

Helping a Woman Thrive in Marriage

As a leader, you want your women to thrive in their marriages because if the women thrive in their marriages, you got happy husbands, you have a better church, the women are happier. As a pastor or leader, you create an environment for the men and women to thrive in their marriages. In some ways, to have a woman thrive in her marriage, she needs to know who she actually married. She married a male. Masculinity. This male is an image bearer.

Who is he? Well, he is a spiritual being. A lot of times, wives will joke about “Like my husband, you know. Is he really that spiritual?” “Oh no. He is a spiritual being.” And his spirituality many times expresses itself in maybe not his emotional ways but he’s a dominion seeker. He needs to work. He has work. He has a life. In Genesis 1, he is to have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air. That’s core to him. I see that a lot in young wives where they sort of feel like work is in competition. But no. It’s part of his DNA as a man. He is often competitive, and this is something some of the wives don’t like and they fight it and fight it and fight it.

He is often competitive. A woman is competitive but the competitive nature is just a little different. A guy is competitive and he’s like obvious about it. A woman can be more subtle about it. But the man’s obvious competitive nature is often something that turns femininity off. But understand that’s often how guys are and they are obvious about it. They want to win and they want everybody know they want to win.

He is more sexually intimate. This is probably one of the hardest things for a female, a woman, a wife to grasp. But sometimes she can grasp it but sometimes she can’t grasp it. That a lot of times, a guy just right away gets physical and the wife is sort of like “What? We just had an argument and now you want to have sex?” Well, understand that for a guy often that sexual experience, intimacy, creates the platform for emotional connecting; whereas for a woman, emotional connecting creates the platform for sexual experience. So anyway, just understand that’s sort of how it is. In some ways, just like for a

woman, he too is still a boy at heart. He wants to play. He wants to win. There's part of every man that's twelve years old. A woman needs to know that.

Let's talk about what he essentially needs from his wife. Well, the Bible says that he needs that biblical submission, that loyalty. Wives, submit to your husbands as it is fitting to the Lord. Accept it of his maleness. I know that for many women, this becomes an equality thing. "I'm just as equal to him." We're not talking equality. We're talking about biblical submission.

Every team needs that team leader. Notice the keyword "In the Lord." It's not saying that he's right in every decision. It's not saying that if in fact if he leads in the way that's not in the Lord or not biblical, his servant submission, his thinking of the best is called into question. But I'm talking in general that attitude of submission is a biblical theme that he is not to be in submission to you, that you are to be in that biblical submission to him as your leader.

Now, this is very complicated today. As pastors, you're going to have to figure out locally how that works as somehow we have abused, we have men in the past who have major abuse authority problems. In some ways, this biblical submission feels more utopian than ever. What I mean by utopian? It seems like is that even practical today in the day of equality, women's rights, and all these things.

Maybe today, that has to be understood in a way where we're moving in the direction back to the more biblical submission from the men's point of view to be a servant leader to lay down his life for his wife and give to her that servanthood and for the woman to trust the man after what happened to her life. What I'm basically saying is that we should not throw out biblical submission, number one, because it's in the Bible and number two, there is great joy and treasure and benefit if we can align our lives back into that of the Scriptures.

A man needs respect back to his maleness. It says that a husband is to love his wife, so a wife needs love, affirmation, faithfulness, loyalty, and care. But a husband needs respect. So as you're pastoring the wives and the women of the church, is sharp-lipped wife who always puts her husband down and so forth, that's something that just goes against who he is. The apostle Paul says, "And the wife must respect her husband." I have a book in this class called *Love and Respect* by Eggerichs and

that's an outstanding book and I highly recommend it to really dig in to what love and respect means from scripture.

What does he essentially need from his wife? He needs a partner. Sometimes he may look like he doesn't need a partner but he needs to be completed from his partner. Behind a successful man is a great woman. I have seen that again and again and again. Back to Genesis 2, "For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife and they will become one flesh." Notice that first part. "And she will be called Woman because she was taken out of Man." God designed that the woman and the man would fit together and that femininity and that masculinity will work together to raise children, to do better in their businesses, better in their callings, better in their ministries, whatever. Together you are a team. Help a woman see that she is looking for how to complete her man.

