

## **BE A LIFELONG STUDENT OF YOUR WIFE AND MINISTER TO HER NEEDS**

Men, how are you treating your bride? The most important aspect of a man's life, except his relationship to Jesus, is the way he treats his wife. In fact no man's life is completely right if things are not right at home. Moreover for a husband to treat his wife right, he must be a lifelong student of his wife in order to understand her needs and how he can meet those needs. To do the above, a husband must die to self and become Christ-like. In doing so, he may discover that he himself is his wife's chief problem.

A great man of God and friend of mine, Rev. Ray Gilder, Bivocational Ministries Specialist, revealed to me that he asked himself this question for many years, "What is my wife's problem?" One day he discovered that he was the problem. Then God burned a special word in his heart over a period of several months: "Likewise, husbands, live together according to knowledge, giving honor to the wife as to the weaker vessel, the female, as truly being co-heirs together of the grace of life, not cutting off your prayers" – 1 Peter 3:7 – NKJV.

"Similarly, you husbands should try to understand the wives you live with, honoring them as physically weaker yet equally heirs with you of the grace of life. If you don't do this, you will find it impossible to pray together properly" 1 Peter 3:7 – Philips.

### **I. TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE WIVES YOU LIVE WITH**

Do you know your wife? Have you ever heard her say "you do not understand me?" Refuse to hide behind the false statement "Nobody can understand a woman." We are commanded by God "understand the wife you live with". This means **WE ARE TO BE LIFELONG STUDENTS OF OUR WIVES**

### **What is it that we need to know?**

#### **(1) You need to know Her weaknesses.**

- (a) Does she have a tendency to over commit herself?
- (b) Does she have a problem saying "no"?
- (c) Does she have a tendency to procrastinate?
- (d) Does she get busy and let time slip up on her?
- You need to protect her from these.

#### **(2) You need to Know Her Strengths**

- (a) What does she do well?

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- (b) What energizes her?
- (c) What gives her a sense of accomplishment?
  - Encourage her to operate in these areas.

**(3) You need to know Her Fears**

- (a) Is she afraid of snakes, spiders, storms, rats, high speed ?
- (b) Never tease or make fun of her fears.
- (c) What makes her feel insecure?
  - Seek to protect her from and relieve her of her fears.

**(4) You need to know Her Basic Needs**

- (a) **She needs spiritual leadership.** She needs to believe that God is leading you to lead the family.
- (b) **She needs affection**—Become emotionally sensitive to your wife. She needs a lot of hugs, kisses and “I love yous”, not always connected to sex.
- (c) **She needs communication.** She needs to talk, she needs details. Women speak 25,000 words a day, men speak 12,500 a day. Make sure you save some for her.
- (d) **She needs undivided attention.** She needs you to look at her, not the TV or newspaper or a book. She needs you to intelligently respond.
- (e) **She needs financial support.** She needs to know that you will take care of her and the children.
- (f) **She needs family commitment.** She needs to know you are faithful to her and committed to the well-being of the family.
- (g) **She needs romance and sexual expression.** In the Old Testament sexual relations was described as “he knew his wife.” Men are interested in their sexual needs. Wives need to know they are really loved.

**(5) You need to know Her Moods**

- a. Her chemistry is different from yours. She is subject to mood swings.
- b. Some days even she does not know why she is in a bad mood.
- c. She does not need rejection, correction or a lecture. She needs to be held and loved unconditionally.
- d. At times I have asked my wife, “Honey, what’s wrong?” and have preached a whole sermon on this question.

**(6) You need to know what is Important to Her.**

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- a. This means talk a lot.
- b. Encourage her to talk about what she really wants.

**(7) You need to know Her Ability to Visualize**

- a. She can see how things will look in advance. Like decorating a home. Men cannot even see it after it is done.
- b. She visualizes a car wreck. If she says “your driving scares me, slowdown.”

**(8) You need to know that She has Built in Radar**

- a. She is usually a good judge of character.
- b. Listen to her when she warns you about other people. Especially women.

**(9) You need to know why God made Her Different from You.**

- a. He gave her to you to complete you.
- b. Her strengths and unique traits are to be used to balance your life.
- c. Actually, you are to blend and balance each other.

**(10) You need to know Her Love Language**

- a. Read Gary Chapman’s book—The Five Love Languages.
- b. Decide what your wife’s love language is.
- c. Speak to her in her love language.

