

Respect: the wife's responsibility.

By B. D. Tate

The Bible says "Wives respect your husbands." Eph. 5:33
"Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

Women, men are vulnerable to the lack of respect. Respect has to do with person, purpose, and meaning. Life isn't just about love; it is about respect. There are two areas in designing anything in life: Function and fashion or function and beauty. Something isn't just supposed to look good it needs to perform a function. In a similar way, love alone will not satisfy there must be a function, a purpose, meaning...

God emphasizes the difference in priority. **For women it's love; for men it's respect.** I'm not saying that women don't want respect or men love. I'm saying that respect points to love for women and that love points to respect for men. Like the differences between men and women in regards to the marriage bed. For women they see a huge heart with a bed in it. Men see a huge bed with a heart in it.

Respect brings meaning to a man's relationships. If he doesn't respect someone he doesn't want to relate to them. If someone doesn't respect him, he doesn't like him back. When men meet, their natural tendency is guard their respect. Posturing, positioning, planning, performing, it's all about respect.

How are wives to respect their husband? Don't step on him. I have heard lots of guys talk about trying to be romantic. They often will talk about being shot down. One bought flowers and the woman said, "I don't like that kind." Another bought some jewelry and heard, "Well, nice try." The point here is a husband may want

to express his feelings toward his wife but feels very inadequate. If she makes a comment or diminishes him for his meager efforts, that is stepping on him, that is showing disrespect. A man will shut down rather than be humiliated by his own wife. He can take a lot of what the world throws at him, but not having a safe haven will destroy him.

Why would a wife demean her husband like that? Maybe she's self centered and expects him to know things, read her mind...or maybe she's been hurt, starving for his attention, and when it comes, she is disappointed. Maybe, she is angry at him because she knows it's not from his heart, it was a cheap effort, it was to appease her, not genuinely loving her. In one case, she's the problem, in the other he is.

How does a wife respect her husband? A wife should focus her attention on respecting her man as the most important man in the whole world. She is to "get it" about him. She is to see him like no other. She is to admire, praise, and encourage her man. Her mission then to cherish and honor her husband is to show him respect.

Respect doesn't mean submission (although submission shows it). It's not about surrender. **It's about appreciation and admiration.** What was it that attracted you to him? What does he do that you love and respect? Most men respond quickly to a wife's respect. We are not talking about **comparing** your husband to the next man. We are not talking **about how much** money, power, influence, fame, or any kind of success he might **get or earn. That is the misconception about respect!**

Respect has to do with knowing who he is, what makes him tick, what are his strengths, what makes him unique, what about him moves you, and made you make him your mate for life.

The best husbands are not the richest, not the most famous, not the most powerful, not the most successful. In fact many movie stars, politicians, business executives, wealthy men **are very bad husbands.**

A wise wife will bring out the best in her husband. No man wants to be pushed, nagged, or belittled. He opened up to no one else but you. How dare any wife belittle her husband? Respect is of the heart. Yes, he'd like to earn it. Yes, he'd like to prove it. But in truth he can't earn or prove his right to respect—it is God given!

Wives respect your husband. Not because he earned it, but because you are to give it to him. Just as a husband is to provide focused attention to his wife like she is the greatest woman ever (and to him she is), so a wife is to focus her attention to make her man the most respected man ever—**just because he is!**

A wise woman: a story to illustrate.

She and her husband had been married for some time. Her husband wasn't the most successful man she knew, or famous, or powerful...In time as the years passed, her husband had a best friend who had become a famous man. His friend was a man of influence, successful by any one's standards. The two men decided to meet again. In fact her husband asked if his old buddy could come to the house. She was delighted. The man came, the discussion centered on all the best friend's accomplishments. She was impressed of course. The best friend wanted both of them to be.

The husband was feeling very insecure, overwhelmed by his friends achievements. He turned to his wife, "*Honey, isn't he just an amazing man?*" What she said next floored him. What he expected was for her to heap praise, adoration, even compare them, which he knew he'd lose. She was very polite and respectful to his buddy, but said, "*I think he's done a wonderful job in his life; but I'm glad I have you.*" It wasn't so much what she said, but how

she said it. It was like she read his mind, knew his heart, knew his disappointments, and how vulnerable he was feeling.

