

A WIFE OF UNFADING BEAUTY

Women place high value on relationships and particularly on the quality of the intimacy of their marriages. There is a longing deep in their souls that yearns to be cherished and pursued. Why is this need so strong? Why is it that the very thing she so deeply longs for she destroys with her own hands?

The Need for Attachment

When God created Eve, He made her to fulfill a relational need.

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." - Genesis 2:18

God made her to reveal an aspect of His beauty and His heart for relationship. A woman's beauty invites relationship. She seeks to be desired and acknowledged for what she was created to be, a helper or Life Saver. A wife seeks to attach to her husband in order to offer him what he desperately needs and to nurture their relationship.

Adam and Eve's relationship gives us a picture of a woman's need for attachment. After God states, "It is not good that the man be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him," God begins to make Adam aware of what he is missing. First, God brought the animals to Adam to see what he would name them. During this process Adam becomes aware of his loneliness and realizes that he is in need of someone to make him complete.

God causes Adam to fall into a deep sleep and removes a rib from Adam from which God creates Eve. God presents this new creation, the woman to Adam. Adam enthusiastically receives her and attached her to himself to make her a part of him.

This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. - Genesis 2:23 NIV

Adam's acceptance of the woman was an acknowledgement of his need for a Life Saver. The woman was designed for this very moment to be attached and to complete the man.

The word we will use during this study to describe what a wife longs for in her relationships is "Attachment." Because she was designed to attach, anything that hinders her from attaching causes her deep pain and often wounds her. The enemy of attachment for the woman is any form of separation.

The Story of Leah and Jacob

The story of Leah shows us the deep longing of a wife desperately trying to get her husband to love her. It is an excellent example of a wife who did not find attachment with her father or her husband.

Jacob and Esau were fraternal twins who were jealous of each other. Esau was favored by his father; Jacob, by his mother. Through deception and manipulation, Jacob tricked Esau out of the blessing that was due him as the firstborn. As a result, Jacob, with the help of his mother, fled to his Uncle Laban. - Genesis 25:19-29:30, NIV

Laban had two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Jacob fell in love with Rachel, who was beautiful, and asked to marry her. Laban, who saw a golden opportunity to gain seven years of free manual labor around the ranch, tricked Jacob into marrying Leah. When Jacob discovered he had married the wrong woman, he confronted Laban, who agreed to let him marry Rachel in exchange for yet another seven years of work.

In short, Jacob loved Rachael and not Leah. Leah tried to earn Jacob's love by bearing him sons, but to no avail. Leah, who obviously was not attached to her opportunistic father, was not attached to her husband either. The result was inner turmoil and pain.

Handling the Lack of Attachment

Leah's Relationship with Her Father

Leah's father, Laban, was always looking out for himself and his possessions. He used people to get what he wanted. He was willing to use his own daughter in a trick and married her off to Jacob, whom he knew did not love her. She was not attached to a father who did not have her best interest in mind.

Leah's Relationship with Her Husband

Leah was not loved, accepted, or attached to her husband, Jacob. She tried desperately to attach to Jacob by becoming pregnant and bearing him sons. But after each son, she still did not find the attachment she deeply longed for.

Wanting to be attached to one's husband is not wrong, but Leah's birth of the first three sons expresses a demanding and manipulative motive to win her husband's love.

When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren, Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, "It is because the Lord has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now." She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "Because the Lord heard that I am not loved, he gave me this one too." So she named him Simeon. Again she conceived, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." So he was named Levi. She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said,

"This time I will praise the Lord." So she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children. - Genesis 29:31-35, N1V

What Attachment Looks Like

A Woman's Identity

How a girl feels about her identity, value, and purpose are strongly influenced by the first man in her life - her father. The way fathers receive their daughters, how they handle their little girls' femininity will have a profound influence on their daughters' relationships with other men in their lives.

The transfer of attachment from father to husband is seen in the marriage ceremony: the father walks the bride down the aisle to present her to her husband. The husband waits to receive his bride and attach her to himself.

