

Bezael Enlite

FUNDAMENTALS OF
CHRISTIAN
MARRIAGE



PASTOR BANKIE

About The Book

Being a Christian is being a disciple of Christ Jesus. Being a disciple means to be actively learning His ways in everything. In this book, you will learn the ways of Christ in running a Christian marriage.

Among the topics discussed are:

- The distinctive mark of unity in the Christian marriage
- What submission is
- What it means to love your wife in the godly way
- How to handle money in the home
- The truth about in-law issues

Peace doesn't happen by itself and for no reason; obeying divine precepts is what paves the way for the peace of God to reign in a home. Read this book and receive the peace of God that no man can give into your life. This book completes the teachings Pastor Bankie began in the partner book *Should I Say Yes, 2nd edition*.



The Author

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MARRIAGE**



PASTOR BANKIE



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Preface



A few years ago, following the suggestion of brethren, I wrote down some of the understanding which the Lord had granted me on marriage matters. When the material was ready, the title I chose for it was *Should I Say Yes*, with a subtitle *Choosing a spouse and preparing for a great marriage*. I felt this subtitle quite well captured what the book was about. As it turned out, so many people felt the book was a set of instructions to single people only on how to make a godly choice in marriage and nothing more, when in truth that was only half of it.

The book was composed of two roughly equal sections; the first dealt with the matter of choice making while the second was a teaching on the fundamental principles of operation of a Christian marriage. Even though these two sections were

appropriately titled within the book, many married people did not give enough attention to make that observation and so they missed out on great truths that would have blessed them. When offered the book, many married persons would simply remark, "I have already said yes".

So, when we released the electronic edition for download from Kingdom-Word Ministries website, I was careful to ensure that same mistake was not repeated; the book was released as two separated ones, each being a section of the previous complete book. The need to reprint has caused us to also produce this new edition in those separate volumes. Little was changed in the contents of the books; they are just the same old book presented in two volumes: *Should I Say Yes? (2nd edition)* and *Fundamentals of Christian Marriage*.

I believe that everyone, single or married, should read both books, and this was why it was just one volume originally. The married should have the knowledge with which to help younger Christians and their children, and the singles do not only need to make the right choice but also know how to operate marriage when they enter into it.

Pastor Bankie

Preface

to *Should I Say Yes?*

(First Edition)



This book was finally written after much reluctance. I never considered myself a marriage expert and so for a long time avoided writing on the subject. However, often while teaching I would expound some things on the subject of marriage. I even taught a 3-part seminar once on the matter. My co-workers and students of the word therefore kept requesting that I put down the things I had been saying here and there together in a book. It took a long time but I finally accepted to do it, and that is why you have the book in your hands now.

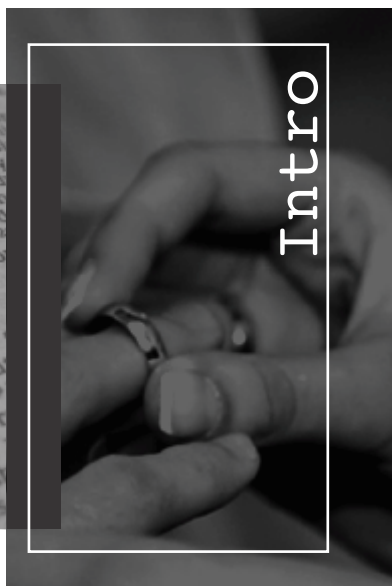
There is just one aim I have in writing this book, and that is to lay a doctrinal foundation on the subject. The book is not anything like an exhaustive look at the subject matter and I am therefore aware that I

will not touch many of the day to day issues; I leave that to the experts on marriage. I hope to, all the same, lay a solid foundation so that those who are eager to follow the way of the Lord will both have a reference and a foundation to build upon.

This book is directed to believers. I know the subject of marriage is very popular with both believers and non-believers, but I did not make any allowance for those who are not believers in this book. It is not a romantic treatise designed to be appealing to the senses. It is simply an exposition of the word of God on marriage.

I trust your life will be touched as you read this book.

Pastor Bankie



INTRODUCTION

This book is not just about marriage, but about creating expectations from the word of God about it. It only has value for those who respect His word. If you are reading this I assume you are a child of God. I assume you have given your life to Jesus Christ and you are looking to receive the best in the area of marriage, as in every other area of life, from His hands.

What do mean when you are talking about a wife, or a husband? Once, a young man like I was and who I was visiting told me the kind of girlfriend he wanted. He was a man who always had a girlfriend and had gone through many (he was not a believer). He described so many things about this wanted lady; by the time he was through I said to him, “what you want is what is called a wife. Go and get married!” No girlfriend would ever be able to fulfil the things he wanted. He had his definitions mixed up.

It is important we get our definitions right. As Christians, getting it right means only one thing—aligning it with the thoughts of God revealed in the Scriptures. The power of God to bless us is released when we are on the same thinking frequency with Him. Many of us think that all we need is to utter words in what we call prayer and God will answer, but that is not fully correct. The problem is not with God but with us; we often are asking for things that we really do not know what they mean, and so the Lord just can't grant the request. James and John came to ask for positions from the Lord and He told them in simple language that they did not know what they were talking about (Matt 20:22).

When our thoughts differ from those of the Lord on a matter, we hinder His ability to bless us. The duty we have therefore is to get our definitions right from the word of God. We must align our thoughts with His thoughts. The result is a release of God's power or grace to win in that area, and I call it the power of resonance.* When our thoughts are so aligned with God, we start having what is called *hope*, otherwise known as an expectation. Before that all we have are wishes and desires.

There is a huge difference between desires and expectations. Desire is something you simply wish for, but an expectation is a *derived* thought. It goes beyond just wanting something; it is born of information and it has tremendous power when the source of that information is the word of God.

* *Resonance. This is taken from a principle of elementary Physics. According to the laws of God in physics, every object has a natural frequency of vibration or oscillation. The amplitude produced by an inciting force in the vibration of that object is greatly increased and amplified when the force matches the natural frequency of the object by its own. This is the application: God has a thought about everything He made and everything conceivable, and this can be likened to its natural frequency. Great power is made available for the release of every increase in life once we are able to align our thoughts with the purpose of God for those things.)*

This book is not just about marriage, but about creating expectations from the word of God about it. It only has value for those who respect His word.

If you are reading this I assume you are a child of God. I assume you have given your life to Jesus Christ and you are looking to receive the best in the area of marriage, as in every other area of life, from His hands. If you are not yet a believer in Christ Jesus, please this book is not for you just yet. It will turn out only to be a source of entertainment or a source of frustrating standards unless you are of faith in Christ Jesus. Step aside for a while and give your life to Christ Jesus (*see page 17*)

For those who are believers and who are looking for the best from God, I want to tell you that your expectations are much more powerful than your desires in producing the good and godly marriage you desire. A good marriage or spouse, as the Lord wants it for you in His love, will not come just because you desire it. It will not come just because you prayed for it. It will come because you are expecting something that is derived from the word of God. It is not that the Lord does not answer prayers offered simply; rather it is because if these things are not in place, you will miss the answer

even if He were to give it.

We are first to think the way God thinks, and want only that which He promised. When we do this, we will discover that He is indeed able to do exceedingly and abundantly far above all we can ask or by ourselves even imagine.

Most of what is often found in the hearts of people are formed by the society, by fleshly desires and other things apart from the word of God. Anyone who wants the favour of God must first renounce worldly thoughts and accept the thoughts of God. This book is about creating the right imaginations and expectations in the hearts of the people of God.

We must know what God calls a husband, and what He calls a wife. We must know these things!

We must know what marriage is from His viewpoint.

We must be asking for the right things when asking the Lord for a wife or a husband. We must have the right things in mind when we ask Him about getting married. Once we align the thoughts of our hearts with God's thoughts, then the glory of God will be

revealed. The expectation that is guaranteed to the child of God is the one that is based upon the word of God. That is what is called faith.

My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off. Prov 24:13-14KJV

Faith is not the stubborn heart that wants what it wants and must get it. Faith is the attitude that wants to know from the word of God what a wife is or what a husband is. It is the attitude that knows that only God has the answer to the questions of the heart and no one else.

That is the victory that overcomes. It is our faith. Whatever is so produced is born of God and it overcomes.

Let us go together in this book and create expectations of marriage from the Word of God.

*How to be a Christian. Being a Christian is not hereditary and is not passed on by association. It is a decision one must make deliberately. It means you have chosen to follow the Man Jesus, the Son of God. It means you want to walk with God as the words of Jesus dictate. Space will not allow me explain but we are all sinners by nature and have sinned in life. We need forgiveness so as to have peace with God. In this need for forgiveness, there is no small sin or big sin. Forgiveness for all sins is found only in Christ Jesus; He died for your sin on the cross of Calvary. To become a Christian starts with a simple prayer, asking God for forgiveness and calling on Jesus to come take over your life and become the Master. His Spirit is always near to hear the prayer. This prayer can be said with any words and in any way, but a sample you may wish to use is as follows:

"Lord God I thank you that I am alive today to make this decision.

"I have walked my own way and have been a sinner. I ask you today to forgive me and wash me clean from sin so I can follow you.

"Dear Jesus, I have heard of you and I want to follow you from today. I heard you died for me, and I choose to believe it.

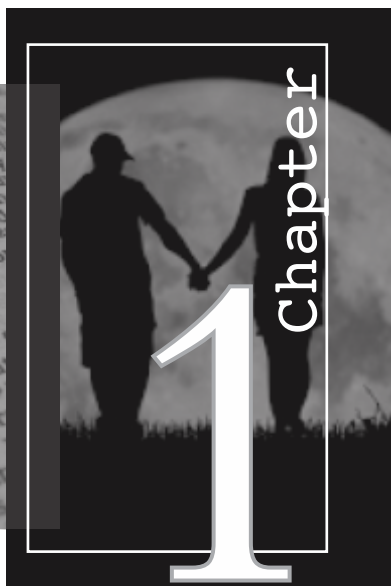
"Make me one of your own and fill me with your life and your joy.

"Make me know you for myself and lead me forever in your way.

"Thank you for a new life.

"Amen."

If you prayed this prayer, then a new life has begun. Your new duty is to start learning the ways of the Lord, that is what it means to be a disciple.



ALL KINDS OF MARRIAGE

In the world today there are indeed so many different kinds of marriage, all of them degenerate forms of the real thing. They are so many that they have made the real one almost invisible.

There are so many different kinds of marriage these days. There are marriages for visas and residency permits, which a lot of Nigerians, Christians included, got into when the craze to relocate to the US and Western Europe was on.

