

Building Respect in Marriage

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Date: 15 September 2024

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[0 : 00] If you want to turn over to Song of Solomon again this morning, we'll start here with our verse we've been looking at. Here is we've been looking at the importance of being friends with the one you're married to.

And it's that critical dynamic of being friends, but oftentimes in relationships the problem is, is they're not friends. They end up in a relationship together for all sorts of different reasons, reasons often which sometimes are emotional, attachment to it.

And so we need to be understanding of how do we deal with this, because I want you to know this also, that by applying godly principles, even if you're not friends now, you can get and work on that in a relationship if you're intentional.

It takes effort, it takes work, it takes a commitment to those things, because look here in Song of Solomon chapter 5, look down at verse 16 with me this morning.

It says, His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. Let's pray.

[1 : 12] Heavenly Fathers, we come before you this morning. Lord, we just thank you for the day, for the opportunity, as we look into this very important dynamic of relationship, especially the relationship between a husband and a wife, and a wife towards a husband.

And Lord, just the critical thing of just being on the same page together. Lord, the same page with you, and the very essential elements attached to it.

And Lord, we pray just have your hand upon the things said and done here today, Lord, that might glorify you, that your people be encouraged, but Lord, that it might not just be information, but it be things that will be applicable and helpful as we work through them.

Lord, knowing that these are not things that you make a one-time decision about, but Lord, these are an ongoing thing of making decisions, even sometimes daily, of this is the direction and the context in which we are going to operate.

And Lord, we pray just have your hand upon each one here today, and Lord, we ask it all in your precious name. Amen. As we begin looking at this series, Married But Not Best Friends, we've looked at the first one, and that was companionship.

[2 : 20] Companionship of having time together. Time is the one resource you cannot replace. We always need to keep that in mind, that time is the one resource you can never replace.

You can replace everything else in some means or another, but time is not one. And so time together is important. To have a proper relationship, there has to be time.

There has to be time together in that. There needs to be conversation. Conversation. And that goes beyond. It's amazing how many people can say words but not have a conversation.

You can have noise without conversation. Conversation is important, and that's talking together. Talking together.

Not just talking about things, but talking together. Understanding that. And then we have this idea of commitment. And we began looking at that last week, this idea of commitment, and that's trying together.

[3 : 22] That's putting in effort to be together. That's investing in those things. Those involve time and talking. But there also has to be a commitment to trying.

To say we have made a commitment, and we're going to move forward with that commitment. Our friendship, to continue to grow, there must be a mutual respect one for another.

We began talking about that last week, of that mutual respect. And we understand, because mutual respect goes for any friendship. You know, you cannot, when you're friends with somebody, there's a mutual respect that takes place.

Especially in a marriage relationship, there has to be a mutual respect one for another. If that respect is not present, there's going to be a problem. Because respect is what keeps the mindset for these other things in the right order and in the right priority. To understand that respect one for another. [4 : 25] And so we began looking last week at six areas of commitment that will help build mutual respect. We talked about a commitment to sacrifice.

That commitment to sacrifice. If you're making a commitment to somebody, it means you're decommitting from something else. Because when you do a priority, one thing means you're deprioritizing something else.

Because let's face it, we all have things that need to be done, or things that we have responsibilities, or other things that are associated. We need to understand a commitment to sacrifice.

Sacrifice to say, this is what's important to invest in. This is what's important to do. That's essential of that building respect, because the other thing sacrifice for somebody else does, it says one big message to them, it says you are important.

And in a marriage relationship, the other person, the person you're married to, wives to your husbands, husbands to your wives, they both need to know that you hold a position of priority.

[5 : 30] There's a priority there. A commitment to closeness follows right along with that. That commitment to closeness, to say, I want to be where I can know you, to hang out with you, we want to spend time together.

There's that closeness, but also a commitment to honesty. You know, a marriage can't be built on falsehoods. One of the problems you'll find in marriages, especially with young people, as they get started out, they, well, we can solve this later.

I want you to understand, if you're not honest about it, you'll never solve it later. Oftentimes, people enter in, if I let them know that, they won't like me. Well, if that's the case, you don't have too much of a friendship, and you don't have too much of a relationship.

Because somebody that loves you, understands that you're not perfect. You understand they're not perfect, and part of that commitment is saying, that part, of who they are, I'm going to help them work through those things, just as they're going to help me work through mine.

In other words, it's not being ignorant to, but being fully aware of. That honesty, and we're going to see this dynamic here play out, and the next area of importance.

