

TEACHING NOTES (underlined words indicate answers for the handout)

Mistakes We Often Make — For the Wife

INTRODUCTION

1. I want to begin this first session tonight in a very practical way. Sometimes practical approaches to improving marriages can do what some other sessions cannot do.

2. How many here have a perfect marriage? Now maybe yours is close, but do not ask your wife since she probably thinks there is room for improvement and could be a little less than perfect.

3. When I refer to “mistakes” I am not classifying them as failures, but they could lead to failures.

There are some who would like to say that failures are reasons for separation and divorce but that is simply not true.

It does not take a lot of brains to get a divorce, but it does take something to stay married.

Howard Whitman, from the Philadelphia Sunday Bulletin, January 15, 1967, said, “It takes guts to stay married...There will be many crises between the wedding day and the golden anniversary, and the people who make it are heroes.”

4. I want to begin by letting some of you share with us some mistakes you made when you were first married. Maybe during the first 10 years of your marriage, or maybe last week.

LET’S BEGIN WITH THE MISTAKE THE WIVES HAVE MADE. IF WE HAVE ANY TIME LEFT THEN WE CAN GO TO THE MEN.

Wives, what are some mistakes you have made in your marriage? (Husbands may speak up if you would like.) These may not be just your mistakes but may include some from other marriages as well.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

5. Today, let's look at five mistakes some wives make some of the time but not all wives all of the time.

It may not be true for all but it is for some!

Mistake #1:

I. Wives Are Confused About Their Role in Marriage.

I know it is hard to believe but there has been a time in history when a woman's worth would be considered less than oxen. Then as the pendulum of time has swung, women have been told they had to be like men to succeed.

Well, I am happy to say that neither position is true.

What is the accepted role for the wife today?

A. The Wife is to be Submissive.

Submission – how do you define it?

1. What it is not.

a. Submission is not yielding to abuse.

If you are living in an abusive relationship, then get out of it.

b. Submission is not being subservient.

c. Submission is not being a mousy doormat.

d. Submission is not keeping your mouth shut at all costs.

e. Submission is not doing whatever you are asked to do even if you are uncomfortable with it.

f. Submission is not yielding to foolishness or ignorance.

2. What does it mean?

a. It means “to yield” . . . to people, precepts, and principles that have been placed in our lives as authorities.

b. It speaks of team work with one person as coach. He is not better than the players but has a different position.

c. It is to make yourself adaptable.

This is hard for some who are afraid of losing their individual identity.

d. It is to be cooperative.

Cooperation is very important because it can't be my way or your way. It must be our way.

3. For a relationship to succeed the we has to become more important than the me.

We are in submission to our country and president. You may not always agree with the president but you still pay your taxes and stop at red lights or most of them.

B. Wives are to submit to their husband because of his position, not because he always deserves it.

1. I realize there are some who abuse the authority and try to control. But no one has the right to do that.

2. Our marriage as a unit must be more important than either of our individual needs or wants or even our desires.

3. The bottom line to submitting to each other, or being adaptable or cooperative simply means being kind to one another. We are willing to defer to each other, let them go first, let them be right, win, or even let them get the recognition.

4. When you are confident who you are then you are not afraid to give.

C. Your role in submission is to be adaptable and flexible.

Mistake #2:

II. Wives Fail to Respect Their Husbands.

A. How do you define respect? Respect means to show consideration or esteem for.

When we respect each other we give to each other a sense of dignity.

Respect is crucial in building healthy relationships.

B. What is first to go in most relationships? RESPECT

What is one of the top needs in man's life? To feel RESPECTED.

C. It is so important that you should respect your husband whether he deserves it or not.

If you have a hard time respecting what your husband does, then respect his position as the husband of the home.

As a wife, your number one need is to feel loved. Therefore, we husbands should demonstrate love all the time even if our wives sometimes may be unlovable.

If you want a strong marriage, respect your husband.

Listen to this story: The mayor of a large city and his wife attended a banquet at a hotel. In order to avoid the rush of the people after it was over, they left the back way and walked to his office.

On the way, they passed a building under construction. One of the construction workers yelled a greeting to the wife. She waved and continued walking with her husband.

The mayor asked his wife who that man was. She replied that he had been her boyfriend at one time.

Feeling rather proud, the mayor asked his wife, "Aren't you glad you married me? Because if you had married him, you would have been the wife of a construction worker."

The mayor's wife replied, "No, the truth is, if I had married him, he would be mayor."

The moral of this story is behind every successful man there is a woman. But it is also true behind every failure of a man is a woman.

