

The Secrets of Blue: God's Design of Men

Most of us are walking around with our heads twisted on backwards.

We don't really mind living like this, with our heads twisted on backwards, because we see that this is how everyone else wears her head; this is really quite popular.



The problem, though, with having our heads on backwards is that we keep banging into stuff! We keep falling, and we keep getting hurt. Life can be pretty confusing when your head is on backwards!

Our natural thinking can be completely contrary to truth, 180 degrees backward. In Isaiah's words, we think that dark is light and that bitter is sweet. But the Scriptures tell us what truth really is; and as we learn and believe that truth, we get our heads turned straight. God gets our heads turned the right way.

Life makes a lot more sense now; we don't keep crashing around and stumbling about.



If ever we had our heads twisted on backwards, it is in this area of marriage.

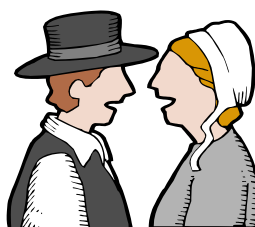
One way that we have our heads on backwards is in believing the "50/50" myth. That is the belief that unless both the husband and the wife are actively working to improve their relationship, then there is no hope for the marriage. We think that unless both people are willing to put attention and energy into the marriage, then it really won't help much. But is that true?

Look at this situation: two people back-to-back. People in a marriage can easily get turned back-to-back in conflict.



If they will both turn around, then they can see eye-to-eye again. It seems that they both have to turn around in order to be in harmony again.

What can just one person do? Watch this: if just one person will walk around the other and then turn the other way, the two people are again face-to-face. The situation is resolved, even though only one person took action.



So take hope! One person can make all the difference that is needed.

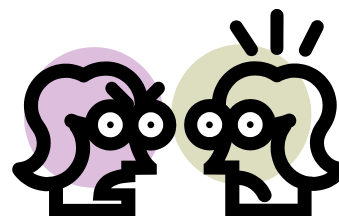
If you are feeling alone in your marriage, take hope! There is great power in the obedience of one person in her marriage because God Almighty fills those acts of obedience with His incredible power.

In fact, Proverbs 14:1 says, "A wise woman builds her house; but with her own hands, the foolish one tears hers down."

A wise wife is credited with nothing less than the building of the house of marriage. That is meaningful work! That is significant accomplishment!

One wise woman can build a marriage. One can build.

Imagine two people trying to have a pleasant conversation, but each one is speaking a different language. Imagine that the two people become frustrated and angry, unaware that they are speaking two different languages.



They are not trying to be difficult, and there is nothing wrong with either one of them. They simply do not understand each other's language.

A perfect solution to this frustrating dilemma would be for each of them to learn a new language. If they both learned the other's language, they easily would be able to understand each other.

But what if only one of them learned to speak the other's language? That alone will completely change the situation.

Of course, it is great if the two people will both learn a new language. That would be ideal, especially in a marriage relationship in which the man speaks "blue" and the woman speaks "pink." But if only one will learn another language, that is enough.

One person—YOU—learning about your husband can make a huge difference.

So...how can we as women learn to speak blue? Speaking blue involves understanding God's design of men and, more specifically, the needs of men. Just like women, men have God-given needs. As *ezer* and as Eve, in ways that are fragrant and feminine, we can minister to our husband's needs. We can speak blue!

We will look at four ways in which we can speak blue, the language of our husbands.

1. What is your husband's deepest need?

His deepest need is not your deepest need.

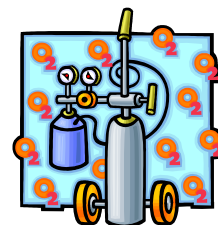
Your husband's core need is like the oxygen that his soul breathes. It is an essential.

When someone is without oxygen, there is nothing more critical. The need for oxygen has to be met even before the need for food or drink. Your husband has a need which is that critical within his soul.

But this is not a core need for a woman. Unless a woman learns this about her husband, she may unknowingly deprive him of the very air that he must have in order to breathe.

If this deep need is not being met, a man will find it nearly impossible to stay. Indeed, he will leave, either physically or emotionally. He will die inside. If, however, this need is being met by his wife, a man will find it nearly impossible to leave.