There are marriages for sex. Richard Branson described an extreme case of this. One of his artistes, when he still ran Virgin Records, married a girl just because the girl refused to go to bed with him unless they were married. So he married her, had sex with her during the night, and filed for divorce in the morning. The one-night wife was awarded something like 200,000 pounds in divorce settlement. People are truly crazy!

There are marriages for money. This is very common today as ever. Men marry rich girls and women marry to get out of poverty. Some marry to have business and political connections.

There are face-saving marriages. Many successful women want only this; let it just be said she has a husband, but they are not interested in the marriage institution at all. They want only the title it adds to their names. They end up signing for marriages not

made in heaven.

For seven women will take hold of one man in that day, saying, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach!" Isa 4:1

A marriage contracted upon this kind of agreement is definitely not made in heaven. The two cannot become one flesh with this kind of pre-nuptial deal.

Some preachers and political figures have married just for the professional appearance. A couple, friends of my wife and I, who reside in the US once remarked that the homepage then of our ministry website wouldn't make it in their country of residence. The problem was that it had just a picture of me preaching or something and did not have a portrait of me with my wife. They explained that it is very hard to be a pastor in the US if you were not married and seen to be a good family man. For this reason many put up a show of a marriage. The marriage is just for the professional image. There was a world famous musician who got married after repeated accusations of having sexual contact with young boys, charges he always denied. When I saw the wedding story I laughed; to me it was obviously

a redeem-the-image marriage. Of course it lasted just a few years, and he never married again.

In the world today there are indeed so many different kinds of marriage, all of them degenerate forms of the real thing. They are so many that they have made the real one almost invisible. The real one that God created, the one that the Lord Jesus said was in the beginning, is now so rare that we do not even think of it as achievable anymore. The standards of real marriage have been so altered that we do not now know what it looks like at all.

In this book my aim is to re-introduce marriage as God made it.



Chapter 2

ARE YOU READY FOR THIS?

Let us remember that marriage was not an arrangement made by people. It was not something decided upon after meetings of the elders of the people. We all met it on the earth. God created it from the very beginning as He was making the first man and the first woman.

Are you ready to walk in the way that leads to true joy and happiness in a Christian marriage? It may not be the popular way, but it is the way of life.

"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it. Matt 7:13-14

Everything desired in life has a way that leads to it. The problems with achieving the desires usually come in two forms. Either there is ignorance of the way that leads there,* or there is rejection of the way, and this for various reasons.**

Life does not give us just what we want; it rather gives us the fruit of the way we are walking on. You will be blessed if you are careful about where you walk, stand or sit.[#] One of the reasons people may reject the way that leads to what they want is that the way is often tight, uncomfortable, and unpopular. This was what the Lord was talking about when He

* *Is 59:8; Jer 6:16*

** *Jer 6:16b-17*

Psalm 1:1

spoke about the narrow gate. From the words of the Lord Jesus above, the way that produces the good stuff will appear hard, whereas the one that is popular and easy is what produces trouble. That is the reason why I am asking in this chapter, "Are you ready for this?"

Ready for what?

I mean God's kind of marriage.

Like we saw at the beginning, it is possible to be asking for something that one has no idea what things are in it. When the Lord Jesus told his disciples what marriage as God made it is supposed to be, they realized they were not ready for it.

The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry." Matt 19:10

I can tell you that many people are not ready for true Christian marriage. Like was seen in the last chapter, there are different kinds of marriage and people marry or want to marry for all kinds of reasons. My discussions with different people over time have shown to me that most people do not know what God's marriage is like. Men think it is

very much in order to conceal things from their wives, and many women express shock when they hear about what true submission is like. In fact many have no idea what submission is, and a submissive wife to them is only a fool. I have even heard of a woman who plainly explained that Sarah, Abraham's wife, was not a good example to follow, and she was supposedly sharing the word of God. Yet they are asking God to send them a husband. They are not ready for him!

I do not have the space or the time to discuss all the troubles of life and how people can reduce the standards of God to adjust to them, as was done by Moses (Matt 19:8); I only have time to tell you what marriage made in heaven is designed to be like.

I will ruffle feathers in this book and many may hate this book for it, but my information is from the word of God, from the words of the Lord Jesus and from the mouth of His apostles like Paul and Peter. We will see what the prophets said about God's view of marriage. Even though I may use experience to buttress some points, yet I am not speaking from personal experience; I am drawing knowledge only from above, from the Father of lights who Himself created marriage.

WHO STARTED IT?

Let us please remember that marriage was not an arrangement made by people. It was not something decided upon after meetings of the elders of the peoples. We all met it on the earth. God created it from the very beginning as He was making the first man and the first woman. This is why it exists in virtually every culture in this world, no matter how far from other cultures any one is. White men who came to Africa met it in Africa. Those who went to North America met it there. The practices may vary from one place to another but no human culture created it. It was by God and from Him we must learn the intention and how it should run.

Like I mentioned above, the practices do vary from one culture to another. Even among the Israelites, as much as God tried to get the best for them, certain things were practised that were not in line with the way God made it from the beginning. For instance, the law about divorce, even though sanctioned by God through Moses, it was not His plan nor was it His will. That particular law came because of the stubbornness of their hearts.

| *He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives;*

| *but from the beginning it has not been this way.*
| *Matt 19:8*

What we want to know is how it was from the beginning. We are not trying to learn what different cultures have practised, even if the cultures in themselves were good ones. We just want the word of God. Many godly men in the Bible did not enjoy the fullness of marriage as the Lord intended it. That was one area in which most of them lived below God's glory. David and Solomon were men God loved but who He never gave as examples to follow in the area of marriage. Even Solomon agreed that his married life was a joke. They were good people but they did not please God in this area and so we are careful when looking at their lives.

I noticed that only a few relationships did the Lord ever use as examples for us as Christians. One was Adam and Eve, then Abraham and Sarah; after these Christ and the Church. Though His bride was generally unfaithful, we also see His thoughts about marriage in the way He related with Israel as a covenant people; they were often described by the prophets as His bride.

What we want to know is what God created

marriage to be like for those who are in Christ Jesus. We want to know what Christian and godly marriages are to be like. I know this is where I am likely to lose a lot of disciples like Jesus did when He taught about the need to eat His flesh and drink His blood. The people felt that it was a hard thing He was teaching and so they stopped following Him after then (John 6:60,66). I pray you will be able to accept the standards of God even if they appear radically different from what everybody around lives by. Take it and aim to make your life like it. Get ready for it; it is the best way to live married.



Chapter 3

LADY, MEET THINE HUSBAND

He is her defender and protector; the one who loves her with all his heart and will rather take the injury than let any evil come to her. When she sees him she sees someone who thinks of her good first even when she doesn't feel like it.

I want to start by introducing what a husband is according to God's standards.

The term *husband* has many things inside it. It describes, of course, what a man is to his wife.

He is her friend.

The closest friend she can ever have.

He is her lover.

The one who sees her naked and neither is ashamed.

He is the one that she confides in and never lies to.

He is her equal, and yet her boss.

His words to her are not suggestions.

He is her prophet, her priest and her teacher.

He is her king. To her, his word is law.

He is deserving of as much honour from her as any man on this earth. She respects him as much as she respects her father, or even more.

He is her defender and protector; the one who loves her with all his heart and will rather take the injury than let any evil come to her. When she sees him she sees someone who thinks of her good first even when she doesn't feel like it.

He is one that she is totally joined to in her soul. She was created to walk with this man. She is bound to him, for better, for worse.

My sister, if you expect this from a husband, you will be very careful in accepting to marry a man. It is not every man you will even consider marrying.

Sometime ago I was talking with a dear sister; there were issues up with her relationship with her fiancée, and I was explaining a point about marriage. At a point I mentioned that she had to understand that the guy will make the final decisions in the home, and she wondered how that could always be since he was not always right. I mentioned simply to her that if she did not trust him to make her decisions, she should please not marry him. Later on the relationship broke up and for a long time I was wondering whether that statement I made had anything to do with the collapse. The reason why I referred to this is just to point out that statement I made. Any man you do not have enough confidence in to lead you in life, please do not marry him.

There was this dear sister who was discussing with me about the several men *chasing* her. Of the three of

them, the one she really liked was, to me, the one with the questionable character. Interestingly, I never really met anyone (I saw one briefly as he passed by her place to drop something for her); all the information about them I got from talking with her. Now, I want to say something about that fellow of questionable character.

She liked the chap. I guess he was fun, interesting and handsome. He was her professional colleague and they seemed to get along fairly well. But the more she talked about him with me, the less I liked him and I began to feel uncomfortable with the prospect of her marrying him. Then one day I had to ask her to clarify something for me. I asked her if she felt quite comfortable with him leading her in life (See, a husband is the leader to the woman). She smiled and said to me, "This is the way it is. If he asks me to close my eyes and give him my hand that he wants to take me somewhere, I will keep one eye open like this." With that she squinted in a funny manner to dramatise her point. I told her, "I think I can be frank with you; please do not ever marry him." I told her that no matter how much her stomach responds to him, he cannot be a husband to her.

Consider this other case of one dear brother. He wanted to marry a lady, and there were richer persons seeking her hand in marriage too. She chose to marry him and her father wondered how she came to that decision. She said to her father, "he is the only one of all of them who I can close my eyes, put my hand in his, and *trust* him to lead me somewhere."

Your husband is your leader. Sarah so recognized this that she called her husband Abraham 'my lord,' and she was commended for it.



MAN, MEET THINE WIFE

She is precious, she is smart, and a part of the life of the man; he was incomplete until she was made. She is weaker than the man not because she has an inferior spirit but because she is to be guarded and led by him.

How does the Lord describe a wife? She is the most important person in her husband's life. Only the Lord surpasses her in priority in his life.

She is a part of him.

She is not at all inferior to him, but she is submissive to him. The aim of this submission is so that he can be a blessing to her as he was designed to be. Eve was taken from the side of Adam, and not from his foot. That is a sign of where the wife belongs in the life of her husband. He recognizes that and so treats her with a lot of respect.

She is first in all his relationships—before his mother, his siblings and even his children.

There are men who I have seen who walk and talk as if their mothers are more important than their wives, but it is very wrong in a Christian marriage. This attitude is very frequently a result of the fact that the mother in question suffered a lot to care for her children. But suffering or no suffering for children, once the boy becomes a man and marries, mummy becomes a distant second to the wife. That is the order of God. "After everything I did for you" is cheap blackmail and a form of witchcraft, if a mother tries to use it to claim the first place in her

son's life. She has done her duty and the son will do his, but his duty does not include putting the mother above the wife in his life.

