

Love & Respect

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Colossians 3:12-17 ESV

The author talks about The Crazy Cycle. "Without love from him she reacts without respect. Without respect from her he reacts without love." Couples repeat the same arguments over and over fueled by her need for love and his need for respect. *Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Ephesians 5:33 NIV* The husband is commanded to love his wife even if she doesn't respect him and the wife is commanded to respect her husband even if he does not show love to her. Do you feel loved? Do you give love? Do you feel respected? Do you show respect?

According to the book, in almost every case the issue that seems to be the cause of the craziness isn't the real issue at all. There are usually deeper problems that couples struggle with and it is typical that many disagreements turn into arguments along the same old lines as previous arguments. Couples need to learn how to stay on task with disagreements and not drift into everything the other person ever did wrong. Identify what it is that is really bothering you. Approach each disagreement thoughtfully with kindness.

Scolding and nagging doesn't work. When a husband or wife continually tries to motivate their spouse by "fixing" them it alienates and demeans the other person. A question in the book asks, "What if your son grew up and married someone like you?" Do you want your child to marry someone who treats them the way you treat your spouse? It's easy to judge someone else's behavior but what about our own? Spend some time "watching yourself" and analyzing how you interact with others.

Men and women have been created to be different. They have different physical and emotional needs. Couples need to spend more time listening to each other and caring about what the other person is saying and thinking. It is easy to see when someone else isn't living up to our expectations. Are we living up to theirs? Couples need to identify what is important and how they can both satisfy each others needs. Do you know what is important to you? Do you ever fight to be right without trying to solve the problem?

A woman can feel beaten down by her husband's harshness. He, on the other hand, might feel like he doesn't know what to do with this nagging woman he married. When we see the effect our actions have on our spouse it should cause us to change but sometimes we don't have the strength to do it. God will help us if we ask Him. He will show us how to follow Him into a better relationship by changing us on the inside. Do you want to have a better relationship with others? Start by have a closer relationship with God.

Who is the boss in your family? He might say she is. She might say he is. Sometimes the kids run everybody ragged. God should be the one in charge. When the husband and wife both seek to learn what He wants it draws them closer together. When we lay down our own strong wills and follow Him, He gives us the peace that passes all understanding. Philippians 4:7. Who is the boss in your family? Do you have peace in your home?

Dear Lord, the only hope for families today is You. Melt our hard hearts and show us how to become the people You created us to be. Give us pure hearts and right spirits so that we will humbly choose what is right. Take away our contention and replace it with genuine concern for each other. Open our hearts to hear You and listen to each other. In Jesus' name, Amen.