

**WEDNESDAY 6/10/20**

**SERIES: FAMILY DONE GOD'S WAY**

**Speaker: Nat Crawford** (w/Arnie & Cara)

**Title: Family Done God's Way: Husbands, Pt. 1**

I've always been a fan of musicals. I'm not sure why. I'm not terribly musical. I can sing, but I'm not a great singer. But music has a way to touch someone's heart. Maybe that's why I enjoy them so much. One of the more tragic musicals is *Camelot*. *Camelot* is the story of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. More specifically, it follows the marriage of King Arthur and Guinevere, and then, the adultery that transpires between the famous Lancelot and Arthur's wife. For all of its tragedy, *Camelot* has some great musical numbers. And there's one that I've found very helpful. It's the song "How to Handle a Woman."

King Arthur is at his wits end on how to deal with his wife. He sings, "You swore that you had taught me everything from A to Z, with nary an omission in between. Well, I shall tell you what, you obviously forgot: That's how a ruler rules a queen!"

And then he asks the question, "How to handle a woman?"

He makes light of the subject by saying, "Merlin told me once, never be too disturbed if you don't understand what a woman is thinking, "They don't do it very often, but what do you do while they are doing it?"

Many husbands today are asking the question, "How to handle a woman." But I think the question husbands need to be asking is "How can I be a godly husband?" By answering this question, we get to the "how to handle a woman"

So men, husbands, future husbands, buckle up. God has a message for us. Put down your pride and open up your heart. These principles – these choices - are just good principles for life. But when you apply them to your marriage, men, your wife will be amazed and God will be honored. So let's jump right in.

**If you're going to be a godly husband, you need to first and foremost, love God.**

You cannot be a godly husband if you don't love God first. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ said the greatest commandment was to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30, NIV). God made you for a relationship with Him. He didn't need to create you. But He did. And He wants you as His child and His masterpiece to put Him where he belongs: in first place.

I love what Colossians 1 says, Listen to this. Colossians 1:15-18 says, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in Him all things hold

together. <sup>18</sup> And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”(ESV)

When I say love God, I mean the Godhead of course: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Colossians 1 tells us that by Christ all things were created. And it is by His sovereignty that all things hold together. He is the head of the church. And then in verse 18, it says that Christ might be preeminent.

That word *preeminent* is not a word we use a lot today. It simply means to be first place. As a godly husband you put God where He belongs: in first place. Your wife doesn't take first place. Your kids don't. Your golf game doesn't. Your job doesn't. Your sports don't. Your investments don't. Your first love is to be God.

*If you ever wonder what has first place in your life, first go look at your calendar.* Where have you spent your time? If you say, God, but church is a maybe - in the wake of COVID-19, I know church looks different - but do you now just skip watching and worshipping? How much time do you spend reading God's Word? How much time do you spend meditating on God's Word, really pondering it, and how it impacts your life? How much time do you spend talking with God through prayer? Is it quality time or is it reading off a script? I can guarantee you, if you said the same 3 sentences each conversation with your spouse, best friend or kid, they'd say, "this isn't a quality relationship." So is God in first place? First look at your calendar.

*The second way to see what's first in your life, is look at your checking account.* The Bible has 500 verses on prayer and over 2000 verses on money. In fact, around 15% of Jesus' teaching was on money. Jesus said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matt. 6:19-21, ESV)

Are you giving to your local church? Are you investing in outreach and discipleship? Are you tithing to advance the Kingdom of God? If not, where is your treasure?

So again, the first step to being a godly husband is to love God above all else.

**The second step to being a godly husband is to love your wife.** In that song from *Camelot*, "How to Handle a Woman", this was King Arthur's conclusion. Arthur sings, "How to handle a woman? Mark me well, I will tell you, sir. The way to handle a woman is to love her... simply love her...Merely love her... love her... Oh just love her."

Whoever wrote that song nailed it. But what's the biblical basis for this?

Listen to this. Proverbs 4:8-9 says, "Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her. <sup>9</sup> She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown." (ESV)

It says, prize your wife and she will respect you. She will honor you if you embrace her. I think the simple way of saying it is, as a godly husband you need to see her as she is: a gift that God's given you. Stop thinking you're God's gift to the world. Have you seen yourself?

Your wife is a gift, so let her know it. Embrace her or cling fast to her. Let her know you love her so much, so she's your earthly prized possession.

In Dr. Emerson Eggerichs' book *Love and Respect*, he says, if you want to love your wife, then begin to spell love correctly. He spells it C-O-U-P-L-E.

It's an acronym for closeness, openness, understanding, peacemaking, loyalty, and esteem. And I'll touch on each of those principles in just a moment.

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Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, a leading voice on marriage relationships, has written a book called *Love and Respect*, in which he spells out the word "couple" as an acronym for closeness, openness, understanding, peacemaking, loyalty, and esteem. Let me touch on these briefly. Because we know that to be a godly husband we need to love our wives.