[6 : 55] Let's take a look over to the New Testament. Turn to 1 Peter chapter 3. 1 Peter chapter 3. Look here in 1 Peter chapter 3. Look down at verse 7. It says, Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, being honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and being heirs together, of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.

I want you to understand, prayer is an important part of our life. But I want you to understand here, when it talks about the idea of your relationship with your wife, impacts your prayers.

Prayers one for another, prayers together, it impacts what's happening. And so I want you to understand here, because oftentimes as people look at this, and they read this passage especially, now notice here it says, under the weaker vessel.

I'm going to just touch on that for a moment, because this is important. Weaker does not mean inferior. That's not the meaning of that term. I want you to understand what it does mean.

It generally means more delicate. It means, it does not mean less valuable. It's kind of like the old joke, what's the difference between a vase and a vase?

[8 : 11] One is common, and the other has great value, and it's usually pretty, it has some great value to it, and very delicate sometimes. And we understand the same as the dynamic.

It doesn't put its value difference, but it is more fragile. It's kind of like the difference between silk and denim. Both have a purpose, both have a place, both have value, but if you're going to go work, silk is not the recommended attire.

Why? Because it's not going to hold up. It's more delicate. It doesn't mean it's less valuable. It means it's different, with a different purpose, and a different dynamic.

And to understand the importance of that, that your prayers be not hindered. Peter here just assumes the reality of prayer in a couple's relationship, but sadly, it's not the case.

We understand that prayer brings a spiritual bond, and it's important to do that, because praying together as well as separately for our children and our grandchildren, because the temptation today

is great for them, and they need our support.

[9 : 24] We need to pray for our kids, and understand the importance of prayer. One illustration put it this way. It said, trying to raise kids today without prayer is like trying to cut down a tree with a chainsaw that's not running.

I'm like, well, that's pretty illustrative there. The fruitful nature of it, of this dynamic. Because when we understand the importance of prayer, can do more in a moment than we can do in a lifetime. I'm not saying it's not important to work with your kids, and to spend time with them, but we need to also pray for them, because prayer is part of that building, that house. Look over at Psalm 127. Psalm 127 in verse 1 tells us this. Psalm 127 in verse 1 says, except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.

Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. I want you to understand, the Lord needs to be that critical connection that's in there, that binds together.

[10 : 30] You need to be praying over things, and just not running headlong into things. We need to understand that when it comes to making decisions in a relationship, we need to make sure that we're not doing it without, one, consulting your spouse, but also without consulting the Lord.

To understand the importance of those two together. To understand the importance, a commitment to prayer. We need to also look here at a commitment to a good spirit.

A commitment to a good spirit. Look over at Job 32 for a moment. Job 32. Job 32 in verse 3. Who's got that one this morning?

We'll get some people woke up and ready to go. Joe, you got that one? He's practicing for the next sword drill back there. Job 32 verse 3. Okay. A good spirit.

His friends. What did Job's friends do? They came and what? Condemned Job. They say, all this calamity came on you because you must be guilty. They were condemning him and were hostile towards the one that was supposed to be their friend.

[11 : 42] They just knew he must have done something wrong. When it comes to a marriage relationship, we need the right spirit one towards another. And one of the elements of that spirit is to not always look for fault in the other person.

Sometimes that's the biggest issue is we're more worried about what's wrong with them than the things, the reason that we married them. The things we like about them. The things that you appreciate. The things that make a difference.

Because when it comes to relationships, some people reside in the camp of finding fault. They have their fault vault. They keep securing any fault they can find to use it later.

They create a vault of fault to the other person. Over the years, as I've done counseling and talked to different people, it's amazing how many come in and the first thing that they'll do is they'll just open up this vault of complaint.

But sometimes what they need to do is stop and say, what have I invested in paying attention to the right things? The things that are valuable instead of just looking for the fault. They play the blame game.

[12 : 46] These were Job's friends. They were blaming Job for all that was happening. And we realize that when you read through the book of Job, Job did nothing wrong necessarily.

I mean, Job was a man. He wasn't perfect. But the things he was going through was not directly tied to ramification of his choices. Job was trying to do that which is right, but his friends show up and say, you're at fault, Job.

They're pointing fingers. This idea of finding fault and especially in relationships, if your job is, to your spouse, is just finding fault in them, there's always going to be a problem.

Because let me give you a little eye-opener. The person you married to is not perfect. Now let me give the shocker. The person they married is not perfect. It doesn't take very long being married to realize that.