The wife is the husband's companion by covenant (Mal 2:14).

She is his most important confidant; she is his girlfriend and lover.

She knows everything about him and has a spiritual door into his innermost life.

The wife is the lover to the man; someone who his soul trusts in totally.

She is the one who sees him naked and neither of them is ashamed.

She does him good all her life and not evil.

She brings the favour of God into his life. She may be the weaker vessel but God is her defence against his errors. She is therefore actually strong.

She is not a liability to him, not an extra project to handle. No, rather she is a pillar in his life, keeping his hands strong like Hur and Aaron helped Moses (Ex 17:12).

Under God's order a wife is not just a baby producer, someone to be kept at home, to be seen and not heard. No No. She is precious, she is smart, and a part of the life of the man; he was incomplete until she was made. She is weaker than the man not because she has an inferior spirit but because she is to be guarded and led by him. I have seen cultures in which women stand up for men to sit. That is very absurd. I cannot remain seated if my wife is standing for lack of a seat.

You can see that cultures which herd women into harems and call them wives have never seen a marriage made by God. David never saw it in his experience, and neither did Solomon. They heard of it here and there by prophetic revelations but never experienced it.

The Israelites under the law never discovered what a wife really is. The way the Lord made real marriage, it is not possible to marry two wives. You cannot enter into that kind of covenant with two other people.

| *...the two shall become one...*

There cannot be *three* trying to become one the way

God made it. Solomon discovered it too late. Monogamy is not a school of thought or a religious instruction; it is the *only* way to marry into God's ideal marriage. Every other type of marriage is a corruption of what He made.

It is clear that a man who knows what a wife is cannot side with his mother or his relations against his wife. He cannot exclude her from knowing about his business, or keep money somewhere as to hide it from her. No, it is not possible. A man with a true revelation of what a wife is cannot commit adultery. A wife is a precious part of the man.

Now, a man that expects a wife as described by God is not content with marrying just any female. He instinctively knows what kind of person cannot be a wife to him. It is only when one has a wrong perspective that he accepts just anything. You will marry any female if all you just want is someone to relieve your sexual passions legitimately when you need it and to have children who bear your name. That was what men used to do in those days when they would have concubines; unfortunately many Christians today still marry wives who are only better than concubines in that they had a ceremony to start the relationship. It is not to be like that.

A Christian wife is not a concubine, and should not be seen as such. She is a part of her husband—a part of his body, and a part of his soul.



Chapter 5

THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE

To vow to be with your spouse no matter how difficult things are is definitely not a profession of fear and unbelief; it is a profession of faith in the marriage covenant and does not in any way reduce your ability to claim the promises of God concerning prosperity and divine health.

A time came when the Lord Jesus was asked about the truth of marriage.

And He answered and said, "Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'? "Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." Matt 19:4-6

This answer of His was radically different from the general knowledge at that time.

The major thing that characterizes God's marriage, as opposed to all other degenerate forms, is this union of husband and wife. That is the distinguishing factor. In God's order, marriage produces a degree of unity that is only surpassed by the unity of God the Father and Jesus the Son, and the truth is that marriage is to come close to even that.

I will like to use money as a way to discuss this matter of unity. Money is very important and is about the single most important thing in life that

shows where someone's heart is.

In most marriages today, the husband has his money, and the wife has hers. She does what she likes with her money and he does what he likes with his. In most of these cases, the woman places demand concerning the home on the husband's finances, because a man is supposedly the one to take care of his household. This is the opposite of becoming one flesh. In God's marriage, that is not possible. The husband has nothing that does not belong to the wife, and in a like manner the wife has nothing that does not belong to the husband.

The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 1 Cor 7:4

Your body is the most precious things that you have, more precious than any other thing; yet we see here clearly, as revealed by Paul, that your body belongs to your spouse. It means therefore that everything you have belongs to your spouse. It is absurd to be willing to give your body to someone and not be willing to give the person your money. It is a form of immorality.

Because of the less forceful declaration of unity in modern day vows, I am unhappy with the way many Pentecostal churches have thrown away the classic marriage vow and adopted the new but inferior ones. I see the will of God in the traditional church vows.

This is an excerpt from the old one:

I take thee to be my lawful wedded Husband/Wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey, till death us do part.

With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

I am sure you can see the profession of union in this.

NO, IT IS NOT UNBELIEF

Just by the way, I have seen faith people argue against this vow claiming that it is a confession of doubt or unbelief, and this is because of the words

'poorer' and 'sickness' that are contained therein. But this is nothing but gross misunderstanding. The truth of life is that no matter how much faith you claim to have, there will be times you will be poorer, times when things will be worse than they were, and there will be times you will need the healing power of God. It is at such times that you will need this great faith of yours active more than at other times. Your spouse is simply pledging by this vow to be united with you even at such times. It is definitely *not* unbelief. Paul, who taught most of the faith that such people claim to have, taught also that a man of faith must learn to endure all circumstances. I don't have the space to include the quotes but please see the references below* and this will be very clear.

To vow to be with your spouse no matter how difficult things might be is definitely not a profession of fear and unbelief; it is a profession of faith in the marriage covenant and does not in any way reduce your ability to claim the promises of God concerning prosperity and divine health.

Unity in everything is what characterizes true Christian marriage. This again is why polygamy is

*Gal 4:13; Phil 4:12; 2 Tim 2:3.

not possible; the Lord does not have to specifically command against it. You have to first break the order of God in marriage to be able to practise polygamy. It is *two* that shall become one.

So we see that the couple owns everything in common. In my home and in the homes of many of my friends, this is what is practised. Everything is seen as belonging to both as they are one. Where this is not the practice trust cannot be easy.

My wife used to work in a bank, and by Nigerian standards that was quite a good job. However, a few years after we were married she resigned the job, and not for a better paying one but to be a wife and mother primarily. She used the opportunity to get an MBA but she was done with paid employment. Her reason was that we had discussed on the matter long before this time, and the plan was that we couldn't have a home with children whose parents were too busy. So once our first son was born the time was ripe.

I brought up this story because many of her colleagues and acquaintances couldn't understand it. They thought something had gone wrong with her head. She was throwing away her only source of

income and consequently her independence. Now she would be dependent on her husband for everything and that meant she would have a lower power in the home. What they did not realize was the kind of home she operated.

They did not realize that for her all that was achieved was a reduction in family income and not her personal income. That did not require as much faith, boldness or madness as they were thinking. While she worked in the bank and earned that money, it was never hers to spend. The money was part of the family's funds and she had never had the kind of independence they were thinking of over it. She was submissive even though she earned. At the same time she had right over every dime her husband earned. She could look into my accounts anytime and I have never hidden money from her. We spent money by pattern and by agreement.

My wife did not feel it for one day that she had lost her independence and voice in the house because of loss of personal income. Yes, the home lost some income, but the loss was spread over all the places we used to spend our money, and my wife was personally little affected. While she earned, she could not just spend money the way she liked

without approval from the chairman of the board, the husband. Even the chairman had to get management approval for his own expenditure, and she was the CEO. Such is the trust that is present when we follow the word of God.

There are people who prepare for eventualities by buying things in their own names as in excluding their spouses (It is amazing how much attachment small-minded people have to material things). Those are the real seeds of marriage breakdown. In older generations, the man would build his own house, and the woman would acquire hers. Each one feels like he or she must have that achievement. I have no problem with that in the older generations; my grouse is against young supposed believers today who do not realize what evil this is in the sight of God. Everything belongs to both of you.

If you observe the laws of settlement at divorce in the US and Western Europe, you will notice that the divorce court sees everything as belonging to the couple jointly and tries to distribute them equitably. The person's name that the asset bears is not relevant. This is a product of the Christian foundation which those societies had. Of course, things have been corrupted so severely now that

stories have begun to appear, like cheating and defrauding each other. Men and women started getting married to rich people while planning to divorce them after some time so as to get a chunk of the wealth. The people also became wise and started signing pre-nuptial agreements so as to protect their wealth. These are all the tares that the enemy sowed in the midst of the good seeds of God, and we should not abandon what is good because some people are feasting on the poison of the enemy. I am speaking of godly marriages, in which divorce is not even permitted except for extreme cases. These extreme cases must necessarily involve the breaking of the marriage covenant which is expressed through adultery.



HIS DUTY, AND HERS

Let me emphasize again that the primary duties of the woman begin at the home front. As much as I agree with those who say a woman can do what a man can do, I also say that it does not mean she should do it.

Let me explain something further about this unity thing, and this has to do with how roles are shared in the home. For that let us note this verse below from Genesis.

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." Gen 2:18-19

Please note that the woman was created to be the man's helper. That tells me that all the duties were his, every single one of them, and the woman came to relieve him. It was his duty to take care of the garden, and take care of the home. He was to preside over everything, have children by himself, so to speak, and raise them, and still worship the Lord in the cool of the evening. This was beyond what one person could do effectively, so the Lord created the woman to *help*.

My point is that all the duties in the home are primarily the man's, and the woman coming to help can do anything that God empowers her to do so as to help. The woman was deliberately created by God to be weaker so that we will never get confused about who is actually in charge and who is the helper; the man therefore is to take the more manly

roles *first*, but anybody can do anything.

To make this clear let me take an issue and tackle it. It is not the duty of the man *alone* to provide for the home. It was his duty when he was alone, but now that he has a helper, it is no longer so; it is now the duty of the couple. The man takes the manly roles *first* but if necessary and possible, he is assisted. If, and I say *if*, a woman earns by working outside the home or doing some business, she has begun to help in that regard, and there is no special commendation. The two is just one flesh.

Please note that I am not saying it is the duty of a woman to provide for the home by working or doing a business; my understanding is that her duties of help begin by primarily taking care of the home front first. Her work starts in the household. A godly wife is not a liability and she is not lazy, but her work tends to start from the household. *If* however she works outside the home or does business so as to earn income, she does not own the money so generated but she has only increased the total income of the home.

It is common place (at least in Nigeria) for many working and earning women to keep their moneys

to themselves and be demanding that the man should bring money for rent (or mortgage payments), food, clothes and children's school fees. The reason for all these is because it is supposedly the man's duty to provide for the home. This is not at all right. The time these women spent at work belongs to the home and so anything that comes out of it belongs to the home too. There are many women who earn so and who 'contribute,' and for doing this think they should be praised. No, there is no special commendation necessary; it is your home and you are one with your husband.

It is when a woman has this mindset of it's-the-husband's-duty-alone that she looks to marry a man who can take care of her. Such a woman is making herself an extra burden for the man to carry. What do such women spend their money on? They bank it, buy clothes, jewellery and eventually start a building project that will add nothing to them. Some are so terrible they do not even spend on their children because it is supposedly the duty of their husbands. It is sad. That is not a godly marriage at all.

