

Leaving the Contentious Woman Behind

- ❖ It is your duty to love your husband and to respect him. Treating a man like a child by nagging and pushing will challenge his brain-wired need for independence. He will react all right.....by ignoring you.
- ❖ Learn to praise your husband, in clear, natural, authentic words, when he engages in a behavior or practice that you desire. He will feel validated and respond, in time, by repeating that behavior. That includes.....spending time with the children, dealing with your family, or even in the bedroom.
- ❖ This is a tough one. Once is enough. Ask your husband once. Remind your husband once. Mention it, whatever it is, one time. Then allow him the freedom to do it when and how he chooses. Resist the urge to do it yourself, unless life or limb are in danger. Then wait. Close your eyes if you have to, and wait.
- ❖ Show respect for your husband by listening to him, even if he is not making sense. Do not blurt into conversations to correct him, nor interject when he is dealing with your children. It is rude. It is wrong. It is also the quickest way to destroy communication, period. Research shows that men's brains simply do not process language as quickly as women do. His silence may not be a punishment; it may be a process. Let the process work.
- ❖ Practice looking for the good in your husband. Focus on three good qualities that he has. Tell him about those good qualities. Tell others about those qualities. Thank God for those qualities. Soon, the negative qualities will seem far less visible and you will wonder why they ever mattered so much. So many womenmarried 15-25 years have told me....."I can't believe we used to argue about X....it really wasn't important." These women had learned to look for the good in their husbands.
- ❖ Guard your sharp tongue. Accusations back men into a corner. The male animal will choose flight, rather than fight. He knows that he cannot win in a verbal engagement with you. You talk faster, better, and you have an amazing ability to recall every low down, sorry, nasty thing he ever did.....Also, guard your sharp tongue with other people. Stop and think before you speak. Adopt the wisdom of my friend who, instead of saying something hard and mean will simply state: "I cannot respond in a way that would edify or build up that person right now."
- ❖ Praise God for the fact that an unbelieving or backslidden husband is sanctified by your belief. 1Cor. 7:13 reminds us: "For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband?" He will provide the way. He doesn't need our trickery or whining to accomplish this. He demands only our obedience. On this same line, I caution you

against diluting the sanctity of your marriage in any way by virtue of the fact that your husband is not a believer or church-goer. Your marriage is sanctified by God, not by you or by your image in the community. Your marriage is just as holy and sanctified as any other. Treat it that way.

- ❖ Intimacy, in the form of touching, sexual expression, and gentle words is a form of healing. It is a message...."I accept you as you are." Scripture is clear that we are not to withhold ourselves in marriage. It is because God, who created intimacy and everything else ...knew that we needed this form of love in order to stay close....literally and figuratively. Dr. Gary Chapman, writing in *The Five Languages of Love*, details the deep, cognitive and physical need that men have for physical intimacy. You already recognize the power that you have in physical intimacy. Do not be tempted to abuse that power.
- ❖ Every day, imagine yourself as the Proverbs 31 Woman. "Strength and dignity will be her clothing." Stand up straighter. Look people in the eye. Maintain your dignity. God has given you all the resources you need to maintain your dignity in all situations.
- ❖ Remember to fear God, in a holy and righteous way. Somehow, we have gotten to the place where we think that if our sin isn't egregious, sexual, violent, or involves breaking one of the 10 commandments, it isn't something that God notices. I don't think so. He notices. Fear Him when you decide to fight over a decision at home just to get your point. Fear Him when you belittle a co-worker, a younger woman under your direction, or a child. Fear Him when you engage in bitter gossip. And I take this last thought from my Role Model, Elizabeth Elliot, who recently said on her radio program, "Gateway to Joy", that the real problem with an overly aggressive woman is not her pushy ways and language, but the way that she pushes God out of the way. No one else can hear Him if you are too loud, nor feel His sweet presences when you are so angry, nor see His powerful actions when you are in the way. God made you to be strong and courageous, not weak and wimpy. But so often, strengths become weaknesses when they are abused.
- ❖ Treat every encounter with your husband as if it might be your last. I am cognizant of the fact that time is fleeting. Every minute counts. Your reaction to your husband makes a difference. Writing in the *Total Woman*, which by the way sold a couple of hundred thousand copies, Marabel Morgan cites research into early morning airplane crashes with test pilots, and notes that when the pilots left home angry and anxious, their judgment was severely impaired. Your husband may act like he could care less....but that's not the case. Scripture cautions us not to let the sun set on our anger. Extrapolate that wisdom to this: Don't leave home in anger....

