

Note to Wives...

Husbands generally are men of few words. When there are confrontations at home, they may be explosive initially but eventually back off without saying a word even if they disagree. Men like to 'save face', be respected, and apparent 'peace' in a way spells 'respect' to them. Husbands, therefore, will come across either as too forceful (initially) or not involved (after a few occurrences).

Wives lament, "with his behaviour like that, how to respect him!" The problem then deteriorates to: the less wives respect husbands, the less involved and loving husbands become. Basically, a vicious cycle.

Perhaps the question is: "Am I (as a wife) proud of my man?" Some probably say, "I was!" A wise saying goes: "Treat a man as you would like him to be and he will grow into the role. Treat him as he is and he will remain so!" If he is treated with respect, he will love more. If he is put down, he will become uninvolved.

Wives may further lament, "If I have to keep giving in, then what's the point? He is becoming very unreasonable and non-responsive! I used to love and respect him but have lost it probably because I keep giving and he never gives!"

Giving and taking in marriages is different from what we would expect. The key principle lies in Eph 5:33 "...each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and **the wife must respect her husband.**" Husband loves, wife respects. In today's society, wife demands and commands, husband withdraws and becomes uninvolved.

How or why do husbands become uninvolved? May we suggest:

1. Their opinions are not adopted.

Whenever husbands give their opinions and somehow they are never adopted, over time, they will 'switch off'. Wives will say the ideas are all useless. Regardless of good or bad, the process behind this is letting men fail for themselves with bad ideas (lots of patience and communication are needed here.). In an attempt to be efficient, we sometimes lose the learning process (through failure). It is similar to parenting stubborn children –

sometimes the best way is to silently watch the child fail and then gently pick the child up!

2. They are put down in 'public' or in front of their children.

When remarks are passed that make husbands feel 'small' or disrespectful, they usually end up exploding or becoming withdrawn. Even if it is within the family, like in front of the children, men will feel disrespected, causing them to withdraw.

3. They are not given enough 'space'.

Husbands like to do their own things without the need to 'report' to anyone (not a good habit but there is this inert inclination). Couples will need to work out what is comfortable but generally keep this guideline in mind and learn what is sufficient 'space' for the guy and what is too little information for the gal.

Times of conflict are learning times. If out of 10 disagreements, wives eventually go ahead and decide and have our own way more than 50% of the time, a 'disrespect' message is sent. Wives will end up going one way (do things without the husbands), while husbands will go the other way (hibernates, channel surfs, bury themselves in computer games, newspapers.)

Hopefully this awareness of the make up of men can help wives understand husbands and strengthen marriages. Changes come when hearts are touched and the way husbands' hearts are touched is through the 'respect' route. Once they feel respected, they will also feel like a 'man' and will assume more responsibilities. Husbands must be allowed the chance to fail, with their wives, without ridicule. That takes time and patience which usually wives have more of!

If children come along, the motherly instinct in wives enable great capabilities in women. Wives will take control especially with family matters. Before long, wives end up mothering husbands as well. Husbands are generally pampered by their mothers already, and they will happily be pampered when the wives do everything! (ie. becoming uninvolved.) If we want husbands to do more, we have to do less. In the process of getting there, many things will **NOT** be done. Actually, is **doing** things more important than **being** the husbands and wives we ought to be?