

EPHESIANS 5:21-33

I. The One Thing That Makes Relationships Work...Submit

What does God ask of us? Unselfishness

What is the motivation? Reverence for Christ!

Who is the object? One Another - every other believer

II. How Are We To Submit To “One Another” As Believers?

Love one another (John 13:34)

Be devoted to one another (Rom. 12:10)

Live in harmony with one another (Rom. 12:16)

Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another (Rom. 14:13)

Accept one another. (Rom. 15:7).

Serve one another in love. (Gal. 5:13)

Be patient, bearing with one another in love (Eph. 4:2)

Be kind and compassionate to one another (Eph. 4:32)

Bear with each other and forgive... one another (Col. 3:13)

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up (1 Th. 5:11)

But encourage one another daily (Heb. 3:13)

Live in harmony with one another (1 Pet. 3:8)

Greet one another with a kiss of love (1 Pet. 5:14)

III. The One Thing That Makes Marriages Work...Unselfish Love

Wives - Give to your husband the gift of unselfish respect

Husbands - Give to your wives the gift of unselfish sacrifice

IV. 4 Strikes Against This Marriage-Changing Truth

1. The way that this scripture has so often been misapplied

2. The culture that we live in

3. The way most marriages are now patterned

Dictatorship: One person controls everything

Partnership: Returning favor for favor

Fellowship: Unselfish Love

4. The fact that I am a selfish person!

We can try to build a successful marriage on our selfish nature.

OR ... we can ask God to change our nature!

V. How do I get my needs met in my marriage?

I must give myself to meeting their needs if I'm to get my needs met!

Your needs will always be better met by following Christ's plan and direction for our lives...regardless of what other people do.

VI. Wives: How To Develop The Attitude Of Respect

An example to empower your respect

The way the church loves Christ

“As to the Lord” - This is the #1 key to a great marriage

Barriers to respect:

“There's nothing to respect”

“But I disagree”

“Our marriage might not last”

“Then he'll never change”

Reasons to motivate your respect:

God commands it

My husband needs it

I need it

Actions to show your respect:

1. Prayerfully release my expectations and “rights” back to God.
2. Decide to totally accept him.
3. Check out my own faults first
4. Focus your thoughts on the positive
5. Tell him and show him.

Unhealthy “respect”:

Resignation - When I blindly follow

Flattery - Faking respect to get what I want

VII. Husbands: How To Develop The Attitude Of Sacrifice

Examples to empower your sacrifice:

The way that Christ loves the church

The way that I love myself

Reasons to motivate your sacrifice:

It helps my wife to grow in Christ!

It draws her towards me!

It makes me happier!

Barriers that hinder our sacrifice:

“My needs will go unmet.”

“My sacrifice will go unrecognized.”

Actions to show your sacrifice

1. Pray for an attitude of humility.
2. Start with the little things
 - The big sacrifice... Jesus died for the church
 - The daily sacrifice... Jesus cares for the church
 - The daily sacrifice is often harder to make than the big sacrifice!

3. Recognize my responsibility to be a spiritual leader

This answers the question... "Who gets things started?"

Unhealthy "sacrifice"

When I'm giving in order to get

When sacrificial love turns into martyrdom

VIII. Question... How Do You Change Your Spouse?!

What are some of the methods that we generally try?

You cannot make someone change!

You can invite someone to change!

The most powerful way you can invite your husband to change is by respecting him.

The most powerful way that you can invite you wife to change is by sacrificing for her.

Our #1 struggle with respect and sacrifice... they make us vulnerable.

When we allow Christ to work in our marriages:

It makes us happier!

We give encouragement to the body of Christ.

We give a witness to the world around us.

HOMEWORK

Wives: Make a list of things you respect about your husband... at least one for every year you've been married.

Husbands: Write down three small sacrifices you can make for your wife this week... and then carry them out.