

What I Wish I Knew...

What Your Spouse Needs Most • Message 2

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A. Introduction

(Ephesians 5:22-23)

We're doing a series, *What I Wish I Knew... Single. Dating. Married.* God woke me up and told me, *I want you to talk about marriage...* and I said *I don't want to talk about marriage...* and He told me *I want you to talk about this for 4 weeks...* and I said, *You are going to have to give me crystal clear direction and because I don't have one* and He did... I can't recall a time God has ever woken me up and put a sermon series on my heart like this... So I want to talk through some relationship principles I have found in every great relationship or marriage God revealed to me... and every marriage that has failed, they have missed one of these things I'm going to talk to you about over the next 4 weeks.

Now this applies to all relationships, so if you're single or dating... it's so important you don't tune this out, it's important that you get these principles either for yourself or for someone else that you can share with...

And if you're married, you want to pay attention, because, let's be honest, everyone needs a little help. Important... because I saw this meme...

Here's a little quiz to see who knows the opposite sex best...

First, women—what's the top thing men want from women - ??? – Respect. (Sex? Women, why do you think so little of us? Most of the men here want a Bible study or prayer.)

Now men—what's the top thing women want from men? Someone, when I said this said: I'm sorry... bonus points if you added you are right! What's the top thing they want... the top thing is love....

I know this won't fit everyone perfectly, but overall, what I want you to see is that men and women are different.

In fact, what's interesting is that there is no Bible verse that commands a woman to love a man; there is only one reference, but there is a command to respect. Husbands are commanded to love their wives... there is a reason, because God has wired us in such a way.

Men, what they want the most is respect... and you may not like that...

But think about it, have you noticed how men... wait for it... tend to embellish, tend to exaggerate? If both men and women went fishing and caught the same size fish, a woman would say...

It was a good size fish. It was about this big...

A man would say, *it was a monster, one of the biggest fish in the whole lake. It was about this big... why?*

Men want to be revered, they want to be respected. They want a sense of dominion.

Women, what they want most is love.

God loves singleness, and He loves marriage. Jesus' first recorded miracle was at a wedding.

Listen, I have done a few weddings, and there is one verse that several people have asked me not to read, they will say to me: *hey, we don't want that verse about women submitting...*

And usually, I just play around and say, *really that's my life verse... I love it... 😊*

But what's sad is people completely misunderstand this verse...

For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of His body, the church.

Ephesians 5:22-23 (NLT)

A couple of quick things on this verse:

- 1.) Some of this might be unpopular to the world. You have to decide what will guide and direct your life—the world or the Word. Brookwood is a church that will always love and welcome anyone and everyone because our motto is *no perfect people allowed...* but we will be a church that builds everything not on the world's ways but the ways of the Word.
- 2.) As I speak about this verse, there is a clear call for the man to be the head... (and women, don't tune out, I'm going to have some hard things to say to your husband or boyfriends later)

When God created the world and He said it wasn't good for man to be alone... was that an indictment on men or women... men... let's just be honest, we need a whole lot of help...

The verse does call men to lovingly lead their wives and wives to follow his leadership. Men and women are equal, but God has specific roles for each of us.

Let me be very clear this is not a verse showing male dominance. This verse only applies to married couples.... God has not commanded in His Word that men have exclusive authority in the areas of politics, business, education and so on. Many of the women in our church are amazing leaders, bosses, entrepreneurs, and you should do that... This verse doesn't apply to anything outside of marriage.

But let me say this to the guy who likes that a little too much, the guy who sort of holds this over his wife, *I'm the head, you need to submit, I'm in charge...* the guy who likes the power and angrily approaches this subject...

We are to be in charge, but we suck at it...

The second, if you take the verse... and you start saying to your wife: *submit... submit... submit... the Bible says to submit...* I'm just saying watch out... because the verse says you are to die to yourself... so, she can shout right back at you...*DIE, DIE, DIE...*

You know what this means at the core... it's about respect... the Bible is showing us what's core to a healthy relationship for men its respect. They were created by God that way...

