

Text: I Peter 5:5-7

Title: "But What About..."

Introduction: For those of you who have not been with us for the past few weeks or are a guest with us today ... WELCOME ... Problem is that you are coming in at the end of the marriage segment of our Relationships Series. So, you might be wondering what is going on. Let me attempt to put what we are doing in a nutshell...

We are attempting to work on one little segment of the very complex relationship of marriage. Here's what we are looking at: Most all of us approach marriage with a list of Dreams, Wishes and Desires; and we are supposed to. We have seen or experienced marriages in our households or on the movie screen that we think is how marriage is supposed to be, so we Dream that our husband will be like this man or our wife will be like that woman.

Many men expect their spouse to conduct herself like HIS MOM. "Because everyone knows that's how a wife should act or talk or dress or whatever..." Many women think that their spouse should act like HER DAD "because that's what a husband does, isn't it?"

Then, as we have time with the one we love BEFORE we get married we have time to dream about what our finances and our schedules and our children and our free time and our vacation, etc. will look like. The problem comes when what were once DREAMS, WISHES, and DESIRES turn into EXPECTATIONS. Not sure exactly when this happens, but subconsciously we all have that moment when we change our language from "I hope someday..." to "WHEN?"

When our DWDs go from the DWD box to the EXPECTATION box, it brings a great amount of STRESS to the relationship. When our dreams turn into expectations, our marriages change from *Covenant to Contract*. A CONTRACT relationship is a DEBT / DEBTOR Relationship. The language in the marriage becomes "YOU OWE ME"! "You are my husband and everyone knows that a husband is supposed to do this or that, so that's what YOU OWE ME!" "You are my wife and we talked about this before we got married and you kind of promised that this is how it would be, so YOU OWE ME!"

If you are wondering where all of the intimacy and passion has gone in your marriage, you probably are living in a debt/debtor relationship. You Owe Me = I Own You. In an "I Own You" relationship, there is no room for unconditional love and gratitude and/or acts of service that contribute to a truly loving relationship.

Again, and if you would like to read or hear the previous messages in this series they are available on our website, www.bmzchurch.org, we've said that we are not to just throw out our DWDs and just focus on our spouse.

Last time we were together we said that we need a THIRD PARTY in the marriage... We were reminded that God challenges us in marriage to love our spouse in a manner of SUBMISSION ... in other words, put their DWDs before our own. "Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord." Put your husband's DWDs in priority over yours, not because they deserve it, but because the Lord wants you to. Easy to submit to Jesus: He died on a cross for you so that you can have eternity in Paradise! Submit to your husband in gratitude to God.

Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church (that's YOU!). Love your wife the way Christ loves you. Jesus does not offer you forgiveness because you DESERVE it, right?!? Neither will you love your wife because SHE DESERVES it. Love your wife because that will show gratitude for what God has offered you!

Remember, we said that God wants His love for us to be TANGIBLE. God wants your spouse to experience that AGAPE/UNCONDITIONAL LOVE day-in and day-out. That's why God put YOU in HIS/HER life! Just as we have a debt-free relationship with God, we are to have a debt-free relationship with our spouse.

Well, with that as our background, we have to wrap up this marriage part of the series today. But, with all that we learned about the DWD box and the EXPECTATION box and moving everything back to the DWD box so that we are not stressing out our spouse all the time with demanding that they be like us or be what we want, we still have two things we need to talk about: One (1), what do we do with all the stuff once we get it back to the DWD Box, and Two (2), how do you talk about all this stuff with your spouse? (Yes, men, we have to talk about it ... women, next time your husband wants to tell you in detail about what has to be fixed on your car, allow them!)

PRAY!

At this time I invite you to take the insert out of your program. On one side you will see our brief scripture for today and on the other an outline of how we are going to attempt to answer these two questions. Please grab a pen and fill in the blanks and write other stuff down that means something to you and your marriage. Not married?!? Enjoy! Take it home and post it somewhere where you will be reminded of what learned today from Scripture. For those of you IPODing or listening on-line, you too can download our program and fill in the blanks.

Let's start with what we have in the box. We are going to go to a short book way in the back of your Bible, 1st Peter. Now, I don't know if you all read the Bible or if you believe that the Bible is the Word of God, but I want you to know that I do. Why? Because it works! If we listen to what our Scriptures say, so often it improves our lives here, much less preparing us for our eternities. Some of you have said, "Stan was preaching at me today. How did he know that I go through that or just had that happen to me?" It's not because Stan is really smart or has your house bugged. It's because this book written by over 50 different authors over a 1500 year period in history is still today, the Word of God. Brace yourselves. Here we go...

