



THE RESPECTFUL WIFE

Part 4 of Real Marriage

Pastor Mark Driscoll | February 05, 2012

INTRODUCTION

All right, ladies. This one's for you; I apologize in advance.

Grace wrote chapter four. I'm just delivering the mail. We're talking about the respectful wife. Ah, yes.

As a man, let me tell you how powerful you are as a wife. You are incredibly powerful, not in the weightlifting sense of that word, but in the areas of trust, encouragement, hope, and courage. You are incredibly powerful in the life of your husband. In fact, I would go so far as to say that for the average man, no one's opinion of him matters as much as his wife's. Men, is that true? Yeah.

When we're talking about the respectful wife, what we're not talking about is a wife who's always flattering her husband, but that she carefully weighs her words to help him become more respectable, that she wants to be respectful, so that he would grow to become more respectable. That's the hope.

This really is a very simple but profound and powerful concept. Some of you wives, you want your husbands to be more respectable, and there are two ways to approach that goal. One, you can nag and disrespect, and you will never get the results that you are hoping for; or, two, you can pray for him, instead of just nagging to him, and you can respect him, thereby helping him become more respectable.

This really is to be found in Ephesians 5:33. "Let the wife see that she," what, ladies? "Respects," not other men, "her husband." Ladies, do you respect other men, or are there other men that you admire, you esteem, you value, you wish your husband was more like them? It's called coveting. It's one of the Ten Commandments. Don't covet anybody else's spouse. You're to respect your husband.

Grace, in the book, gives this great definition. Respect is "to notice, regard, honor, prefer, defer to, encourage, love, and admire." Do you respect your husband? Every wife, if she's honest, would say, "I've got room to grow."

HEAD OF RESPECT

In this chapter, she talks about a head, a heart, and hands. She talks about a head of respect, a heart of respect, and hands of respect for you ladies. And so we'll start with a head that respects.

The question is, how do you think about your husband? How do you think about him? Do you think of him in a way that is hopeful or hopeless? Do you think of him in a way that is respectful or disrespectful?

Some of you would say, "Well, I never say it." Well, God knows your thoughts, and your husband, he can tell by the look on your face what you're thinking. See, ladies, sometimes our sin is not just what we say or do. It's also what we think, and that's why change begins in the mind. Repentance begins in the mind. That's where the Bible says in Romans 12 to not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. You have to think differently before you can feel differently and before you will act differently. Repentance and change begins in the mind.

How do you think about your husband? Again, you may say, "Well, I've never said it." But if you think it, it is affecting how you feel and what you do. Your heart and your hands are affected and implicated by how you think about your husband.

Do you think, "He's an idiot"? Do you think, "I could've done a lot better"? Do you think, "I'm smarter than he is"? "I'm more godly. If I were the head of this household, things would be better. If he would just do what I tell him, then he'd be a good leader." Something to think about. "He's not very impressive. Had I to do it all over again, I definitely would not have picked him. He can't keep up with me. He's not as smart as me. He's not as nice as me. He's not as fun as me. He's not as dependable as me. He's not as hard-working as me. I deserve better. Tragically, he's lesser." How do you think about your husband?

Here's what Philippians 4:8-9 says about thinking, in general, and I would apply this to thinking about your husband, in particular: "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence," if you can find anything good in the guy, "if there is anything worthy of praise, think," meditate upon, make an effort to keep in the forefront of your mind, "these things." This is spiritual discipline. "What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

KEEP A JOURNAL AND ENCOURAGE

Grace has a great recommendation for wives, based upon a head of respect and the admonition and instruction of Philippians 4:8–9. Keep a journal. I'm going to give you ladies some really practical things to do. Keep a journal. You can keep it on your phone, or you can keep it in a notebook. Keep it somewhere separate. As you think things about your husband that are, to use these words, "true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, worthy of praise," write them down. Write them down. And then in that moment, pray and say, "Thank you, Lord, that I'm seeing this in my husband."

Then encourage your husband. One of the most powerful things a wife can do is encourage her husband. You can encourage him toward godliness and respectability by praying for him and encouraging him. Send him a text, give him a call, write him a letter, send him an email, whatever it is. "Honey, I was just praying for you, and I'm really thankful because of," blank, whatever it is.

Some of you say, "He doesn't do anything big." Then pick anything, anything that could be encouraging. You've got to start somewhere, because if all you ever do is show him his faults, his failures, and his flaws, he will think that he lives with his critic or his mother; neither of which is particularly motivating for him to grow in godliness.

Now, your job is not to change him. His role is to take responsibility, and the Holy Spirit will give him the power, but, ladies, you could give him some encouragement. Write these things down. Make note of them. Pray for him, through them, and speak those words of life to him.

