***The Divine Relationship for Husband and Wife

M-2B***

So far in this series on marriage we have explored the divine institution of marriage itself, including its beginning in the Garden of Eden and the role of the woman as a helper to her husband. We have looked at the Bible doctrine of sex, including the ground rules which the Word of God lays down of sex limited to those who are married. We have looked at the nature of true love as a mental attitude which is free of ill will, which is the groundwork of a marriage relationship.

Now we come to the very important subject of the role of husbands and wives within marriage--the divine relationship for husbands and wives. The happy purposes of the divine institution of marriage are often frustrated by the ignorance of the divinely ordained roles of a husband and a wife. It's necessary to understand the meaning of love in its biblical sense, or the marriage is in for trouble.

There are warning signs about a woman which indicate her inability to fulfill her appointed role in marriage. If you ignore these warning signs, you do so at great peril to your own personal happiness. So, you would be smart to start picking up a few clues from the Word of God that signal problems that you may have if you enter a marriage with a certain person. This is divine viewpoint information from the Bible, and you won't find it generally accepted among those who are oriented by mere human viewpoint and human conclusions. You're going to hear some things, again, that are not what you've always heard. You're going to hear some things that are not what is popularly being promoted in our day by people who think they are in the know. I remind you again that all reality conforms to the Word of God. If the Bible says a certain thing is so about a certain relationship, in particular between men and women, you may be sure that that's the way it is. That's the way the universe spins. So, the Bible always tells it like it is no matter how it may seem to us or to our society. Our society is motivated and directed by Satan and his thinking. That's human viewpoint, and it is self-destructive.

**Wives as Responders**

So we begin with some divine insights about women. The woman was created first of all basically to be a responder. Ephesians 5:22: "Wives, submit yourselves onto your own husbands as unto the Lord." The word "submit yourselves" is not in the Greek. This thought is understood in verse 22 from verse 21 where the expression is used. Verse 21 says, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Then, in a very pungent way it follows through: "Wives, do the same thing unto your own husbands as unto the Lord." Submit. The Greek word is "hupotasso". It is made up of two words. "Tasso" means to be in line. "Hupo" is a proposition indicating subordination, to be under the authority of someone. It's actually, in the Greek, a military word. It means to line up under someone who is in charge. The word connotes response to a constituted authority--to be in subjection to constituted authority.

In applying this to marriage, when a woman accepts a marriage proposal, she is, from a biblical point of view, agreeing to be under a man's authority, and to respond to him as the shepherd and bishop of her soul. Compatibility in marriage is impossible without this free inner yielding of a woman's will to her man. A woman who has inner reservations about the idea of yielding her will to her husband is going to fight him after marriage. She has to settle this issue before she ever enters marriage. If it pains a woman to respond to a certain man, then marriage is going to become an enslavement to her. God has created her for only one role, and that is to be a responder. That requires that the totality of her being is to be in subjection to her husband.

Right away, the whole women's lib movement is raising the banner of dirty male chauvinism and everything else right down the line. Human viewpoint is almost 180 degrees opposite to this. But on the basis of the Word of God, it is clear that a woman should not marry a man to whom she feels she cannot respond completely in her mind, in her emotions, and in her will--with all of her soul. If she cannot respond with her soul, she will never respond with her body.

Wives, here in Ephesians 5:22, are told to respond to their own husbands as an act of submission to Jesus Christ. In other words, it's a godly act. When a woman takes the role of subjection to her husband, she is doing the same thing as being in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ. A woman's nature, by divine creation, is such that she can never find fulfillment except through responding to her husband, and that fully (only), if he is her right particular man.

Now, you may be married already to the wrong man. You are then in the position where you're not turned on because of your response to him. You may turn on in your soul, and you may turn on physically out of a sense of duty, but this does not have the ring and the thrill of full happiness. This is a makeshift arrangement.