What happens is when a man feels respected, he can accomplish so much more.

A wife has the ability to be the greatest influence on her husband. What a position.

For a husband to be all he should be he needs his wife's encouragement.

D. How do you demonstrate respect?

1. How you talk about your husband.

2. How you talk to him.
3. If you are kind to your husband.
4. By being loyal to each other.
5. By working together to overcome a problem.

When a husband and wife are respectful, show loyalty, and demonstrate honor then great things will happen.

Learn to ask about an issue rather than telling what you are going to do or demand something be done.

When your husband knows you are his soul mate then he will want to hear what you have to say regardless what it is. He may want to postpone it to another time but he will hear it.

Queen Esther treated her husband with respect and she saved her nation. Let me give you the story briefly:

Esther became queen basically because she won a beauty pageant. But she proved to have far more than beauty going for her. Soon after she was made queen, she found out that her husband's right-hand man, Haman, had devised a plot to kill all the Jews.

Esther, herself a Jew, realized that she needed to do something. In fact, her cousin Mordecai suggested that for this cause she was made queen. First, she asked all the Jews to pray. And then, rather than barging in to see her husband, the king, and demanding that something be done about Haman, she invited him to a feast.

At the feast, Esther made sure that she looked beautiful and that the food was great. And she didn't ask anything of the kind except that he come back to another banquet. Timing is everything!

At the second feast, the king asked Esther what her petition was. She asked him to spare her life, telling him that Haman was plotting to kill all the Jews, including herself. The king was outraged and had Haman killed, and then as King, he provided a way for the Jews to defend themselves.

Esther was able to not only save her own life but the lives of thousands of Jews by handling the situation in a respectful and honoring fashion.

Respect is what you give your husband even if you think he does not deserve it.

E. When you demonstrate respect to your husband, he will accomplish great things.

The third mistake is:

III. Wives Try to Fix Their Husbands.

Why do wives try to fix their husbands?

When a husband feels like his wife is trying to change him, then he thinks he must be broken and then he acts that way.

A man's motto is if it's not broken, then don't fix it.

A. When a man feels respected automatically he begins to grow.

I understand there are some things that need changing and most men need to grow to be the ideal man. But your job is not to change your man.

B. A man will change not because you have told him to many times but as a result of your conduct and your quiet encouragement.

Don't try to fix him. Learn to encourage him and make him feel he is the most important person in your life.

A man does not usually leave his wife for a prettier woman or someone with more money but for a woman who respects him, and thinks he hung the moon.

I read about one woman whose husband had left her and she was complaining that he had left her for some bimbo who thinks he's just wonderful.

She proudly said that she hadn't seen him through rose colored glasses; she had stood up to him and had challenged him often. She hadn't seen him as some sort of superhero, as his new girlfriend did.

C. Your husband is looking to be someone's hero. Why not yours?

Deep inside every man there is a hero or knight in shining armor. More than anything, he wants to succeed in serving and protecting the woman he loves. When he feels trusted, he is able to tap into this noble part of himself. He becomes more faring; when he doesn't feel trusted, he loses some of his aliveness and energy, and after a while, he can stop caring.

Imagine a knight in shining armor traveling through the countryside. Suddenly he hears a woman crying out in distress. In an instant he comes alive. Urging his horse to a

gallop, he races to her castle, where a dragon traps her. The noble knight pulls out his sword and slays the dragon.

As the gates open, he is welcomed and celebrated by the family of the princess and the townspeople. He is invited to live in the town and is acknowledged as a hero. He and the princess fall in love.

A month later, the noble knight goes off on another trip. On his way back, he hears his beloved princess crying out for help. Another dragon has attacked the castle. When the knight arrives, he pulls out his sword to slay the dragon.

Before he swings, the princess cries out from the tower, "Don't use your sword; use this noose. It will work better." She throws him the noose and motions to him instructions about how to use it. He hesitantly follows her instructions. The dragon dies and everyone rejoices.

At the celebration dinner, the knight feels he didn't really do anything. Somehow, because he used her noose and didn't use his sword, he doesn't quite feel worthy of the town's trust and forgets to shine his armor.

A month later, he goes on yet another trip. As he leaves with his sword, the princess reminds him to be careful and tells him to take the noose. On his way home, he sees yet another dragon attacking the castle. This time he rushes forward with his sword but hesitates, thinking maybe he should use the noose. In that moment of hesitation, the dragon breathes fire and burns his right arm. In confusion, he looks up and sees his princess waving from the castle window. "Use the poison," she yells. "The noose doesn't work."

