

Accepting My Mate Unconditionally

Jon & Lonnie Brock

Recognizing my spouse as God's perfect mate for n is an essential step toward our growth-together in love and unity, To receive my spouse unconditionally is to accept my spouse as is, without hope of change.

1. Ask yourself these questions:
 - a. Do I accept my spouse just as he/she is?
 - b. Are there areas of his/her life which cause a wrong response
 - c. Do I find myself responding toward my spouse with: bitterness? irritation? resentment? impatience? ungratefulness?
 - d. Do I nag or belittle my spouse?

2. Make a list of things you don't like about your spouse. (Prayerfully ask God to show you traits or actions in your spouse which cause a wrong response from you.)

3. Admit that these wrong responses by you indicate a lack of unconditional acceptance of your spouse. Recognize further, that this lack of acceptance is really a bitterness toward God...for the way He made your spouse and for the environment He chose for your personality development.

4. Confess your resentment toward God. Acknowledge "that you have an attitude of self_ righteousness and that you have failed to love and respect your spouse as God has commanded you to do.

5. Receive' God's forgiveness - I John 1:9.

6. 6. Thank God for all the things you have resented in your spouse. Thank Him also for the qualities He will produce in you because of these very traits in your spouse.

7. Yield your will and expectations to God. Tell Him you mill cooperate with Him works in you and your spouse to bring about those changes which please Him, (Philippians 2:13).

8. Concentrate on your spouse's good qualities.
 - a. List the things you admire about your spouse.
 - b. Admire your spouse verbally!
 - c. Review the list of his strengths daily.
 - d. Thank God for these strenghts.*

*every NEGATIVE quality in a person has the potential to become a POSITIVE quality. i.e., indecisiveness can become flexibility; bluntness--honesty;

touchiness--sensitivity; leniency--forgiving; permissive--patient; critical--discerning.

Try to see the potential for strength in your spouse's weakness.

9. Perhaps you will need to ask your spouse's forgiveness for your wrong responses and attitudes toward him/her. In seeking his/her forgiveness, be very careful of your wording and manner so that he/she will not feel you are casting blame on him/her. Remember, you are asking forgiveness for what YOU have done wrong, and you are not intending to remind him/her of what he/she might have done wrong.

We cannot change our spouses. That is a work that only the Lord can do. When we try to change our mate we will create tension. Communication and love between a husband and wife can be destroyed.

Love Grows Out Of The Climate Of Acceptance!

Trusting God to take the responsibility for any changes He feels need to be made in my spouse will free me to accept my spouse unconditionally. When my spouse sense my satisfaction and joy with him/her my spouse will give me his/her deepest love.

The Act Of Receiving By Jack Taylor

1. Do I receive my mate unconditionally?
2. If not, what must I do to do so now?
3. Do I really believe that God is the blessed controller of all things? (I Timothy 6:15-Phillips)
4. Do I believe that God allows certain people and things to enter into my life in order to conform me into the image of Christ?
5. Is your life controlled by a spirit of reception or rejection? (If we live in a stronghold of rejection, we cannot receive ourselves, others, circumstances, or the will of God graciously.)
6. Do I really believe that God could have kept my marriage from taking place but that He allowed it and gave me a mate perfectly suited to my needs.
(It is Satan that wants us to reject others or circumstances . . . to fail to unqualifiedly receive them.) All that my mate is meant to be, he or she cannot be if I do not receive him or her.

“When we receive something as a gift from God, we receive it as a perfect gift. When we receive it as a perfect gift, that gift is released to be everything to us.”

The Husband-Wife Relationship

"Show me a picture"

Selected Verses from Ephesians 5:21-33 (J.B. Phillips)

Focus: vv 22-25

v 22 "You wives must learn to *adapt* to your husbands *as you submit to the Lord* for the husband is the *head* of the wife in the same way that Christ is head of the Church and savior of His body."

"adapt" – submit (Amplified) – Webster's 1.) to make suitable or more suitable, especially by changing. 2). to change one's self such as one's behavior, attitude, etc., will conform to new or changed circumstances. SYN. *adapt* implies a modifying so as to suit new conditions and suggests flexibility; *adjust* describes the bringing of things into proper or harmonious relation through the use of skill or judgment; *accommodate* implies a subordinating of one thing to the requirements of another and suggests concession or compromise; *conform* means to bring or act in harmony with some standard, pattern or principle.