Let me emphasize again that the primary duties of the woman begin at the home front. As much as I agree with those who say a woman can do what a

man can do, I also say that it does not mean she *should* do it. There are things that nature itself teaches, using the words of Paul in 1 Cor 14:11; for example, we know that as a mother the wife is best equipped to take care of children when they are still young. For this reason her life should be structured in such a manner as to make doing things like that her primary duty. One of the reasons my wife had to resign her banking job then was that the work was just too hectic for a woman who had to take care of a home and was bearing children. I used to joke with her that if God were to ask me to explain why I was making my wife labour so, I would have no explanation.

It is not right to put too much burden on the woman. I do not however believe that a woman is to be made just to sit at home and do nothing; all I am saying is that whatever she wants to do must not jeopardize the performance of her primary assignment. After all, the virtuous woman described in Proverbs 31 was a businesswoman of some sort.

| *She considers a field and buys it; from her earnings she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong. She senses that her gain is good. Prov 31:16-18*

A woman can be anything. She can be a teacher, lawyer, scientist, public office holder, doctor, businesswoman *etc.* She can be a preacher of the gospel. No matter what a woman chooses to be, if she chose also to be a wife and a mother, all other things will have to take second place to the wife and mother duties until a later time.

A man on the other hand should not have being at home as his primary responsibility; that job should generally be taken care of by the woman while he does the job of going out to bring in the spoils. This is the reason why he is the stronger vessel. The situations in which the woman goes out to work and bring in money for the household may occur but should be very temporary and be seen only under extreme circumstances. The man must never accept it as normal and should behave like he is not comfortable with it. Bishop David Oyedepo joked once that if his wife was working and he was not working he would refuse to eat so that he can at least die in righteousness. Of course that may be an extreme, but the point being made is clear. It is one of those things that erode respect and makes it hard for a woman to be submissive if the man does not work and work hard too.



7 Chapter

LETS TALK ABOUT SUBMISSION

Life has a structure and marriage has an order. There are offices in life and there are ranks of offices. Offices and ranks were created for the sake of order, and they have little to do with personal quality; rather they speak of divine appointment.

Now I will dare to speak on the matter of headship and submission in the home even though it is a very touchy subject for most women. Touchy or not, the truth must still be taught, and that truth comes from the word of God.

Life has a structure and marriage has an order. There are offices in life and there are ranks of offices. Offices and ranks were created for the sake of order, and they have little to do with personal quality; rather they speak of divine appointment. I am a teacher of the word not because I am a better Christian than other people, but because I was created by God to be one. There are very good Christians who are more mature than me and who are more spiritual than me but who are called to be businessmen, and so they sit under a teacher as their pastor. It is about the office each person occupies. To fulfil my office I must be careful to prepare and be diligent, but I was first a called teacher and that fact is what makes these acts of preparation and diligence matter. These rules also apply in the home.

Husband is an office. Wife is an office. The husband office is higher in the command structure than the wife. It is not about personal superiority because all are equal in Christ.

For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Eph 5:23-24

Men and women are equal before God, but equality does not remove order in a home. The husband being the head is about order. Bear in mind that the purpose of order is to create a channel of divine blessing. Without order blessings cannot flow.

The duty of the husband as head is to lead, and he must not to shirk his duties just because it is not fashionable or because his wife does not like it. He is responsible for all decisions that are made in the home even if he did not make them. There is a divinely granted ability in him to lead. It does not mean he is wiser than his wife inherently, but he has a spiritual force in him which makes him able to give direction. Part of the duties of a wife is to recognize this by faith and allow it to manifest. Most times, at the beginning of a marriage, it is a matter of pure faith.

A wife must never ever do something that she knows that her husband is in disagreement with,

otherwise she is directly removing herself from under the blessing that God has placed there for her sake and she has started tapping into the curse of Eve. She should be careful to run decisions by her husband and not nag him into agreeing with her. Her faith is important in this matter; it empowers him to tap into divine wisdom. I like the way my wife says it; "So, my husband, what do you say?" That decision she made to behave thus has saved her from a lot of trouble.

Marriage is not a democracy. In fact there is no democracy in the things of God. God simply rules in the affairs of men through a structure of authority. My wife has learnt that my words are not just another opinion but that they are words of power from one with authority. This authority is purely so that she may be blessed and not so that I can have my way. With all glory to God I can say boldly that I have never, to my recollection, made any decision because it favours me or just because I like it so. I have endeavoured to do things because it favours my wife and my family and because I believe they are right. I have never sought my own good (I have no desire for any good anyway that is not as good for my wife and for my children). I am not saying I am always right, but when a woman has a truly

submissive spirit, the Lord will make her husband's errors of judgment turn out in her favour.

THE FAITH CONNECTION

Spiritual things are interesting in that they are activated by faith. Submission is an act of faith which activates wisdom in a woman's husband. If you, as a woman, do not have the submissive spirit, Satan will help you see why it is foolish to be submissive. You will see your husband do things wrong again and again and you will come to the reasonable conclusion that it is risky to follow this man. That is how spiritual things work.

Submission is an attitude; it is not just a yes-sir behaviour. Like I say to my wife, "I am anointed to give you direction." An anointing is a divine enablement to help you perform more than your natural ability and make good decisions that are beyond your natural wisdom. My wife is submissive when she recognizes this fact. She is not saying that she married a very wise and smart man; she only recognizes that God wants to bless her and His word is in the mouth of this domestic prophet called a husband. My wife would often come and kneel down before going out on a journey and say to me, 'Bless me before I go.'

See there is a difference between being obedient and being submissive. Yes we must all obey authority in our lives but being submissive goes beyond that. Obedience is a response to an instruction but submission is when I wait for the word and seek it even if it is not coming easy. Submission has more to do with the spirit and the attitude. Saul waited for Samuel for the days Samuel said he should wait, and when Samuel did not show up he went ahead to offer the sacrifice (1 Sam 13). He was obedient, but he was not submissive. It was an attitude that said, "I did what you *told* me." A submissive attitude would have been, "there is nothing I can do until Samuel comes because the word of God is in his mouth, and he did not say what to do concerning the sacrifice if he does not come." Submission looks for wisdom and counsel in the mouth of the person of authority.

I am a specialist doctor involved in training both medical students and specialist doctors. I was trained under similar circumstances in which I train other people today. In the training setting in medicine, the chain of command is interesting just like in the military. In fact every person calls the seniors 'chief.' I have noticed here the matter of submission.

My resident doctors (those in training) look up to me for wisdom and knowledge. They believe I am better in this job than they and that I can impart knowledge to them. They do not just hold to their own opinion but will subject it to my scrutiny. They call me to get clarification when I am not present. For this reason it is easy to teach them and there is hardly any argument between us.

Obey your spiritual leaders and submit to them [continually recognizing their authority over you], for they are constantly keeping watch over your souls and guarding your spiritual welfare, as men who will have to render an account...

Heb 13:17 AMP

It is easy to lead when there is an attitude of submission.

Even though my resident doctors are not at liberty to disagree with me and disobey, I hardly ever have to use that authority of 'I am the boss.' Even when some of them qualify and become specialists in their own right, the attitude persists. There is a case for mutual submission too in that I always pay keen attention if they seem to not agree with a decision I am making on a case. There are times when it is a

case of because-I-said-so but those are rare and are needed only when there is crisis and the subordinate is not quick in getting the point. That was the kind of relationship I also had with my chief when I was training.

My chief did not have to prove she was right before I agreed; the spirit was that she was essentially always right even though as a human being she could be wrong, but I was not in the position to say she was wrong. There was just a submissive attitude. If I thought she was wrong I told her as much and allowed her determine if I was right in saying she was wrong. She still had to decide if she was wrong. As much as I could have been right, I still had the attitude that she had to decide that.

You are not submissive if your husband must prove his point to you before you agree with him or obey him. Even a stranger who proves his point to you should get obedience, so if you insist on that with your husband, it is not submission.

Please I need to emphasize that authority figures should not love to wield their authority. They should lead in love knowing that they have the authority. I do not wish for a man to read what I am

writing here and become a lord who cannot be questioned. That is not the attitude. If you always have to throw the authority to the fore, you may just have as much problems in yourself as the person you are claiming is not submissive. You should have a teaching spirit and make yourself easier to obey.

I mentioned earlier that submission is a matter of faith and a matter of understanding. A woman should start out in marriage with the knowledge that God is blessing her through the leadership of her husband and should *never* wait for him to earn the respect. She is a believer too and also a priest with God, she should use that privilege of approaching God to activate that blessing of a leading husband in her life. She should pray for him so that he will do his duty over her life. She should confess the word of God to herself.

"My husband is wise.

"My husband has the spirit of God.

"He is a leader over me and has the word of God for me.

"He is my own personal prophet."

She must fight the fleshly temptations that wish for her to take over in the home. I have observed that

many women try to do the take-over thing, but believe me my sister, you don't want that job. Initially it will appear sweet, but you are not wired for it. Eventually you will tire out and get into resentment towards your husband for not taking the lead. I have seen this again and again. I have never seen a woman who wrested the reins of leadership from her husband who does not feel bad about it. Outside you will think she is tough, but inside she admires those women who don't have to do what she is doing. The problem is that it is usually too late when she finally realizes this.

THE CURSE OF EVE

We know the story of Eve as told in the book of Genesis chapter 3. Adam had given God's instructions to his wife. Satan came, tempted her and she was deceived.* She ate the fruit, thereby disobeying her husband's instructions and the Lord's. When her husband returned, she persuaded him to eat. He disobeyed the word of God. In his case it was a conscious act, and not a result of being deceived. He took heed to the voice of his wife and took instructions from her (Gen 3:17). She took over

*Gen 3:13; 1 Tim 2:14. *To be deceived means she actually believed the lie she was told.*

his role of being the leader and he allowed it.

Why did he begin to take instructions from his wife? We can keep speculating, but I suspect she nagged him into it, or she used emotional blackmail, and the man decided to give in just for the sake of peace. That was the genesis of their problems.

What was the result for her?

*"I will greatly multiply
Your pain in childbirth,
In pain you shall bring forth children;
Yet your desire shall be for your husband,
And he shall rule over you." Gen 3:16*

My comment is on the curse that says her desire shall be for her husband. See, anything you desire I know you do not yet have; you only desire something that is currently not within your grasp. What that curse means in summary is that he will be missing from her life; his place over her will be vacant even though he may be physically there. She will long for him to be what he is to be to her but he will either be unwilling, unable or both. The genesis was when she took over his place, thinking she was wiser and knew how to lead.

