

IMPROVE YOUR MARRIAGE



Marriage was God's idea! It is so important that we need to shift how we think about marriage. We need to strive to have a Godly marriage where we honor and love one another. How can we do that in a culture that says it's better to be alone, or you can't trust anyone but yourself.

BASIC NEEDS

There are 3 basic needs men have, if these are met then they do everything they can to ensure your needs are met as well. If these 3 basic needs of men are met they will step up to protect, lead and provide for your family.

1. Appreciation and validate them for the hard work they do
 - a. Men need to know you appreciate what they do, both to bring finances into the home and to help with the household.
 - b. Men need validation. They need to know that they have been heard and that you care about their point of view.
2. Initiate Physical Intimacy
 - a. Men love intimacy, especially when we initiate it, this is a key piece to them feeling loved. It is important not to punish him by taking intimacy away.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 7:5a Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer.
3. Serving
 - a. Men recognize us serving them as us seeing them and knowing them. We can assess what they need and provide it.
 - b. This serving can be cooking a meal, cleaning the house or doing something for them that they need done. These things demonstrate to them that we care about them.

How can you fulfill these needs for your husband? In the past, when you have given him these needs what was the response?

WHAT IS A WIFE'S ROLE IN MARRIAGE

God created a woman to be the keeper of her home. She sets the tone and where her mind and heart goes, her home and marriage tend to follow.

A wife's role is of utmost importance but we often overlook it. A woman sets the tone in her home. You create the atmosphere in which your whole family abides. Is your home a place of peace, love, and hope; or strife, conflict and dishonor? In every given situation our response can change the atmosphere in our homes. You may think why do I need to take the high ground here, but it is because God created you to be the keeper of the home.

What do you want your atmosphere in your home to be?

If it is not what you want how can you change to create the kind of loving, honoring home you desire? You get to choose!

Proverbs 14:1

***The wise woman builds her house,
but with her own hands the foolish
one tears hers down.***

Proverbs 21:9

***Better to live on a corner of the roof
than share a house with a quarrelsome
wife.***

Keep God at the center of your marriage, Seek his counsel when dealing with difficult situations and conflict. Ask him for his perspective. If you keep God at the center your marriage will be as strong as a three stranded cord.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up! Also if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not easily broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

COMMUNICATION

Communication is a key component in a healthy marriage. There are different types of communication.

Men and women communicate differently. Men are problem solvers, when they speak to each other they are trying to figure out a solution to the other guy's issue. Women are more of information sharers, we don't want people to fix it, we just want people to listen and understand. Recognizing the difference is important when we look at communication in marriage.

Men get tired when we talk to them the way we would talk to other women, because they want to fix it and we only want them to listen. This causes a breakdown in communication because the man feels like his input is being tossed aside and women feel like they are not being heard.

One thought is to take problems to your husband and then hear his solutions to see if one will work in the situation. He will then feel like he is actually fulfilling his part in the communication.

Also, keep in mind that this means when he brings things to you, he is probably looking for a solution. So when we listen and don't give a solution, he may see it as us not understanding where he is coming from. They like you to share your thoughts and insights but do not tell them what to do. That will have the opposite impact.

How to set yourself up for success when communicating.

- Schedule a distraction-free time to communicate what's happening, concerns, worries or needs. (no phones, children or other distractions)
- Pay attention to what each other is saying. Don't be hearing to respond but listen to understand.
- Men can't read our minds so we need to share what we are thinking.
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How can you improve your communication?

CONFLICT STRATEGIES

- no accusations or criticism
- Share honestly from your heart how something made you feel and how they could do things differently in the future
- compliment before you correct or address issues
- Use "I Feel" Statements
- Prioritize relationship over being right
- HALT- do not discuss issues if you are hungry, angry, lonely or tired
- Take time to talk to God about a given situation, and ask him for his perspective
- The Towel Strategy - make space for rational discussion

There are going to be times when we communicate, that we end up in conflict. There are some strategies that can help with conflict to resolve them quicker.

When beginning a conversation you know can go in the direction of conflict you may want to start off with praise. Start off by appreciating them for the good things before launching into what needs to be dealt with. You can even let them know you are not angry with them, but need to resolve the issue at hand.

Another thing you can do is refrain from using language like always and never, when you start using this language it is because your emotions have escalated to a place where your communication is no longer rational. There is a strategy to help with this exact situation:

THE TOWEL STRATEGY

You can use a towel, another object or a safe word, just make sure that both you and your spouse know that this object when brought into a conflict means that you are shifting the way you are speaking to each other.

Whoever is holding the object, gets to start. If you use a safe word whoever said it can start. Using only "I" statements (like "I feel..."), the person who starts explains their point. If they have more than one point, tackle only one at a time in order to ensure nothing gets missed. There should be no accusations, no blaming, just a communication of your feelings.

Once the first person is done the other person mirrors back what they heard and asks if they heard correctly. If not, the other person can clarify what they were saying, if they said you heard correctly, then ask if there is anything else they would like to add that they missed.

