

Introduction

Marriage is one of the most significant relationships a person will ever have in life. It is more than just a legal union or even a romantic partnership; it is a sacred covenant that depicts the close relationship between Christ and the Church. This union of love, respect, and sacrifice is necessary for a strong and eternal marriage as its foundation.

The divinely appointed roles on which every marriage is based are unique responsibilities each partner has. These roles, which God has carefully ordained for us to fulfill in order to keep the covenant and properly manage our relationship with God, are central to the subject. The Bible defines how husbands and wives work together through life. Each gender plays a different role that is crucial for the unity and health of their marriage. It's critical to understand how these roles don't revolve around positions of power and control. Both have authority in Christ. Equal authority with different responsibilities. This concept of roles as opportunities for collaboration and service to one another leads to balance and harmony in the relationship.

As we walk through these roles during the crunch of real life, it can get tough. From over 30 years of experience mentoring couples and over 40 years of marriage, author, and mentor Lori Yarbrough and her husband Glen draw from their experience and knowledge to develop healthy and thriving marriages on biblical principles. The divine roles that God assigns may seem outdated or controversial in an era that is increasingly challenging traditional views of marriage and the family. But the Bible offers timeless wisdom to guide us through that which

is cultural. These roles are about balance, mutual respect, and a correct understanding of God's design for love and partnership when they are properly understood.

Prayer is useful and practical for this journey. It assists in our relationship with God and helps us to fulfill these roles better. Through prayer, husbands can seek guidance and wisdom in their servant leadership, a role exemplified by commitment and selflessness to their wife's well-being, which mirrors Christ's selfless love and dedication to the Church, his bride. Also, wives should pray for insight and strength to honor and respect their husbands, and in doing so, they can add their own unique gifts to make the relationship flourish.

These roles are not rigid stereotypes or a sense of worth based on actions but a dance of mutual submission and selfless love. Both partners are called to serve and build each other up because they are united in one body under God's covenant, and each has the same authority in Christ. God's blueprint manifests a beautiful interplay of mutual submission and selfless love. Each partner is called to lift and support the other, the two coming together under God's covenant.

This book will examine biblical roles in marriage from a holistic perspective, discussing their meaning, how they are worked out in everyday life, and how they reflect God's covenant with us. The roles of communication, love, respect, selflessness, and prayer, as they are walked out daily, will be discussed.

As we move through the chapters, I pray you will see the beauty in God's design for marriage, embracing the roles he's given us and the transformative power of prayer. By this revelation we can create marriages that last a lifetime and demonstrate his love and faithfulness to the world.

This journey is about finding God's plan for marriage, based on His Word, enabled by His Spirit, and anchored in the covenant He has established for all of us.

CHAPTER 1

Respect in Marriage

Respect & Love Through His Eyes

Respect is a fundamental principle in any relationship, particularly in marriage, where it serves as the linchpin that keeps the union harmonious. Yet, men and women often interpret the concept of respect differently, which can lead to misunderstandings and frustrations. These differences are not only shaped by emotional needs but are also deeply rooted in biblical teachings. In this chapter, we will explore how men perceive respect, why it is so crucial for husbands in a marriage, and how understanding these perspectives can foster a healthier, more fulfilling relationship.

The Man's Interpretation of Respect

In marriage, one of the deepest and most profound needs a husband has is the need for respect. This need is not simply a preference for him; it is woven into the very fabric of his identity. A husband's sense of worth and value in the relationship is often tied to how respected he feels, particularly by his wife. When a wife acknowledges his efforts, leadership, and role as a provider, she affirms his purpose and strengthens his confidence. This validation plays a crucial role in how he perceives his self-worth, both within the marriage and in the world around him.

From a biblical perspective, this need for respect is emphasized in Ephesians 5:33, which states, “However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” Here, the Bible makes it clear that respect is not a mere suggestion—it is a command. A wife’s respect for her husband is essential to the health and harmony of their marriage, serving as a core part of their partnership that affirms his role and leadership within the family.