I have seen this curse play out again and again in the lives of women. I have seen many tough women take charge over the home, and they often become good at it. But they are never happy, and I have heard them complain again and again. They wish their husbands would get up, speak up and tell them what to do. What they often forget is that they started it; they thought he was wrong in many things and they decided to take charge. The sons grow up rebelling, and the daughters often run wild. In societies where it is permissible, the man usually is long gone. He just walks away from home.

"And he shall rule over you" is another thing.

A lot of men rather than just abdicating their positions result to keeping it with the force of a tyrant. This is one source of mental and physical abuse on the home. It is a consequence of not letting him take the position God created for him.

I am not saying it is always the woman's fault. I am only saying women must be careful to ensure it is not their doing. They must avoid the curse of Eve.

Let your husband lead. Refuse to take his job from him. Sit there and tell him, "I am waiting for your

word on this.” Let him know you value his leadership and that you are praying for him that God's spirit will be with him. Never behave towards him like you think you are wiser than him or more spiritual (a very common problem with female church leaders). That is an effective way of sowing a bad seed for your marriage.

Call your husband a name that stimulates leadership. 'My husband;' 'My prophet.' Anything but his first name. He is not just your pal or boyfriend; he is your husband. Even though calling your husband by his first name is not illegal, it does not help him get better in being your husband. Everybody calls him by that name so why should you? Call him what you want him to be to you.

HER DEFENDER IS STRONG

Let me quickly add that God is the personal defender of the woman against the errors of her husband when she is submissive to him. That God looks out for the wives can easily be seen from the words of Malachi.

And this is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the

offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. "Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Mal 2:13-14

The Lord did not just leave the woman alone to be maltreated the way 'the boss' wants. He comes to her defence and makes him do what is right if he tries to take advantage of her submissive attitude because of his fleshly failings. That was what happened with Sarah and Abraham.

Sarah told her husband to do something, and he refused. She said nothing further but the Lord did not keep silent. In their case Abraham even appeared right to the common mind, yet the Lord ruled in favour of Sarah and made her husband do what she said.

So she turned to Abraham and demanded, "Get rid of that servant and her son. He is not going to share the family inheritance with my son, Isaac. I won't have it!"

This upset Abraham very much because Ishmael was his son. But God told Abraham, "Do not be

| *upset over the boy and your servant wife. Do just
as Sarah says... Gen 21:10-12 NLT*

Woman, if indeed you are right, God will come to your defence.



LOVE YOUR WIFE

A man is commanded only to love his wife and to bear rule in his home. It is a woman's duty to be submissive; a man was never commanded to subdue his wife. If she does not submit, there is little a man can do. The only active thing you can do to your wife is to love her.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her... that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing... So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but **nourishes** and **cherishes** it, just as Christ also does the church. Eph 5:25-29

A man is commanded only to love his wife and bear rule* in his home. It is a woman's duty to be submissive; a man was *never* commanded to subdue his wife. If she does not submit, there is little a man can do. The only active thing you can do to your wife is to love her.

How should a man love his wife?

*1 Tim 3:4 AMP "He must rule his own household well, keeping his children under control, with true dignity, commanding their respect in every way and keeping them respectful." *To bear rule means to remember to take authority and never leave things 'just for the sake of peace.'* Give the word and be firm about it especially when children are involved. Please know that the home is not a democracy. The husband and father is a king and should rule with all love and benevolence. However a man can't force his wife to do anything. The only active thing a man can do to his wife is to love her. Men who do not get this

I don't think I have a specific answer for the how-to, but I guess I can say the first rule is to make sure he really *loves* his wife. What I mean is that before you start looking for the methods to express your love, make sure you work on making sure the love is in the heart. Once this is done, the outward how-to will be easy.

Once I aired a teaching session on TV, and in it I said I loved my wife then more than I did when I first married her. A few days later I arrived at my office in the Teaching Hospital and one woman who worked in the same hospital stopped me with exclamation in her voice. She said she watched the programme and she had never heard anything like that before. She had never heard a man claim he loved his wife more at the end of a decade of marriage than at the beginning. By that time I had been married for close to 10 years, and it was the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

How did I achieve that?

point will eventually become violent out of frustration, as they try to get their wives to submit. They are trying to enforce obedience when there is no heart of submission. Some others may become abnormally passive and watch as the children are set up for rebellion.

The truth is that it was not something I did myself; it only could have been God. That is the literal truth. I have no other method to prescribe than the one I used, and that was to call upon the Lord to do it. The only thing I know I did was to come to a realization in myself that this is my wife for life and there will not be another. For this reason, when I felt the love cooling off, I prayed severally to the Lord that He might kindly pour mightily into me the spirit of love for my wife. I prayed and confessed a scripture, and that word has come to pass in my life. It is in Proverbs.

| *Be exhilarated always with her love. Prov 5:19*

Sometimes when my wife would complain, "Why don't you leave me alone for once," I'd answer, "It is the word of God working." I have been married to her as at now for 12 years* and I love her deeply and seriously. I am literally exhilarated with her love. She is having to try and cope with the fondness. It is not because I am a good man; it is because I asked the Lord for it, and He did it. I claimed it by faith from those words of Solomon. Any man who believes in Christ Jesus can do that too.

*Married December 1999

TAKE IT BY FORCE

One of the problems with the societies and churches of God that go against the word of God and make divorce easy is that they help ruin the marriage institution when things are rough, even when there should have been a remedy possible with the word of God and prayer. Instead of people fighting for their rights in Christ to have a good and happy home, they run away in divorce. As much as I do not wish to be judgmental, most of the troubles our brethren in America divorce their wives over are surmountable with prayer. They complain about things that would have been nothing if the heart was focused on the word of God.

See, if we realize and accept what Jesus said to the people about the taboo of God concerning divorce, we will stop the rubbish talk of "there's no more romance," or "the love is no longer there" that our brethren have used as a legitimate foundation for divorce. We will stop the crap and put love back into the marriage by force, using prayer and the word. Just like any part of the kingdom of God, it requires violence and only the violent will force their way into it.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. Matt 11:12

There is a kind of spiritual violence that is required to keep the love for your wife burning inside you. As a child of God you have no option. You cannot have a concubine; you will walk into a curse that way. You cannot divorce her; you will also be disobeying God. So what option do you have left? Get the love back by force!

The problem is that the church has left the word of God and have joined the world in trying to get their romance back primarily with fleshly methods like taking holidays, having candle light dinners and all such things. Those things are very good and right to do, but they cannot put any lasting love and romance back into your marriage. These things fail to work more often than not and they leave both man and woman frustrated. "We have tried everything!"

In Christianity we do not just try everything, we operate by the power of the word of God and prayer. Ask God simply to fill your heart with love. Do this knowing that you have no choice apart from loving

your wife. That desperate kind of faith can only be available to you once you know the truth that you are locked in this thing for life. Please do not follow our American brethren, thinking there is a way out through divorce; that road only compounds problems apart from the fact that you would have walked against the commandment of the Lord Jesus in the matter. Once you realize that the only option is to love her, you will pray, God will see the resoluteness of your heart and He will help you.

I remember the story told by Edwin Louis Cole in his days. He was speaking on '*The circumcised marriage,*' and he described the married couple who had lived together for years but with zero affection between them. They got along very well and the man even described the woman as his best friend, but there was simply no affectionate love. Ed Cole said he was not ready to start hearing all the stories of who said what to who. It was not going to work and he knew it. He led them in a prayer of circumcision of the marriage, and the romance and affection returned immediately.

I have used this story to point out that Christianity is not psychology; we walk by the power of the Spirit and we pursue after righteousness. That is how we

get things done.

Having settled that, let us look at some practical how-to.



Chapter 9

A WOMAN SHE SHALL BE CALLED

The power to prophecy into the life of that new wife was placed in the mouth of her husband, and so it remains till this day! Proper use of this power is where loving the wife begins.

One of the first things we must learn about loving our wives as men is the very thing that Adam did when he first saw Eve.

*And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and **brought her to the man**. And the man said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; and she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Gen 2:22-23*

Unlike what we easily think, God did not actually bring the woman to Adam and impose her on him as a wife; He brought the woman to him to see what He would call her!

*And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and **brought them to the man to see what he would call them**; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, **but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him**. Gen 2:19-20*

The Lord God and Adam had been working; they

had been looking at every living creature to see what Adam would call them. The Lord would bring one, and Adam would examine and give it a name. Any name Adam gave was final. Among the living creatures, none was fitting to bear the name of a helper. Please bear in mind that this naming process was not just for the sake of taxonomy of the animal kingdom but because a helper was being sought for Adam. This is very clear if you read the preceding verse 18.

When all had failed, the Lord God then made the woman, and also *brought* her to the man to see what he would call her, (please remember that whatever he would call her was to be the final word). Adam looked, liked what he saw, and so gave her a name.

| *She shall be called Woman.*

See, names are not just descriptive; they define character. We see God often changing the names of people after blessing them. Abram became Abraham; Jacob, supplanter, became Israel, strength of God; and Simon became Peter. Your name is beyond just being the means of identifying you; it is prophetic.

The power to prophecy into the life of that new wife was placed in the mouth of her husband, and so it remains till this day! Proper use of this power is where loving the wife begins.

So, what do you call your wife?

“You women cannot manage money!”

Whatever you call her, that shall be her name.

“Foolish woman; bush woman.” I actually heard a man call his wife *mumu*-wife (In Nigeria, *mumu* means something like a dunce or retard).

| *Whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.*

My dear Mr Husband, your words have mighty power over your wife, more than you have imagined. The reason why she can't think straight is that you have brought confusion to her soul by the words you continually speak over her and about her. "This wife of mine is good for nothing" is the reason why she always loses money. You released the spirit of confusion into her when you told her in the morning, "I know we are in trouble today again that you have taken the car."

| *Whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.*

This power should be used constructively.

Speak power words to your wife.

I know she has done things that make you feel like what you have been saying is right, even though negative. I wish to correct you by telling you that you have been falling for temptations by so doing.

Life is a battle of words. Job was tempted to see what he would say. Satan knows that winning or losing in the battle for your marriage is based on words and so has been tempting you to speak negatively. To call something a temptation simply means you will feel justified when you do it but doing it is a sin. But please read from Isaiah 40; it is a commandment to speak kind words, and it applies to speaking to our wives also.

| *Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her...*

Don't fall for the temptation to speak evil any longer. Speak kind words to your wife. Tell her she is beautiful. Trust me, she wants to hear it, and believe me, she *is* beautiful. Don't let the world tell you a movie star is beautiful and your wife is not. Beauty

is in the faith of the beholder and it is transmitted to the eyes.