It means so much when a wife encourages, and as she does, she puts life and courage and dignity into her husband, because he wants to live in such a way that God is pleased with him and that his wife is proud of him. True or false? Completely true.

So, one of the things— because, see, some of you ladies, you have the gift of encouragement. You're just an encourager. Okay, your husband's really blessed. Some of you ladies, you need to grow in that gift. Grace is growing in that gift. She's really making an effort to grow in that gift, and it's a real gift to a husband.

HEART OF RESPECT

So, head of respect. How do you think about your husband? It leads to a heart of respect. How do you feel about your husband? How do you feel about your husband? And you know how you feel about your husband by what you say. Jesus says it this way. Matthew 12:34, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

All right, ladies. I've been accused in the past: "Oh, you only yell at the men. You don't also speak directly to the women." We'll make up for all those omissions right now. Because we believe in equality and diversity, we will now offend the women, as well.

If there is disrespect in your head, it will reside in your heart. If there's disrespect in how you think of him, there will be disrespect in how you feel about him, and it comes out in your speech. It comes out in your speech. I would say, ladies, this is one of the reasons it's really important to regularly be praying for your husband, because it conditions you on how to speak about your husband.

The truth is you won't speak about your husband to the Lord the way you do to your worst women friends, the nagging, gossiping, busy-bodying, bitter brigade, sometimes called the women's prayer circle. "Oh, we all pray for one another." No, you don't. You all disrespect your husband and call it prayer requests, so it seems holy, while Satan is dancing.

You should be praying more for your husband than you should be talking about your husband. Gossip, ladies, is talking about someone, instead of to someone. If you're talking to others, particularly women, instead of talking to your husband, you're guilty of gossip. And if you are allowing them to just talk negatively about their husbands, you're not encouraging them. You are not serving them. You are not helping them. You are joining them in sin.

What do you say about your husband? What do you say in his absence? What do you say in the presence of your children about their father? "Oh, your father's such an idiot. Your father screwed up again. I don't know why I ever married that guy."

Here's what you're teaching your children: "Dishonor, disregard, disrespect your father." You're teaching them, you're training them to dishonor the instruction of the Bible, and you are separating them from their father, which leads to their death.

And what'll happen is the children will start to parrot the mother. Right? All of us guys know that gal. She's the wife and mother that just lets her husband have it in front of the children. And before long, the children start to parrot the mother. It's a horrible thing. How do you speak about your husband in the presence of others, in the presence of the children, in his own presence?

Are you a nag? Just keep pushing, pressing, demanding.

Are you quarrelsome? Does he not even want to talk to you, or if he does, he has to emotionally prepare himself like a soldier heading off to war? You're just an emotional hurricane, and you're quarrelsome, and he knows, "Man, if I'm going to bring up anything, I've got to pick my battles carefully. I need to come in with a battle plan, and this is going to be a long, drawn-out war."

Are you loud? See, some women just try this tactic of volume. "I'm going to raise my voice, and I'm going to yell, and I'm going to scream, and I'm going to threaten, because he can't do that. If he raises his voice, then he's being mean. And it's a trick, and I won, because I'm louder."

How many of you women, it's emotion. You're emotionally manipulative. As soon as you start losing, you start crying. "Oh, you hurt my feelings."

You just changed the subject. That was brilliant, amazing! He was talking about sin in your life, and you talked about how you feel about his recognition of the sin in your life. You just changed it from your sin to how he has made you feel! Brilliant. Cry, freak out, get emotional, melt down, because you know he doesn't know what to do. All of a sudden, he's like, "She's crying. I don't like . . . I can't cry and use her trick."

I'm not saying you women can never be heard, and you can never be hurt, but how do you speak about your husband? How do you speak to your husband?

Are you manipulative? Do you play him like a puppet? You're the marionette with your words, and your manipulation, and your flirtation, and your threats, and your volume, and your quarrelsome nature, and your nagging, and your emotionalism. He's just dancing like a good boy should.

Are you a mocker? Proverbs talks a lot about the mocker. Do you like to make fun of him? Do you like to point out his faults and flaws? Do you like to highlight them by stating them publicly? Are there certain embarrassing things that he's done? Maybe they're not even sinful, just embarrassing things. Those are always good for the holidays. Those are always good for the dinner parties. Those are always good for Community Group. "Let me tell you about my stupid husband. You'll never believe what he did. Ha, ha, ha." You're not funny. You're a joke, but you're not funny.

Head of respect. How do you think about your husband? Heart of respect. How do you feel about your husband, and how does it manifest itself in your word? Because out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. One of the great cures, ladies, is to pray for your husband. It will change how you speak to your husband. It doesn't mean that you're a total flatterer, and you never point out sin, and you don't deal with hard things. It means that your tone will change.

