

What Wives Need To know

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[0:00] You didn't have time last night to help Becky with her math.

! I hope you can get home sooner tonight. Jerry, I need Becky's lunch money. My wallet's over there on the bed. Why is it you always have money, and I never seem to have any?

Well, you have a checkbook. Are you leaving? Yeah, see you tonight. You're always in such a hurry to leave until late getting home.

Kevin hardly even knows you. Honey, the pressure will be off soon, and I am doing better with Kevin. Well, I haven't seen much difference. See if you can't get home in time to help Becky with her math.

Does that seem familiar? Carol has helped to create a no-win situation, and when that happens in a marriage, the result is anger and resentment, which is just the opposite of what she really wanted.

[1:17] The last session dealt with what husbands need to know, and today's fourth session of the Marriage Enrichment Seminar deals with what wives need to know. Dr. Carl Bikin believes that the wife is the emotional hub of the marriage, that she sets the tone of the husband-wife relationship.

Out of his years as a counselor, he suggests practical guidelines that will be valuable to the wife who wants to build a warm, sensitive, and supportive relationship with her husband.

Let's join now Dr. Carl Bikin as he presents What Wives Need to Know. A couple years ago, I ran across a little piece that Richard Rogers had written that he entitled My Wife.

I've known Richard and loved him for a lot of years. I've known Barbara, his wife, since she was about 11 or 12 years old. And when I saw the piece, I thought, that's great. I believe I'll clip that and save it.

And I'd like to begin this session by reading it. So let me share it with you now. He says, A sigh in the night, a smile across a room of strangers, a tug at a sleeve in the middle of a sad movie.

[2:29] That's my wife. She's a pair of waiting arms for a weary warrior. She repairs frayed banners torn on daily battlefields. She cushions defeats and makes victories worthwhile.

That's my wife. Her smile can lighten a heavy heart. She can hold a hand and lend an ear. She can blow a kiss and ease a care. She can ruin a cold room just by walking through the door.

A wife is a secret sharer. She has a private smile that belongs to just her husband when they both recall a fond and secret memory. A wife is an unpredictable creator.

She can remember a word spoken in love 20 years ago but can't remember to pick up the cleaning. She's magic with a dish towel in her hands.

Romance running a vacuum cleaner. Charm with a smudge of flour on her nose. A pair of blue-green eyes with faith shining out. A head of soft hair that bounces when she runs.

[3:29] A sad pout when things go wrong. That's my wife. A sweetheart for all the years of a man's life. A helpmeet when the load grows heavy. A friend when all other friends have turned their heads away.

That's my wife. Wives look beautiful in the strangest places. Like standing in a doorway or reaching high to take a dish off the shelf. Or straightening pillows on the sofa.

Or tucking a child into bed. Or standing in the rain waiting for a husband to open a car door. When a man runs out of heart, a wife gives him part of hers.

She rekindles the spark of dreams. She can make a husband young again with just a twinkle in her eye. She's charm, love, enchantment, hope, pride, dreams, pleasure, laughter, delight, magic, deity, and Christian womanhood all wrapped into the most wonderful woman in the world.

She's my wife. And I love her. Marvelous tribute to not just one Christian wife, but all Christian wives. A couple of years ago, Smitty and I were driving out across the country going, I think we were going to a lectureship somewhere.

[4:44] And it's one of those times that, you know, when we're at home, schedules press, and the children are always there going every direction under the sun. But when we get out in a car traveling somewhere, it's time to communicate, time to visit.

And we were talking about this section of the seminar. And about the role of the Christian wife. And we were talking about some things that we might do to get some feedback from Christian wives across the country.

And so we came up with a little questionnaire that asks, what is the greatest fault of American wives and what is the greatest fault of American husbands?

We decided that we would hand pick 50 of the best wives that we need and 50 of the best husbands that we need.

Didn't have to be married to each other. And you realize, of course, that us looking from the outside at a marriage, you don't always see what you think you see. And there are a lot of things perhaps in those marriages that we didn't see.

[5:44] But anyway, this is where the little questionnaire came from. And we wrote to 50 Christian wives and 50 Christian husbands. And we asked them, what is the greatest fault of American wives?

