

## INTRODUCTION

We come now to a section in Ephesians, chapter 5 and the first part of chapter 6 that deals with marriage and the family. I am doing like a series within a series. a series of 5 messages entitled “Home Improvement, Jesus Style.” Unlike the popular television show when I talk about home improvement, I am not talking about building or rebuilding a residence. I am talking about how to build strong families, because I think there is a difference between a house and a home.

As I drive down the streets of East Texas I oftentimes look at houses and I think, “I wonder if there is a home in that house?” because a home is a family that is built upon the foundation of the word of God. The Bible says unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain.

From the very beginning, what God has created to be good and pure and noble, the devil has been constantly trying to destroy and tear apart. It’s interesting to me that before God ever created a nation, before God ever created a church, he created a family: Adam and Eve. From the very beginning we see Satan slithering his slimy body up to Eve trying to divide the two of them. Since that day the devil has been trying to destroy marriages. The Bible says, “What God has joined together let not man pull apart.”

One of the greatest tragedies we face today in America is the breakdown of the traditional Christian home. Those of us who are married should be working to fight against the effort of the devil to destroy homes. We ought to be trying to learn about what the Bible says about how we can build strong families. For those of you who have gone through the heartache of divorce and perhaps you are married again, I know more so than ever you want to do everything you can to make your marriage survive and make it strong.

Today I am going to be talking to you about the fundamental differences between men and women. Of course it applies in marriage, I mean it really applies in marriage but if you have to work with someone of the opposite sex or perhaps you have a relative you have a hard time understanding, or kids, even in school you need to understand at an early age that men and women are different. I say Vive le difference! I thank God for the difference between men and women. The last two weeks I have been in the former Soviet Union and all these pastors come up and hugged me and kissed me on the cheek: A kiss on one side and one on the other. I dodge their lips so they don’t get me right on the lips. As I have said before. Ladies, I didn’t know this, but the faces of men are like sandpaper! I mean they are so rough! I thank God I don’t have to kiss and hug on a rough face every day.

Some of you recognize this title, “Men Are From Pluto & Women Are From Mercury,” as a takeoff from the popular book by John Gray, *Men Are from Mar, Women Are from Venus*. His title is tongue in cheek and so is mine, because in this wonderful metaphor about the differences between men and women John Gray says all the men lived on Mars and all the women lived on Venus, two totally different civilizations, two totally different creatures. The men on Mars trained their telescopes to Venus and they saw these beautiful, intriguing, alluring creatures and they got messages to them saying, “We want to meet you so they met on planet Earth and they began to marry and inter-relate to one another but realizing they were two totally different races two totally different kinds of creatures. And of course he is saying this facetiously “Throughout

the centuries we have developed a collective amnesia and men and women have forgotten how different we are. When we don't recognize those differences, what results is conflict competition incompatibility. That's why there are a lot of problems in marriages today because men and women don't understand how truly different they are.” So I took that title and I said, “It's not Mars and Venus Men are from Pluto. Women are from Mercury, which is further apart than Mars and Venus. But men and women are very much different and you need to understand what these differences are.

Let me just say. We all know the number one reason given for divorce in America is incompatibility. Catherine Marshall wrote that men and women are totally incompatible. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of God can a man and a woman live together in marriage. I'm going to tell you some of these differences, but I want to tell you up front. I am not an expert! I will be sharing with you some things about the differences between men and women. There's an interesting little poem called, “Mom & Dad at the Football Game,” which goes like this:

They claim the sexes are the same.  
But check them at the football game.  
He notes the gain of every yard.  
She worries because they hit so hard.

They drop the ball, and how he grumbles.  
She pities the poor guy who fumbles  
He finds the halftime show a bore.  
She'd like the band to play some more.

Girls twirl, he smiles and forgets to scold.  
She wonders if their legs are cold.  
Two minutes there's a pass complete  
A touchdown made he's on his feet!

“That's it!” he cries there goes the gun.  
“Watch our boys go wild. We won!”  
Why must she think at such an hour  
Of the poor losers who are crying in the shower?

Men and women are different and if you don't try to understand some of those differences, you'll have trouble in marriage, or in the workplace, or in relating to people of the opposite sex. Some guys just don't want to learn; some women don't want to learn. They think ignorance is bliss. No. In marriage ignorance is absolute misery if you don't understand the special, unique differences between you and your spouse.

