

Angie's Marriage Column – January 28, 2015

How to Live with a Disrespectful Spouse and Learning to Communicate

Ask Angie: My question is this. My husband believes in God but does not really believe that Jesus is the son of God. When I married him 3 years ago I was not saved either and did not seek God's advice whether I should marry him or not. So, three years fast forward. God willed that we have a daughter. She is the light of our life. Now I have a growing relationship with Jesus but it is sometimes deeply hurtful to be in this marriage. My husband has some good qualities but he often verbally disrespects me and I do not feel loved. My heart is in a lot of pain. I have tried everything... talking to him, taking a marriage course by myself because he does not want to, and distancing myself emotionally (which helps a little). I go to church every Sunday with my daughter and he sometimes joins us if he is not working but very reluctantly. Other than praying for him and myself and for the restoration of our marriage any other advice you have?

Marriage Guidance: Thank you for writing in today and sharing your concerns. You letting me know that you "go to church" every Sunday does not tell me anything, other than you think that "going to church" somehow makes you a good Christian, and maybe it does, and maybe you are. But understand that many people "go to church" and prove through their actions that they haven't really learned how to behave as a Christ-one. Clearly, "going to church" does not make one better than someone who worships and adores Jesus Christ and LIVES the Christ-centered lifestyle, without going to church.

Please read this marriage column with your husband. No one can make your husband believe in Jesus Christ; this is something that he must realize and come to know on his own time. Pestering him to "go to church" is not going to help him to know Jesus Christ. What would be better is to show your husband how Jesus is working in your life. Be the light on the hill for your husband; this will influence him more than anything else. Be the yeast in the bread; be the salt of the earth;.....

Matthew 5: 13 KJV **You are the salt of the earth**; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. **You are the light of the world.** A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”**

It can be VERY difficult living with a verbally abusive person. Many marriages have either one or both couples who disrespect one another on a daily basis and they don't even know **they** are doing it!

That's the scary part; that **they** DON'T EVEN REALIZE THEY ARE BEHAVING DISRESPECTFUL. This might be the case with your husband. I say "might be" because I do not have enough information to go on to base the negative behavior on anything.

Examples of Disrespectful Behavior: Some wives often belittle and micromanage their husbands. They think they are being helpful, or think that their husbands need their two-cent worth, but both ways of thinking are in error, and that's the problem. *We wives need to let our husbands just be.* If they need something from us, moral support, encouragement, advice, they'll ask.

Now bear with me, I'm not saying you are behaving this way with your husband, but we need to LOOK at our own behavior as well, **and then see if there is a pattern.** All marriage issues work both ways, so goes the saying, "Takes two to tango". There is hardly ever a one-sided issue or one person causing the marital problems. We're so busy micromanaging one another that we forget to look at ourselves. Let me be clear. **Disrespect runs rampant in marriages today, even Christian homes.**

The biggest problem I see is people do not know how to be nice to one another; instead they gripe, complain, yell and become angry with one another because this is how they try and control the relationship. Problem is, using our emotions

negatively does not work in the long run; what does work is backing off and detaching from the person who is behaving disrespectful and abusive.

Scripture talks a lot about how couples are to treat one another; with **long-suffering**. It takes spiritual maturity and the Holy Spirit of Christ within us to suffer through a marriage when our spouse is treating us bad. This is why we need to pray for Jesus to help us get through the difficult times of marriage, asking Him to take the burdens from us.

Ephesians 4:2-3- King James Version (KJV) With all lowliness and meekness, **with longsuffering**, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Why Would a Husband Disrespect His Wife?

If a wife is belittling, nagging, complaining, and correcting her husband all the time, and even some of the time, he is going to feel like his wife doesn't think he can do anything (right) without her. Where does this leave his confidence level?

We wives can really lower our husband's self-esteem just through our cutting words.

A man/husband needs to feel capable and able "as the man" of his house, but when a wife constantly ridicules or demeans him, what do you think is going to happen in his position as the man? He will begin to feel discouraged and worse, less of a man. This can make a man verbally abusive and disrespectful towards his wife; it severs intimacy and is VERY hard on the marriage. Through his frustration he expresses himself and when he does it, he uses his emotions in a bad way through impolite and cutting remarks.

This may or may not be the issue in your marriage, but consider carefully what I am saying. All wives reading this today need to consider **this** as it is a BIG, HUGE problem in many marriages today.

Is there a pattern? When does he get abusive with his wife? Is it after she demeans his position "as the man of the house" in some way? Is it when she nags and complains about "something about him?" Is it when she goes her own way,

disregarding his feelings? Is it when she selfishly does whatever she wants without consulting her man? Is it when she shows self righteous indignation with him because she claims to know God and go to church? I could go on and on here, but I won't put you through that.

And it works the other way too, but most men are less confrontational and will simply spout off a few words and walk away, but women continue to go on and on. How do I know this? Well, for one, I used to do it with my own husband years ago, and for two, from receiving hundreds of emails from couples for over the last 12-years!