This same idea of a woman's role in marriage is confirmed again and dealt with again in 1 Peter 3:1: "In the same manner, you wives be in subjection to your own husbands. And if any obey not the Word, they also may without the Word be won by the behavior of the wives." Here again is the identical Greek word "hupotasso" which is used to describe the wife's role in marriage. The grammar here is significant. This word "hupotasso" is in the present tense which in the Greek means it's to be her continual life-long role toward her husband. It's the only workable relationship she can have. It doesn't say anything about what kind of a husband he is. She is to be in subjection to him, short of his desire for her to violate the principles of the Word of God. If she is not in subjection to him, it's not a working relationship. It is also in the middle voice which in the Greek means that a wife has personally benefited from playing the role of responder. It's the means of satisfying her built-in insatiable desire for a man. It's a participle which indicates a basic life principle. It's the law of life for emotional and family stability and for order in the human race.

So, you men who are not married, if you discover that you're dating a woman who doesn't respond to your soul, the first thing you want to do is break off the relationship. This doesn't mean that this reflects adversely upon your soul or upon hers as such. It's just that you are not designed to fit to each other. You are like two pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, and the two pieces do not mesh. Each of you belongs someplace else in the picture separately from one another. There is nothing wrong with either one of you. However, if she cannot respond to your soul, that means she does not fit you. And, this has to be an identical exact fit. There is a particular man for a particular woman, and the two pieces of the jigsaw puzzle will not just approximately squeeze together, but they will identically join one another. God has designed your soul to mesh with the soul of your particular mate, including your mind, your emotions, and your will. God has, as a matter of fact, designed your body to fit exactly the body of your exact and particular woman. That's just how specific the role of creation in reference to marriage has been. So if she doesn't respond to you, break off the relationship. When you do make contact with the responder that God has designed for you, it will be quite evident to your soul and to hers.

One of the places that you can see the lack of response of a woman, interestingly enough, is in family finances. You may want to think about this as a kind of touchstone, kind of a testing point. Family finances reflect a woman's response and her subjection to her husband. The old saying is very true: "He that holds the purse strings rules the family." Since the Bible requires a husband to be the head of the home, he must, in the nature of the case, handle the family finances. The wife may have delegated responsibility for the spending of funds in certain areas: food, household, certain items of care for the children, and so on. However, the husband and wife should not have separate bank accounts even if the wife works. The marriage is not two corporations doing business under one roof. The husband is in charge. A wife with her own bank account is susceptible to the spirit of independence and of self-sufficiency. Unfortunately, through women's liberation. This is contrary to a woman's divine role. A wife with her own bank account is susceptible to the spirit of independence and self-sufficiency. When troubles, pressures, and difficulties come within marriage, which they do, it then breeds an easy way out with divorce.

I have had many experiences where people were determined to get a divorce. So, they would come to see me with the specific intention of my guiding them to some source of funds by which this woman could secure a divorce. I've noticed that when that was not provided for her, she went back, in every case, and looked back at the marriage, and the marriage is still functioning. The problems were straightened out, and divorce was not an easy way out. I've also noticed that where the expenses (for legal fees, etc.) of having a divorce were readily available to a wife, it was very easy for her to remove the problems with which she was living by pursuing the divorce--when such funds were made so easily accessible to her. If a family makes large purchases, the wife should, of course, be consulted for her feelings on the matter. However, it is the husband's place to pay the bills, to balance the bank account, to supply the income, and to be responsible for the financial status and situation of a family. If a woman does not respond to this, and rejects this, it's a good sign that she's not your woman.

This raises the question: If a woman is to be a responder, what makes her respond? How are her responses activated? Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. The Greek word for love here is the word "agapao," which, we have learned, is a mental attitude. This is the Greek word which has no emotional connotation, but has a mental esteem free of ill will. It expresses an attachment, which is the result of reasoning, which sees in this woman something worthy to regard, so she is desirable on that basis. The word thus does not connote an emotional falling in love, but a love that chooses its object. It's a reason thing. The word for this type of love in the Bible is commanded as a duty for Christians. Obviously, we could not command the other word, the "phileo" type of love because that is an emotion. A husband is commanded to have this mental attitude toward his wife. The other word for love in the Bible, aside from "agapao" is "phileo." This is the Greek word which is a spontaneous natural affection. It's an emotion. It expresses the emotional unreasoning falling in love type of love. This is the word for a type of love which cannot be commanded as a duty, so the Bible never does. However, the husband is commanded to love his wife with the "agapao" type of love, free of mental ill will.

