

EPHESIANS 5:21-33

The one thing that makes marriage work... Unselfishness!

Wives - Give to your husband the gift of unselfish respect.

Husbands - Give to your wives the gift of unselfish sacrifice.

From the beginning - the marriage of Adam and Eve - God designed two attitudes into marriage

The attitude of wonder

The attitude of oneness

The unifying power in marriage in our unselfishness... the decision to sacrifice and the decision to respect.

Question... How do you change your spouse?!

You cannot make someone change!

You can invite someone to change!

The most powerful way you can invite your husband to change is respect.

The most powerful way that you can invite your wife to change is sacrifice.

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

How Does The Principle Of Sacrifice And Respect Work In 6 Important Areas Of Any Marriage?

I. Making Contact - Communication

Respect means being careful with my words.

Sacrifice means being open and available in my communication

4 things to remember about communication:

1. All relationships are fueled by communication.
2. The foundation of communication is trust.
3. Communication is always "from the heart."
4. Communication that makes a difference is positively honest.

II. Making Decisions - Problem Solving/Decision Making

The model for making decisions in a marriage is the model of Christ and His church.

Jesus does not dictate all of our decisions for us...

Jesus does not delegate all of the decisions to us...

Jesus does lead us in the process of making decisions with Him.

What does the principle of unselfishness do to our process of decision making?

1. It causes a husband to consider his wife's needs before pressing to achieve their wants.

2. It causes a wife to look for the value in her husband's opinion before looking for the flaw.

III. Making Love - Intimacy And Romance

Marriage is a decision to specialize on one person - for life!

Refuse outside intimacy (Prov. 5:15)

Rejoice in marital intimacy (Prov. 5:19, 1 Cor. 7)

Satisfaction: One Person

Captivation: Mystery

Respect ... my husband's God-given need

Sacrifice ... don't demand and never demean ... delight

IV. Making The Bed - Roles, Who Does What

Ask yourself three questions...

1. Is my home a place of indulgence, or service?
2. Is my home a place of law, or of love?
3. Is my home a place of fighting for my rights, or of giving to others' needs?

We serve our way into significance.

V. Making Mistakes

3 things you have to live with:

My spouse has "character flaws."

My response: Accept Them

My spouse makes mistakes... "Major mistakes!"

My response: Compassion and Understanding

My spouse sins.

My response: Forgiveness

VI. Making Peace - Handling Our Differences

Our differences can become our greatest enemy... or our greatest strength.

Unselfish love helps us to begin to say...

"We can be together what we could never be alone."

"We're both right."

"We need each other to see the complete picture."

My marriage is more than a place for my needs to be met.

My marriage can become a picture of the love of Christ.