That's like the little second grade boy who, based on all of his wisdom and experience was giving some advice to his 5-year-old brother who was going to his first day of kindergarten. The He said, “Whatever you do, don't let them teach you to spell ‘cat.’” The 5-year-old said, “Why not?” and the second grader said, “Once you learn how to spell that, every word after that gets

harder and harder and harder!” I think sometimes that’s the attitude men and women take. “I just don’t want to learn the differences. I don’t care to learn.” If you will learn some of these differences, it will help you meet the needs of your spouse. It will help you understand those people you have to work with.

## **1. Men and women are different in the way they communicate**

I want to give you six basic differences between men and women. Number one, men and women are different in the way that they communicate. Men say “just the facts.” Women say, “Give me the juicy details.” Do you remember the old “Dragnet” show with the detective who said, “Just the facts, Ma’am.”? That’s basically what men want to know 1, 2, 3, 4, 5...but when a woman communicates, she wants to know the whole story. “Give me the juicy details.”

Several people have asked me since I got back, “Tell me about your trip to the former Soviet Union.” And I’ll say, “Do you want the female response or the male response?” Most guys say, “Give me the male response.” I say, “Ok. It was great!” That’s all I say and that’s fine. That’s all they wanted to know. But when I got back the other night and Cindy said, “Tell me about your trip.” Do you think I just said, “It was great!” No. I sat down with her and I gave her a blow by blow description of the day all the things that were happening, because I knew that’s what she wanted. Men and women are just different. A man can describe something in just one word. A woman wants to tell you all the details about it. It’s like sometimes I’ll come home from work and Cindy will say, “How was your day?” and I’ll say, “It was fine.” That’s my evaluation. Then I’ll say, “Tell me a little bit about your day.” She can take 20 minutes telling me about a 5-minute phone call. How is that possible? They just go into detail a lot more than we do and men. Men typically see the big picture and women look at the details. Guys, have you ever been over to someone’s house and you have never been there before and when you get back home your wife says something like, “What did you think about that room?”

You think, “It was okay. It was fine.” You just saw the big picture.

She says, “Did you notice how those little picture frames on the end table all coordinated? Did you notice the matting for the frames on the pictures picked up that color in the carpet so wonderfully?”

“No, I didn’t notice that.”

“Did you notice how the drapes just really brought out the color of the wallpaper?”

“No.”

“What did you notice?” she says.

“I noticed they didn’t have a television in there.”

Men just see the big picture. Women like to see the details. A woman can look at another woman and she’ll see her jewelry, notice her makeup, how her hair is fixed, the shoes she’s wearing, and the belt she has on. Guys look at somebody and say, “Good looking.” or “Not good looking.” “Acceptable.” “Not acceptable.” Women tend to look at the details. They generally want to be more verbal. Experiments have proven this is really true. They’ve done experiments taking 6- and 7-year-old children. They’ll put a boy in a room with a play telephone and they’ll have the play telephone ring. The little boy will pick it up and say, “Hello.” Nobody’s talking on the line so he just says, “Wrong number,” or he’ll say, “It’s for you.” But you put the same age girl in there and you let the phone ring. She picks it up—and there’s nobody on the other end of the

line—but she can carry on an imaginary conversation. She can talk, and talk, and talk, talk... Women like to have all the juicy details. Guys just want to have the facts.

## **2. Men and women are different in the way they relate to each other**

Here's the second difference and this relates to the scripture today. Number two. Men and women are different in the way they relate to each other. The roles and responsibilities of men and women are different. Paul introduces the topic by showing us that the roles and responsibilities of men and women are different. Ephesians 5:22-25, "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

In the next couple of weeks I'll be talking a lot more about what it means for wives to submit and for men to love, but basically, I want you to see at the very beginning that the roles and responsibilities of men and women are different in the way they relate to each other. A wife is a different emotional person than a husband and husbands are different emotionally than their wives. Let me give you an example. First of all, men tend to be like rubber bands. This is a good analogy John Gray gives in his book. Men are like rubber bands in the way they relate to their wives. Men enjoy being close, intimate with their mate. But only for really brief periods of time that's just the way most men are. Then that man wants to pull away and get isolated. In his book John Gray says, "Men retreat into their caves." For some men their cave is their job for some men their cave is their hobby. For some men their cave may be the workshop out behind the house, but they want to pull away and be alone. The mistake a lot of women make is they look at their mate pulling away and think, "Oh, no. He doesn't love me anymore! Why won't he talk to me?" There is something about a man's personality that when he pulls away and he gets to that certain point. Then he starts missing that closeness and intimacy and so he wants to come back and get close again. But then he will want to pull away again. He'll go out and hide in his cave. John Gray says, "Women, you have to be careful. When your husband is out in his cave, don't go and fetch him. That's not the best time because if you go into that cave, you're going to get burned by the dragon that's out there." Just understand that it is his nature to come back.