You enter in, oh, this is going to be bliss. Then you find out they're people. But those are things you have to look and understand. How do you work through those things? You know, I want to understand if you're going to be a friend to your spouse, they don't turn against you.

[13 : 53] They stick with you even sometimes when you're wrong. Because people are turned against us at times and we should always have our best friend at home that's always on our team, on our side, keeps a good positive spirit, working together, trying to resolve the problems.

One of the problems that come though oftentimes in a relationship instead of being the one on the team with them, it's the one they take shots at. Somebody else shot at them so they go home and take shots at their spouse.

It's not going to build a positive relationship. And to understand the importance of this, we've talked in this series a lot about men, but today we're going to talk a little bit about ladies and responsibilities because there are a lot of responsibilities.

Because ladies, if you haven't noticed, men do sometimes have a little bit of ego to them. And men thrive with admiration. To be admired. Men thrive for their woman's admiration.

Women need attention. Men need admiration. Women need love. Men need respect. Women want leadership and men want a following. If you ask, how do you show your man admiration?

[15:06] Very simply this, by how you treat them. Now we're not talking about bowing down and kissing their feet. Now that might go a long way, but not, they might feel good about it, but it's not going to be very lasting.

Striking chords with that one, aren't we? Yeah. In other words, they might find out about the fun guy. Yeah. We better move on before I get in trouble with that one.

But instead of admiring their man, oftentimes women instead make their man feel inferior. Put him in a conveniently low place where she likes to keep him. They do it to the very detriment of their own relationship.

To understand that a critical spirit makes him feel like he can't do anything right, that affects a guy's courage and his confidence as she makes him feel, instead of like a man, to feel like a beat down little boy.

Some ladies think this will be motivational, but I want you to understand a critical spirit does the opposite of what you're desiring. A critical spirit, ladies, will make a guy draw back more and be less.

[16:16] Where if you're encouraging, it'll make him feel important and you'll get the progress in the right direction. Now that seems contrary to our human nature, doesn't it? Because our human nature says if I beat him long enough, they'll change.

But I want you to understand by building up and building that confidence and building and encouraging, you're going to see praise that's going to be beneficial. Because ladies, your husband needs your praise and admiration.

I want you to understand when your husband's out and about, there's plenty of people trying to beat him down. The last thing they need is to come home and get beat up there too. You're not going to help your relationship by beating him up when he shows up.

That verbal tearing down. He needs to know that there's no one else in the world, if there's no one else in the world rooting for him and on his team, you are. As a wife, you need to be on your husband's team.

You need to be part, you need to be behind things that are going on. I want you to understand, and this is even more critical today, I think, because of the lack of fathers in the home. Because guys who are raised by strong fathers, this impacts less than those who were raised without fathers or fathers that beat them down.

[17:29] Because oftentimes, men can become very fragile in their self-image because of how others have treated them throughout. They never measure up.

One of the things as a wife to help your husband is to be on his team. To be there to encourage and to strengthen. You'll accomplish more change in your man by praising them by criticizing and nagging.

It's amazing how often you hear a guy have an affair with somebody who's far less attractive than his wife, and you say, how could that be? Well, a lot of times it's because that other woman praises him.

You might say, well, that's shallow. No, that's reality. As a wife, you need to pay attention to how you honor and respect and to build up your husband.

If you want to, you'll want to dramatically reduce the likelihood of your husband having an affair, you be the one that praises him. Now, let's look for a moment. Go over to the book of Proverbs for a moment because this is exactly what God warns about.

[18:34] Let's get a couple of volunteers here. I need Proverbs chapter 2 and verse 16. You got that one, Lou? How about Proverbs 5, 3 through 5? Who's got that one? 5, 3 through 5.

You got that one, Matt? You got that one for me? Proverbs 7, 21. Can you grab that one, Lance? And then, while you're there, you can get Proverbs 7, 4, too, since you're in the chapter, if you would.

The Bible perspective puts it this way. The Bible talks about a strange woman. Now, a strange woman here is not just somebody that's weird or different. The strange woman is the one that's estranged from the guy who's married that's not his wife.

Notice what the Bible says here, Proverbs 2, 16. Ah, the woman who does what? Flatters with her words.

Now, we talked a little bit about flattery this morning and the dangers of it, but while flattery is dangerous, sometimes it catches us, and you have to be careful.

[19 : 39] How about, when we understand flattereth her with her words, I want you to understand it's not so much about the actions as much as her words. She tells him how funny he is, how strong, how smart.

