

CSL's Marriage Observations and Advice

This is a miscellaneous catch-all collection of past posts from my blog that don't fit into neat categories. In essence, they are observations and advice for husbands and wives that aren't so much meant for correction, but for clarification. All too often, we get locked into seeing things through our own lenses that we forget that our spouses might have different perspectives. It's not that they are in the wrong, but that they are male/female or have different ways of approaching situations that arise.

In this .pdf, I have collected the posts of three different series and one stand-alone post that weren't dealing with great matters of marriage, but were observations about how we can make relationships less abrasive. These posts were less about the *Sturm und Drang* of life than about the lubrication that makes the cogs in relationship machinery run smoother.

Ch. 1 - 7: *Hard Things To Hear* - a series that I wrote with short bits of advice for husbands and wives.

Ch. 8 & 9: *Please Lead (But Do It My Way)*- This was directed at wives who insisted that their husbands be spiritual leaders in their homes, but then proceeded to emasculate them if they tried.

Ch. 10-13: *Christian Go-to Marital Tools* - in this series, I dealt with the standard weak-knee'd approaches that good christian husbands and wives use to address matters in their marriages, and demonstrated why I think that these approved "Christian" approaches were more than unhelpful.

Ch. 14: *Another Nothing Box* - In which I tell of an unexpected revelation about wives and sexuality!

As always, here's hoping that these help you in your marriages.

And as always, my disclaimer:

Disclaimer: I am not a counselor, doctor, or pastor. For that matter, Wife says I don't play well with others. My advice and comments come from my concern for hurting Christian husbands and wives. Someone once said to me, "Church shouldn't hurt", and I believe the same thing goes for marriage. I'm going to call 'em as I see 'em, but please, don't take my word as gospel. Yes, read what I say, pray about what I say, but do your own "due diligence."

Chapter 1:

Hard Things To Hear: It's a Clean Thing

In John 6:60, some objected to what Jesus was saying: "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?". While I'm not Jesus, there are some who will attest that I provoke the same reaction. Might be what I'm saying, but it's possible it might be my manner. Be that as it may, I'm going to pull rank and lay some things on the line in the next few chapters. I'm going to present some things that might be hard to hear, but trust me; this is nearly 50 years of marriage coming at ya!

Say Hello To My Little Friend

Guys, this post is directed at you. Let me introduce you to...



I know that we like to be “Manly Men”, and our man-culture tells us that sweaty and dirty is butch, er, manly. My question to you husbands is this: who are you wanting to sleep with, your buds in the mud or your wife? Guess what, guys? While there may be outliers on the Smell Scale, most women are not into sweat and dirt. How do I know? Easy - check their kitchens, bathrooms and boudoirs.

In the kitchen, you won't find your wife running around saying, “A place for everything and where in Hades did I put it?” In the bathroom, how many soaps, shampoos, washes and lotions do you find on the counters and in the cabinets? In the bedroom, can you even begin to number the perfumes, colognes, sachets and scented candles?

Personal example: for years, my concern about being spiffy was only when I left the house in the morning, heading for work--was I fresh and sparkling clean for my co-workers and students? But for my wife, when I got home? Eh, not so much. It took me years, and a hard conversation or two, to realize that after a day's work, maybe I wasn't so fresh.

It's a Jungle Down There!

Guys, look at the geography of the situation: two land masses join the mainland right at Happy Town. The body is designed to keep Camp Crotch warm, in order to protect our swimmers. It gets hot and sweaty down there, and the conditions can get rather rank. In other words, guys, many of us rot fast. To make matters worse, God has given our wives much more acute olfactory abilities, and many of them can smell us coming a mile off. So here it is, in plain English, guys: get spiffy for the girl. Wash up and slosh on a little English Leather or something, to keep from stinking up the joint. Make the girl happy. Addendum: I just read this to Wife (she of the nearly 50 years), and she said to tell you guys this: “She might not tell you, but believe me, she knows!”

CSL

Chapter #2: Hard Things To Hear: It's a Clear Thing

Wives, this one's to you.

How many of you have the last name "Kreskin"? No one? Okay, then why would you think that you married The Great Kreskin? Prof. Henry Higgins, in *My Fair Lady*, had it right about men: "By and large, we are a marvelous sex!" That's why you married us; we are that good! But we do have one failing: we aren't psychic!! We don't come equipped with one of these:



Bewitched, Bothered and Bemildred *

For someone who likes to write, I can be remarkably terse in real life. I have been known to point if that answers a question, so I get the fact that non-verbal communication is still communication. But when a poor sod reaches the point where he is having to resort to antennae and divining rods to try to find a clue about you, he's not growing in marriage, he's just flat-out bewildered.

Will Rogers is supposed to have said, "There are two theories for arguing with a woman; neither work." Well, years ago, Wife and I attended a week-long Christian seminar, and one of the sessions was on husbands learning to understand their wives. The presenter gave one illustration that made me believe that Will Rogers was a genius!

According to the presenter, a wife expressed a 'hurt' to her husband: "I'm hurt when you don't pay attention to me in public." He took this to heart and began to do so, but then her reaction was "I don't want you to pay attention to me in public." "Oh, I guess I misunderstood," the poor guy thought, and so backed off. Only to hear, some time later, "I wish you would pay attention to me in public." Wondering what he was hearing, he again started to do what he thought she wanted, and got this: "I don't expect you to pay attention to me in public." **

At that moment, in that session, in that seminar, I closed my workbook, shook my head and said to Wife, "I can't win, can I?"

Use Your Words

But I was wrong. In reading around the blogosphere, I've learned that people are starting to realize that men aren't clairvoyant. One of the most popular bits that Johnny Carson used to do was his Great Carnac. We husbands can only hope to do a decent

Carnac for our wives. There is nothing that we possess that makes us great diviners of the depths of the feminine heart. There is only communication.

What it comes down to is this: if you need something from your husband, or if you want something from your husband, speak up! While Hangman is a fun game to pass the time, having to guess letters in a word, feeling like your marriage is a game of Hangman with your head in the noose while you try to divine the correct answers in your marriage is no fun. As the old folk song says, "Hangman, slack your rope." Instead, give him a clue!

CSL

* Bewitched, Bothered and Bemildred were the names of the three hobo bats in the Pogo cartoon strip. Given that sometimes we husbands can feel that we've gone batty, I thought this an appropriate subheading :)

** Interpretation of statements:

1. "I'm hurt when you don't pay attention to me in public." = "I want you to love me."
2. "I don't want you to pay attention to me in public." = "Don't embarrass me."
3. "I wish you would pay attention to me in public." = "I want others to know you love me."
4. "I don't expect you to pay attention to me in public." = "I want you to want to."

Chapter 3: Hard Things To Hear: It's A Man Thing

Okay, here is where I'm probably going to lose my Mr. Nice Curmudgeon image, because I'm going to address a problem that I am reading about, and that is boys pretending to be men. I can't count the number of times I've read of wives –

>>wives!<<

MARRIED, get that, guys?

– who tell of husbands that spend their time away from work either playing video games or off with their buds seeking some adrenaline rush from their latest exploits.

I'm sorry to have to tell you this, wives, but you didn't marry a man; you married a boy. He needs to go back home to his Mama and ripen. In case I'm not being clear enough, these babies need to...

GROW UP!

For these clowns playing at marriage, I've got one verse from the Bible that they need to read and heed:

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. (1 Cor. 13:11)

Unfortunately, due to the clueless nature of our society, we've extended adolescence to the late 20s. We have created a generation of Peter Pans who tell us that they don't want to grow up, and marriages are suffering for it. Oh, as adolescents, they are horny, and if they're good "Christians", they know that they have to get married, and so they look around and find a good Christian girl to become their legal "friends with benefits".

This means that, in their eyes, they are now grown-ups; after all, they're married now and having sex. Unfortunately, in the eyes of society, they are also seen as grown-ups, and not as the immature boys that they are. They haven't accepted real responsibilities of manhood, such as building a life and preparing for the future. Instead, they find ways to obtain bigger, more expensive toys, whether it be primo gaming gear, bigger bikes or boats or 'boards. To these boys, marriage is great because they can live free from Mom and Dad telling them what to do, and they have a sex partner who also cooks and cleans like their moms did. Life is good!

Boys Play, Men Serve

Guys, it comes down to this. When you got married, you didn't acquire an accommodating French maid, you entered into a contract/covenant, a mutual relationship with a wife. You owe her your entire self, as that is what your marriage contract entails. You promised to love, cherish, and provide as a husband. So begin to do so.

Marriage entails responsibility. It means that you accept the role of husband. If you aren't willing to do that, all you are doing is playing house.

Now, I'll admit I'm a throwback, but I'm going to give you my mindset, and the analogy that I use is that of a rocket launch site. Think back to every video of a rocket or shuttle launch that you ever watched. Of course, there was the rocket, right, standing erect on the launchpad? And, of course, next to it was the supporting gantry, the framework that provided connection and support to the rocket as it stood on end awaiting launch. Those are the only two components in the launch, right?



Wrong! There is the launching pad, itself, which is the ground that gives support to both the gantry and shuttle.

In my mind, the husband is like the launching pad. In my allegory, the wife is the gantry, with the connection to the rocket. Archetypically speaking, it is usually the mother that is the more nurturing partner in a marriage, but she needs the support of her husband as she fulfills her role in the marriage. Husbands, you are the support, the base upon which your wife will find her place to stand in this world. It's your task to provide a wideness for her to nurture her abilities and help her discover how to use them to serve your family and friends, church and community.

It is the role, the task, of the husband to be the grounding for the wife and family, to be the support for those under your care. And mark what I say, God sees that they are under your care. You are going to be accountable to God for them.