Imagine this: a man is sitting on a chair with plastic tubing going from his nose to an oxygen tank; he is absolutely dependent on that oxygen. A woman comes in and, completely oblivious of the tube, stands right on it. Unaware that she is blocking off his oxygen, she tries to talk to the man, but he only looks at her with irritation. He completely ignores her questions; he keeps yelling at her about something. Not understanding, she gets her feelings hurt, and she finally walks away in tears, thinking to herself, "He is such a jerk!"



This is going on all over, all the time. Men breathe respect.

If a man feels disrespected, he can't really focus on anything else. If a man doesn't receive respect, he feels as if he cannot breathe. All he wants is to get away to someplace where he can breathe.

Husbands have an innate need for respect, and this is something that women do not understand unless they are taught because unconditional respect is not our core need.

Women generally protest this, saying, “Listen, there is no one who wants to respect my husband more than I do, believe me! And I will . . . when he earns it! I will respect him when he does this and this. . . .” But when women understand that this need for respect is just like a woman’s need for love—unconditional, unearned love—then they get it!

As women, our deepest need is to feel loved.

But your husband’s deepest need is to feel respected.

Not only do we women need love—that is, affection—but we want *unconditional* love. We need to feel loved even on days when we are not very lovable. In fact, we need to feel loved *especially* on those days!



In the same way, not only does a husband need respect, but a husband needs *unconditional* respect. He needs to feel respected even when his wife does not think he has earned it. He may need respect *especially* at those times!

Your husband is made in the image of God Almighty. According to Scripture, simply being made in the likeness of God is reason enough for respect.

Your husband’s actions may not be worthy of respect. But his spirit is. His spirit is worthy of your respect.

Be in awe of who God made him to be. Focus on his spirit: honor his immortal spirit that was awesomely created for greatness and designed for strength; respect his spirit that was created to be a mighty man of God.



When you cause your husband to feel disrespected, he cannot hear anything else you say because he cannot breathe.

Let’s say your husband comes home one evening and says something unloving to you, and you just can’t get past that comment. You keep thinking about it.

Everything else he says to you is filtered through your hurt. Everything else for the rest of the week stands in the hazy background of those words that made you feel unloved.

In a similar way, if we treat our husbands with disrespect, they cannot get past that—they cannot focus on anything else. Everything else moves to the

background. When we fail to give respect to our husbands, nothing else really matters.

One of the greatest things a mother can do for her children is to teach and to model respect for their father. Having instilled in their spirits honor for their father is a gift that will bless those children for the rest of their lives.

Conversely, one of the most damaging things a mother can do to her children is to foster in their spirits dishonor for their father. When people have a broken foundation of dishonor for the father, the other pieces of their lives will be continually subject to brokenness and failure, anger and sadness.

We convey respect or disrespect in three ways:

- in our words,
- in our actions,
- and in our body language.

Our tone of voice and our facial expressions are powerful communicators of respect or disrespect—more powerful than our words, in fact. Nonverbals convey our attitudes and our feelings.

Have you ever received a love letter? Many wives wish that their husbands would write a love letter to them, and women will sometimes write love letters to their men. But instead of writing love letters to our husbands, we really should be writing *respect* letters.



Have you ever written a letter to your husband that expressed nothing but solid respect? Here's my challenge to you: write a respect letter to your husband that salutes him just as powerfully as you can with the help of God's Spirit. Write a letter that will cause him to walk taller and stand straighter. And if he actually swaggers a bit after he reads your words, then I salute you!

May God forgive us for suffocating our husbands with disrespect. May God forgive us for choking the life out of our husbands and then condemning them for their weakness.

We breathe life into our husbands when we give them the gift of respect. We breathe life into our husbands when we admire them and honor them.

A man can be wilted with self-doubt, wilted with a sense of failure, wilted with a lack of confidence. But his wife can breathe life into him.

She breathes the oxygen of respect into him, and he can rise up to be a man of strength and nobility. She breathes respect into him, and he can rise up into grand, heroic greatness.

It is a glorious thing to breathe life into a human being. It is glorious, and it is sacred. It is what God did at creation, and it is what you do in your marriage.

This is the God-given gifting of a wife.