This continues until they have expressed their point clearly and you have understood it. Then the other person gets to respond in the same manner with the first person mirroring back.

This method will bring emotions down and allow you to return to rational conversation. Allowing both parties to be heard and understood.

Think of your last conflict, how would this strategy have helped that situation?

DOES IT MATTER IF YOU ARE RIGHT?

We all want to be right, but does it matter if you are? It takes humility to let it go when you believe you are right. Our first instinct is to stand our ground until the other person backs down, but where does it get us? If they never concede, we are both then battling forever.

There are times when it doesn't matter who is right or wrong and it is not worth the damage an all out battle can do. It is better to concede even if you are right than to possibly cause lasting damage to your marriage.

It is more important to preserve your relationship with honor than demand to have your own way or to prove that your perspective is right. I have often found that when I have conceded and let my husband know that I will support whatever decision he makes there are usually two outcomes. He sometimes takes my feedback, sometimes chooses his own and other times comes to me and says he wishes he took my counsel because my thoughts would have had a better outcome.

Either way I have learned that peace in our home is more important than demanding he do things the way I think is best. I trust God with the outcome and if it is an important issue I believe God will speak to my husband. God has given our husbands the responsibility of leading our families and we need to let them do that even if the outcome is not good. Loving and honoring through it all creates a safe environment and he will feel open to taking your counsel more in the future.

Make sure that if he makes a decision that you don't agree with and it had negative consequences that you don't communicate that you told him so or it's all his fault.

How can letting go of needing to be right change your conflicts?

Do you honor your husband and the role that he plays in the family?

Do you desire him to step up and lead more? Step back and let him take the lead, be there to support and offer suggestions but let him be the decision maker. No matter the outcome be there to support and show your love and appreciation. If you do this you will find that he will want to know what you think and will follow your suggestions more often.

LOVE LANGUAGES

There are five love languages: physical touch, gifts, acts of service, quality time, and words of affirmation. Each of us operates out of our top love languages and we recognize love from others out of those same languages.

So if your top love languages are touch and quality time, then if you are not receiving physical touch or quality time, you feel unloved. You also would be quick to give hugs and spend quality time with those you love. However, if those you love do not have the same love languages as you, your efforts to show love to them may not be understood as that.

Physical Touch: hugs, kisses, hand holding, snuggling

Gifts: cards, presents

Quality Time: coffee dates, meal times, game nights, walks, conversations

Words of Affirmation: praise, compliments, appreciation, honour

Acts of Service: doing things for the person like cooking, cleaning, helping them with things they need

Do you know what your love languages are? If not, you can take a quiz by going to <https://5lovelanguages.com/>.

How do you think knowing about love languages will help you improve your marriage?

RESPECT VS. HONOUR

There is an opinion that men need respect and women need love. The issue with this thought is that respect needs to be earned and can be lost. It is better to say that men need honour and women need love. Honour requires humility as it is a gift given regardless of whether the other person deserves it or not.

So what does it mean to honour someone? It means that you treat them well, you speak well of them, you show them love and compassion, whether or not they deserve it. This is a calling higher than mere respect.

If we honour our husbands in this way, how would this impact your marriage going forward?

THINGS NOT TO DO

- expect your husband to be a mind reader
- say never-mind, I'll do it.
- criticize or complain
- refuse to take responsibility for your part of the issues
- need to be right in everything, never compromise or see the other point of view

It is much easier to fix a broken marriage than to start over again. Your issues will follow you into your future relationships if you don't deal with them.

Activation

HONOURING YOUR HUSBAND

When we have had a difficult time in our marriage, we sometimes lose sight of why we love that person to begin with, yet there are many things we noticed about them in the beginning that we have loved. Circumstances have changed, but deep down, those things are still there.

We will take the next five minutes to make up a list of things we love about our husbands. We can either write them on cards or notes for our husbands or say something we appreciate about him each day for the next few weeks.

This is a great way to create an environment that fosters honour. If you are having a hard time thinking of things, go back to the beginning of your marriage and remember why you wanted to marry him to begin with. There are times when things fade into the background when we face tough circumstances, it is amazing how someone speaking them out can bring them back to the forefront again. This is calling out another person's strengths.

3 Keys to Remember

- 01 MEN HAVE 3 BASIC NEEDS THAT WHEN THEY ARE FULFILLED THEY WILL DO EVERYTHING THEY CAN TO MAKE SURE YOUR NEEDS ARE MET.
- 02 THE ROLE OF A WIFE IS TO MANAGE HER HOUSEHOLD, SET THE TONE AND CREATE THE ATMOSPHERE SHE DESIRES.
- 03 HONOR ONE ANOTHER, PLACE EACH OTHER AS MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOURSELF AND YOU WILL BOTH FEEL VALUED AND LOVED. HONOR IS NOT EARNED, IT IS OFFERED EVEN WHEN THE OTHER PERSON DOES NOT DESERVE IT.



Contact Information

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