She throws him the poison, which he pours into the dragon's mouth, and the dragon dies. Everyone rejoices and celebrates, but the knight feels ashamed.

A month later, he goes on another trip. As he leaves with his sword, the princess reminds him to be careful and to take the noose and the poison. He is annoyed by her suggestions but takes them just in case.

This time on his journey he hears another woman in distress. As he rushes to her call, his depression is lifted, and he feels confident and alive. But as he draws his sword to slay the dragon, he again hesitates. He wonders, should I use my sword, the noose, or the poison? What would the princess say?

For a moment he is confused. But then he remembers how he had felt before he knew the princess, back in the days when he carried only a sword. With a burst of renewed confidence he throws off the noose and poison, and charges the dragon with his trusted sword. He slays the dragon and the townspeople rejoice.

The knight in shining armor never returned to his princess. He stayed in this new village and lived happily ever after. He eventually married, but only after making sure his new partner knew nothing about nooses and poisons.

Remember that within every man is a knight in shining armor is a powerful metaphor to help you remember a man's primary needs. Although a man may appreciate caring and assistance, sometimes too much of it will lessen his confidence or turn him off.

From John Gray's book: Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus

Wives, your job is not to fix or change your husband. You are not his teacher even though at times he may learn from you.

D. You are to be an influence by letting your heart, character, and integrity speak for itself.

Instead of trying to fix your husband's life, work on fixing the many things in your life.

The Fourth Mistake is:

IV. Wives Blow The Steam Out of their Husbands Dreams.

We are living in a very negative world where often the husband is bombarded with such thoughts as, that will never work! No, I can't do that. I don't have what it takes. I'm not qualified to do that.

What wives need to do instead of blowing the steam out of her husband's dreams she needs to be his encourager by saying you can do it. Or, that is a great idea.

A. How can you encourage your husband? BECOME HIS CHEERLEADER.

What is a cheerleader? A cheerleader is one who speaks encouragement.

The word encourage means to put courage in.

Courage mean to face the danger in spite of the fear.

When we encourage, we are saying, keep going; keep doing right; you'll get it.

Remember when your child started to walk? When they took that first step we clapped and really encouraged them be telling them how good they did. We certainly hoped they would take more steps than that as they grew older.

B. As wives you need to encourage your husband in every step he takes in the right direction.

Maybe what he is doing is not being done perfectly but encourage him anyway.

Do not be critical and impatient, expecting him to get it right the first time.

C. You should praise his dreams and his attempts to reach them.

The Fifth Mistake is:

V. Wives Fail to Like Themselves.

Why should you like yourselves?

A. We are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

This simply means if I do not love myself then I certainly cannot love anyone else.

Your husband is not responsible to fix you or to give yourself self-esteem. That comes from within. You are to make yourself feel good.

B. Ask your husband and I am sure he will tell you it is true that “when you like who you are, you are more fun to be around.”

You need to laugh at your mistakes. Everyone else is. If you are not able to laugh at yourself it is a sure sign that we lack confidence or self-esteem.

C. There are many reasons why people have low self-esteem: neglect, rejection, past abuse, and abandonment.

When I talk about self-esteem I am talking about the quiet confidence you get from knowing your identity and to know you are in this world for a purpose.

Sometimes we have to be reminded that we were created for a purpose and we were not an accident.

D. You have a destiny to reach and a purpose to fulfill.

Through God’s eyes we are:

1. We are not a victim, but a conqueror – in fact, more than a conqueror.
2. We are not a loser, but a winner.
3. We are not an addict, but an overcomer.
4. We are not a captive, but set free.

5. We are not a sinner, but forgiven.

6. We are not a random creation or her parents' accident, but put on the earth for such a time as this.

E. How can I obtain self-esteem?

Not from books or seminars, even though it will help.

1. It comes from living in the identity that God has given to you.
2. By daring to have a dream and following through on reaching that dream.
3. Upon reaching your dream your self-confidence will rise.

What are you dreaming today? If you do not have a dream then you are having trouble liking yourself.

Never quit dreaming.

F. God calls you to be a virtuous woman.

This does not mean weak or quiet. It means a force on the earth consisting of three things: people, means, and resource.

She understands that she must build a strong people-base in her life.

She must understand the value of making, spending, and saving money.

She must understand the value of continual learning.

You must accept the challenge of building your own confidence. Your husband can help. But it's really up to you.

CONCLUSION

1. You must understand your role.
2. You must respect your husband.
3. You do not need to fix your husband.
4. You should not blow the steam out of your husbands dreams.
5. You must like yourself.