Something is making your husband frustrated and feel contempt from within; it's not coming from nothing. Make sure that you are not part of the problem. I don't mean that in a bad way; just make sure that there is NOTHING YOU ARE DOING OR SAYING that would cause him to be disrespectful.

Is he having issues at the work place; are you too demanding of him in the home after he has been working all day long? What causes a man to be disrespectful towards his wife, if she is being loving towards him?

Galatians 6:2 King James Version (KJV) Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

There could be NUMEROUS reasons why your husband is disrespecting you but for now, let's talk about what you can do about it. You say that you are distancing yourself emotionally, and that is good but you need to know "when" to detach and when not to, otherwise it will begin to sever any intimacy that's left and then things really begin to go down-hill from there.

What YOU Can Do about a Verbally Abusive Husband

Disclaimer: these things to do are only for a verbally abusive husband, not a husband who is violent and hits you.

1. Communicate with your husband. Express yourself in a nice, loving way. No one should be a sounding board for disrespect and abusive words and you should

not accept it. So learn to be loving and communicate (in a good way) why you will not allow being disrespected.

Don't say: Why are you disrespecting me all the time?

Don't say: Why are you like this, what's wrong?

Don't become angry or get disrespectful back...etc...etc

Do Say: I am sorry that you are having a difficult time, but please do not take your frustrations out on me.

Do Say: What can I do to help, or make you feel better?

Do Say: If you start to verbally abuse me I will leave the room. (then walk out)

Do Say: If I have been disrespectful towards you, I am sorry and I will work at being nicer because I want to be nice and love you the way God wants me to love you.

Make sure that you do what you say you are going to do or he will only see it as threats and not real.

Miscommunication is another big problem in marriages today; people do not know how to express themselves properly. But you can learn by reading articles that encourage productive communication and by thinking first before you speak.

[How to Apply Productive Communication into Your Marriage](#)

2. If you are sure that you have been treating your husband respectfully *then* you must learn how to detach from him when he uses abusive words towards you. If you are NOT part of the problem then don't have any part of the problem.

This takes us back to number 1. Express yourself in the proper way towards your husband. Lots of times just asking "what's wrong" is not enough. People do not want to say what's wrong to avoid more negative confrontation and or because they simply are not sure themselves. So asking "what's wrong" "why are you treating me this way" will make him respond in a negative way. Maybe he thinks you are treating him disrespectfully and that is what your answer will be. All this does is start an argument and yelling; neither is productive communication.

Read, [How to Be Emotionally There for Your Spouse](#) and then apply into your marriage.

Your husband has to feel like he can talk with you without you coming back unconstructively or with invalidation. Everyone needs to have “their moment” to express themselves without anyone interfering. When they are done talking then you may speak your thoughts and opinions about *it*, but in a loving manner, not with criticism and harsh tone.

3. Read and study the bible about how a wife should love her husband and how a husband should love his wife. A good place to start is right here on the Heaven Ministries website. There are sections [just for wives](#) and [just for husbands](#). Make use of them and look up and study any scripture.

There’s a lot to be learned for married people as they rush into marriage without really knowing each other. We can learn to love and continue to grow together in Jesus Christ, or we can argue, fight and fuss with one another. We prefer the learning to love through Jesus Christ and being the husband or wife that God wants us to be for each other sentiment. That’s what the Heaven Ministries Marriage Ministry is all about...learning to love and grow with your spouse.

[Remember, a Good Communicator Is Always a Good Listener!](#)

4. PRAY for Jesus to help you with longsuffering. ***Colossians 3:12 King James Version (KJV) -- Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;***

There’s that ***longsuffering*** word again.

5. Be an example to your husband. How do we do that? Well, you say that “you go to church” and you claim to be a Christian then we must begin to BE a Christ-one as well. Instead of thinking we are better than our husbands because “we go to church”. ***Titus 2:7-8 King James Version (KJV)-- In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.***

If “going to church” is not helping your marriage then why do you continue to go? Let’s instead, work at being nice, because as I see it, nothing is going to change as long as you continue “going to church” where people are taught incorrect scripture and where they look on the outside of how a person behaves rather than the heart of a person.

It would be much better if you and your husband began studying the bible at home together and then start applying the principles for a successful marriage that Jesus Christ wrote about 2000 years ago.

John 4:23-24 King James Version (KJV) But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Consider this: If we, who “go to church” and profess to be Christians are not being the yeast in the bread, the salt of the earth, or the light on the hill for our unbelieving spouses and all those who are unbelievers, then what are we being?

Be Blessed through Jesus Christ!

Angie and Frank

Be blessed,

Angie and Frank

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Do you have a marriage question that you want biblical answers to? Let us know and we’ll pray about it, research it and answer it with the understanding and wisdom God has blessed us with. It’s not what Frank or Angie can do for your marriage; it is between YOU and God. We’re just the messengers.

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