**Love**

Remember that we indicated previously that this mental attitude love is defined in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. It lays out certain specifics of the husband's duty to the wife with a mind free of ill will. Let's review those once more. These are the characteristics, the qualities, of mental attitude love, as drawn from the Phillips translation:

1. It is slow to lose patience.
2. It looks for a way of being constructive.
3. It is not possessive.
4. It is not anxious to impress.
5. It does not cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.
6. It has good manners.
7. It does not pursue selfish advantage.
8. It is not touchy.
9. It does not keep account of evil.
10. It does not gloat over the wickedness of others.
11. It is glad when truth prevails.
12. It knows no limit to its endurance.
13. It knows no end to its trust.
14. It knows no fading of its hope.
15. It can outlast anything.

Mental attitude love of the husband is commanded for the wife. That means he esteems her with a certain attitude of mind. In Colossians 3:19, the apostle Paul says, "Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them." Here the word "pikraino" is used in conjunction with this mental attitude love toward the wife. The word bitterness means jealousy; indifference; contempt; antagonism; grudges; competition; or, suspicions. The husband's outward conduct toward his wife may appear quite acceptable when they're around other people, or maybe when they're alone. Yet, he may be concealing mental attitude ill will toward her. There is a difference between acting loving and being loving. Many a woman is conned by a husband who acts loving and yet who has eating away at him certain resentments toward her. She's conned by his acting loving rather than by his being loving, which is really the thing that counts. A husband's mental attitude love will trigger, by God's arrangement, the wife's responses in her spirit, her soul, and her body, toward himself.

So, the Bible, interestingly enough, does not command the wife to love her husband, but to respond to him and to respect him. The young wives in Titus 2:4 are taught to have love for their husbands. Titus 2:4: "The older women are to teach the young women to be sober-minded, to love their husbands, and to love their children." You might think, "Well, here a wife is told to love her husband." However, if you look into the Greek, you will discover that the word for love here is "philandrous," which is the word "phileo" and the word for "husband" combined. What we have here is the command that the women are to teach an emotional attachment of a wife for her husband. She is to come to this desire of being emotionally attached to him as the goal of their marriage relationship. However, it is he, through his mental attitude, that draws forth this kind of emotional attachment from her. So, the husband is the one who is commanded to love his wife. The wife is commanded to be a responder to her husband, to be in subjection to him.

If a husband creates the climate of mental attitude love so the wife can respond to him, she will love him. She will love him in her mind. She will love him in her body. A wife cannot respond to mental ill will in a man because she then experiences frustrations. This goes against the grain of her nature. A wife who is treated as an irritant, to stay out of the way until the husband wants something from her, physical or otherwise, is not one who is being dealt with on the basis of biblical love. This is ill will of mind. A husband is then unable to turn on his wife, and he wonders, "What's wrong with her?" Well, there's nothing wrong with her. It's simply that his own mental ill will, his lack of true love, has frustrated her responding mechanism. So, the Bible lays on the man the responsibility for creating the climate for a wife's response. She may not respond even then, but for problems within herself. Nevertheless, it is his duty to see that he presents an attitude of mind free of bitterness toward her.

Hopefully, the marriage begins with no negative attitudes or responses, or else it shouldn't be entered into to begin with. So with the right climate of mental attitude love, the wife's responses are going to improve in quality over the years of the marriage. A wife who doesn't respond to a husband has mental ill will toward him for some reason. A woman is able really to be her most feminine and desirable self when she's able to exercise this drive that God has put within her to respond without reservation. Women's liberation makes unfeminine, hard, callused, jaded women if its theory is pursued to its ultimate limit.

Therefore, a woman should be: happy; loyal; adoring; above circumstances; non-competitive; tender; unselfish; free of greed or envy; and, non-abusive of others. For a woman to be able to be these, which is totally feminine, she has to be able to respond to her particular man. It is the husband's mental attitude of love that draws out this response from his wife. Mental love in a husband and wife develops into an emotional type of love and to its sexual expression. The woman really by nature does not want to be in the aggressor role. A wife normally does not want to dominate her husband. She does not normally desire the man-to-man relationship because this places a strain upon her being. What she seeks rather is a relationship of cooperation in her own role rather than a competition with a man's role. The wife wants a husband she can treat with respect. A man is to be able to assume the responsibility, therefore, for family life. No mature man is going to look to his wife so he can have a mother; so she can baby him; so that he can have someone to stimulate his ego; to make decisions for him; or, to handle their finances. This kind of a man is not a man that a woman can respect. When a woman cannot respect a man, she will not respond. That's why teenage marriages are such a hideous disaster at best. A teenager doesn't have the maturity to be able to deal with a woman on a basis that he can draw from her the respect that enables her to respond.

