

# Wives are Not Maids

October 8, 2013

Men, what are you looking for in women? Husbands, what are your expectations from your wives? Twelve years ago (2001) I wrote an article entitled "Lord, Please Give me a Housewife." In that article I attempted to inform readers how terribly many wives were being treated and how unrealistic were the expectations of many husbands. Today, more than a decade later, I sadly report that far too many wives or female live-in-partners are still being treated like house maids and mere sex partners, not lovers, partners, and spouses.

Far too many fathers and grandfathers are still re-enforcing abusive, controlling, and extremely traditional behaviors of men toward women. In addition, far too many mothers and grandmothers are still teaching their daughters that the role of the wife is to be unquestionably subjective to their partners, serve them, feed them well and give them all the sex they need, and their marriages will be happy.

I am still hearing men say that they are "looking for wives to take care of them." I am also hearing women say that "they are looking for a man with plenty of money." These are two expectations that when mixed with extreme traditionalism will create controlling and abusive relationships. (*Look out for next week article "Lord, please give me a good husband"*).

During courtship, many men are sweet, giving, caring, helping and compassionate. These men would literally do anything to capture the hearts of their girlfriends--even if it means cooking, washing, and cleaning the house. After the wedding bells would have rung and the honeymoon would have ended the husband's true colors begin to show themselves. Within a few months to two years after the wedding day the wife discovers that her husband is really not that sweet, caring person she first met. Although he would come home from work hours ahead of her he refuses to prepare meals, wash dishes, and clean the house. Instead, he relaxes in the arm chair half asleep while watching television. When she arrives home from work, even if it is very late, he demands attention and to be served his freshly-made evening meals. How unreasonable! It is an unreasonable expectation. This is the kind of expectation that can cause serious marital discord in early marriages. Why? Because it is one partner treating the other like a servant or slave. It is making the wife feel as though she is her husband's property, thus devaluing her meaning and purpose in life.

## THE WIFE I WANT

Let me share a few lines from the article I wrote twelve years ago where a husband describes the kind of wife he wants. Here it is: "I want a wife who will take care of the details of my social life. When my wife and I are invited out by friends, I want a wife who will take care of babysitting arrangements. When I meet people at school who I like and want to entertain, I want a wife who will have the house clean, will prepare a special meal, serve it to me and my friends, and not interrupt when I talk about the things that interest me and my friends. I want a wife who will have arranged that the children are fed and ready for bed before my guests arrive so that the children do not bother us. And I want a wife who knows that sometimes I need a night out by myself. . . . I want a wife who is sensitive to my sexual needs, and a wife who makes love passionately and eagerly when I feel like it, a wife who makes sure that I am satisfied . . . I want my wife to quit working and remain at home so that my wife can more fully and completely take care of a wife's duties."

In marriage seminars and therapy sessions, I constantly reminded both men and women that they

both have equal responsibility to govern and manage the home – every aspect of it. Together they should decide, based on talent, not gender, the different tasks they would do in the home. Note carefully however, that if it is mutual agreement that the wife remains at home to provide care and nurture for their growing little children, it does not absolve the responsibilities of the husbands to be involved in nurture or household duties. Some men think that staying at home to care for the children and manage the home is easy work. They often do not understand the awesome task of homemaking. Thus they refuse to participate in household duties.

### **“LORD, MAKE ME THE WIFE”**

Here is a fable of a husband and wife who had three little energetic boys not yet old enough for school. The husband worked outside the home and the wife as a full-time homemaker (home and family engineer). The wife constantly requested for her husband to participate in taking care of the children when he gets home from work and do certain household chores. He would say that he was working very hard on the job so when he comes home he needed relaxation and peace. He said “He should not have to work at home and on the job.” He would say that his job was much harder than she was doing therefore she should be glad she is at home doing “very little.” After months of the wife’s complaints, and annoying the husband, he decided to do something about it. He fell on his knees and prayed to God to help him show his wife that his work is hard and her work is easy. He asked the Lord to make him the wife and make her the husband for just one week. He was sure that by the end of the week his wife would appreciate how hard he worked. So the Lord granted the request. The wife took the place of the husband on his job and the husband stayed at home.

The first day for the wife on the job went well. She was already use to managing and multitasking. It was easy and productive. Her colleagues were amazed with her performance. For the husband, by the end of the first day he was beginning to become frustrated. The demands from each of the boys, the noise, phone calls, rush to the store, stomach aches, cries, screams, cooking, etc. It was frustrating. By the end of the third day while his wife (disguised as the husband) was doing very well on the job, he could not go on any longer as the wife. It was far too demanding, energy depleting, and frustrating. It required too much of him. He wanted out.

So he went on his knees to the Lord. He said “Lord, I cannot wait to the end of the week. The work is too hard. I now respect the work my wife is doing. I would now participate and do what I suppose to do when I get home. Please Lord, I cannot go to the end of the week. Turn me back to the husband before the week in completed.” The Lord said “I hope you learned your lesson. I can turn you back now, but it will not be wise. It’s too late” “Why, Lord?” The husband responded. The Lord said “because you are pregnant and that’s going to take nine months and then another four to six months of breast feeding” Then the husband screamed loudly.

Of course this is not a true story, but it does make a point. Husbands, your wives are not your maids. If you need a maid you can look in the Classified Adds and hire one. She is not required to serve you like a waiter in a hotel and you never do the same for her. Honor your wife and start sharing in all family and house-hold duties. Remember, when you are cleaning the dishes or clean the house, you are not “helping” your wife. You are actually doing what you suppose to do. She is your equal partner.

Barrington H. Brennen is a marriage and family therapist and board certified clinical psychotherapist, USA. Send your questions or comments to [barringtonbrennen@gmail.com](mailto:barringtonbrennen@gmail.com) or write to P.O. Box CB-13019, Nassau, The Bahamas, or visit [www.soencouragement.org](http://www.soencouragement.org) or call 242-327-1980 or 242-477-4002