B. What Your Spouse Needs Most

1. How to respect your husband.

(Ephesians 5:22-23; 1 Peter 3:1-2, 6)

Now, the key to understanding Ephesians 5 as a whole is about understanding that it's about life in the Spirit. Paul wrote this letter to the church in Ephesus and chapter 5 is about life in the Spirit...

For instance, without this context, you would just read chapter 5 as a whole lot of do's and don't... for instance,

So, when you read about husbands and wives, this is showing what a Spirit-filled marriage will look like... That's why Christian marriage is different than all other marriage...

It's a willingness to submit and respect your husband... if you are single, always, always date someone you can look up to, that you can respect... if you are married it's too late... ☺
and if your attitude is *I don't want to respect or submit*, then you shouldn't get married

But how do you respect your husband if they don't deserve it?

I don't mean this to be harsh, but I just want to say it: Some men aren't men; they are boys. They don't step up; they aren't doing what they should be. How in the world do you respect them...

Respect must start with commitment to the Lord.

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:22 (NIV)

This has to be the number one motive... because, let's be honest... men are wired to do stupid things... and if you only follow him when he's worthy to follow, it won't be often... so the motive has to be discipleship to Jesus. Honoring Christ.

Submit is a Greek military term meaning: *to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader*. In non-military use, it was *a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden*.

Listen, I have worked for terrible bosses, and I mean terrible, and I still did it faithfully... How? Because I knew I was working for the Lord... If you are a woman, and your husband hasn't stepped up, how in the world could you submit to him? Because your first commitment isn't to a spouse, it's to God, and this is what God asks you to do.

Think about it... how many bosses have people under them who are far more talented and competent, or generals who have more gifted people beneath them... it's saying you respect the position, the authority they have been given...

Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

1 Peter 3:1-2 (NIV)

This may not apply to all marriages. Some of you women need to speak up more. I actually think you're too silent and your husband needs to be directed.

But some women... the keyword is *some*... need to talk less... need to nag less...for those who talk down or nag, it doesn't work... you've been nagging about that light in the bathroom for 6 months and he still hasn't changed it, has he? This verse is showing that we need a different tactic.

So that is respect - and remember, this is God talking, not me.

Think about it, in the same way he should not get tired of loving you, you should not get tired of respecting him ...

Listen to what it does go on to say in 1 Peter 3:6:

like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. ...

1 Peter 3:6 (NIV)

What did she call him? Lord... let's practice—turn to your husband and call him Lord...☺

For some of you, it's easy to respect the person and the position. Others of you go: *this is difficult they aren't doing anything right now, they sit on the couch, or they do this, and they do that... how in the world can this pastor come in here and tell me to respect them... they need to do something to gain my respect...*

Listen, you cannot disrespect a man into respectability. Give him a crown, and he will become a king. Our job is to speak into him what God sees in him.. and he becomes that.

On a very important side note, let me stop by and say this to young women or single women looking to marry or remarry...

Don't marry for money, don't marry for romance, don't marry for job or status, marry someone you respect... This is so important...

I heard an older lady once say the number one reason she's single and didn't marry... is because she never found a man who she could respect enough to submit to her ☺... don't settle.

When is it okay not to submit?

- 1.) *When a husband asks or expects you to sin.*
- 2.) *When the husband is physically abusive and endangers the safety of the wife or children.*
- 3.) *When the husband breaks the marriage bond by adultery.*
- 4.) *When a husband isn't in his right mind... clinically, not just your opinion. We need a doctor's note, okay? ☺*

2. How to love your wife.

Then notice what it says...

For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up His life for her...

Ephesians 5:25 (NLT)

Why would it say this... because one of the top thing's women want is love.

The word for love is the word *agape*—it means unconditional love. It means God's love.

Someone said something in passing that hit me...

There is a reason women lash out. Women should respect their husband if they have earned it or not, but men need to understand what they really are looking for is love from the other person.

To love your wife means you put her needs above your own.

Notice what it said, Christ gave Himself up for her... that isn't just metaphorical He died. Some of the men have to decide to die for your wife. To be kicked, to be hurt, to cut, and that doesn't make you less of a man... you are a man for that.

Listen, your wife isn't your child, she isn't your object, she isn't your pet... she's your equal.