A woman really does not want to be the aggressor. She wants the consideration of her views to be taken under advisement. She seeks the protection and care as part of the man's own body. Ephesian 5:28 says, "So ought men to love their wives (again, mental) as their own bodies. He that loves his wife, loves himself. For no man ever yet hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church.

So, the wife has a basic desire. Everyone has two basic needs. These are needs which must be fulfilled through other people. The first one is that everybody has the need to love and to be loved. Secondly, everybody has the need to feel worthwhile to oneself and to others. You need to love and to be loved, and to feel worthwhile to yourself and to others. To the extent that a person is unable to fulfill these two needs, he is in poor mental health. This has an eroding effect upon a person's being. It has a corrosive effect when you cannot love and be loved, and when you cannot feel worthwhile to yourself and to others.

Now, for a woman, these two basic human needs are largely met through her husband. When this is not the case, she is unfulfilled. She's an empty vessel. She's yearning. She has a built-in desire for that right man who can provide and meet these basic needs for her. It's the mental attitude love of her husband which enables her to respond in love, and to find worth in his esteem, the esteem that this love connotes for her. A woman's sense of security, therefore, is the love of her husband, the man behind the love. Her sense of security is not his money; his insurance; his will; his social status; his profession; or, his business success. These things are meaningless to her. She can't respond to those things. She can only respond, and find a sense of security, through his love. So, a woman can reflect insecurity in spite of the fact that she has a husband who gives her everything. She's not sure what she wants or what she needs. He's not sure that he wants her, or that he needs her. So, a woman's need to love and to be loved, and to feel worthwhile to herself and to others is met through her husband. The husband is responsible to give the time, therefore, that is necessary to provide the security to the wife, the security of love and esteem from him.

Now, she may reject it for some other factor in herself, which in itself needs correcting. However, his role is to be the stimulator, the aggressor, that brings forth her responding mechanism. She may reject these things but he, in turn, should not fail in his role. For example, he should not try to get even by publicly criticizing her. This destroys her security. It's crude and stupid to discuss your wife's weakness with others, or for the wife to discuss her husband's weakness with others. There are always people around us who are dropping little inquiries in some solicitous way about our husbands and wives. Those questions should always be answered in Christian grace, but in a way that gives the message loud and clear, "It's none of your business." An attack on your mate to others is typical of losers who are exercising revenge. Mental attitude love keeps its mouth closed. A wife's security, because it is the person of her husband, can be shattered when he discusses her in terms of her weaknesses with others. Her security is her husband so the responding ability on her part is devastated if he belittles her before others; even in the family, in front of the children, as well as outside of the family environment.

Let's summarize the divine viewpoint on marriage. True love from God is a mental attitude and it must precede sex love. Such love is positive in response, and it is not possessive in its expression. Love serves the partners in practical and idealistic ways to the extent that each has these needs. God gives mental attitude love to spiritual Christians, but the old sin nature distorts its expression if it's permitted. We are talking, of course, about a quality which can only be expressed by a spiritual Christian. What is a spiritual Christian? A spiritual Christian is one who has claimed the promise of 1 John 1:9 and has confessed all known sins. In the process of confessing to God, and to God alone, all known sins, the unknown sins are also covered. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness--all unrighteousness. God can do this in a faithful and just way, He can do it every time, and He can be just in doing it, because Christ has covered every sin. He has removed all the barrier between ourselves and himself.

