

For Better . . . For Worse

The Knowledge Factor

February 12, 2012

HDBC

Play Video - 2-Dick Van Dyke Marriage

For Better, For Worse. That is the question that every marriage has to answer. Are we going to make our marriage better or worse. This is the second in a three-part sermon series designed to help you strengthen your marriage or prepare for your future marriage. Remind you that this series is very topical and is very **application focused**.

Last week we looked at the . . .

Reality Factor – You wake up and realize the fantasy of the fairy tale is not happening.

Knowledge Factor - One of the most important factors in building a **better** marriage is knowledge. The Bible has a lot to say about knowledge. 153 times. Here are a few.

Knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Proverbs 2:10

Wise men store up knowledge. Proverbs 10:14

Every prudent man acts with knowledge. Proverbs 13:16

It is not good for a person to be without knowledge. Proverbs 19:2

By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. Pr. 24:4

A man of knowledge increases in power. Proverbs 24:5

Knowledge is a pretty important thing. That is true of life in general. A great portion of what parents are doing in training their children is imparting knowledge. Important that children gain knowledge of how life works. New employees have to have a knowledge of what it takes to do their jobs. Equally important in a marriage. The knowledge fact is so important! Specifically this morning I want to talk about knowledge of a very specific thing. Not worrying about budgets, housing, careers, etc.

Husbands, you must grow in your knowledge of your wife.

Wives, you must grow in your knowledge of your husband.

This happens on two levels. First, understand the characteristics of the other gender. Second, understand the specific characteristics of your spouse. Sound complicated? It can be, but it will be worth the effort. Start with the general, then move to the specific.

1. Know the Origin

It is an understatement to say there is a **gender crisis in America**. Our culture seems to be very confused when it comes to gender. Some boys are not sure they

really are boys. Some know they are boys but want to be girls. Some girls are convinced that the differences in gender are a figment of narrow-minded people's imaginations. There is even a psychological diagnosis called . . .

Gender identity disorder (GID) — A strong and lasting cross-gender identification and persistent discomfort with one's biological gender (sex) role. This discomfort must cause a significant amount of distress or impairment in the functioning of the individual.

Some will blame the sexual revolution of the sixties. Others will blame the women's liberation movement for the confusion. But I want you to know that the confusion started long before either of these.

It is important that we understand some origins concerning gender. Two things are worth noting.

A. Gender is a Creation of God

Where do the genders come from? How did we end up with two genders? Why two? The answer is found in Genesis.

Genesis 1:27

God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

From the very beginning it is clear that God created two genders. He could have created three or four or ten. But he chose to create two. Two types of people. Two categories. Both fully human, fully made in the image of God, equal in value, essence and standing before God and the rest of creation. But radically different. Physically, emotionally, and psychologically.

Now, look at Genesis 2:25. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Why is that verse there and what does it teach us? Not simply a statement that they had no clothes. It is the revelation that they were absolutely transparent with each other. Absolutely at ease with each other. Absolutely comfortable with each other. No hindrances, no issues, nothing hidden. It think it is safe to say that they not only were completely comfortable with who they were as a man and woman, but also that they fully understood, accepted and love the other person for who they were.

The man was comfortable with his manhood. The woman was comfortable with her womanhood. And each one understood the uniqueness of the other and fully appreciated it. They absolutely completed each other in every way.

No confusion. No shame. No fear. No misunderstanding.

But it did not stay that way. A short time later in the narrative of Genesis we see them confused, embarrassed, ashamed, hiding. Trying to cover themselves with clothing. Blaming one another. Confusion entered into the situation. Competition over the God-given roles which were a compliment to their gender uniqueness. **What was it that caused that change?**

B. Confusion is a Result of Sin

Genesis 3 is the story of how Adam and Eve sinned against God for the first time. They experienced the short-lived rush of rebellion and the long consequences of that rebellions. That included conflict and struggle in their marriage. You can bet that some of that conflict had to do with a waning understanding that they were each created in a special and unique way to bring something special and unique to the marriage.

Rather than complimenting and completing one another, they began to blame one another. Unity and transparency were replaced by division and competition.

So, what do we learn from origins?

Gender distinctions are God-designed and God-given.

Gender confusion and conflict started with original sin.

So, where does that leave us? Leaves us with a challenge and responsibility. Two more things.

2. Know the Differences

In light of the gender confusion and competition that is found in our culture, it is critical that we understand God's original design in terms of gender distinctions. Men and women are different. That, my friends is an unchangeable fact. All attentions to blur the distinctions or move us to a unisex society will be met with frustration and failure. You can claim that 2 plus 2 is 5. But it will always be 4.

So, it is important to marriage that we understand the differences. Earlier this week I asked you guys to help me with this. I wanted ladies to share what they wished husbands knew about women. I asked guys to share what they wished wives knew about men. Interesting responses.

Before I read them, let me say a couple of things.

I've take some editorial license on some.

Not going to read them all. Time and redundancy.

Women responded 2-1 over guys.