And then we asked each of them to give us a list of the five qualities that they thought were most important in a life of a Christian wife. When the material came back, the greatest fault of American wives, men said, and there were two articles that tied for first place in this one.

The men said, number one, they're not satisfied. And tied for first place with that one was they're too materialistic. And I hear much the same thing coming through. I hear wives who seem to never quite have enough, never quite be happy, always wanting something to be better and always complaining, perhaps if it's not.

Now, the article in third place was they're not supportive enough. And then they said they neglect their family and selfishness came in fifth on this particular list.

The material that came back from the wives said selfishness was number one to them. The greatest fault of the American wife is selfishness. Second, they said not letting Jesus rule in their lives.

[6:57] And third, trying to get the best of their husbands. The spirit of competition in the marriage they saw as being a real problem in the relationship. And then when we got the material back from the wives where we had asked what are the five most important qualities in the life of a Christian wife, it was interesting to see how many things came in, how many things were included in the lists that the wives wrote us.

But when we began to put the lists together and see which things were coming in most and second most and third most and so forth, let me share with you the ten that came back in one, two, three, four order with regard to the number of times they came in.

These wives said the number one quality in the life of a Christian wife is a personal relationship with God. And a lot of them said she's not ready for any other relationship in her life until she has a personal relationship with the Lord.

They said number two, affectionate, warm, and responsive. In just a little bit we're going to call the wife the emotional hub of her family and I think it focuses right here.

These wives said she needs to be affectionate and she needs to be warm and she needs to be responsive to the needs of the people around her. Thirdly, they said she needs a good self image. And Paul and I have both already talked about a good self image and how important a good self image is and how important her husband is in helping her not only to build but to maintain that healthy view of her own role and herself.

[8:29] And number four, they said she needs to be submissive to her husband. He must not take the responsibility for placing her in submission but she must be herself in submission and place him in the role of leadership.

And then the fifth quality that they cited was the quality of patience. I think it's interesting that when the apostle Paul got ready to describe love in 1 Corinthians 13 beginning in verse 4 when he told the qualities of it, the first thing that he says is love is patient.

I think that all of us who are living in a relationship would attest to the importance of patience in maintaining and building every relationship of life.

You just have to have a lot of patience to live constructively with another human being. Horrible to live without people around. But with people around, there is the need for patience. Number six was

loyalty.

And the wives said she needs to be faithful to her husband but more than that, there is a spirit of loyalty that goes beyond faithfulness. And then number seven was right priorities.

[9 : 36] And in having a sense of right priorities, we heard these wives saying that if we're going to live together as families, we've got to have a sense of what is more important and most important.

Because there is a constant danger of us spending all of our emotional energies on things that are important, but leaving no emotional energy for things that are the most important things in our lives. For example, it's very easy for us if you imagine that each one of us has, let's say, 100 units of emotional energy. If I spend 99 units of emotional energy on my job and with other people and doing other things so that when I get home to my family, I have no emotional energy left to spend with the people that are the most important people in my life, then I have been foolish in that budgeting.

And so we heard them saying she needs to learn to budget her emotional energies. But more than that, we heard them saying that if a person is going to live a really productive life, that person needs to have a sense of what is the most important thing in life.

And so let me share with you just briefly in connection with right priorities what I believe are the Christian's five basic priorities of his life. Number one must be his relationship with God.

[11 : 08] His relationship with his father is the number one thing in his life. Now, that's not working for the Lord. That's relationship with the Lord, and I'm drawing from the great commandment. The greatest commandment is you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength.

And the second likened to it is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. And the neighbor that is the most important neighbor in a person's life who is married is spouse.

I don't have to get married. But if I get married, I must take on some responsibilities that I would not have had otherwise, and I cannot live as though I'm not married.

We don't have to have children. But if we have children, we cannot continue to live as though they're not there, and they have no needs, and they have no rights. If we're going to have children, we must relate to them and spend some time with them.

And so the third priority of life is our children. If we have children. Many times when children are born into a relationship, especially the wife, tends to focus so much attention on those children that the husband seems to be neglected, feels neglected.

[12 : 25] And I'm sure in many instances he is neglected. And many husbands complain about that. Ladies, your husband is your number two priority, is your number one priority after your relationship with your heavenly father.