So first is *closeness*. Your wife wants to be close to you. Think about it, Genesis 2:24 says, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." (ESV) Hold fast means to glue together. It means to hold onto her with the strength of The Incredible Hulk, but the softness of a lover. My wife cherishes it when I come into the kitchen and put my arms around her, and I just hold her. No sexual advances. No hidden agenda. Just letting her know that I am there. My embrace is not to control, but to reassure. I am close to her because she desires this.

Second is *openness*. This is one of those unique qualities of a wife that can make a man crazy. Here's what I mean. In the book *Men Are Like Waffles - Women Are Like Spaghetti*, Bill and Pam Farrel, the authors, point out that men compartmentalize their thoughts and emotions. They have boxes or places for each emotion and thought. We even have a space for nothing. We can be thinking or feeling nothing at all. Women, they are like spaghetti. Everything is intertwined. Feelings, emotions, memories, dreams – you name it. So wives desire and need you to be there, so they can express all these intertwined thoughts and emotions. And here's the key. They're not asking you to fix it. They're not asking for your advice. They simply want for you to be present, to listen and be open. That's really hard. And then your wife really wants you to be open as well. You have thoughts. You have emotions. They may be in a compartment 5 rows away, but at times she will ask you to go to them. It's okay to be in your nothing box, but you need to be open about your fears, dreams, hopes, hurdles, thoughts and feelings with your spouse. She cares for you and she desires openness.

I think my wife feels closest to me when I first listen to her without offering my valuable insight, and second, when I am truly honest with her about life. Those moments where I show my anger, my sadness, my fear, it's in those moments she knows I love her. For me, it's not easy, but beneficial. That is openness.

Third is *understanding*. We'll talk more about this tomorrow. But know that because you love your wife, you want to know her – all of her, good, bad, ugly, pretty. And she needs to know you love just the way she is. No fixing. No solutions. Just understanding.

Fourth is *peacemaking*. When I was becoming certified as an executive coach, I learned from my coach, who was also a pastor, that a key course he teaches is the art of an apology. Husbands, future husbands, if you're going to love your spouse, you need to be a peacemaker and learn to ask for forgiveness. Because, I hate to admit it, but we'll sin and hurt our wives. So when you sin against your spouse, say "I'm sorry. I was wrong. Will you forgive me? What can I do to make this right?" That's the art of true peacemaking. You admit you were wrong. You admit it. You

apologize. You ask for recognition and reconciliation. And then you seek to make it right, if necessary and if possible. And trust me, fellas, if you're not really sorry, or you don't understand what's wrong, they know it. They sniff it out every time. You can't fake it. Women have a bologna sensor built into them. So become a peacemaker, but don't do it artificially. It'll only do more damage.

So that's C-O-U-P which bring us to L. In order to love your wife, you need to convey your loyalty. That's the L - *loyalty*. In other words, she needs to know you're committed to her.

You know in our first couple of years of marriage, we really struggled. Year two of marriage we almost called it quits. But by God's grace, we rekindled the love and recommitted. And in that time, we promised we would never use the D word. You know it: Divorce. We said, we'd never use the word Divorce. Not in joking. Not in anger. It was a forbidden word. And the Bible is clear about the importance of our commitment in marriage. Titus 1:6 says an elder and/or pastor should be [the husband of one wife](#). It could be translated as faithful to his one and only spouse.

Proverbs 5:15 says, "[Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.](#)" In other words, be faithful to your spouse. That is your well. You don't go anywhere else.

Hebrews 13:4 says, "[Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.](#)" You get the idea. Your wife wants to know and feel and experience fidelity. She wants to know you're committed.

This brings us to the E in loving your wife. E stands for *esteem*. Your wife wants you to honor and cherish her. During this time of COVID-19, I know a lot of moms and wives are feeling down. They may be unemployed. They may be homeschooling. They may be feeling cut off from their church and friends. This is very common. This past week, my wife expressed to me how much of a failure she felt she was. She knew better, but she had lost her cool with the kids. The homework was piling up. The kids were at times being difficult. The kitchen was a mess. And she felt alone, out of control, and like a failure. I wanted to fix it, but I couldn't. I just let her vent; remember, we need to be open to our wives. And then I just reassured her that she is a good mom, who is at the same point as other moms and wives. She just needed to be esteemed, cherished, built up.

Song of Solomon 7:6 says, "[Oh, how beautiful you are! How pleasing, my love, how full of delights!](#)" Solomon says, Babe, you are the one I want. You are smoking hot. I love you just the way you are.

Proverbs 31:28-29 says this of a wife, "[Her husband praises her. There are many virtuous and capable women in the world, but you surpass them all!](#)"

1 Peter 3:7, [husbands honor your wives](#). Cherish her, love her, build her up, when she needs it most, and out of nowhere.

Friends, husbands, and future husbands, **in order to be a godly husband, you need to first love God and second love your wife.** How? C-O-U-P-L-E. By being close, open, understanding, peaceful, loyal, and esteeming.