Only when heads are twisted on backwards is this gifting seen as something demeaning or weak. It is a divine gifting, a work that mirrors the very work of God.



“A wise woman builds her house; but with her own hands, the foolish one tears hers down.” (Proverbs 14:1)

As you commit to minister to your husband and to bless him with the gift of respect, remember that no one on the face of the earth can tear him down like you can, and no one can build him up like you can.

2. Let's look at the next aspect of speaking blue.

Have you ever really wanted to talk to your husband? Not about anything in particular--just talk so that you can feel close to him. Just talk face to face so that you can feel connected to him.

As women, we feel that on a regular basis—this strong need to share in conversation, looking into each other's eyes—just to connect. It makes us feel intimate with our husbands.



When that is not happening, we can feel it in a way that is almost physical. It wells up in us, and we feel this strong desire to talk with our husbands.

Well, have you ever wanted to talk to your husband, and he just did not understand that? He said things like, “What did I do now? What do you want to talk about?”

And you said, "Nothing. I mean. . . . everything! I mean, nothing in particular, just talk."

And you stammered and fumbled, and it sounded kind of silly, which was frustrating, because it wasn't silly to you; it was really important to you. And it hurt that he not only did not feel the same way, but he did not even understand it.

Now, listen to a husband respond to a wife's desire for conversation:

Oh, all right. Since this means so much to you. [rolls eyes]

Okay, fine. [heavy sigh of resignation]

Didn't we just do this?

How long will this take?

Are we done yet?

Good.

And then your husband walks away, getting back to what he really wanted to do and thinking that he has done his husbandly duty and that you should feel loved now. Do you? Not really!

Mostly, you feel disappointed. In fact, you are going to be more reluctant to ask to talk to him again. It just means so much more if he wants to talk, too. When he is not interested, when he is still keeping his eyes on the newspaper or the television, you think, *this is not what I had in mind*.

Now, let's take the very same words that we just applied to women and their desire for conversation. Let's image that we are a group of men right now, and let's use these same comments to reflect the desire of men for physical intimacy.



"We [men] feel, on a regular basis, this strong need to share and connect in a physical way with our wives. It makes us feel intimate with our wives. When that is not happening, we feel it; we feel this strong desire to be physically intimate with our wives.

"Well, men, have you ever wanted to be with your wife physically, and she just didn't understand that? It was really important to

you, and it hurt that she not only did not feel the same way, but she didn't even understand it.

"Maybe she responded like this: **Oh, all right.**

Since this means so much to you. [rolls eyes]

Okay, fine. [heavy sigh of resignation]

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How long will this take?

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"Mostly, you feel disappointed. It just means so much more if she wants to do this, too. When she is not really interested, you think, *this is not what I had in mind.*"

Well, ladies, there seem to be two different gender languages. Women speak a gender language of conversation, and men speak their gender language of physical intimacy.

Who should first learn the language of the other? Let's answer that with another question: How many other people can converse with your husband in his gender language?

Only one! You are the only one who can rightfully and helpfully speak his gender language with him.

But what about the female gender language of conversation? How many other people can speak with you in your gender language? As many godly girlfriends as you can collect!

Take note of this: Women are not as dependent upon their spouses in the area of core neediness as men are. We need to twist our heads on straight about this, and pay attention.

A husband's core need is met in a healthy way only by his wife. That is a serious responsibility for us.

Here we build, or here we destroy. We alone can do this building, and God has put the tools in our hands.

We live in a sex-saturated society, and we think that we know what men want. We can see that sex is the packaging of what men want, but we are blind to the real need inside—and that need continues to be unmet in our culture. Inside that surface, physical need is a compelling, driving need to be accepted and to be desired.

If a man does not talk to his wife, she does not feel hurt because she feels uninformed; she feels hurt because she feels rejected. The lack of communication represents a lack of acceptance to her. This sense of rejection is a deep wounding to her.

In a similar way, when a woman does not respond fully to her husband physically, she wounds him deeply. He feels unaccepted by the most important woman in his life. He feels rejected in his soul.

One of the best ways for a woman to influence her unbelieving husband for God is to convey enthusiastic acceptance to him physically. If she does not, then he connects God and wife and rejection all together. The wife represents God to him, and she represents rejection or maybe mere tolerance to him; this does not draw him to God at all.