On the other hand, women are like ocean waves. There are times when their self-esteem and their feelings about themselves and about others are riding high. On one day they can look in the mirror and say, "You know I'm not Miss America, but I look pretty good!" And they can show love to other people. But on the very next day for whatever reason, they'll be down at the bottom. They'll look in the mirror and say, "Oh, how ugly. How could anybody love me?" They don't love themselves and they don't give love to anybody else. Husbands standing there watching these waves are getting seasick. They say, "Whoa, I don't understand this. Yesterday, you were just so happy and today it's hard to live with you." Women are by nature very moody. There are times their mood is high and times when their mood is low. So guys, be smart. Don't get angry at her when she is down there at the bottom of that wave. That's not the time to criticize her and try to be ugly to her. That's the time she needs your support. She needs your love and appreciation at that time. Guys, learn to be a good surfer and ride those waves. Surfers don't ride the little bitty bottom waves. They wait until a big one comes along and they get on

the crest and ride that thing in. Learn to recognize it and live with her as the Bible says “according to understanding.” When Peter is writing about husbands and wives, he says “live with your spouse with understanding.” Understand the way they are emotionally and just take it into account.

### **3. Men and women are different in the way they face problems**

Here’s the third difference. Men and women are different in the way they face problems. We all face problems. But a man is “Mr. Fixit” Got a problem? No problem. Let’s just fix it. Women on the other hand say, “Help me talk through this problem. Let’s discuss this problem because part of the solution is discussing it and looking for every option.” For men it’s, “No. let’s just fix it!”

When your wife says to you something like, “I’ve got a problem. You never tell me you love me!” how are you going to respond? Most men are going to say, “That’s not true. I told you last week that I love you and you say I never say I love you. I’ve told you at least six times since we’ve been married that I love you.” In other words, guys take that statement You Never Tell Me You Love Me literally. In a woman’s vernacular, they are allowed to make generalizations and exaggerations. Men are just so precise. She’ll say, “You never turn off the light in your closet.” He says, “I remember distinctly. Three weeks ago I turned it off.” She’s just talking about a problem. She wants you to talk with her and not just say, “Here’s the answer to it.”

Maybe your wife comes to you sometimes and is very frustrated. “Honey, I just don’t have enough time to do everything I have to do. I feel like I’m getting it from all directions. I’m tired!” A man out of love for his wife wants to immediately design a solution. He pulls out his pen and a sheet of paper and says, “We can fix that right now. Number one, what you need to do beginning tomorrow is get up 45 minutes earlier, okay? Number two. You need to make a list of things that you want to do during the day set a daily agenda. Number three. At the end of the day mark off everything that you have accomplished. Number four. Make an agenda for the next day and set long range and short range goals. There’s the solution to your problem.” And you wonder why she makes a face! Most of you men are thinking. “What’s wrong with that? That’s the solution!” She didn’t *want* a solution! She wanted you to empathize with her. She wanted you to understand the way she was feeling. She wanted you to talk with her about that. So the correct answer (I am told) is to say, “Honey, I know how you are feeling. I sometimes feel the same way. How can I help you?” Men just want to fix the problem. Women want to talk through the problem.

Women, on the other hand, let me warn you: Sometimes your husband doesn’t want your advice on how to fix the problem. He thinks he has already got it figured out and he thinks he can handle it. One of the things that really bugs men is what’s called “unsolicited advice.” When he is doing something a certain way, he doesn’t want to talk about it. He just wants to fix it and you stepping up and saying, “You’re doing it the wrong way. Let’s talk about the way you ought to be doing it.” He doesn’t want to hear that and he gets offended. So just understand each other. Women want to talk about it men want to fix it!