"as you submit to the Lord," – this is true for both husband and wife – a quick look at *our* relationship and one should quickly detect our relationship with the Lord. Sometimes it is a matter of getting back to the basics when either of us has been quick tempered or short with the other. It is a matter of confessing the sin to God, i.e., submitting to His Lordship and *then* seeking the right relationship with our mate – Acts 24:16.

Example: counseling people regarding marriage problems – first get things right with the Lord, i.e., get saved, repent, etc., then get things right with your marriage partner. It's hard to communicate to someone how the marriage is supposed to work when they don't have a clear, *experiential* view of Christ and the Church and especially His Lordship. I Corinthians 1:18.

The Five Essentials of a Team:

1. Common objective and a vision of it. (State objective)
2. Accepted Leader – "Kings don't make subjects, subjects make kings!"
3. Agreement on methods and activities.
4. Strong sense of love and loyalty.
5. A certain division of labor.

v 23 "for the husband is head of the wife in the same way that Christ is the savior of the Body." As Christ is the rightful "Accepted Leader" then:

v 24 The willing subjection of the Church to Christ should be reproduced in the submission of wives to their husbands.

Why does the Church willingly submit to Christ?

Examples: Christ's example – Isaiah 53:4-11 (Today's English Version)

4 "But he endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne. All the while we thought that his suffering was punishment sent by God. 5 But because of our sins he was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment he suffered, made whole by the blows he received. 6 All of us were like sheep that were lost, each of us going his own way. But the Lord made the punishment fall on him, the punishment all of us deserved. 7 "He was treated harshly, but endured it humbly; he never said a word. Like a lamb about to be slaughtered, like a sheep about to be sheared, he never said a word. 8 He was arrested and sentenced and led off to die, and no one cared about his fate. He was put to death for the sins of our people. 9 He was placed in a grave with those who are evil, he was buried with the rich, even though he had never committed a crime or ever told a lie."

Romans 12:1 – The "mercies of God..."
I have often wondered why the Apostle Paul endured all the hardships he did – II
Corinthians 11:23-28. The answer lies in II Corinthians 5:14 (Wuest)!

Husbands Notice: It is only through our *demonstrated* love that we earn the right to have a submitted wife.

v 25 Remember, this means that the husband must give his wife the same sort of love that Christ gave to the Church when He *sacrificed* Himself for Her.

"Sacrifice" Webster's – "an offering of the life of a person or animal, or of an object as propitiation to a deity, 2.) a giving up or destroying, permitting injury to, or forgoing of an object of some valued thing for the sake of something of greater value, 3) in baseball, to advance a runner by means of a sacrifice."

Probably the greatest sacrifice we can make today is our time – my life is time; time to listen, time to help, time alone with her and her alone.

Colossians 3:18,19 JBP – Bitterness can result from either partner not fulfilling his or her role. cp
Hebrews 12:15 JBP

Syner^gism – The simultaneous action of separate agencies which, *together*, have greater total effect than the sum of their individual effects.

Examples:

- Muscles
- Team (fist illustration)
- Lock & Key

When we become "one flesh" we, *together*, become a new organism that is capable of doing far more toward glorifying God than either of us could accomplish individually. "We" develop a personality that is unique to our marriage relationship.

Example:

- Lonnie – hospitable, time for everyone, methodical, planner, very detailed – paints with a fine brush.
- Jon – bottom line, no time for details, tendency to be abrupt – paints with a broad brush.

Illustration: Artist William Alexander – Jon paints the background while Lonnie paints the foreground including the flowers, rocks, and details. The outcome is a beautiful picture.

v 31 The "mystery" of the "one flesh" relationship is exemplified. To see a vivid illustration of Christ's relationship with His Bride, the Church, look at the relationship of a loving husband and wife and to see what a loving marriage should look like; look at the relationship between Christ and His Bride, the Church.

The Husband-Wife Relationship

"Show me a Picture"

Marriage Overview – Ephesians 5:21-33 (J.B. Phillips)

5:21 - Thank God at all times for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And "fit in with" each other, because of your common reverence for Christ.

5:22-24 - You wives must learn to adapt yourselves to your husbands, as you submit yourselves to the Lord, for the husband is the "head" of the wife in the same way that Christ is head of the Church and savior of the body. The willing subjection of the Church to Christ should be reproduced in the submission of wives to their husbands.

