

# Life Lessons

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## Better Relationships: Conqueror and Helper

It is God's will for us to enjoy and have meaningful relationships in our lives. He made men and women uniquely (not better than each other). His purpose for us is to live in harmony and celebrate our differences. Regardless of our marital status, deep in our hearts we all long to be in a loving, accepting relationship. We're created to receive and give love. However, many of us struggle to build quality relationships. We lack understanding and practical tools. We frustrate ourselves and each other because we don't know how to understand our mate and be understood.

*You married men should live considerately with [your wives], with an intelligence recognition [of the marriage relation], honoring the woman as [physically] the weaker, but [realizing that you] are joint heirs of the grace (God's unmerited favor) of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered and cut off. – Otherwise you cannot pray effectively. I Peter 3:7 (AMP Version)*

*In like manner you married women, be submissive to your own husbands – subordinate yourselves as being secondary to and dependant on them, and adapt yourself to them. So that even if any do not obey the Word [of God], they may be won over not by discussion but by the [godly] lives of their wives, when they observe the pure and modest way in which you conduct yourselves, together with your reverence [for your husband. That is, you are to feel for him all that reverence includes] – to respect, defer to, revere him; [revere means] to honor, esteem (appreciate, prize), and [in human sense] adore him; [and adore means] to admire, praise, be devoted to, deeply love and enjoy [your husband]. I Peter 3:1-2 (AMP Version)*

**Men enjoy independence.** A man's sense of self-worth is determined when he "feels" in-charge. When God made man, He gave him a task (taking care of the garden). He feels better about himself when he is free to do things and handle problems on his own. This is why men are often resistant to their spouse trying to change them. The more the wife tries to "improve" him, the more he tries to resist her. It makes the man feel like his partner doesn't trust his

ability to deal with life. He resists her input and she persists in trying to be a helper by making him the "target."

**What she can do:** Give him the "gift" of freedom. Stop trying to change him. Don't give advice unless asked for. You're trying to improve him but he feels controlled. Share your feelings calmly with him about the areas you'd like to see him change. The greatest "weapon" you have in your hands is prayer! You'll accomplish more talking to God about your husband than talking to him for a lifetime. Be assured, God answers prayer and your husband has no way out of His hands!

**Women like to share.** A woman is fulfilled when she can talk freely, express her feelings, supported and validated (approval for the way she feels). When God made Eve, He gave her a relationship (to improving Adam)! Helping and nurturing comes naturally for her. She longs to get closer to her mate. Feeling number one in his life is of high priority to her. She enjoys the spirit of mutual sharing to feel secure and close to the relationship. To belong and assist someone else brings her fulfillment.

**What he can do:** Give her the "gift" of your listening ears. Be generous to invest your time on her. Allow her to share her feelings without criticizing or interrupting. Learn to listen to her sharing without taking it personal or thinking she's "blaming" you for her frustrations. She is not; even if you feel like it! Do not try to "fix" her problems when she opens up to tell you how she feels. (Boy! Have I made some mistakes in this area? I did that again just this week!) Just listen with patience and empathy! Express genuine interest and care about her feelings.

**A husband can make his wife feel important by listening to her and asking her input in the decision making process. A wife can make her husband feel confident by giving him freedom and not making him the target of her home improvement project.**