

Understanding My Family

(This series of lessons was compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources and many teachers over a period of thirty years. The compiler is very grateful for their wisdom.)

Introduction:

- A. New series on relationships between husbands and wives, and parents and children
- B. Consider three principles throughout the series:
 1. God's plan for the family is all important
 2. Learning the difference between men and women, adults and children is necessary for successful relationships
 3. Our self-oriented expectations for the relationship are unimportant

I. MEN AND WOMEN ARE DIFFERENT

A. "Thank you, Obvious Man!"

1. Failure to remember and apply this fact is the second of three factors that leads to the unhappiness found in so many marriages
2. The first is failing to apply God's marriage instructions
3. The third is unmet expectations
4. We are going to address all three in this series of lessons

B. Men are not women

1. According to recent article in MEN'S HEALTH magazine the typical man.... * ...will produce about 25 feet of hair in his lifetime but one in five will go bald in their 20's. will produce up to a half gallon of sweat daily. He consumes 2,400 calories per day and his body is so efficient that if he ran on gasoline, he would get 900 miles per gallon. The typical male is married and would marry his spouse again. He cries about once a month, approximately one fourth as often as a woman and he usually tries to hide it.

2. H. Norman Wright adds, "Men snore more...they fight more...they change their minds more often than women do...their blood is redder...their daylight vision is superior.....they have thicker skins and longer vocal chords. Their metabolic rate is higher...more of them are left-handed...they feel pain less than women.....They age earlier but wrinkle later...their immunity against disease is weaker...they talk about themselves less, but worry about themselves more."

3. Men are attracted to women visually, and he gauges his relationship with his wife based on what he sees in her and what she does. Women are attracted to men based on what they say and reveal about themselves, and she gauges her relationship with her husband based on what he says to and about her and things important to her.

4. Men are usually focused on one thing at a time while women can be multi-focused, which is why our wives expect us to be able to watch TV and engage in conversation at the same time. Another difference: Men tend to seem to care less about relationships than women. This showed up in responses to a survey: When asked, "What do you wish your wives knew about you?" one husband said, "less" -- and another wrote, "She already knows too much." These men were using humor to say, "Relationships are hard for us to deal with. Let's just leave things be."

5. Dispel the myth that says that a man's only needs are PHYSICAL. This misconception has led us to say things like, "the way to a man's heart is through his STOMACH." I believe that husbands would say that this philosophy expresses a very shallow opinion of a man. For, deep down inside we have the same types of needs as our wives. Real men have emotions, we just experience them differently. "How many REAL MEN does it take to change a light bulb?" "Zero-because REAL MEN aren't afraid of the dark!"

6. Men just aren't equipped to communicate emotions. Young couple walking; he thinks: "What an extraordinary evening...the sunset is brilliant...and I am walking with the most beautiful girl in the world. It's as if this night was made for us! I'll never forget it as long as I live..." Then he turned to his girl and said, "I'm hungry. Want to go grab a burger?" And in great feminine frustration she replied, "Oh you're so Unromantic!" He wasn't unromantic; he just didn't know how to communicate it. Wives tend to think, "The marriage is working as long as we can talk about it." But husbands think, "The relationship is not working if we have to keep talking about it."

C. Women are not men

1. Book entitled, Everything Men Know About Women; every page blank

2. Sigmund Freud once said, "Despite my 30 years of research into the feminine soul, I have not yet been able to answer the great question, 'What does a woman want?'"

3. Many women can equal or surpass men in lower body strength which comes in handy when babies need to be born. And women tend to do better than men in long distance activities like running and swimming. The women's best time in swimming the English Channel is three hours better than the man's best time? Women tend to live 4-8 years longer than men. A woman's metabolism is slower than a man's....so it is harder for her to lose weight. Women have larger kidneys, liver, and stomach than men. A woman's heart beat's faster than a man's. They withstand high temperatures better than men do.

4. Men are geared to focus on accomplishing tasks and women on building relationships. Women tend to be interdependent while men tend to be independent. Men tend to compete; women tend to cooperate.

5. What does she need?

a. They need to have their husbands express UNCONDITIONAL LOVE to them – Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:19

b. WORDS OF AFFIRMATION - "I wish my husband knew that kind and encouraging words go a long way toward making me happy and content."

c. QUALITY TIME - I wish my husband knew how important time he spends with the family is to me and how hurtful it is when he chooses not to spend time with us but with his buddies."

d. RECEIVING GIFTS - "I wish my husband knew how much little things he does for me mean to me. They are more meaningful to me than the expensive endeavors."

e. PHYSICAL DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION – Helps everyone. Life insurance companies did a study recently and found that men who kiss their wives every day before they go to work have fewer accidents on the freeway. They also

discovered that men who kissed their wives the last thing before they go to bed at night live longer than other men. The same study found that men earned more money at their place of employment if they regularly showed physical affection for their wives.

f. ACTS OF SERVICE - "I wish my husband would respond to me the way he does to requests from the church."

D. Marriage requires that each partner gives 100% regardless of what one's mate does

1. Husbands and wives are supposed to live together, sleep together, eat together, spend money together, vacation together, socialize together, raise children together, worship together, and so on. How can we do this in a way that brings us fulfillment and joy -- and at the same time glorifies God -- if we don't understand each other? When we selfishly don't care about our spouse's unique needs this becomes an impossible and painful task.

2. Larry Crabb writes, "With selfishness in control, every effort to improve the relationship will create new problems....only when the central problem of self-centeredness is faced first and squarely can a desire to do right develop....then God's instructions become a delight, rather than a box to squeeze into, or an imposition on our freedom."

3. A good marriage relationship is one in which each partner willingly and actively devotes whatever he or she has to the well-being of the other. The song that says, "Learning to love yourself is the greatest love of all," is hogwash! You love yourself best when you love your spouse.

II. IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU!

A. Eph. 5:21-33

1. Where in that text do you read that you are entitled to anything?

2. If you are a man, you are commanded to love your wife. There is not a word in this text that authorizes you to demand anything from her

3. If you are a women, you are commanded to respect your husband.

There is not a word that authorizes you to demand anything from him.

B. Godly marriage is not about you; it's about your mate.

1. It is not about what I want in a wife

2. It is not about what she wants to be as a wife

3. It is not about what she wants in a husband

4. It is not about what you want to be as a husband

5. All of these are subjective and motivated by misguided priorities

6. We need to learn what God wants us to want in a mate, and if we do, over time we will learn to be happy with what God wants for us

C. There are three forces contending for dominance in marriages; these forces threaten to tear it apart

1. List what the man wants from his wife

2. List what the wife wants to be

3. Contrast these against what God expects her to be

D. Expectations are the enemy

1. They are oriented on the self and not the mate - selfish

E. True love is not self-oriented

1. Love wants the mate to be happy and fulfilled
2. Love finds its own happiness and fulfillment in providing for the happiness and fulfillment of others
3. If loving myself takes priority over loving God, or my mate, or children, then loving myself is a euphemism for selfishness
4. Modern psychology is in error on this point; one cannot properly love himself UNTIL he learns love by means of loving someone else and being loved in return
5. Psychology wants people to learn to love themselves without a genuine frame of reference; which is why this philosophy will always fall short of the Bible way.

Conclusion:

- A. How do I come to understand and love my spouse?
 1. I learn what God, the Designer of marriage, wants me to know about my mate and how I am to treat her.
 2. I learn to love her as she is by understanding that she is different with different likes and dislikes than men
 3. I prove my love to her and myself by letting go of selfish expectations for her part in the relationship