**(11) You need to know Her Past.**

- a. What kind of family did she have as a child?
- b. Did she experience any abuse as a child?
- c. What traumatic experiences impacted her life?
- d. Especially know her relationship with her father.

**II. GIVE HONOR TO HER**

**How do you honor her?**

**A. Honor her by placing her above other people and things.**

- 1. **Place her above the church**—not God, but the church. You are married to her not the church. For the layman, this means placing

her above your work. But do not use her or your children as an excuse not to pray, study, or attend important meetings.

2. **Place her above the children**—If you do not, when they are gone you will be living with a stranger.
  3. **Place her above your favorite past time**: be it sports on TV, golf, or other hobbies.
  4. **Place her above your parents—especially your mother**. The Bible tells us to leave before we cleave (Genesis 2:24).
- B. **Honor her by showing her she is special**. We are to cherish our wives. Genesis 3:16 tells us she is built with a strong desire for your acceptance and appreciation.
- C. **Honor her by servicing her**. Bring her breakfast in bed; give her a foot massage, open doors for her, take her weekly to the beauty parlor.
- D. **Honor her by surprising her with gifts, trips and outings that she was not expecting**. This lets her know you have been thinking about her.
- E. **Honor her by spending more on her than she expects**. She is worth the investment.
- F. **Honor her by shielding her from unnecessary harshness**. Protect her from crude language, vulgarity, blasphemy. Treat her like a lady and insist others do the same.
- G. **Honor her by having eyes for her only**. She notices when your eyes follow that shapely young blonde. Burn Job 31:1 in your heart.
- H. **Honor her by valuing her opinion**. Give her credit for her ideas.
- I. **Honor her by bragging on her**. Proverbs 31:28 tells us that a godly woman is to be praised by her husband.
- J. **Honor her by spending time with her**. This proves that you enjoy her presence and highly value her.
- K. **Honor her by making her your best friend**. Look forward to sharing your life with her.
- L. **Honor her as God's precious gift to you**. (Proverbs 18:22).

When you decide to honor your wife, don't tell her you are going to do it, just do it. Let your actions speak for themselves. She has heard too many empty promises that never came true.

A husband can give honor to his wife and still disagree with her. As the spiritual leader in the home, he must sometimes make decisions that are unpopular, but he still can act with courtesy and respect.

### III. **BECOME HER PROTECTOR**

- A. Understand what "weaker vessel" means.
1. It does not mean weaker mentally, spiritually or emotionally.
  2. The word "vessel" refers to an instrument in the hand of God.
  3. She is just as important to God's work as you are.
  4. Weaker refers to her physical strength.

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- B. God made wives to need protection from dangers, abuse and overwhelming pressure.
- C. God designed husbands and fathers to find fulfillment in providing protection for wives and children.
- D. This is where the term chivalry comes into the picture. This is one of the characteristics of a knight. Webster describes it as “special courtesy and consideration to women.”
- E. We should protect our wives from dangerous situations, heavy-duty physical work, physical and verbal abuse and more pressure than they can handle.
- F. The husband should treat his wife like an expensive, beautiful, fragile vase, in which is a precious treasure.

#### **IV. DEVELOP A PARTNERSHIP**

- A. You are heirs together in the grace of life (1 Peter 3:7).
- B. One thing this teaches is that men and women are equal spiritually.
- C. The grace of life is the grace given by God to live this life. It is given to you as a team or partnership.
- D. Your greatest effectiveness is as a partner with your wife.
- E. This should lead you to discover ways to work together.

#### **V. PUT POWER IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE**

- A. A key to spiritual power is harmony with your wife (1 Peter 3:7b).
- B. A husband’s spiritual health depends to a large degree in the way he treats his wife.
- C. Discover the power of praying together. There is a tendency to try to act spiritual when conflict arises between you and your wife. We throw ourselves into our work, we pray a lot more and we spend extra time reading the Bible. The Lord’s answer is probably like what He told a man who brought a gift to the altar and had problems with a brother. He would say, “Get up and go get things settled with your wife.”

### **CONCLUSION**

Some of you may say, this study has been awfully one sided. My first response would be that this is the typical reaction to any call to dying to self.

Secondly, I am convinced that the man is called to take the lead role in the relationship.

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Thirdly, don't use the excuse "I will do my part when she does her part."

Lastly, becoming the husband this verse teaches frees your wife to respond to you properly.

*\*The above was adapted from Ray Glider's article, "Giving Honor to Your Wife."*