

Mothers Day 2009

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Well, here we are, Mother's Day 2009, I have been meditating on the incredible worth of a Godly woman. This is sorta a backwards message. It is totally about women, but it is addressed to our men. Here are my thoughts…

THE NEED TO UNDERSTAND HOW JESUS SEES HIS BRIDE:

A BIBLICAL MODEL FOR VIEWING WOMEN

I want us, here at the Atlanta South Metro House of Prayer, to walk in agreement with the heart of God, not just in matters of intercession, the power of God, and things like that, but in every area of our lives. How many know and understand that in God's eyes, there are no spiritual or secular designations to our lives? In the life of a believer, the secular is the sacred. We are to do everything to the glory of God (Col. 3:17). All too often we are guilty of looking at things through the dirty lens of natural life in a fallen world. And as a result, we miss the beauty and the majesty of what we have, even in this age.

This morning, I want us to heed Holy Spirit's call to honor godly women, starting with our wife and mother, then extending it to all other women as well. One of our enemy's greatest strategies is to minimize the value of godly motherhood. Mothers can be the most influential people on earth, for good or for bad. For real!

Who can understand and appreciate the intrinsic virtue and worth of their wife? Jesus can. He sees and appreciates our virtue, even when it is still in an embryonic seed form.

An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. (Proverbs 31:10)

There is a virtuous woman in the earth today, she is called the Bride of Christ. There are many voices criticizing her, tearing her down, due to the sad fact that so many only see through the lens of their natural eyes. Are their problems in the Church? Certainly, she is weak and broken, yet, in her brokenness, the Lord sees great virtue and worth in her. Beloved, Jesus, the God-Man wants us to know how He sees His Bride. As you have heard me state so many times, spiritual maturity equates walking in agreement with God (Amos 3:3)

Jesus cherishes His Bride, and isn't hesitant to affirm her, even while she is still in process in her journey to spiritual maturity. Why do you think that is? It is because, in the Kingdom, affirmation is based, not on where you are, but where you are going, and is the key to the empowerment that results in making her spotless and eventually filled with glory. Jesus understands, because He is the one who made us that way, that the power of cherishing is the most effective way to transform her. He wants husbands to imitate him in this.

Let's look at Ephesians 5:25-29 for a moment.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church (Ephesians 5:25-29).

We have been studying on Sunday nights, the Song of Solomon. The Song is one of the themes that Holy Spirit is emphasizing in this season of human history. It is the path toward Holy Passion. It is the Bridal paradigm of the Kingdom of God in concentrated form. Good stuff!

One of the major themes of the Song of Solomon is how much Jesus cherishes His Bride. And not just the fact that He cherishes her, but the method and the purpose behind why He cherishes her! Why? Because we need to know this! The Shulamite's journey is our journey! The Lord names us according to our budding virtues, even if they are just beginning to be seen in our heart (Song 4:1-5; Judges 6).

Jesus sees the cry or the longing in our spirit to be dedicated to Him, long before we are able to walk it out in a mature way. In the same way, we men must learn to rightly interpret and bless the budding virtues in their wives and children. The Lord taught me this, out of the Song of Solomon, and instructed me in the importance of looking at my beautiful wife Kaye, not through the lens of how she presently is, but through the lens of her potential, through the lens of what I know she will be – because that is how He deals with her, and me, and you!

Men, the Lord wants you to think about your wives in the way He thinks about His. Here's a golden nugget for you: Your bride is first and foremost His Bride – forever! Gentlemen, be careful how you treat God's wife! Get it? It would behoove us to seek the Lord to show us how He views our wife so that we can see the truth of the reality of who she is – in the light of eternity, not just in the light of today. Ask Him to open the eyes of your understanding so that you can see your wife's heart in the way that He sees it.

Men: you are to partner with Jesus in calling your wife forth into her eternal destiny! Get this; she is to hear the Lord's voice of honor and affirmation through YOUR lips. Get it? And this doesn't just apply to our wives either. We should express this same principle to our children and to our friends as well. This has been my goal and my battle plan for years. One of the things that people tell me that they see and appreciate about me the most is that I am an encouragement to them. This isn't by accident. Because I am a co-laborer with Him who is the great Encourager.