Tomorrow, we'll look at a few more ways to be a godly husband. But today, cultivate that love for God, and let it flow into loving your wife. She deserves it. She desires it. And she needs it.

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N: Well, I am looking forward to today talking about the idea of C-O-U-P-L-E with my faithful discussion partners, Arnie Cole, and Cara Whitney. Arnie, from the acronym of the word couple, which letter or letters stood out to you, and why?

A: You know, that's a great question because it's a powerful acronym. I think all of it is critical. I mean the Closeness of course, but you can't have Closeness without Openness and you can't have Closeness and Openness without Understanding. And then when you have misunderstandings, you need the Peacemaking. And then if you agree to disagree, you've got to be Loyal. So to me, it just all adds up to Esteem. So how do you separate one out from another, you see? Because they're all intertwined and so critical to the success of a couple. Cara?

C: Well, I was going to say, what letter is the one where the husband tells his wife she's hot? Because I like that letter.

N: That is the unspoken letter S for - I probably can't say sexy - I don't know, is there?

C: Well, like when my husband tells me I'm hot, I mean, he means it. [Right] And I have to say, I love it.

N: Oh, Steam.

A: That's Esteem. That's esteem, Nat. You have to excuse him. You have to excuse Nat. He's still a young man. Pretty stupid; when it comes to being hot, you don't say, "Oh, hot". You say, esteem her, [Ohh] Tell her she's beautiful.

C: Yeah. Well, you know, at my age and I'm going into shorts season, and I've got to say, when I hear that, and I know he means it, and then, you know, you put everything we've been through together. And I would say, that is my favorite letter.

A: There you go.

N: Yeah. It's kind of funny. After all these years of marriage, I can call my wife beautiful. But when I do say she looks hot, it's a game changer. And that's all I'll say about that.

C: I'm telling you what, it's a good deal, yeah.

N: It is; it's a very good deal. Men, listen up and take advice. Forget about what Arnie said.

A: You kids; you kids are nothing but trouble.

N: Oh man, we are, we're feisty; we're feisty. So Cara, for all of us guys, what's one of the best ways for us to esteem our wives?

C: I'll tell you something. I love observing people and I love older people. And when I say older guys, I'm talking like guys in their eighties; these guys have been married 40, 50 years. And when they speak about their wives, whether they've gone on, or they're still with them, they always say the same thing. And this is what they say. "She's been a good wife to me." And to me, that is such a simple sentence, but it just summarizes just great love that they have for them. I hope when Dan's old, he will describe me as just saying, "she's been a good wife to me." I know that he believes that now, because Dan tells me that. I think your wife just wants to hear she's doing a good job.

N: Right. And I think, that you love her no matter what. But again, it's a willingness to focus on the positive versus the negative, focusing on the good, rather than the annoying, because we all have parts of our characters that frankly, aren't perfect. And that's true for men and it's true for women. But when we focus on the good and the positive, that speaks volumes to our spouses.

Arnie, you've seen the research, you're a researcher. How do Christian guys tend to get off track in their marriages? And I think the better question to follow up with is, how do they get back on track?

A: So guys tend to get off track. Christian guys, non-Christian guys, all guys, it seems at some point in their marriage, tend to get off track - according to our research, anyway - with the use of pornography. It just really tends to get their marriage off on a bad foot, and it continues to go downhill. So that is probably the number one thing that we see, probably 70 to 75% of all guys that claim to be Christians struggle with, is pornography. Then there might be a high percentage, I think it's 30%, that struggle with lying. So basically, most guys struggle with pornography, and how do they get their lives back on track? That's huge, because it's such a one way street, because you start living in a world that doesn't exist. That is such a downward cycle, that guys have a terrible time of getting out of that. And then you've got the problem with these generations now, where pornography is readily available to 11, 12 year olds, where their psyche is even messed with at an early age, where you start getting into a situation where you think these virtual people in these virtual things are reality. It is just a super mess.

So how does one get out of it? That is something that needs a change of heart in the individual. I worked with a lot of guys, a lot of pastors, and probably the one thing that I see most is, they really don't want to get out of it. So in their mind, they've justified why it's usually someone else's fault, and they just really don't have a change of heart. And it's one of those things, where guys especially have been taught, "Well, you know what you think about doesn't hurt anybody," and you know, I can get away with it, because it's just a thought, there's no harm, no foul. It takes a lot of undoing, some of these habits that guys so stupidly get into.

N: That is great insight. And I think you nailed something in there that, you know, pornography is trying to meet a legitimate need in an illegitimate way. And that's where certain addictions that develop that are so natural to who we are as human beings, whether it's a sex addiction or food addiction, where we're simply trying to meet again, a legitimate need in an illegitimate way. And the only way out is by what you are saying, it's realizing that we are in a place of slavery to sin, a dependence, and we need to cling to God. And part of that, and what we do here at Back to the Bible, is helping people *renew their minds daily*, Romans 12. So that would be something we would suggest, but these are great insights and great discussion today, guys. Thank you.