The husband receives her for the benefit of nurturing and making her beautiful not in the material sense for his own pride, but for whom she is. The husband is to cherish her, he places a great value on her and treats her with care.

A woman's identity comes from a sense of belonging or attaching to her father and then to her husband.

A Woman's Value

God created the woman by her very nature to meet a need. She was designed to provide for the man's loneliness (Genesis 2:18). She offers herself by who she is and what she does as a means of fulfilling her calling and finding her value.

A woman's value is tied to how well she is received by her husband and others. How she looks and what she does have a powerful impact on how she feels valued. She wants to be accepted and pursued in spite of her flaws and shortcomings.

A woman seeks to be reassured that she has value by seeking approval from the way she looks, how she prepares the meals, how she keeps the home and cares for the children.

A Woman's Purpose

A woman finds her purpose as she offers herself for the purpose of nourishing relationships. She was created for the purpose of being a helper/completer. She offers good deeds and words that nurture relationships and provide a context where relationships can flourish. Her deeds include bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble, devoting herself to all good deeds (1 Timothy 5:9-10). She offers words and uses them wisely to provide intimacy with loyalty. She does not use slander or

gossip, which destroy relationships, but rather she uses words in a way that encourage, enhance and give a taste of life (I Timothy 5:13, I Timothy 3:11, Titus 2:3).

Failure to Attach

When a woman has not attached well to her father and/or husband, it has a profound impact on how she views herself, on her identity and how she relates.

Attachment To Her Mother

Women usually experience attachment more naturally from their mothers, since women are usually more nurturing. Girls learn about nurturing by watching their mothers and grandmothers.

A mother can wound her daughter by her fears, mistrust, insecurity, neglect, verbal or physical abuse, or controlling.

Attachment To Her Father

A woman's attachment to her father has a profound impact on how she views herself at her core as to her femininity.

A girl wants to be received by her father, get his approval, warmth and involvement. When a woman receives strength and involvement from her father she has a sense of completeness. How a girl is received by her father has a powerful impact in all areas of her life her inner self, appearance, and sexuality.

A father can wound his daughter by being passive, detached from the home, offering conditional acceptance, by his anger, lack of warmth and closeness, his physical, verbal or emotional abuse. The way the father treats other women; talks about women, viewing pornography or his unfaithfulness to her mother can do great damage. These wounds send a message to the daughter that she is damaged, does not measure up. The message says that something is wrong with her beauty.

Describe how you have attached to your father during the following ages, including wounds you received as the result of not attaching. Describe when you felt like you were a disappointment to your father. What words, attitudes or actions from your father impacted you?

Attachment To Her Husband

A woman enters marriage with the deep desire of finding attachment in a safe relationship. Perhaps now she will find a man that will not harm her and will understand her and accept her,

A wife may fail to attach to her husband for one of two reasons:

1. She has been damaged in previous attached relationships, with her father or other males in her life and doesn't want to be hurt anymore. She may be fearful of intimacy and therefore may avoid attachment.

How has your attachment or lack of attachment with your father or other male relationships affected your relationship with your husband?

How would you describe how you have attached to your husband?

How has your husband helped you as the result of your wounds from your failure to attach well with your father?

2. She may deeply desire attachment to her husband, but the husband is distant, uninvolved, fearful, avoiding, or angry. Therefore, there is no husband for her to deeply attach to.

How has your husband hurt you as the result of his failure to attach to you?

How has your husband added to the wounds you have received from you father or previous relationships?

Some Characteristics of an Unattached Wife

- ◆ She feels that she can never be enough.
- ◆ She becomes a doormat in order to be liked or accepted
- ◆ She is often critical and or negative.
- ◆ She is difficult to please.
- ◆ She avoids sexual intimacy.
- ◆ She is self-sufficient.
- ◆ She is fearful of making others angry.
- ◆ She is controlling or dominating.
- ◆ She is fearful of being open and vulnerable.
- ◆ She is fearful of being taken advantage of.
- ◆ She finds it very difficult to trust.

