

## Week 6: Our Spouse's Deepest Need

Ephesians 5, can be a pretty tough book to read without properly understanding what Christ did for us. Free of charge, without ever expecting ANYTHING in return Christ modeled sacrificial living. The teaching in Ephesians is pure gold for our marriages.

### What does the Bible say about our spouse's greatest need?

#### Men, love your wives the way Christ loved the church

**“Husbands, go all out in your love for your wives, exactly as Christ did for the church—a love marked by giving, not getting. Christ’s love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything he does and says is designed to bring the best out of her, dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness. And that is how husbands ought to love their wives. They’re really doing themselves a favor—since they’re already “one” in marriage... “However, each man among you [without exception] is to love his wife as his very own self [with behavior worthy of respect and esteem, always seeking the best for her with an attitude of lovingkindness].”**

*Ephesians 5:25-28 MSG, 33a*

#### Wives, respect and honor your husband

**“...and the wife [must see to it] that she respects *and* delights in her husband [that she notices him and prefers him and treats him with loving concern, treasuring him, honoring him, and holding him dear].”**

*Ephesians 5:33 AMP*

*A wife {sacrificially} loved by her husband and a husband honored and respected by his wife, gives the world the clearest picture of the gospel of Christ.*

*A sacred exchange takes place between a husband and a wife when we offer something without expecting anything in return.*

***A loved wife is a respected wife; a respected husband is a loved husband.***

*Disclaimer: If the very thought of asking your spouse the following question scares you in the slightest... It's a good indicator to ask sooner rather than later.*

### **Make a change moment:**

***Humility:** The quality of being humble; modest opinion or estimate of one's own importance, rank, etc.*

With total humility look him/her in the eyes and ask the following question. Be prepared to really listen to the answer.

***Husbands ask: Do you feel loved and cherished by me? Or maybe... Have my words or actions made you feel unloved?***

***Wives ask: Do you feel honored and respected by me? Or maybe... Do my words and actions make you feel disrespected?***

When I've asked couples for feedback on what does or doesn't make them feel loved/cherished, respected/honored; it's been clear that couples struggle with answering this question or saying the words, "I feel loved when you..." or "I feel respected when you..." But they can identify what makes them feel unloved/disrespected.

So, let's start there! If we can easily identify the things we don't like, it paints a clearer picture of what we do.

### **Start the conversation by saying...**

"I feel disrespected when you..."

"I feel unloved when you..."

Rethinking what is disrespectful to our husbands:

Some feedback I've heard from men...

- Don't assume you know what I want. Ask me.
- Ask me for my opinion and give me time to process the answer
- Include me
- Back off when it comes to our kids. I love them as much as you do and don't need you to critique all my parenting techniques, especially in front of our kids or other people.
- Talk to me privately if you don't agree with me. Don't belittle or discount my thoughts in front of others.
- Support me. I need you to remind me that I'm capable and doing a good job.
- Remind me I am more than enough. Financially, spiritually, and emotionally I carry a huge load.
- Always talk highly of me: in private, in the company of others, and in front of our kids.
- Tell me the things that I do that make you happy. I really love to see you smile. "Happy wife; happy life." One of my greatest joys is seeing you overflow with joy. Give me opportunities to see you laugh and smile.
- Don't discount my opinion
- Do things I like to do
- Our kids are amazing, I know... But put me above them.
- Encourage me to have alone (one-on-one) time with our kids. You have great ideas and know them so well. Give me ideas for dates they may like or (privately) help me plan awesome things that will make them feel so loved. Remember we are an awesome team.
- If I ask for something to be done... Honor me by making it a priority.
- Listen to my advice.
- I have a mom... I don't need another one. Treat me as your partner, not your child.
- I don't love it when you include me in your kid count.
- Notice and point out all the things I DO RIGHT.
- Don't push or nag me to love God. Show me with your actions and pray for me. 1 Peter 3:1-2
- Shoot me a look (often) that reminds me that you approve of me, love who I am, and are proud of what I've done.
- I don't always need you to wear makeup or dress up for me, but I LOVE it when you do. You're a stunning.
- Enjoy being ALONE with me. No one else, but me. Make this a priority.
- I trust you with our family... so please, trust me.
- Think about me and plan-ahead for what I need/want/desire— In the bedroom, out of the bedroom, on a day-to-day basis.
- Don't compare me to other men.

Of course, this isn't an exhaustive list—But it's a really good place to start.

Rethinking what makes a wife feel loved:

Some feedback I've received from women I know...

- I already have kids, please clean up after yourself so I don't have to clean up after you, too.
- I know I said a couple of years ago that I don't like flowers, but this year, I do. It's similar with a lot of things. Thank you for checking in periodically to see if things have changed in the 'likes' and 'wants' department.
- Tell me I'm beautiful. If you are thinking it... Say it out loud.
- Keep your eyes on me. Laughing about how hot someone (other than me) is or catching you staring her way, isn't an insecurity thing... I need you to only want me.
- Tell me the ways I'm excelling as a mom. Often, I feel like I'm failing. Remind me that I'm not.
- Just a note. It's so much more than a note. Leave it for me on the table, by my toothbrush, next to the coffee pot.
- Plan-ahead for me. Date nights, babysitters, details...
- That to-do list... I know, it's a lot. But, can you check off one of the items?
- Pray with me.
- Help me with bedtime, baths, and tucking in our babies.
- Kiss me
- Remain faithful. With your eyes, heart, and body.
- Take mental notes. If I say I really love something, remember and act upon it.
- Even if we are around the guys... pull me close.
- Love me with your words. Talk about me in a loving and positive way to others when I'm around and even when I'm not around.
- Lead our family: Cast vision, follow through on your word, and commit even when I'm scared about the road ahead.
- include me on decisions
- Hold my hand
- Be intimate with me even if it doesn't end with sex.

This isn't an exhaustive list. What makes your wife feel loved? You need to ask her.