So, the Christian who confesses sin has now freed the Spirit of God who indwells him to function in his life. It is either the Spirit of God who is running your life, or it is the old sin nature. The weaknesses in your old sin nature produce sins, and the strengths in your old sin nature (and it has strong points) produce human good. God rejects both of these. He gives a mental attitude ("agape") love as part of the fruit facet of the fruit of the Holy Spirit--love, joy, peace, and so on. It is to the spiritual Christian, the Christian who is filled with the Spirit as the result of confession of known sin, that God gives this quality of love and from whom this quality can be expressed. So, God gives this to spiritual Christians. It's available to us, but the old sin nature can tear it to shreds and destroy its expression. Then the marriage has got a problem.

**Husbands as Aggressors**

You read about publicized ideal marriages. They go along for a while and they break up. Why? Well, the thing that held people together was that they stimulated each other's ego, and the time came when this was not enough to hold the marriage together. It was not mental love. It was ego stimulation, and when ego satisfaction was no longer enough, then the marriage had no place to go. Though the people had been easily drawn to each other because they were stimulated in their egos toward one another, they could not be held together. Ephesians 5:22 and 25 indicate that a husband's love is to be aggressive and protective, and a wife's love is to be responsive and receptive.

Now, this is not to say that when a woman is married to her right man, has met her right man, that she is not to be aggressive. There is a pattern; there is a time; and, there is a way in which she too is aggressive toward him. She is aggressive in drawing forth his aggression toward her by the way she acts; by the way she dresses; by the way she speaks; and, by the way she responds to him. It is an ideal combination when you have a wife who can be aggressively attractive to her husband so that his aggression is stimulated toward her so that she, in turn, responds to him. It's a basic design of creation that a man gives and the woman receives. This is indicated even in their physical structure. The man gives and the woman receives. It's not a matter of demands to be met, but of roles to be fulfilled. This is the way the game is to be played, and this is the way it can be won. The wife does not want to be the leader of an immature man. The woman needs a sense of loving and of being loved and of worth to herself and others. She secures this only as she responds to her right man.

Now, there are certain signs that you should keep in mind as you pursue the idea of marriage. There are certain signs indicating an unresponsive woman. These signs may exist even though you may be the most aggressive husband with the fullest capacity for mental attitude love, and yet, for some reason, here's a woman who cannot respond. A woman's responsiveness is dependent upon her spiritual maturity. Her spiritual maturity is dependent upon the amount of Bible doctrine in her soul. She may be an untaught Christian, and I'm not talking about somebody who goes to church. There are plenty of people who go to church that are the most ignorant Christians on the face of the earth. I'm talking about people whose souls--mentalities, emotions, and wills--are affected and immersed by doctrinal principles of life which flow up from the human spirit. People who have sat under sound pastor-teaching Sunday after Sunday, instead of devotional talks that go in one ear and out the other. These are people who have learned the Word because they've been taught the Word and their positive volition has given them a ground of functioning under divine principles. Responsiveness in terms of quality, not quantity, is dependent upon her spiritual maturity.

**Unresponsive Women**

The unsaved woman's capacity to respond can only depend on her character. The unsaved woman, and for that matter the carnal Christian woman, is subject to distortions because the old sin nature is conducting the business of their souls. So, their capacity to respond is hindered. It is bad business to select a wife, therefore, because she has certain appealing outward factors such as her appearance, her speech, or her poise. Here are some of the warning signs of the incapacity of a woman to respond:

