Love and Respect

Learning to Communicate For a Better Marriage (ch 1-3)

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- Chapter 1 – The Simple Secret to a Better Marriage
  - “You can be right, but wrong at the top of your voice” – Even if we’re saying something that’s true, the way we say it is just as important as what we say.
  - Loving times and spats of ugliness – There is no marriage. We all struggle to have a good marriage.
  - The “secret” hidden in Ephesians 5:33 -
    
    you must also love his wife as he loves the wife must respect her husband.” (NIV)
  - How God revealed the Love and Respect connection feels disrespected, it is especially hard to love his wife feels unloved, it is especially hard to respect her husband.” Pg. 16
  - Why Love and Respect are primary needs
    “In this verse, respect for the husband is just as important as love for the wife.” Pg. 18

- Chapter 2 – To Communicate, Decipher the Code
  - Craziness—just keep flipping the light switch – “Craziness happens when we keep doing the same things over and over with the same ill effect.” Pg. 29
  - Why do couples communicate in code? Men and women speak in different “codes” that are easily misinterpreted by the other person.
  - “When the issue isn’t the issue” – “Just because you may feel unloved or disrespected does not mean you spouse is sending that message.” Pg. 32
  - We’re as different as pink and blue – God created male and female, both in his image, but they are very different parts of his image. Men and women can look at the same situation or hear the same words and interpret them very differently.
  - Men hear criticism as contempt; women feel silence as hostility

- Chapter 3 – Why She Won’t Respect, Why He Won’t Love
  - Unconditional respect—an oxymoron? – “Wives and husbands believe respect ought to be earned.” Pg. 43
  - But both love and respect should be unconditional for the marriage to be healthy.
  - Greeting cards are all about love
  - Respect is a man’s deepest value
  - Husbands are to value wives as equals – the New Testament makes it clear that men and women are of equal value, “fellow heirs” (Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-2, 7; Galatians 3:28).
He Said, She Said!

We’re Speaking The Same Language But Saying Different Things (ch. 4-7)

- Chapter 4 – What men fear most can keep the crazy cycle spinning

  “Wives must grasp that their husbands aren’t half as big and strong and impervious to being hurt as they might seem.” (pg. 57)

  - Conflict makes most men feel disrespected – in midst of conflict (often when it’s the most difficult) men need to feel respected in order to have productive conflict.
  - When dating/courting men feel a great deal of respect and are driven to show love in return. His Even after marriage the need for respect drives his actions both before and after the wedding day, though the amount of respect he feels may drop.
  - Men have an “honor code” with other men that dictates how they speak and act. Because of this, when his wife challenges him, he feels the most honorable thing to do is to drop it and avoid the conflict.

- “The yearning and need of husbands is that their wives give them honor and respect.” (pg. 58)

  - Criticizing vs. Stonewalling – different approaches to the same problem
  - Women see good conflict as getting everything out on the table, but men don’t see things the same way.
  - Women see the offering of criticism as a compliment, since, in their mind, it is a loving attempt to help their husband be a better person.

- “It is better to live in a desert land than with a contentious and vexing woman.” Proverbs 21:19

- “A wife of noble character is her husband’s crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.” Proverbs 12:4

  - Men are not always conscious of their need for respect and so have a hard time articulating it. When the feelings of disrespect arise he does not know how to express them in an appropriate way.

- Chapter 5 – She fears being a doormat; he’s tired of “just not getting it”

  - Who should make the first move? YOU! Don’t wait for the other person.
  - There is the fear that if you increase your love/respect that the other person won’t reciprocate, but what you’re doing now isn’t working.
  - Love/respect has nothing to do with superior/inferior – it’s the joining of two equals. The need of men for respect does not reduce the need of women to feel loved.
  - It is risky to show love/respect when you aren’t receiving it in return. Trust God to know what is best for your marriage, he created it!
  - Men are ok with not knowing something (no really, it’s true), but being labeled as “stupid” or a “Neanderthal” is very disrespectful and hurtful to men.
  - Before we speak we need to think about whether or not the words will seem unloving/disrespectful. We also need to understand that our spouse really cares about us, so we should make the assumption that they do not intend to be unloving/disrespectful.
The most important thing to remember in conflict is to avoid being disrespectful/unloving.

