

Love and Respect – The Little Black Book (Week 3)

HOOK

1st Abiding Harvest camping trip story – lost in the Ozarks. Major, quiet argument.

Last week: I mentioned God gave men and women a common mission but unique giftings. He created us as two parts of one puzzle on purpose so together we show a clearer picture of who HE is – all He does points to His glory. Paul recognized this mysterious and beautiful truth. Further, he also recognized God created us with different core needs.

BOOK

Are you willing to do whatever it takes to have the marriage you've always hoped for? Tonight may challenge you.

Ephesians 5:31-33 - *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

- Paul reaches back to Genesis to define marriage and confirms God intended marriage to show the love of Jesus.
- Both a man and woman are created with unique gifts and unique core needs.
- When a husband serves his wife's need, it brings unity to their marriage and reflects Jesus. When a wife serves her husband's need, it brings unity to the marriage and reflects the church.
- Both men and women need love and respect, but both are waiting for one.

For us to serve each other well, we must choose to be selfless.

LOOK

Deepest Need of a Woman = LOVE

* This means daily showing her that you choose her and are hers. Affirm to her you have chosen her and are hers. Make sure she feels your unconditional affection, awareness, show her she dominates your thoughts. **Ex.** Over your work or entertainment, you choose to send her a text or schedule time to be with her.

- Spaghetti: When she feels **loved**, she feels connected, and that satisfaction connects to everything else in her life.

- With every issue she faces, she is carrying that feeling of affirmation, confidence, and value. No matter how hard the problem, everything is still colored by those positive feelings.

Deepest Need of a Man – RESPECT

* This means showing affirmation for him and celebrating his character, abilities, and achievements. He needs to feel your admiration, belief in him and confidence in his ability to handle life. With all the tasks around, you believe he is adequate to lead in taking them on.

- Waffle: When he feels **respected**, he feels successful, and he takes that feeling into every box of his life. With every issue he faces, he is carrying those feelings of accomplishment, confidence, and value. No matter how hard the problem, it doesn't seem quite as impossible.
- Of 400 men polled, 74% said they'd rather feel alone and unloved than inadequate and disrespected.

The beauty of how God made us for unity is this: When the man gives his **love**, her natural reaction is to return her **respect**. When the woman gives **respect**, his natural reaction is to give his **love**.

- When our need is being met, we feel **energized** about life and excitement about the relationship.
- This mutual care creates the **ENERGIZING CYCLE** (around and around).
- The great news: There doesn't seem to be an end to how high this can climb or how beautiful it can become. I don't think it peaks. Ask our hero couples.

The danger is: (The root of most destroyed marriages) When the man acts without **love**, her natural reaction is to withhold/act without **respect**. When the woman acts without **respect**, his natural reaction is to withhold/act without **love**.

- When our need is not being met, we feel discouraged about life and frustrated about the relationship.
- This mutual defensiveness creates the **CRAZY CYCLE** (around and around).
- The awful news: There IS a limit to the downward spiral. It ends in division and pain and everyone around suffers too (ie. Your children). Some of you have woundedness in your hearts that is a product of your parent's crazy cycle.

You MUST learn to defeat the Crazy Cycle!

Ephesians 5:33 – *let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

- Doesn't leave room for an if/then argument. "If she will respect me, then I will love her. If he will love me, then I'll respect him."
- Jesus modeled this selflessness – **1 John 4:10** - *...not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the substitute for our sins.*
- Good news: It only takes **one** to break the crazy cycle, but the only person you can change is **YOU**.
- "If you're not liking what you're getting, change what you're giving." You will have to be the difference to break the momentum of the runaway selfishness.

The HOW – How do we begin the energizing cycle?

Ephesians 5:21-24 These are the verses directly before Paul describes our deepest needs. He is teaching on two levels. **1)** How have unity with Jesus. **2)** How to have unity in marriage.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is Himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

- **1)** What unites Christ and the church? Our submitting to Jesus.
- **2)** What will bring unity in marriage? Wives submitting to husbands.

Ephesians 5:25-28 - *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.*

- **1)** What unites Christ and the church? Jesus sacrificing for the church.
- **2)** What will bring unity in marriage? Husbands sacrificing for their wives.

How do we break the crazy cycle and begin the energizing cycle?

- **Wives** are told to submit and allow their husbands to lead. This is her primary way of showing **respect**.
- **Husbands** are told to sacrifice and give up his personal gains for her sake. This is his primary way of showing **love**.

Look how this reflects God's character! Jesus sacrificed Himself so we could be "washed" and made "holy without blemish." What can we do but reply with obedience? Jesus attached obedience to love – (John 14:15) – "if you love me, you'll obey my commandments." Do you love Jesus? If you're not obeying Him, you don't love Him. If the world doesn't see a Christian being obedient to Jesus, they won't put much weight in the value of the cross. **We obey because of His love for us.**

- Future husbands, you are to submit to God and **sacrifice** for your wives.
 - Jesus held nothing back, but acted as a servant **LEADING** us to follow His example. Jesus shepherds (guides, protects, provides) out of **love**.
- Future wives, **submit** to God and obey God by **respecting** your husbands.
- What's the benefit of obeying God?

