

Introduction: Is your marriage a “*dance*” or a “*debate*”?

- A “great dance” demands . . .
 - A choreographer
 - Mutual submission to His “steps”
 - Clarity of roles
 - Practice, practice, and more practice

- A “great dance” develops . . .
 - An incredible team
 - Balance, timing, rhythm, and strength
 - Personal joy and joint fulfillment
 - A thing of beauty

God's design for "The Dance" of marriage:

Ephesians 5:21-33

- **Mutual submission to the Choreographer**

²¹Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Ephesians 5:21

A word to women – Follow his lead

²²Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior.²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Ephesians 5:22-24

- **Who is leading the dance?**

- Who handles the money?
- Who disciplines the children?
- Who initiates discussion of future plans or problems?
- Who asks the most questions and who makes the most statements?

- **The command**

- **The reason**

- What does this mean?
 - Marriage is not a _____ proposition.
 - There are specific _____ and _____ and lines of authority in marriage.
 - The woman _____ submits out of love for her husband.
 - The woman's greatest _____ and _____ will be achieved and embraced by following God's design.
- What this does *not* mean
 - The man calls _____ the shots in the marriage relationship.
 - The woman is a _____ that she can't voice her approval - that she should ever feel or be treated as an inferior.
 - The woman should submit to her husband's _____, _____, or _____ demands.

Reference: Passive Men, Wild Women by Dr. Pierre Mornell

A word to men: Be worthy of following

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of His body.

Ephesians 5:25-30

- The command - Love your wife as Christ loved the Church.
- The purpose - Help your wife reach her full potential.
- What does this mean?
 - The husband must love _____.
 - The husband must love _____.
 - The husband must love _____.
- What this does *not* mean
 - The husband always _____ to the wife.
 - The husband doesn't have a life _____ of the marriage.
 - The husband _____ the wife or makes her feel totally _____ on him.

A word to the world: It's about the dance, not the dancers

³¹"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."³²This is a profound mystery-- but I am talking about Christ and the church.

³³However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Ephesians 5:31-33

Conclusion - Is your marriage a “dance” or a “debate?”

Discussion Questions:

1. What new insight did you gain concerning the roles of men and women in marriage?
2. How has our culture made it difficult to function according to God's design?
3. How have abuses in the church made it difficult to function according to God's design?
4. How could focusing on “your role” vs. evaluating your mate's role help you both “get in step” with God's plan for your marriage?

Resources:

For those with unbelieving or unresponsive spouses – CD Series available at Living on the Edge: *LIFT! The Awesome Power of Encouragement*, *Authentic: How to be a Christian without Being Religious*, & *Love One Another* For more research on male/female roles - Book: *Male & Female: Enjoying the Difference* by Larry Crabb