Things are hardly ever beautiful in themselves; it is the power of man to decide what is beautiful. That is why fat young ladies were beautiful in the Calabar of those days, but thin ones are supposedly beautiful these days. Your wife is beautiful only because you say so. In this matter, you cannot be wrong and you cannot lie.

When I met my wife she was quite thin, and I thought she was just beautiful (Actually I was looking at our wedding pictures recently and I was quite surprised at how thin she was. It was something like, "You mean you were this thin and I married you?"). She has gained some weight over the years, and I think she just got more beautiful. There was a time she added a lot of weight, and I went 'crazy' for her bust-line at that time (Prov 5:19 says to let her breasts satisfy you at all times). She thought something was wrong with me. She lost that extra weight, and now I think she will finish me with the latest figure. Why? I have set my love upon her, and that is all. Whichever way she turns she is my wife and she is just the real deal. The world is not going to tell me who is fine, because I already know

it, and I married her already. So I can't ever lie whenever I tell my wife she is beautiful.

So go on and tell her she is beautiful.

Tell her continually how much of a blessing she is to this generation. Even when she does things wrong, tell her of the potential she has that she is yet to deploy. We all have potentials that we have not developed. Don't focus on your wife's deficiencies; emphasize the stuff that is good.

Speak kindly to her, and call her the name you want her to be. There is a special power in your words.

Please call your wife; tell her to kneel, and begin to prophesy over her head. You are the prophet and the priest in that house. Don't just wish for things in her life; command them into existence with the power of prophecy.

Speak fruitfulness to her womb. Rebekah didn't conceive until Isaac prayed for her (Gen 25:21). He waited twenty years! Why he did is baffling, but I guess he did not realize the power in his prayers for his wife. Take time out to pray over and for your wife. Prophesy all kinds of good concerning her. Make this a regular affair. I don't just mean that you

should pray together; I mean you should take up that prophetic mantle and do the prophesying while all she says is Amen.

Let me add this to it before we leave this chapter. There is a name you call your wife so as to address her. Please call her a name of affection that shows how much you value her. Our fathers called their wives mama-this and mama-that, calling them by the names of their children. To my mind that may have been because the culture valued the women for their offspring, but we are different now and have seen the light. Christian wives are not valued based on the children they bear; child-bearing is an added blessing. Our wives must bear names from our mouths that show they are special. Get a name that nobody else can call her apart from you, a name that speaks of being special and the only one in that spot in your life; a name that her father or mother can't use, and your children too. A name that no man who is not eagerly looking for the wrath of God will dare to call her. I call it a *love-name*.*

**On a lighter mood, one of my friends calls his wife Sweetheart and she calls him the same. When their daughter was small, if she called 'daddy' again and again and she gets no response, she'll shout 'Sweetheart' because that one definitely would get the job done.*



Chapter 10

NOURISHING AND CHERISHING

The woman is the glory of the husband, and that means she is the expression of his nature. A dirty woman has a husband with a dirty heart, unless she is just stubborn. No matter how nice a man looks, he is a hypocrite if his wife does not look better or at least as good as he does.

So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but **nourishes** and **cherishes** it, just as Christ also does the church.

A man is to nourish and cherish his wife. Let's start to explain this part of loving by looking at a particular occurrence.

I was somewhere one day with some people; I was seated under a canopy talking with another man who was seated also. It was drizzling and people were trying to get under the canopy and take seats, but there was little space and there were no seats left. Then I noticed that the wife of this man I was talking with was among those trying to get a dry spot and a seat. I was about to rise for her to take my seat when I reminded myself that her husband was in front of me and he was not moving. He did not seem concerned even though he could see the situation. I was really uncomfortable with the situation and so made some moves until she was settled.

What should he have done?

Simple! Get up and let the wife sit while he tries to resettle. That is the proper thing to do. It is called loving and cherishing her. My wife would not have hesitated to ask for my seat, and I would have been proud to get up for her, in the presence of other men. Those other men should learn it. She would not even have needed to do that if I saw it on time. She is mine to cherish and nourish.

Once I heard a brother say that in his culture (of the world), women get up for men to sit. I told him that it is a very bad culture. I agree that wives should honour their husbands, but not by physically suffering while he sits in comfort. It is a bad culture.

I come from a breed of men who were taught to cherish and nourish the ladies. In my campus fellowship in the University of Benin, the Light of Christ Community, we were taught to take care of sisters. We used to brag about the fact that if you saw guys carrying a lady's load and walking into female hostel, they were our brethren. I used to offer to put my feet in muddy waters so that the ladies could step over without getting their feet dirty (No one ever took me up on the offer though). On cold nights, the sisters became used to collecting our sweaters during fellowship meetings. We did those

things with joy, and it has stayed with me till now. It is the right way to behave.

When I walk with my wife she is not allowed to carry anything beyond her handbag unless both of my hands are full to overflowing. In the earlier days of GSM phones in Nigeria, a young woman remarked to my wife that she carried the fine handsets while Pastor (that is, me) uses old ones. My wife smiled and said 'he is the husband.' Most times I would buy the nice phones and inherit the old ones. I believe my wife should have the nicer things because she is to be cherished.

I believe in being prudent and pragmatic, but there are times you should spoil your wife a little. Buy things that are costly but which look nice. I encourage women not to make ungodly and worldly demands, but I also encourage men to spoil the wives a little. The woman is the glory of the husband, and that means she is the expression of his nature. A dirty woman has a husband with a dirty heart, unless she is just stubborn. No matter how nice a man looks, he is a hypocrite if his wife does not look better or at least as good as he does.

I find it out of order when a man drives a nice car

and his wife has an old jalopy to cope with. Any time I buy a new car I encourage my wife to take it and drive it. When I bought a car brand new (which is remarkable in Nigeria; we mostly drive used cars), a number of my colleagues said to me that my wife would soon collect it. They knew us well and were surprised I still used the car after a while. But they were right, I kept it for my use only because my wife said it was too small for her needs and she preferred the one she already had, a Sienna minivan, which could accommodate her load and the kids.

Let us men get dirty at home with household chores with our wives. It is not against being a real man to wash clothes and cooking pots at home. Carry the trash, scrub the toilets and bathtubs, and please wash her undies; that is what loving husbands do!



HONOUR HIM

As a little rule to help you, woman, make sure there is nobody you respect more in life than your husband; your father, pastor and boss included. And let it show!

Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.
| Eph 5:33

We have spoken on the matter of submission but please I wish to distinguish between submission and respect and then dwell more on the latter in this chapter. The two should of course always go together in the life of a Christian wife, but it is important we highlight the differences. We have already seen what submission is.

The word *respect* is what is also known as reverential fear, and it denotes how we relate with someone as in showing them outward honour. For example we bow before an elderly person and we do not raise our voices to talk to our parents. These are signs of respect (I know these are shocking things to many people in the western world and 'advanced' countries today).

This is one thing I have hardly ever heard anyone dwell on in teaching. In all my years of listening to teachings here and there and reading books, I can remember only one message I have heard preached on this subject in marriage, and it was not the main

topic anyway. I know there must be messages somewhere on this matter, but it is definitely not a very popular subject. I think part of the reason is that majority of the messages distributed in the world today have come out of places where they have lost almost every bit of the art of respect and honour.

When Paul wrote in Ephesians chapter 5 that women should respect their husbands, I have a feeling he was saying that to people who already understood what respect is and was just telling them that it should be applied to husbands too. I say this because in the world of today many people do not understand what it is. What I see depicted on TV about the way people relate to authority and elders in the so-called advanced countries is definitely far from what God intended it to be. We must be careful not to throw away good things in the name of development. My observation is that Asians, Africans and Arabs still have a lot of respect in their culture and they must not let the invasion of homes by TV spoil it. It is not everything that the so-called first world does that is good.

I am not saying honour and respect are good because Africans and Asians practise it; definitely not! I am saying so because the word of God says so.

Take relating to elders as an example, both the Old and the New Testaments tell us what to do and what not to do.

Show your fear of God by standing up in the presence of elderly people and showing respect for the aged. I am the LORD. Lev 19:32 NLT

Some people think this is African culture, but it is not; it is called the-fear-of-God culture. Paul told Timothy, "I know you are the Pastor and Bishop, but when you see an older man in church, even when he errs, don't shout on him like you shout on the younger fellows!"

Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as though he were your own father. 1 Tim 5:1 NLT

Honour for your father and your mother is what prolongs life according to the word of God. A lot of young people who end up in jail and who die early do so because of the lack of respect for their parents. It is the duty of parents to teach children to respect their parents and all elders.

Like I mentioned earlier, respect and submission are

two different things but both must be found in the life of a wife towards her husband. Respect brings a blessing into a wife's life which most women have never experienced. They do not even know what they are missing.

Let me illustrate with a simple thing. Most young couples in modern times follow the pattern of western countries and the wives call their husbands by their first names. This is a recent development in African culture and is a hand down from western 'civilization.' See, there may be nothing wrong with it as in the matter of whether it is a sin or not, but we can all easily agree that it does not contain any form of respect in it. It is bland, and there are better and more godly options. What was dropped so as to embrace modernization had more approval from the Lord.

I think a man should call his wife by a *love-name*, but even though a woman should also call her husband by a *love-name* sometimes, it should not be her usual one to use. She should find an honour name to call him, and openly too. Why should a woman be ashamed to call her husband a name that depicts honour in public but she wants him to show her love publicly? Woman, be proud to let people see how

much you honour your husband.

The Bible says we must admire the things that are excellent and also to copy those who have discovered the truth and have walked by it.* As much as names like honey, sweetie, sugar and whatever sweet name we can think of may be good to call a husband, the only one specially complimented in the Bible is the one Sarah used, and this is 'my lord.'**

How I wish more women will copy that today. Please note that to call somebody 'my lord' was not unusual those days; it was the way by which servants addressed their masters and subjects addressed the king. It was a way of addressing a high authority over one. What was unusual was that a woman used the name for her husband as if he was a king and she was a subject; it was a sign of deep respect and submission. This is why I am not particularly recommending the expression itself. Insisting on the expression 'my lord' may mean that we have missed the point, because it can just easily become a religious observance. The point is that it

**Phil 1:9,10; Heb 6:12*

***1 pet 3:6; Gen 18:12*

was an expression of deep honour, and a term that connotes such respect and honour in contemporary language will be more appropriate.*

My wife and I have studied these truths from the scriptures and she chose to call me *Baale mi*.** This is a Yoruba name which is hard for me to translate into one word in English but it is something like 'my lord.'** Of course she calls me all the sweet names of romance when she wants to, but her usual is different, and it bears the sound of honour and respect.