Those children are third, and there are times when I think all of us have a struggle with this, but let me share a conviction with you that says that there are times when we suspend otherwise good priorities for an emergency situation.

An illustration comes from the parable of the Good Samaritan. Regardless of where the priest and Levite were going that day, they should not have passed by the man who was beaten and robbed and left for dead.

Even though they may have been going to the temple, or coming from the temple toward their homes. Those are good priorities under normal circumstances. But when there is a man beaten and robbed and left for dead, there is an emergency that says let's temporarily for the time, for the moment, let's suspend our normal priorities, and let's do something that is important in the here and now.

I'm convinced that when children are small, they are a walking emergency. And because they are a walking emergency, that we have to realize the need for time and attention and supervision when they're small, but we also need to realize that we are temporarily suspending otherwise normal priorities of our lives for a very special emergency time.

[13 : 55] And as those children grow older and are able to take care of more and more of their own needs, the need for husband and wife to renew their own relationship so that when the children are gone, husband and wife will have something left.

The fourth priority is probably our vocation. And a fifth priority for ministry.

And I believe it's very important for us to realize that there are some things that need to take time in our lives. And that one was number seven. That these Christian wives said that a Christian wife, in

order to really function in her role well, needs to have a sense of right priorities.

And number eight in their list was that the Christian wife needs to be available to her husband's physical needs. They realize that you can't talk very long about the marriage relationship without talking about our sexuality.

And the way God designed us to function in families and in the marriage relationship. And one of the things that these Christian wives realized was that they must be responsive to their husband's physical needs.

[15:03] I remember Maribel Morgan quoting a psychiatrist friend of hers to say that if a wife wants her husband to worship the ground she walks on, there are two great needs that she must fulfill.

One, she quotes the psychiatrist as saying, is compliments. He needs to be complimented by his wife. The second is warm physical love. Number nine, these wives said she needs a zest for living. She needs to have a natural love affair with life so that there is a zest and there is a vitality in her life. And number ten was unselfishness. She needs to gladly do the little things for the comfort and the needs of other people that reflect her love for them and her love for her family and her commitment to the things that are the most important things in their life.

Therefore, I call the wife the emotional hub of her family. And I believe that this describes her role in a way that helps us to see some things that are very important to her.

Let me sketch on the board. We'll put the wife in the center. We'll put a husband going this direction, a child going that direction, and we'll put a child going these other two directions. And let's talk about the wife as the emotional hub of the family.

[16:19] I'm convinced that you can't make the world bad enough to break those children and that husband down if at home they have someone who loves them. Who loves her role, who loves her family, who loves her life, who loves her Lord if you please.

You can't make the world out there bad enough to break down the members of that family. But how tragic it is for the family that has that wife and mother at home who doesn't like her role, who doesn't like her family, who doesn't like the things that she has to do.

I know some husbands that don't like to come home. Do you? And I know some husbands that I don't blame. If I had to go home to the kind of wives that they have to go home to, I wouldn't want to go home either.

Ladies, I believe it is the responsibility of that wife to make the home so warm and loving and accepting and affirming a place that the members of that family will find it a refuge.

Ladies, I believe that you are the emotional hub of your family. And in that regard, I believe that there are 16 minutes of your day that are especially important to you. Now, I made up 16 minutes.

[17:31] Those 16 minutes may stretch into 30 or an hour or whatever and so in your family it may be quite different than in other families. Let me share with you what I call the four most important four-minute periods of your day as wife and mother in your family.

And the number one time, the first four minutes are the first four minutes that you are together early in the morning. Now, I don't know who gets up first in your family.

Matter of fact, it doesn't matter who gets up first in your family. In my family, I get up first. The reason I get up first is because I'm a fanatic about quiet time. I've struggled for years with a time to spend alone with the Lord in Bible study and prayer.

And through the years, I have struggled with some kind of format for that and some kind of time to put that. And finally, I've come up with the first hour of the day and so I get up first in my family. Right now, our schedule is that about 6.30, I go back to the bed and I bend down across my wife's sleeping body and I kiss her on the cheek.

[18:42] I kiss her into awareness. When she sees me kiss her on the cheek, she turns her face full up and we have a very tight-lipped kiss.

