

# Men, Here's How to Love the Other Gender (Gender Equality Rightly Understood)

*By Barrington H. Brennen, July 2, 2014*

I usually do not reprint a quote so quickly in this column. However, I feel compelled to share the words of two songs I shared in February this year to the entire nation. This time I am asking the male readers of this column to focus on these songs. It is the 1965 song by Hal David and Burt Bacharach: "What the world needs now, is love, sweet love, It's the only thing that there's just too little of. What the world needs now, Is love, sweet love, No, not just for some but for everyone." Then here are the words from Bob Marley's famous song also written in 1965: "One love, one heart. Let's get together and feel all right." These songs are telling us that the big problem facing our society today is the lack of true love. My emphasis in the article is to talk about the lack of loving of the males in our society towards the females. Let me hasten to say that I am not talking about every male. There are loving males in our society, but far too many do not know how to truly love and are wounding instead of loving their female partners.

In fact, this is the fundamental reason the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has been organized. Far too many women are being abused around the world. We have discovered that too many men are wounding women because they have negative views of the role of women; and they misuse or abuse of their own perceived power. Hence, the gender equality initiative by CEDAW is simply to help men to love their women the same way they love themselves, and to consider them as their true partners in society and not competitors. Understanding gender equality is simply about accepting the equal value of the women in our lives. It is accepting that both male and female are designed by God to have equal voice, vote, power, access and opportunity in society and the world.

## **QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT**

Therefore men, could you pause for a little while and focus on what these songs are talking about—loving, and more specifically, loving the women in our lives. They are our wives, sisters, nieces, aunts, cousins, grandmothers, mothers, girlfriends, and all other women we work and play with. Here are the important thinking questions: Are you satisfied with the way you love the women in your life? Are you treating them the way you want to be treated? Men, are you loving them gently, kindly, and with respect? Do you love them the way you want to be loved as men in their lives?

When Adam saw Eve for the first time, he saw his "alter ego." This means he saw his "other self," someone like himself. He did not see a competitor or someone opposite to himself. Therefore he said to her "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." Men, how do you treat someone who is "bone of your bone?" Perhaps I can also ask: Would you deliberately slap, punch, hit, kick, or curse yourself. The reality is many would dare to think about doing that to themselves and it is down right difficulty to do so. Therefore, why would we do it to your "other self" I call your "equal partner?"

## **LOVE**

I believe that if men truly understand the meaning of love they would not wound the women in their lives and would have no problem understanding the importance of gender equality.

Men, many of you, as I do, claim to be believers of Jesus and readers of Holy Scriptures. Therefore the passage of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 should have special meaning to you. It is perhaps the best description of love anywhere. Here is it: "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud. 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance."

Ironically, it is among Christian men, men who know these texts, that are found the most abusive to the female partners in their lives. It seems as though men who know more of Scripture and study it the most are the ones who hurt the most. This allowed me fifteen years ago to discover the "formula" for violence against women and children. Here is the formula: "When rigid traditional family values are combined with rigid traditional religious beliefs, there is always abuse." This has never failed. I have discovered that as long as men continue to rigidly hold to the view that they are superior to women or have a "divine right of power over women," the end result is always abuse. It can be emotional, psychological, spiritual, sexual, or physical. Statistics show us that this abuse against women occur from the pulpit to the pew; from the corporate office to the utility room; from the board room to the secretary's office; from the bedroom to the kitchen, etc.

I am postulating that the main reason men are hurting the women in their lives is because they do not know how to truly love. Men who are stanching against the promotion of gender equality and the upcoming Gender Equality Policy in our country are refusing to humbly understand the true meaning of love. Men who are fighting so that "women will not take over" are not true lovers. The truth is when women and men truly love, no one will be "over" the other. There will be equal power sharing.

Men, what are you afraid of? Your abuse of the perceived power position you have placed in action has already frightened the women in your lives. I appeal that you humbly step back and take another look at this. Before sin, God made both male and female with equal authority; and that authority was not over each other, but their surroundings instead. Since the resurrection of Jesus, He redeemed human beings to stand side by side as equals. He said in Christ there is not "male or female" (Galatians 3:28).

### **MY APPEAL TO MEN**

Men, my appeal to you is to understand that the upcoming Gender Policy is simply about having guidelines to ensure that we all love each other equally – both genders. I think it is a shame that societies have to establish laws to create equality and fairness in society when just being human should be sufficient. Because of our selfish, foolish, and arrogant attitudes and erroneous beliefs, societies around the world have created laws to deal with us conditionally. If you are continuing to support the downward trend of our society where women and children are continuing to be degraded, you are not following the Biblical mandate to love everyone equally. Men, I request of you to start thinking of women as your "other self." Would you hurt yourself? Think about it.

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