HANDS OF RESPECT

Grace rightly says, in the chapter, that there are also hands of respect. My question would be, what do you do for your husband? What do you do? How do you serve?

I'll say this about men. We interpret everything in terms of respect and disrespect. Some of you ladies would say, "I love my husband." Here's the truth. Men want to be loved, we're grateful to be loved, but the truth is we've seen our women love some total losers. Some of you women have had boyfriends: loser, nothing respectful in him, nothing respectable about him, but you loved him. Sometimes women can love the worst men. What matters more to a man is, "Does she respect me? Does she respect me?"

And it shows up in word and deed, the hands of respect, the service. How does she act? How does she serve? It says this in Genesis 2:18. Before sin entered the world, God said there was one thing that was not good. Genesis 2:18, "The Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'"

Every man knows, "I need help!" Just look at a man. Look at a single man. Does he need—yes, he needs help. Everyone knows that. And so God made the woman to be a helper. She is equal to him. They both bear the image and likeness of God, but they work together in a complementary way like a right hand and a left hand. He's the leader; she's the helper. They need each other to glorify God and to do good for one another.

Ladies, your husband needs you. He doesn't need you to condemn him. Satan is already doing that. He doesn't need you to criticize him. His enemies are already doing that. He needs you to encourage him. Some men are dying for this, and it shows up with a wife saying, "I'm here to help. I'm here to help you become more like Jesus. I'm here so that you can lead our family in the purposes of Jesus. I know you can't do it alone, and I'm here to help."

And it's not a denigration for a woman to be called a helper, because the Bible says that God is our ever-present help in trouble. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit would come as our helper. The Bible says that God helps us. So, ladies, God is inviting you to join him in helping your husband become more like Jesus and to love and lead your family in the purposes of Jesus, and part of that is what you do with your hands.

How many of you ladies love the Proverbs 31 woman? I mean, she's just kind of the off-the-charts, over-the-top, amazing, action-figure Bible gal. She's incredible. "Oh there's the Proverbs 31 woman." Here's what it says of her in Proverbs 31:13. It says that the wife "works with willing hands." She wants to have hands of respect.

HANDS THAT PRAY

Grace rightly says this includes hands that pray, holding hands with your husband or laying hands on your husband and praying for him. I can still remember, we'd been married some years. I was still fairly new to ministry, going to speak at a conference. I'm sure that Grace had prayed for me before, but I remember that day. That was the first time I ever remember Grace praying for me before I preached. It's one of the most significant days in my whole life. I don't even remember the conference or the sermon. I don't even remember what state we were in. I don't remember anything about it. Here's what I do remember: Grace held my hands and prayed for me before I preached. That's what I remember. Hands that pray.

HANDS THAT TOUCH

Grace mentions, as well, hands that touch. I love it when we hold hands. I love holding my wife's hand. Hands that touch; it's respectful, it's affectionate.

HANDS THAT FEED

Hands that feed, Grace says. Now, some of you men can cook. God bless you. Some of you are chefs. That's awesome. That's not me. I'm good at picking up takeout. That's who I am. When we first got married, Grace understood nutrition and health. I didn't, and so I ate really bad. In the grace of

God, I'm learning, and growing, and changing, but I'm nowhere near as healthy or as smart in this area as Grace, but I'm learning to trust her. And she understands nutrition. She understands wellness. She understands naturopathy. And so for her, a part of her respecting me is serving by ensuring that our family eats well. And it makes all the difference in the world. She's got a head of respect, a heart of respect, and it leads to hands of respect.

HANDS THAT HUNT AND FISH

She says, as well, hands that hunt and fish. I don't hunt or fish, but what she's talking about is a wife respecting her husband enough to be involved in whatever activities he's in. Back to the earlier friendship sermon, it's a wife learning to enjoy what her husband enjoys and participate in what her husband's participating in, saying, "I respect you, and I respect what you're doing, and I want to go do whatever you're doing."

HANDS THAT OPEN THE BIBLE

And she says, lastly, it's hands that open the Bible. One of the ways that a wife really respects her husband is by respecting the Word of God. And I'll tell you ladies, there is nothing more endearing than seeing your wife study the Word of God and be conformed to the Son of God. It's beautiful. There's nothing like it, and the deepest intimacy is spiritual intimacy. It's the fountain of all other intimacy, including the physical.

PRINCIPLES AND METHODS

Grace gives one—when she's talking about head, heart, hands; thoughts, feelings, and actions of respect—she gives one very good insight to you ladies, and I'll pass it on to you: to be careful to distinguish between principles and methods.