This also holds true for women with Christian husbands. When our physical responses and our behavior say, "I accept you, and I desire you," *then* is our holiness beautiful to our men. *Then* our holiness can attract our husbands to their wives and to God.

3. The third element in speaking blue is related to respect; I would call it a subset of respect. But it is important to mention it specifically because it is distinct and necessary in itself.

Not only does a man breathe respect, but there is something for which he is listening, something which his male soul senses.

Think of a man testing the ice on a pond: if he sense that it is solid, he gets out there and does impressive stuff. But if he senses that the ice is thin; if he hears cracking sounds of warning, then he leaves that pond. He either waits for the ice to be solid, or else he looks elsewhere for a safe pond.



What is it that your husband is listening very diligently to hear? This is what he must hear in your words or behind your words; "success" is what he must sense in your spirit and behavior. That word "success" gives him a firm platform to move out on.

He is listening for "you are a success in my eyes," or "you are becoming a success in my eyes."

Bill and Pam Farrell say that this concept is so critical to a man that it is what "unlocks" his heart. They call it the password to his heart, "the code." When this primary issue is resolved, then everything else can be resolved as secondary details.

A man must know that he can be a success in relationship with you.

He is listening for "I believe in you. You will be a great success in this marriage. You will be a great success as a man and as a husband to me."

Your husband wants to succeed as your husband. He very much wants to please you, to impress you. But many men know that they have failed; they know because their wives tell them! We tell them, of course, because we think, "If he knows he's a failure, then he'll change and be a success!" But that is pink thinking, not blue.

Once a man hears the ice is cracking, he is motivated to leave, not to go farther!

Men don't stay where they feel that they are failures. They try to go to ponds that are solid so that they can be successful.



It is that solid ice—those message of success that they hear from their wives--which gives them a platform on which to do great things.

How does God speak to men? Does God speak blue? Man, He really does!

He assures men that as they trust Him, they will be successful. He assures them over and over that as they are obedient to Him as their God, their relationship with God will be successful.

- God told Abraham, "You will be great." God promised him that they would be friends.
- Joseph was given incredible dreams of success, long before any of these great things happened. These dreams were messages of success that helped to strengthen and encourage Joseph on his way to the place of promised success.
- God told Joshua, "You will be prosperous and successful" (Joshua 1:7).
- David was anointed to be the king of Israel while he was still just a young shepherd boy. This anointing was a message of success giving him hope and confidence and helping to propel him to actually being the king.

You have heard of "red letter" editions of the Bible. Would you like to see a blue-lettered chapter? 1 Chronicles 12 is completely blue; it bulges with the muscles of mighty warriors and with the heroic feats of fierce fighters. I am especially interested in verse 18, in which these very-blue men speak to very-blue David:

"We are yours, O David!
We are with you, O son of Jesse!
Success, success to you,
and success to those who help you,
for your God will help you."

The word "success" is used three times here! And what kind of effect did such "blue" speech have on David? The rest of the verse says, "So David received them and made them leaders of his raiding bands." These manly guys knew how to talk to David!

What about the wives of David? We find that one was ignorant of "blue," but another one was fluent in "blue." David's first wife, Michal, truly loved David, but her failure to speak "blue" caused her to lose David's heart. In the incident record in 2 Samuel 6, Michal essentially says to David, "I don't respect you; you are a failure in my eyes" (v. 20). She belittled him and scorned him, and—immediately-- that was the end of their relationship.

In strong contrast is David's wife Abigail. Her speech is full of respect and messages of confidence. Her words to David are highly embellished with ornate flourishes of respect embroidered all over them. She is absolutely fluent in "blue." In fact, as she concludes her speech to him in 1 Samuel 25, Abigail creates an effective finale by using the word "success" (1 Samuel 25:31). David is completely won over by Abigail's "blue" words; and the moment she becomes available for marriage, David swoops her up.

Ruth is another fluent speaker of "blue." Her message of success to Boaz changed all of history. Boaz had no idea that the pond was frozen; he was not going to even try it. But after one little whisper from Ruth, he was out there winning the ice-skating championship. Ruth let Boaz know that he would be successful in pursuing her, and he took it from there in a masterful way.