5:25-27 - But, remember, this means that the husband must give his wife the same sort of love that Christ gave to the Church, when he sacrificed himself for her. Christ gave himself to make her holy, having cleansed her through the baptism of his Word - to make her an altogether glorious Church in his eyes. She is to be free from spots, wrinkles or any other disfigurement - a Church holy and perfect.

5:28-33 - Men ought to give their wives the love they naturally have for their own bodies. The love a man gives his wife is the extending of his love for himself to enfold her. Nobody ever hates or neglects his own body; he feeds and looks after it. And that is what Christ does for his body, the Church. And we are all members of that body; we are his flesh and blood! 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'. The marriage relationship is doubtless a great mystery, but I am speaking of something deeper still - the marriage of Christ and his Church. In practice what I have said amounts to this: let every one of you who is a husband love his wife as he loves himself; let the wife reverence her husband.

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THE CHRISTIAN HOME CLASS

SUBMISSION..... the life-style of every believer!

Submission is NOT THE EXCLUSIVE ROLE OF THE WIFE.... all of creation is based on the

principle of authority and submission. Husbands are under the authority of the

Lord Jesus Christ, the government, the law, the boss...As Christians we are

to submit to one another--Ephesians_5:21 Christ is our example

(Philippians 2:5 we cannot submit ourselves to one another unless we follow His Example and empty ourselves of SELF!

WHAT IS SUBMISSION to obey with joy--to cleave--to rest--to lean--to abide--it is trusting--giving up of my plan and purpose for God's plan and purpose--it is throwing "a foundation under"--to support-- to hold--it is accepting what God has made and equipped me to be-- being submissive is the best of all things for me to do!

IS IT FAIR?

We should never consider God's commands to us as to whether they are fair or not! Our response should always be--obedience from a heart filled with love-- not dependent on our husband's love.

SUBMISSION IS NOT... inferiority--intellectual suicide (you have GOOD ideas!)--lack of fulfillment... God's plan always brings us ultimate fulfillment! Submission is not something we do just when we're in the mood--to be submissive is a direct command of God!

Submission is not...being passive. You are not a doormat!

Submission is not...denying you have rights. You have them, but you don't demand them. Instead you give them to God to hold for you.

Submission is not..."being wrong." Your opinions are often right!

Submission cannot be demanded by the husband!

Submission is not...a tool to get your own way.

Submission does not mean...losing your identity!

SUBMISSION AND HEADSHIP IN MARRIAGE ARE LIKE:

A Musical Duet

Both voices must be heard...one is responsible for carrying the tune (husband) the other harmonizes and supports (wife)

God's Organization

The husband is President... the wife, Vice President... BOTH ARE NECESSARY' They
function differently... No organization can have two heads... God made women to
have the supporting role... Be what God made you to be, and you will be
beautiful!

THE HEADSHIP OF THE HUSBAND

does not mean that he is superior * or that he has all the ideas
* or that he can be a dictator * or that he is always right

Being submissive must be an attitude before it is an act... it is
placing myself under the will of God voluntarily... placing
myself in submission is a responsible act of MY WILL!

REMEMBER: It is a PRIVILEGE to love... NOT an issue of rights!

Box 5

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: You helped "Never Been Wed in Wisconsin," who had been invited to a bridal shower and was asked to bring 10 tips on how to be a good wife.

I thought they were real neat. Do you happen to have 10 tips on how to be a good husband? I'm getting married soon and need to know.

MARC

DEAR MARC: Try these:

1. Never forget her birthday, anniversary or Valentine's Day. A kiss, a card or a single rose could save the day.
2. Don't keep talking about the beautiful young chicks at work.
3. Don't turn on the radio or TV, or pick up something to read, when she's trying to talk to you.
4. Don't bring a friend home to dinner without advance notice.
5. Don't use her car and return it with an empty gas tank.
6. If you know you're going to be late getting home, call and tell her.
7. Don't try to make her jealous.
8. Don't look like a slob all weekend — unless she looks worse.
9. When you know you're wrong, admit it.
10. Never criticize her in the presence of others.

IN WISCONSIN

DEAR NEVER: I just happen to have 10 tips tucked away in my bridal file:

1. Don't keep telling him about all the other men you could have married.
2. Don't bring out the bills at breakfast.
3. Don't start a conversation with him while he's reading or watching a sports event on TV.
4. Don't correct him in front of other people.
5. Don't try to make him jealous.
6. Don't bad-mouth his relatives.
7. Don't put a shirt in his drawer with a button missing.
8. Don't call him at work unless it's absolutely necessary.
9. Don't use his razor.
10. Don't threaten to leave him unless you have a better place to go.