How A Wife Handles Her Pain of Not Attaching Fear

A wife who is not attaching to her husband is usually controlled by fear. Fear motivates her to control her husband. She may have tasted disappointment with her father or other relationships and does not want to be hurt again. She may feel powerless to make her marriage safe. Her husband's lack of leadership and poor choices leave her feeling vulnerable. Because of her fear, she is afraid to let her husband fail and face the consequences of his choices.

First Peter exhorts wives how to relate to a husband who is not behaving in a manner that he should. Peter tells her that she should respond with a gentle and quiet spirit and that she should not give way to fear.

You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. -I Peter 3:6, NIV

Anger

As an unattached wife continues to experience the consequences of a husband who is not coming through for her, she becomes angry. Her anger is the result of not seeing any change and feeling hopeless. Anger usually leads to withdrawal and the hardening of her heart.

A Demanding Spirit

Being in a marriage where she feels alone and unsafe, she takes matters into her own hands to create the marriage that she deeply longs for. She attempts to find a way to change her husband in order to protect herself from more pain.

Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife. - Proverbs 21:19, NIV

This verse is referring to a wife who is not happy with her husband and she is trying to change him.

It says that she is quarrelsome [the King James Version uses the word, contentious]. The word means to dispute or umpire. It is a wife who knows the rules as to how her husband should behave. When she feels that the rules are not being followed, she blows the whistle. She is not going to let her husband get away with any errors. The husband might feel that he is being micro-managed.

If the husband does not correct his ways, then she feels compelled to make him wish that he had listened to her. She becomes ill-tempered [the King James Version uses the word, vexing]. The idea here is that she will make him suffer, for not changing. The word means, *to put salt in ones mouth*. Perhaps now she will get him to change.

Finding Her Beauty

Even though God created women to enjoy attachment, she lives in a sinful world where attachment, in the way a woman deeply desires to have it, is impossible. Women are placed in the position of being vulnerable to a husband who doesn't cherish them, who does not offer safe leadership and who does not have her best interest in mind. Whenever a woman looks to a man for her complete attachment, she is going to be disappointed.

How Does a Woman Lose Her Beauty?

When God created Eve, He gave her a special beauty that invited intimacy and attachment. Adam immediately recognized her beauty and accepted her for all that she had to offer.

When the serpent confronted Eve, and placed doubt in her mind that perhaps she was missing out on something, she believed the lie from Satan that God was not enough. At that point she took matters into her own hands that she should meet her own needs. God could not be trusted. She would get her needs met on her own terms. At that moment her beauty was marred.

After God confronts Adam and Eve of their disobedience for eating the fruit, God placed a curse on them. The curse on Eve would be one of pain in relationships.

To the woman he said, I will greatly increase your pain in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." - Genesis 3:16,17, NIV

She would now experience loneliness and disappointment in the very relationship that she was designed to offer completeness. Instead of experiencing attachment and nurturing her relationship with her husband, she would seek to control her husband with her own resources in order to get the attachment that she was designed to have with him. The disappointment she would experience would cause her to be dependent on God for her attachment. Her struggle would cause her to fully turn to God to find her beauty that had been marred as the result of the fall.

Where Does A Woman Go To Restore Her Beauty?

A woman can choose to restore her beauty by her own resources or she can seek to find her inner beauty, which comes from God.

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. -1 Peter 3:1-6, NIV

Peter is speaking to wives who are in difficult marriages whose husbands will not listen to reason and are not acting in a loving way. He instructs the wives that they are not to focus on winning their husbands over by their outer beauty, but rather focus on their inner beauty. It is the inner beauty that restores attachment to her husband.

Inner beauty comes as the result of a wife's dependency on God. She chooses to renounce the vows she has made to protect herself from the pain of the wounds she has experienced in her marriage and past relationships. She will not resort to using her own beauty as a means of manipulating her husband but rather she will rely totally on God to make her beautiful on the inside. She realizes that her husband may deeply disappoint her by his choices, but he can not destroy her soul.