See my brethren, these things are prophetic. You will treat your husband the way you address him. Please show him some respect and avoid referring to him in the presence of people by his first name or a silly name. I know you may be joking but jokes don't take you into the kingdom. By the way, why not joke with better things? Why not *jokingly* call him something *mylord-ish* (another neologism, but

*The word 'Sir' is the modern equivalent of the ancient expression 'My lord.'

***Baale mi*, pronounced "baa-ah-lay me" is a Yoruba, Western Nigeria word that literally means the lord or father of the home. It is one of the traditional words used to also describe a woman's husband.

from one of my sisters). My rule for jokes (even though I sometimes fail in it) is that it must not be harmful if mistakenly taken literally. The things you do are observed by the angels, I hope you know.

| *Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 1 Cor 11:10*

Relate with your husband with as much respect as you would want well-trained children of yours to give you. The way you treat your husband is the first example of respect for parents and for authority generally that your children will have. A lot of women don't understand why they do not command the respect of their children; the children are so unruly and disrespectful towards them. The truth is that they are the very ones making sure that the children behave so. They do this by setting a bad example for them when relating to the father of the home. These things are spiritual; how you honour your husband is a seed that you are sowing.

Don't shout on your husband. Rise to greet him when he comes home. If I enter the house and my wife is on the phone, she apologises to the person on the other end and puts an end to the call unless there

are important reasons to do otherwise or I tell her not to bother. It's just honour! Please note that she was also like every other modern woman until we took the word of God and reshaped our lives with it. In fact one brother said he felt sorry for me when he heard I was to marry Sister Ufuoma. According to him, "I have seen her handle brothers before." He said he actually prayed for me. I thank God for his prayers (God added it to the blessing in my life and marriage) but he did not know how I always wanted to marry someone who the word of God could mould, and I married my wife because she was so. He told me this after he observed how my wife would defer to me in matters and show it.

What I am saying is that it was not natural to her too, but was a product of the word of God, and anyone who loves the word of God can do it too. Refuse to reason it away as not being modern; modern, in this context, is bad.

Usually when I am to bless my wife, she'll kneel to receive the blessing, and this is because I am her prophet, and not because I am a preacher or because she married an old man (though I am a little older, we fall into the same age bracket). Did I mention that *that* is also the normal way of greeting in the

morning if she'll get the blessing for the day? I decided to tie them together. If you wake up and say 'hi', I will reply 'howdy'. If you humble yourself and come, then I will put on my prophetic mantle and release the blessings. You must activate grace by the works of faith.

These are radical thoughts for many people. Some think I am crazy, but when they see my wife and the way we relate and how much true liberty she has, they have to relax. Many desire the fruit that they are not willing to sow the seeds that produce it. No, God is not mocked.

As a little rule to help you, woman, make sure there is nobody you respect more in life than your husband; your father, pastor and boss included. And let it show!



Chapter 12

YOUR MONEY

Planning is the best way to handle money. Impulse is the exact opposite. Please plan, plan, and plan.

I think it is a good point to give a few practical tips on the handling of finances in the home as it is a major source of contention in homes. Please bear in mind that I can only lay a foundation; delving deeper into these matters is out of the scope of this volume.

When it comes to handling money in the home I have a few points that I believe will help. I have been married at the time of writing this book for 12 years* and I have endeavoured to use the word of God as the standard all this while. It is from this experience I make these points.

1. Total openness and honesty.

Don't hide money from one another as a couple, and don't hide to spend or even to give. You will disagree sometimes, but please do not allow disagreements lead you into hiding to do things. Hiding is most times a result of shame, and it is all the time a seed of distrust. Discuss about things; that is the better way.

2. Plan, and make good allowance for generosity.

Planning is the best way to handle money. Impulse

**I reviewed this book for this edition after 20 years of marriage, and I still gladly offer these.*

is the exact opposite. Please plan, plan, and plan. Get together as a team and plan. Your planning must be based upon the understanding of the word of God and prayer; not just the knowledge of natural economics.

Of course it is not possible to debate every expenditure, but you must plan ahead how to handle every type of situation. In my home a certain amount of money is budgeted for what my wife calls housekeeping, and it is placed in my wife's hands at the beginning of each period. There was a time my wife complained it was too small, and I explained to her that the discipline was in making sure it was enough. I asked her to trim luxuries that may be affecting the cash usage.

We have a proportion of family funds that is used for giving to the gospel. Whether there is need to give or not the money is dedicated and is kept just for that purpose.

We have a general rule of generosity. My wife can give money without discussing with me but she can't buy material things beyond the basic and usual without my consent. I am allowed however to buy such for her to surprise her, and she buys almost *all*

my clothes.

Now, planning for my wife and I is easy because we discuss a lot and she is the one I talk to the most in life. So we end up discussing every plan to spend money. Even though both of us generally give without necessarily discussing with the other person, we end up *always* disclosing such acts. As impulsive as the acts of giving may seem as we do it sometimes, the truth is that we have made a very good allowance for it in our planning and that is why it is easy. Generosity is part of the fabric of Christianity.

3. Defer to the more disciplined person.

As much as the man is the leader in the home, it does not mean he must always be in charge. Of course there are things that are generally traditionally left for the wife to handle. When it comes to the matter of handling money the couple should decide to leave the day to day decisions with the more disciplined person. I believe that everyone knows his or her weakness. I know men who are impulsive spenders; they should not handle family money. Under that kind of situation, it is good to agree to let the woman handle all moneys and give small manageable allowances to the man. In Korean

culture, as I read it from a writing of David Yonggi Cho, the men work for the money but the women get all of it. They give all the money to their wives, and the wives give allowances to the men. I think it is good, generally speaking.

Generosity is part of Christianity and so must be prominent in the lives of Christians. Christian couples should defer to the more generous one of them. I noticed something in my home that is interesting; my wife is kinder than I and is quicker to notice places where help is needed, but I am more liberal in giving. Sometimes she is alarmed at how much I say we should give, but I almost always have the final say in that.

4. Pray about money and don't be afraid of tomorrow.

Excessive planning, tight budgeting and lack of generosity are signs of fear of tomorrow and carnal mindedness. Don't forget to pray and believe God as part of money handling in the family. Make sure you make enough allowance for enjoying everyday life even while you are being careful not to be wasteful.

I remember two of my friends in those days in the university; these fellows were well funded but they

were always so tightly budgeted that you couldn't squeeze a bottle of coke out of them. They were not good company, and that should not be our testimony as Christians.



Chapter

13

YOU AND YOUR IN-LAWS

The truth is that in-law problems do not exist in reality; the problem is always one with the couple. In-law problems arise only because the couple, at least one of them, allowed it.

I have very little to say about this matter because it is a very small matter. It only appears big because we have not examined what the real problem is.

Many times I hear descriptions of problems people have with their in-laws and I have never been able to get the point. The truth is that in-law problems do not exist in reality; the problem is always one with the couple.

Please I am not at all saying that there are not cases in which the in-laws are the devil's assistants. Of course there are; after all, an in-law is just a person and even armed robbers and serial killers have relatives and these have wives and husbands. What I am saying is that 'in-law problem' as an entity hardly exists. Problems with in-laws are actually manifestations of problems within the individuals and *between* couples themselves. By this I mean that when a man has a personal problem, it may manifest as a mother-in-law problem to his wife, and when a woman has an inherent spiritual or emotional problem, it may manifest as a family-in-law problem (I suppose this one too exists) to her husband.

If a woman is being disturbed by her in-laws, it is

because the husband has refused to take his place. That is why a man must *leave* before he is allowed to cleave.

For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. Gen 2:24

When you marry and still take instructions from your father or mother as a man, you are the cause of the in-law problems. You have not yet *leaved*;* you are sowing the seed for trouble. When you still depend on your parents for a roof over your head, I recommend you postpone your wedding, because except for very exceptional people, you will have in-law troubles.

A woman needs her own home; she does not want to be an assistant to another woman who is in her own palace. No matter how small your own place will be, leave so you can cleave. Those who have not *leaved*, whether physically or in their minds, will have

*Please allow me use the neo-logism 'leaved' instead of the proper English word 'left' so as to print the concept of leaving in our minds. When I say leaved, I mean a man (and woman too) separating himself as is proper for the purpose of subsequent union of matrimony as stated in Gen 2: 24 and confirmed by the words of the Lord Jesus in Matt 19:5)

problems. If you keep running to your family for money you will have problems. In-law troubles are fruits which come from seeds of refusing to leave. This applies to both man and woman. Most of the troublesome mothers-in-law are just caring mothers who have not been able to realize that their babies have grown. It is the duties of these babies to grow up and let mummy and daddy know that they have.

See, I saw a lot of so called in-law problems before I got married and I reasoned with the word of God that it did not make sense and that it will not happen with me. I was not planning to choose who my in-laws would be, I just realized that the real problem would never be with them but with me. I have been married as at the writing of this book for 12 years*, and my wife's folks think I am a good person, and I think they are good people; they think my folks are good people and my folks think the world of them. I have absolutely no quarrels with any of my in-laws and my wife has no quarrel whatsoever with any of her in-laws. My mother loves my wife dearly and will rather conspire with her than with me. She thinks she is softer to deal with than me. That is nice, right? But let us see some things I had to do.

**I reviewed this book for this edition after 20 years of marriage and still have wonderful in-law relationships.*

My wife is a very nice person, and so shortly after we were married she tried to be nice to my younger brother when he would often visit and stay with us. "Deji, please feel free o, this is your home o." The day she said that I shouted after her, "Please do not feel too free, this is not your home. It belongs to your brother and his wife and you are a visitor here." My wife felt I was being too hard and I told her I was saving all of us, everyone involved, unnecessary quarrels later. The time my mother and my sister were visiting after our oldest son was born, something happened and I explained to my mother, *my mother*, that she should talk to my wife if she wants anything from the kitchen and not my sister. My wife couldn't get why I was being so firm on small matters. Actually my mother was trying to spare my wife a lot of hassle because she was nursing a baby but I was trying to let her know the order of things. I told my wife that I was saving her a lot of troubles and that we should not because of being nice start sowing seeds that we will not like the fruit tomorrow. Now everybody is free in my home, and we have a lot of peace.

See, later on as my wife began to notice things happening to other people, she would say, "that cannot happen with my husband." She became

grateful I took the stand I did in those things. All she used to do when it had to do with her parents was to simply defer to me. She has always been on my side, and me on hers.