Those are things that they want to hear, and if he hears it from somebody else, what's going to happen? That's going to be the one that gets the attention. One of the best things you can do is to guard against that is by building up your husband.

Proverbs 5, 3-5. Can you read that one? All right.

Think about that. For the lips of a strange woman drop as a honeycomb. Her mouth is smoother than oil. Flattery is the tool that opens the door. If you want to protect your husband from flattery from some other woman, make sure that you're on his side.

Make sure that you're encouraging and you're telling. What's Proverbs chapter 7? What's verse 21 say, Lance? Proverbs 7.1. With her much-cared feet, she talks into you.

[20 : 54] With the flat on her lips, she forced him. Okay. Consider the reality there. What's the dynamic? Was it a physical thing that made the big difference?

What made the difference there? What? The words, the speech, a critical thing. And what does Proverbs 7.4 say?

Proverbs 7.4. Say unto you, bow off my sister, and call on her standing like him for you. Okay. We need wisdom. Say unto wisdom. Why do we need wisdom? To keep us from the strange woman.

Now, guys, I want you to understand what I'm not saying. Just because some woman flatters you and your wife isn't, it doesn't give you an excuse. That's not what the preacher's saying.

What the preacher is saying, be careful of it. Guys, we need to be careful. Wives, you need to be careful. Because if you're always critical at home about everything, what, there's going to be some lady come by that won't be critical and get attention.

[21 : 57] And get attention. We need to understand the importance of that. If you want to keep him at home and keep the fire burning, build him up. You're there.

The Bible says, as his spouse, you are his helpmate. Part of being that helpmate is being on his team. Being there. To understand, because every man wants somebody to be somebody's hero.

He might as well be yours or he'll be somebody else's. I want you to understand the importance because we're going to talk here a little bit about three ways to never change your husband.

Most wives look at their husband and say, well, I wish there were some things I could change.

There's always something they do that is just kind of, sometimes gets irritating. Just maybe it's always getting a new cup out of the cabinet to get a drink of water.

I mean, there's little things throughout. Maybe it's where the socks end up or you have all the things. It's funny because as we're just, I'm talking to one of the young couples just got married this summer and the thing was, you didn't cover about arguments over blankets.

[23 : 07] I mean, it's ironic though, but it is true. I mean, there's things that when you begin as a married couple living together, there's some transition and things you find out about somebody that you didn't know.

there was no way to know beforehand. But I want you to understand there's three things you need to be careful of that are never going to work.

There's three items you can do that I guarantee you will fail and do the opposite effect of what you want to do. The first one is nagging. Nagging, it usually makes it worse, not better.

Number two is criticizing, especially in front of others. You should never tear down your spouse in front of others. If you want to hurt your relationship, that's a number one way to create a problem, to tear down your spouse in front of others.

Ladies, if you tear down your husband in front of others, you're doing a double destruction. You're not going to get the end results because it erodes confidence.

[24 : 20] Criticism makes men defensive in their actions and in their responses, especially in public. You say, well, maybe they shouldn't be.

No, I want you to understand that's the way God made us and there's some attributes from that that help accomplish other things like anything else. Our attributes always have to be kept in a godly order and a godly check.

We need to understand God wants us to use those things for the right reasons. The reality is this, you'll catch more flies with honey. Nagging, criticizing, and then we haven't done the next one yet. We're just getting ready to get into that. The next one is physical punishment. That's how we'll phrase it. Now, I want you to understand this is not smacking them with your fist or a rolling pin. I want you to understand this here is by withholding marital relationship using sex as a tool or a weapon. This is a common philosophy that does nothing but destroy a marriage.

[25 : 29] Take a look over into 1 Corinthians 7. 1 Corinthians 7. Look down at verse 3. Look here at verse 3. It says, Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

The wife hath not power of her own body but the husband and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body but the wife. Defraud ye not one another except it be with consent for a time that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer and come together again that Satan tempt you not for your inconstancy.

I want you to understand the reality of the marital relationship is part of your relationship of being married. If that ceases because somebody's using it as a weapon or a tool it's going to have an opposite impact of what you want.

It's not going to be as effective of what you think it may be because the reality is is you're inviting an affair. Because consider usually along with this is the same thing we talked about earlier is criticizing, tearing down, that nagging, that dynamics that take place that tear down the husband instead of build him up.

And you think about how much more susceptible is that relationship if there's other problems at home. All he does is get tore down. His wife rejects him.