And so are you!

The way we encouragement others is to put courage into their heart by speaking the affirming truths that God has shown us about them. Here is an important point, it is not enough to just think affirming truths about them; we must speak the obvious because the Devil is working to obscure these truths, with the purpose to wear them down with accusation and condemnation so that they eventually give up. Anyone but me ever fell to that scheme?

But instead warn (admonish, urge, and encourage) one another EVERY DAY, as long as it is called Today, that none of you may be hardened [into settled rebellion] by the deceitfulness of sin [by the fraudulence, the stratagem, the trickery which the delusive glamour of his sin may play on him]. Hebrews 3:13 (AMP)

We serve those whom God has strategically placed in our lives by asking the Lord for His insight into how He feels towards them and what His destiny is for them. And then we tell them that constantly. And as a by-product, not only do they grow and blossom under this "ministry" but our love for them grows in the process as we tell them of their virtue and destiny.

And let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities, Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25 (AMP)

SOME PRACTICAL WAYS TO HONOR OUR WIFE:

WITH THE RESULT OF INCREASED POWER IN PRAYER

Let's look at 1 Peter 3:7.

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)

Jesus wants us men to understand the heart and destiny of his wife — her potential as a Daughter of Zion. But let me tell you up front, gaining this insight takes time and focus. And as men called to be watchmen on the wall, the importance of this cannot be over emphasized. Why? Because this majorly affects our prayer life. We must cultivate this, it is NOT an option, or just something that we try to fit in now and again. And let me warn you, guys, it does not come naturally.

When Kaye and I counsel men, women or couples, one of the things I almost always tell the men is this, "Almost everything you know to do "naturally" is wrong. Why? Because by nature, men are jerks!" Society, the flesh and the Devil, all work together in a negative symphony to get men to do what is the exact opposite of what women need to soar in God and in their destiny in God! Get it? We had better get it.

A woman is clothed with honor from God by her doing honorable acts and by her being honored by her husband and by her children. Men, do you clothe your wife with honor? People live more honorably, when they receive honor. Those who are "honor starved"; almost always, without fail, exhibit less honor in their lives. Honor causes our hearts to flourish in God.

She is clothed with strength and honor, and she can laugh at the time to come...her husband also praises her: (Proverbs 31:25, 28 NET)

Men, we are to take the leadership in our marriage — it is NOT an option. And it is also NOT by lording over our wives, like the macho demon tries to get you to do. IN the Kingdom you do not lead by "lording it over others";.

And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. BUT IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG YOU. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:42-45)

Men, you lead by being the first to humble ourselves in a conflict — even if you think you are right! Get it? My goal is to always put Kaye first, I don't do it perfectly, but that is my goal. When we go out to eat, I "want" to go where she wants to go. Get it? Not because I don't want something else, but because I am striving to serve her with all that I am, with all of my being.

I don't always tell her that. A good servant doesn't always tell the one he is serving how great a servant he is, now does he? The result is the revelation of the fact. Get it?

If we appeal to Scripture to demand that our wife submit to us (and you would not even believe how many times I have heard men use the Bible to "make" his wife submit to his carnal leadership), then we are operating in a wrong spirit.

I was talking with someone the other day about church leadership and what the Bible says about it. They had expressed that believers are to blindly submit to their leaders like mindless zombies. WRONG! Respect is never given, it is earned!

Has anyone ever told you that they respect you for something, for some positive quality you have demonstrated in your life? Let me ask you something. Did they respect you for a quality that you didn't have? I have people that I respect for their integrity, or their trustworthiness, or some other quality. Do you know why I respect them? Because over time, in every circumstance, they have demonstrated repeatedly that quality. To give respect and trust, without demonstratable cause is foolhardy.

A good leader in the home, in the church or in the marketplace will take initiative to humble himself in conflicts – with no regard to who is right. I always just say, “I'm wrong, I'm sorry, please forgive me, I love you.” I have nothing to prove, I live before an audience of one. Kaye has a saying, “It's not eternal.” What does that mean? If it won't matter 10 minutes after you die, then it isn't such a big deal now. Get it?

