

**“Biblical Perspectives on Love, Marriage and Sex,
Part 2—What Women Wish Men Knew About Women.”**

Today we're going to embark on a journey into the minds of women. We're going to try to understand what goes on in the minds and what they need so that men can be better at meeting women's needs.

Here's Hollywood's glimpse at what is going on in the minds of women from the movie *What Women Want*. The chauvinist Nick Marshall, played by Mel Gibson, has been given the ability to hear what women are thinking—and here's what that is like for him that first day. **[VIDEO: *What Women Want...*]**

That ability is given to Nick almost as a punishment for being so insensitive to women's needs. And it's a sad fact that we men are not known for our sensitivity! In general, we're not known for being overly caring about our spouses. But it doesn't have to be this way. So today we're continuing this series of sermons on building healthy marriages and relationships. The reason that we're doing this series is because God cares about the relationships in your life. God is concerned about the details of your life and relationships. God isn't just concerned about Sunday morning. He's not just concerned about you being a good person. God isn't just concerned about you doing religious or spiritual things. God is concerned about your heart. God cares about how you relate to other people. God is concerned about your love life!

The Bible teaches us this. It has some relevant, important things to say to us about how we relate to one another and if we learn those things and apply them to our lives, God blesses us in some wonderful ways.

Last week we set out the foundation in marriage by looking at Genesis and seeing that marriage is a sacred calling from God. It's not an accident, it's not some primitive hormonal thing. Marriage is a calling. Some people are called to be married and some are called to be single. If you are called to be married you have to understand that God has a plan for what marriage ought to look like. God has an idea of what husbands should be and what wives should be. Husbands and wives are a gift to each other from God. Husbands and wives are to be a tangible sign of God's presence to one another. God is counting on you in a marriage.

With that in mind, today we're taking aim at us men. You ladies will get your turn soon. But today, we're going to look at what women wish men knew about women so that maybe we men can listen to that, process that and do something about it. So men, listen closely.

Now, one email response I got said this, "I feel I have the answer to what you asked the women in the congregation. You asked them "what do you wish men knew about women?" As soon as you asked that question I imagined every woman I've ever known saying in unison: "if you don't know I'm not going to tell you." So, the answer, of course is: "Women wish men knew what they want without having to ask." But I asked via an email survey and many of you are responding and that will help shape this sermon series. When we ask questions and get answers we can begin to know what those around us really need.

You see, great marriages happen when spouses meet one another's needs. I want to say that again and then I want to clarify what I mean. Great marriages happen when spouses meet one another's needs. When a spouse has unmet needs then there is a discomfort or dis-ease in that relationship that can tear it apart. Now wives, that does not mean that your husband was designed to meet every single one of your needs. He's not! That is why we live in communities and why the community of the church is so important. Some of our social and emotional needs are met there. But there are certain needs that your husband is supposed to meet in your life. Men, God is counting on you to meet these needs.

But here's the problem. We men think that women have the same needs as we do! So we go around trying to meet those needs for our wives, but those aren't the needs that they have! As much as I wanted to buy my wife a shopvac for Mother's day, I refrained because that was not what she wanted or needed. I wanted it, not her. Then another problem is that if we find out what our wife's real needs are we forget to remind ourselves to meet those needs. This means we have to be careful. You may learn some important things today and really start to act on them, but a year or two down the road you may have slipped back to your old ways if you don't continually remind yourself what those needs are!

What I want to talk about now is for you single men, you teenagers out there that might be called to be married someday. It's for you guys who are engaged. According to our survey and another one done in Kansas City. **Single** Christian women indicated the qualities they were looking for most in a potential mate. They also identified the ideal characteristics of a man. Here is what they said. Are you single guys listening? You married guys listen too because this is probably what your wife **thought** she was getting when she married you!

The number one thing that these women said, in fact 75% said this was their number one requirement, was that a man had to have a **[SLIDE: "1. Strong Christian Faith"]** strong Christian faith to be a potential mate. Why is it so important? Because our Christian faith is our worldview. It's the core of who we are and it shapes what's going on in our hearts. Who we are stems from that basic, core set of beliefs. So men, are you growing in your faith? Are you giving as much attention to developing your faith as you are to your career or your vast knowledge of football trivia or NASCAR standings!