Your wife needs to be honored and pampered... They need to be put on a pedestal... before you go, *no, no, no*... men, everyone one of you did this when you were dating... you didn't just flip a ring at her and say *you want to change your name?* And this is important, when you do something, don't expect anything in return.

Don't say something nice at 10 pm when you might get something... sex... Say something nice at 10 am when you won't get anything.

When your wife is making up the bed, go grab the other end and say *let me help*, and when she picks herself up off the floor say *I'm glad to help!*

Your wife isn't there to serve you, you are there to love and serve her.

And listen, if you've got kids, this is important. I love being with my kids, but the husband-and-wife relationship takes precedence over the kids. You are preparing your kids to leave... and quick... but you've gotta live with your wife. Men, invest in that relationship.

Show me in the Bible where it says men as the head are just to provide... it means you love, care, and you serve. Give her break, or night out away from the kids... serve her.

Listen, it's important to know men and women are stereotypically, not always wired the same...

Like if a married couple has been gone from each other for a week... they're not always in alignment on what's most important...

Men, for women, emotional intimacy precedes sexual intimacy... you aren't getting her body because you haven't gotten to her heart...

C.S. Lewis wrote a book called *The Four Loves*.

What's interesting is that every time the word *love* is used in the Bible, it represents four Greek words for love...

Affection (*Storge*)- this is like a nostalgic love, it's the familiarity...

***Philia*, Friendship** gives a sense of place and belonging. We are known and deeply connected.

***Eros*, Romantic love, it's passion, it's intensity, it's where we get the word erotic. It's a sexual love.**

***Agape* – God's love... that's why God says *agape* your enemy. You can love your enemy and not necessarily like them, that's how it's God's love!** Agape love does not come naturally to us. Because of our fallen nature, we are incapable of producing such a love. If we are to love as God loves, that love—that *agape*—can only come from its Source.

Culture's Way

Eros (Romantic)

Storge (Nostalgic)

Philia (Brotherly)

Agape (Unconditional)

God's Way

Agape (Unconditional)

Philia (Brotherly)

Storge (Nostalgic)

Eros (Romantic)

... you are to *agape* your wife regardless of what you receive because many of the problems we have with our wives that don't *philia* us or they don't *eros* love...

This is what it looks like to love like Christ did in marriage...

You love this way... you don't just provide... it isn't just sexual... it means

that you love with God's love, you have an unconditional love where you care and serve. It's an act of the will.

Then you develop a friendship, you connect.

Then you have an affection, you share moments, memories, hobbies, and experiences...

Then it's a sexual or romantic love...

And too many marriages don't last because they reverse the order...

Men, love your wife unconditionally and watch what happens...

Let me say it this way... the people who are most satisfied with their sex lives... are the couples in which the man loves, serves, and cares for his wife like Christ loved, served and cared for the church...

Final challenge to marriage and everyone...

3. See the best in others.

(Judges 6:12)

Denny Niequest's story...

When I was a high school pastor, there was a leader named Denny Niequest. He was amazing... he had a group of junior and senior boys who were some of the most sarcastic, arrogant, tough-to-lead kids I had ever been around. Listen, I will confess most of the time I didn't give them that much time because they just were always causing problems. Not Denny though. He was always sitting with them, and he truly loved them... what struck me most was Denny was always happy, and one day, I asked him I said *what's your secret, man... you have the most difficult group of guys in our whole group, and every Sunday you seemed fired up and excited to be here.* I said *are you on drugs, what's your secret...* you know what he told me, I've never forgotten this... he said *I find one thing I love about each kid, and sometimes I can only find one great thing, and I start to see them through that lens... and I call out what's good in them*

In relationships, in marriages, in jobs, in people, in small groups... we have to see the best in people...

We have to see them as they will be not as they are...

Think about this... God says to Gideon in the Old Testament...

The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said, "Mighty hero, the LORD is with you!"

Judges 6:12 (NLT)

Because He saw him not as he was but as he will be. Keep believing for others and keep asking God to help you see the best in others... He is faithful.

Think about it, in the same way he should not get tired of loving you, you should not get tired of respecting him ...

Re|Engage and Marriage Night:

Re|Engage begins Sunday, September 8, registration is open now.

Marriage Night is Friday, September 13. Free to attend, fun, childcare is provided.