



*little words*

# COUPLES AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

Men and women reflect the heart of God differently

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# COUPLES AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

Men and women reflect the heart of God differently



## *Made in God's image*

**MEN AND WOMEN ARE BOTH MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.**

While we each reflect different qualities of God's character, he embodies them all. God did his most powerful work in our world when he took on a position of incredible vulnerability, by giving up his eternal qualities and taking on a fragile human form. In doing this, he won the hearts of his people, many of whom, in turn, gave up their lives for him.

In Ephesians 5, God calls us to interact in our marriages the way that God does with the Church. Eph 5:31-32 *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."* This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church." When united in relationship, men and women join together their two halves of the character of God. The man follows the example of God, and the woman, the role of the church, in responding to him.

Most couples don't fall out of love, they begin to resent the other for not giving them what they need in the relationship. The Relationship Workshop will show you what each partner needs to feel fulfilled - uniquely to the way God designed them, and simple activities to use everyday that will bring you both back to the feeling of being in love.

*So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

**GENESIS 1:27**



*little words*

# Masculine State

## A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

**Like God, men are strong (Deuteronomy 3:24), hard-working and self-sacrificing (Ephesians 5:25).**

God has great power, just as a man does physically over a woman, yet he chooses to give it up in order to draw his people to him through love. In the same way, a man is most powerful when he gives up what he himself wants and chooses to enhance the happiness of his wife. This is what truly wins her heart and binds her to him in love, for life.

God calls a man to shoulder the responsibility of taking care of the family. This does not mean he does everything to provide for the family, or that he necessarily does more than his wife, but that the weight of it rests upon him.

Accepting this responsibility gives a man purpose. In entering a relationship, he is seeking the purpose of having a partner, and potentially a family to provide for. He is seeking acknowledgement and appreciation for doing this role well.

Many times in the Bible we are exhorted to thank God for the things he does for us. Jesus made a big deal about the one leper out of ten who returned to say thank you. Men are fueled by appreciation, however a man who truly reflects the heart of God is not needy for it. He sacrifices in order to fulfill his purpose, of providing for the happiness and well being of his partner. Then he accepts and enjoys her appreciation.

It may seem unfair that the man is called to be self-sacrificing, however, what a man truly wants is to make his partner happy. That is why this relationship dynamic works, because he is fulfilled in rising to this challenge, and in doing so, regains his freedom. If he will not give up his desires to meet hers first, she will constantly attempt to interrupt his freedom in order to test whether she is his primary focus.

When a man gives up his life (wants and desires) to meet her needs first, she then will allow him more freedom to pursue his own interests. "Whoever wants to save his life, will lose it, but he who loses it for my sake, will save it" Matthew 16:25



**Husbands, love your wives,  
just as Christ loved the  
church and gave himself up  
for her. In this same way,  
husbands ought to love  
their wives as their own  
bodies.**

EPHESIANS 5:25

## Maintaining Masculine State

### WARNING SIGNS FOR A MAN THAT HE HAS DROPPED HIS MASCULINE STATE:

- You are trying to get space from her
- You are defensive when she shares her feelings
- You feel like you can never get anything right in the relationship
- You want to escape her constant nagging.
- You never get any time to yourself

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO RESUME MASCULINE STATE

- Choose to self-sacrifice and put your wife's needs first.
- Go and find her and ask her about her day. Give her time to talk, sharing her feelings with you. As she shares, respond to her with statements like this:
  - How does that make you feel?
  - That sounds like it's really hard for you.
  - Tell me more about that

Giving her the gift of your time and attention foremost and freely will allow her to feel connected with you. When she feels understood, she will feel safe in the relationship and less worried about the time you spend apart. She will be more open in expressing her appreciation to you, which will allow you to feel successful and fulfilled in the relationship.

### WARNING SIGNS FOR A WOMAN THAT YOUR MAN HAS DROPPED HIS MASCULINE STATE:

- He is spending more time than necessary at work
- He is defensive when you share your feelings
- He feels he needs lots of time to himself

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ENCOURAGE HIM TO RESUME MASCULINE STATE

- Stay in feminine state - the relationship can only tolerate one person in that state for long periods, if you stay where you are, he will step up.
- Instead of criticising, be vulnerable. Share how it makes you feel when he withdraws. If he becomes defensive, validate his feelings. Gently remind him that you share your feelings because he's made you feel safe enough to do so, knowing he's man enough to handle it.
- Ask directly and specifically for what you want. E.g. "It would make me really happy if you...", "Could you please..." Remember to ask for these things and not demand them, trust that he wants to make you happy.
- Thank him when he does them (however reluctant he may be). Men are fuelled by appreciation and if he feels he "didn't get it right" he won't want to try again.
- Keep your heart open to him. Love is the most powerful force in the universe. It is love that will motivate him to be there for you, not rejection or criticism.





## Feminine State

### A WOMAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

**Like God, women are: beautiful (Isaiah 28:5); intuitive (Isaiah 65:24); compassionate (Exodus 34:6), vulnerable and beyond understanding (Job 36:26).**

Like God, women in relationship want to be sought after, desired and understood. "You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13). A woman enters a relationship because she is seeking emotional connection.

Women in relationship are encouraged to respond to their husband in a similar way to how they respond to God. She is vulnerable with her feelings. God does not fear rejection. He knows he is incredible. But he does want to bond with us on an emotional level. He is outright in expressing his love for us.