1. A woman who throws tantrums: You're going with somebody and you notice she throws tantrums. She becomes hysterical. She becomes ill when she can't have her way. She may be the neurotic type, seeking ego stimulation instead of giving in response to a man. Tantrums and pouting are only going to get worse after the wedding. If you're going with somebody who's a tantrum thrower, who's the neurotic type who constantly is getting sick, particularly when something that she wants is not delivered to her or she doesn't get her way, you're going to have the same trouble on a greater scale after marriage. This woman is responding to her own ego, not to her man.
2. The woman who gossips and slanders people: This is a sign of an unresponsive woman. This destroys a woman's inner beauty, and she can't cover that with cosmetics. A bitter spirit makes her miserable, frustrated, and totally disoriented to the man's mental attitude love. So, avoid this type of woman even if you agree with what she's telling you about other people. You may totally agree. She may be exactly right about what she says about these people, but if she uses slander and gossip, she's controlled by envy and bitterness. A woman who is emotionally controlled by bitterness cannot be a responder.
3. The domineering woman: She wants the meek and controllable man who will play the responder to her. She's the troublemaker in the local church unless you cut her down. Unless there's an authoritative pastor who knows his business and knows his place and pulls the rug out from under, she will dominate. She tries to run everyone else's life to conform to her ways because she's frustrated at home in her incapacity to respond to her own husband. She nags her husband to fit into some ideal that she envisions for him. Constant pressure finally causes him to pull away from her.
4. The woman who wants to get away from home: She's drawn to a man as an escape mechanism for some unpleasant environment. She will usually continue to use a man after she is married to him to get away from something rather than delighting in responding to him. So, if you find a woman who wants to get married, she's eager to get married so she can get away from home, you're running a dangerous game. She may have difficulty responding to you and may keep using you for escaping what is unpleasant to her.
5. The woman who wants to be "in." Her friends are all marrying. This is the herd instinct. She'll be preoccupied with producing the latest "in" thing rather than responding to her husband. She's a status symbol collector, and her husband is part of that collection.
6. The woman who's in love with love or in love with marriage: She's often signaled by the fact that she's the vivacious and gushy type. She doesn't respond to a person, but she responds to an ideal, a vision that she has. She's in love with the idea of being in love. She has difficulty responding with flesh and blood reality.
7. The woman who imposes unrealistic qualities on a man: You should avoid the woman who has storybook ideals. She is the one who comes along with the "I never thought it would be this way" type of woman. She's the woman who will constantly be placing unrealistic demands upon the man. *The first lesson of love is to give up your dreams because they stand in the way of happiness.* You people who've got a lot of notions as to how it's going to be, and a lot of ideals that you're going to fulfill, you're going to get burned. The first lesson of love is to give up your dreams and start moving with the Lord to unravel the life that He will prepare you through doctrine to live. This woman won't respond to anyone but to an imaginary ideal, and her husband can never fulfill that.
8. Beware of the woman who seeks money and security: She's going to keep her husband slaving all the time. She will harass him for greater effort to be productive for her. She wants to control the family income. She wants to dole it out to her husband. She responds to money, not to her husband. So, when you find a woman who is seeking money and security, and her language is peppered with "my this" and "my that," that should be a red flag, and you'd better take a little closer look at her. You've got a potentially unresponsive woman on your hands.
9. Unresponsiveness in a woman is often signaled by her flaunting her intelligence: She is the one who views herself as superior to all others. She competes to out-think her husband because she wants to be in the star role of the aggressor. She can't respond intellectually to a man. Her love is stifled. This is not to say that you should seek some dumb blond. A woman who is low on IQ will be very low on responding to love. It will be very difficult for the low IQ woman to be able to enter into a great expression of love. She goes through more of a monotonous (almost animal-like) plain routine. However, the woman who is flaunting her intelligence, that's something else. She wants to play the aggressive role.
10. The woman who lacks femininity: Excessive masculinity is a dangerous sign. Don't pass her off as simply being the athletic type. You better look a little more closely and see what kind of friendships she has with other women. Beware of this tendency of developing absorbing friendships with other women. This may be the sign of someone who is responsive to women but unable to respond to men. She will lack simple responsiveness to a man's attentions. She's the cold fish type.

So, here's the picture of the roles that God has called and God has designed for us, as men and women, to play: the husband as the aggressor, and the wife as the responder. She takes her "hupotasso" position of subjection under his authority, falling in line with his leadership. He, in turn, draws out her responsiveness through a mental attitude love, a mind free of ill will toward her. She can respond to him and find fulfillment in loving and being loved, and find that his esteem for her makes her feel worthwhile, and she finds herself worthwhile then to herself and to others. The woman who cannot respond will signal this incapacity in various ways. Acquaint yourself with these signs. When they are there, take a little closer look. Men, when you find a woman who cannot respond to you, cut off the relationship, because God has one that will. Women, if you find a man who will not play the role of aggressor with metal love toward you, cut off the relationship, because God has one for you that will. You are a jigsaw puzzle piece. There is some man and some woman who will coalesce with you perfectly in your spirit, in your soul (your mind, your will, and your emotions) and in your body. That's the divine relationship for husbands and wives.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1970

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