Building Up Your Husband: Words and Actions of Respect

Example: Complimenting him after a long day of work or after he has put in extra effort in making decisions or handling household matters. For instance, saying, “I really appreciate how hard you work to provide for our family, and I see all the effort you put into making sure we’re taken care of.” This shows that you recognize his contributions and effort, reinforcing his role as a provider and leader.

Supporting His Leadership

Example: Trusting his judgment and allowing him to make decisions, especially in areas that align with his strengths. If he suggests a family activity or makes a decision about finances, you can express your support by saying, “I trust you to lead us in this decision, and I know you have our best interests at heart.” This validates his leadership and encourages him to take an active role in guiding the family.

Expressing Admiration and Gratitude

Example: Regularly expressing genuine gratitude for the things he does, whether it’s fixing something around the house or handling a difficult situation. Saying something like, “I admire how you stay calm

and handle tough situations so well. I'm grateful to have you as my partner." This lets him know that you respect his qualities and abilities.

Honoring Him Publicly

Example: Speaking highly of him in front of others, whether it's in social settings, among friends, or with family. For instance, "My husband has such great leadership qualities, he always knows how to guide us, even when times are tough." This not only boosts his confidence but also reinforces his status as a respected man in the community, just as described in Proverbs 31:23.

Respecting His Need for Space and Downtime

Example: Recognizing when he needs time to recharge or pursue his own interests. For example, if he wants to unwind by watching a game or taking a walk, you might say, "I can see you need some time to relax. Take all the time you need, I'll handle things here." This demonstrates respect for his mental and emotional well-being, acknowledging that leadership and responsibility can be draining.

By incorporating these actions into daily life, a wife can show respect that encourages her husband's sense of purpose, strengthens their bond, and fosters a respectful and loving relationship.

A Personal Journey: Encouraging Glen and the Role of Respect

My own marriage with Glen vividly illustrates the power of respect. Early in our marriage, Glen and I struggled to find a balance between work and home life. Glen, a hard worker, was often absent, and I found myself raising our children mostly on my own. For over four years, Glen was rarely home except to eat and sleep, and it became emotionally taxing for both the kids and me.

One evening, after yet another day of feeling alone in our family life, I sat down with Glen and expressed how difficult it had been. I encouraged him to see that while work was important, his first ministry was to us, his family. I told him that God would make a way where there seemed to be none. It wasn't a criticism but a plea, and Glen took my words to heart. From that day forward, he made changes, finding better ways to balance work and family. And the rest, as they say, is history.

That conversation marked a turning point for us. It was at that moment that I realized how deeply respect influences the dynamics of a marriage. Respect is far more than a word; it's the foundation on which a healthy, thriving relationship is built. In our case, it was through respect for Glen's role as a provider and leader and his commitment to stepping up for our family that we both began to experience deeper harmony and fulfillment in our marriage.

Respect in Disagreements: How to Disagree While Building Up

It's natural in any marriage to have disagreements, but how we handle these disagreements speaks volumes about the respect we show. Disrespecting our husbands in times of disagreement can tear down the foundation of the marriage, but responding with respect and grace strengthens it. When you feel strongly about something and disagree with your husband, it's vital to express your thoughts in a way that doesn't undermine his leadership.

The story of Abigail and Nabal in 1 Samuel 25 offers a powerful example of how to show respect even in the face of disagreement. Although Abigail disagreed with her husband's decision, she respected his position and sought a peaceful solution without undermining him. She showed wisdom, grace, and humility in her

approach, demonstrating that disagreement does not require disrespect. It is possible to express your opinion firmly and clearly while honoring your husband's leadership and role in the relationship.

Ephesians 5:33 calls on wives to respect their husbands, and one of the most profound ways to do this is by approaching disagreements with a "gentle and quiet spirit" (1 Peter 3:1-2). This does not mean suppressing your own thoughts or feelings but handling difficult conversations in a manner that respects your husband's dignity and leadership. Even when you don't agree, choosing a kind tone and listening actively shows that you value him and his role.

Encouraging Your Husband's Strengths and Abilities

A husband feels respected when his wife acknowledges and encourages his strengths. It's not only about recognizing the results of his efforts but also encouraging him to realize his full potential, especially when facing difficulties. In Joshua 1:9, God encourages Joshua to "be strong and courageous," affirming his strength as he steps into leadership. Similarly, a wife who encourages her husband, particularly during challenging times, helps him to tap into his potential and deepen his confidence.