Genesis 2:24-25 - *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*

- Since Adam didn't have a father or mother, this note wasn't written for him, but for us. God's definition of marriage: 1 man + 1 woman + His blessing (1:28). What's the benefit? = Blessed unity.
- "Naked marriage:" Not just a sexual reference, but a marriage without shame. Imagine a unity with them without secrets, without baggage from your pasts, without embarrassment for flaws. A marriage where you're one-minded, that lasts, that thrives, that keeps the passion alive!
 - Do you want God's blessing on your marriage? Do things HIS way.

Paul concludes by reminding us of the ultimate purpose of a united marriage.

Ephesians 5:31-33 - *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

- Purpose 1: A relationship like this reveals the relationship between Jesus/us.
- Purpose 2: A relationship like this brings unity, fulfillment, and endurance to the marriage.

To the Women: In our politically correct culture, the idea of submission to anyone carries the fear of becoming a doormat having to obey someone who will exercise their power over you for their own selfish gain.

- **Submission** = Sub-mission: Under a mission. The root of the word is a military term for flanking the enemy – working together.
 - “Anything with two heads is a monster.” – Pastor Rene. There can’t be unity in a two-headed marriage.
 - But with 1 taking lead and 1 flanking the problem-at-hand brings victory.
- Respecting your future husband’s leadership is creating **unity**.
 - If you’re not ready to be under his mission, you’re not ready for a man of God yet. You just want a little boy to give you what you want.
- **Disclaimer**: You are not called to submit to just any boy. Before you say, “I do” you’re still in the “choosing wisely” season of your life. You are commissioned to obey **Jesus**, your **parents**, and your governing **authorities**. You don’t have to give in to anything your boyfriend wants. He’s not your husband.
 - Choose wisely someone you’re willing to submit to.
 - If the husband is head of the wife, who is the Head of the husband? It should be Jesus. You need to know who this boy serves before you ever get involved with him? If he doesn’t serve Jesus, you don’t want to be under his leadership someday.
- **Matthew 20:25-28** – (disciples wanted power) *Jesus called them to Him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*
 - Future wives, in the marriage you hope for, does your husband submit to Jesus? If he’s made Jesus his role model in serving you, he will be a leader who is easy to respect.
 - If love is a choice, you have the power to choose WISELY.
- **Ladies, choose wisely** = a man who is surrendered to Jesus. Let him lead, and watch the **energizing cycle** begin to work.

Break the crazy cycle!

To the Men: Future husbands, you are commanded by your Authority to love her through sacrifice. That means giving up what you want moment-by-moment for Jesus, for her, and your family.

- A woman of God can join that. It’s far easier for her to respect a man who makes Jesus his role model because as she’s being submissive, you’re being

sacrificial. She will feel much more comfortable joining a husband who she believes is making decisions based on her and her family's best interest and not in selfishness.

- You're going to have the privilege of sacrificing many of your wants for your family's needs. Your free time, hobbies, some friends will be minimalized in the light of your responsibility.
- One way of loving her (and it's also super wise) is making her your #1 advisor. Let her spaghetti all around the decisions at hand and express to you how everything connects. You will be blown away by the missing pieces of the puzzle you missed when you were about to jump to a decision. You'll be able to make a much wiser decision when you've looked at all she sees, and she'll be able to accept your making a decision much easier when she feel HEARD.
 - 99% of the time, Jacqui and I agree on decisions. When we've both brought our gifts to the table (my logic; her everything else), the solution is fairly easy for us to see. Remember, for her to jump from problem to solution is counter to how she works. Until she can spaghetti, she won't feel at peace even with the right solution.
 - In those rare times that I make a decision she disagreed with, we celebrate when it turns out to be right and she forgives me when I was wrong. I don't humiliate her when the decision was right and she doesn't abandon respect for me when it's wrong.
- Submission means she is stepping under your mission, your purpose. And, if your purpose isn't beyond yourself, for something/Someone greater than yourself, then you are asking her to make YOU her purpose. Do you see how selfish that is? She will have a very hard time respecting you.
 - What's your purpose? If you don't have one, you're not ready for a woman of God yet. You just want a little girl to make you feel good about yourself.
- Note: If a girl won't submit herself to Jesus, she probably won't submit to you.
- Men, choose wisely = a woman surrendered to Jesus. Sacrifice for her and watch the **energizing cycle** gain momentum.

Break the crazy cycle!

To Future Wives: Trust him, believe in him, support him, and join him.

- Everyday your husband will be asking, "Are you proud of me? Do you admire me? Do you trust me?"

To Future Husbands: Give her unconditional affection. Display your love extravagantly!

- Everyday your wife will be asking, “do you choose me today?”

When our relationships reflect God’s plan, we inspire each other. When Jacqui submits to me, it makes me want to pour out love on her. I imagine it’s the same for her.

RECAP

- A woman’s deepest need – love. A man’s deepest need – respect.
- When given, they create the energizing cycle. Withheld, the crazy cycle.
- Good news: It only takes one to break the crazy cycle.
- Love is expressed through sacrifice. Respect is expressed through submission. These fuel the energizing cycle.
- When both are obeying the Lord, it 1) brings unity to the marriage and 2) shows the relationship between Jesus and us. He sacrificed for us; we obey Him.

TOOK

Are you willing to do whatever it takes to have the marriage you’ve always hoped for?

Challenge 1: If you missed one or both of the last two weeks, listen to them on podcast. Every week will build on the previous ones. You’ll be lost in some parts if you’ve missed out.

Challenge 2: Our first commission is to give all our love/respect to Jesus. Pray tonight about how he would like you to give more sacrifice and obedience in your life. If you’re brave enough, listen.