Next Sunday: 10 tips on how to be a good husband.

SUSAN 13

RULES FOR A HAPPY MARRIAGE

1. Never both be angry at the same time.
2. Never yell at each other unless the house is on fire.
3. If one of you has to win an argument, let it be your mate. t. If you have to criticize, do it lovingly.
5. Never bring up mistakes of the past.
6. Neglect the whole world rather than each other.
7. Never go to sleep with an argument unsettled.
8. At least once every day try to say one kind or complimentary thing to your life's partner.
9. When you have done something wrong, be ready to admit it and ask forgiveness.
10. It takes two to make a quarrel, and the one in the wrong is the one who does the most talking.

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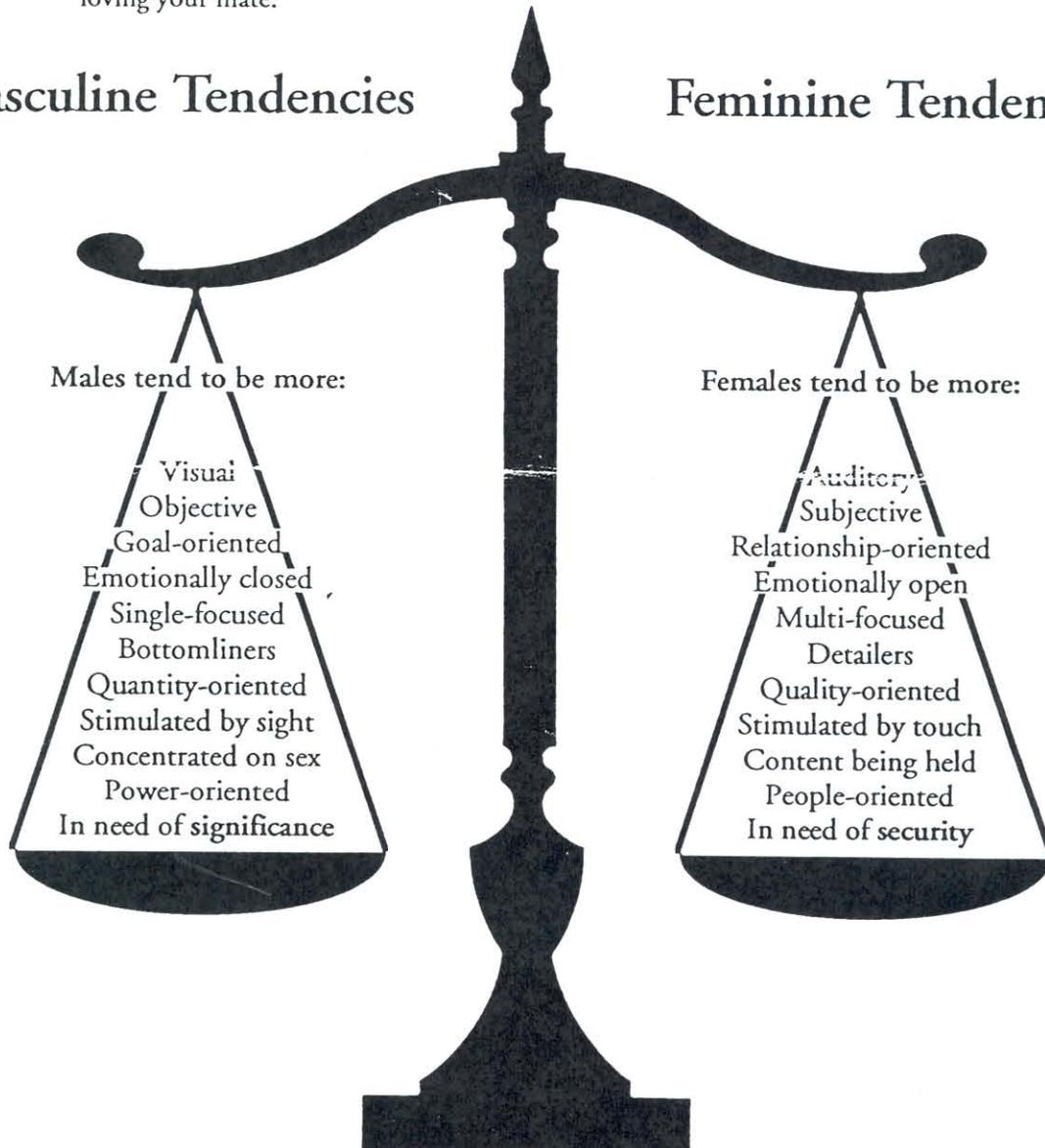
Discern the God-given Differences