This is what women are encouraged to do in relationship: to be emotionally open in pouring out their hearts to their husband, the same way as we can with God.

**"Trust in him at all times,  
you people; pour out your  
hearts to him, for God is  
our refuge."**

PSALM 62:8

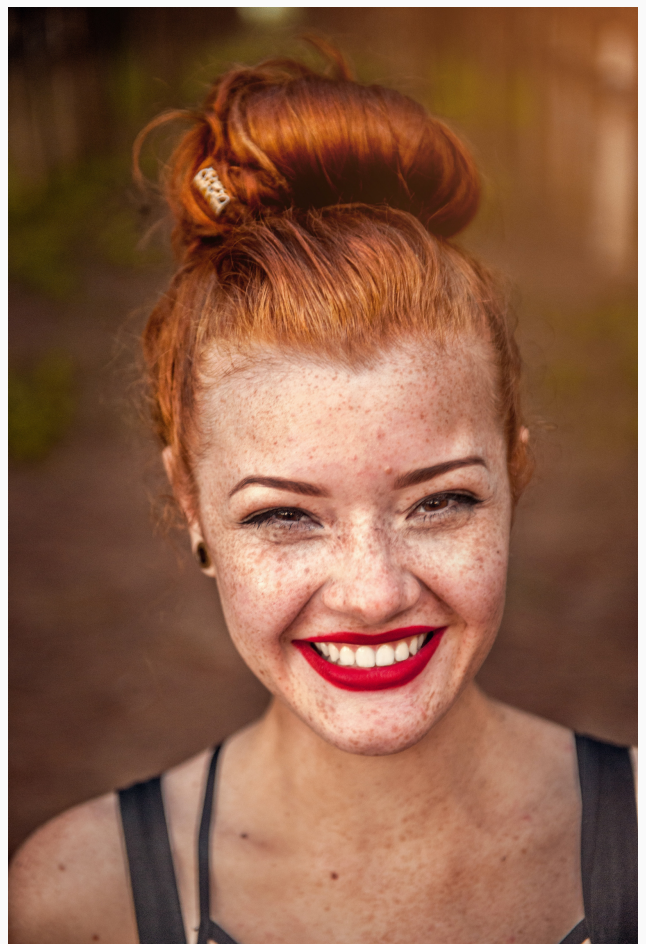
**Give thanks to the Lord for  
he is good; his love endures  
forever.**

PSALM 107:1

She does not need to fear overwhelming him with positive or negative emotions; he has God's character traits too, and he is enough to handle it.

God encourages his people to ask him directly for what they want. "Ask and it will be given to you...for everyone who asks receives" (Matthew 7:7-8) This is how a woman in a relationship can inspire her man to act. When she fully expresses her needs and desires, he is inspired to act in order to fulfil her happiness.

When she feels free to express her feelings, needs and desires fully, she is also able to express her appreciation to her husband freely. This reinforces his sense of purpose in the relationship, and helps him understand what makes her happy.





# Maintaining Feminine State

## WARNING SIGNS FOR A WOMAN THAT SHE HAS STEPPED OUT OF FEMININE STATE:

- You feel disconnected from him.
- You feel like you have to do EVERYTHING.
- You feel the weight and responsibility of the family and relationship rests upon you.
- You are ordering him around.
- You feel resentful about the relationship

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO RESUME FEMININE STATE

- Ask him if he could spend 10mins with you to just listen. Tell him that you've got a lot on your mind and having him listen to you get it all out without arguing or fixing, just to have your feelings understood, would take a real weight off your shoulders.
- If you find it difficult to share feelings that are unreasonable, illogical or desires that are mutually exclusive, try prefacing your share: "I've got some things I need to share about how I'm feeling that I know are unreasonable, I just need to be able to get them out so that I'm not holding on to resentment in the relationship".
- If he doesn't know how to respond in a validating manner while you do this, ask him to ask you how it makes you feel.
- Thank him for listening afterwards (even if he doesn't get it quite right).
- Choose to get what you want, rather than be resentful. Ask specifically and directly for the things you wish your husband would do. His brain does not work the way yours does. The things that seem obvious to you are not clear to him. Spelling it out for him will help him learn what you like. Appreciate him when he gets close to the mark.
- Find three things every day and appreciate your man for them. This will help you focus on the positives of the relationship and reinforce him doing the things that make you happy.

*Life is too precious to waste in resentment*

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AND GROW WILDLY IN LOVE WITH YOUR PARTNER

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## WARNING SIGNS FOR A MAN THAT YOUR WIFE HAS STEPPED OUT OF FEMININE STATE:

- She is prickly and snappy and nagging
- She finds fault with whatever you do
- She is demanding and it seems like she wants more and more from you.
- She complains that she feels bored/unloved/disappointed/disconnected/not understood in the relationship.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT HER TO RESUME FEMININE STATE

- Stay in masculine state - the relationship can only tolerate one person in that state for long periods, if you stay where you are, she will relax.
- Ask her to sit down with you and tell you about her day. Give her 20mins to talk, sharing her feelings with you.
- When you listen, rather than making a list of things she is wanting, just focus on validating her feelings. This is what she truly wants, underneath all the requests.
- To validate her feelings, respond to her with statements like this:
  - How does that make you feel?
  - That sounds like it's really hard for you.
  - Tell me more about that
- If she reacts badly to these words, it is a TEST! She wants to know whether you *really* want to find out how she feels. Let her know you've got all the time in the world for her. In the long run, she will take less of your time if you do this.