Chapter 6 – She worries about being a hypocrite; he complains, “I get no respect!”

- Isn’t it hypocritical to show respect even when you don’t feel respectful? No, just like love, you can decide to show respect whether or not you feel like it (and then you will usually begin to feel like it).

- “When the alarm goes off in the morning, we get up even when we don’t feel like getting up. Because we do what we don’t feel like doing, does that make us hypocrites?” (pg. 91)

- It takes a great deal of faith and effort to show respect/love every day.

- Men are usually scared to say, “I feel disrespected”. It feels self-centered, and they’re scared about the possible response.

- “Honey, that felt disrespectful. Did I just now come across as unloving?” (pg. 92)

- “Be angry, but do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger.” Ephesians 4:26 – That means that it’s okay to be angry! Feeling anger isn’t a bad thing, what is wrong is allowing anger to lead to sin and/or holding a grudge instead of dealing with the problem. Just like pain lets us know something is physically wrong, anger lets us know that something is emotionally wrong.

Chapter 7 – She thinks she can’t forgive him; he says, “Nobody can love that woman!”

- Though it may not be fair to ask a wife to forgive an unloving husband, the issue is not fairness, but “touching his spirit”.

- “It is easier to forgive when you let go of the belief that your spouse intended evil.” (pg. 102)

- Just like anything difficult, you will probably fail many times as you attempt to practice love and respect. Keep practicing and you will be successful soon!

- We have developed habits in our marriages and they may lead us to be unloving/disrespectful. Give yourself time to change these habits – it took time to form them.

- Your children are watching your marriage; the way you treat each other will influence the image they have of the way marriage ought to be.
The Energizing Cycle:

COUPLE – how to spell love to your wife (ch. 8-14)

The opposite of the Crazy Cycle is the Energizing Cycle. With it you will build on the accomplishments of adding love and respect to your marriage. Remember, our goal is not to just avoid problems, but to have great marriages!

“The Energizing Cycle is proactive. It is positive. And it is preventative. Energizing Cycle and the Crazy Cycles will not spin.” (pg. 117)

- **COUPLE**—How to spell love to your wife – ch. 8
  - The acronym COUPLE helps men to remember what it takes to energize their wives.

“Unless a pilot learns to pay attention to his instruments, he will feel as if he is being whirled about, quickly get disoriented, and crash.”

- Trust the “instruments” of COUPLE even if they don’t seem to be working – it can take time to energize your wife.

- **Closeness**—She Wants You to Be Close – ch. 9
  - Closeness is more than just physical, it is a spiritual and emotional connection.
  - She wants to talk as soon as you both get home and he wants to unwind. Both can compromise – to achieve closeness. Give him a few minutes to himself (if necessary) and give her the time that you would be watching the news to tell her about your day.
  - Learn her “Love Languages” ([www.fivelovelanguages.com](http://www.fivelovelanguages.com)) to communicate closeness
    - Words of Affirmation
    - Quality Time
    - Receiving Gifts
    - Acts of Service
    - Physical Touch

- **Openness**—She Wants You to Open Up to Her – ch. 10
  - Wives often ask questions to get their husbands to open up to them because they equate openness with a deep sense of love.
  - She needs to frequently hear about what you are thinking, feeling, and dreaming.
  - She needs to feel like she can share herself with you without the fear of being judged or criticized.
  - Praying together is a beautiful form of openness to each other and to God.

- **Understanding**—Don’t Try to “Fix” Her; Just Listen – ch. 11

“Closeness and Openness are very similar, and one plays off the other. And understanding plays off of closeness and openness.” (pg. 147)

- Just listen! Don’t always offer a fix or solution. Sometimes she just wants to know you care and listening is the best way to show that you care.
- Paraphrasing back to her what you heard her say is a good way to show that you understand.