CSL

Chapter #4

Hard Things To Hear: It's a Woman Thing

In preparing this post, I thought that I would be able to turn the previous post around and apply it to women, saying, “Put down the electronics, log off of Facebook, and engage with the hubs”, but that didn't work. While Wife and I have had a real-life example of that very thing occur very close to home, it just didn't ring true. Why? Because the truth is that wives, for the most part, WANT to engage with their husbands, so telling them to “grow up and take the marriage relationship seriously” just doesn't seem to be all that useful.

But the more I cogitated on a female cognate for “It's a Man Thing”, a truism of marriage came to my mind, and the more I thought about it, the more it seemed to me to be accurate. The truism, which I'm sure we can all pretty much recite together, is “A man marries a woman hoping she will never change; a woman marries a man hoping he will.” And I think that, like many truisms, there's more than a grain of truth in it. So if I'm going to say to husbands, “Grow up!”, I think that what I should tell wives is that...

You Married A Man, Not a Fixer-Upper!

Please pay attention to this next line, because it contains a secret that is, apparently, not widely known in today's society. Ready? Here it is:
by God's design,...

MEN ARE DIFFERENT FROM WOMEN.

Not defective, just different.

If one accepts the common stereotypical portrait of men, you come up with the following categories and descriptors of masculinity:

- Physical: bigger, stronger, hairier.
- Social: more ambitious, more adventurous, more competitive.
- Relational: less communicative, more confident, cerebral (as opposed to intuitive).
- Emotional: less emotional, more independent, less empathetic, more sexually aggressive.

On the surface, these seem to be accurate descriptors. However, a problem arises when accurate descriptors are seen not as traits, but as symptoms of defectiveness and need of correction. Prof. Henry Higgins asked “Why can't a woman be more like a man?” Our society has posited, “Why can't a man be more like a woman?”, and proceeded to try to bend the gender.

If you think I'm off-base with this, I'll have to point out to you that it's not just me saying this. Of course, there's the go-to author on this topic, scholar and feminist Dr. Christine Hoff Sommers, and her seminal work, *The War Against Boys*. An even more surprising advocate of this premise is lesbian writer and iconoclast, Camille Paglia. In an article from a few years back, Paglia presented the case that our culture is emasculating itself into oblivion. This is the first paragraph:

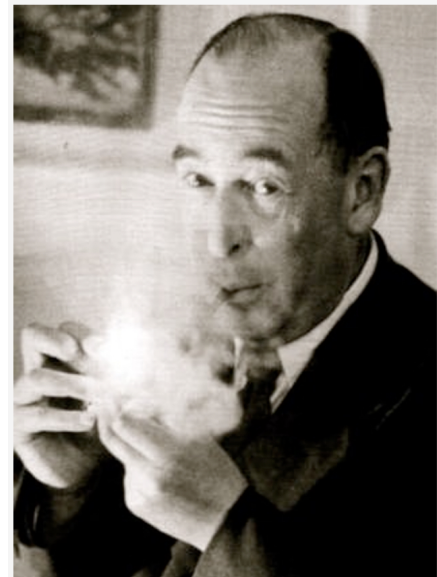
'What you're seeing is how a civilization commits suicide,' says Camille Paglia. This self-described "notorious Amazon feminist" isn't telling anyone to Lean In or asking Why Women Still Can't Have It All. No, her indictment may be as surprising as it is wide-ranging: The military is out of fashion, Americans undervalue manual labor, schools neuter male students, opinion makers deny the biological differences between men and women, and sexiness is dead.

It's pretty much a given that our society is waging war on men; Christian wives shouldn't be buying into the world's lies. They need to realize that husbands are no more a DIY project than wives are.

There's Only One God, and You're Not Him

Years ago, when I was a new Christian, the people who were discipling me, while well-intentioned, tried to play Holy Spirit for me. I had grown up with a love for the smell of pipe smoke; one cherry-flavored blend was particularly wonderful, and so when I left home and joined the Navy, I bought a pipe and took to smoking Captain Black Cherry pipe tobacco.

A couple of years later, when I became a Christian, these nice people told me "Christians don't smoke," and since they told me that, I said, "Oh, I guess I'd better not smoke, then." Fast-forward about five years to when I'm out of the Navy, going to college, and working part-time in a Christian bookstore. One day, I'm opening boxes of new stock and find that we've just received a new edition of a book by that great Christian writer, C. S. Lewis. Imagine my shock when I opened up the cover and found this on the inside of the dust jacket:



They Lied To Me!

Those well-meaning Christians, eager to set me straight, didn't give the Holy Spirit room to work on me, but decided to help God out. They had a new Christian on their hands, and so began to do renovation work for the Holy Spirit.

Wives, when you got married, God didn't give you a fixer-upper. He didn't say, "Hon, here's your DIY project. I'll check back with you in forty years to see how you're getting on." In a post on my blog, I said that due to The Fall, no one comes into a marriage as a whole person. Yes, marriage changes people. It changes men and it changes women. However, this change has to come about "organically", as a part of growth, not as part of a Hubs Home Improvement Project.

And that's the key word, isn't it--growth. In my previous post, I told husbands "Grow up and become a man!" In this post, I'm saying to wives, "Grow up and accept your man as a man!"

CSL

Note: Wives, two later chapters, ch. 8-9, go along with this post, dealing with wanting your husband to be the spiritual leader.

Links:

Christine Hoff Sommers, The War Against Boys: https://www.amazon.com/War-Against-Boys-Misguided-Policies/dp/1501125427/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=the+war+on+boys&qid=1596914861&sr=8-2

Camilla Paglia interview: <https://www.theaquilareport.com/camille-paglia-a-feminist-defense-of-masculine-virtues/>

Chapter #5: Hard Things To Hear: It's Not About You, Dude!

In this chapter, we are going to get down and dirty; we are going to talk about where the rubber meets the, uh, uh ... (sorry 'bout that). Guys, just because you have a dick doesn't mean you have to be one, got it? (Wife will ream me for that line.) Guys, now that the women have all fainted, let's talk. There is a famous line that says that a woman needs romance for sex, whereas all a man needs is friction. So, guys, you need to realize that just because you can have sex with a greased knothole, that doesn't mean your wife can get turned on at the drop of your drawers.

Read Up, Fella!

I realize that for many guys, the locker room is the only sex education they've ever gotten. If that's the source, of your sexual knowledge, then there's not a snowball's chance in Hades that you picked up anything useful there. Listening to all those other guys trot out fictitious encounters isn't going to prepare you for making love to a wife. Did you see that last line? Read it again, and let it sink in.

"Make love to a wife."

There is a boatload of difference between shagging a knothole and making love to your wife. Making love is not about you and your jollies! If you are a real man, you didn't get married just to get your rocks off. If that's your interest, do your wife a favor: tell her the truth and take a hike.

Your wife deserves a man who wants to make love to her, and is willing to learn and take the time to do so. And that doesn't mean waving your magic penis about and expecting her to get thrilled. First off, just in case you haven't done any reading, or learned anything about your wife's sexual needs, let's start with some basic facts.

- Fully 40% of women cannot orgasm from penile intercourse. No matter how Fast and Furious you try to rev your engines, she just can't. So get over yourself.
- A safe bet is to multiply by a factor of 10 the time it takes you to orgasm, and you'll be in the ballpark for about how long it will take your wife to orgasm, to go from "Oh, hi" to "Wow". You can go from start to finish in two minutes? She's not even out of the starting gate, guy. Not even close.
- Men – you think about sex and Mr. Happy salutes. Women think about sex, and it's "Really? Now?" The truth is that, for most women, desire for sex doesn't happen until after they are aroused. We desire, and it's instant arousal. Women, not so much. The upshot is that you are going to have to help your wife become aroused.

As I've said in my About Page on my blog, I'm writing from a Christian perspective, and I have no illusions about trying to address non-Christians. So, to any Christian husbands out there who have stumbled upon my blog, I've got a Bible verse for you:

The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. (1 Cor. 7:3)

Did you get that? If you think it's right and proper for your wife to jolly you, then by Billy Bedamned Hangtree, it's right and proper for you to give your wife her jollies. And if you try to weasel out by saying, "It takes too long" or "It's too hard", then don't expect her to give you a good time. Paul is mutual, here, guys; what's good for the goose is good for the gander, and goose or gander, you'd better be up for this task in marriage.

A Short Curriculum For the Clueless

I'm going to be charitable here. I'm going to assume that those of you who aren't doing right by your wife are just clueless, that everything you know about sex you picked up in the locker room, like most of the guys who go through public schools (or Christian schools, for that matter.) I have some resources for you that you'd do well to read and heed. (I'm not called The Librarian, for nothing.) These websites, linked below, if you read and absorb and practice with your wife, will help you become the lover your wife deserves.

First, read the Wikipedia article on the *Clitoris*. (You don't know how tempted I was to lead into this one with "Say Hello To My Little Friend", but I used that one before). Blow up the illustration that accompanies the article and you will see that the structure of the clitoris is actually quite a lot bigger than the pea-sized organ that can be seen.

Next, read *Rubbing vs. Feeling* on the *Awaken Love* website learn what to do with the clitoris. In fact, start reading everything this woman has written on her blog. Just click on the BLOG tab and start exploring. Your wife will thank you for it.

Third, for those of you who don't get the vapors at the drop of a hat, you can learn the techniques for arousal at *Give Her An Orgasm*. Using QuickTime videos and a rubber/plastic model, it demonstrates techniques to use to help your wife. The site has an up-front warning that you need to understand:

The videos are free, do not include nudity, but do include the use of realistically shaped models to demonstrate the techniques.

So if you get the vapors easily, don't watch the videos. Everyone else, learn to help your wife become aroused.

Personal Experience

Years ago, when Wife and I entered into marriage, I had somehow picked up on the fact that sex was supposed to be enjoyable for both the husband and wife, and so was desirous that Wife enjoy love-making, too. We were married in July, and for two

months, I would ask her if she had orgasmed, and she would tell me, “It was enjoyable; it felt good.”