I Peter 5:5 ... we are coming in here in the middle of a thought of Peter's. He has been addressing the Elders in the Church on how to be good Elders in the Church and we pick it up in verse 5...

Here is the answer to the question, "What do I do with my DWDs?" You might say, "I have been in this marriage a long time now and I have some Hopes and Dreams about what might be as part of my relationship with my spouse and they are not coming true. What do I do with those things and how do I handle them?"

Now, remember that Peter is married. He's watched Jesus and how Jesus was in relationship with people and now Peter is writing about church relationship ... which, does apply to marriage relationships...

V. 5 = "*In the same way, you younger men must accept the authority of the elders.*" That was what Peter was talking about specifically in this passage ... again, about submission to other people, but then he gets to us...

V. 5b = “*And, all of you serve each other in humility...*”

I. Serve Each Other in Humility

- A. Biblical Humility = NOT ... “since you are my boss or my elder, I will just do whatever you say.”
1. NOT ... “because of your position and my lack of position, I guess I have to do it your way.”
 2. NOT ... “because you have earned the right to lay down the rules, I will follow your rules.”
 3. Biblical humility has nothing to do with anyone else’s rank or position or wealth...
- B. Biblical Humility = IS ... a choice ... “I’m going to choose, not because of who you are and who I’m not ... to put your Deal ahead of My Deal.”
1. I choose to make your priorities more important than mine.
 2. I’ve got a box of DWDs and you’ve got a box of DWDs and I choose to make *your* box more important than mine!
- C. Peter reminds us that throughout Scripture and throughout Jesus’ life we were reminded that in order to be Christ-like, we would put other people’s needs and wants and interests before ours without asking, “What’s in it for me?”.
- D. We are challenged to do this for all people, no matter who they are. In Scripture, Jesus always made the joy of others His priority. Are you hearing me CHURCH?!?
- E. Then Paul writes, “...for...”, meaning “because” ... okay, here’s why we treat others out of humility:

V.5b = “*God opposes the proud but favors the humble.*”

II. God Opposes the Proud

- A. God sets God’s Self against the Proud! Again, throughout Scripture it is pride that gets people into trouble.
- B. “Okay, if my deal conflicts with your deal, I want MY DEAL to be the priority!” Whenever life becomes about me and my priorities, we’ve got a problem. Why do you think problems come in marriages?!?!?
1. If you are having problems in your marriage, the first place you need to look for a solution is in *the mirror*.
 2. If you are proud and your marriage or parts of your marriage is about you, then guess where God is?
 3. God says, according to Peter, if you are making yourself and your desires more important than your spouse or their desires ... God says, “I’ll be over here opposing. Good luck!”
 4. God = God opposes or “works against” the proud. If that’s you ... don’t expect God to get involved in your business.
- C. If you are willing to put the other person first, God will jump back in!

III. **God Gives Grace to the Humble**

- A. "...but 'favors'..." (BUT, God doesn't play favorites ... God loves everybody ... Yes He does and Yes He does!) = Grace = This definition of "grace" is NOT the one about Jesus hanging on a cross so that you have an opportunity to repent of your sins and be forgiven of your sins.
- B. This GRACE = The ability to do what we need to do at the given time.
- C. In other words, if you are HUMBLE and are willing to put your spouse's stuff ahead of yours, God will give you the strength, courage, wisdom and love to do what you need to do in the moment.
- D. If you are humble, God will give you the GRACE you need to handle it when your spouse does or doesn't or shouldn't have or when you feel like ... etc.
- E. IF YOU ARE HUMBLE and putting, not only your spouse's DWDs first, but putting God first. Guess what? When we put other people's needs ahead of our own because that's what God's Word says, then we are being obedient to God and HUMBLING ourselves before GOD!!
- F. Okay, here's the part we didn't want to hear in this Scripture...

V.6 = *"So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor."*

IV. **In God's Right Time**

- A. Gotta tell you this ... God's RIGHT TIME and my RIGHT TIME are often different! MY TIME = If I've been pretty good at being humble and putting her DWDs ahead of mine for say ... 3-4 hours ... there had ought to be some reciprocation!
- B. Guess what that's about? Yep. That's all about ME again!
- C. You know what? If we are humble before God and we put others DWDs ahead of ours, there is a good chance that in some of those instances, God's Right Time might not show up in this life!
- D. BUT, know this: ***If you are humble before the mighty power of God, God will, at some point, lift you up in honor!*** It might not be the way you pictured it and it might not feel like it's paying off right now, but, the honor from GOD is coming!
- E. Here is not the proper response ... "Well, if it's going to be God's right time when I finally get what I want, it will never happen..." Guess what just happened? It's all about you again!
- F. But, do you know who cares about you and your DWDs more than anyone else?