That's not the best kiss of the day. It's just the first kiss of the day. And I whisper in her ear and I say, Sweetheart, it's time to get up.

Now, it's very important to remember Proverbs 27.14 at that point. Because Proverbs 27.14 says, He that greeteth his neighbor with a loud voice rising early in the morning shall be counted as cursing.

So it's very important to remember to be very, very quiet at that time of the day. But anyway, I kiss my wife awake and I whisper in her ear that it's time to get up.

I go back to my study table and as she goes by the bathroom usually and then comes by my chair, she always bends down and she kisses me and tells me she loves me and I tell her I love her. [19:48] And then sometimes she'll sit down in my lap and we'll hug and pat and caress and kiss a little bit before she goes to the kitchen to fix the breakfast for the family. But we believe those three minutes are extremely important.

Let me share a letter with you. That begins, Dear Abby Brickin. Now you know you're in trouble, the letter comes beginning, Dear Abby Brickin.

Now listen to this one. He said, My wife and I attended your seminar in San Antonio. And the next morning I decided to try your procedure by kissing my wife into awareness.

As I get up to cook breakfast, I always let the dog out. When the dog comes back in, she always gets on the bed with my wife. When breakfast was ready, instead of my usual awakening call of, Breakfast!

I went to the bedroom, leaned over my wife and kissed her on the cheek. And before she could turn her face upward so I could complete the procedure, my dog attacked me. He says, Now what do I do?

[20:52] Your seminar did not touch on jealous dogs in the marriage. And he signs it, Boy and Loser. Well, I wrote him a letter, you know, and told him, You might wait until after you've kissed your wife into awareness before you invite the dog back in.

Or you might get rid of the dog. I don't know. But the first four minutes of the day are the most important four minutes, I believe, for a couple, Because these are the minutes that set the tone for the way you feel about each other.

All day. And the way you feel about your relationship. All day. And so, those moments are very, very precious and very, very important. The second most important four minutes of the day are the first four minutes that you're together at the end of the day's working activities.

Whatever that means in your family. Those four minutes that you are together at first when you both get home. And that's a time to welcome each other home.

You see, we have made choices to come home. We have made a conscious decision to go home and to be together.

[22:01] And the reason those four minutes are so important is because they set the tone for the way you feel about each other and your marriage for the rest of the evening hours. Whether you're together or whether you're apart, they set the tone for the way you feel about each other in your marriage for the rest of the afternoon's activities.

So ladies, when your husband comes home, it's not the time to load him down with all the things that have happened to you that have been bad that day. That's not a time to fuss at him about forgetting the laundry or the cleaning or to pick up something at the grocery store.

That's not the time to be negative in any way. That's a time to say, I'm glad you're here. I'm glad you're mine. I'm glad you came home. I'm glad we're together. That's the fact. The third most important four minutes of the day are the last four that you're together before you separate for the day's activities and go to work.

Now, those four are also very important for children, aren't they? My wife and I through the years have tried to develop a little ritual with our children as they go out of the house for school.

And we try to never say anything negative to our children as they go to school. We try to say something to them that says, I hope you have a fantastic day today and I love you because that's very important.

[23:15] But it's also important for husband and wife as you part for the day to have some kind words, some loving words. That's not the time either to fuss at a person about what they forgot to do yesterday.

That's the time to be in love with each other. And the fourth most important four minutes of the day are the last four before you go to sleep at night. The last four before you go to sleep at night.

And the reason those four are so important is because they put the capper on the day's activities and they let you go to sleep feeling good about your relationship and good about your marriage and good about who you are and good about being together.

But those four minutes should be filled with at least a hug and a kiss and some patting and caressing and some words of love that say, I'm glad you're mine. I love you.

I enjoy our life together. Makes you go to sleep at night feeling good about your relationship and that's extremely important. That's what these four four minute periods are designed to do in a marriage.

[24 : 22] They're designed to allow two people to say to each other, I love you and I'm glad we're together and I'm glad we belong to each other. You're beginning to get the idea that I think it takes a lot of hugging and patting and kissing and caressing to make a good marriage.

Are you beginning to get that idea? If you are, you're right. The Bible says open rebuke is better than hidden love. If you love each other, by all means, tell each other.