After a couple of months, I wasn’t satisfied that I had brought her to an orgasm, and so one September afternoon, I took Wife to bed, not for sex, but for helping her explore her response to stimulation. After about 20-25 minutes of making out and manual stimulation, Wife experienced her first orgasm; a body-shuddering, toe-curling, moaning-and-gasping experience that left us no doubt. There were no “maybes”, no hesitant “felt goods”; she knew what orgasm was, now. We haven’t looked back.

Wife will tell you that in our love-making, her orgasm was paramount. “Ladies first”, as the old saying goes. Rick Warren starts off his book, *The Purpose-Filled Life* this way: “It’s not about you.” Men (that leaves out you boys!), the purpose-driven sexlife isn’t about you, either. It’s about the both of you. Now get out there and do it right.

CSL

Links:

Clitoris article: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clitoris>

Rubbing vs. Feeling: <https://www.awaken-love.net/2017/08/17/manual-stimulation-for-your-wife/>

Give Her An Orgasm: <http://giveheranorgasm.com/index.html>

Chapter 6: Hard Things to Hear: Lady, It's Not About You!

In the last chapter, I laid into clueless, selfish husbands who refuse to learn how to be lovers to their wives. I have read so many anti-testimonies from wives whose husbands have been clueless gits and treated sex as if it was simply a guy thing. (You have no idea how good it felt to say some of the things I said in that chapter.) Unfortunately, too many guys get their ideas about sex from other bell-ends like themselves, and so know nothing about their obligations in marriage.

“Is There Not A Clue”?

So, for this post, I turn my focus on wives. I'm going to be as charitable toward wives as I was to the husbands, and assume that most wives are not intentionally mean and cruel, but are, like the husbands I chewed out in the last post, merely clueless.

Clueless? About what?

About just how important sex is to most men. For some reason, wives can downplay the importance of sex as an expression of love. I can't begin to tell you how often I have read statements demonstrating that wives don't get what the deal is with their husbands and sex. “After all, it's just sex, right?”

Wives, let me ask you something, seriously, not Curmudgeonly. If you are a Christian, do you believe the Bible when it says that God created man and woman, made them male and female? If so, do you believe that you know better than God about how men work, how the male body and mind function? Do you believe that God needs to consult you about re-formatting men so that testosterone is deleted from their systems?

Another serious question – did God make a mistake in giving your husband his libido, his sex drive? If you are a Christian, and you are a wife, might it not be incumbent upon you to accept the idea that, maybe—just maybe—there is nothing wrong with your husband's desire to have sex with you, his wife? Or do you feel that your husband is your mission field, and that it is your life's work to destroy that demon of lust in that less-than-Christian husband that God made?

Here It Is, At Last! A Clue!

This clue is not found in the Bible, nor does it come from some great Christian writer. This quote is from a woman who is not a Christian, but gleaned her knowledge by careful observation. For those of you who think that there is something wrong with your husbands, please read this carefully, and think upon on the ramifications it has for your marriage:

Women will try to do a lot of other things to ADD UP TO what sex provides for a man. But she doesn't know that all of these things will NEVER add up to what sex provides for a man. ~ Alison Armstrong

Is this you? You believe your husband knows he is loved because

- you have his children,
- you clean the house,
- you do the laundry,
- you do the cooking,
- you do the shopping,

But you don't do HIM. So he knows he's loved.... how?

Her Report Card			His Report Card		
	Subject/Activity	Grade		Subject/Activity	Grade
1	Housekeeping	A	1	Housekeeping	A
2	Mothering	A	2	Mothering	A
3	Cooking	A	3	Cooking	A
4	Appearance	A	4	Appearance	A
5	Sex	F	5	Sex	F
	Final Marriage Average	C		Final Marriage Average	F

You are a marvelous wife. You're a Prov. 31 wife. But are you telling your husband that you love him, or that you really don't think much about him at all? Chris Taylor, over at *Forgiven Wife*, has assembled a collection of anti-testimonies by hurting husbands:

~ The woman I married is one of the finest women around. Anyone would be lucky to have her for a friend. But you would be as lonely as me if she were your lover.

~ What is so wrong with me that my wife, who married me, doesn't want me? How do I go out into my profession and interact with people I don't know and expect them not to reject me?

~ Refusal tells me that not only am I unloved, but that I am worthless.

~ There's nothing worse than lying in bed while your listening to your spouse sleep and breath while you're awake and the mind is racing and you're praying to God, "Please just end this already. I just can't take it anymore!"

As I sit here writing this, an obscure quote just popped into my head. I am a chess player, a life member of the U. S. Chess Federation, and having played in both postal

and over-the-board tourneys, I know chess and chess players. Reading the quotes on *Forgiven Wife's* page reminded of something that Bobby Fischer, the greatest chess champion ever, once said. When asked what his favorite part of chess was, he responded,

"I like the moment when I break a man's ego."

Can you read those anti-testimonies on that page and see that everyone of those writers has been Bobby Fischer-ed by his wife?

A Way Out? Up? Back? (Your choice)

As I said above, I'm going to assume that many wives are just clueless, and not ego-crushing Bobby Fischers in drag. If you find yourself realizing that your husband could have written one of those anti-testimonies, you might be asking yourself, "Can anything be done to fix this, to heal the wounds I've inflicted?" Thankfully, the answer is "Yes!"

A few years back, a pastor's wife wrote a message on a marriage forum telling how she realized that, for nearly 20 years, she had damaged her marriage and her husband through sexual throttling. She decided, on the spot, that she would turn it around, and began posting monthly updates in order to have a body of mentors who would keep her feet to the fire, so to speak. Her one-month post (just one month after her decision!) was a list of changes that her marriage experienced due to her decision to not refuse sex with her husband. Wives, please read these three entries from that post (presented with her permission, btw):

7. We are much more physical during the day with holding hands, hugs, kisses, back rubs, etc. I no longer have to worry about that my "actions" will lead him to thinking about sex, it is already a given.

8. There's a lot less tension, arguing or snapping at each other.

13. We have laughed together a lot more. We've had several times where we both have had that belly achin', cheek achin' laugh. That has been a rarity in our marriage.

So, it can be done. The testimony of many wives tells you that it can be done. So how? On my blog, I list several blogs written by Christian wives who write about marriage and sexuality. Here are a few of them:

The Forgiven Wife ~ Chris Taylor's blog has the tagline, "Learning To Dance With Desire", and this is the quick "about" on her page: "The mission of *The Forgiven Wife* is to encourage Christian wives as they break away from sexual withholding and gate-keeping. After 20 years of restricting the sex life in my marriage, I have learned to dance with desire and enjoy the full intimacy that comes with passionate and joyful sex with my husband."

Bonny's Oysterbed ~ Bonny's mission is "Encouraging the low-libido wife through a Christian lens". Some years ago, Bonny decided to write one post a week on helping wives to deal with low libido, and those posts have now been gathered into a book, *Unlock Your Libido*.

Hot, Holy and Humorous ~ J. Parker deals with all things "christian marriage" and with a sense of humor that would get her thrown off of many a deacon board.

The XY Code ~ This is written by a man, who explains men to women. Trust me, ladies; your husbands are every bit as complex as you are. And should you think that this entire post is off the beam, that what I say doesn't apply to your husband, I challenge you to read Paul Byerly's past posts to check up on me. See just how far off I am.

Sex Chat 4 Christian Wives - a podcast hosted by Chris Taylor, Bonny Burns and J. Parker (the three women above, plus Gayle Christmus, of *Calm. Healthy. Sexy.*) This one is so good that I have seen non-christians recommend it.

A Personal Word

Several years ago, after our "Come To Jesus" meeting, Wife read Dr. Laura's *Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands*. She told me that even though we had been married 40 years, she hadn't realized just how important, how necessary, sex is to husbands, as an expression of love. She told me that she had, like so many wives (maybe even you?), just viewed sex as something physical, often fun. But love? No way!

Wives, read. Just as I told husbands to read and learn to be lovers to their wives, I'm going to tell you to do the same thing. Read those anti-testimonies on the Forgiven Wife blog, and then look for resources to help you learn to be a lover to your husband.

CSL

(btw, if you feel the need to tell me just how badly I beat up on wives, don't. I read this post/chapter to Wife and she said that I was a whole lot easier on wives than I was on husbands. I answer to a Higher Power, She Who Must Be Obeyed.)

Links:

Chris Taylor, *Your Husband's Hurt*: <http://forgivenwife.com/new-to-this-blog-start-here/understanding-your-husbands-hurt/>

Dr. Laura Schlessinger, *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands*: http://www.amazon.com/Proper-Care-Feeding-Husbands/dp/0060520620/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1425939628&sr=1-1&keywords=proper+care+and+feeding+of+husbands

Chapter #7: Hard Things To Hear: The End of the Matter

Hopefully, this concluding chapter for the *Hard Things To Hear* series won't be that hard to hear, as I've pretty much done my ranting in the previous chapters. To summarize:

- In *Hard Things #5*, I told the husbands, "It's Not About You, Dude!"
- In *Hard Things #6*, I told the wives, "Lady, It's Not About You!"

"Well, then," someone might respond, "who is it about, then?" If I were a truly Spiritual Christian Blogger, I would cast my eyes toward Heaven and piously intone, "It's about God."

Yeah, well, mebbe I'm just not that spiritual. This series has been a rant about husbands and wives growing up into marriage, and being lovers, as God intended. And just in case the penny hasn't dropped, I've been coming down heavily on the "Lovers" part of the bargain. So the answer is

It's not about him or her, it's about y'all!

Maybe the problem is that we are so individualistic, that we are fixated on our rights and desires. Maybe our churches and Christian media have dropped the ball in conveying the message that in love, we are to prefer another over ourselves (Rom. 12:10). Whatever the root problem is, it seems that many have gotten the idea that each has his/her marriage, each has his/her sex life and that each has his/her relationship with God.

