

# It is what it is?

Week of October 11

Throughout the pages of Scripture are images of God longing to be a true Husband for His people, a metaphor of the most intimate of relationships. In the marriage union, a husband and wife share things no other person is privileged to know—the deepest level of love, sexual intimacy as a most sacred trust—where two hearts (and physical bodies) become one. When God made human beings in His image He created them male and female, one to compliment the other. There is a magnetic draw that the Lord put in Adam’s heart for Eve: “‘At last!’ The man exclaimed. ‘This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh!’ ... This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one” (Genesis 2:23a, 24).

Sin (brought on by the lie of the Serpent) distorted the beautiful marriage that God designed. And still to this day sin seeks to rob and destroy marriage after marriage. Ultimately, it’s only through Christ that marriage can be restored to its original beauty. Why? Because it is ultimately through our Savior that each man and woman is restored and forgiven of sin: “For your Creator will be you husband; the LORD of Heaven’s Armies is His name! He is your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the earth” (Isaiah 54:5). God never intended for marriage to be degraded to the level it is today. To even ask the question, “Do all marriages suck?” is a sad commentary on the twisted mindset that has so influenced our current culture.

Here is what God intends for His children and for marriage—

*Out of respect for Christ, be courteously reverent to one another.*

*Wives, understand and support your husbands in ways that show your support for Christ. The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does to his church, not by domineering but by cherishing. So just as the church submits to Christ as he exercises such leadership, wives should likewise submit to their husbands.*

*Husbands, go all out in your love for your wives, exactly as Christ did for the church—a love marked by giving, not getting. Christ’s love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything he does and says is designed to bring the best out of her, dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness. And that is how husbands ought to love their wives. They’re really doing themselves a favor—since they’re already “one” in marriage.*

*No one abuses his own body, does he? No, he feeds and pampers it. That’s how Christ treats us, the church, since we are part of his body. And this is why a man leaves father and mother and cherishes his wife. No longer two, they become “one flesh.” This is a huge mystery, and I don’t pretend to understand it all. What is clearest to me is the way Christ treats the church. And this provides a good picture of how each husband is to treat his wife, loving himself in loving her, and how each wife is to honor her husband.*

Ephesians 5:21-33 (from [The Message](#), by Eugene Peterson)

1. The Plain Truth states: “The greatest frustration in any relationship is the gap between expectation and reality.” Consider what building blocks you and your spouse can put in place in order to help bridge this gap (i.e., learning to attack the problem, not the person; communicating with more depth and detail; sharing specific expectations; taking time to listen). Name some of them in the space below.

Why is it important for a couple to be sensitive to lurking frustrations?

By being watchful, couples can proactively curtail many frustrations before they take over. Song of Songs says: “Catch all the foxes, those little foxes, before they ruin the vineyard of love, for the grapevines are blossoming!” (Song of Solomon 2:15) How would you define some of the “little foxes” which have attempted to steal joy and love from the prime of your marriage?

Too often we forget to share our dearest expectations with the dearest person in our world. Men and women have different emotional needs, and it is vital that we express those needs to one another.

2. Why is sharing specific emotional needs important in a healthy marriage?

Consider how sharing that intimate information is like a precious trust—an account in a love bank where both investments and withdrawals are made. In what ways are you investing in your spouse’s love bank these days?

What (and how many) withdrawals have you been making?

What is dangerous about depleting your spouse’s love bank (constantly making withdrawals, rarely making deposits)?

No doubt, it’s important that the withdrawals don’t outweigh the deposits. But overtime, as a husband learns to value his bride (making deposits), he actually allows her inner beauty to unfold before his eyes. Though she gets older, she becomes more beautiful to her husband on a deeper level, and radical as it sounds, he can actually become more physically attracted to her. Likewise, as the wife becomes more secure in her husband’s love, she learns she can truly be herself. She is free to love and express emotion without fear of being judged. And because she trusts her husband from the deepest places of her heart, she can actually become more physically attracted to her man of many years. He is her lover, her rock star!

3. Do you see how both husband and wife are joined to reflect the unchanging love of our Lord—steady, faithful, eager to listen and forgive, slow to anger? In what specific ways is the Lord calling you to more faithfully love your spouse?

At the close of the age, the Bride of Christ (the New Testament Church) will be presented to her Groom, her Love, her Redeemer—the Lord Jesus Christ: “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.” She will be “like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband” (see Revelation 19:9, 21:2). She is “holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s Word... She will be holy and without fault” (Ephesians 5:26, 27b).

And to think our marriages can reflect this glorious union! Will we perfectly reflect the glorious union of Christ and His Church here on this earth? No, but in part and parcel—and through the power of the Holy Spirit—the covenantal union between a man and woman can be a true and lasting reflection of God’s redeeming love to a lost and broken world.

4. Although the Lord God has declared: “I will not give my glory to anyone else, nor share my praise with carved idols” (Isaiah 42:8), according to the following Scriptures, with whom will the Lord share His glory? Name one take-away from each passage (or perhaps a “thanksgiving” to the Lord):

Colossians 1:27, 3:4      Romans 8:16-17, 23      Ephesians 3:6      Luke 12:37

In his old age, Peter said: “Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. And through your faith, God is protecting you by His power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see” (1 Peter 1:3b-5). Marriage is worth it if we endure and hang on to the end. Your marriage doesn’t have to “suck”—instead it can be a living testimony of Christ and His pursuing love for His Bride.

*Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.*  
1 Corinthians 13:4-7

### One Year Bible Reading

- Oct. 11: Jeremiah 16:16-18:23, 1 Thess. 4:1-5:3, Psalm 81:1-16, Prov. 25:6-8
- Oct. 12: Jeremiah 19:1-21:14, 1 Thessalonians 5:4-28, Psalm 82:1-8, Prov. 25:9-10
- Oct. 13: Jeremiah 22:1-23:20, 2 Thess. 1:1-12, Psalm 83:1-18, Prov. 25:11-14
- Oct. 14: Jeremiah 23:21-25:38, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17, Psalm 84:1-12, Prov. 25:15
- Oct. 15: Jeremiah 26:1-27:22, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18, Psalm 85:1-13, Prov. 25:16
- Oct. 16: Jeremiah 28:1-29:32, 1 Timothy 1:1-20, Psalm 86:1-17, Prov. 25:17
- Oct. 17: Jeremiah 30:1-31:26, 1 Timothy 2:1-15, Psalm 87:1-7, Proverbs 25:18-19



**Text: Ephesians 5:21-33 MSG**

## The Plain Truth:

The greatest frustration in any relationship is the gap between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

The Symptoms:

1) Unmet \_\_\_\_\_

2) Understanding Her Needs from Dr. Harley

### Women Need

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Intimate Conversation
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ & Openness
- 4) Financial Support
- 5) Commitment to \_\_\_\_\_

### Men Need

- 1) Sex
- 2) Recreational Companionship
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse
- 4) Domestic Support
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

3) Deciding to become a \_\_\_\_\_, a renter or a \_\_\_\_\_.