

Love & Respect

Ephesians 5:33

Each of you must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Ephesians 5:33 is the key to a biblical husband / wife relationship. If we don't apply this biblical principle to our marriage, we find ourselves with the natural result called the Crazy Cycle.

Crazy Cycle:

When he does not express his love to her; she reacts to him without respect.

When she does not give her respect to him; he reacts to her without love.

The reason the Crazy Cycle keeps spinning is lack of communication. Communication is not to be confused with talking. We must learn to decipher what our spouse is saying because it is not always evident what their words mean. We also send each other non-verbal body language messages where our actions speak louder than words. Our words are put through a filter because we all interpret words and body language from our male or female perspective. Men and women look at life differently. The following is an example.

A couple is getting ready to go out with friends and they both say "I have nothing to wear." This statement is not precise enough to get the message across, and requires more information.

The woman means "I have nothing _____ to wear."

The man means "I have nothing _____ to wear."

We don't always fill in the blanks when we talk because we don't realize that our spouse has a different perspective of the situation. They should know what I mean. The Crazy Cycle starts because we don't understand how our spouse doesn't understand what I am saying.

What I said is not what you heard, and what you think you heard is not what I meant at all.

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Most of the time the issues we argue over are only the symptom of the problem. It is only after we realize that the real issue is the love and respect dynamic, we can start to deal with the source of the problem. As we make progress in expressing love and respect, we see the symptoms of anger and tension dissipate.

Once we decide to get off the Crazy Cycle and get on the Energizing Cycle we still must be taught how to love or respect our spouse in ways that are meaningful to them. Men do not instinctively know how to express love to their wife that is meaningful to her. Likewise, the wife does not know how to give respect to her husband that is meaningful to him. The initial effort to get on the Energizing Cycle is typically awkward since each does not know what expressions of love or respect are meaningful to the other. The Love and Respect book has 12 chapters (6 for men and 6 for women) on how to express love or respect to your spouse in ways that are meaningful to them.

Women develop relationships face to face, they talk. For men, face to face is a confrontation. Men develop relationships shoulder to shoulder in silence. Fishing, and hunting are two examples.

Applying Ephesians 5:33 to your marriage is a very strong dynamic. The love and respect principles operate at an action / reaction level in your relationship. It takes two to keep the Crazy Cycle going. It only takes one to stop it. You cannot argue with someone that will not reply with the same hurtful comments given to them. You can disable the Crazy Cycle if you apply God's word (Eph. 5:33) to the situation and reply with love or respect as appropriate. Do you choose to believe and obey God's word, or do you respond in the natural? This is an application of the Spirit / Soul / Body lessons we just finished. Will you allow the Holy Spirit to convince your Soul to respond according to God's word?