

Know RESPECT

- ✖ The secret to winning a woman's heart is found in the pages of God's Word.

Years ago a couple came to us for marriage counseling who were on the verge of divorce. Why? Because the husband continually failed to lower the toilet seat!

Thankfully, we can report that they are happily married today. Generally speaking, however, men really don't understand women. But why?

God created men and women with diversity. He gave them both a need and a desire for one another. But He wired them biologically and psychologically differently. Your failure to understand this will create continual tension and frustration in your relationships.

1 Corinthians 7:3 says, "The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband" (NIV). It is a husband's job to learn God's expectation for him and understand his wife's needs.

In the process, he earns her respect. And just what does a woman respect?

1. A woman respects a man with a sense of humor. In poll after poll, when asked what they want most in a man, women answer, "A good personality and sense of humor." A woman loves a man who can laugh—and make her laugh. She is impressed with a man who sees the cup as half full, rather than half empty (see Phil. 4:8).

2. A woman respects a man of vision. A woman intuitively knows when her man has no vision. It leaves her with a sense of insecurity. A man of vision sets goals and works toward the betterment of himself and his family.

At marriage, a woman may feel that she must abandon her gifts, callings and dreams at the altar to fulfill her husband's. Blend your dreams with hers. Help her fulfill her kingdom potential. That's covenant marriage!

3. A woman respects a chivalrous man. A woman never tires of a man opening a door for her or pulling out a chair. She desires flowers, long walks and romantic evenings.

Never let anyone speak derogatorily of your wife or girlfriend. Fathers, never let a child of yours say anything to your wife that you wouldn't let the man next door say to her.

4. A woman respects a man who takes care of his body. Scripture teaches that a husband and wife are one flesh (see Gen. 2:24 and Eph. 5:31). The care you show your own body shows your wife that you love her. This means working out, eating correctly and practicing good hygiene.

There is nothing romantic about armpit stains, yellow teeth or toenails that look like ancient Egyptian artifacts. It is a shame that it takes a "queer eye" to teach a "straight guy" what women want!

5. A woman respects a man who respects her. Weak men devalue women. Jesus respected women—even women that other men refused to respect. He spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well. He spoke to the woman with the issue of blood. His closest female friend was Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. In fact, it was women, not men, who provided financially for His ministry (see Luke 8:1-3).

Treat her as your equal. In the Spirit-led marriage, Paul says to husbands and wives, "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21, The Amplified Bible). He explained to the Galatians, "In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal. That is, we are all in a

common relationship with Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3:28, The Message).

6. A woman respects a man who talks with her not just at her.

A common complaint from women is that they feel ignored in conversational settings.

Gary Smalley, who has written extensively about marriage, says that a woman requires 10,000 words a day to communicate. But a man needs only 2,000 words each day. So, don't be surprised when you come home exhausted from work and are finished talking for the day and discover that she is just getting started.

Here is the best advice we can give you: Listen with your eyes. If she's speaking and you are focused on the television, the computer monitor or the newspaper, you aren't listening.

A man is an intellectual processor. He talks to express thoughts, solve problems and arrive at conclusions. When talking about a problem, a man wants the bottom line.

A woman tends to be an emotional processor. Your wife talks about her problem primarily to process her emotions, not her thoughts. She's not wasting words and time.

Rule: If her lips are moving, she's processing her problem with words. Interrupt her with your solutions at your own peril. She'll find relief by talking it out, not by hearing your solution. Just listen (yes, with your eyes).

7. A woman respects a decisive man—a man with initiative.

Ambitious men attract women. A woman respects a man who is willing to take the bull by the horns, step up to the plate and accept responsibility. Paul wrote, "The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does to his church, not by domineering but by cherishing [her]" (Eph. 5:23).

A strong woman married to a weak man will tend to do one of

two things: She will back up in order to get the husband to step forward, or she will step up and assume his roles and responsibilities. Either way, she betrays herself in an attempt to provoke him to manhood. In time, this relationship will suffer.

8. A woman respects a one-woman man. She wants to know that she is the only woman in your heart. This rules out porn and Internet sex. A godly man will put a guard over his eyes and his heart. It also rules out continual comparisons and/or references to your first wife or your mother. And never discuss intimate things with any other woman but your wife, lest you commit “emotional adultery.”

9. A woman respects a thoughtful man. Some men tend to have selective memory. He can remember the length and weight of the bass he caught in '83, but he can't remember his wife's birthday. He can recall the points on the deer he shot in '99, but he has difficulty remembering his anniversary. Thank God for PDAs!

Also, you may fail to realize that women need relationships with other women. They communicate socially with one another on a level that men can't. If you don't understand this, you may think she is not a good wife or mother because she wants to be with her friends.

A thoughtful husband gives his wife time to be with her friends. He will occasionally take care of the children while she goes to a movie with her friends.

10. A woman respects a man who loves her. Scripture instructs, “Husbands, go all out in your love for your wives, exactly as Christ did for the church—a love marked by giving, not getting” (Eph. 5:25). There are three areas that you can focus on today to express love to your wife:

First: Her children are extensions of who she is. If you ignore the children, refuse to affirm or to discipline them,

you are ignoring her.

Second: Her house. Your house is also an expression and an extension of who your wife is.

When you ignore a leaky faucet, a burned-out bulb or any other of her concerns regarding the house, you are ignoring her. Learn it.

Third: Her time. She wants to be your friend, as well as your lover. She has many demands on her time, but what she wants is time alone with you! Select a weekly date night, and arrange for a baby sitter. To her, companionship and friendship is more than sharing the same space; it is sharing the same interests, goals and dreams for the future.

The question isn't, "Do you love your wife?" It's, "Are you loving your wife?" Love is what you do, not what you feel. How can you know?

We suggest you take 1 Corinthians 13, "The Love Chapter," and insert your name for the word "love." Now read it aloud and ask yourself, "Does this describe me?" If not, then list the areas that need improvement.

Take them before the Lord in prayer. Ask the woman in your life to hold you accountable. Intentionally grow into the man God is calling you to be.

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