The second most desirable quality in men was honesty **[SLIDE—add to previous: "2. Honesty"]**. 51% said honesty was one of their top three requirements of a man.

Number three was a sense of humor **[SLIDE—add to previous: "3. Sense of Humor"]**. 45% said humor was critical. Somebody who knows how to laugh and make them laugh, and isn't serious all the time.

Number four was a man who is affectionate **[SLIDE—add to previous: "4. Affection"]**. A man who's willing to hold and cuddle and care and make them feel special. 41% had this in their top three requirements of a man.

The next six were in the top three requirements by 20% or fewer of the women's responses. Number five is intelligence **[SLIDE—add to previous: "5. Intelligence"]**. Number six is being family-oriented **[SLIDE—add to previous: "6. Family-oriented"]**. Number seven is having strong values and morals **[SLIDE—add to previous: "7. Strong Values and Morals"]**. Number eight is a man who is respectful of women. **[SLIDE—add to previous: "8. Respect"]**. Number nine is loyalty or faithfulness **[SLIDE—add to previous: "9. Faithfulness"]**. And number ten is communication. **[SLIDE—add to previous: "10. Communication"]**.

Now in that same survey **married** women were asked what they needed most from their husbands, either in things they were getting and appreciated or things that they needed and weren't getting. Here are their top five responses: Number one, the top need, was for affection **[SLIDE: "1. Affection"]**. They said things like, "Pay attention to me, cuddle me, cherish me, treasure me, make me feel like a woman." This came up over and over again in the survey as the number one thing that women were grateful for if they had it or longed for it if they didn't have it. This included needs like kindness and compassion.

The second need was honesty. **[SLIDE—add to previous: "2. Honesty"]**. When we men goof up our tendency is to tell little white lies to cover it up. But our wives are kind of like Santa Claus. They will eventually find out if we've been naughty or nice, it may take years, but they'll find out. As I've talked to women it seems that they would much rather have you stand up and 'fess up and say you blew it! They would rather feel that pain for the short term than feel like you were not honest and they couldn't trust you. It's better to be honest than try to hide little things here and there.

The third thing was communication. **[SLIDE—add to previous: "3. Communication"]**. This is sharing and listening. The women said over and over, "Please listen to me! Turn off the TV when we're trying to talk!" Now, Janet and I both know that I cannot converse when the TV is on! I've tried and tried but it's virtually impossible for me to do those two things at once! I know how that feels. I've visited people in their homes and hospital rooms when they've had the TV on and I can tell they're not really paying attention to me. I'm just a distraction from what they were watching. My wife has to live with a person like that! When Janet and I want to really share and visit the TV has to be off so that I can listen and give the attention that's a sign of my love and is simply a matter of common courtesy. Husbands, tune into your wife! They want you to listen to them.

The fourth thing that women said they needed from their husbands is family time and support around the house. **[SLIDE—add to previous: "4. Family Time and Support Around the House"]**. The women said things like, "We know that you have to travel a lot for your job and have to be away, but please make time for

us. We feel like we're number five or six on your priorities." Husbands, and I'm guilty of not doing this, the order of our top three priorities in our lives as Christians should be God, family, church. So many times our families slip way down below the top three into fifth or six or seventh place. Don't let that happen.

The fifth thing wives said they needed from their husbands was appreciation. **[SLIDE—add to previous: "5. Appreciation"]**. A few weeks back I got home early one evening and Janet and Zoe were gone. We'd been extra busy that week and the kitchen had gotten very cluttered and messy. I made a bite to eat and then I cleaned the kitchen. I unloaded the dishwasher and washed the pots and pans that were in the sink and on the counters. I put stuff away that had been sitting on the counters and washed them down and did just a real good job of it. I was feeling pretty proud of myself.

When Janet and Zoe came home I wondered if Janet would notice and say something. I didn't say a thing I just waited to see. And when she walked in she didn't say anything about how good the kitchen looked. But I was patient, ready to drop some hints if necessary. But I didn't have to. It wasn't long before she noticed and said, "Aaron, I noticed you emptied out the dishwasher and cleaned the kitchen and it looks really good!" That made me happy! But thankfully what she didn't say to me was, "Hey, I do that laundry every couple days, wash, dry, fold and put it away, and I make most all the meals and take care of most of the arrangements for Zoe. I'm the one who makes sure that the bills get paid, and when was the last time you showed me a little appreciation that those things were done and done well?!" Thankfully she didn't say that! We men so rarely show genuine appreciation, especially in light of what our wives do!