What about the woman from the Song of Songs? We certainly see her speaking messages of success to her lover. Just look anywhere in that whole book, and you will see that! "Success" seems to be the only word this girl knows.

Finally, let's look at the Proverbs 31 woman. Verse 23 says, "Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land." Now this chapter is about the wife, not about the man, so why is this statement here? The point is not that a godly woman should marry a respected leader; the point here is that this godly wife was the kind of building-up influence that respected her husband into a respected place in the community; she breathed him into that place.

Not only is he respected at the city gate, but he is successful as a leader in the land. This statement about the husband is here in Proverbs 31 because of the role that a godly wife plays in the development of strength in a man's life. The wife's messages of success give him the platform on which to become respectable and successful.

Imagine this: across from that city gate, sprawled out in the shadows against the wall there, is another man: the city bum. Perhaps this man had once stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the respected leader now sitting in the city gate. But now the wife of the disgraced man stands there with her hands on her hips, saying, "See, I told you that you were a failure." We cringe, but she doesn't even hear herself; she doesn't realize that she had a determining hand in tearing him down.

God once told his prophet Samuel to anoint the next king of Israel. When David came before Samuel, God said to David, "Rise up and anoint him; he is the one" (1 Samuel 16:12). I think God says this same thing to each of us wives: "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."

You and I are like Samuel, and our husbands are like David: each day, we choose this one man out of all the other men in the world. We are the ones who see the king in this shepherd boy (something even his family may not see.) Every day, we continue to do this. "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."

The Message puts it this way: "Up on your feet! Anoint him! This is the one." Anointing our husbands involves more than lounging on the couch; we must put some energy into it.

To anoint someone means to choose him, so every day we choose our husbands to "be the one" in our lives. We say to our husbands, "You are the one. You are the one for me. You are the one to whom I am devoted. You are the one to whom I am committed."

What happened after David was anointed? He received the Spirit in power.

Which came first—the anointing or the power? The anointing precedes the power. Maybe we need to stop waiting for our husbands to be powerful, and instead anoint them so that they can be powerful.

When we anoint our husbands with respect and messages of honor, they change. This "anointing" brings new strength into their lives.

4. What is the fourth part of speaking blue?

Think again of the situation in which two people are frustrated in their conversation because they are speaking two different languages. They react with anger and feelings of rejection until someone realizes what is going on.

Well, human hearts speak five different languages of love. When a husband or wife understands the concept of love languages, it is absolutely transformational in a marriage.

Dr. Gary Chapman has specialized in this area. His book entitled *The Five Love Languages* describes each of these ways of expressing and receiving love: the giving of gifts, acts of service, physical touch, quality time, and words of affirmation. Although all five languages are valid expressions of

love, every person seems to associate love more strongly with one of the languages.

Your husband's individual love language is the fourth element in speaking blue.

A woman who speaks the language of quality time does not really feel loved unless her husband spends time focusing on her. But if this is not her husband's love language, he will not understand why this is important to her, and he will not speak it to her. Although the man does love his wife, she won't feel loved because she does not hear it in her heart language, in a way that she understands.

Perhaps the husband, meanwhile, speaks the language of acts of service. He is continually fixing things around the house for his wife or washing her car. He thinks that he is expressing love, but she does not understand that because acts of service is not the native language of her heart.

The husband, for his part, feels quite unloved by his wife because she does not help pack his lunches or fold his laundry. It seems to him that his wife just wants to go on picnics! This creates a great deal of maddening conflict. In reality, it is simply two people trying to say "I love you" in two different languages; they just don't realize it.

But if just one person will learn the language of the other, it will make all the difference. When we learn this concept of love languages, our first thought is, "Great! I am going to teach him my language!" If he is open to that, great. Do not be frustrated if your husband does not learn your language. Instead, focus on speaking in his language—not only speaking his language to him, but also listening to him in his language.

If the wife will recognize that every time her husband takes out the trash, he is expressing love to her, then she can know that she is loved. And if she will express her love by making sandwiches for her husband, then he can feel loved.

When wives become fluent in the love languages of their husbands, life gets much, much better.

