

"THE REAL REASONS MEN ACT THE WAY THEY DO!"
by Rom A. Pegram (2/3/19)

As I begin this series of messages on Christian marriage (or relationships in general), I have to share with you where I'm coming from personally. I'm kind of like this woman who went to a marriage seminar one weekend—without her husband—and came home so excited to share all of the new things she'd learned with him...

She went home and immediately began to tell her husband about all the things she'd gotten from this weekend ... but he didn't have time to listen. She began to say, "Honey, I know you're busy, but I just want to tell you ONE thing I learned at this seminar." He continued to say, "No, no, we'll talk about it later. I'm busy now." Well, she continued. (Some might call it nagging, but for the sake of this story, let's call it 'being persistent.')

Finally, she wore him down and he agreed to listen to just one thing she'd learned...

She began to tell him about it. "Honey," she said, "the speaker this weekend told us that we needed to do something together REGULARLY as a couple—like a hobby or something—*while* the kids are growing up. This is so that when the kids leave home, we won't experience the 'empty nest syndrome' too bad." Her husband said, "Empty what? This sounds like a bunch of baloney to me. These guys travel all around the country and they don't know what they're talking about!" She continued to explain it all to him...

Finally, she said, "On the way home, I figured out what we can do together. I want to learn how to hunt!" Her husband just about hit the ceiling. "Honey, that's something I like to do by myself," he said. "But, honey, I think this would be good for us," she came back. Folks, she finally wore him down (persistent) and he gave in. He said he'd teach her how to hunt so that they could do it TOGETHER...

For her next birthday, he bought her a new rifle; she was really excited!?!@##@ He taught her how to use it and then taught her all about deer hunting—that's where they were going to begin. Well, they went out deer hunting on opening morning. Not long after they reached their stands, the husband heard two shots coming from over in the direction his wife was at. He rushed over to see what was going on. As he neared the location of her stand, he heard these two people screaming at each other at the top of their lungs ... but he couldn't quite make out what they were saying. As he came up on them, he heard VERY CLEARLY NOW this guy talking to his wife; he said, "O.K. lady, O.K.! You can have your DEER. ... *Just let me get my saddle off first!*"

Now, I'm very much like that lady ... in this way: For the first several years of Jane's and my marriage, I didn't really know what I was shooting for! I couldn't understand why Jane and I were stressed out from time to time. I thought I knew the secrets to a happy marriage, and I told Jane—several times—different things *she* could do to help improve our marriage, but she just didn't seem to like any of them. Sometimes, I felt like getting out a chalkboard at the supper table to go over *the plan* with her. But she never responded to any of my ideas, or what *I* thought would work. And then when Jane would try and explain things to me, even after she explained them, I didn't have the slightest clue what she was talking about. *I didn't know where I was shooting in this marriage relationship ... and I needed help...*

That's what this worship series is being dedicated to—to those who need help, to

those who want to know, maybe just a little better, what to shoot for in relationships...

Maybe some of the men here today feel like the psychiatrist who spent 30 years of his career in *women's studies* and when he retired said, "There is only one question left unanswered: *What do women really want?*" Maybe some of you wives feel like today's sermon title and want to ask, "Why do men really act the way they do?" Well, the scripture I want to share with you today, as I begin to speak on relationships speaks to these questions. It begins to teach us what to shoot for in our marriages. Listen (Ephesians 5:21-33, NLT)...

And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²² For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. ²⁴ As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything. ²⁵ For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶ to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. ²⁷ He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. ²⁹ No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. ³⁰ And we are members of his body. ³¹ As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." ³² This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. ³³ So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

HUSBANDS, DON'T FORGET YOUR PART OF THIS SCRIPTURE! THERE'S MORE FOR YOU HERE THAN FOR YOUR WIVES. The reason I say that is because I really want to concentrate, today, on the very last words of Paul here—his final and most important words—particularly the second half of verse 33 -- EVERY WIFE MUST RESPECT HER HUSBAND. Some of you are already thinking, "Woah! That's a tall order!" But, Paul's words tell us this is key to making Christian relationships tick! So, first...

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO RESPECT ONE ANOTHER? Verse 28 says, "Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies." If both husbands and wives would love each other *this* way, they would have RESPECT for one another, as Paul's speaking of...

Think of our country's flag. I hope and pray that kids in school are still being taught a respect for our country's flag—which represents the United States and all we stand for. But how should we treat the flag? Out of respect, right? What is the one thing you never let happen when you're handling the U.S. flag? (Touch the ground.) That's respect; it is never abused.

How about LAWS in this country? Do we respect them? When I've talked to young people in the past, about getting their driver's license, I always tell them to drive

as if a police officer is right behind them at all times. That would be respect, wouldn't it? Respect for the law—an awareness that the LAW is present...

Wives, how would you treat your husbands if you knew your pastor was sitting in the room with you, listening to your every word? (And this goes both ways, fellas!)

Verse 21 (The Message) says, "Out of respect for Christ, be courteously reverent to one another." That's how people in relationships should treat each other all the time, because the fact is ... Christ IS there! Those are some examples of WHAT RESPECT MEANS, but...

