

Angie's Marriage Column – April 15, 2009

How to Deal with a Husband *You Think* is Controlling

Ask Angie: My husband is too controlling, every time I think things are going to work out, they go back to the way it was before, he bit my face a couple weeks ago, I didn't do anything, he starts feeling a certain way and thinks I'm lying to him. I've been with him for 16 years, and it hasn't gotten better, he's made some changes, not as violent, but the constant grief I get, I can't take it anymore... my heart is breaking.

One of our kids is acting out, the 2 older ones don't want to be at our house, and he's great with our baby. I don't know what to do. My family is about to wipe their hands of me because I keep going back... I don't know what to do, I want to be a good wife and mother, he says I'm letting my kids tell me what to do, but I do see their pain, my older two, especially my middle one who is a great boy. Thank you for listening.

Marriage Guidance: Please print out this marriage column and preview and discuss it with your husband.

Why do people try and control others? What does controlling someone mean? People who control others with words, threats, fist, lies, and manipulative behavior usually have underlying insecurities within them. Perhaps they are afraid of losing something or someone. They have to get to the bottom of these insecurities to understand *how to accept the things they cannot change* and the courage to only change the things they can – themselves!!

Your husband's behavior is definitely not appropriate behavior for a husband or father to be using. When a person uses any kind of verbal or physical force to get their way it is because they do not know any other way to behave. They think by using angry tones or physical force they are in control, but in actuality they are far from being in control of themselves. Your husband needs personal and inner healing to learn how to manage his emotions properly.

Don't misunderstand the usage of the word "control". Only when a husband or wife controls in a negative way is it actually controlling or trying to change that person. If couples have to scream at one another, demand things from one another, hit one another and manipulate one another than it is using controlling behavior. But if a husband or a wife is acting out as part of their God-given position then it is not control. Christ is a husband's director and a Godly husband directs his wife and family under the direction of Christ.

Here are a couple of examples you can go by to actually see if your husband is controlling or not. If your husband said he did not want you to wear a bikini at the beach without him with you would that be controlling behavior to you? What if he told you that

he wants you to quit your job and stay home with the kids? Is that controlling behavior? What if your husband said he did not want you to go to the grocery store alone at night, would that be controlling to you? All of the above is NOT controlling behavior but protective behavior. Society has totally misused the word “control”. Many wives believe their husbands are behaving controlling when really he only wants to protect his wife and family.

A feminist woman may find the above to be controlling because she doesn't need a man telling her what to do. But she is in rebellion to God and will have to answer for her behavior one day. Essentially when a woman rebels against a Godly husband she is rebelling against God. Protective behavior is instinctive for a good man to behave toward his wife. This is actually showing that he loves and cares for his wife enough to not let anything bad happen to her. We all know what can happen in the above scenarios when wives are out and about without their husbands. Most couples are in denial about what can happen when a woman is alone and then stuff happens.

Husbands Should Not Bring Grief to Their Wives

Most men rely on their wives to take care of many aspects of the home front except for if the roof needs repaired or if wood needs to be chopped, stuff like that. But some husbands micromanage how the wife is managing the home and he ends up being bossy and controlling doing it. This would be controlling behavior. Unless your wife is just a lazy slob who sits around on the couch watching soaps and eating bonbons all day, you need to leave her alone.

Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. (Ephesians 5:25) In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. (Ephesians 5:28)

A loving husband should not control his wife with strong words but be a loving husband for his marriage. A husband's example is seen in Ephesians 5:25. Controlling husbands usually feel insecure about their position as the man of the home. In many instances the wife is also bossy and controlling, which leaves him feeling devalued and under-appreciated. The more disrespected he feels the more controlling he gets. This is a vicious cycle in marriage, but it can be rectified when husbands take back what belongs to them – their headship position in the marriage.

Apply the wisdom and understanding that God has given you. God has given you strength and courage to be the man of your home and marriage, and to love and protect your wife. Most women don't have a problem with their husbands being lovingly firm with them. But they do have a problem when their husbands demand, control, and boss them around for their own insecure reasons. Where is the wisdom in that?

The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and insincere. (James 3:17)

If a husband has to control his wife for her to accept his headship influence then something is askew with the relationship. Or maybe something is wrong with her attitude. In a healthy marriage a man shouldn't have to boss or control his wife in any way – they should be communicating with each other instead. Use the wisdom God has given you and communicate with your wife so she will *want to* support your guiding direction.

You should make every effort to not argue and fight in front of your children. Little children act out because they feel insecure with mom and dad fighting all the time. They may do negative things just to get your attention. You and your husband NEED to sit down together and rationally, assertively and openly talk about what is missing/lacking/needed in your relationship with each other. Then you can come together in some kind of compromise.

Study these simple communications guidelines to understand how to get the most out of your communications with your husband. If you don't know what is bothering your husband how can you properly care for him. If your husband doesn't know what is bothering you then how can he properly care for you. Husband and wife need to make sacrifices for each other...these sacrifices start with proper communication.

Don't say: "You can't do anything right, I'll just do it myself?" (This is invalidating and rejecting)

Do say: "Yes, that is one way of doing it, but I like doing it this way because..." (This is not invalidating or rejecting)

Don't say: "Stop watching that crap on TV..." (This is demanding and controlling)

Do say: "I feel that we could be watching something more positive on TV..." (This is making yourself a part of the change rather than being demanding)

Don't say: "You make me so angry" (This is blaming and accusing – no one can make you angry but yourself)

Do say: "I feel angry when..." (This is directing your anger toward the circumstance instead of on your spouse)

Don't say: "You made me have an affair because..." (This is making your spouse feel responsible for your weakness. You need to be accountable for your sins, not your spouse.)

Do say: "I made a mistake, I'm sorry for being unfaithful in our marriage. (This is taking responsibility)

Don't say: "All you care about is what you want, what about me?" (This is selfish. What about you? Do something to take care of you.)

Do say: "I feel that we do a lot of things that you want, and I would like to do something that we both like." (This is compromise)

Do you see where I am going with this? You would not believe how many times a day that we direct our negative and destructive feelings at our spouse, and accuse each other for stuff that has nothing to do with them. Husbands and wives need to work together and stop being demanding, bossy, and controlling of each other.

We have control over our feelings and how we use those feelings in interaction with those we love. Think before you speak. Stop hurting your spouse with mean, disrespectful words. Learn to be nicely assertive instead. When we have a good relationship with Christ that is when we will have a good relationship with those we love. And remember: [A Good Communicator Is A Good Listener](#)

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