Now, let me share with you some basic passages of scripture that will be foundational for a wife's relationship with her husband. And I want to begin with Romans chapter 7 verse 2 that says, Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives.

But if her husband dies, she's discharged from the law concerning the husband. Her wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. The God of heaven intends for the marriage relationship to be a relationship of permanent duration.

As long as we both shall live is the basic design of God for the marriage relationship. And that's Romans chapter 7 verse 2. There are a number of other passages that teach the same thing.

[25 : 35] Now, think with me about Titus chapter 2 and Paul's instructions to his young son in the gospel as he talks about the duties of older men, older women, and so forth.

And I want to share with you some thoughts from Titus chapter 2 verses 3 through 5. Verse 3 begins, with the older women likewise, to be reverent in behavior. Not to be slanderers or slaves to drink, but they are to teach what is good.

And notice verse 4. Verse 4. And so to train the young women to love their husbands and their children. Did you know that we can be trained to love?

That's what that verse says. We can be trained to love. You want me to give you an illustration? I remember an experience when I, I must have been six years old or seven or somewhere along in there. And as I recall this story, we went to a picnic.

And I was mischievous when I was young. Haven't lost all of that yet. Got it under control a little bit. But my mother would testify that I was mischievous when I was young.

[26 : 37] And as I recall this picnic, I was making everybody miserable by being in their hair and running and kicking up dust and everything. And as I recall, my mother pulled me aside and sat down on a park bench so that she could look me straight in the face.

She grabbed me by the shoulders and said to me, You are not going to ruin this picnic for all of these people. You are going to enjoy this picnic and we are too if it kills both of us.

Now, you hear what my mama's doing? My mama is training me to love. Now think with me a moment about our passage in 1 Peter chapter 3.

And every time a woman comes into my office to talk about a marriage relationship where she has to live with a difficult husband, this is the passage that I turn to and share with her.

Because Peter tells a wife in 1 Peter chapter 3 how to live with a difficult husband. Listen to the way Peter begins. He says, Likewise, you wives, be submissive to your husbands.

[27 : 42] That's the opening remark. Be submissive to your husbands. So that some, though they do not obey the word. Now, isolate that phrase and hear what Peter is saying.

He says, care that some, though they do not obey the word. These husbands that Peter is about to talk about are husbands who are not obeying the word. They may have a complete disregard for the word.

They may not claim to be Christians. They may not like anything that is Christian. They may not care about that. But whatever the background, they are not obeying the word. They may go to church all the time.

Teach semi-school classes or preach or serve as officers in the congregation or whatever. And still be husbands who do not obey the word. But whoever they are, Peter is giving instructions for Christian wives.

And he begins by saying, be subject, be in submission to your husbands. So that some, though they do not obey the word, may be one without a word by the behavior of their wives.

[28 : 44] And notice the characteristics that Peter talks about. When they see your reverent and chaste behavior. Let not yours be the outward adorning with the braiding of hair and the decoration of gold and the wearing of fine clothing.

But let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit. Which in God's sight is very precious. That word translated there, very precious in the sight of God. Is a word that can also be translated very expensive. What in the world could be expensive to God? God who owns everything. God who created everything.

God who lays claim to everything. What in the world could be very expensive to God? God. And what Peter says is, a woman who has a gentle and quiet spirit.

Is in the sight of God very precious. Now, let me go back up in that passage moment and focus for the next few minutes on the section that says, He may be one without a word.

[29 : 50] One of the complaints that husbands have about their wives is, my wife nags. She complains.

Ladies, don't nag. Win him without a word. I remember a young wife in my family relations class one day. She'd been married since August, just before school started.

And as I recall this incident, we were a couple of months into the semester. One day after class, she came up to me and she said, Dr. McKee, I've got to ask you a question. I said, let's wait until everybody clears out and then we'll spend some time together.

And so, after everybody had cleared out, she said, How do I get my husband to pick up his clothes off the floor? And I said, does your husband lose? You know.

And you can just hear all kinds of things behind that one. And I said, well, if he knows that you want him to pick them up, then I only see about four or five alternatives as to what you need to do.

[30 : 49] And I said, the number one alternative is, please don't nag at him. Don't nag. And I was getting the impression, of course, that she had been nagging him. And I said, the opposite extent from that would be to pick them up for him.

