

SHE NEEDS LOVE & HE NEEDS RESPECT PART 2

“Men and woman are different and God made us that way. Men are not to try and be like women and women are not to try and be like men, however we need to understand why the opposite gender thinks and responds the way they do, and we need to really try to meet each other’s needs.

For many years we have been hearing about the need for unconditional love in a marriage and yet men have often struggled to describe what it is they need from their wives. The researchers confirm what the Bible teaches: that men need to feel respected, in life generally, and especially in the home.

Ephesians 5:33

³³ *So each husband should love his wife as much as he loves himself, and each wife should respect her husband.*

These two attitudes in a relationship won’t solve every problem but they will go a huge way to resolving the crazy cycle where a woman, out of a desperate need for her husband’s love, a desire to connect with him, will sometimes raise her voice or use sharp words to get his attention. She is just trying with good intentions to get right with him; then the man seeing her expression, hearing her tone, most commonly feels disrespected and doesn’t think she wants to connect with him. In fact he may think that she wants to control him and often a man will withdraw, not knowing what to say or do, which seems incredibly unloving to the woman who ...

Love and respect will break that crazy cycle and they are the two attitudes and ingredients that are most likely to cause harmony and unity in a marriage.

Where we have often heard that husbands should love their wives unconditionally, the other half of this verse has often been overlooked; that wives are to respect their men unconditionally.

Assume the best of each other, forgive each other before the sun goes down and be strong, be the one to break the crazy cycle out of your love for God; if you are a man, love your wife even if you are not getting respect from her. And if you are a woman, respect your husband even if you are not getting love from him.

But what does love and respect look like practically in male – female relationships. I want to share with you two acronyms.

COUPLE and CHAIRS

Men, how do you give your wives the love that they so keenly desire from you?

C- in couple stands for Closeness. Women are created to desire spiritual and emotional closeness with others. Being close to your wife costs you nothing but time and love. Your wives will feel close to you when you make eye contact, when you hold her hand, when you hug her or show affection without sexual intentions; they feel close when you make it a priority to spend time together, when you let her know you value her opinions and thoughts, when you do the unexpected, when you take time to talk after intimate times together. Women need to feel close to their men and there are lots of practical things you can do to serve your wife in this way.

O – in couple stands for Openness. Women want their key relationships to be always sorted and so they naturally want to get everything out on the table and talk about it. Men on the other hand often hold their cards close to their chests and talk only when they have got things worked out. Men, your wives need you to really make an effort to be open with them.

Tell her about your day and its difficulties. Ask her what she is feeling. Ask her for her opinions. Let your body language communicate to her that you want to talk to her. Take her for a walk and talk over the problems you may be having with the children. Give her your full attention, no grunting responses while you are trying to watch TV. Discuss with her your financial concerns, possible job changes, or ideas for your future.

U – in couple stands for Understanding

Don’t try to fix her or fix her problem, just go out of your way to listen. She will feel loved by you if she comes to think of you as her burden bearer, her man with big shoulders. When she comes to you for understanding – her action is really a big compliment, don’t shut her down or shut her out, take time to try to understand her and she will feel really loved.

While I have never said this to Juliette I have heard other men ask their wives the question; do you need a solution or my ear? That's a brilliant way of showing them love, through trying to be understanding.

You demonstrate love by understanding when you are an active listener, when you try to identify her feelings, when you never dismiss her feelings no matter how illogical they are, when you don't interrupt her when she is trying to tell you how she feels, when you apologize and admit you were wrong, when you cut her some slack during her monthly cycle, when you pray with her and for her.

P – in couple stands for Peace-making. She wants you to say "I'm sorry."

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 7:28 that those who marry "will have trouble!"

Men, when we have a argument with one of our friends or with a colleague at work, we tend to express ourselves, what we think and what we want, calmly or strongly and then we walk away and say no more. Why do we have to – it's been said already. Our wives are not like that, they need to know that the two of you are at peace. It's worth going head to head, talking it through even if it's hard until you get to that point where you can say to your wife, "we have agreed on this and now you and I are okay." Men, if you are in any way partly responsible for the trouble, make sure you say those hard to find words "I am sorry." For you to say, "I am sorry, I was wrong," might feel like you are losing a bit of self-respect but she will interpret it as an increase of love in your relationship.

A paraphrase of Proverbs 15:1 goes like this; "a gentle, loving answer turns away wrath, especially your wife's."

She will know you love her when you let her vent her frustrations and hurts without closing off to her.

When you admit you were wrong and say I am sorry will you forgive me.

When you understand her desire to negotiate and compromise for genuine peace and meet her halfway.

When you try to keep your relationship up-to-date, resolving the unresolved and never saying 'forget it.'

