

Discussion Questions

For Better, Not Worse: A One-Sentence Success Story

Testimony Time: Did anyone experience *the Energizing Cycle*? That is, did your loving actions as a husband (related to **C.O.U.P.L.E.**) motivate your wife’s respectful responses (related to **C.H.A.I.R.S.**)?

For example . . .

Husbands . . .

- Did your closeness face-to-face motivate your wife’s desire to be shoulder-to-shoulder with you?
- Did your understanding motivate your wife’s desire to respond more positively to your insight?
- Did your attempt to cooperate as a peacemaker motivate your wife to respond to your leadership and authority?

Wives, feel free to participate in this discussion.

Couples, please share specific examples of how you saw this connection work this past week.

There is a Love and Respect connection. When a wife respects **C.H.A.I.R.S.** this energizes the husband to commit to **C.O.U.P.L.E.**

1. Share Your Successes

The best way to love a husband is to respect him in ways that are meaningful to him. As Sarah went through the practical application for **C.H.A.I.R.S.**, discuss in the group what you feel, as a couple, are some successful areas for you with regard to respecting. Look at the whole list under **C.H.A.I.R.S.** and discuss the positive applications of respect that you see in your marriage. Jump in on any item under any of the letters and start talking.

For instance, a husband may share, “My wife tells me often that she appreciates my hard work for the family.” Or, a wife may share, “I have been committed through the years to refrain from saying anything negative about my husband in front of the children since that can be so demeaning of his leadership, and he has done the same toward me.”

Midweek Devotional

Question: What Is Respect? Answer. C-H-A-I-R-S

And the wife must respect her husband.

—Ephesians 5:33 NIV

The e-mail from Wendy stated: “I feel the biggest question or concern women have is, what is respect?” I wrote back to say I heartily agree; it is, in fact, the question wives ask me most. Not surprisingly, I answered it in much the same way I answered Nathan when he e-mailed to ask, what is love? Respect, for a man, is not rocket science. I described six practical, biblical ways that a wife can express respect for her husband in chapters 15 through 21 of *Love & Respect*, using the acronym C-H-A-I-R-S.

- **C:** Conquest. You are seeking to recognize and thank him for his desire to work and provide for his family (Genesis 2:15).
- **H:** Hierarchy. You are trying to thank him for his desire to be responsible in protecting and providing (Ephesians 5:23).
- **A:** Authority. You are trying to pull back from subverting his leadership, albeit innocently, and are seeking ways to acknowledge his desire to lead and serve (Ephesians 5:22).
- **I:** Insight. You are endeavoring to appreciate his desire to analyze and counsel by listening to the ideas and advice he offers (1 Timothy 2:14).
- **R:** Relationship. You are valuing his desire for you to be his friend and stand shoulder to shoulder with him (Titus 2:4; Song of Solomon 5:1).
- **S:** Sexuality. You are seeking to respond to him, appreciating his desire for sexual intimacy that only you can meet (Proverbs 5:19; 1 Corinthians 7:5).

The C-H-A-I-R-S acronym is the other half of *the Energizing Cycle*: her respect motivates his love. As I often share when speaking or writing, respect for the husband is a harder sell than love for the wife mainly because so many wives feel “he is failing to love me as he ought to, so he has to earn my respect.” Of course, that is just the point. He doesn’t have to earn her respect any more than she has to earn his love. Both are to be unconditional. God commands a wife to put on respect independent of who her husband is (1 Peter 3:1–2; Ephesians 5:33), just as God commands a husband to put on love regardless of his wife’s lovability (Ephesians 5:25, 33; Hosea 3:1).

But what about Wendy’s question: what, exactly, is respect? How does a wife show it? Note that all of the principles taught in C-H-A-I-R-S include the idea that the wife is to appreciate her husband’s desire to succeed at work, protect and provide, serve and lead, analyze and counsel, enjoy her friendship, and engage in sexual lovemaking. The respectful wife seeks to honor her husband’s desires, not because he is perfectly honoring her desires but because she intends to obey God’s call to give him unconditional respect. She realizes this really isn’t about her husband; it is God’s command to her as a wife (Ephesians 5:33).

As you engage in this devotional together, take a few moments to reflect on the respect in your marriage. Using the C-H-A-I-R-S acronym, look for the positives and pluses, not the negatives and minuses. Husband, guard against making this an “I gotcha!” game by just looking for ways you aren’t getting proper respect at all times. Instead, be thankful for your wife’s respectful

words and actions. And wife, don't feel defeated if showing respect may sometimes seem awkward. Like love, respect doesn't just happen. Like love, respect is something to be carved out a little bit each day as the wife obeys God's command "And the wife must respect her husband" (Ephesians 5:33).

According to Dale Carnegie, "Truly respecting others is the bedrock of motivation." When a wife truly respects a husband's desires as outlined in C-H-A-I-R-S, most likely he will be motivated to truly love her as outlined in C-O-U-P-L-E, and *the Energizing Cycle* will hum!

Prayer: Thank the Lord for the respect that is present in your marriage. Ask Him for wisdom and guidance in appreciating and sharing the desires He built into men: to work and achieve, to protect and provide, to serve and to lead, to analyze and counsel, to enjoy shoulder-to-shoulder friendship, and to enjoy sexual intimacy.

Action: Use the suggestions at the end of the *Love & Respect* chapters on C-H-A-I-R-S, thirty-eight ideas in all, to explore and expand the concept of respect in your marriage.

For more "husband-friendly devotionals that wives truly love," see Emerson's book The Love & Respect Experience (Thomas Nelson, 2011).