Leaders, lead by serving. I have worked for way to many leaders that aren't the first to repent, they demand that you repent. They aren't the first to change, they demand that you be the first to change. And if you don't, they throw you and your relationship and your ministry and your gifts right out the door. And that is just down right wrong. Leaders, when you are wrong, repent. When you are right, or feel you are right, repent. Don't tell me you are a leader, show me, I'm from Missouri. When people see that you are committed to serve them, do what is in the best interest for them, not what is good for you, then they will know you are a man or woman of God and they'll respect you. Get it? We lead by example.

Men, we lead our wives spiritually by our lifestyle choices that help cultivate our own personal passion for Jesus. One of the greatest gifts that you can ever give your wife and children is to cultivate a deep-seated spiritual depth in your life. Don't tell her you love her above others – show her. The best way you can show her that you love her above all others is by loving Jesus above her. Get it? When she sees you making Him the center, the priority in your life, she will trust you and follow you willingly. Get it?

HOMEWORK

Want some practical homework assignments? Well, you are going to get them anyway!

Make a commitment to your wife to not regularly relate to, or work with (if it is possible), another woman that she feels uncomfortable with for any reason (discernment or jealousy, etc.). Don't justify, don't argue, it's not about you, it's about her. Get it?

My friend, Guy Chevreau, told me a story, let me share it with you. He was pasturing a church and had a female associate that was good, I mean g-o-o-d! They were friends, they worked good together, etc. But one day, the thought occurred to him, that there was aspects in his relationship with her that had the potential of being a concern to his wife, Janice. Not that there was anything wrong, there wasn't. But Janice was first and he was committed to her being first. Ministry, or ministry skills didn't even come into his thoughts. He went in and let her go.

He said that things were rough, she was a good assistant and a good Christian. But Janice came first! His next assistant wasn't as good, wasn't as efficient, wasn't as close of a friend. But none of that mattered, he had done, not what was good for the church, or for himself, or for his assistant, he had did what was good for his wife, with no thoughts for the other dynamics. Now that is the type of leader that you can trust and you can follow.

Anyway, men, we serve and love our wife by verbalizing the budding virtues in her life that she often loses sight of. We regularly verbalize the value of her role in our life and the Kingdom by walking in the dignity, servant hood and daily routine of being a wife, mother and being a support to you.

We support her ministry assignments that she is involved with outside the home. We contend for her honor by teaching our children to honor her by their words and actions. Hear me, and hear me good! Kids come and kids go, but your wife is your first priority. Gentlemen, it is a father's responsibility to first-of-all contend for his wife's honor. He ensures that she does not need to strive to receive honor from her children. If your wife must raise her voice to make the children obey, then you are failing as a husband and as a father. Children honor their mother to the degree they see their fathers do it. And one of the key ways they see you honor her is when you absolutely require that they honor her. Get it?

Many men assume that they are already walking in most of these principles. Here is the litmus test. Occasionally ask your wife for honest input on how you can improve in these areas. Some couples have trouble talking about these issues. If that is the case, then let me suggest that you ask your wife to write down their thoughts or even to email you their thoughts.

If she says you need to work on any of these areas, DO NOT respond on how good you think you are doing. It is not about you, it is not about you, it is not about you. Get it! It is about her, her needs, and you representing the Lord Jesus in such a way that she blossoms into the woman of God she is destined to be, and that will only happen if you swallow your pride, lay down your thoughts of comfort and do what is best for her, by serving her needs.

My desire, is that it can be said of the men at the Atlanta South Metro House of prayer, that we rightly honor the women that God has entrusted to us. There is must debate about the growing feminist movement in our nation and even in many parts of the church. Well, I have news for you, the feminist movement isn't the problem, it's a response. It is a reaction to the failure of men (especially the men of God) to see and treat women in the way that God treats His Bride. They are fighting for their honor because men have failed to.

Men, let's make a quality decision, a quality decision is a decision from which there is no retreat, to demonstrate a commitment to be like the Lord Jesus. A commitment to love God above all, and to show it. Let your wife see that your don't put job, or sports, or anything else before your time with God. Then let her see that see comes way before anyone else, including the kids. Ask God to let you see what the potential in your wife is. Then pray that over her, then affirm that to her, and always treat her in the light of that, not in the light of where she is at the moment.