When you forgive her for her wrongs.

When you never nurse bitterness and reassure her of your love.

L – couple stands for Loyalty. She needs to know that you are committed.

When she asks you, "will you love me when I'm old and grey? Or if I am an invalid/ Will you still love me if I get Alzheimer's?"

Resist, resist, resist the temptation to make a joke. It will really hurt her if you do.

She is not built to appreciate that kind of humour. She is so constructed that she appreciates loyalty and commitment. Assuring her of that will make your marriage so much stronger and better.

She will be assured of your loyalty when you speak highly of her in front of others, when you help her make decisions, especially the ones about the children, when you don't look lustfully at other women, when you correct the children if they talk disrespectfully to her, when you keep your commitments and when you speak positively of her at all times.

E – in couple stands for Esteem. She wants you to value her.

Men, when your wife brings up issues in your marriage that she wants sorted out, she is not trying to control or chair your relationship, but she is saying to you that she wants your relationship with her to be the most important thing to you.

One very successful female CEO wrote this of her husband:

"At the end of the day, all that's important is that I know he loves me and values me. That's what I want more than anything else."

Men, our wives carry a child in their wombs for 9 months before they give birth, that's why they never forget a birthday. Many girls often dream of their wedding day from a very young age, that's why they never forget a wedding anniversary. Men, make use of those occasions to show that you really value your wives, that you have a high opinion of them.

I read a true story of a lady who received two gifts from her husband on her birthday; one was a Mercedes Benz and the other was a poem he had written especially for her. Which one do you think she treasured most? The poem of course.

Tell her that you are proud of the way she handles situations.

Speak highly of her in front of others.

Make her feel like the most important person, even if it means time with her and less time doing men things.

Men remember COUPLE.

Ladies, to show respect to the men in your life remember CHAIRS:

Ladies – How do you give you husband and the men in your life the respect they are really wanting?

C – in chairs stands for Conquest. Please appreciate his desire to work and achieve.

There is a natural born instinct in men, in your man, to go out and 'conquer' the challenges of this world and that will most often be expressed through his work. Originally when Adam, the first man was created, before Eve was created, God put Adam in the garden and told him to cultivate it and keep it.

Ladies, when two men meet each other, have you noticed what is usually the first question that they ask of each other? It's usually, 'what do you do?' for a job. Right or wrong, it's just the way it is. Men get much of their identity and self-worth from what they do for a job. That is why it is so incredibly difficult for a man to be unemployed. And I would suggest to any man in that terrible position to be busy doing voluntary work.

Ladies, appreciate how important your husband's job is to him. He needs to conquer, he needs to achieve. When you show interest in his job or thank him for working hard for the family. It is a powerful way of showing the respect he needs to hear from you.

When I was in my first year at Carey College training to be a pastor, having never done tertiary education before, I failed an Old Testament paper and both the lecturers and I doubted that I had the ability to achieve a degree. The life transforming moment for me was when Juliette said to me that she believed in me, she knew I could do it. I finished that degree with the best marks in my small year group. The same thing has happened many times. I have thought, "Can I build that, can I do this?" Juliette has said, "I believe in you Russell, you have got what it takes," and that respect, that confidence in my ability to conquer has been one of the most life transforming gifts I have ever been given.

Ladies, you show respect for your man when you tell him you value his efforts for you and the family, when you listen to his work stories, when you help him achieve his goals, when you allow him to dream, when you don't criticize his work efforts.

H – in Chair stands for Honour. Appreciate his desire to protect and to provide.

In Ephesians 5 when Paul wrote that husbands should be willing to give up their life for their wife as Christ did the church, that, ladies, is a no brainer for us men. When the Titanic started sinking most men without thinking would have loaded those life rafts with the woman and children first. Of course we will do whatever it takes to provide for and to protect our wives and our children. Even though that is a natural quality found in most men, it's still an admirable quality that you can honour your man for.

In this book there is a story about a trainee doctor who earned very little during his Doctorate years. One day he came home to find the house all dark, he tried light switch after light switch but no joy. Finally he came into the dining room where a beautiful candle lit dinner was waiting. Rather than berate her husband for not being a good provider which would have devastated him, apparently she just said; We didn't have enough money to pay the power bill this month, we will get that sorted some time but tonight let's eat dinner by candle light.

You show your husband respect when you verbalize your admiration of him for protecting you and being willing to die for you; when you never in word or body language put down his job or how much he earns; when you

respectfully discuss financial concerns with humble suggestions about what you and other family members can do to help.

A – in Chairs stands for Appreciate his desire to serve.