Okay, as I'm saying this, every wife is thinking, "I've got room to grow." Amen? Some of you'd say, "I don't." Well, you should respect this sermon more.

And what can happen is then a wife feels convicted by the Holy Spirit, and she's motivated to become more respectful. So, what she does then is she runs to other women and to books written by other women to find out how they respected their husband, and she takes their methods, and then she takes them to her husband, and she mimics those methods, and her husband doesn't respond like she was hoping. Then she gets discouraged, or she gets frustrated, or she gives up.

The Bible is filled with principles, right? "Wives, respect your husbands." It doesn't give us methods. And so to get the methods, you can read a book or talk to another woman, and you can learn some methods; but, most importantly, you need to talk to your husband, because the other women and the authors of other books, they have different husbands. Your husband will know what he finds respectful and disrespectful, and he will help you find the methods of respecting him with your head, your heart, and your hands.

So just ask your husband things like, "How have I been disrespectful?" And don't argue; and, men, don't attack. "Honey, I love you. Thank you for asking. I want this to be a time for us to grow. Let me give you a few things." And then, ladies, listen. Ask your husband, "How could I be more respectful? How have I been disrespectful?"

TWO KINDS OF DISRESPECTFUL WOMEN

Two kinds of disrespectful women. You ready? Deep breath, ladies. Round two.

SILENT AND COMPLIANT

The first one, you ladies are going to be shocked. Wife number one, who is disrespectful, she is silent and compliant. She is too silent and too compliant. She thinks, "Well, I'm respectful. I never disagree with him. I always tell him he's fantastic. I let him make all the decisions. I'm very respectful." You're not respecting the Lord, because you're worshiping your husband.

The root issue for these women—because, see, some women go to the Bible, and they see, "Well, okay, Colossians 3, and 1 Peter 3, and Ephesians 5, and 1 Corinthians 7. 'Wives, submit to your husbands.'" And what she hears is, "He makes all the decisions. He thinks through all the issues. He's the boss. I just shut up and do what I'm told." That's not what it means.

See, Jesus submitted to the Father while he was on the earth. Jesus says, "The Father has sent me. I say what the Father tells me to say. I do what the Father tells me to do." Even in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus says, "Here's what I want; but not my will, your will be done." He's submissive, but he's passionate. He's submissive, but he's vocal. He's not just always silent, passive, without opinion, no conversation, no communication. He's not that way. And for a wife to submit to her husband is to submit to her husband in a way that Jesus Christ submits to God the Father.

Proverbs 29:25, "The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe." A woman who is silent and compliant, overly silent and overly compliant, her issue is not that she's a godly, submissive woman. Her issue is that she struggles with fear of man.

Ed Welch, a biblical counselor—we use this a lot. He's one of my favorite biblical counseling authors. He says this: "Fear in the biblical sense includes being afraid of someone." She's afraid of her husband, or his displeasure, or his anger, or his frustration, or his discouragement. "But it extends to holding someone in awe." He's way too big, and Jesus is way too small. "Being controlled or mastered by people . . ." "I just do what he says." . . . worshiping other people, putting your trust in people or needing people. The fear of man can be summarized in this way: we replace God with people. Instead of a biblically guided fear of the Lord," which is what the Bible says, "we fear others. When we are in our teens, it is called 'peer pressure.' When we are older, it is called 'people-pleasing.' Recently, it has been called 'codependency.'" And I would add, in an unhealthy marriage, it is called

enabling.

There's a difference between submitting and enabling. Submitting is "he is submitting to the Lord, and I am submitting to him and helping him to honor the Lord." Enabling is "he is not submitting to the Lord, and I am still helping him to do things or do things in ways that are dishonoring to the Lord." Why would a wife do that?

Again, back to the theme. It's disrespectful. It's disrespectful to the Lord, and it's disrespectful to the husband, because the Bible says in Genesis 2:18, ladies, you were built to be a what? A helper. And enabling is not helping. Enabling is not helping.

But many women have fear of men, fear of their man. The number one most frequent command in the whole Bible is this: "Fear not." And in 1 Peter 3:6, it has a specific application to wives: "Do not give way to fear." Another way of saying it is, "Dear wife, fear not, but do what is right. Say what is right." You may think that by being silently compliant you are being respectful, but you're not respecting God's call. You're not respecting God's Word, and you're not respecting God's will for your husband in marriage.

LOUD AND CONTENTIOUS

Now, the second kind of disrespectful woman is not silent and compliant. That's not ever been a real issue for her. She is, rather, loud and contentious. See, the first woman looks respectful, but she's disrespectful. The second woman looks disrespectful, because she's disrespectful.