We subscribe Netflix, and the other night, we watched an old movie that we hadn't seen in decades, *A Man Called Peter*, the life of Peter Marshall. Made in a time when being a Christian was not a shame in Hollywood, there were several scenes of Marshall preaching. One of the sermons in the movie was on marriage, and this quote from the movie speaks to the failing of Christian teaching on marriage today:

Marriage is not a union of two sovereign states.... It's the fusion of two hearts, the coming together of two tributaries, which, after being joined in marriage, will flow in the same channel and in the same direction, carrying the same burdens of responsibility and obligation.

~ purportedly, a Peter Marshall sermon, *A Man Called Peter*.

No Longer Sovereign

A single man or woman is just this: sovereign. As a single adult, I am able to make decisions about my life on my own, with or without advice from others. It's my decision, and mine alone!! I'm free to choose whether to become a scholar, a salesman, a sailor, or

a sot. How I choose to live my life is my decision, and as long as I hurt no one by breaking any laws, I can go about living my life as I choose without regard for others.

Marshall's imagery of two rivers converging is apropos. At Pittsburgh, the Monongahela River, flowing from the south and the Allegheny River, from the north, meet. Where these two rivers join, the Ohio River is formed, and flows to the west. You can't take buckets of water from the Ohio and try to parse it out, saying, "This bucket is from the Monongahela, this from the Allegheny." The two rivers are joined, flowing in one direction. When a couple are married, they are joined, and should be flowing in the same direction, as well.

When a couple marry, each is promising to the other that his/her sovereignty is now going to be subsumed into the life of the marriage. The word that should jump out at you, from Marshall's paragraph, is responsibility. As a single person, I am not responsible to anyone or for anyone; I am sovereign, without any boundaries on my life, other than legal ones. This is true of my spouse-to-be. "Free, single, and 21", goes the amended, non-offensive version of that statement.

But when a man and woman marry, they are voluntarily assuming obligations that make "sovereignty" a thing of the past. Each is saying that s/he now assumes responsibility to care for the other and seek the other's good. In my *Happy vs. Holy* series, on my blog, I said that I feel that when we marry, we are taking on the task of bringing joy and happiness to our spouse. We are also taking on the obligation of laying aside ourselves in order to care for our spouse.

And this is the point that Marshall is getting at. When we decide to marry, it isn't to add accessories to our lifestyle. Instead, it is to change our lifestyle, to send it in new and different channels, with another at my side; one to whom and for whom I am responsible for their care and happiness. This is true marriage.

CSL

Link:

Happy vs. Holy series: <https://curmudgeonlylibrarian.wordpress.com/2014/10/19/happy-vs-holy-pt-1/>

Chapter 8: “Please Lead” (But Do It My Way), part 1

In ch. 4, I wrote about the temptation to play Holy Spirit, and help your spouse to “improve”. One unique concern that I often read in different blogs and frequently hear discussed on podcasts is both Christian-specific, and husband-specific. (This is not a concern in non-Christian marriages; it is Christian-specific.) The problem?

“My husband isn’t fulfilling his role as the spiritual leader of our family.”

In conservative Christian churches, it is commonly taught that the husband is to be the spiritual leader in the home. This is a teaching that I think has merit, but, as we have done with so many teachings, we have over-spiritualized our interpretations and ideals to the point where we are in danger of emulating those Pharisees whom Jesus accused of binding burdens on the backs of men, and refusing to help carry them.

Spiritual Leadership In The Bible

Do I believe it is the task of fathers to be spiritual leaders? Absolutely, along with mothers. God commanded that the home be the place of learning about God and His ways. The *Shema*, the great Jewish confession (equivalent to our Apostle’s Creed), includes the duty to pass on the faith to the children:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” (Deut. 6: 4-7)

As well, Paul tasked fathers with need to teach their children:

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Eph. 6:4)

So, yes, dads must be involved in the religious training of the children. But so must mothers, as well. After all, in Proverbs, we are twice told of both fathers and mothers working to inculcate spiritual values in their children:

*Hear, my son, your father’s instruction,
and forsake not your mother’s teaching, (Prov. 1:8)
My son, keep your father’s commandment,
and forsake not your mother’s teaching. (Prov. 6:20)*

Imperative Input of Fathers

As if Biblical dictates were not enough to impel fathers to lead in spiritual activities, two studies demonstrate the vital importance of fathers in the spiritual development of their children.

A multi-generational study was conducted by the Swiss government and published in 2000 that, among other things, showed the impact of fathers on the faith of the next generation. In an article for *Touchstone* magazine [linked below], the author looked at the analysis of the researchers, as they determined that there is one critical factor that determines future church-going: the spiritual participation of fathers. Here is a good summation of the data:

In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.

Wife found the highlighted portion disturbing, and I must say that I am surprised, as well. A second study, done in America, was published by the *Baptist Press News* in the same year as the *Touchstone* article. The news article cited a *Focus On The Family* study, and began with these three sentences:

*Did you know that if a child is the first person in a household to become a Christian, there is a 3.5 percent probability everyone else in the household will follow?
If the mother is the first to become a Christian, there is a 17 percent probability everyone else in the household will follow.
But if the father is first, there is a 93 percent probability everyone else in the household will follow.*

So, yes, the concern for husbands and fathers to be spiritual leaders in the home is valid. These stories demonstrate that it is crucial that dads be part of the spiritual lives of their children.

Mutiny in the Ranks?

Fresh out of bootcamp, I was stationed aboard the *USS Kennebec*, in 1968. I quickly learned about the command structure of the ship. The captain, of course, was the leader of the ship, but his next-in-line was the Executive Officer. The captain dealt with the entire Navy structure: DoD, CinCPac, Base commanders, etc. As well, the captain gave course directions, speeds, etc. The XO dealt with the day-to-day running of the ship. The

captain determined ship policies, and it was the XO's task to have them carried out. If the captain felt that we should go to a three rotation watch, the XO created the different rotations. If the captain, upon inspection felt that extra training was required, the XO made sure that the key personnel received training.

It's been my view, however benighted you might think me, that something similar applies to husband and wife. The husband deals with most of the world-at-large concerns for the family, while the wife deals with most of the within-these-walls matters. And, yes, I am of the persuasion that the husband is head, just as Christ is head of the Church. I don't think I am alone in this, as the clamor for husbands to be spiritual leaders demonstrates. But there is a problem that is underlying these well-intentioned desires.

I enjoy listening to old pulpit masters strut their stuff, and one great preacher/teacher of the past was Donald Grey Barnhouse, a Presbyterian minister from Philadelphia. In one sermon, he told how his ministry started receiving checks from a woman for \$100 (back in the 40's, \$100 was big money.) After several months, he was conducting a series of meetings in another city, and a woman came up and introduced herself as the one who had been those \$100 checks. She asked Barnhouse if there was any problem with her giving to his ministry, not knowing if he would approve of her occupation – it seemed she was a ballet teacher. (Mind you, many Christian had problems with all forms of theater and entertainment, back then.)

Barnhouse assured her that her occupation was fine, and that her giving to his ministry or any other ministry was praiseworthy and noble. And then Barnhouse, addressing those listening to him said, "And I know what many of you are thinking! You're thinking, 'Dr. Barnhouse, we've got to have standards.' What you mean is we've got to have YOUR standards!" And he proceeded to lay into them for playing God.

I think you can see what I'm getting at, can't you? If not, let me clarify; many times, the problem isn't so much that the husband isn't being a spiritual leader, but that he isn't being the spiritual leader that his wife envisions. Just as Barnhouse's critics wanted Barnhouse to advocate their standards, it seems that many wives want their version of a spiritual leader.

And the Church isn't helping. With teachings about how to be a Good Christian Family, the role of the husband and father as spiritual leader swells and expands with duties and tasks, until the only one who could possibly fulfill expectations is a man who is a cross between Ward Cleaver and Billy Graham.

The Curmudgeon's Recommendations

Here's what I say: Relax, back up and unknot your knickers.

Wives, be willing to accept your husband as something less than Billy Graham. After all, you're no Ruth Graham, yourself, right? Yes, you desire your husband to be your family's spiritual leader, so pray for him to grow into that role. But when he does, be humble enough to accept his leadership, however it manifests itself. Oh, you may believe yourself to be the second coming of Beth Moore, but you are the one who wants him to grow into this role, so be willing to pray and accept.

Story Time:

One day, a woman called her pastor on the phone with a question about biblical interpretation. This pastor, a renowned Bible teacher, received calls like this all the time, and was always willing to help people to better understand the Bible. This time, however, before blurting out his answer, he found himself saying, "Have you asked your husband about what it means?"

"Oh, no, pastor," she replied, "you know that he's not really a student of Scripture."

"Well, your husband is supposed to be your spiritual leader, so ask him, see what he says," the pastor said, and then said his good-byes.

That evening, the wife went to her husband with her question, saying that she believed him to be the person she should go to for spiritual leadership, and asked her question. Some weeks later, that husband made an appointment with the pastor and told him that when his wife said that, he realized that he needed to study the Scriptures to be able to answer his wife. He also said that he was engaging in prayer and study more than he had before, because he had come to see that he would be accountable for his wife.

"Go thou and to likewise, wives" ~ Luke 10:37

CSL

Resources:

Robbie Low, *The Truth about Men & Church*: <http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=16-05-024-v#ixzz3UzJHVNKK>

Baptist Press News article: <http://www.bpnews.net/15630>

Chapter 9: Please Lead, (But Do It My Way), part 2

In the last chapter, I recommended to wives who desired their husbands to be spiritual leaders (a valid desire, by the way) that they just chill. Okay, I didn't say "chill", but I did say that maybe they should back off and leave room for God to work. It's all part and parcel of my reaction to the "let's make my man in my image" mindset of too many wives.

I know that we come into marriage with expectations, both men and women. Often, our expectations are based on what we have already experienced in our families: "my dad was like this", "my mom always did that", etc. And when we live with our spouses, our expectations butt up against the reality that Hubs isn't Dad, or that Wife isn't Mom. And right there, we have a choice: we can accept our spouses for who they are and embrace their gifts, or we can be disappointed and initiate maneuvers in order to get our spouses to change.