“... at the beginning of creation God made them male and female.” (Mark 10:6)

What do you know about the man or woman in your life? Are you perplexed or even angered by your loved one’s behavior and responses? When Scripture says, *“God made them male and female,”* it means God made them different, and this dissimilarity goes deeper than the obvious physical differences. God constructed them differently inside. Males and females simply think and experience life differently. Understanding masculinity and femininity is a clue to understanding and loving your mate.

Masculine Tendencies

Feminine Tendencies



These tendencies are not weighed on a scale of “right or wrong.” They are complimentary and God-given to bring balance and depth to a relationship.

*“God saw all that He had made,
and it was very good.”
(Genesis 1:31)*

GENERAL DIFFERENCES IN MEN AND WOMEN

WHAT IS A MAN?

Father

A man develops his manhood through fatherhood (physical/spiritual). He creates, he provides, he teaches, and directs. He shares what he has and what he is with those for whom he is responsible. He gives of his own self (body, heart, mind, and will) so that each one in his care might become his or her own unique self. When he repudiates his duties as a parent, ("I'll make the money, you raise the children.") he unwittingly undermines his own manhood. (A woman prefers a manly, masculine man. One reason: such a man makes her feel more like a woman.)

CONQUEROR

Man's mission is to subdue the earth, to gain mastery over the forces of nature. He competes and does battle with fellowman. He seeks status and proves his worth by acquiring and exercising power. ("Now you know who's boss around here.") He, too, shows love but shows his love by working, by conquering the world.

CENTER OF INTEREST: THE WORLD

He sees the world of business and work as his natural environment. Here is where the action is, this is where his interest lies. (The perennial danger: his job can be divisive, can become more important than his family.) Man is expansive. He looks for new challenges; constantly extends his horizons.

OBJECTIVE

A fact is a fact. More detached viewpoint. Sees things and events as they are in themselves. ("I don't deny that a trip would be fun, but we just can't afford it right now.") ("The Jones' called to say they can't come. They're going to be busy tomorrow.")

IMPERSONAL

Thing-centered, idea-centered. To him the real world is that of material objects, and of plans and projects and abstract principles. Thinks of people as members of a group or in terms of their functions. ("Yes, the office boy does a good job.") Because of this attitude, leans more towards justice and strictness.

SOUL-MODEST

Not embarrassed by his physical nakedness, but reluctant to reveal his inner self. ("It makes me uncomfortable to talk about love. Besides, don't actions speak louder than words?") Equates sentiment with sentimentality; thinks it unmanly to display his honest feeling to cry, for example, or to admit that he has fears.

PASSIONATE

SEX? Anytime, anyplace. He is jetpropelled: sights, words, touches can rapidly, even instantly, arouse him. More prone to think of intercourse as a physical act in which spouses do something.

NEGLECTS

Tends to take his spouse for granted. ("Of course I love you. I married you, didn't I?") Forgets about or can't be bothered with (what are to him) the trivial details, attentions, the thoughtfulness and courtesy, that means so much to a woman, show her that he thinks of her as a person — not a housekeeper.

MAIN WEAKNESS — SENSE OF DISCOURAGEMENT

This is his psychological pitfall. The doer, the fighter, the conqueror, he needs a continuing vote of confidence; to be esteemed and admired, to have his ego built up. A man can never succeed enough, will never be satisfied. (A wife can either push or inspire, her husband, make or break him. But if he's a success in her eyes, he never really fails.) He needs her behind him at all times.

FUTURE-MINDED

Not overly concerned with today, but looks to tomorrow. What will the future be like? What can be done by next year? He takes a long-range view.

ESSENTIAL-MINDED

Focuses on what is important. Goes to the heart of the matter, gets to the point. ("I'll admit it's a good-looking car, but how well does it run?") ("But I did remember your birthday. I gave you a watch.") ("I liked that speaker's ideas.")