Proverbs talks a lot about these women. Proverbs 12:4, "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones." The question is, ladies, are you a crown or a cancer? Are you a glory, or are you a misery?

Here are a few women who are cancers and not crowns. Proverbs 9:13, "The woman Folly is loud." I said it like that so you'd remember it. "She is seductive and knows nothing." You know, if she's always talking really loud, how could she know nothing? Oh, she can do it. She can tell you about anything, and everything, and everyone, and anyone. She doesn't know what she's talking about, but she's both confident and loud. Some of you women have learned that volume is your great ally.

And it talks about a seductive woman. The most disrespectful thing a wife can be is flirtatious with other men; incredibly disrespectful, shameful. Ladies, are you loud? Are you flirtatious outside of your marriage?

Proverbs 21:9, "It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than a house shared with a quarrelsome wife." Quarrelsome. Some of you ladies are like, "I'm not quarrelsome!" Yes you are. "No, I'm not!" Yes, you are. "No, I'm not." Yeah, you are. "I just always have to have the last word." Quarrelsome. "He needs to know how I feel." We all know how you feel. "It's good for him. It makes him tough." No, it makes him sad. Quarrelsome.

And what the Bible rightly says is if the wife is quarrelsome, the husband goes elsewhere. For this guy, he gets all his camping gear, climbs up on the roof, pulls the ladder up, so she can't find him, sets up his tent, brings out his Coleman stove, lays out his sleeping bag, and just sits there worshipping God in silence for the first time in his whole life! The point is, if you're quarrelsome, you drive your husband away. That's why he doesn't come home from work. That's why he stays late. That's why he goes out for drinks. That's why he bought one season ticket, not two. He finds a way to live his life apart from you until, eventually, he does that altogether.

Proverbs 27:15, "A continual dripping on a rainy day and a quarrelsome wife are alike." You guys ever had gutter problems? Drip, drip, drip, drip, drip, drip, drip, drip, right? And we're in Seattle. You're like, "Six months of this is like being in a POW camp. This is torture! I'm going crazy!" Some women are just like that. Nag, gossip, yell, demand, push, disrespect, disrespect, disrespect, disrespect until the guy goes crazy.

I'll tell you this, ladies. You're very powerful. And here's what'll happen. Number one, if you disrespect your husband, you put him in a lose/lose scenario, especially if you do it in front of other people. That's why some of you do. It's like a hostage situation. If you disrespect him, here are his choices. "I respond to her, and then I'm a bully, and I'm mean, and I'm not very nice. And I know she's going to get loud and embarrass me or cry and humiliate me. I can't beat this woman." Or he says, "Okay, I'm just gonna take it," and then he's a wuss. It's a lose/lose. A man can't win an argument with a disrespectful wife. It's a lose/lose.

Number two, if you disrespect him, you will drive him away. I'm not saying it's right, but I'm saying it's inevitable.

Number three, you can have a big, outgoing, vivacious personality and still be respectful. And some of you have believed a demonic lie: "I've got a big personality. I'm an outgoing, gregarious person. That's why I'm disrespectful." No, you can have a big personality. You can be a strong gal. You can have strong opinions. You can be an extrovert and still respectful.

And number four, here's the hard, cold, sad, painful truth. If you disrespect him and win, so that you can rule over him, you will despise him and not even be attracted to him. True or false? You're like, "I beat that guy. Now I feel like his mother. He's not even interesting to me."

DISAGREEING RESPECTFULLY

In closing, how can you disagree respectfully? Here's the truth. Just because he's the head and she's the helper doesn't mean you'll always agree. It doesn't mean that a woman doesn't have independent thoughts. But what do you do when you disagree? Good question, right? How do you disagree respectfully?

Option number one, most of the time, a husband and a wife lovingly and patiently keep working for a unified decision, because all the way back in

Genesis, God wants you to be one. So, the husband and wife, “We’re going to pray. We’re going to talk. We’re going to do our research. We’re going to do our homework about whatever decision we need to make, so that we can come to an agreement. Yeah, we both believe this is how we’re going to do it and what we’re going to do, and we’re aligned together.” This should be the vast majority of decision making in a marriage; prayerfully, carefully coming to a unified agreement. But there are times where you just don’t come to an agreement. So then you have additional options.

Option number two. Some of the time—if this is often in your marriage, you have a serious underlying problem of trust, or theological disagreement, or something of that nature. Some of the time, a couple cannot agree, and so they bring in a third party. Don’t make it a family member. Not your mother, not your father, not your friends, not your drinking buddies. Don’t try the case at the local bar. Don’t try the case at the local women’s ministry. Some of the time, a couple cannot agree, and so they bring in a third party, such as a ministry leader, a Community Group leader, a Redemption Group leader, biblical counselor, pastor, to help in the decision making. “Help us come to resolution. Help us to make the decision.” If this happens frequently, you have a crisis in your marriage. If it happens occasionally, that’s acceptable. That’s understandable.