We give gifts to our parents and siblings. It was our policy then to make sure my wife handed over the gifts for my parents to them as much as possible. It was always, "we brought you this." Every one of our parents and siblings understand that these two are together and they will not even try to think otherwise.

Jesus implied that there is a curse on anyone who tries to break the one-flesh that the Lord has joined. Why many in-law trouble makers are not seeing the wrath of God is because they are not the ones breaking the union; the husband and the wife never left their people. When you badmouth your wife to your mother or make it clear to your mother that you agree with her that having a son is the reason why you married, what do you expect from a caring mother? Of course she will agree to take on the son's enemy, his wife. No one of your relations can give any trouble to your spouse without passing through you, and that is a fact. If you stand by and defend your wife or husband, everybody will relax.

Couples having in-law problems should please solve the issues themselves and stop hiding behind their parents as if they are the problem. The truth about these problems many times is that the man or the woman is allowing the relatives fight on his or her behalf. These mercenaries are saying things that the man is thinking about his wife but is too afraid to say because he knows it is wrong. The wife may be too afraid to confront her husband and so allows her mother to do it.

Any man that has sense will defend his wife before his relations, and vice versa. Deal with matters yourself; like it is said, pull your thumb out of your mouth and grow up!

My parents and siblings only know what I say about my wife or what I confirm in their impressions. All their thoughts about my wife are directly or indirectly formed by me. If she does what is wrong, I can dispel it from their minds even if they found out about it. Man, if your mother has an issue with your wife you are mostly at fault. PERIOD. Keep them away from each other if they can't get along. What is your mother doing in your home when she can't stand your wife? Or woman, what is your mother doing in your home when she can't stand your

husband? If she has nowhere else to go, then she has to take some adult lessons in coping with difficult people, because she is a guest in another person's home.

Another problem I see a lot is when a man packs his siblings into his home with a new wife in it. You know, I think such men are just either wicked or do not know what a wife is. I remember a man who packed three grown men, in their twenties, with a teenage girl, all his siblings, into a home with a wife and four little children. Then they started accusing the woman of being intolerant.

I give a thumbs-up to women who can cope with that but before you start seeing the speck in the eye of the woman who can't, I think you should remove the log of stupidity from your eye, o man. You are invading the privacy of the woman, denying her the atmosphere of romance due her, and putting her under unnecessary pressure to cope with many husbands at a go. Those grown husband siblings in the Nigerian setting more often than not treat the wife like the stranger in the home (the wife is still seen as an acquisition). She is the one trying to cope with them rather than them trying to make sure they are not nuisances in the home. Some husbands are

so insensitive that they wonder why the woman can't cope with everybody trooping into her kitchen at will. The man I spoke of ended up with a broken home; the wife left the children for him to handle, and finally the brothers and sister went their various ways. He is alone and I guess still blames the woman. May God continue to open blind eyes!

I know there are practical issues to deal with in the different lives that may be involved in this problem with siblings, and we can't begin to tackle them now, but a man always should remember to make the wife feel like it is first her home and all others are visitors. As much as possible, don't crowd the home for your wife. Wives too, take note and be responsible! This door swings both ways. Don't pack all your family problems for your husband to solve.

In-law problems arise only because the couple, at least one of them, allowed it.

A word, it is said, is enough for the wise.



Questions and Answers

Q & A

Sir, could you kindly address the issue of denominations as it relates to marriage. We have been taught that as Christians we must not marry unbelievers. But now in Christendom, are we permitted to decide based on denominations since we are all believers in Christ Jesus?

It is most certainly right that a Christian should not marry an unbeliever. However, the issue of denominations is not so.

First let me talk about denominations a bit.

What is my denomination? I am asked this sometimes. My answer truly is I don't have any. I am simply a Christian. I know I fit what people will call a Pentecostal and Charismatic, but I personally do not like labels. I am a Christian and that is all I care about. I love the word of God and anyone that loves the word of God is acceptable to me. Though I do not pastor a church and currently attend a Pentecostal church, I preach most Sundays in one church or the other, and I think for now I preach as much in what we call orthodox churches as I do in new generation Pentecostal ones. So you see I look beyond denominations.

Also, we all know that even among Pentecostal and Charismatic churches there are many different groups of churches. The interesting thing is that even though they are all of the Pentecostal label and they believe essentially the same things, some will still frown at their members marrying from other Pentecostal churches. A lot of pastors are only afraid to lose their members through marriage and that is why they counsel against marrying from the other places. Beyond the matter of membership, some feel they are better than every other group. There are four church groups which I am aware of in Nigeria today that each feels like it is the one that is the true church of Christ. Three of these are very well known Pentecostal churches. I think this madness is beyond the matter of marriage; I think anybody attending those churches should please learn to discern the body of Christ as Paul wrote in the first letter to the Corinthians. No, as long as we are all Christians, denomination should not matter in the matter of marriage.

Having said this however, it is not going to be easy to be in unity with someone who differs widely from you in important doctrines they hold unto. How are you going to pray for healing together with a spouse who does not believe that God still heals

today? Are you going to be praying in other tongues in a home where your husband thinks that it is a manifestation of demons? "Two cannot walk together unless they are agreed" is what the Bible says, and so I don't think it practical for unmarried people who differ seriously in doctrines to pretend like they will marry and have fun unless at least one of them is planning to change and makes that change before marriage. I know they may both be Christians but are they truly agreed? It is another one of those recipes for trouble. This is one of those situations in which it is a matter of commonsense to avoid possible hassles if you can, and God will have to prove it is His will, if it is, through mighty manifestations.

Please we should not be denomination minded; we should rather be more keen on love for the truth. Be sure that you and the person you want to marry are actually in agreement on major matters. There will *always* be varying degrees of differences in minor matters, so please relax on those. If one person believes that speaking in tongues is compulsory and the other thinks it is optional, I call that minor. It is clear they both believe in the current day manifestations of the Holy Spirit. One person may believe in tithing and the other doesn't; as long as

they both believe in generous giving, there should be no problem. I have heard pastors teach that a woman should not marry a man who doesn't tithe. I think that is carrying minor things to the extreme; it is a minor thing of Christianity and that is why it was not ever emphasized in the New Testament church recorded in the Bible.

Sir, I want to ask about a situation in which a marriage set on a solid foundation still goes wrong. What could be the cause?

First, notice that the key word here is 'foundation.' A foundation is not a building; it is the solid base upon which a house stands. You can have a very solid foundation but add to it bad pillars and a leaky roof. The building will still fail despite the fact that the foundation is solid. So it is with marriage.

There are things to do to make a marriage sweet and enjoyable. There is work to do everyday. We don't just lay a solid foundation and go to rest. A solid foundation however makes restoration of a damaged or poorly finished building easy. A marriage with a solid foundation is also very easy to restore.

Marriage is a place where most people want to get it right even though their whole life is wrong. Well, no matter how well they discovered the will of God when choosing a mate, the fact that they are not keen on building every aspect of their lives on the word of God will make it impossible for them to build well on the solid foundation, even though they were able to successfully lay it.

Sir, is it alright for a man to marry a woman who is older than him?

It is true that generally wives tend to be younger than their husbands. The fact that females mature physically earlier than males may partly explain why this is natural. However my study of the scriptures has revealed to me nowhere that this was commanded, admonished or implied. I have a lot of examples in modern times in which the wife is older than the man and they led a very successful godly married life. I think therefore that if it is alright with the couple there is nothing wrong with it.

Sir, if a man is in the ministry, shouldn't his wife also be in the ministry with him? Is it possible for a preacher and his wife to be pursuing different careers?

It is common practise for men who are in ministry to train their wives to join them in ministering; the women are encouraged to do essentially what the husband is doing. I don't think that is right most of the times.

Generally speaking, being in ministry just means to work in one way or another in the ministry. If this is what we are talking about, then it is good. I preach and my wife helps Kingdom-Word Ministries in whichever way needed. She leads prayers; being a trained accountant she helps with the auditing of accounts; she runs a business and the business gives to the ministry. Also she and others among my co-workers sometimes teach or give exhortations in our meetings, especially when I am absent. She has also honoured some speaking engagements on her own. It is all good.

However, being called into the ministry of the word as a calling can only be done by God and a husband cannot do it. It does not come to you by association. As at today my wife is not a preacher, and I cannot make her one. It is a wrong concept to expect that a preacher's wife must also be a preacher. It has no foundation in the scriptures. The only people in the Bible that I am aware of who were both in preaching

ministries as a couple were Priscilla and Aquila, and Isaiah the prophet and his wife (he called her the prophetess). Most of the men mentioned in the Bible as preachers were married but you rarely hear of their wives being mentioned as ministers. Quite a number of women in the Bible were also mentioned as prophetesses (Miriam, Deborah, Huldah etc), but apart from Priscilla and Mrs Isaiah I cannot easily recollect any other whose husband was also a preacher.

So we see that it was never implied that a man's wife must also be a minister of the word because he is one. If the woman is a minister, it will manifest and the husband should encourage her. However, if she is not, he should not even try to make her one; it is unnecessary. Just like a businessman can have a preacher as a wife, and a doctor can have a school teacher as a wife, so can a preacher's wife belong to any calling that the Lord chooses. She does not have to share your gift to be an effective helper; life has many facets.

Sir, I understand that the Bible says a woman should be submissive to her husband in all things. But what about a situation in which a man requests his wife to do something that is wrong?

I will lay a few points clearly out here. One, submission is an attitude. I have explained that extensively in the relevant chapters in this book. It does not mean blind obedience. Also as I have already mentioned, authority figures are not permitted to directly oppose the written word of God (Acts 4:19). If it is something that is against the word of God, of course the woman cannot obey it.

I need to add however that this kind of question rarely comes up in a Christian home running normally on Christian principles. The problem we often have is that the home is run by every other principle apart from the word of God and then suddenly a husband begins to demand submission as prescribed by God at certain times. I am not saying the woman should therefore be non-submissive; I am just saying that I actually do not have a simple and straight forward answer to their question. The problem is usually much more complicated than whether the woman should obey a certain instruction or not. Imagine a situation in which a man requests his wife to go sleep with a big man just because he hopes to get a contract that will make them rich. I think the least of the problems in that marriage is submission. The problem is more of demon-possession that requires serious casting out

when a man will willingly give up his wife into a thing like that because of money. Let's follow God in every aspect and some questions will not even arise.



ABOUT

Kingdom-Word Ministries

The author ministers from the platform of Kingdom-Word Ministries, a non-denominational organization based in Enugu, Nigeria. Activities of the ministry include weekly Bible classes at the ministry office, publication of free teaching tracts and books, radio/TV broadcasts and organizing teaching seminars in various towns and cities.

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