[26 : 59] And some woman comes along and begins to flatter in what directions is going to happen. You're opening a door that you don't want to open. I want you to understand the importance. That's the reason the Bible talks very expressly about this because you do not belong to yourself.

When you get married you belong to one another. And we don't have time to get into all the details of that in this forum. But I want you to understand the importance of that.

Because if you don't you're inviting an affair. Because a husband will respond with these three weapons are very simply put out because men are going to do one of three things in response to this.

The nagging, the criticizing, using physical punishment. Men are going to respond to these three weapons you're trying to use against them this way. Some will clam up and not want to be around you so they'll look for things to do away from home all the time.

That's a reality. I know guys that intentionally stay away from home. I want you to understand as a married couple you guys ought to desire to be together.

[28 : 09] It ought not to be what can I excuse to be away what things aren't as important as being there. Now I'm not saying that there's not things you do a part or do. I want you to see the big picture here.

It's intentionally saying oh there's extra overtime. I don't really need the money but I'm going to stay at work that way we don't have much time at home together. She can't beat on me if I'm not there. Some will blow up sometimes violently to let off steam that is built up. They'll either clam up they'll blow up and some will just give up.

Sometimes it's just it becomes the point of it's just not worth it. When you understand that's these are dynamics that take place in marriages today. These are elements that are working in our current marriages.

These are things that are working in those who are looking to be married. These are things you need to understand before you enter in of the critical nature of being friends and the dynamics of it.

[29 : 17] So let me put some positive on this. what can you ladies continue to do that are going to help? One is pray for him. Don't take it all into your own hands.

Realize that God can do more for him in a moment than you could do in your lifetime. The reality is to praise him. Look over to 1 Peter chapter 3 for a moment.

1 Peter chapter 3 look down here in verse 1 it says likewise you wives be in subjection to your own husbands that if any obey not the word that they may without the word be won by the conversation of their wives that's not just words that's the way they live that word conversation there involves more than just words it's action while they hold their chaste conversation coupled with fear whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of the plating of the hair and wearing of gold or putting on of apparel but let it be the hidden man of the heart in which is not corruptible even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price.

I want you to understand prayer and a good spirit but also the sixth thing we find here is a commitment to unconditional love. When people get married you need to be understanding what you're entering into.

You're saying on that day you get married that it's an unconditional love. I'm making a commitment to you no matter what.

[30 : 51] That's not to be entered into lightly because you need to understand the ramifications of what you're saying because life is not going to be easy but I want you to understand having an attitude and an understanding saying I'm entering into this on a long term permanent basis from the very get go.

and to act accordingly. I can't just trade it off and this is not a test drive. People try to test drive marriage today and when they're test driving they actually destroy the very foundation that they need to build.

Instead of doing what the world says well see if you're compatible I want you to understand your conversation all the things prior to is how you find out whether you're compatible and how you think how you process how everything comes together are you in agreement on these things are you moving the same direction on these things because if you're not doing those things the rest of it's never going to come together.

I want you to understand it's not love that sustains your commitment it's commitment that sustains your love. An unconditional love says I have chosen to love you and there's nothing you're going to do that's going to change it.

That unconditional love love is a feeling. Love is not an emotion in that context when it comes to marriage.

[32 : 18] Love is a commitment. Love is a promise. It's something that's a mental astute and a choice that's attached to it to say I have chosen you.

If you don't enter into marriage saying I have chosen this person no matter what I'm going to invest everything into it there'll be a problem because I want you to understand if you come in with an understanding of an unconditional love commitment the emotion will still be attached to it but you can have the emotion will come and go if there's not commitment there has to be a commitment to it these are essential things when it comes to being married and being best friends together and I hope maybe this has helped some these are things that are essential and critical to relationships put them into practice you're not testing what the preacher says you're testing what God says how can you say that I can rest assured if you put into practice what God says it's going to turn out and turn in a direction that it ought to because you have to do your part in that and so hopefully this series in the last few weeks have been helpful and beneficial maybe even to yourself or to others because we all have people that we see that are dealing with these things or we're dealing with them ourselves or we have people that are young people that look to get married these are things you need to enter into with your eyes open and understand the realities and what it takes to be married for 40 or 50 years to celebrate things together to go through the good times the bad times the rough times the smooth times all those things are going to happen marriage is not a straight line it's sometimes a bumpy road with great things along the way but it's worth it it's worth the investment to be best friends with your spouse let's pray heavenly fathers as we come before you this morning lord we're just thankful for you