She looked like I had hit her with something soggy and damp. And she began to shake her head that she was not about to do. She was not about to pick up her husband's clothes from the floor.

So, I said, well, I just see two or three other real viable alternatives. One is to walk on them. And a second one is to flick them out of the way with your toes so you don't have to walk on them.

Would you believe I've heard some other alternatives since then? I had one wife who came up after one of the seminars, and she said, Well, I'll tell you what I did. I nailed my husband's clothes to the floor.

And I said, well, you know, I'm sure that works, but I can't really recommend that. I've got a feeling that if you tried that, that it would come out his pores in a level of other ways.

[31 : 58] I had one other wife who said, my husband used to leave his shoes on the floor, and she said, I got to where I'd put them in his pillowcase. And she said, you better believe that solved the problem. Well, there are some other alternatives, but none of them that I can really recommend.

Let me share with you one of the funniest stories that I've ever heard in my life. It's a story that came from a counselor on the West Coast that swears that it's true. He says that a couple came into his office one day for marriage counseling after they had been married only about six weeks. And he said, as they walked in, they said, Doc, we've got some problems. We need to talk to you. And he invited them to sit down in his office. And then he said, share the problem with me. Tell me about what happened. And so the wife began.

She said, well, what happened was that the first night after the honeymoon was over, and we were back in our apartment where we were going to live, she said, my husband, as he started to bed, I was already in bed, and as he started to bed, he stopped in the middle of the bedroom, and he stepped out of his underwear, and left his underwear in the middle of the bedroom floor, stepped into his pajamas, and started around the corner of the bed.

And she said, I raised up on one elbow, and I called to him, and I said, hey. And he stopped and looked, and she said, are you planning on leaving those there? And he looked back at them, and he said, yes, I was.

[33 : 16] And she said, what do you plan to happen to them? And he said, I planned for them to be washed and returned clean to that bottom drawer right over there.

And she said, I told him that that would be a cold day in you know where. When that happened, and so he came on the bed. She said the second night, he put a second pair on top of them.

The seventh night, he put a seventh pair on top of them, and ran out. The next day, he wore a dirty pair to the bank, and took a hundred dollars out of savings and bought underwear.

Thirty days later, Thirty days later, there's a stack this tall in the middle of the bedroom, and they decided they needed counseling.

So they bring the marriage counselor to the problem, and the marriage counselor says, all right, now let me be sure I understand. And he turned to the wife, and he said, now, if your husband would put those in an appropriate place, would you wash them and return them clean to his drawer?

[34 : 32] She said, yes. If he would put them in the clothes hamper where they belong, I'd wash them and return them clean to the drawer. But I'm not, and he said, I understand, I understand. And he turned to the husband, and he said, now, if there was a clothes hamper right out there in the middle of the floor, well, it wouldn't be any trouble if there was a clothes hamper right out in the middle of the floor there, would it be all right with you to put them in the clothes hamper instead of putting them on the floor?

And the husband thought a minute. He said, yeah, I guess that'd be all right. And the marriage counselor said, well, now, let me just take a for instance. If we move that clothes hamper over to the side of the room, would you mind going by over there?

He said, yes, this is not out in the middle of the floor, but if it's over at the side of the room, would you mind going by over there and taking your underwear off and putting it in the clothes hamper over at the side of the room? And the husband thought a minute. He said, no, I guess that wouldn't be too much to ask.

And the counselor said, well, let me take it just one more step. He said, if we put that clothes hamper in the bathroom where clothes hamper usually stay, would it be asking too much to have you go by the bathroom to take off your underwear and change into your pajamas?

And the man thought a moment. He said, well, come and think of it. I guess that wouldn't be too much to ask. The marriage counselor said, well, I'll be \$12.50 for the hamper and \$40 for the counselor. We have so many problems in marriage that could be solved. Ladies, but please don't nag at your husband.

[36 : 05] Let me tell you one story and let's close. It's a story that I'm reminded of very often because it happened to us many years ago. We moved to San Angelo, Texas to work with women congregations in that city.

And as we did, we decided that one of the first things we needed to do was to get acquainted with the families in the congregation. So at night when I would come home from the office, we'd grab a quick bite and then we'd hop into the car and we'd visit three or four families.