The father of one of my friends growing up was a great role model of how to appreciate a wife. His name was Art McClure and he died several years ago but he had a knack for showing his wife appreciation. He was always cleaning the house and doing the laundry, he was always telling her how much he loved her. She was a schoolteacher and he would regularly drop off goodies for his wife and the other teachers there. Or he'd bring lunch in for the two of them to share during her lunch break. He was very observant and if she expressed interest in something he would try to get it for her even if it wasn't a special occasion. If he came across some information about kids or teaching that he thought she might be able to use he made sure to get it to her. They were real movie buffs and he would find soundtracks to the movies she liked and get those for her because she wouldn't do that for herself. He knew how to appreciate his wife, Judy.

We men need to develop this skill. Husbands, look for ways each and every day to say thank you, or show appreciation for what your wives do everyday. Two simple words can do amazing things for your marriages, men! The two words are THANK YOU! Imagine what your marriage would look like if you looked for ways to thank your wife.

God is calling us to meet certain needs for our wives, men. But when a wife's needs are not being met it can be very, very painful. It can cause her to doubt your love and commitment to her. It can cause her to doubt her love and commitment to you and make her more vulnerable to temptation. Men, you need to know that infidelity among married women is on the rise. There is no excusing this, but don't, by your lack of appreciation, make her more vulnerable.

But there is another way. God is calling us to another way. Wouldn't you love to be able to meet your wife's needs? Wouldn't you love to be able to make her feel like a woman? God is calling you to do that.

All of what I've said so far takes us to our faith in Christ and the Bible reading in your outline. Take a look at it. 1 Corinthians 13 is one of those Bible passages that gets read at weddings all the time. I read it at almost every wedding I perform. It's easy to think of it as a sweet, sappy, romantic scripture, but it's not that at all. It's about the hard calling of Christian love. It's how we as Christians are supposed to respond to each other and even more so as a married couple! I believe that Paul was thinking about the cross and Jesus when he wrote this, about Jesus and his sacrificial love for us.

And when you look at what's written here it's a big part of the list of what women are looking for in men. **[SLIDE...]** **"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres"** (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, NIV)

A great test of how you love is to cross out the word “love” in that passage and put your name in there instead and see how well you fit. Try it this week and see what areas you need God’s help in. Could you imagine what a marriage would look like if two people were actually loving each other like that!

But here’s the catch: you can’t make yourself be like the qualities listed in this Bible passage! All you can do is open yourself up to God and allow him to transform you on the inside! God is the one who’s going to help you be this kind of person. If you open yourself up and say, “God help me! I want to be this for my spouse!” he will come in and start to shape your heart and life so that you can begin to look like the kind of person described here!

In Colossians 3 Paul talks about the calling of Christians. He says, **[SLIDE...] “Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love...And be thankful” (Col 3:12-15, NIV).** Now can you imagine what a marriage looks like if two people are actually doing this?

Here’s what I’ve found, in my own life, the times that I’m closest to God, when I’ve spent time in prayer, when I’ve allowed God to work in me and not kept him out, when I’ve listened to God and acted on what he tells me, those are the times when I’m the best husband that I can possibly be. The closer I get to God, the more I begin to look like the man my wife thought she was marrying.

So here’s the challenge. Men, take these scriptures home with you and put it up on your shaving mirror and let it be a standard for you. See how you measure up! And pray and invite God to make you that kind of man. And then five times a day for this next week find ways to bless your wife. Five times each day find ways to show your love and appreciation. And when the week is over, keep it up. She wants you and your love and your appreciation all year long.

Now, you wives, you have a challenge today too. As you leave today don’t think that one sermon is going to transform your husband! Don’t beat him up with this sermon! OK? Don’t take home the notes this week and wave them in his face on Wednesday and say, “Looky here! You’re not doing what Aaron said you should be doing!” Instead, encourage him, nurture him and help him to become the husband you long for him to be. Help him to be a 1 Corinthians 13 husband as you become a 1 Corinthians 13 wife. And for today that is the Good News. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I thank Rev. Adam Hamilton, Sr. Pastor of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, for his wonderful sermon on this subject!