

Song of Solomon The Christian Marriage Life (6)

Opening Readings: Song of Solomon 1:1-4 & Eph. 5:22-33

Introduction:

- A. What makes good business practice?
1. Remind yourself of your goals
 2. Review your practices to reach those goals
 - a. Is my primary focus to build my character? (Song 1:2-3)
 - b. Am I practicing praise? (Song 1:5-17; 4:1ff)
 - c. Am I still living at 'home'? (Song 4:8)
 - d. Do I hunt out the predators? (Song 2:14-15)
 3. Adding more useful practices to reach the goals
 - a. In a relationship, you never reach the summit
 - b. Without the Holy Spirit, nothing will grow.

V. Use a Leadership that Draws Together (Song 1:4a)

- A. God has 'designed' distinctive roles within *each* relationship
1. Take your own body: *though organs have distinctive tasks, they are all to work together towards one goal: living!*
 2. Within marriage God's design is the 'headship of the man over the woman' Eph. 5:22-24
 3. The first disruption in God's design came in Gen. 3:6
- B. God's seven-word description of roles and responsibilities in marriage: Song 1:4a!
1. Consider *who* asked this.
 2. Consider *what* she did ask. (compare Hos. 11:4 & Jer. 31:3)
 - a. So she asked him to **take the lead ...**
 - in loving her
 - in guiding her towards God's best
 - in serving her needs
 - in sensitive, compassion, care

3. Consider *how* she envisions the rest of the journey.

C. God wills men to be *loving, sensitive and serving leaders*

1. the Lord Jesus is the model: Matt. 20:28; Eph. 5:25-27

2. In order to lead well, husbands are to be learners: 1 Peter 3:7

a. each woman *does* come with 'owner's manual'

b. 'weaker' isn't a *muscle weakness* but *emotional strength*

c. our task is to *lead her with understanding* so we need to learn what she needs

d. without 'learning' we end up *damaging or bruising*

D. What keeps women from asking men to take lead?

1. Past experience of male-domineering by father or brothers

a. many males lead by *fear and intimidation demanding service*

b. new husbands should be aware of *dysfunctional family homes and society* that have misshaped understanding of God's design

2. Misinformation from the 'feminist camp'

a. Our society advocates a culture of anger and resentment about 'female oppression'

E. What keeps some men from taking the lead?

1. Ignorance

a. many have no clue how to successfully lead

b. for many this is due to the lack of good role models

2. Fear or insecurity (a flow down from ignorance)
 - a. what do all men fear the most?
 - b. we need to fight this fear with faith in and prayer for God's grace and power

3. Stored up anger
 - a. Any sinful anger held on will destroy a man's ability to lead
 - b. If sinful anger or resentment lives within, seek help

F. Leaders needs encouragement to lead (Song 1:4a)

1. Encouragement is communicating that you don't expect him to be perfect
2. Encouragement is given by *verbalizing appreciation or recognition*
3. Encouragement is given by *positive* feedback
 - a. upbuilding criticism needs the right 'wrapping paper'
 - b. a wife is to expected to give her husband *feedback* on his leadership (and a husband is to seek it)
4. Encouragement is given by allowing your leader a *periodic vacation*

Follow up ... *the goal of godly leadership is to bring about a two-part harmony where both partners complement each other as they move into the same direction. A godly leader isn't boss ordering and delegating tasks but a man who draws all available and given resources toward the common goal: a God glorifying life!*

1. Poor models of past male leadership will influence both husband and wife in their relationship within marriage. Take a joint look at your pasts to determine which role models of male leadership you have seen. Determine together how they influence you today and how they might affect your relationship.
2. Make a list of positive leadership traits acted out in your families. What are you doing to cultivate these, also in your sons?
3. Every human being has a variety of fears as result of our fall in Paradise. Face your own fears and make a specific list of them and share them with each other. Discuss how you can help each other in these fears.
4. Think back on times of failure. We learned that failures are the opportunities to learn.' Do you consider your failures as opportunities? What steps will you decide on to make failures into growth opportunities?
5. Define accurately what you think 'wifely submission' means.
6. Sinful or unrighteous anger makes effectual leadership impossible because it affects the relationship you have with those you are to lead. Therefore ask yourself if there is any sinful anger simmering or burning lustily in your heart. To distinguished righteous anger versus sinful anger, consider David Powlison's diagram to determine whether or not your anger is sinful.

Righteous Anger

*When God doesn't get what He wants
God's will is violated
Motivated by a sincere love for God*

Eph. 4:26

Sinful Anger

*When I don't get what I want
My will is violated
Motivated by a love of some
idolatrous desire*

James 4:1

Appendix 1 Suggested questions to ask each other (from Lou Priolo)

1. If you could change three things about me that would make me more Christ-like, what would you change?
2. Do I have any other annoying mannerisms or irritating idiosyncrasies that you would like to see me change?
3. How does it make you feel like when I ... (name something that you know displeases or worries her)?
4. What goes through your mind when I ... (again name something that you know displeases her)?
5. What do you want from me that I'm not giving you at the moment?
6. On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate our marriage?
7. What would make our marriage a ten?
8. What are your personal goals as wife or mother? How can I assist you reaching them?
9. Do you have any needs or desires that you believe I ought to be meeting or fulfilling better than I do?
10. Plan your own questions that help you learn more!