When your husband faces struggles, whether personal, professional, or spiritual, encouragement from you can make all the difference. For example, instead of simply offering sympathy, you might say, "I know this is difficult, but I believe in your ability to overcome this challenge." Such words not only acknowledge the struggle but also affirm his capacity and resilience, reinforcing his sense of self-worth and value.

Involving Him in Family and Personal Decisions

In addition to affirming and encouraging him in times of difficulty, a wife can show respect by actively involving her husband in decisions, big or small. Proverbs 31:11 speaks of the virtuous woman whose husband has “full confidence in her,” showing that mutual respect and partnership are vital for a strong marriage. Consulting your husband in both major decisions and everyday matters communicates that you value his input and trust his judgment.

How a wife speaks to her husband can also greatly impact their relationship. Proverbs 21:9 warns against a contentious spirit that can erode respect. Words that criticize or belittle can undermine trust and confidence, so it’s important to approach your conversations with kindness and respect. For instance, rather than saying, “You never help with anything around here,” consider saying, “It would really help me if we could tackle this together.” This shifts the conversation from criticism to collaboration, strengthening your bond.

Respect: The Foundation of a Strong Marriage

Respect is not simply about agreeing on every decision or blindly following one another’s lead. It’s about honoring each other’s worth, validating each other’s roles, and trusting each other’s leadership. A wife’s respect through her words, actions, and attitudes lays the foundation for a strong and thriving marriage. It fosters love, trust, and unity, creating a space where both partners feel valued and heard.

In marriage, respecting your husband is not about agreeing with him on everything but about recognizing his role and supporting him with love, kindness, and wisdom. When you handle disagreements with grace, encourage his strengths, and involve him in decisions, you build a marriage that honors both God and one another. Through mutual respect, you are not only honoring your husband, but you are also

fostering a marriage that glorifies God and creates an environment for both partners to grow in love and faith.

How a Husband Receives Love

Love is often called the greatest gift. As 1 Corinthians 13:8 tells us, “Love never fails.” It’s the force that holds us together, providing healing, support, and connection. But here’s the thing, love isn’t always experienced or understood in the same way. Each person, shaped by their personality, life experiences, and values, interprets love differently. This is especially true in marriage, where two unique individuals come together in a covenant of love, each bringing their own perspective and needs.

In this chapter, we’ll dive into how a husband receives love. By drawing on both personal experiences and Biblical examples, we’ll explore the various ways a husband’s heart can be touched and nurtured.

The Biblical Foundation of a Husband’s Love

The Scriptures offer us clear guidance on love within marriage. Ephesians 5:25 tells husbands to “love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” This is a profound responsibility, showing that a husband’s love should be sacrificial, unconditional, and deep. While this verse outlines how husbands are called to love their wives, it also gives us insight into the nature of love in marriage: it’s about sacrifice, selflessness, and commitment.

But how does a husband feel loved in return? To answer this, we need to look at how love is expressed throughout Scripture. Jesus continually demonstrated that love isn’t just an abstract concept; it’s something that can be experienced in practical, tangible ways. His example provides clues on how a husband can feel loved and supported in his marriage.

Words of Affirmation: The Power of Encouragement

A close friend of mine once shared how she learned to love her husband, and it really stuck with me. As newlyweds, she and her husband were still figuring out how to communicate. She'd always believed that actions spoke louder than words, but over time, she realized something important when her husband expressed appreciation for her, it felt like a healing touch. Simple words like "Thank you for all the little things you do" or "I admire the way you support me" made her feel deeply valued and connected to him.

Reflecting on her story, I realized just how powerful affirming words can be, especially in marriage. Proverbs 18:21 reminds us that "the tongue has the power of life and death," showing just how important our words can be. For a husband, words of affirmation are a key way to receive love. It's not about flattering him or telling him what you think he wants to hear, but about speaking truth with kindness and respect.