LOGICAL

Studies the evidence; then, step by step, in orderly fashion, reasons to a conclusion. ("You didn't say you were worried. How was I to know?") ("Look at how hard I work. Doesn't that prove that I love you?")

STEADY

Displays fewer ups and downs in his emotional patterns. Tends to stay in the same mood (pleasant or mean) the better part of the day.

A LEADER

The decision-maker. Must carve out his, and his family's destiny. His masculinity demands reassurance that he is the "Head of the House."

EGOTISTIC

His favorite personal pronoun (by ten to one) is "I." Strives to rise above or to be better than others. To esteem him and to admire him is to give him the attention he craves. (The smart wife takes care not to humiliate her husband; instead she makes him feel important.)

WHAT IS A WOMAN?

Mother

A woman develops her womanhood through motherhood (physical/spiritual). She is womb-centered. Rooted deep in her being is the desire to produce, conserve, and nourish life. She may choose not to mother a child; but mother something or someone she will; her husband, her boss, her poodle. (A man prefers a feminine, womanly woman. One reason: such a woman makes him feel more like a man.)

LOVER

"Love is a man's life apart, 'tis woman's existence." For her, to love (and to be loved) is to live. She finds fulfillment in taking care of her family's needs and in demonstrating affection. She, too, is a conqueror, but conquers by means of personal love.

CENTER OF INTEREST: THE HOME

Her home is an extension of herself. This is the creation-part of her heart and soul. Here she is queen. Woman is conservative. She takes root, gathers unto herself, seeks to preserve and to make more secure the familiar world that is already hers. ("I don't want a bigger house; I want a better home. I wish you'd spend less money on us and more time with us.")

SUBJECTIVE

Feelings come first. More attached. Makes much of things and events and what they mean in relation to herself. ("Maybe we can't afford a trip, but think of the fun we'd have.") ("The Jones' aren't coming, you say? I wonder what we did to offend them?")

PERSONAL

Person-centered. Attaches greater importance to people, more aware that each individual is a unique human being. ("George, our mailman, says he has sinus trouble.") Because of this basic attitude is more likely to be merciful and lenient.

BODY-MODEST

Hesitant to expose her physical self and doubly so when unsure of her own attractiveness. ("I wonder what he'll think of my figure?") Loves, though, to talk, to verbalize and externalize what she feels.

ROMANTIC

Her mood and the setting may have much to do with her desire and sexual response. ("Not this evening. I'm too tired" or "Soften the lights, turn on the music.") Like a lumbering bomber she becomes airborne, excited, gradually, less quickly. Approaches intercourse more as an emotional experience by means of which husband and wife say something.

NAGS

Her mother-instinct, her emotionalism, her concern for detail all combine to make her a fault-finder. ("You never tell me what a good cook I am.") Nagging is a device that can get her the attention that she wants.

MAIN WEAKNESS — SENSE OF LONELINESS

This is her psychological pitfall. More loving, more emotional, more subjective, more dependent, she is more sensitive to human loneliness. Experiences greater need for interpersonal relationships and for heart to heart communications.

PRESENT-MINDED

Not too worried about the future, but more interested in the present. It's the here and now that matters to her.

DETAIL-MINDED

Impressed by, and distracted by, the little things — the accidental and incidental. These to her mean a lot. ("Isn't the dashboard cute?") ("I know you gave me a watch, but you didn't even bother to wrap it!") ("Did you notice the tie the speaker was wearing?")

INTUITIVE

Often know without knowing how she knows. Relies on instinct, on emotion. ("There's something bothering you; I can tell.") ("I just feel you've changed towards me. You haven't said you love me lately.")

CHANGEABLE

Sensitive to people, and environment. She shifts her emotional gears more frequently and abruptly. ("You don't care for her mood? Just wait ten minutes.")

A FOLLOWER

Feels secure when relying on a man (but with a womanly, not childish, dependence). Must feel needed as a helpmate to her husband. Her femininity demands reassurance that she is the "Heart of the House."

JEALOUS

She wants all of her husband's love, all of the time. In her craving for attention she is monopolistic. Inclined to possess, to appropriate, to make sure that this man is exclusively her own. Every woman, to any woman, is a rival. (The smart husband continually reminds his wife that she is the only woman he loves.)

