

The word “Fireproof” means being capable of withstanding or preventing damage by fire. Over the next six weeks, we want to look at some practical ideas and steps taken from the Bible that can help to fireproof our marriages, friendships and relationships with people at work, school or play. To help us do that, we are going to use some clips from the movie “Fireproof.” (In case you haven’t seen the movie yet, we are planning on showing it on Sunday evening, March 1st. We also want to invite our local Fire Fighters to honor them that night and give them a copy of the “Love Dare” book to help them learn how to Fireproof the important relationships in their lives.)

We begin today by looking at how to get along with members of the opposite sex. I’m sure that you’ve noticed that men and women are different. One of the challenges that we face is trying to relate to someone who is so different than we are. Watch what can happen if you expect your partner to be just like you. [Fireproof Your Marriage DVD, video clip #1](#)

I saw a few of you nodding your heads in agreement with the things that were being said. It is easy for guys to think that they are superior to women or for women to wonder why guys are so strange.

To help us learn how to get along together we want to look at Ephesians 5:21-33. We read the whole section earlier. So let’s begin with verse 21 that tells us, **“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”** Another way of putting this is to give up our rights and to look out for the best interest of our partner.

So the first thing we want to remember today is that ***marriage works best when both husband and wife give up their rights for the sake of the other.*** 1 Peter 3:7 gives this advice to men. **“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives.”** Wouldn’t all of homes be better off if we followed this basic principle of putting others first. This is simply taking Jesus’ “Golden Rule” (Luke 6:31) **“Do to others as you would have them do unto you,”** and applying it in our homes.

Before that can happen, we have to remember that ***marriages work best when we remember that men and women are different.*** Country Western Singer Brad Paisley describes the difference this way in his song, “Remember, I’m Still a Guy.”

When you see a deer you see Bambi and I see antlers up on the wall.

When you see a lake you think picnics and I see a large mouth up under that log

*You’re probably thinking that you’re going to change me in some ways well maybe you might.
Scrub me down, and dress me up. Oh but not matter what remember I’m still a guy.*

One of the big differences between men and women happens when we go shopping. Most guys are baggers, we want to go into the store, pick up what we came for and leave. I remember when I was about 12 years old. My mom sent my Dad out with me to buy a pair of shoes and told us “Don’t buy the first pair you try on.” Well of course you know we came back with the first pair I tried on. On the other hand, women tend to be shoppers. They go for the experience. They try on a whole variety of different things and may not buy a thing, or may come back with something completely different. There are times when Joan and I go to the store together that I have to ask, are we bagging or shopping. I need to know what we are doing.

The difference are what makes marriage challenging, but they are also what makes marriage rewarding. We all need different things in a relationship. God recognizes that fact and tells us in Ephesians 5:33, **“Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”** This means that women need love and men need respect.

Women, you don’t know what it is like to be a guy. So let me tell you, while we can be rough and tough on the outside, we’re crème puffs on the inside. We’re like puppy dogs that need the one who matters to us the most to believe in us. If we are not the heroes in our homes, we are not going to be heroes any place else. Show your husband respect and it will make a positive difference in your marriage, your home, your family.

Guys, we will never really understand what it is like to be a woman, but we do need to know that our wives need to know that we love them. She needs to hear it from you, see it from you, feel it from you, and receive it from you. One of the best ways that she receives love from you is to have you listen to her. Listen to her dreams, her feelings, her thoughts and her fears. Listen, but don’t try to fix her or her problem. She’ll let you know if there is a problem that needs fixing. What she really wants if you for you to listen and care and show that you love her.

The Bible even tells us what this kind of love should look like. Ephesians 5:25 reads, **“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”** That is a great challenge that is empowered by a tremendous gift. The challenge is to love like Christ. Jesus gave the world the greatest gift of love when he died on the cross to pay for the sins of all people. He took our punishment on Himself. He put us first, before Himself. The Bible says we should treat others that way, and that husbands should especially treat their wives that way. I know I can’t do that on my own. But because God loves us, because His love renews our loves, because the Holy Spirit is producing the fruit of love in our lives, he enables us and empowers us to love this way. Men, if we show our wives this kind of love, they are going to both love and respect us.

In the movie, Fireproof, the father of the main character challenged his son to put love into practice. He gave him a love dare. The challenge before us today is to do the same.

- Wives, what can you do this week to make your husband feel respected?
- Husbands, what can you do this week to make your wife feel loved?
- Singles, whose life would you like to add value to by giving them greater respect or love?

Join us next week as we continue our series on strengthening marriages and relationships as we think about the good news that God loves us first. See you then. Amen.