So this brings me to the fact that I have another suggestion for these wives (other than chill, that is):

"Lift Up Your Eyes...."

No, I'm not saying that the fields are ripe for harvesting. Instead, get your eyes off of your preconceived vision of what a spiritual leader is and expand your perspective to consider new possibilities. Instead of looking for an idealized pastor-substitute, look instead to your husband's giftedness.

Every Christian has a motivational spiritual gift, an impulse through which s/he operates, and believe it or not, your husband's spiritual gift will determine HOW he leads. I promise you that, more than likely, it won't be in the way that you want, so I would advise you to be willing to lay your 'vision' down, and be willing to accept how God works through your husband.

I believe that there are seven areas of 'giftedness', that are basic motivations by which we respond to the world around us, whether it be family, church, work, etc. There are two good methods, by the way, for learning your motivational gift: first, spend some time examining your actions and seek to get to the reason why. "Why do I do what I do?" The second method is an excellent tool, as well. Again, ask yourself a question: "What is it that Christians do that really irritates me?" Quite often, your reaction is a valuable insight into your spiritual gift.

In my case, while the first question pointed to the fact that I like teaching, the second (what irritates me) yielded the big, neon-flashing, horns-blaring fact that too many Christians are stuck on stupid and ignore God's Word and principles. It is this willful

ignorance and stupidity that really burns my toast. It wasn't too big a jump to realize that's what motivates me, to realize that my spiritual gift is teaching.

With that in mind, these are the seven motivational spiritual gifts that Paul tells us that God gives:

1. Prophecy – proclaim truth
2. Serving – meet needs
3. Teaching – clarify truth
4. Exhorter – stimulate faith
5. Giving – entrust and manage assets
6. Administration – plan and organize
7. Mercy – remove distress

Let me tell you a short story to illustrate how these seven different motivational gifts might operate in a given situation:

One day, at a cookout for his Men's Sunday School class, Sam carried a plate of grilled hamburgers to the table. He had been asked a question by one of the guys, and because he was trying to answer it, he wasn't watching what he was doing when he started to set the plate on the table. He set it down on the edge, and the plate tipped and fell off the table. Immediately, his seven classmates sprang into action, to help with the spill. Since each was gifted with a different motivational/spiritual gift, each reacted differently to the accident.

Al (*administration*) started organizing, "Don, can you get the broom? Ben – oh, you've already got that. Sam, have you got any hotdogs? They'll grill quick and replace the burgers." (Motivation – help the group meet the 'crisis' and achieve its goal at the same time)

Ben (*service/helps*) immediately got down on the ground, saying "Let me help you pick them up." (Motivation – fulfill a need)

Carl (*prophet*) immediately said, "Ooh, man! That's what happens when you get distracted!" (Motivation – correct the problem to prevent a recurrence)

Don (*mercy*) said, "Hey, could have happened to anyone. I'm dropping things all the time." (Motivation – relieve any feelings of embarrassment)

Ed (*teaching*) noted, "Hey, Sam? Have you noticed that your picnic table isn't level? That's probably why the plate fell off." (Motivation – to discover why the plate fell and learn from mistake)

Frank (*exhorter*) smiled and said, "Hey, Sam, next time, ask for help in getting the food to the table." (Motivation – correct the future)

George (*giver*) suggested “I can go down to KFC and get a bucket of chicken, if you want.” (Motivation – meet a tangible need)

Hot dogs were quickly brought out, and the cookout continued.

~ ~ ~

I hope you get that each of these men responded in a different way. Not one way was the right way to respond, and none of them were wrong. It’s just that each response came from the way that these men were wired, the way that God had ‘gifted’ them. Not right, not wrong.

“This Is What Spiritual Leadership Looks Like!”

If you watch the brain-dead Left and their protests, whether it be the Occupy Wall Street goobs or college students protesting their latest outrage du jour, you’ll hear their mindless mating call, “*This is what stupidity democracy looks like.*” I’m going to appropriate that chant and inform wives that having a one-track vision of spiritual leadership and chanting to yourself, “*This is what spiritual leadership looks like*” is just as useless as an OWS protest. **

While many wives say that they are asking for spiritual leadership, what they are really asking for is for their husbands to be like a mini-pastor in the home, setting up and leading little Bible studies and prayer meetings. And all the time that they are doing this, they are missing the ways that their husbands, with their own different spiritual gifts, are living out Christ’s call in their lives.

I am challenging these wives to step back from their desire, and examine both their own motives, AND their husbands’ lives.

First, Christian wife--while you have a legitimate desire for your husband to be the spiritual leader of your family, are you trying to mold your husband in your image of what constitutes spiritual leadership? Has your preconceived vision of spiritual leadership caused you to mutiny in such a way as to sabotage any effort he may try to make in that area?

Second, is it possible that you are missing the ways that God works through your husband, that God has gifted him in a manner other than your concept? Spiritual leadership isn’t always a Bible study or devotion; it may be service to others, it may be help in organizing community/church activities, it may be serving as a Cub/Boy Scout leader. It may be that he demonstrates spiritual leadership by the simple act of being there for you and your children.

Lastly, pray for your husband to grow in his spiritual giftedness. And to complement him, learn more about his spiritual gift and yours. There are a number of Spiritual Gift

Assessment tests on the internet, enough to make me leery of them, but I did find one that avoids the wild and wooly. A panel of 98 questions, easily done in a single sitting, I believe that this test yields an accurate assessment of one's spiritual motivations and impellings. There are probably many other good ones out there, based on the lists of spiritual gifts in Roman and 1 Corinthians. Just search for them on Bing or Google and you'll find something that will be of use to you.

I will say that the best one that I've seen is Chip Ingram's *Your Divine Design*, but you have to buy the DVD and study book. I think that it is worth it, but when there are other options out there on the internet, it couldn't hurt to see what you can find. Just avoid the wild and wooly hucksters, okay?

CSL

** I make no bones about the fact that, politically, I'm so conservative that I think Attila the Hun was a pinko. I try not to let it intrude into my writing, but due to the need to appropriate the OWS chant for literary purposes, my disdain for them shines through. No apologies; it is what it is.

Spiritual Gifts Assessment test: <http://www.spiritualgiftstest.com/test/adult>

Chapter #10: Christian Go-To Marital Tools: Mr. Natural

This chapter is actually the fourth of a five-part series that appeared on my blog, but after I had finished the series, I realized that I had them out of order; in fact, I had them in reverse order, so in this .pdf, I correct my earlier mistake. Oh, and there are only four chapters instead of five, as I did a little editing.

All too often, when a problem first manifests itself in a marriage, the initial attitude that is adopted is, “Give it time. Things have a way of working themselves out. Let nature take its course, and things will be alright.”

So, in dealing with marital issues, the first tool we go to is Time, thinking that just letting things go will ensure that they will right themselves as we go through our regular daily routine. In trying to identify a way to describe christian go-to marital tool, I came up with Mr. Natural.

Back in the day, when I was a young sailor stationed on a ship out of San Francisco, I dabbled a bit in that counter-culture that was San Francisco in ‘68-’69; that included acquaintance with the popular counter-culture cartoonist of that era, R. Crumb. One of his most popular characters was Mr. Natural, who passed out advice; one phrase that Crumb, via Mr. Natural, created and popularized was...



“Keep On Truckin’”

This is just what someone imitating Mr. Natural does in his marriage. “We have a problem? Well, just keep on truckin’.” And many of the advisors we might consult also give the same advice: pastors, parents, friends.

“We’ve hit a bump in the road...”

“Well, you’re young...”

“Well, you’ve just had a baby...”

“Well, she’s starting a new job...”

“Well, you are just dealing with a little stress...”

“...so just keep on truckin’ and it will all work out in time.”

So you keep on truckin’. You know how it is, these things happen, and you two are married and are committed to each other, so you know that things will work out. But after a year or three, and the problem persists....

Yes, there are the pressures of daily life. Yes, there are the pressures of different seasons of your life. But your marriage seems to have become merely a partnership, and your bedroom seems to be a hangout for roommates and not lovers.

A Quick Aside

I have been reading posts and articles by husbands and wives who have undergone sexual throttling and sexual refusal for different lengths of time. I've read reports by spouses who have experienced refusal for two-three years, ten-twelve year and up. I've read "testimonies" of husbands and wives who've experienced refusal for 25-35 years!

As I read these stories, it seems that Mr. Natural is the first tool that turns up. This is the spouse who goes to a parent or pastor or pal, and says that things aren't as they should be in the bedroom. And they are told, "It'll work itself out. Just give it time. These things happen all the time." And so Mr. Natural waits for things to work themselves out.

But they don't.

Mr. Natural's antidote: The Student

"I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate, exotic fruit. Touch it, and the bloom is gone." ~ Oscar Wilde, The Importance of Being Earnest

Despite the wittiness of Oscar Wilde, I have never understood the attitude that ignorance is helpful. But somehow, it appears to be one of the cornerstones of problem-solving. "Don't worry about it. Things will turn out right, in the end." But what if the end is merely a grateful release from a cheerless life 40-50 years down the road?

The answer to problems that arise in a marriage is not Nature, but Nurture. Contrary to Mr. Natural, the Student sits down with his wife and seeks to study the problem. Situations are discussed, attitudes are delved into, convictions are studied. In this way, the Student learns about his/her spouse. And then begins to study.

Two Presuppositions

Before I examine further the Student, I believe it imperative to state two premises that need to be taken as 'givens'.

First, there is no such thing as a perfect marriage because there are no perfect people. Paul Byerly has said in one of his *Generous Husband* posts that all men come into marriage with a broken idea of intimacy due to porn in today's society. I believe that there is no such thing as a person who enters marriage whole. We are all broken, in some way, due to the fact that we live in a fallen world, and we have been nurtured in

our selfish ways by this world. Whether it be because of bad teaching or bad experience, all come into the marriage with good intentions but broken conditions.

