

R-E-S-P-E-C-T: A Two-Way Street

This subject is for both husbands and wives. Why? Some may be surprised to learn that FivestarMan has an interested audience of women curious to know more about the quest for authentic manhood for the man in their life.

Shelly, via Facebook, asked this question recently: "How do I show respect to my husband?"

To answer, I would say this: It would be very difficult to show respect to your husband if he first didn't show his love toward you.

So let us first discuss the man's role in gaining respect from his wife. The apostle Paul addresses this very question by directing his command to the man first: "Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband" (Eph. 5:33, NIV).

Paul continues by equating the relationship Jesus has with the church with the relational and emotional needs of a healthy marriage. He actually prods the husband to understand that the love he has for his wife should be sacrificial—even to the point of death. That's a very strong statement, and yet that's exactly the kind of love a husband should strive to have and show toward his wife. To be honest, very few husbands have lived up to that standard, but it is certainly a worthy goal.

Men, know this: The greatest need of a woman is to be loved.

The apostle goes on to teach the power a husband's words have on his wife. He says the words of a man have the ability to cleanse, even sanctify, his wife. This is why the words of a husband should be useful for edifying and strengthening his wife.

Yes, there are times a man's words may seem like a rebuke or correction, but the spirit behind those words should be out of his love for her, never to damage or oppress her.

By the same token, a man should never allow his wife to speak derogatory statements over herself.

Why? There is enmity between the world system and the woman. It only takes a few minutes spent viewing television commercials to see the degradation aimed toward women. This skewed view makes many women feel they can never live up to the unnatural standards portrayed. A natural tendency, then, is to feel a sense of despair and condemnation. However, a husband has authority to speak kind and comforting words over his wife that will cleanse her from unrighteous condemnation.

And now for the women. Know this: The greatest need of a man is to be respected.

Paul instructs women that men need something different than the communicative emotion of love. Men actually need to be respected. Men value the position of honor and expect to be treated with it. The husband should live in such a way that merits honor, and in return his wife should show respect toward him. She should esteem him. She should listen and carefully receive from him.

God honors protocol. He will honor the fact that the husband is the "head" of the wife. God speaks *through* leadership, not *around* leadership. God will use the husband to speak instructional advice to his wife.

What if the husband is an unbeliever? "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God" (Rom. 13:1).

God has established husbandry as the authority of the home. The husband is the designed protector, provider and promoter

of the home. Even though he may not be a believer, a woman should do her best to honor her husband's role. (For more information regarding the protocol of authority, you may download a free copy of *The Centurion Principle* at .)

So, how ought you, as a woman, show respect?

- Honor your husband. Do so by never speaking down to him or belittling him to any of your friends. Do not grumble against him.
- Encourage him by giving him gratitude and praise for what he does and what he provides for your family. A simple gesture of thanks goes a long way for a man.
- Think of creative ways to serve him and show kindness toward him.
- Do not nag at him. Proverbs warns of the nagging wife—even suggesting that it would be better to live in the corner of the attic or even in a dry and desolate place than with a nag. Don't do it.
- Do not compare him to anyone else. Do not be snippy or sarcastic.
- Do not raise your voice to him. Speak to him in a respectful and honorable tone.
- Be quick to apologize when you are wrong. Do not allow strife to exist between you. Where there is strife, there is every evil work.
- Save some energy for him. I know you have a lot going on around the house, especially if you have small children. However, make sure you nurture your time with him and only him. Make your bedroom a sanctuary. Children should not run into your room. They should knock on the door for permission to enter. I know you may be thinking I am unrealistic at this point, but I am not. In fact, let me go one step further: Do not allow your children to sleep with you in the master bedroom.
- Go to your husband for answers. He is given a position of wisdom, and you need to draw upon his wisdom.

- Finally, make sure that you pray for your husband daily.

*For the original article, visit . Fivestarman was founded in 2008 by **Neil Kennedy**. Kennedy has passionately promoted God's Word for 25-plus years of ministry. He is known for practically applying biblical principles that elevate people to a new level of living. As a business, church, ministry and life consultant, Kennedy has helped others strategize the necessary steps to reach their full potential.*