### **4. Men and women are different in the way they cope with stress**

Number four, men and women are different in the way we cope with stress. I think most of you have learned by now that men conceal their feelings and women reveal theirs. That tends to be true of most men and women. It is part of the American mystique and myth that men have to be tough macho creatures. In fact, James Collier wrote, “Men in America feel that they ought to be able to deal with anything that comes along and it is an admission of failure if they have to admit they are having trouble. Some men would rather fail at their marriage or with their children than to admit something is wrong and seek a solution.”

Men conceal their feelings. They climb into this shining suit of armor and on the outside want to look to the world like they are strong and tough! But if the truth be known, on the inside they are like little children and are crying and having a rough time. They feel like it is important to show everybody they are tough. The reason your husband doesn't want to share his problems with you a lot of times is out of love for you, because he feels that by sharing his problems with you he is burdening you down and he still has the weight himself. Sometimes out of love he won't do that. Some men (and this is typical) he won't share his problems with his wife, but may go to a bar and after a couple of beers, will share every one of his problems with a total stranger. A woman would never do that. She would only share problems with someone she trusts and feels intimate with. He'll unload with a stranger because he has no connection with that person. He doesn't mind burdening *him* down.

On the other hand, women reveal their feelings. That's why they want to talk to you about their problems. For a woman to talk about the stress she is feeling is part of the solution for her and men think it is part of the problem. Someone wrote, “Wives think ‘our marriage is working as long as we can talk about our problems.’ ‘Sure, we have problems,’ the wife says, ‘but if we can talk about it, we can work it out.’” A man says, “Our marriage must not be working right if we have to keep talking about the problems.” and you wonder why there is such incompatibility and competition and conflict. It is because we are different in the way that we deal with stress.

## **5. Men and women are different in the way they value expressions of love**

Number five. Men and women are different in the way they value expressions of love. Basically, we need to express as men to women that we love them, because they need to hear it very often. Let's face it, most of us guys don't feel like we have to be told every day that we are loved and we don't necessarily feel like we have to be hugged every day, but a woman needs to be told and shown several times a day. Men say, “Only the biggies count!” Most men have a basketball mentality about giving gifts in expressions of love. A little gift is a free throw—one point. An average expression of love to their wife—that's a two pointer. But if you back out beyond the three-point line and you really give her a big expression of love—that's a three pointer! Most of us think it goes higher than that. If you work all year and you save your money and buy a really nice gift for your wife, perhaps an expensive piece of jewelry, or a wonderful trip, that's a shot from way down court and it ought to be worth 10 or 20 points. That's the way men think. But with a woman every gift is equal. You think that that ring you gave to her is a 10 pointer? You see the rose, that long-stemmed, red rose you stopped and bought for her (and it's not your anniversary, it's not her birthday; there's no occasion for it) and you take it in and you give it to her and you say, “Honey, I was thinking about you and I saw this rose and it's such a beautiful, special creation of God. And you're such a beautiful, special creation of God. I just want to give

it to you.” Do you know what that is? That’s a 10-pointer with her. It’s every bit as much as that big gift you give her.

I am told women are keeping score. I just want to warn you. In the back of their brains there is a little calculator that’s always going. And sometimes you make deposits and sometimes you make withdrawals. They’re keeping score. I would venture to say that just about every wife in this room thinks she is way ahead of her husband in this “value game.” She may think, “I’ve given 50 points and he’s only given 10.” Women have a way of averaging that out. They’ll subtract 10 from both scores and they’ll say, “I’m worth 40 he’s worth zero!” or “I’m a plus 30 and he’s a minus 10.” That’s why sometimes women get frustrated, because they don’t have a lot of these visible expressions of love.

Sometimes my wife sends me one of those little funny, romantic cards in the mail. And I have to say I really enjoy that, but I read it, chuckle and think it’s nice and then I put it down. But if she were to get me a new set of golf clubs or a new car or something like that, man! She *really* loves me!” Guys, to your wife that little funny, romantic card you send her in the mail—and it’s not a special occasion—Whoo! That really scores high! So guys, you need to express your love to your wife.