Second, marriage is a crucible. I have written that God's purpose for marriage is happiness, not holiness, but the melding of two separate lives into one is going to cause change. After all, tin and copper make bronze through fire, and two lives become one through the fire of life.

Isobel Kuhn, a new missionary to China in 1928, wrote of being shocked when she was told by a veteran missionary that all the scum of her humanity would rise to the top when she got on the mission field. "That can't be!", Isobel thought, "I've devoted my life to Christ, and unlike other Christians, I'm going out in obedience to the Great Commission!" But a year later, she had to admit that everything that the older woman had said was true: she had to deal with inner attitudes and traits that clashed with selfless service to others. Oh, she professed high ideals, but the lowly humiliations and sacrifices of the day-to-day galled her nature. And she had to take those to God.

In the same way, marriage becomes a crucible that shows us our selfishness. We have our ways, our wants and our expectations. And darned if s/he doesn't, too! Yes, in that sweet, sweet honeymoon phase, when everything is so new and precious, his idiosyncrasies seem charming. But after a while, certain traits are smiled at through clenched teeth. And years later, there is definitely severe dental enamel loss.

Enter The Student

And here is where The Student makes his/her appearance.

Bonny Burns, of Bonny's *Oysterbed*⁷, made a comment on my blog in response to my presentation about how Mr. Natural addresses marital problems:

Aside from advocating the continual discussion, I find two key points here. Marriage counseling and boundaries. IMHO, most sexless marriages have a lot of other junk to sort through.

Of course she is spot-on. When two become one, there is going to be learning, compromise, adjustment, and growth. That is, if things go right. However, given the human capacity to make really stinkin' decisions, outright conflict, with concomitant casualties, may be the outcome.

Whatever happens, when problems arise (and they will arise!), The Student makes use of resources; s/he studies. Is there a conflict in expectations of household arrangements? The Student will avail himself of books or teachers who are skilled in dealing with conflict. Is there a problem with mixed signals and misunderstanding? There may be good blog writers or podcasts that help with matters like this. Is there a

disagreement about the roles of husband and wife? There are excellent bible teachers and preachers who can help apply scripture to their relationship. Is there a problem with sexual intimacy in the marriage? Thankfully, today there are many good teachers and writers who have created resources for The Student to access. The internet is chock-a-block full of different writers and teachers who address different needs in marriage.

Just A Few Good Resources

On my blog, I present links to several excellent blogs that address different marital intimacy needs. Does the wife have a problem with a low-to-nonexistent libido? Then go to *Oysterbed*⁷, and read the excellent blogs of a wife who addresses that problem. Are there wives who wish to understand why their husbands think, feel and act as they do? Then they need to subscribe to *The XY Code* and read the archives. (The old aphorism that men are only capable of hunger or horniness, while a funny joke, is ridiculous on its face. Men are every bit as complex as women, and Paul Byerly's *XY Code* is an excellent tour guide into the male psyche.)

Paul and Lori Byerly also write two must-reads, one apiece, for husbands and wives. Men, subscribe to *The Generous Husband*; women, subscribe to *The Generous Wife*. These two daily blogs give great insight in how to better love your spouse, as God would have you to do. Chris Taylor writes from the perspective of a wife who has walked the edge of a precipice and stepped back. Many of her *Forgiven Wife* posts are down-right wrenching to read, and I can only guess at how wrenching they were to experience.

J. Parker writes *Hot, Holy and Humorous*, which takes a look at the hows and wherefores of intimacy and technique, often with a skewed sense of humor. If you need to learn a technique, she's got the guts to address it.

You get the picture. The Student sees a problem and doesn't let it ride, hoping "it will work out." S/he ponders the problem, talks to the hubs/wife, and starts looking for answers. Early in a marriage, before problems become ingrained and before habits become routines and ruts, many issues can be thrashed out and a healthy resolution found. However, if left to grow, habits, routines and ruts become entrenched as "the way we've always done things", and become nearly insurmountable.

Final Word

I am going to make a final recommendation and a final disclaimer.

First, Chris Taylor has put together a small Resource Page on her *Forgiven Wife* blog, with many useful links.

Second, the problem that I am addressing in this series on Christian Go-To Marital Tools are situations that, for the most part, fall into the realm of self-improvement, and

most of these resources also fall in that category. There are situations that occur in marriage that are far more pathological in nature, and require help that is far more heavy-duty. I refer you to Bonny's quote above, in which she reminds us that marriage counseling is available for those who need it.

And there are many who need it. If this is you, then seek help.

CSL

Links:

Paul and Lori Byerly:

The Generous Husband : <https://www.the-generous-husband.com>

The Generous Wife: <https://www.the-generous-wife.com>

The XY Code: <https://thexycode.com>

Bonny Burns, *Bonny's Oysterbed7*: <https://www.oysterbed7.com>

Chris Taylor, *The Forgiven Wife*: <https://forgivenwife.com>

J. Parker, *Hot, Holy & Humorous*: <https://hotholyhumorous.com>

Chapter #11: Christian Go-To Marital Tools: Jedi Mind Trick

Michele Weiner-Davis, author of *The Sex-Starved Marriage*, says that 1 in 3 marriages have a problem concerning significant libido differences. That's a clinician's way of saying that one person in a marriage is wantin' and ain't gettin'. And I've come to the conclusion that Christians have the worst set of skills for confronting a sexless marriage.*

The Jedi Mind Trick

The second of the Christian's "go-to" marriage tools is the Jedi Mind Trick. After some time (weeks, months, years...), Mr. Natural realizes that things AREN'T working out, and so decides it is time to call in some help. He appeals to God.

He prays, he pleads, "Help me, ~~Obi-Wan Kenobi~~ Lord. You're my only hope." He wants God to reveal to his wife just how much he wants, needs, to have sexual intimacy with her. We have this idea that God is going to wave His hand and this will somehow magically happen.....

God: You like sex.

Wife: I like sex.

God: You want sex.

Wife: I want sex.

God: You want sex with your husband. Now.

Wife: Come here Tarzan, Jane wants to play. Rowr.

Husband: Thank You, ~~Obi-Wan Kenobi~~ Lord!

Does that make it sound like I don't believe in prayer? I hope it doesn't, but if it does, well, people have thought worse things about me. But here's the deal: I have this idea that Christians are trained to be passive and just pray for something, and to not do anything, as that is considered to be "working in the flesh." Instead, being the spiritual giants that we are, we prefer to "stand still and see the Hand of God on your behalf!"

I read a quote recently, on a Filipino pastor's blog, that applies James 2 very well:

To paraphrase a verse, prayers without works are dead. Yes, we pray. But we do more than pray. We become God's answer to our prayers.

For some reason, Christians think that speaking up for themselves is un-Christian. We hear "Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?", from 1 Corinthians, and we think that applies to our marriage. We assume that it is better to suffer in silence and hope that God will pull a Jedi Mind Trick to make things better, rather than

working on our marriage. And so, suffering continues. One year, two years, five, ten, twenty years, and the prayers continue, "Help me ~~Obi-Wan Kenobi~~ Lord."

Speak Up!

I hope you get the import of what that Filipino pastor was saying. It's not enough to just sit back and hope that God will do His thing. Yes, pray. But put feet to your prayers. You don't know but what it is God's intention for you to work. That verse in 1 Cor. about being willing to suffer wrong is about bringing a fellow Christian before corrupt secular judges. It had nothing to do with marital advice. Why do we assume that it is God's will for christian husbands and wives to suffer in marriage?

I assume that everyone has heard that old sermon illustration about the man sitting on the roof of his house during a flood and refusing help. Three times he tells would-be rescuers floating by in boats, "I don't need to be rescued," he told them, "God is going to rescue me." He ends up drowning in the flood, and when he gets to heaven, he asks God, "why didn't you rescue me?" And we know the reply, right?

"I sent people to you three times to rescue you, but you refused."

We look for God's divine hand, we want the bells and whistles of miracles. But we don't want to work for our miracles. We think that God's work is done by God, and not by us.

Instead of waiting for God to flash a revelation in the minds and the hearts of our spouses, we need to speak up. If there is a problem with sexual frequency/activity (or the lack thereof), bring this up with your spouse. Discuss it, address it, and be upfront about it, not waiting for God to somehow waive his hand and and say "you want sex."

"But you don't know my wife"

True, I don't. But if this matter of concern is so important that you feel that you have to go to God with it, why isn't it something you would talk over with your wife? You're already using your mouth to talk to God, why not use it to talk to your wife? Yes, I don't know your wife. I don't know you, either. But if you are saying that the situation is something that you need to pray over, that you need to bring to God into, then why isn't it something that you would bring to your wife?

But, actually, I think I know why you don't bring it to your wife. You see, to you, your situation really isn't intolerable. As long as the situation, whether it be refusal or gatekeeping, is something you can live with, you will live with it. If you can tolerate it, it's not important enough to you to do something other than wish and pray about; it's merely a preference. When you are desperate enough to put down the Jedi Mind Trick and do something, anything, then you are really serious about changing your marriage.

CSL

* I realize that experts tell us that in up to 40% of marriage dealing with libido issues, the spouse with the higher drive is the wife. And, yes, I realize that, for the sake of these articles, I am using the societal archetype of males as the higher drive, frustrated spouse. I do not believe that this discounts what I am saying to refused and/or restricted wives. Yes, there may be a different set of challenges, but I don't think a different skill set is the answer.

Link:

Straight From Pastor Ey: <http://straightfrompastor.blogspot.com/2011/10/prayer-without-works-is-dead.html>

Chapter #12: Christian Go-To Marital Tools: Mr Milqtoast, part #1

In the last chapter, I presented the Jedi Mind Trick, the second Christian Go-To tool for dealing with marital issues. Mr. Natural's advice is to just keep doing what you're doing and things will all sort themselves out eventually. After weeks, months, years, etc., of simply coasting along not working, the christian husband or wife opts for the second Go-To marital tool, prayer. Or as I like to call it, the heavenly Jedi Mind Trick, in which s/he hopes that God will change their spouses' behavior.

So in this chapter, I am going to talk about the third Go-To tool that is resorted to, when neither Mr. Natural nor the Jedi Mind Tricks work. Let me introduce you to...

Caspar Milquetoast

In the 1920's and 30's, there was a popular single-panel comic strip entitled The Timid Soul, and it featured Caspar Milquetoast. According to the illustrator, Milquetoast is the kind of guy who "speaks softly and gets hit with a big stick". You can see Caspar Milquetoast in action, or rather inaction, in collections of strips on the internet; google the phrase "Caspar Milquetoast Comics", and you will find a bunch of them. (While not a comics buff, I do like many of the old comics, such as Popeye, Krazy Kat, Nancy and Sluggo, etc.)

Now unlike Mr. Natural, Mr. Milquetoast does have scriptural support for his course of action inaction. Per the many Christian marriage manuals and magazine articles that are published for strengthening marriages, the Christian husband follows the example of his savior, the Lord Jesus Milquetoast: Mr. Milquetoast becomes a Servant. The Servant Model of Leadership is a popular and widespread teaching about how husbands are to approach their marriage.

When I was originally set about writing the rough draft of the post that became this chapter, I started to Bing-search the phrase, *Servant Leadership*. However, before I could finish (all I got typed was "Servant Le..."), Autofill gave me these search phrases to choose from:

- Servant leadership
- Servant leadership definition
- Servant leader
- Servant leadership characteristics
- Servant leadership model
- Servant leadership quotes
- Servant leadership PowerPoint
- Servant leadership Houston
- Servant leadership Theory

As you can see, Servant Leadership is a very popular topic.

I believe that much of the teaching of Servant Leadership is a reaction to the past teaching that the man is the “Head of the House”, and the concomitant abuse that it can engender. Yes, I admit that there are jerks who think that being male and husband is an entitlement nigh onto deity. I believe that Charles Shedd said it best, in his book, *Letters To Philip*, from the 60’s:

“Get your foot off her throat, Hitler,”

But I also believe that much of the Servant Leadership teaching is simply modern revulsion triggered by biblical language that is offensive to modern sensibilities. After all, we are all just happy as clams about the dictum, “Husbands, love your wives,” but the accompanying dictum, “Wives, submit to your husbands?”

Oh, \$&!#!!% no!!!! Are you fresh outta your \$%^@!# mind???*

Milquetoast-ing the Marriage Bed

As a result, today, Milquetoast-ing is the preferred Christian go-to marital tool for husbands, right after doing and saying nothing. Milquetoast-ing enables husbands to be “leaders in the home” by giving them the illusion that they are leading their families by emphatically saying, “Yes, dear.”

According to proponents of Servant Leadership, Eph. 5:23 says “*For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church*”, but we know that Paul didn’t really mean what he said. After all, any idea of submission is just a patriarchal crock, and so the Bible doesn’t really mean it when it says that the husband is head of the wife. So, the proper way to understand Eph. 5:23 is to look for ~~mitigation~~ explication elsewhere. And since Jesus Himself said that He “did not come to be served, but to serve” (Matt. 20:28), it follows that the husband, like Jesus, is to serve. Serve who? Why, the wife, of course.

In the area of marital intimacy, Mr. Milquetoast is told that this Servant Leader model is highly touted to act as an aphrodisiac for wives so served. After all, the popular aphorism says, “there’s nothing so sexy as a man doing dishes”. But all too often, Mr. Milquetoast finds that the more he engages in choreplay, the more things stay the same. Mr. Natural just lets things coast along, hoping that things will right themselves, but after a few years of near-celibacy, he realizes that things haven’t worked themselves out. And he further realizes that there doesn’t appear to be any likelihood of things working themselves out, so Mr. Natural starts praying for God to use a Jedi Mind Trick, “Help me, ~~Obi-Wan Kenobi~~, Father, you’re my only hope.”

Mr. Milquetoast, on the other hand, actually takes action and speaks up. Yes, he communicates!! Bravo, Mr. Milquetoast. He Milquetoasts his wife and requests, (oh so

deferentially!), “Maybe, if it’s not too inconvenient, do you think that you might deign to have sex with me sometime in the next month?”

Yes, Mr. Milqtoast lets his wife know that he is concerned about the lack of sex and intimacy, that he thinks that married couples should discuss intimacy, and come to a mutually acceptable frequency. And maybe Mrs. Milquetoast agrees with Mr. Milquetoast.

Maybe.

Conditionally.

But nothing happens.

The frequency is not upped, and Mr. Milquetoast continues on. As a good Servant should.

And things go on, as before.

In the chapter discussing Mr. Natural, I was able to present his antithesis, The Student. Because the discussion of the antithesis to Mr. Milqtoast is a longer discussion, I will do that in the next chapter.

CSL

Chapter 13: Christian Go-To Marital Tools: Mr. Milqtoast, part #2

As my previous chapter presenting the third Christian Go-To Marital Tool went a little long, I decided to present the antidote to the Milquetoast in a separate chapter. Yes, I believe that the Milquetoast needs an antidote, and so I present to you Patrick Henry.

In the previous chapter, I wrote about how the Servant Leadership teaching, as a reaction to patriarchy (real or perceived), turns the whole of marriage upside down by making the husband the servant of the wife, instead of the head, as Paul wrote.

And now, because of the tweaking of biblical interpretation, things are as they should be. Naturally, Servant Leadership is a very popular teaching. After all, as George Bernard Shaw once said, “Any government that robs Peter to pay Paul can count on the support of Paul.” The same goes for Christian teaching, I guess. And the great thing about it is that both parties are happy. The wife is being served, and Mr. Milquetoast, while working as a servant, knows that he is the head of the house.

Thesis, Meet Antithesis

As I said in my last chapter, Mr. Milquetoast doesn't just hope and pray that by waiting patiently things will work themselves out; no, as Servant Leader, he speaks up! He addresses his wife in loving tones, (not too insistent, mind you), with proper deference as befits a servant-leader. He puts forth his concern for the lack of intimacy in the marriage bed, and listens, lovingly, (with the proper deference befitting a servant-leader!), as his wife lets him know why frequency isn't up to what he would like. And after a discussion, Mr. Milquetoast hopes that things will change due to his decorous display of servant-leadership and the presentation of his wants and needs in a socially accepted manner.

Several years ago, I was frequenting an internet forum, and one of the people on that forum was a man whose wife basically had imposed celibacy on him. This poor sod told how he had discussed the matter with his wife, but since she didn't see that there was a problem, there was nothing he could do. My counsel to him was to not let the matter die out, but to continue to bring it up for discussion, despite the possibility of negative reaction from his wife. I borrowed from Patrick Henry and wrote to him, “Is home life so dear or marital peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God!”

Patrick Henry In Action

I am familiar with the story of a man who, for 15 years, was the model servant-leader. He served his wife and family, doing what he could to pamper his wife. He was met with a cycle of ingratitude, guilt, sexual restriction and attempts (on his part) at greater

choreplay. “After all,” he thought, “I may hate being married, but I love God and my kids, so I have to carry my cross.” After discovering online resources, with articles and counsel that helped to break through his fog, he decided to demonstrate to his wife what life would be like without his care and pampering. He removed the princess from her pedestal and began to do just his basic husbandly and fatherly duties.

After a couple of weeks, his wife came to him, absolutely livid at the recent lack of pampering. He stopped her in mid-rant by telling her that what she had experienced was intentional, that it demonstrated how she had been treating him for 15 years, and that the marriage was going to change from that point on. Ol’ Pat (as I call him) had planned for this discussion and informed his wife that he had a couple of conditions for their marriage that were non-negotiable, and that if she didn’t like them, she was welcome to leave. Stunned upon hearing his ultimatum—starting marriage counseling and re-instituting the marriage bed (2x a week)—her initial reaction was to call his bluff.

She informed Ol’ Pat that she refused to accept his conditions and that she would leave him instead, whereupon he calmly got out the newspaper and started searching the classified ads for an apartment for her. Faced with this as a reality, she quickly changed her mind, and agreed to his boundaries. Later communication with Ol’ Pat told of how his wife was reacting under the new regime, and how she was responding to the new counseling they were receiving. He was much happier in his marriage.

IYADWYAD, YAGWYAG

This is a truism: *If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got.* To put it another way,

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing expecting different results.
~ Albert Einstein

I realize that this seems to go against the grain of accepted Christian thinking. After all, didn’t Ol’ Pat initially have the right idea, that if his marriage sucked, well, that was simply his cross in life to bear? I’m sorry, but that is pure bilge water. In posts on my blog, I have addressed this idea, and I still say that there is absolutely no biblical support for the idea that suffering through a sucky marriage is godly.

The Patrick Henry will talk about the problem, not just sweep it under the rug. It will be a topic of concern that he will raise often, despite any and all protests. Ol’ Pat hopes passionately for his marriage, but also believes passionately that the status quo is unacceptable, and so the problems in the marriage must be addressed. It’s basic: a marriage cannot be a good marriage if one of the partners is regretting it. And if a marriage has a problem, it does no good to just let the problem fester.

Ol’ Pat, in the story above, spoke of despising his marriage. Julie Sibert, in a post on her *Intimacy in Marriage* blog, spoke of exactly this situation:

I hear from husbands all the time who... ..hate feeling trapped by Christian morals they have grown to resent.

I admit to having an annoying habit: when I hear someone say that he has been dealing with low/no sex for 8, or 12, or 16 years, I ask him, “Well, are you up for another 8, 12, 16 years?” And I point to my abbreviation: IYADWYAD, YAGWYAG.

I’ve had a few tell me that what I said was a slap in the face, a wake-up call. They hadn’t thought about living the rest of their lives in the misery that they currently were in. If doing what you’ve always done only results in misery, then stop doing it. A sucky marriage is never a God-given cross.