Get the kids together and then bomb them dead together and kind of get acquainted with the families. About the time we arrived, we discovered that there was a member of the congregation that was dying of cancer. She had been diagnosed as having terminal cancer.

was going to die in several months as it happened. She died about the first of November and we were doing this visiting along in September when we first began. And so we would pop in on three or four families and then we found out that if you visit very much after about nine o'clock at night, people are putting their kids to bed and it's not convenient.

And so we'd start going by her house about nine o'clock at night. At first, she was up and about and could visit and everything was smooth. But as her case deteriorated, finally they took her to the hospital for the last time.

[37 : 18] And they said we cannot do anything else for her. And so they sent her home to die. Her husband bought her an electric bed, took care of her night and day.

And as we walked into the room one night, I remember she burst into tears and she said, I want to die. I just want to die and get on out of the way because I'm a millstone around my family's neck. As long as I'm here, they cannot do anything. They can't go places, they can't do things, they can't do anything as long as I'm here because I'm terminally ill and I hate being this kind of a burden to my family. And we all cried.

I just didn't know anything else to do. But I went home that night and I tossed and I tumbled and I prayed and I said, Lord, surely there's got to be something intelligent that you can say to a person in that kind of a situation.

And I don't know whether it was the next night or a couple of nights later that we went back in and I pointed to her and I said, I hope you will never say that again. Here was a beautiful Christian lady with a deep faith in God, a deep commitment to the cause of the Lord in the world and she was ready to go.

[38:24] And she was such an example. She was the kind of person that cheered you up when you went to someone even though she was the one that was dying. That kind of person. And so I said to her, I hope you won't ever say that again because I know you hurt and I can't identify with your hurt.

But as long as you are alive, you are the most important person in your family's life. She had one son who was grown and had his own family. She had another son who was a junior in high school, about 6'1 and 195 pounds.

And I said, if you were healthy, you couldn't spank him anymore. But when he comes in the house in the afternoon, comes home from school, he comes first to your room and he sits down on the edge of your bed.

And you choke back the pain and you listen as he tells you about his day. And your response to the things that he tells you about himself and his life, your response is the most important factor in his development right now.

And the day you die, this house is going to be the emptiest house in this town. Because as long as you're here, and as long as you're alive, your spirit fills every corner of this house.

[39:35] Your faith, your commitment, your spirit fills every corner of this house. But when you're dead, even though your memory will live on, that immediate presence will no longer be here.

And I hope you won't ever say again, I want to die, even though I know you hurt terribly. You see, I'm afraid that there are too many women, wives, who think that their primary role in life is cooking and mending and cleaning and sewing and doing things for their families.

And one of the things that I said to her was, your family really can get along fairly well without you doing those things for them. They can do them for themselves. But those are not the things that give you your importance. Those are the things you do because you love your family.

But the thing that gives you your importance is your love for them and your love for God and your commitment to the things that are the most important things in life.

Ladies, I hope that you can feel good about what it means to be a woman in our world. I'm convinced that your role is the most important, formative, influential role in the world.

[40:53] And that many of the reasons why that's true focus on the things that were there in the life of that mother who was dying of cancer. So I hope you can feel good about your role as wife and mother.

And you can be glad that God has created you to be a wife and mother and has placed you in this very, very special role. Because I think it's a tremendously important, influential role for the future of our world.

Let's pray together and we'll take a break. Father, we're so grateful that you've called us together in families. And as we think about our husbands and wives and children and the joys of these relationships in the past, we're conscious of things that we've done that were wrong and that were hindrances.

And we pray your forgiveness for those. And we pray that you'll help us to catch a vision of what our lives could be if we were committed to these God-given roles.

And so we pray your blessings on us as we think together and as we study together. And as we reflect about what you want us to be.

[42:10] Continue to bless us throughout this day. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. This concludes the fourth session of the Marriage Enrichment Seminar.

In the next two sessions, Dr. Paul Faulkner speaks to a real trouble spot in many marriages. Communication. In session five, Dr. Faulkner will describe things we do that kill communication. And then in the sixth program, he'll outline specific ways to build good communication in marriage. Be with us for both of these sessions. The most important thing you have to do in the next two months, I'm not going to do to do to go to the end.

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