In my own marriage, I've found that my husband's words don't just comfort me, they give me strength and motivation to carry out my responsibilities with love. The Bible shows us this principle time and time again. Think of Abigail in 1 Samuel 25. Her wise and respectful words to David prevented him from making a destructive decision. In the same way, our words have the power to shape peace, honor, and wisdom in our marriages.

Physical Touch: A Sign of Love and Care

One of the most profound ways a husband can feel loved is through physical touch. The Bible affirms the importance of physical affection in marriage. In 1 Corinthians 7:3, Paul writes, "The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her

husband.” Physical touch is a vital way to express love, intimacy, and connection.

I’ll never forget a time when my husband was carrying so much stress, work, life, and responsibilities, and it started to take a toll on him. I noticed him withdrawing emotionally and physically, and it broke my heart. I missed the closeness we once shared. One evening, we sat together on the couch, and I reached for his hand. It was such a small, simple gesture, but I hoped it would remind him of my love. Even amid the chaos, I wanted him to know that he was still deeply loved, not just in grand gestures but in those quiet, everyday moments.

For many husbands, physical touch is one of the clearest ways to feel loved. Whether it’s holding hands, sharing a hug after a long day, or a gentle touch on the shoulder, physical affection can break down walls and reestablish connection.

Acts of Service: Sacrificial Love in Action

When I think of acts of service in marriage, I can’t help but think of how Jesus demonstrated love through His actions. In John 13, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, an act that was humble, sacrificial, and full of love. This wasn’t a one-time gesture; it embodied the very heart of Christ’s love, a love that serves, a love that puts others first.

For me, showing love through acts of service means paying attention to the little things that make my husband’s life easier. It’s not always about grand gestures but about showing up in practical ways. Whether it’s running errands for him or making his favorite meal after a long day, I try to step in and help without being asked. These acts aren’t just about fulfilling duties, they’re about expressing my love and appreciation for everything he does.

Scripture also teaches us that love is often shown through service. In Galatians 5:13, Paul says, “Serve one another humbly in love.” For a husband, this love is often experienced when his wife shows care and thoughtfulness through actions, whether that’s lightening his load or serving him in practical ways.

Respect: Honoring the Husband’s Role

One of the most powerful ways a husband feels loved is through respect. The Bible is clear that respect is a crucial part of marriage. In Ephesians 5:33, Paul urges wives to “respect your husbands.” While love and respect are closely intertwined, a husband experiences deep emotional fulfillment when he feels respected as the leader of his home.

I think back to the early years of our marriage when I sometimes felt uncertain about my decisions. During those times, my husband’s trust and respect for my leadership encouraged me to rise to the occasion. Knowing he saw me as worthy of respect gave me the confidence I needed to lead in the growth and nurturing of our family well.

The Bible paints a clear picture of mutual respect in marriage. A husband feels loved when his wife demonstrates respect—not just for his role but for his identity as a man, affirming his worth in God’s eyes.

Conclusion

Love is an intricate, beautiful gift, and it takes on many forms in marriage. For a husband, love can be experienced through words of affirmation, physical touch, acts of service, and above all, respect. Each of these elements reflects God’s love for us and serves as a model for the love we are called to give and receive in our marriages.

As we seek to love our spouses in a way that mirrors Christ's love for the Church, we must also strive to understand the unique ways our husbands feel loved. By doing this, we can deepen our connection, honor God, and build a marriage that reflects His heart for us.

Let's be mindful of how we show love because, in the end, it's not just the grand gestures that matter, it's the everyday actions, words, and touches that reveal the depth of our hearts.

A Prayer over your Husband

Heavenly Father, I ask for Your help to reflect the love, respect, and honor my husband gives me. At times, I fall short of showing him the appreciation he deserves. Please give me strength and guide my words and actions so that they may reflect the respect I have for him. Teach me patience and understanding, especially in moments of frustration, and help me listen with compassion. Fill my heart with gratitude for his sacrifices and help me express my love through thoughtful gestures.

Strengthen our marriage, Father, and keep us united in love. May we always grow closer to You and each other, rooted in Your truth and grace. Teach me to love my husband sacrificially, joyfully, and with unwavering respect, reflecting Your love and faithfulness in our marriage.

In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.