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1 Take the 30-second assessment here: [http://www.fivelovelanguages.com/30sec.html#love](http://www.fivelovelanguages.com/30sec.html#love) to discover your love languages.
Closeness, Openness, and Understanding all take time. Set aside time every day for connecting – as little as 15 minutes can dramatically improve your marriage.

- Try eating at the dinner table, or not watching TV for a while, or spending a few minutes after the kids are in bed.
- Make this a part of your daily rhythm and your marriage will thank you!

**Peacemaking—She Wants You to Say, “I’m Sorry” — ch. 12**

- Conflict isn’t bad! Good marriages will have lots of conflict, and often bad marriages will have very little conflict. The difference is that in good marriages they work out the conflict and use it as a way to connect more deeply.
- Are you having the same argument over and over? Perhaps you are not truly making peace with each other. It is important to find the root cause of the conflict (hint: it’s probably not the dishes).
- When you find the real reason you’re in conflict it is vital to admit your own fault in causing the conflict. Though it takes two to tango, you can only change your actions and you can only apologize for your actions. Do what you can, and let your spouse do their part – don’t try to do the other person’s job.

**Loyalty—She Needs to Know You’re Committed – ch. 13**

- She needs constant assurance that you’re a one woman man.
- Your vow was, “until death” – that includes now too.
- Praise her in front of others. Ask her opinion on important decisions. Don’t look lustfully at other women. Let her know your plans. Keep your commitments to her.

**Esteem—She Wants You to Honor and Cherish Her – ch. 14**

"Your wife wants to know that you have her on your mind and heart first and foremost."

- Do your best to remember what she likes (it’s ok to ask her, just not right before you are supposed to know).
- Communicate, verbally and non-verbally, that she is the most important person in your life.
- Show your love in public, with words and actions (give her a big smooch and tell her how proud you are of her).
  - Note: Wives, help him by being gracious in accepting compliments. If you tell him he’s wrong, then he’ll stop doing it. All you have to say is: “Thank You.”
The Energizing Cycle:

CHAIRS – how to spell respect to your husband (chs. 15 – 21)

"Wives do not need a lot of coaching on being loving. It is something God built into them, and they do it naturally. However, they do need help with respect." (pg. 183)

Just like COUPLE is the key to energizing women, CHAIRS is the key to energizing men. Showing men the respect they crave is the surest way to motivate them to serve and love. Try this experiment: tell him that you respect him, and give him reasons why.

- **Conquest – Appreciate His Desire to Work and Achieve (ch. 16)**
  - This is not a chauvinistic type of conquest where men conquer women!
  - Conquest signifies men’s desire to do well in their work. They want to go out and conquer the world.
  - Adam was created and given the task of working the Garden of Eden. Eve was created because Adam could not do it alone.
    - Men need a job, a purpose, but they also need women to help them achieve that purpose.
  - Men often identify themselves by their work and find their self worth in their job. Disparaging comments about a man’s job make him feel belittled as a person.
  - A man wants his woman to believe in him and what he does.
  - Conquest is different from being a “workaholic”. But it is impossible to cure “workaholism” by attacking the work. Try a respectful approach instead.

- **Hierarchy – Appreciate His Desire to Protect and Provide (ch. 17)**
  - Again, biblical hierarchy is not sexist. It reflects what scripture says in Ephesians 5:23-24:
    - "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything."
  - Biblical hierarchy or headship is a position of sacrifice and service. Husbands want to provide for and protect their families.
  - Remember Ephesians 5:21 sets all of this in the contexts of mutual submission. Even though the husband is “head of the wife” that does not release him from the responsibility to submit to her.