Or option number three on how to disagree respectfully. Some of the time, the husband makes the decision as the head of the home, and the wife follows it by submitting. If he is wrong, he repents, and she forgives, and together they work to fix their problem or problems. Sometimes the husband says, “We don’t agree. We talked to other people. I need to make a decision. I’m going to make it. I have heard you. Your input has been considered. I’m going to take responsibility. If it goes poorly, it’s on me, not on you. Please follow me. Please trust me. Please work with me. This is where we’re going and what we’re doing.” Those are the three ways to disagree respectfully.

HE IS THE REFEREE

Now, at the end of the day, let’s say that there is a wife who says, “I’m being respectful,” and there’s a husband who says, “No, you’re not.” Who is the referee that makes the call? Ephesians 5:21. And the whole section, again, Ephesians 5:22–33, is about husbands leading, loving as the head; wives respecting, submitting as the helper. It’s all prefaced with “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” That means she gets to decide whether or not he’s being loving, and he gets to decide whether or not she’s being respectful. So, ladies, your husband has the right to decide whether or not you are being respectful or disrespectful. He gets to be the referee on that particular issue.

Q&A WITH GRACE

And with that, I’ll bring Grace out, and we’ll do a little Q&A. I love you, ladies. I love you enough to tell you the truth, because I want you to live a life and have a marriage that is biblical, and practical, and functional, and ultimately is joyful. And that’s what I want for you.

Hey, baby.

Grace: Great job. You got ‘em.

Well, I preached your whole chapter, so thank you for the content. How about we do some questions? See what we’ve got here.

“My husband refuses to lead, because he says he doesn’t know how. I feel he is passive and lacks a desire to step up. I have lost respect and trust in him. What is my role as a wife?”

Grace: I would say encourage. And that may sound strange for this question. It sounds like laziness, that he says he doesn’t know how to lead. If he is in a church, if he’s reading, if he’s doing things to want to lead, then to say that you don’t know how is a laziness issue. If he isn’t surrounded by community, isn’t surrounded by teaching, encourage that in him. Encourage him to have friends that are good leaders, that will help him in that process. Don’t nag him. Pray for him. Encourage him to be who you see God wants him to be, as a leader, as a head. Help him see ways that you want to submit to him. If there are ways that you’ve broken him down, as a wife, to even make him want to lead, like Mark talked about, the different types of women, repent of that. Start with you repenting of your own sin to him, so that he can see that there’s an opportunity there for him to change, as well.

I would say he is leading. He’s just leading poorly, and sinfully, and weakly. The question, again, is never, “Is the man the leader?” The question is always, “How is he leading?” And so the myth men tell themselves is simply, “I’m not a leader, so I can’t lead.” You are leading, and your wife and children are going to suffer or be blessed, depending upon how well you lead. And so, yeah, the question is not, “Is he leading?” The question is, “Is he leading well, lovingly, humbly, boldly, sacrificially, like Christ?”

I would say, as well, it may be incumbent for you, as a woman, to let some things fall apart, which can be very hard for a woman. “Well, he’s not going to take care of this or that, so I will.” Well, maybe you just let it go. Just let it start to slip and fall apart. And if he gets frustrated, say, “Honey, I love you. I want to follow you. I want to help you. You lead, and let me know how I can come alongside, but I’m not going to do your job, and I’m not going to take your role. I’m going to pray for you, and love you, and encourage you, and support you.”

And here’s the hard, cold, sad truth. If you’re at Mars Hill, there’s no reason, as a man, not to know how to lead, because there is an army of men who are leading, not perfectly, but well, by the grace of God, and those men are very glad to open their home, to open their life, to open their calendar to serve you, to help you, to teach you, to train you. The men of Mars Hill have this deep in their DNA. They want to be good men, God’s men, and they want other men to be good men and God’s men, and they want the men of Mars Hill to be a different kind of man, who raise different kinds of sons. That’s deep in the heart of the men of this church.

And you’re probably, every Sunday, sitting by them, and all you’ve got to do is introduce yourself to them. Go to their Community Group. Sit on their

couch, and see what they do, and then ask them questions, and those men will invest in you. There are thousands of men that have had this experience at Mars Hill. And it is an excuse. It's like saying at the grocery store, "I was starving to death." Avail yourself of all the opportunities for nourishment.