V.7 = *"Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you."*

V. **God Cares for You**

- A. I hope you haven't done this, but over the past few weeks as I prepared for this marriage part of the relationship series, I've had some

moments that I looked at my DWDs and thought; “Well, that one is just dumb and trivial. I don’t know why, logically, that means anything to me, but it does. Maybe I should just throw that one out!”

- B. Do you see what Peter just told us? God cares about you. And, for the most part, those DWDs that you have are there because that’s how God created you to be (some not so much). I don’t know if you’ve ever discussed your DWDs with God, but listen to how God appears to respond according to this Scripture:
1. “God, I’ve tried to move this back over from the Expectation Box to the DWD Box, but the family schedule still matters to me. It matters how my spouse and I communicate and divide up the carpooling and what time we will be home to have dinner together and I don’t know why it matters so much...”
“Does it matter to you?” “Yes.” “Okay, then it matters to Me.” “Really?” “Yeah, Really!”
 2. “God, I feel so foolish that I wish my spouse would ...”
“Wait.” “What?” “Does it matter to you?” “Yeah, but...”
“No but. If it matters to you, it matters to me. But, instead of loading that up on your spouse, give that to Me.” “Really?”
“Yep.”
 3. “BUT God, what if he never...” “Stop.” “But, what if she never...” “Stop.” “Why?” “Because that is not your part. You just place all those DWDs on Me and in My Right Time...”
- C. Here’s what happens: The more we place on God when we get frustrated and less on our spouse, we find that over time we become better people. We look at a situation and say, “You know, about 5 months ago, I would have been really mad about that...” The more we rely on God, the more God has a chance to come through.
- D. This lowers the stress in our marriages greatly!
- E. Okay, last thing ... at some point or another, as spouses; you have to be able to talk about this stuff.

VI. BOX TALK

- A. Confess – Start the conversation with this: I want to confess that I know that I have poured out these expectations on you. I confess that and I’m sorry and I’m working on loading those up on God. I might still load some on you because I’m not that good at this yet, but I’m working on it.
- B. Ask – 2 questions...
1. “*Where do you feel pressure to live up to my expectations?*”
I have tried to confess some of the things I KNOW that I put on you, but maybe there are some that I don’t even realize. So, please tell me: “Where do you feel pressure to live up to my expectations?”

2. **BIG WARNING ON THE 2ND QUESTION:** “*What can I do to make our marriage richer?*” Another way of asking, “What’s in your box?” **DO NOT** ask your spouse, “Tell me everything that is in your box.” 2 problems...
 - a. #1 = Your wife wants you to figure it out without her having to tell you ... for the 400th time!
 - b. #2 = There are things in your spouses DWD box that cannot become a reality ... period! If you bring those out to your spouse, they will always feel like a failure. What if Sarah said to me, “Ever since I was a little girl, I’ve always dreamed of being married to a professional football player?” Well, that’s helpful!
 - c. If you have one of those that you know your spouse will never come through on ... cast that on God, but **DO NOT** ever tell your spouse. If you do, they will forever feel like a failure.
 - d. “What can I do to make our marriage richer?” That gives your spouse the choice of what to bring out of the DWD box at that time ... maybe something your spouse can do something about.
- C. **Reward** – We need to reward our spouse like we did back when we were dating. Simple principle that will work everywhere ... “What’s rewarded is repeated.” (repeat) Sometimes we accidentally meet one of the DWDs in our spouse’s box and we don’t even know it. The other person is so thrilled about it, but they never tell you. What happens? We don’t know we did anything good and our chances of repeating it are pretty slim. **REWARD WHAT YOU WANT REPEATED!**
 1. We have to find a way to reward what our spouse does that cares for anything in our DWD box, especially if we suspect they had no idea that that was one of our DWDs!
 2. Leave a note ... tell them what happened and that you are grateful. Please don’t tell them that you **EXPECT** it to happen again tomorrow ... just moved back to that box!
 3. We have to reinforce what our spouse does that cares for our DWDs so that those things can continue to happen...
- D. **Cast ALL** your anxieties on God, talk to your spouse (again) and reward when they come through ... intentional or not.

Let’s Pray!

Thanks to Andy Stanley’s book and series “Imarriage” for outlines and insights for this part of the worship series.