  "The problem many women have today—including Christian wives—is that they want to be treated like a princess, but deep down they resist treating their husbands like the king." (pg. 208-9)

- **Authority – Appreciate His Desire to Serve and to Lead (ch. 18)**
  - Authority gives him the ability to carry out the responsibilities that God has placed on him to serve, and if necessary, die for the family.
  - “All authority” has been given to Jesus (Matthew 28:18) and he uses his authority to lovingly guided and serve. Men are to do the same thing.
  - It is impossible for him to be the head that God has called him to be without authority.
  - In the context of Love and Respect nearly every conflict can be resolved to the agreement of everyone involved.
When there is a rare occasion where compromise is impossible – then his authority ought to be respected.

- Very often, given the authority and responsibility to lead and serve the family, a man will make the choice that is the biggest sacrifice for him in order to spare his family.

**Insight – Appreciate His Desire to Analyze and Counsel (ch. 19)**

- Women have intuition that helps them and should be heeded by men, but men have insight which women should respect. Together they make a powerful combination.

“Husbands and wives need each other.” (pg. 231)

- Sometimes your husband can give you valuable advice to help with problems – you can let him try to “fix” you once in a while. Remember, he’s built to find and fix problems. Maybe after you have had time to vent your feelings you could ask for his advice.
- Remember, God made male and female for a reason – we are both a part of the image of God and only together do we complete the picture.

**Relationship – Appreciate His Desire for Shoulder-to-Shoulder Friendship (ch. 20)**

“... men communicate by sharing experiences. Women share experiences by talking about them to each other, examining and infusing the experiences with their impressions and emotions. Men are different. They share their experiences by sharing an activity.”

- Sitting next to each other and watching TV or taking part in a mutual activity can build the relationship without any words being spoken.
- Men connect with one another through shoulder-to-shoulder activities that require little or no talking. Through this time the friendship deepens to where they can open up to one another on a very deep level.
  - Wives can use this method to connect with their husbands and that will encourage them to open up to their wives.

**Sexuality – Appreciate His Desire for Sexual Intimacy (ch. 21)**

“... just as the devil will do everything he can to bring two people together sexually before marriage, he does everything he can to keep them away from each other after marriage.” (pg. 250)

- Responding to your husband sexually shows that you respect his need for sexual release. Then he will be motivated to fulfill your need for emotional release.

“Wives, what if your husband didn’t talk to you for three days... three weeks... or three months?” (pg. 252)
The Rewarded Cycle

“Perhaps the major problem that keeps so many couples somewhere between the Crazy Cycle and the Energizing Cycle is the fear that, even though they try to practice the Love and Respect Connection, it won’t work.” (pg. 267)

- The Real Reason to Love and Respect (ch. 23)
  - What’s the point in showing love/respect if it won’t be reciprocated?
  - Don’t give up—trust God to work.
    - If you don’t see changes right away, don’t stop showing love/respect. It takes time for people to change.

“Don’t give up . . . Don’t interpret delay as defeat . . . Most often, love or respect is working on your spouse more than you realize . . . Have confidence that God will work.” (pg. 270)

- Showing unconditional love/respect is being obedient to God. Even if your spouse doesn’t respond, God still wants you to be obedient to him.

“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does.” Ephesians 6:7-8

- What matters to God, matters!

- The Truth Can Make You Free, Indeed (ch. 24)
  - It is pointless to try to assign a percentage of responsibility for problems in a marriage. You are 100% responsible for your response to the situation.
    - Taking responsibility for how you respond is freeing, because no one else can make you do anything.
    - Free people realize that no other person can heal them; your health and well being come from God and you.

“According to Jesus, you are free if you want to be. Your spouse can affect you, but your spouse does not control you.” (pg. 287)

- One of the rewards is a legacy. Your family can see the example of love and respect and learn to emulate it.
- One possible reward is to influence your spouse God’s way. God doesn’t want us to coerce or force our spouse, but to show them love/respect.

- Pink and Blue Can Make God’s Purple (conclusion)
  - Men and women are both parts of the image of God.
  - Marriage brings men and women together to make them one – this completes the image of God.
  - When we mature together through love and respect we become a beautiful reflection of God’s image!