What does it mean to have a gentle and quiet spirit?

A gentle spirit denotes a gentle and humble attitude that maintains patience despite offenses and does not give into vengefulness and malice. It is a picture of a wild stallion that is gentle. Its strength is under control. Its passion and power are under control.

Gentleness is not a passive word, rather it is active against evil. A wife can be at peace inside while she still deals with problems in her marriage.

A quiet spirit is a calm spirit that is not easily irritated or excited. It has the idea of being in control rather than out of control. The wife is at peace inside in spite of what might be going on in her marriage. She is not controlled by fear, bitterness, or belligerence.

An aggressive woman demands from others. An assertive woman asks. Aggressive women present themselves as controlling their environment and others. Assertive women are in control of themselves and resist control from others. Aggressive women attempt to influence others to their way of thinking. Assertive women freely think for themselves and allow others to do the same.

What Happened with Leah?

Leah was able to praise the Lord even though Jacob still didn't love her.

God seems to have rewarded Leah for her ability to trust Him in a difficult situation. It was through her fourth son, Judah that the Messiah was born. Though Jacob failed to show her love, she learned to praise God in the midst of her circumstance and appreciate what God had given her.

Leah continued to struggle with manipulating her husband by: competing with her sister, giving her maid to compete in childbearing, and she hired Jacob mandrakes, in spite of this, she continued to put her trust in God.

Notice the change that took place in Leah after her fourth son by her sons' names:

Fourth son, Judah = Praise - *"This time I will praise the Lord"*

Fifth son, Issachar = Reward - *"God has rewarded me"*

Sixth son, Zebulum = Honor - *"God has presented me with a precious gift."*

Leah continued to learn to trust God in the midst of a difficult marriage even though her marriage didn't change.

A Woman Who Invites Attachment

A wife can bring attachment into her home by nourishing her relationship with her husband.

She Nurtures Her Husband

Because she is built in such a way to attach for meaningful identity and relationship, she provides a special gift that nurtures relationship.

"When a man realizes that his wife is more naturally motivated to nurture relationships, he can relax and accept those tendencies and choose to develop a better marriage and better relationships with his children.

As a husband, do you realize that your wife's natural ability for developing relationships can actually help you fulfill the two greatest commandments taught by Christ? LOVING GOD and LOVING OTHERS. Jesus said that if we obey these two commandments, (Matthew 22:36-40) we are fulfilling all the commandments.

Think of it, your wife has the God-driven drive and ability to help you build meaningful relationships in both of these areas. God knew you needed special help because he said it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper and completer suitable for him.

If you let her, your wife can open up a whole new and complete world of communication and deeper relationships." (Taken from Gary Smalley - If He Only Knew]

A wife nurtures relationships by:

Her Deeds -1 Timothy 5:9-10; Titus 2:3-5

I Timothy 5:9-14 describes the nature of how relationships should be operating.

The woman deemed worthy of support is described as: well-known for her good deeds, bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble, putting herself to all kinds of good deeds. The way she lives life shows a very strong commitment to relationships.

Titus 2:3-5 is another picture of what being involved means in the home by providing a context where relationships can flourish. She is the "soil" in which relationships can grow. The husband provides direction, the "to go;" the wife provides the "to grow." The soil that the wife provides: good deeds that are highly relationally oriented in the context of hospitality for the growth of the work of God, a strong commitment to husband, to children, to saints, and to strangers, and an open home with an emphasis upon service in relationship.

Her Words -1 Timothy 5:13; I Timothy 3:11; Titus 2:3

She is the house ruler who, by what she does, does not provide information which slander can be based upon to do damage to the work of Christ. A woman can provide great morsels of gossip for the slanderer to do injustice to the people of God. In I Timothy, she is to love in such a way as to not slander.

