**A Gospel Marriage: Wives**

God gives us the gift of the marriage union. He has clearly designed marriage and shares its blueprint on the pages of scripture. One man is to leave his parents and be joined with one woman for life. In many ways marriage is a picture of the gospel story of Jesus. Jesus dies to bring an everlasting covenant union with his bride, which is the church. As people see the selfless love and devotion shown in a marriage covenant between spouses, they get a glimpse of God’s love for the world. As with all things in the world, marriage has experienced the effects of the fall, and we are to strive in the power of the Holy Spirit to uphold its original beauty/design.

**Read Gen. 2:18-25**Discuss the importance of seeing and understanding how God has designed marriage.

God’s design for marriage provides specific roles for both the husband and the wife. These roles bring order and beauty as husband and wife work in harmony to bring glory to God.

1. **God’s divine design** – God – Christ – Man – Woman – *1 Corinthians 11:3*
2. God created man and woman equal but different.
3. Marriage is a sacred covenant, designed by God, for the purpose of reflecting Christ and the church
4. Discuss how Christ is the head of every man – how a husband is the head of the wife – how God is the head of Christ.
5. **God’s design for wives**
	1. *Genesis 2:18* Women are created to be a help mate – to help the husband be the man God created him to be
		1. Eve was designed to complete her man – to nurture life in him and to create new life in children. God intentionally created man needing a helper.
		2. This means a husband:
			1. needs to feel confident and appreciated
			2. should receive support of their leadership in the home
			3. deserves respectful acknowledgement of their role in the family
		3. A wife’s task is to encourage her husband to obey God’s Word and will for their life.
	2. *Ephesians 5:21-24, 1 Peter 3:1-6*
		1. Submission is love by God’s design - it is a beautiful thing – it is more than a command; it is an expression of love to our husbands. A wife is to lovingly submit to her husband, his leadership, his everything (not against God).
		2. Submission is not a dirty word!!!! Being a helpmate is an honor, a privilege – it is important! *Ecclesiastes 4:9-10* and *Galatians 6:2*
		3. Submission expresses love – when you choose to place yourself under the authority of your husband – it says “I love you!”
			1. Lack of submission fuels resentment, resistance and rebellion.
			2. We should never criticize or attack our husbands, we are to respect and encourage them (be a doer of the word, not a hearer only - James)
		4. Ruth Graham said, “Tell your husband the positive and God the negative.”
		5. Discuss ways of being a help mate to your husband and how it is displayed through your submission to him. How does your submission to your husband honor God and bring Him glory?
6. **Love and Respect** – *Titus 2:3-5*
	1. Titus 2:3-5 is a letter to believers giving instructions on how to live a transformed life in Christian homes. How to “love“ your husband the way God designed = live your life the way God desires
	2. *Ephesians 5:21-33 “****submit to one another out of reverence for Christ****….husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church….so also* ***wives should submit*** *to their husbands…****wife must respect*** *her husband*”
		1. Love in action = submission
			1. Accept your husband’s suggestions w/o negative body language
			2. Make him feel appreciated in whatever love language he speaks
			3. Remember, actions speak louder than words…**.**
	3. Respect = love by God’s design.
		1. Norm Wright “Respect in marriage means ministering to your partner through listening, a loving embrace, a flexible mind and attitude, and a gracious spirit. It means looking past faults and differences and seeing strengths and similarities. It means sharing concerns mutually instead of attempting to carry the load yourself.”
			1. When we think about respect – we often say or think – “but….they don’t earn/deserve it or they’ve done something and lost it”
			2. We are commanded to love others as Christ loves us. Look at Psalm 103:8-10 and discuss why we are to show respect to our husbands and ways to practically do this.
7. Definition of a successful marriage – knowing and obeying God’s will as revealed in His Word. Faithfulness to God and to husband. Commitment to God given roles.

**6 things your husband needs**

1. Respect - Husbands need trust, admiration and to know you believe in them.

2. Admiration - When they receive regular and genuine affirmation from their wives (not flattery, by the way), they become much more secure and confident in all areas of their lives.

3. Appreciation - Men feel the burden of being the provider for their family; appreciate, encourage and support them.

4. Intimacy - Men simply need to be wanted. Regular, fulfilling sex is critical to a man's sense of feeling loved and desired. (Sex means more than sex. When men feel their wives desire them sexually, it has a profound effect on the rest of their lives. It gives them an increasing sense of confidence and well-being that carries over into every other area of his life.)

5. Confidence – Be your husband’s cheerleader and show him he is special to you. Your appearance matters. Husbands appreciate the efforts their wives make to maintain their attractiveness.

6. Clear Communication – not just the day-to-day happenings, but your thoughts and feelings towards him. Men want their wives to know how much they love them, so communicate with him openly about how you feel his love.

Personal application: What changes do you need to make to embrace your role as a wife? What is one way you can better show your husband respect and be his help mate?