

## CouplesInBloom.com – Relational to Responsible Ratio

July 2014

**Example marriage:** husband and wife love each other, are quite different in many ways but appreciate the strengths of their mate. The interaction of their weaknesses, however, has been a long-standing problem; specifically: (as often happens), the wife is more tuned in to emotional aspects and the husband is more focused on logistics. Although both of them know that both are vital, their personal prioritizations divide them. They need help:

Without knowing it, they make their situation worse: in her longing to feel cared for, the wife thinks about how rarely that happens which functionally de-motivates her as a wife. This creates problems: it gives her husband more logistics to do, it allows him less time for her, and most importantly: it kills opportunities for them to do things together. If she only had eyes to see she was tearing her own house down ⇨ Proverbs 14:1. This is what the wife needs to understand. Now let's see what the husband needs to understand:

The husband really likes the affection of his wife, yet he is the biggest factor in hindering it: his unspoken but clearly lived-out prioritization of being **responsible** to get tasks done over being **relational** to love his wife complicates her weakness ⇨ 1 Peter 3:7. If he only had eyes to realize that he needs to love ⇨ Ephesians 5:25 (*literally be beside his wife when loving*) (*closely relating to*) his wife in the way Jesus left being just spirit but **took on flesh to come along side** His Bride of Christ, the Church, **to love her**.

So much for seeing; what about **doing**? The first step of doing is **owning**: the marriage will not improve unless both spouses embrace a **relational-to-responsible ratio** that fits them. In case you are wondering (or arguing) which is more important, the answer is both but the **relational** is where it starts and the **responsible** is where it is proven / finishes. If both spouses agree to this Biblical **relational / responsible** order ⇨ James 2; Psalm 127; Matthew 7:21-23; etc., their properly motivated obedience qualifies them to prosper.

As in Jesus' example, **doing** this **relational-to-responsible ratio** requires **three steps**:

- 1. Previewed joy** ⇨ John 3:16; 15:13; Hebrews 12:2. This is not something human willpower can master; rather, it is the process of surrendering that human willpower after being convinced that what God said is right but is also beyond human **doing**. It is the **previewed joy** that starts any Godly process, and is the heart motivation throughout it.
- 2. Painful murder** Jesus became sin by taking ours, which had to be paid for in order for us to enter into God's goodness ⇨ Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10. He did not want to pay for our sin in His humanity ⇨ Matthew 26:36-42, but submitted His human will to God's will so God's power could manifest; not human willpower ⇨ Hebrews 12:2.
- 3. Permanent peace** ⇨ lots of verses describing eternal life starting now; look them up! Write these steps down at strategic places in your life to help remember and live them.

If we share in Jesus' death then we also share in His resurrection ⇨ Romans 6:5. We as individuals and couples must embrace this Biblical **relational / responsible** order in our lives. Husbands must be **responsible in relationship** (*working at loving her*), and wives must become **relational in responsibility** (*loving when working*). This **relational-to-responsible ratio** is not a mathematical formula, but rather a revelation from God. ♥