

DECODING THE COMMUNICATION OF COUPLES

Introduction – The reasons for couples to be conflictual can appear complicated. There are countless issues that result in misunderstanding and disharmony. Wives end up losing respect for their husbands and husbands question their love for their wives. The good news is that the root problem is simple.

- A. The most extensive biblical discussion of the relationship of couples is found in the Ephesian letter.

Ephesians 5:21-33

1. Submission is a much misinterpreted biblical concept.
2. Submission is about having a respectful attitude and approach to one's partner (1 Peter 3:1-6).

Sarah was no passive personality in her marriage, but learned to respect Abraham over time (Genesis 16, 17, 21).

3. The Christian marriage demands mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21).

- B. Men speak the language of respect while women speak the language of love (Ephesians 5:33).

1. The secret to having a cooperative and loving husband is giving him the gift of unconditional respect.
2. The secret to having a respectful wife is giving her the gift of unconditional love.
3. Obviously both need respect and love, but it is the priority of each gender that is different.

1 Peter 3:7

- C. What do women want?

1. She desires an affectionate intimacy.
2. She wants him to willingly share his feelings.
3. She wants a good listener who does not always try to fix her problems.
4. She wants her partner to be a peacemaker, not contentious.
5. She wants him to tell her the reasons he loves and values her.

D. What do men want?

1. He wants his partner to appreciate the effort he makes to provide for her and protect her.
2. He wants her to be willing to listen to his advice and insights and thank him for his concern.
3. Men want companionship beyond talk that includes a side-by-side sharing of life.
4. Men want their partner to assume they have good intentions, even when they do not come across in a way that makes her feel loved.
5. Men look for acceptance in the area of sexual intimacy and are hurt by repeated rejection.

Conclusion – These are general differences between the male and female cultures. Not every man or women fit perfectly into all these generalities. Getting to know your partner is essential to the biblical goal for marriage of oneness (Ephesians 5:31).

Discussion Questions

1. What exceptions do you see to the general rule that men want to be respected and women want to be loved?
2. What are some practical suggestions women can offer about how men can better communicate in the language of love?
3. What are some practical suggestions men can offer about how women can better communicate in the language of respect?