Read the Responses.

3. Know Your Spouse

It is not enough to simply get an idea of what makes the other gender tick. Not enough to know that you think, feel and often act in totally different ways. **It is critical that you know your spouse.** Among all the other members of their gender, they are uniquely made by God. It is your job and privilege to know them.

Look at an important passage with me. 1 Peter 3:7

Husbands, in the same way live with your wives in an understanding way . . .

Two things to note in this statement.

First, there is a statement about the importance of knowledge. That phrase in an understandable way implies knowledge. It implies a growing knowledge and understanding of your spouse. **So guys**, God calls you know your wives.

Wives, you have the same responsibility for your husbands. Note the second thing in that short statement. In the same way ties this statement with what precedes it. It means that wives have the same responsibility to **know their husbands**. It is a mutually inclusive statement.

So, how do we do it? Let me offer two practical actions.

A. Pay Attention

Listen, look and learn. Watch what they do. How they respond. Listen to what they say. Learn from being with them.

B. Ask Questions

Most of us don't do enough of this. One of the best ways to bet to know your spouse is to ask questions, then let them share.

What Husbands wish their wives knew about men.

That "guy time" in moderation is beneficial to the family dynamic and marriage

We are not lazy . . . all the time

We usually mean exactly what we say and only what we say.

Just because we have a far-away look in our eyes doesn't mean we're having deep thoughts. Or any thoughts, for that matter.

It's OK to let us think we're right occasionally ,-if for no other reason than a change of pace.

Why ask us to clean if you are going to re-clean after us?

Men want more sex than women.

We need to know that our wives have confidence in our ability to lead the family.

No, driving around town just to do it, is not fun.

Anything you wear is fine. Really.

We need to be affirmed of our manliness.

If you ask us what we're thinking about and the answer is "nothing", 90% of the time this is true (especially if the TV is on). The other 10% of the time it's probably something that would lead to a fight. Go with the average and assume that nothing was there.

Our jobs often define who we are as men. Men take criticism of our jobs (such as "You don't make enough money") very personally.

Men are like dogs. Our needs are few and obvious, we can be trained to do simple tasks and if someone makes a mess in the living room then chances are it's us.

Husbands need affirmation and encouragement from their wives. Unconstructive criticism is so destructive.

As much we try to be consistent in our mood and our attitude, regular sex improves both our mood and attitude!

If something is said that can be taken two ways and one of those ways means I need to sleep on the couch ... then assume I meant it the other way.

Men aren't as creative about romance (non sexual matters).

Shopping is not a sport.

What women wish their husbands knew about women

We need your full attention during a conversation. Just because you can watch espn and talk at the same time doesn't mean that you should

We need regular hugs

We want you to put the dishes in the dishwasher, not the sink.

Meaningful Conversation is the way we connect. No conversation; No connection. Chit-chat about unimportant things does not count.

Dirty laundry~ IN~ the laundry basket is better than roses.

When I say it doesn't matter...it usually does.

The load of laundry on the chair is not the same pile that was there when he left that morning -it's the 5th load she's done that day. Staying home with the kids **is Work.**

Little things are important. Making us coffee, helping with the chores at home.

Just because we cry DOES NOT make us weak. We cry for many reasons - anger, frustration, confusion.

Saying "I am sorry" brings healing and restoration to a difficult situation.

When we are discouraged, upset or stressed that we don't need you to fix things.

We just need a hug and reassurance that you are there for us.

Honey-do lists are meant to be done before the honey comes home.

Sex is not the first thing we think about after we have worked all day.

The frequency of a wife's intimacy is not tied to her love for him. We aren't always aware of how long it has been like he is. Cuddling fills our love tank just as much.

Our wishing we could have/buy something is not a comment on their inability to provide - sometimes it's just a general statement.

You don't babysit your own kids, they are yours too.

We love it when you practice chivalry.

The dinner table is not the place to blow your nose.

I wish husbands knew the depth of our insecurities

Expensive gifts do not make us feel loved. The more time and trouble the gift takes the more special we feel.

I wish husbands knew how hard it is to be a woman.

Helping in the kitchen is important to romance

The most wonderful thing you can say to us is, "You're right. I'm wrong".

When we ask who won a game, we do not need details. We just want to know who won

We don't expect you to solve all our problems. Sometimes we just need a hug.

Snuggling doesn't always have to result in sex.

While we juggle work/home/kids, etc. smoothly and efficiently, we actually do get tired and need a time of rest away from everyone (this doesn't mean we don't love you).

We want you to have some clue about women's hormones and female cycles.

I wish husbands knew how to read facial expressions

We want you to know it makes a woman feel to recognize birthdays and anniversaries.

We really are hormonal, our WHOLE lives!

We don't want your friends to be more important than we are

Women are stronger than men believe. BUT we still want a knight in shining armor when it's needed (you should automatically know when this is needed).

When you say not to worry about things, it makes us worry more.

If I cook dinner, please clean the kitchen.

Husbands should go into hibernation during menopause