Let me just stop and preach here a minute. Some men say, “If my wife would start submitting to me, I would start loving her.” I think you are absolutely wrong in that attitude. I think according to the word of God and according to the example of Jesus Christ, men are to first love their wives. Once you demonstrate and express your love to your wife then she will have a more submissive attitude in the true spirit of that word as it has been explained. You say, “Why is that?” “Aren’t I the boss?” No, you are the *head* of the wife. But you are totally equal partners in the marriage. Submission is when one of two equal partners recognizes the God-given authority of the other. Did God look at us as sinners and say, “When you folks get good, when you submit to me and repent, then I’ll send my son to die for you.”? Absolutely not. In fact, the Bible says just the opposite. “God showed his love toward us while we were still sinners.” “Christ died for us” God said, “I’m going to love those people on planet Earth. I’m going to love the church and show my love to the church.” and then he waited for the church to respond. Show your wife many, many expressions and understand she values each one equally, the little gifts as well as the big gifts.

## **6. Men and women are different in the way they are motivated**

Number six. Men and women are different in the way they are motivated. Every man has an ON/OFF button. Some things really turn him on and motivate him. And every woman has an ON/OFF button. A man says, “Appreciate me for what I do!” When your husband feels genuinely appreciated for what he does and what he works to provide, when you tell him you appreciate the good provider that he is, that’s pushing the “on” button! And what pushes the “off” button? When he is ridiculed. And many times when you try to make him feel like he is not valuable for what he does. Women sometimes wonder why their husbands spend so much time at work. Maybe if you complain about that, you are reaching out for him, but sometimes you are pushing him away, because he is hearing you say is, “I don’t appreciate all the work that you do to provide for us” although that’s not what you intend for him to hear at all.

On the other hand, a woman says, “Cherish me for who I am.” Sometimes men get their significance and their value from what they do, their job, and their accomplishments. Sometimes men look at women and they think that’s the same thing that gives *them* value and significance. Some men think their wives receive a great sense of significance and accomplishment from washing their dirty clothes. She doesn’t. That’s just something she does or has done because she loves you. Instead, men need to say to their wives, “You are so valuable and important to me. You are a wonderful wife. You are a great mother. You are the most witty, intelligent, thought-provoking friend I have ever talked to.” When she feels that importance for who she is, Boiiiing! That’s the “on” button. Wives also have an “off” button that stays depressed a lot of the time. The thing that pushes it is when you ignore her or you don’t give her the respect she feels like she needs.

In talking about all of these differences in the way we communicate, the way we face problems, the way we cope with stress, the way we are motivated, and the way we value expressions of love is not so you can change your spouse, but so you can *appreciate* them for who they are. You are always going to be different from each other and again I thank God that we are different. But God made us different so he could make us one. So start with a new attitude in your marriage. Instead of trying to change your mate, just begin to appreciate who he is who she is.

## CONCLUSION

You know as many of you know my wife and I love going to the beach. We’ve gone to Panama City Beach for many, many summers. And one of our favorite things to do is to sit on the beach toward the end of the day in our little chairs and let the waves kind of come in and tickle our toes while we watch the sunset. Most everybody else is getting ready to go eat somewhere and I’ve learned through the years to sit there patiently and enjoy until the sun is completely out of sight. Then I say, “Okay now, let’s go eat.” Having watched it maybe dozens, perhaps hundreds of times, I’ve never seen two identical sunsets and I’ve never seen an ugly sunset. Never once have I looked at a sunset and tried to tell God to change it. “God, if you’d put a little more yellow up there in the top left, it would be a lot better.” or “A little more pink down there on the bottom right, it sure would be nice and God, if you would put a few more clouds right there.” No I’ve never done nor even thought about doing that. Instead, I have said, “God. That is beautiful. I thank you and I worship you because that is a special creation and only you could paint something that beautiful!”

So instead of trying to tell your mate how they ought to change maybe you ought to just start thanking God that he made them so special and that he has given you the joy of living with that person and working for years to understand who they are and who they are going to become.



## OUTLINE

### MEN AND WOMEN ARE DIFFERENT IN THE WAY THEY:

#### 1. Communicate

Men: Just the facts

Women: Give me the juicy details

#### 2. Relate to each other

Men: Rubber bands

Women: Ocean waves

#### 3. Face problems

Men: Mr. Fixit

Women: Help me talk it through

#### 4. Cope with stress

Men: Conceal their feelings

Women: Reveal their feelings

#### 5. Value expressions of love

Men: Only the “biggies” score

Women: Every gift is equal

#### 6. Are motivated

Men: Appreciate me for what I do

Women: Cherish me for who I am



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For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes