

A SPECIAL INTERLUDE
"How God Has Men Reverse Their Futile Interactions With Women"
(Deuteronomy 17:14-20)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) For years I have noticed a significant issue existing in our society that negatively affects relationships between men and women. I see that, on the one hand, a *significant* number of **husbands** sense that their wives or women in general don't **respect** them, and a *significant* number of **wives** or women in general have candidly *expressed* their **disrespect** for their husbands **or** for men in **general!** It is my belief that men *often* don't know how to **gain** that respect, though they **want** it very much, and that this frustration leads to many futile and aberrant behavior forms among **men** that only *exasperate* women!

(2) The issue has come into sharp focus with President Clinton's nationally-known adultery scandal. This week he told reporters that he had a **lot** of work to do in repairing his family relationships! After talking with my wife, Nadine about his remarks, we both concluded that the President's **respectability** before Mrs. Clinton and daughter, Chelsea are a *main* ingredient of what he meant needed to be repaired!

(3) On Tuesday, the ABC evening news reported that the President is getting counsel from two notable **Evangelicals**, **Tony Campolo** and **Gordon McDonald**. Amazingly, Reverend McDonald *himself* once fell into **adultery** while **pastoring** a church in Lexington, Massachusetts, and had to leave his pulpit! He is now back in the pulpit, something I do not believe is Biblical, but I bring up the point to show that the issue of a man's **respectability** before his **wife** or before women in general is a **BIG national** issue today!

(4) Then, on Thursday morning's news, we heard that Republican Congressman, Henry Hyde, head of the Congressional Judiciary Committee that first handles the Starr Report on the President's affair issue **himself** committed adultery 30 years ago! The issue of the **respectability** of **husbands** is hitting us from all angles!

(4) Since we have just finished a series on Ephesians, and before we get into another theme, all things considered, I believe that the Lord is directing me to do a Special Interlude sermon on this issue.

So, in keeping with the Lord's leading, for this one sermon, we will look into God's Word to see how to ADDRESS the concern of the LACK of RESPECT for MEN among WOMEN.

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "There is a notable lack of respect that many women have for many men that bothers the men! Men often react in ways that only lead to tragedy! How is this need EFFECTIVELY addressed?!"

- I. **To help us SEE just WHAT we often face, I hold that there are these three STAGES of increasing entanglement with the problem:**
 - A. **Stage One That Fails - To be respected, men usually first try to GUESS what are their wives' needs and wants so as to fill them.**
 1. One problem with this route is that men do not know what will make a wife fulfilled as men cannot **read** a woman's *mind!*
 2. Another problem may arise from the woman's failure: the man may do everything right, but because of sin or weakness in his wife, she refuses to respect him regardless what he tries to do to fulfill her!
 - B. **Stage Two That Fails - When that fails, "to stay sane," men may just GIVE UP trying to please their wives and do what they want.**
 1. If a husband ignores a wife's disrespect to do what he wants only, the woman becomes angry as he avoids his needed dominion of her.
 2. If a divorce doesn't threaten first, the squelched or angry wife may take out her wrath on her sons, leading to more wrath problems!
 - C. **Stage Three That Fails - Finally, men may try to be or to do what their WIVES TELL them to do in order to gain their respect.**
 1. God confirmed even **after** the **Fall** of humanity into sin that men should lead women for their mutual benefit, Gen. 2:23-24; 3:16b.
 2. If a man then simply does what his wife wants him to do, he fails to lead her as **she** thus **leads** herself *and* him, and she gets frustrated as the man in this role seems to her like an irresponsible child!
- II. **OPPOSITE this "cobweb", Deuteronomy 17:14-20 has a solution!**
 - A. Since **God** equipped **MEN** with the "master" influence over women even **after** the *Fall*, we **start** to **handle** this issue by addressing **men!**
 - B. Well, Dt. 17:14-20 is a good text to use as it shows **male kings** how to be **blessed** by *God* in their *reigns* over **all** subjects, even **WOMEN!**
 - C. In *using* this text, we use the insight from "I" above **guide** us into **avoiding unworkable** applications and *toward* making **right** ones!
- III. **As SOLVING this issue beginning at the "Stage Three" level may mean addressing a fragile marriage, we UNTANGLE the stages SLOWLY in REVERSE order in using Deut. 17:16-20 as follows:**

- A. Step One - Opposite "I,C" where the man seeks to heed his wife's lead to win her respect, note that Dt. 17:20b does **NOT** promise God's king will be **respected**, but *only* that he'll have a **long reign!** Thus, a man should **not AIM to win** a woman's **respect**, but **AIM to obey God** in *how* he relates to her, see Luke 6:26! Then he can *really lead* her!
- B. Step Two - Opposite "I,B", a man must **avoid self-centeredness**:
 - 1. He must avoid feeding his ego and stop hoarding power-enhancing tools to get influence and respect (in Dt. 17:16, these were horses). He is to trust God for his power, not **things he acquires** for that!
 - 2. He must avoid viewing and using the woman as an object of lust, a vice often seen in a man's seeking **many** women, Dt. 17:17a. He must **respectfully** (1 Thes. 4:4-8) cleave **only** his wife, Gen. 2:24.
 - 3. He must avoid amassing material goods for himself, but focus on meeting those needs for his wife and others under him, 17:17b, 20a
- C. Step Three - Opposite "I,A" where a man **guesses** his role, and gets into trouble by guessing wrongly, a man must **daily read Scripture** to find the **right way independent of himself (and his wife)!**
 - 1. In reading Scripture, a man learns he is to be **accountable to God**, and that checks a tendency to **neglect** his "master" role, 17:18-19b.
 - 2. Yet, he also learns his accountability to **God** means he must **NOT favor either his wife's or his own** but **GOD'S will**, Dt. 17:19b,c.
 - 3. His seeing this accountability to God will also check his selfishness so that the man can really **learn** and meet his wife's **welfare**, 17:20a
- D. Result - God sees to it that **worthy** women **respond** to such responsible, selfless, insightful, **real leadership** with **respect**, 17:20b.

Application: ***GOD has given the man a "master" influence over the woman. Thus, SOLUTIONS to all man-woman relation problems must begin with (1) MEN getting right with God by faith in Christ, Jn. 3:16; 3:3; 7:38-39. (2) Then such saved MEN must (a) depend on God's indwelling Spirit for behavior control (Gal. 5:16-23). MEN can then (b) stop TRYING to make themselves RESPECTED by women, and rather obey God. They do so (c) by not using their "master" influence over women for selfish ends, but (d) in heeding SCRIPTURE in relating to women so WOMEN will benefit as GOD defines their benefit. (d) This route BYPASSES what WOMEN or MEN respectively think or WANT. (e) Such men will be influential, and WORTHY women will RESPECT them and SUBMIT to them!***

Lesson: ***MEN by grace must SHIFT from trying to get RESPECT from women and just focus on gaining GOD'S approval! GOD then blesses such MEN with long-term influence and respect from WORTHY women!***

Conclusion: (To illustrate the lesson . . .)

I do not regularly watch the television show, "Dawson's Creek," so I do not know if I would recommend that show for regular viewing.

However, one night I happened to see just one scene in an episode of that show and was very impressed with it.

In the scene, the male character "Dawson," a teen has just "broken up" with his girlfriend. Some of his high school buddies take Dawson to a nearby college town where there is a gathering of "college women". They hope to find some dates there and get Dawson to meet a "college woman" and get over his high school girlfriend. **Their** intent is apparently to get Dawson so involved with another girl that one of them can "move in" on a relationship with Dawson's **former** girlfriend!

The key scene shows Dawson coming up to a college girl at the hangout, a girl he randomly picks from behind and asking if he can talk with her. Thinking he is trying to solicit an encounter with her for self-centered reasons, she turns around and flatly tells him to go away!

Dawson refuses to budge, but patiently and quietly waits for the "college woman" to finish talking to the other guy at her table. When she finally notices Dawson still standing behind her, she turns, looks up at him and asks why he didn't take her hint and go away.

Dawson responds, "I broke up with my girlfriend today, and I want to talk to you so I can feel better! I just want to talk, that's all!"

The girl, unnerved by his remark, lets him sit down and talk.

The conversation proceeds smoothly and she comes to like him and hints at having a deeper relationship. Dawson responds, "No, that would not be right on my part! I just wanted to talk with you!" He offers to escort her out and get her into her car as it is night. As she drives off, she asks him to call her again!

Meanwhile, Dawson's buddies who have gotten nowhere with all of their approaches to the "college women" marvel as Dawson makes headway with his **first** try! When he returns to them and they ask, "What's your secret?" he replies, "I told her I wanted to talk!" His buddies are speechless, and stand there with their mouths open!

God's plan is for MEN to RESPECT God and be humble and considerate toward WOMEN while doing what is RIGHT in taking INITIATIVES. THAT wins their being influential with WOMEN the right way, and it strengthens a nation long-term!