HOW DO WE GO ABOUT RESPECTING ONE ANOTHER? Let me suggest, this morning, that the beginning of RESPECT in our relationships is *understanding*--to understand (BEING OPEN TO UNDERSTAND) our partners in relationships. **HERE'S BIG NEWS:** *There're differences between men and women...* But before I get into specific differences though, I want to first draw your attention to the general differences and how they affect our lives together...

The best example I can give you to illustrate the general difference between men & women is Gary Smalley's illustration:

THE BUTTERFLY has a keen sensitivity. It is sensitive to even the slightest breeze. It flutters above the ground where it can get a panoramic view of its surroundings. It notices the beauty of even the tiniest of flowers. Because of its sensitivity, it is constantly aware of all the changes going on around it and is able to react to the slightest variation in its environment. Thus, the butterfly reacts with swiftness toward anything that might hurt it (and if you've tried to catch one by hand, you know what I mean). Now, if a tiny pebble were attached to its wing, the butterfly would be severely injured and eventually die.

THE BUFFALO is another story. It is rough and calloused. It doesn't react to the breeze. It's not even affected by a thirty-mile-an-hour wind. It just goes right on doing whatever it was doing. It's not aware of the smallest flowers, nor does it appear to be sensitive to slight changes in its environment. Tape a pebble to the buffalo's back and he probably won't even feel it.

Now (and please hear this), the buffalo isn't "rotten to the core" just because he goes around stepping on pretty flowers. In fact, the buffalo's toughness is a tremendous asset. His strength, when harnessed, can do amazing things...

The analogy should be obvious... Ladies, your husband is the buffalo (Don't say 'AMEN' too loudly!) and you're the butterfly. He may tend to "PLOW" through circumstances, while you "feel" life and your surroundings with much more sensitivity. The "pebble" on the butterfly's wing may take the form of a sarcastic remark, a sharp criticism, or even an indifferent attitude. Whatever it is, it can hurt and even crush you, while he may not even notice what he's done...

The analogy ends this way: The buffalo can never take on any of the butterfly's sensitivities, and the butterfly will never benefit from the buffalo's strength. **BUT THAT'S NOT TRUE IN YOUR MARRIAGES!** Husbands CAN LEARN how to be gentle,

sensitive, and romantic, but they can't do that on their own; he needs your help to do it. *The beginning of being able to respect your husband is learning why he acts the way he does.* I've heard many women say, "It must be a MAN thing!" 'Know what? They're absolutely right!

There are also specific differences between women and men—differences that make each act the way they do: mental/emotional, physical, sexual and intuitive differences. Today, however, I only have time to talk about the first—emotional differences, like these:

- Women tend to be more personal than men...
- Women have a deeper interest in people and feelings, while men tend to be more preoccupied with practicalities through "logical" deduction...
- There tends to be more of an 'intimate' attachment, for women, to both people AND surroundings--making change in their lives come a bit harder...

Steve and Bonney had been struggling to make just enough money to put food on the table. His small business was requiring about eighteen hours a day on his part, and she was putting in at least eight hours a day—while seven months pregnant. One day, Steve flew east to check out an opportunity—to show his business to a millionaire who may invest. The man was impressed and made Steve a generous offer. Steve could hardly wait to call Bonney and tell her the good news.

It took Steve less than five minutes to accept the offer. It was the only "reasonable" course of action. He called Bonney and told her the news in "logical" order, so she could get as excited about it as he was. Steve was shocked when Bonney began to weep uncontrollably. At first he thought she was crying for joy (I know for some of you it's hard to believe he thought that, but remember ... buffalos). As soon as Bonney caught her breath, she began to ask some questions—ridiculous in Steve's mind, of course. She asked, "What about our parents?" and "What about our apartment—I just finished the baby's room?" With her third question, Steve—with all of the masculine "sensitivity" he could muster—abruptly hung up on her. *She had the nerve to ask him if he'd forgotten ... she was seven months pregnant!*

Do you see what Steve did? Let me show you (*show pebble and boulder illustration—bowling ball & marble*)...

Steve's business failed eight days before their baby was born. Steve had to learn the hard way that questions like "What about our parents?" and "What about the nursery?" are sometimes more important than money or logic. He doesn't make any major decision now without first talking it over with Bonney. He gives her time to adjust to changes in life, as soon as he foresees them. BUT, LADIES ... THE POINT IS, HE WAS TAUGHT. HUMAN 'BUFFALOS' CAN BE TAUGHT TO UNDERSTAND YOU ... BUT IT TAKES A MUTUAL RESPECT—that kind of relationship—in order for that to happen; the beginning is in respecting your husband (or others you're relating to)...

IT'S ALL ABOUT RESPECT—MUTUAL RESPECT ... and there're 2 things to keep in mind:

FIRST, learn about and *celebrate* your differences! Husbands, respect your wives sensitivity and intuitive gifts; they are truly an asset to your life—a gift from God! And wives, respect your husband and love him where he's at ... but teach him—*out of love*—how to be a better husband ... to know what you need in a relationship...

AND **SECOND**, do unto others (ALL YOU'RE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH) as you would have them do unto you! That'd be Jesus' best advice to having a happy life together...

Today, we're reminded of the love that drove Jesus to the cross—what he did for us. The question to ask yourself, as you join in Holy Communion today, is this: DOES THE LOVE I SHOW MY SPOUSE REFLECT THE LOVE CHRIST SHOWED FOR ME?