Marriage Enrichment



Lesson Topic: Roles & Responsibilities

Week Two Homework

The husband’s essential **role** in marriage is to *lead* his wife whereas the wife’s essential **role** in marriage is to be her husband’s *helper*. The primary **responsibilities** that a husband has in his role as leader is to *love***,** *understand* and *honor* his wife. The primary **responsibilities** that a wife has in her role as helper are *respect* and *submission* to her husband. As a husband lovingly leads and honors his wife with understanding, the wife’s response is to respect and submit to her husband. As a wife respectfully submits to her husband, his response is to love, understand and honor her. As each spouse carries out their responsibilities in fulfilling their God-given role, they are encouraged in their response.

The homework for this week will help you better understand the responsibilities that God has given you as husbands to love our wife and as wives to respect your husband.

**Scripture Memory Verse**

“However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” (Ephesians 5:33 ESV):

**In the Word Together:**

1. Read Ephesians 5:22-33 with your spouse. What do these verses tell you about how you are to view your roles & responsibilities in your marriage?

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**Talk About It Together:**

Discuss the following questions with your spouse and write down your shared responses. Your responses to questions 2 & 5 (for husbands) and 4 & 6 (for wives) will be shared during the men’s & women’s breakout time. Remember to be a safe place for your spouse to express his/her thoughts – especially for these emotional topics.

**A husband is to Love his wife as himself:**

You learned that one of the husband’s responsibilities is to **LOVE** his wife. This is also a response to his wife’s respect for him. A husband’s love should be like Christ’s love for the church and should be:

* **Willful**: Intentionally choosing to unconditionally love her on a daily basis regardless of his wife’s performance or actions with his words, actions and attitudes. Praying with her and for her. Learning her love languages and knowing how she feels loved.
* **Discerning & Understanding:** Investing time to talk with her to know and understand her better. Listening well and asking her questions. Please see the “Additional Homework for Husbands” towards the end of this homework for sample questions to ask your wife to understand her better:
* **Unselfish/Sacrificial**: Putting the needs of his wife before his own. For example: show interest in your wife’s interests, helping with chores without being asked, giving flowers for no special occasion, showing appreciation for her in various ways, by being physically affectionate without further expectations, asking her what she would like to do on your next free night together and doing it. Being transparent with her about his own emotions and what is going on inside him.
* **Purifying:** Helping her to grow spiritually. Protecting her financially, emotionally and physically.

**Husbands ask your wife the following two questions:**

1. What are some of the practical things that I already do as a husband that help you feel loved by me – especially in regards to my words, actions and attitudes?

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1. Is there something new that I can do or something that I can do better as a husband to help you feel even more loved by me? [Wives: Please be gentle and gracious with how you answer this vulnerable question from your husband.]

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**A wife is to Respect her husband:**

You learned that one of the wife’s responsibilities to **Respect** her husband. This is also a response to her husband’s love for her. Some practical ways for a wife to foster that respect for him are to:

* A wife should study her husband to focus on his character traits which are worthy of respect rather than focusing on those with which he currently struggles. Respect his admirable qualities.
* Strive to have the same compassion for him in regards to his weaknesses as Christ has for him.
* When a wife esteems her husband, great results follow.

**Wives ask your husbands the following two questions:**

1. What are some of the practical things that I already do that help you feel respected by me?

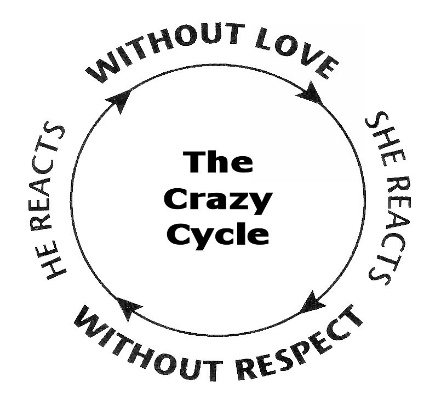
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1. Is there anything that I can do to help you feel even more respected by me? [Husbands: Please be gentle and gracious with how you answer this vulnerable question from your wife.]

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**The Love and Respect Cycles (“The “Crazy Cycle” and the “Energizing Cycle”)**

The book ***“Love and Respect”*** by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, was referenced during the teaching. The book explains that women want to feel loved and often husbands fail to deliver. Likewise, men long to be respected but their wives fail to deliver. This results in what he calls the “**Crazy Cycle**”: without love from a husband, the wife reacts without respect; without respect from his wife, a husband reacts without love. Around and around the “Crazy Cycle” goes…

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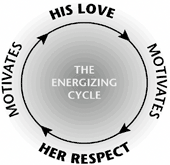
1. **Husbands ask your wife:** Is there anything that I do that feels unloving to you? Are there certain areas of our marriage or repetitive topics for conflict where it is harder for you to feel loved by me? [Wives: Please be gentle and gracious with how you answer this vulnerable question from your husband.]

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1. **Wives ask your husband:** Is there anything that I do that feels disrespectful to you? Are there certain areas of our marriage or repetitive topics for conflict where it is harder for you to feel respected by me? [Husbands: Please be gentle and gracious with how you answer this vulnerable question from your wife.]