What does he need? He needs intimacy. He needs that sexual sizzle with relational support. Now, again, this is one that gets to be a lot of debate right now because a lot of women they sort of see that and it turns them off. "So he's horny and he wants it right now. Oh, man. I'm not in the mood. I don't feel like it. The way he yelled at me two hours ago? No way." There's sort of that attitude. But help your women see that there's no games and conditions to that sexual part of their relationship as well.

I like how it says in Song of Songs 8:10. "I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers. Thus I have become in his eyes like one bringing contentment." Help your women see that they can protect their husbands. "I'm a wall." Their very presence, their physical presence—men are visual—can be towers, protection. They can be one who brings contentment. A guy can be grumpy and really crabby and doesn't want to be relational and all these things. He comes home. He got beaten up at work and all this. Somehow he gets a sexual urge and so he goes over his wife and the wife is like "Boy, is he grumpy. How can he even want sex right now?"

And then, she goes forward and she says, "I got to help my man. I got to love my man. I got to be turned on for my man. I'm in that mindset." And then, after they've had that sexual intimacy, it's like he opens up. He emotionally opens up and he is ready for the next day of struggle, to bring home the bacon, so to speak, for the family because he thinks if there is sexual sizzle, our relationship is great. And

then what happens? The relational side keeps increasing. I know there might be women out there who say, “No way. My husband, he just wants it and he’s gone.”

Well, he needs to get with men and he needs to be encouraged about the emotional sizzle. He needs to be encouraged about being that relationship romance man. In the church, as a pastor, that’s why we work in both women ministry and men ministry. We don’t just beat on the men to be more relational. No, we also encourage the women to come where a man is at. Together, you encourage both. And as both are encouraged, marriages are enhanced.

Romancing Your Husband is a book by Debra White. She wrote this book and she writes basically what he does not need and she talks about female chauvinism and it’s kind of interesting so I’ll read you some of the things she writes about. Help your women to understand that they shouldn’t roll their eyes and saying “That’s just like a man.” There is like a disrespect to them. Or telling jokes that out men down with other women or dishonoring husbands by scorning their needs. “Yeah, he’s going to come. He’s going to want sex and blah blah blah. He’s such a boy. He needs all that stuff and I’m here to be the big mommy.” Or treat your husband, the next one, as if they were your children.

Here’s another one. Thinking all day on how to control your husband and manipulating ways to do that. Believing that women are really superior to men. Debra says, “Don’t even go there. It brings you a lot of unhappiness.” Or joining in on “Let’s complain about men” gab session. Or discrediting husbands’ decisions, dreams, and masculinity. Here’s one. Criticizing your husband in front of children and friends. I have been a pastor a long time and I’ll see all of a sudden a wife just launch into criticizing her husband and I will just see his whole demeanor drop. I just see the hurt. And wives too. If a husband just started lay wasting into a wife how that would totally defeat a woman. But in front of children and friends, it really does have a negative impact.

Not speaking constructive criticism to a husband unless it’s in private and in love. They that women have a gazillion more brain cells than men do. My wife is way more capable of seeing what needs to be addressed and fixed in a hurry and she doesn’t do that. But I know that how it would feel to me like she just spilled off her opinions right in front of everybody. My wife will tell me in private when we’re in bed.

“You said this. I thought you were a little prideful there. I thought this...” And I just respect and love her for that.

And then Debra talks about from little girls, “Girls rule; boys drool.” That’s kind of funny. But it’s that attitude. It’s that attitude of how do you live with a man. As a pastor and leader, you are encouraging in each, you’re encouraging men to do their part, women to do their part, all guided by a walk with God because if you have healthy and thriving marriages, your church does a lot better.