IN CHRIST

IN MARRIAGE

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. You turn from one way of life to complete committal to a new way of life <u>permanently</u> . | 1. Marriage is the upheaval of the settled routines of two individuals. It requires many <u>permanent adjustments</u> (not just temporary ones). |
| 2. Christ becomes the center of my life. | 2. You turn from a way of life where your world centered around yourself to a way of life where your world must center around another. |
| 3. It is a turning from all other "religions" to committal to a person, Jesus Christ. | 3. It is a turning from all other men to a complete committal to one man, my husband. |
| 4. It is a deliberate choice. It involves your will. You choose to allow Jesus Christ to be the Lord of your life. | 4. It is a deliberate choice. I choose to stop "playing the field" and to commit myself to one person - the man I married. I must allow him to head our family. |
| 5. You lay yourself open to the chastisement and correction of the Heavenly Father. | 5. I lay myself open to the hurts, burdens, responsibilities, and lifestyle of this man. |
| 6. You become eligible for the peace, joy, love and satisfaction that can only come from the fulfillment of a life in Christ. | 6. I become eligible for the joy, love, satisfaction and fulfillment that can come only inside this relationship. |
| 7. As you walk with the Lord, your love for Him grows and deepens. | 7. As I walk with my husband through life, my love for him grows and deepens. |
| 8. You must actively seek to know the Lord; you have to work at it! | 8. I must actively seek to know my husband; I have to work at it! |
| 9. You must submit to the Lord lovingly and willingly from the heart. | 9. I must submit to my husband (as unto the Lord) lovingly and willingly from the heart. |
| 10. You must allow nothing to come between you and the Lord that would break fellowship. | 10. I must allow nothing to come between my husband and me that would break our fellowship. |
| 11. You must reverence Christ. | 11. I am commanded to reverence my husband, also |
| 12. Your motivation for doing what you do in your Christian life should be love for Him. | 12. My motivation for doing what I do in my role as a wife should be love for him. |
| 13. Christ is to have first place in my life. | 13. Of all human relationships, my husband is to be my first priority. |
| 14. We adapt ourselves to what Jesus Christ wants us to be and to do. He gives us the grace and power to do this. | 14. I am to adapt myself to my husband and to his needs and lifestyle. Jesus gives me the grace and power to do this. |
| 15. We are to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. | 15. Why shouldn't I do the same for my husband? |

Characteristics of Christ-Like (Agapé) Love

Agapaō - from which comes the noun agapé - the nature of true love in a Christian marriage. Some characteristics of agapé love:

- a) It is volitional; it is not emotional. The Lord commands us to have agapé for someone (and you can't command someone to have a feeling). So since it is comanded it obviously is volitional. Agapaō has neither the warmth of phileō nor the intensity of eros and it refers to the will rather than the emotions. It is the steady directing of the human will toward the well-being of another. To say that love is a feeling or anything of that kind is an unChristian concept of love. Agapé is not primarily an emotion or affection; it is primarily an active determination of the will.
- b) It is an attitude; it is not a feeling. Agapé has an attitude of considering or seeking or caring concerning something for the other party. If true Christian love is an emotion then the opposite to it is hate. But because true Christian love is an attitude of caring and concern then the opposite to it is not caring; indifference; a total lack of concern.
- c) It is discerning; it is not something that is sentimental. Agapé discerns between what is harmful and helpful for the other person and then sets their will toward doing that which will be helpful to that other person. It seeks that which will be to the benefit and well-being of the other person.
- d) It is indiscriminate; it does not discriminate between persons who are worthy of it and persons who are unworthy of it. Our Lord tells us as Christians to have agapé for our husband or wife, agapé for our neighbor, and agapé for our enemy. Agapé seeks the well-being of the other person regardless of whether he deserves it or not.
- e) It is unselfish; it seeks the well-being of the other person without any concern for receiving back from that person. Joseph Fletcher in his book, Situation Ethics, points out that there are three basic ethics: 1) Egoistic (based upon the verb eraō) - The person says, "My first and last consideration is myself." That is eros; passion; sensualness. 2) Mutualistic - The person says, "I will give as long as I receive." 3) Christian (it is the altruistic ethic) - The person says, "I will give regardless of the worthiness of the person to receive, expecting nothing back in return." Now that is agapé love. That is the ethic of the Christian in his life. It has been said that in reality, the love which is based on the emotions of sympathy or affection is self-love because it is a love of preference and choice. And the standards of the preference and choice are mine. That is why it is a selfish love. So anything that is based purely upon emotions is selfishness. And that is not agapé because agapé is a giving kind of love.