

Husbands & Wives

by Wayne Goff

John Wooden was famous for being the legendary basketball coach of the UCLA Bruins. But more importantly, he was married for 53 years to the love of his life, Nell. He was so dedicated to her that after her death in 1985, he continued to write Nell a love letter every month for the next 25 years. He faithfully placed them under her pillow in their bed until his own death in 2010. Coach Wooden had this to say about marriage:

“Love means many things. It means giving. It means sharing. It means forgiving. It means understanding. It means being patient. It means learning. And you must always consider the other side, the other person. You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving ... Young couples get married and don’t realize it’s different from courtship. You have to work at your marriage; it’s two-sided, and you’d better realize that.” (from *The Marriage of Your Dreams* by Rick Johnson. Copyright 2012)

No Kidding!

What Mr. Wooden said comports perfectly with what the Bible calls “**love**.” True love is providing the one loved with that which they need most and is given selflessly. When parents teach, nurture, train and discipline their children, they are showing them true love. When spouses overlook imperfections, act selflessly, and provide nurturing, then they are showing true love. Every worthwhile relationship is **W-O-R-K**.

Mr. Wooden said that love means giving, sharing, forgiving, understanding and being patient. Does that sound familiar? It should, because it *reflects* the description of love found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8:

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”

A single word for that descriptive paragraph on love is **W-O-R-K**. *Self-indulgent people* today want the fruits of love without the *giving!* It just does not work that way. It takes two, working together, loving together, all the time. Every marriage can be prosperous with that recipe.

Mr. Wooden went on to say that marriage means **learning**. Once again, this truth is a *reflection* of God’s instructions on the marriage relationship. “*Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel...*” (1 Pet. 3:7). The popular book, *Men Are From Mars; Women Are From Venus*, by John Gray, reminds us of the differences between men and women. However, those differences are not to be viewed as *antagonistic* but as *complementary*. Woman was made by God as a “*helper comparable*” to man, Gen. 2:18. Men and women bring different things to the marriage relationship, and wise mates use these differences to their advantage!

Amy Simpson, editor of *Marriage Partnership* magazine, explained her relationship with her husband:

“My husband and I share responsibilities like cooking, cleaning, yardwork, and caring for our kids. But there are other tasks that fall to just one of us because they're a better fit for one individual's strengths, skills, or available time. For example, he handles the car maintenance; I handle the budget. I manage our family social calendar; he takes the lead in most of our social interactions.”

Successful couples learn and understand the differences between men and women and use them to their benefit.

Finally, Mr. Wooden said that in a good marriage you must “always consider the other side.” Decisions must always be made with a view toward one another. Actions must always be done with that same view. Once again, this truth is but a *reflection* of the Scriptures: “*...in honor giving preference to one another...*” (Rom. 12:10; see 1 Pet. 3:7).