you assure him and do all to make him feel that

 *he (still) is the best husband?*

 ● Do you thank God for him while praying for him?

 b. Show respect by *honoring his leadership and decisions*

 ● often a wife may be a better decision maker yet

 she is not to make the decisions

 ● any ‘improvements to his leadership’ must be given

 wisely

 - choose the right time

 - share what you want to talk about

 - ask him when it is good time to talk

 - use ‘sandwich approach’

 - use ‘I-phrases’ instead of ‘you-phrases’

 - be problem focused instead of person focused

 - don’t speak to him as you do to the kids

 c. Show respect to *his insights and wisdom*

● ask him for his thoughts on matters relating to

 your life as woman, wife, mother

d. Show respect by *accepting his ways of desired*

 *companionship*

● we men love ‘silent companionship’

 e. Show respect for the fact that his need for sexual

intimacy is different than yours

● He needs more *physical than emotional* love

 ● He may never demand *yet he is entitled to your*

 *body* and vice versa (1 Cor. 7:3-5)

 ● Refusing sexual intimacy is felt as *contempt and*

 *disrespect*

● To be invited to a love-making feast is *a huge way*

 *to show him respect* (Song 5:1b)

 f. Show respect in *conflict resolution*

 ● Speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15)

 ● Unloving words by him to you are no less harmful

 than your disrespectful words to him

Conclusion: *Submission and Respect is a spiritual response to God!*

A. In this submission and respect God tests your love and faith in Him

 a. Eph. 5:22: *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands*

 ***as unto the Lord***

B. Disregarding God’s arrangement brings *evil which can never be*

 *corrected until God’s will is honored*

C. This submission/respect is always a *voluntary action*

 a. Headship doesn’t give a husband a *divine right to command*

 b. Husbands are *never allowed to force the wife into submission*

 *or respect*

 ● Where *commands come in, happiness/respect goes out*

 c. For the wife, his ‘known wish’ should be, except in cases of

 conscience, law to you

 d. As husband, we also should never wish or expect anything that

 may not be perfectly proper for the wife to render

● Barnes: *He should remember that she has a special claim of*

*justice on him. For him she has left her parent’s home, forsaken the friends of her youth, endowed him with whatever property she may have, sunk her name in his, confided her honor, her character, and her happiness, to his virtue; and the least that he can do for her is to love her, and strive to make her happy. This was what she asked when she consented to become his; and a husband's love is what she still asks to sustain and cheer her in the trials of life. If she has not this, whither shall she go for comfort?*

*Remember, Great deeds rarely occur: The happiness of life depends little on them, but mainly on the little acts of kindness in life. We need them everywhere; we need them always. And eminently in the marriage relation there is need of gentleness and love, returning each morning, beaming in the eye, and dwelling in the heart through the livelong day.*

H**ome-Construction Exercises**

1. The calling of wife and mother is the queen of callings for no one influences the way of a man more than his mother and his wife. Describe in a few sentences how you see yourself in this role as wife. Share this definition with your husband.

2. Below a few valuable suggestions gathered in the readings. Take a moment **to rate how each is important to your husband** (1 = not at all important – 2= important – 3 = very important). Ask your husband to do the same thing and compare the results. You might discover something about how differently we are wired!

a. Be a home-maker and provide at home a place of safety, encouragement, comfort and understanding.

b. Be trustworthy, dependable and organized.

c. Maintain a good attitude.

d. Discuss things openly, lovingly, honestly.

e. Be satisfied with position, possessions and daily tasks.

f. Be long suffering, forgiving, forbearing.

g. Show interest in his problems, concerns, victories and work

 accomplishments.

h. Be industrious, frugal, ambitious, creative.

i. Offer suggestions, advice, corrections only when needed.

j. Keep yourself beautiful, presentable (especially inner person)

k. Maintain a good spiritual life.

l. Build loyalty to him in the children.

m. Be grateful to him: express appreciation

n. Show confidence in his decisions: disdain, lack of trust,

 anxiety, strong opposition over his decisions may cause him to become indecisive, defensive, reactionary.

l. Confront him in private and after suitable preparation.

3. In what ways can you be your husband’s helper in each of the five areas? Afterwards share these things with him. Be specific, creative and purposeful in your thoughts.

 a. Spiritually

 b. Emotionally

 c. Socially

 d. Intellectually

 e. Sexually

4. Let’s assume your husband is about the make a wrong decision. What should be your plan of action? Share this plan and discuss ahead of time whether this will be the right plan.

5. Is unconditional respect also necessary after your husband has failed you, for example, you have discovered he has had an affair or was involved in pornography? Or is there a limit to unconditional respect?

6. Think of ways by which you can remind, correct or advise your husband without being bossy or nagging. Share them with each other.

7. Make a list of ways in which you could let your husband know he is important to you. Check with him by ‘trial and error’ whether you were right.