

Unleash the Divine Potential of Your Marriage Relationship With This Powerful Secret

A young man shared a personal story with me that illustrated how traditional approaches to marriage can be so confining and destructive. He shared this story over several days while shuttling me from my hotel to a conference where I was a guest speaker.

He told how he and his wife had a successful business in which they provided personalized handbags, caps, pens and so forth for churches, conferences and special events throughout North America. His wife, who is a CPA and has a university degree in accounting, ran the office while he worked with sales and customer relations.

They functioned in a partnership according to their gifts and abilities and both their marriage and business flourished.

The pastors of their church, however, took them aside and counseled them that they were out of divine order in their marriage. The pastors explained that whoever controls the money in a relationship, controls the relationship. Because the wife, as the accountant, was controlling the money, she was controlling the relationship. As the man and “head” of the home, it was his responsibility to control the money and the relationship.

The pastors’ advice, unfortunately, was based on a narrow reading of Ephesians 5:21-33 that did not consider the context of the passage nor the many other biblical passages about marriage.

Wanting to do what was right, they exchanged jobs. He took over the office and accounting, and she began doing sales and

customer relations. They both hated their new responsibilities, and things quickly began to deteriorate. After a few weeks, they were in danger of going bankrupt, and there was strife and tension in their marriage. He exclaimed, "It didn't work!"

They found it necessary to return to their original approach in which they functioned in a partnership according to their gifts and abilities. When they did, peace returned to their relationship, and their business began to prosper. The full potential of their marriage relationship was, once again, unleashed.

The Power of Partnership

The marriage in which a man and woman function, not according to their gender, but according to their gifts and abilities, will know no limits. Such an approach to marriage will facilitate the synergism and multiplication of power Jesus promised in Matthew 18:19, where He said,

"Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 18:19).

"Agree" in this passage is a translation of the Greek word *sumphonesosin*, from which we get "symphony." A symphony orchestra is made up of different musical instruments with different sounds, but when they all play the same melody in the same key, something beautiful comes forth. Jesus said that if any two of his followers would make a symphony of faith about anything, it would be done.

Christian marriage is the place, more than any other, where such a symphony should be occurring. But such a symphony can only occur where there is freedom for each marriage partner to respond to the heavenly maestro in their unique gifts and calling. When this happens, the full potential of their marriage will be unleashed.

Jesus Affirms Partnership in Marriage

Jesus affirmed partnership in marriage by pointing his listeners to the creation model in Genesis 1-2, before the fall, as the model for Christian marriage. This came through in his response to the Pharisees' question of whether it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife "for any reason" (Matt. 19:3b).

In response to their inquiry, Jesus pointed them to marriage as it existed before the fall. He said,

He answered, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? (Matt. 19:4-5).

The Pharisees then quoted Deuteronomy 24:1 to justify their unjust treatment of their wives. Jesus responded by saying that Moses made this accommodation because of the hardness of their hearts, "but from the beginning, it was not so" (Matt. 19:8b). Thus He once again points them back to the creation model, before the fall, as God's original plan for marriage.

This is vital, for in the creation story in Genesis 1-2, there is perfect equality and mutuality between the sexes. Both are given the same authority and the same blessing, and neither is given authority or priority over the other. The plural pronoun is used throughout in what has been called "the Genesis Mandate."

"God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen. 1:28).

At the beginning, God gave the man and woman authority over creation, not over one another. Man having dominion over the

woman does not appear until after the fall and the entry of sin into the world. The statement to the woman in Genesis 3:16 that “your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you” is listed as part of the curse coming into the world because of sin.

Genesis 3:16 is not God’s plan for marriage. Jesus made this clear when He exhorted the people of his day to go back to how it was at the beginning—before the fall—to find God’s original plan for the marriage relationship. To unleash the full potential of our marriages, we must follow the instructions of Jesus and aspire for God’s very best as it was at the beginning.

Paul Affirms Partnership in Marriage

In Paul’s most extensive teaching on marriage, he clearly insists on mutuality between the two marriage partners. The passage is 1 Corinthians 7:1-16, where Paul discusses practical issues related to marriage such as sex, divorce, unbelieving spouses and decision-making.

It is the only passage on marriage in which Paul uses the word “authority,” and he gives the same authority to the wife as to the husband. In fact, throughout this discussion, Paul purposely balances the responsibilities and rights of the husband with those of the wife so that what results is a marriage that expresses mutuality and partnership.

Commenting on this, the well-known New Testament scholar Dr. Gordon Fee says,

“In a way quite unlike anything else in all his letters, the argument alternates between men and women (12 times in all). And in every case there is complete mutuality between the sexes” (Hyatt, *Who’s the Boss?*, 43).

Examples of this are as follows:

1. *Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband (v. 2).*
2. *Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her and likewise also the wife to her husband (v. 3).*
3. *The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does (v. 4).*
4. *The husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does (v. 4).*
5. *Do not deprive one another except with consent (v. 5).*
6. *A wife is not to depart from her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife (v. 10).*
7. *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy (v. 14).*

Throughout this entire discussion of marriage, there is mutuality and partnership. Only in such a marriage will both partners be free to function in their unique gifts and calling, and only then will the full potential of their marriage be unleashed.

It Works Because it is True

My wife, Dr. Susan Hyatt, and I had the privilege of working for a time with T.L. and Daisy Osborn, who exemplified this model of marriage. Although T.L. was world-renowned for his massive miracle crusades in many parts of the world, his ministry would not have been possible apart from his partnership with Daisy.

Daisy was the one who did the groundwork of setting up those massive crusades. She would fly into a country months in advance. She would preach in churches, meet with pastors, form a crusade committee and rent a stadium. She would obtain the necessary government permits, acquire sound equipment and

oversee the multitude of details necessary for such a crusade to happen.

When everything was ready, T.L. would fly in and preach to the multitudes. He once said, "Daisy goes in first and drives out all the devils, and then I go in and preach." They functioned in their gifts, and the full potential of their marriage was unleashed. As a result, millions were blessed.

Who Has the Final Say?

"But," some will ask, "What if a couple just cannot agree on an issue? Who has the right to make the final decision in that situation?"

After 43 years of marriage, Sue and I cannot answer that question, for we have not come to such an impasse. Yes, we have had disagreements—some very serious ones. However, when we both die to self and go to our knees seeking what is best, resolution ultimately comes.

You see, Christian marriage is not a two-way partnership. It is a three-way partnership, with God as the senior partner. Marriage is His idea, and as each marriage partner yields to Him and flows in their unique gifts and personalities, the full potential of their marriage relationship will be unleashed. {eoa}

This article was derived from Dr. Eddie Hyatt's book, Who's the Boss? available from Amazon and his website at . Eddie is a member of the board of directors of God's Word to Women and is convinced that the fullness of spiritual awakening will only be realized when accompanied by an equal recognition of the gifts and callings of the female part of Christ's body. He is available to speak on this issue and can be contacted at dreddiehyatt@.

This article originally appeared at .

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