Men may not be as good with words as you ladies are but men will look for ways to practically help the family, fix this, build that, help with the other. It's not how you most want love; you would prefer more heart to heart conversations, but it is still the male way of showing love and it's important to appreciate your man for what he does for you all.

I remember about 4-5 years ago we had been through a hard time as a church and as I walked through the café Ronnie said to me. "God has given you broad shoulders, Russell." That's all she said, and it really hit me that my sister appreciated my serving attitude through what we had been through. I felt so good and still remember today that powerful expression of appreciation. Over the years several of our senior ladies have said this phrase to me, "You are a real pastor, Russell." Now us men would carry on and do what we do for our families and for our jobs irrespective of what others say, but the reality is, those words of appreciation have a tremendously energizing effect on men.

Ladies, Appreciate the good decisions he makes. Show grace to him if he makes a bad one.

Appreciate the things he does for you and the children.

Never criticize or correct him in front of others, especially the children.

I – in Chairs stands for Insight. Appreciate his desire to analyse and counsel.

Woman's intuition is a mysterious and real thing but men also have Insight. You need both in life. Insight is that ability to look at the big picture rationally and logically and to come up with wise solutions.

Ladies you show your man respect when you recognize his problem solving approach as his male brand of empathy.

You sometimes let him fix things and applaud his solutions.

You let him know that you believe that God made us male and female for a purpose and that we need each other.

You thank him for his stability and wise counsel.

R – in chairs stands for Relationship. Appreciate his Shoulder to Shoulder friendship.

Everyone is very familiar with the truth that woman love heart to heart, face to face deep conversations. Ladies, men enjoy shoulder to shoulder friendships; when you just hang out in the garage with him as he is fixing something; when you sit on the wharf with him as he is fishing; when you are just present with him as he does his stuff, he will feel really respected.

'one wife decided to go deer hunting with her husband, who uses the bow and arrow. She helped him set up the blind, as they both sat there for hours waiting for a deer to happen by. They saw nothing, they shot nothing, and they said nothing. Finally, they took down the blind and headed back to the car. To this point she had not said one word the entire time. As they were walking down the trail, her husband turned to her and said, "That was awesome!"

Ladies, men feel respected when you just sit with them, when you just hang out with them. Your husband will also be more open to talking heart to heart while you are busy doing things shoulder to shoulder than he ever will be face to face.

Finally

S – in Chairs stands for Sex. Men need sexual intimacy to feel respected.

Ladies, your need to be understood emotionally is equal to your husband's need for sexual intimacy. A woman needs to feel loved to want sex but a man needs to have sex in order to feel loved. And that is normal, the way God made men and women. When a wife rejects her husband's desire for sex, it can feel like the most rejecting, disrespectful slap in the face he could ever get.

Well, she says, I am not going to have sex until he meets my emotional needs. Well, he says, I don't feel close to her and I can't express my love for her unless we have sexual intimacy. And the crazy cycle starts again.

If that happens in your marriage occasionally it's time to grow up. In 1 Corinthians 7:5 Paul said to husbands and wives, *"don't deprive each other of sex except by mutual agreement for a time so you can devote yourselves to prayer, then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."*

Ladies, your man is much less likely to look at the other women, or be tempted by porn or an affair if you are meeting his needs.

A young lady at a love and respect conference, recounted her recent conversation with her mum to Sarah Eggerichs

"We're not coming over to visit today, mum."

"Why not?" enquired the mum.

"I suppose because we have not been sexually intimate for seven days." Said the young wife.

Mom did not hesitate; gently but firmly she let her daughter have it. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Why would you deprive him of something that takes such a short amount of time and makes him soooooo happy?"

Men, love your wives, remember COUPLE and what it stands for.

Woman, respect your husbands, remember CHAIRS and what it stands for.

1 Peter 3:1-2 suggests that you can win over an unbelieving spouse by treating them the way God has commanded you to treat them.

Men, if you give your wives the love they so need, and women, if you give your men the respect they so need; consider what you will be modelling for your children and what legacy you will be passing on to them.

But I can't until she ... and I can't until he ...

No, let's serve each other as unto Christ Jesus, let's seek His power, His resources to both love and respect unconditionally.

Pray Together:

Lord Jesus we need you. We cannot show love and respect perfectly.

But you do, and you can today if we allow you to work through us.

Help us assume the best of each other's motives and actions, forgiving each other daily and working to deal with issues in ways that communicate to each other what it is that our spouses need to hear.

Ultimately Lord, it's about our relationship to You. We want you to know that we love you by the way we obey your commands, even when it seems hard and unfair. None of us are victims. We are all free to choose our responses. We believe that when we obey You all things are possible.

May the responses that we choose to make in all our relationships bring honour to Your Holy Name. Amen