It's really a weak man who just sort of thinks passively that leadership skills and modeling are supposed to come from the man fairy and just be personally delivered to him. Men need to go get learning. Men need to go get modeling. Men need to go find other men.

I'll be honest with you. When I first got saved, I had never seen a man pray for his wife or children. I'd never seen a family open the Bible. I'd never seen that. So, we found a family in our first church. It was an awesome church. And I've told the story about them. We recently got to reconnect with them. Ten daughters, two sons, one wife. Just do the math. It's Duggar-ific is what it is.

So we told them, "You obviously can't afford a babysitter, and so we will baby-sit your kids for date night." And we started babysitting their kids on Friday night, and we got to see them have dinner, and see them read the Bible with their kids, and pray with their kids, and correct their kids, and we got to learn by watching their family, not just by taking from them, but going to serve them.

The result was I learned so much by just watching. "Oh, oh, the kid did something, and the dad turned off the TV, and walked over, and got involved, and talked at the heart level, and didn't shame the kid, and used gospel language of sin and repentance, and reminded him about Jesus, and then prayed for them, and then sent them to apologize to their sibling, and this is amazing. Okay, this is what it looks like. It's dinnertime. Oh, they pray before the meal. They sit down and eat it together. Look at that. The TV is not even on. This is a miracle." It's just seeing things. And some of you men are highly practical, which means you need to see modeling, if you've not had it. But in Mars Hill Church, there's no excuse not to see that kind of modeling. There's just no excuse.

"Over time, my wife has become more disrespectful. How do I regain her respect without being in constant conflict with her?"

Grace: Again, repentance is usually a part of the equation. If there are ways that you have been unloving to her, her sin is her sin, so she shouldn't have responded even to your unloving with disrespect. But if there are ways that you can look at, since you're the one asking the question, that you can see, and ask the Lord, that you've been sinning against her and not being loving, then I would say that that's a good place to start.

If a woman is disrespectful, there can be fear behind that. There can be just plain old sin and rebellion, pride, bitterness. So, it can be a lot of things behind that. And to get to that, you need to, again, make a safe place for her to come and break before the Lord, have her heart broken, so that that disrespect is taken away.

So, to come to her and say, "This is the area," or "These are the areas I've been convicted that I have not loved you, and I apologize for that." Not doing that so that she will repent of hers, but doing that so that you're right before the Lord, and then asking the Lord to soften her heart in that process.

We've had to do that a lot through the years, where when there's not always a time to discuss each other's unlovingness or disrespect, it's not always something we get to speak into—God uses other people; God uses the Holy Spirit in whatever way he wants to convict us. And so, for me, I've learned, through time, whether it's something that I'm going to speak to Mark about, or if it's something I'm not going to speak to him about and just work through with the Lord, I always need to start with prayer. "And, Lord, where have I sinned in this? If I've sinned in this, show me where I've sinned, so that I can repent." And then it gives me a lot more graciousness toward him, when I'm going to address an issue, instead of going hard-hearted, or bitter, or thinking that somehow my sin is better than his.

So, repentance is a great place to start, and oftentimes it'll soften the disrespectful woman and allow her to say, "You know what? You're right. You may have been unloving, but I was disrespectful. Let's get on the same page with this. Let's walk toward oneness, toward friendship. How can we work on this together, instead of division?"

Sometimes, too, as a husband, it's waiting for the right time, saying, "Well, we're in the middle of dinner with the family, or there's a bunch of people here. Now is not the best time." So, it's picking a time, and then it's giving specific examples, and it's inviting her to see it and even saying, "Okay, honey, earlier, when you said this, or when you sneered, when you rolled your eyes, when you just kind of lost it, it was really disrespectful. Do you see that?"

Give her an opportunity to agree. If she agrees and says, "Yeah," say, "Okay, I really appreciate you acknowledging that. In those moments, what could I do to help you, so that we could be one and not two, and we could be allies and not enemies?" And listen.

And if she says, "No, I'm not, I'm not disrespectful," I think then, as a husband, you've got to lovingly, but firmly, say, "Actually, you were. And I love you, but you can't continue to sin and think that it's going to improve our marriage. And what I want is not you just to lose this argument. I want us to lose this sin, so that we can be friends, so that we can be close, so that we can obey God, so that we could take good care of each other."

And it's inviting the wife to have an identity apart from her sin. "You're a daughter of God. He loves you. You're forgiven in Christ. I love you. I'm in covenant with you. I'm committed to you. I want to be one with you. This sin is getting between us, and this sin is not you. It's something you did, but it's something you can repent of, so that we can be closer and together."