There is a strong relationship between a commitment to relationships and the issue of slander (which shows up in both passages.) Relationship is an opposite of slander. Here are several passages to look up: Proverbs 11:13, 20:19, 16:28, 18:8, 26:20, 22. The point is that a woman

who is not the kind of wife she should be provides information for the slanderer and she herself slanders. To be a woman means to not be a slanderer or a gossip.

A good wife is the opposite of a slanderer. She is one who uses words wisely to provide intimacy with loyalty. Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let your words not be rotten, but edifying, building up." The purpose of words is to build up, oriented to "I want to do this person good;" to cheer, to nourish. In other words, the idea of words being hospitable. Hospitality is not just provision of food and bed. A hospitable woman is one who is looking to nourish and give rest by the quality of her own soul and the quality of her own words. She is looking for her words to be said in such a way that encourages, enhances, gives a taste of life. If you hear someone tell you something about someone else, this causes you to wonder about what they will do with your words. Slander can be thought of in two ways:

Surface perspective - Misuses the words of others that were shared in an intimate context and now are shared in a general or public context.

Deeper perspective - Questions to ask: How do I handle your soul? Am I loyal to what is inside of you? Will I take seriously what is inside of you so that I will not do anything to damage your soul? My ministry to you will be toward the goal of building you toward the person you were meant to be.

Showing Respect

However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. - Ephesians 5:33, NIV

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. -1 Peter 3:1-2, NIV

A wife attaches to her husband by respecting him. Respect motivates a husband to take responsibility and that someone believes in him. When a wife communicates to her husband that he has something to offer, it energizes him to give more of himself.

Ways a Wife Respects Her Husband

- ◆ Don't criticize him, rather learn to share how you feel.
- ◆ Don't try to get him to simply live up to your expectations. Encourage him to be what God wants him to be.
- ◆ Share how you feel, but keep it brief.
- ◆ Listen to your husband without being judgmental or critical.
- ◆ Compliment him for moving in the right direction
- ◆ Look for the good.
- ◆ Listen to how he feels.
- ◆ When he disappoints you or withdraws from you, express your longing for connection.
- ◆ Don't use words like "you always...", or you never,..."

She is a Protector of the Relationship

God has gifted women with special senses and abilities that can enhance the marriage relationship. God has given women a special radar to sense what is going on.

- ◆ You've heard about "women's intuition."
- ◆ Stanford University research team found:
- ◆ Women catch subliminal messages faster and more accurately than men.
- ◆ Women simply have the capacity to perceive something or feel something about a situation or person whereas, men tend to follow the logical analysis of circumstances or people.

THEIR RESEARCH CONCLUDED:

Men, you will do well to listen to your wife.

if the husband shuts out his wife and does not listen to her:

- He doesn't realize he is losing something very valuable.
- He is robbing himself of the very thing that will make him complete.

She is the House Ruler - Proverbs 31

Proverbs 31 epitomizes the house ruler, as a picture of a valiant or warrior woman in the battle for life. She is called to rule the house under her husband, but nevertheless to rule.

She feeds the needy, provides her husband with a base of authority to go out in his world, provides clothes, property, etc. She organizes, delegates, and supervises the work of her household.

In the Ancient Near East everything to do with society occurred within the home. In our day, our homes are often not the center for education, socialization, commerce, or culture. Very little of importance happens in our homes. They have become simply places for eating and sleeping.

Proverbs 31:25 is a picture of what this woman is like-her character. She is clothed in strength and dignity. She is a powerful person. She is not a weak woman. Dignity is an honor bestowed on someone who is strong. She has substance. She continually offers her soul to others. Therefore, she can "afford to laugh at tomorrow," meaning that there is nothing that tomorrow can bring which will take away the substance of her feminine soul which she will enjoy for eternity. There is no fear of tomorrow because tomorrow cannot damage or strip her of who she is as a woman.

The Purpose of Attachment

- ◆ To fulfill God's purpose to be the helper.

- ◆ Without attachment, she is not complete nor fulfilled.