Drastic Measures?

Dr. Corey Allen has a podcast entitled *Sexy Marriage Radio*. In an older episode, Corey and his co-host, Shannon Etheridge (author of *The Sexually Confident Wife*), addressed the specific topic of the Sexless Marriage, and spoke of the resolve that the refused spouse must have in order to address the marital problem. Please make time to listen to Corey and Shannon, as they address sexless marriage in podcast #122 [see link below].

At about the 6:50 mark, Corey says that the first thing to do is to “talk about it.” And yes, Mr. Milquetoast, you may have talked before, but as Dr. Phil likes to say, “How’d that work out for ya?” Instead, it needs to be addressed firmly, and with a resolve that things can’t continue as they have.

At the 7:50 marker, Corey says this:

“Even before you have this conversation (and I’m going to speak directly to the partner that is interested in sex in their marriage), before you even have this conversation, you need to have a little, maybe a lot of soul searching. Is a sexless marriage a deal-breaker for you? What do you really believe? What do you really want in your marriage? Is life without sex with your spouse a possibility, is this a deal-breaker? That’s a rough, tough journey.”

Just as a warning, the Patrick Henry needs to follow Corey’s advice, and do a lot of soul-searching. If your situation isn’t intolerable, then tolerate. You can only be a Patrick Henry when you can say of your misery, “Forbid it, Almighty God!” And even then, the successful changing of your marriage to sweetness and light is not a guarantee. I know of one marriage that ended because the wife decided that a sexless life was to be preferred over marriage to her husband.

It is going to come down to this question that every Mr. Milquetoast will have to answer: are you up for another two, three or four decades of imposed celibacy? It’s your call.

CSL

Links:

Julie Sibert, *Five Dangers of Denying Sex* : <http://intimacyinmarriage.com/2012/11/05/five-dangers-of-denying-sex/>

Shannon Etheridge, *The Sexually Confident Wife*: https://www.amazon.com/Sexually-Confident-Wife-Connecting-8-Sep-2009/dp/B013IL8ZWM/ref=sr_1_3?crid=12ZLFYYEPDNWW&dchild=1&keywords=sexually+confident+wife&qid=1597165202&srefix=sexually+con%2Caps%2C326&sr=8-3

Dr. Corey Allan, *Sexy Marriage Radio*, episode #122, *The Sexless Marriage*: <https://smrnation.com/sexy-marriage-radio/>

Chapter 14: Another Nothing Box?

A couple of years ago, I read a comment from a husband whose wife had been a refuser, but who finally got the message that sexual intimacy was lacking in their marriage and they were able to correct their problem. In his comment, he told of an incident that was part of her receiving the message, and it's a theme that I'm coming across more and more. In posts on my blog, I have told of knowing two different husbands who "let slip" to their wives that their supposed great marriages were only great for one person.

Then I learned of a third instance that inspired this chapter, which was occasioned by one of those "marital assessment" tests that are so ubiquitous in magazines. The wife in this incident took the test and because of the answers she gave (based on her perception of the marriage), got back a score of 8 out of 10. Of course, she was feeling pretty good about her marriage. She was stunned, however, when her husband took the same test and the result, based on his answers, came back a woeful 2.

For the wife, sex was just one part of a marriage, and while that area was "less than perfect" (in her way of thinking, anyway), the marriage was pretty good. However, the awful state of their sex life colored his perception of the entire marriage. He explained to her that the pain of refusal spilled over into every aspect of the marriage and he "hated it all."

In chapter #6, *Lady, It's Not About You*, I retooled a graphic that Chris Taylor, of *Forgiven Wife*, created, that was of a his-and-hers report card (see below) that illustrated this dichotomy; this guy's story falls in line with everything I was saying in that post.

Now, I could write another chapter re-hashing my points from ch. 6, as I wasn't wrong. But there's more to the story here. I participated in a discussion with that husband, and his story, and the way he presented, sparked a thought in me, which I briefly mentioned on that forum. However, I didn't really do anything with the idea, and it is only recently that this question has come back to me, and I want to address it.

Wives' Nothing Box

One of the funniest speakers who deals with marriage and relationships is Mark Gungor. Gungor is a pastor in Green Bay, WI, who has a podcast/radio show, and who has a marriage seminar that he presents entitled "*Laugh Your Way To A Better Marriage*." One of the best-known excerpts from his seminars is on YouTube and has been viewed millions of times. In *The Tale of Two Brains* [see link below], he tells about how men's brains are compartmentalized while women's brains are interconnected. He's very funny in his presentation, and if nothing else, you'll really enjoy the clip.

Now, lest you are tempted to say that he's just being stereotypical, know that what he is presenting is the *Waffles and Spaghetti* imagery that is popular today. Instead of Gungor's boxes and balls of wire, this popular teaching uses waffles and spaghetti as its metaphor. Men are waffles, with separate compartments, and women are spaghetti, with pasta strands all interwoven. So Gungor's presentation isn't all that kooky.

Now, all this is well and good, and is not really ground-shaking in its novelty. But what got me from that husband's narrative was the comment made by his wife in her astonishment. After all, to her, the rest of the marriage was great; "*we just had this one struggle,*" the area of sex. And that's when it hit me:

Wives have a Nothing Box, too, and that's where they put Sex!

Against Type

When I was originally reading this husband's story, it triggered a new thought and a new question for me. According to popular teaching, women aren't supposed to compartmentalize; for them, everything is supposed to be connected, right? After all, Waffles and Spaghetti, Balls of Wire vs. Boxes, right? (Yes, I know that what is presented by these different teachers can sound like stereotyping, and, yes, I realize that everyone is different; but still there is an underlying truth to gender differentiation.)

Here is the question that I had, that I presented in that forum, but never followed up on:

Why is it that sex is the one thing that women can apparently separate from everything else and compartmentalize, and is the one thing men can't compartmentalize?

Do you think that I'm wrong in saying that women compartmentalize sex? Then why the "*It's just sex*" mantra that men are always being told? Or how about the "*Sex is the icing on the cake*" or "*Sex is the dessert*" type of statements? Conversely, sex is so vital for men that its absence colors their perception of the entire marriage, but, for so many wives, sex is so "meh" that it has its own shelf, where it can be stored and ignored.

Still think I'm wrong? Then hear what Wife said to me when I read her this man's comments, and asked her about this idea of wives compartmentalizing sex. Wife responded, "Women often see sex as 'just a small part' of marriage. Instead, wives look at all the other things they do for their husbands and say, 'Isn't it enough?'"

Her Report Card		His Report Card	
Subject/Activity	Grade	Subject/Activity	Grade
1 Housekeeping	A	1 Housekeeping	A
2 Mothering	A	2 Mothering	A
3 Cooking	A	3 Cooking	A
4 Appearance	A	4 Appearance	A
5 Sex	F	5 Sex	F
Final Marriage Average	C	Final Marriage Average	F

As I pointed out in the *Lady, It's Not About You* chapter, above, the answer is “No, it isn't enough!” That report card graphic that I retooled shows the impact of sexlessness on a marriage, as perceived by husbands and wives.

Why This One Compartment?

If conventional wisdom is true, that the brains of women function in an interconnected manner, then why does this one compartment, this one separate square, even exist? Why is it so easy to disconnect one's whole self from this one component of nature?

As I've been thinking on this, and asking Wife about it, a couple of ideas seem to offer themselves as possible contributions.

Sex is dirty: It is an accepted truism that the bad teaching of the Church has resulted in a distorted view of sex. Many Christian wives have the perception that sex is dirty. I know that it is quite trendy to blame the Purity movement for this, but apparently the concept of “Sex is dirty, gross and disgusting, so save it for marriage” has been around for a lot longer than the Purity Culture. Wife agrees with the many who say that it is hard to overcome the idea that sex is taboo as soon as you say “I do.” Is it possible that one reason that wives are able to compartmentalize sex away from the rest of their lives is due to the retained idea, “Sex is dirty?”

Sex may be God-given, but it's not that important: After all, God made appendixes and tonsils, too, but we can get along fine without them, right? Apparently the same goes for sex. I think that behind this idea, and certainly reinforced by the “Sex Is Dirty” teaching, is a Christian version of Gnosticism. According to this ancient heresy, that which is physical is sinful while that which is spiritual is godly. This can help feed spiritual pride, as well. After all, it is a commonly accepted truism (rightly or wrongly) that women are “more spiritual” than men, and the fact that men think more about sex only confirms the fact to many wives that women are the superior sex because they can do without.

It is too much work to be aroused: Men are aroused SO easily; heck, many of us wake up aroused! Women, on the other hand, don't desire sex because they have to be aroused first, and that takes up too much time. Many women find that they have to be intentional if they want to be into sex, and that just takes too much effort. I'm thinking that absence of a conscious lack of desire to be aroused helps to create a “meh” approach toward sex, and leads to walling it off from their minds and their lives. (BTW, guys, if you are not willing to invest the time to help your wife become aroused, you don't get to bitch about being in a sexless marriage. After all, Ch. 5, *It's Not About You!*)

Wifely Nothing Box: A Real Thing?

Well, maybe. From the kind of comments I've cited, it sure seems like it can be a real thing. But from other sources, maybe not. After all, I've read around enough to know

that there are other contributing factors to sexual and marital dysfunction, such as past sins or past abuse or past hurts. But it seems that the ability to wall off one component of marriage does play against type, doesn't it?

I'm open to reading comments and other ideas and possibilities, but I will confess that I think I'm right.

CSL

Resources:

Mark Gungor, *A Tale of Two Brains*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XjUFYxSxDk>

Bill and Pam Farrell, *Men are like waffles, Women are like spaghetti*: http://www.amazon.com/Men-Like-Waffles--Women-Spaghetti-Understanding/dp/0736919619/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1459441349&sr=8-1&keywords=men+are+like+waffles