And in those moments, when you shove that identity on the wife, "You are disrespectful—" I've done that. Holy smokes, I've done that more than fifty

times. “You are disrespectful.” What you’re doing, then, you’re giving your wife an identity. “You’re disrespectful.” And then she says, “I’m not!” Okay, now you’re fighting over the wrong thing.

“You’re my wife. I love you. What you said or did was disrespectful. Can you see that and repent of that? And in the future, how could I help you, so that we don’t go back to that way of thinking, or speaking, or acting?” And it’s inviting her to be with you and to walk away from the sin, not shaming her and having the sin be the totality of her identity.

And I think that’s usually where the real conflict comes. “You’re disrespectful.” “No, I’m not.” Now we’re fighting over the identity. “Let’s let the identity be in Christ, and let’s let the sin be dealt with at the cross, and let’s be one, instead of two, and let’s move on together.”

And any way a husband can respectfully, with his tone, not in front of other people, at the right time, when they can talk about it, with a specific example, point it out to her, then, hopefully, she submits to the Holy Spirit, who convicts us of sin and says, “Okay, I see that. I’m sorry.” “Great. Whew, okay, sweetheart, going forward, what can I do to be more helpful in this area?” And inviting her to be honest with you.

If your wife bristles or fights, you’ve got to pray for her. You may need to continue to press the issue, not in an argumentative or combative way, but in a way, saying, “Honey, I really do love you. And just because you’re stubborn doesn’t mean I’m going to let this go. It’s important.” And if she cries and freaks out, you could say, “I love you, but this is manipulation.” And you love her enough to keep pursuing her. And it’s not loving to say, “I give up. I’m okay with sin, and I don’t have any hope for you.” That’s not really loving her like Christ loves the church.

Wow, that got heavy. Why don’t you close our time in prayer? Maybe pray for the men to be more respectable and for the women to be more respectful. Thanks, baby.

Grace: Lord, thank you, again, for this time. Lord, I ask you to convict us all of our sin; as women, of disrespect; as men, of unloving times. Lord, I just pray that you would teach us what that looks like in our marriages, that we would be willing to ask each other how we can better respect and love each other. Lord, you gave us those commands, and we need to trust you, that that’s what’s best for our marriages. So, I pray that we would do that, that we would pray over each other and for each other, and that we would not see each other’s sin as worse than our own. Thank you, Lord, for convicting us, for forgiving us, and for healing us, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

RESPECT THE WORD OF GOD

At this point, we’re going to respect, to use the theme, we’re going to respect what God says, so we’re going to collect our offering. This is where we respect the commands of Scripture, that we don’t worship our wealth, but we worship with our wealth, that we give generously, and we give gladly. That’s what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. So, as we collect the offering, we’re respecting the Word of God and saying, “God, everything we have comes from you; and out of respect, we want to give back, so that the gospel would go forward.”

As they’re collecting the offering, as well, we’re going to respect the Word of God by asking you ladies to take a bit of time, before you partake of Communion—where we remember the broken body and shed blood of Jesus, that our sin is such a big deal, that God died for it—I want you ladies to, in any way that is appropriate, repent to your husband of being disrespectful. And it’s okay to cry and get emotional. Before we conclude our time together, today, it’s really important to honestly take the time and do that, so that walking out, your husband doesn’t have that awkward car ride home, like, “Do I ask? Hey, what did you think about the sermon?” Go first. Tell him, “Honey, I heard it. Here are some things I’m thinking about. Please forgive me. And here’s the ways you can help me.” That’ll open up a loving, gracious dialog, instead of conflict.

You men, if you’ve been, or are being, disrespectful in any way, repent of that and tell your wife, “I know you’ve had a hard time respecting me, and it’s because I’ve not been very respectable, and I ask your forgiveness for that.”

After you repent of sin to one another—and for those of you who are single, this includes you, as well. Is there anything in your life where you are disrespecting the Word of God and maybe even disrespecting the spouse that God may bring you? Repent of that. Then partake of Communion, remembering the broken body and shed blood of Jesus.

For those of you who are not Christians, we want you to respect the Lord Jesus by not just hearing about him, but trusting in him; by not just listening about sin, but putting sin to death, because Jesus died for it; by giving him your sin and receiving his salvation.

Then we’re all going to sing. And one of the things I want you to focus on with me, today, is, as we sing, we’re respecting Jesus. We’re singing about him, not ourselves. We’re singing to him, not ourselves. We’re singing as an act of humility, as an act of faith, as an act of trust, as an act of love, as an act of adoration. One of the ways that we, as Christians, show respect for Jesus is we worship him by giving, to be sure, repenting of sin, partaking of Communion, and singing. And so that will now be your opportunity to respect the Word of God.

Note: This transcript has been edited for readability.