She knew his question was one of painful duty. She knew he had to be magnanimous and gracious. If he were caddy he would only humiliate himself. **She had it in her power to crush her mate.** She could have doted, praised, and compared her husband to his buddy. She could have demeaned him, belittled his feeble attempts to succeed in life. **But she was a wise wife, who doesn't tear down her own house.**

She married this man, lived her life with him, and committed her best years to loving him. She was sold out to him. **No, there was no way she was going to humiliate the man she loved**—she knew him. She knew his value, integrity, and his commitment to her and the kids. Instead of tearing him down, **she took a very weak moment in her husband's life and sustained him.** She placed an impenetrable rock of encouragement, love, and her deepest respect right where he needed it most. She looked at him, smiled knowingly, and said to her husband by code...You are the most important man alive. You are the most to me. I love you and no other. **I respect you more than any other**...what we have no one else has...I get this about you. She knew his worth to her was not based on anything he did, it was who is he—a gift from God.

There is a lot of heart ache in marriages I know. We have stopped far short of our dreams, we've experience far less than our desires led us, it hasn't been like we thought it would be...but here's the answer...

1) **Husbands love your wives**—make them the most important mission for the rest of your life. Make sure you believe again, focus your attention to cherish her, honor her **as the most beautiful woman God ever made.** (Romance her always in your heart.)

2) **Wives respect your husbands not because they perform the best in any area compared to any other man.** Not because they make the most money, are the most powerful or influential, not because they earn it or can prove it. After all, do you want to have to prove you are the most important woman? No, it is not earned it is given! It is God given, God inspired God breathed, God motivated. **God has chosen you to respect him.** God has chosen him to love you.

Why did God choose you? He wants everyone to know they are the most important person in the world. **He has chosen you to treat your mate that way for him.** Through you she is loved, through you he is respected. In a very unique way, we have tools given to us by grace to be God's representative to each other, in a most intimate, purposeful, meaningful, way...It is a strange paradox at how God can create so many human beings and love each one as the most important. One of the ways he does this is through a loving mate, father, mother, brother or sister... He gets us to do it for each other. **How can God love us all the same? By loving us all uniquely!**

No one earns love. No one earns respect. In marriage, these things are given—God given.

Just as men are responsible to romance their wives until death, so are women to respect their husbands. **I understand that a wife may feel great resentment toward her husband because he has failed to keep her as the priority in his life.** A wife in response to that can become dismissive, hostile, angry, demeaning, picking at, nagging, disdaining, or a number of other manifestations. In this lose-lose scenario, what is going to make it change? Certainly a

godly man is going to re-focus his mission on his wife; however, if he does not, what then?

I Pete3:1-6 addresses marriage relationships but makes an interesting promise to the wife. God inspires Peter to write, “Wives, likewise be submissive to your own husbands, that **even if some do not obey the word**, they without a word, **may be won by the conduct of their wives**, when they observe your chaste conduct **accompanied by fear**. Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the **hidden person of the heart**, with the incorruptible beauty of a **gentle and quiet spirit**, which is very precious in the sight of God.”

Some husbands, Christian or not, may not obey, and that is grievous. But they may be won by the conduct, behavior, and **ATTITUDE** of their wife: A purposeful understanding of the situation accompanied by fear, reverence, **RESPECT**. Do not be adorned only on the outside, Peter is not saying to neglect the outward appearance at all, he is saying there is a **beauty that a wife possesses for a husband in the hidden person**. There is a key to unlock a stagnant, neglected marriage, it is inside the wife, and it can only be released in the marriage. In other words, it is incorruptible and set aside for the deeper love. **What is this key?** Peter describes it as a gentle and quiet spirit, a tender, wise, knowing, loving spirit, heart, or attitude that a wife possesses concerning her husband. **It is a power God has given to a wife: to respect her husband.**

Instead of trying to re-write to describe this power I’m going to point you to a book, **The Proper Care & Feeding of Husbands**, by Dr. Laura Schlessinger, HarperColling Publisher 2004. She does a wonderful job of explaining this power. In a nutshell, a wife has the power by her words, actions, attitude, to set the tone of the home. It is her respect for her man. Read the book,

and if you're like some people I know, let your husband read it, then argue. That's right, we read it, and argued. We gave it to another couple, they read it, and argued. It's not that I'm advocating it for its argumentative power, no. I'm advocating it because it strikes a nerve and it does so because its main thrust is to teach wives to respect their husbands.

*This booklet addresses the wife and her major role. Another booklet by the title of "[Romance](#)" is written to address the husband and his major role.

*If you have questions contact our Church Office at 609/971-9700

*A wonderful resource for marriage and family is Focus on the Family, out of Colorado Springs, Colorado. Any search engine online will connect you to this valuable ministry. Put in "Focus on the Family."