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In the book, Dr. Eggerichs also talks about the “**Energizing Cycle**”. When a husband acts lovingly, even during conflicts or when his wife doesn’t seem to “deserve it”, she reacts less negatively. She softens because love meets her need. It motivates her to treat her husband with more respect. Likewise, when a wife maintains respect, even during conflicts or when her husband doesn’t seem to “deserve it”, he reacts more positively. Respect meets his needs. He lessens his anger and is motivated to treat his wife with more tenderness and love:



1. What are some ways you have found as a couple to stop the “Crazy Cycle” and once it starts, and perhaps even turn it around into an “Energizing Cycle”?

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1. How does both asking for and receiving forgiveness fuel this “Energizing Cycle”?

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**Apply What We Learned:**

* Plan some time together to have a more focused opportunity to talk about how you see the relationship between love and respect playing out in your marriage. Preferable choose a time when there is not an open conflict in process so that the subject can be discussed calmly.
* Husbands: Invest time to better know and understand your wife. One of the ways you were taught to do this is by asking her questions on an ongoing basis such as:

1. What do I do that makes you feel loved?
2. How would you rate our marriage on a scale of 1-10 and what could I do to make our marriage a “10”?
3. How is your spiritual walk going and what is God teaching you now? What are you reading and what are you learning?
4. What is burdening you now and how can I be praying for you?

**Additional Resources to Read:**

* “The Five Love Languages” by Gary Chapman
* “Love and Respect” by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs
* “Practical Ways a Husband Can Show Love to His Wife” [included with this homework]
* “Practical Ways a Wife Can Show Respect to Her Husband” [included with this homework]

**MEN’S Breakout Time - Answer these questions and come prepared to discuss them:**

1. How have you followed through with the goals you set last week to:
   1. Improve the oneness in your marriage by being a better leader in your marriage
   2. Help your wife feel honored and cherished

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1. What has the Lord taught you in your personal times with him this past week? How regularly were you in the word?

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1. Based on your wife’s answer to Homework Question #2 above, what do you need to do to help your wife feel even more loved by you?

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1. Based on your wife’s answer to Homework Question #5 above, is there anything that you do that feels unloving to your wife? Are there any certain areas of your marriage or repetitive topics for conflict where it is harder for your wife to feel loved by you?

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**WOMEN’S Breakout Time – Answer these questions and come prepared to discuss them:**

1. How have you followed through with the goals you set last week to:
   * Improve the oneness in your marriage by encouraging your husband in his role as the leader of our family
   * Trust the Lord more by submitting to your husband’s leadership

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1. Based on your husband’s answer to Homework Question #4 above, is there anything that you can do to help your husband feel even more respected by you?

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1. Based on your husband’s answer to Homework Question #6 above, is there anything that you do that feels disrespectful to your husband? Are there certain areas of your marriage or repetitive topics for conflict where it is difficult for your husband to feel respected by you?

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**Practical Ways a Husband can Show LOVE to His Wife:**

**Closeness**

* + Hold her hand
  + Be affectionate without sexual intentions
  + Do things together and be impulsive
  + Go out of your way to do something for her
  + Take time to ask her opinion and get her insights

**Openness**

* + Be willing to open up emotionally
  + Tell her about your day and difficulties
  + Ask her what she’s feeling and ask for her opinions
  + Pray with her and for her
  + Give her your full attention when she is talking

**Understanding**

* + Really listen (can you repeat it back?)
  + Don’t dismiss her feelings or interrupt her
  + Cut her some slack during her monthly cycle.
  + If you see something that needs to be done, do it ASAP and without making it a big deal

**Peacemaking**

* + Be willing to admit it when you are wrong and apologize
  + Forgive her for any wrongs she confesses
  + Be willing to negotiate and compromise
  + Never nurse bitterness
  + Let her vent her frustrations and hurts and don’t get angry and close her off

**Loyalty**

* + Speak highly of her in front of others
  + Get involved in things that are important to her
  + Help her make decisions
  + Don’t correct her in front of others or your children
  + Call her and let her know your plans

**Esteem**

* + Tell her when you are proud of her
  + Encourage and praise her with genuine enthusiasm
  + Be physically affectionate with her in public
  + Chose outings with her over the “guy” things

**Practical Ways a Wife can Show RESPECT to Her Husband:**

**Leader/Provider**

* + Tell him you value his work efforts
  + Express your faith in his abilities and admire him for these qualities
  + Allow him to dream as he did when you were courting
  + Praise his commitment to you and the family
  + Empathize with his concerns (work & home)
  + Never put down his job or salary

**Supportive**

* + You support his self-image as a leader and see yourself as his helpmate
  + You praise his good decisions
  + You are gracious if he makes a bad decision
  + You disagree only in private, quietly and reasonably
  + You tell him you are thankful for his strength and enjoy being able to lean on him at times

**Insight**

* + Counsel him respectfully when you differ
  + Quietly and respectfully voice concerns about finances or other issues
  + Thank him for his insights without acting insulted
  + Sometimes let him “fix” things and applaud him
  + Thank him for his godly counsel
  + Recognize your own vulnerabilities and value his protection

**Relationship**

* + Tell him you like him and show it
  + Be involved in his recreational activities
  + Encourage him to spend time alone to re-energize
  + Respect his male friendships
  + Share an activity rather than a face to face conversation

**Sexuality**

* + Respond to him sexually more often
  + Initiate sex periodically
  + Let him acknowledge his sexual temptations
  + Understand his needs are different than yours
  + Don’t try to make him open up to you verbally by depriving him of sex