

**Series:** Fireproof Your Relationships  
**Title:** *He Said/She Said*  
**Text:** Ephesians 5:21-33  
**Key Word:** Principles  
**Proposition:** Everyone can get along with the opposite sex by practicing these biblical principles.

**PowerPoint slides**

Good morning! We're beginning a new series called, "Fireproof Your Relationships." *SHOW FIREPROOF LOGO* We trust that as we seek God and listen to His Word we will see God heal and strengthen relationships.

A couple months ago, Sherwood Films released a film called, "Fireproof." Fireproof, produced with \$ 500,000 has grossed over \$32 million in box office sales. It features an all volunteer cast, including Hollywood TV star, Kirk Cameron. The sets and location were all donated. It has had mixed reviews though. I've seen the film and it moved me deeply. It made me want to be a better husband, father, and a better friend.

According to my dictionary, "**FIREPROOF**" means, "**CAPABLE OF WITHSTANDING OR PREVENTING DAMAGE BY FIRE.**" In the next several days, we want to give you principles and practices from the Bible that will fireproof your relationships at home, work, school, and play.

I hope many of you have seen this movie. We also invite you to come and see it on February 8, in our Great Hall. It's the story of a couple – Caleb and Catherine - whose marriage is breaking up. They've been together for seven years,

but their love has eroded to more of a room-mate relationship rather than sweethearts.

Fireproof is the story of how this couple, with God's help, put their marriage and their lives back together again. They struggle through the issues of forgiving, rekindling feelings for each other, breaking free of addictions and the things that hold us back. Eventually they find God's love.

We're going to explore each of these themes as we learn how to "Fireproof" our relationships. I believe that God will show us ways we can make our relationships better.

Today, we're going to look at how to get along with members of the opposite sex. I hope by now you've noticed that men and women are different? Well, in the film, one of the first cracks that widen in Caleb and Catherine's relationship comes from a challenge all men and women face. They struggled with "How do I relate to someone who is so different than me?"

In this clip we're about to show, watch what can happen if you expect your partner to be just like you. **(Play the Session One clip from your *Fireproof Your Marriage DVD*. Total length = 1:33. PLAY CLIP)**

Let's open a bible to ***EPHESIANS 5:21*** where we can find some very practical advice. Paul, a follower of Jesus, says that men and women should be treated differently. Why? Because we are different. Keep it open while I refer to

some Biblical principles which, if practiced, will make a significant difference in fireproofing your marriage.

**First**, Paul says, in v. 21, ***“SUBMIT TO ANOTHER OUT OF REVERENCE FOR CHRIST.”*** That verb, “submit,” in the original Greek, means, ***“TO LINE YOURSELF UP UNDER, or, TO GIVE UP YOUR RIGHTS.”*** It appears only here in v. 21. It’s then implied in both of the next two paragraphs. Paul goes on to apply this submission to relationships saying, “*Wives, submit to your husbands...*” that verb “*submit,*” isn’t actually in the Greek sentence. It’s understood from v. 21. Likewise, when you get to v. 25, the same verb, “*submit,*” is carried from v. 21.

The Bible says that men and women are to line themselves up **under** their mates in order to make the marriage work. Each one is to give up their rights and look out for the best interests of their partner. Marriage works well when each spouse submits to the other. In other words marriage is not about you! It’s all about your mate.

So, fireproofing principle number 1 is...***“GIVE UP YOUR RIGHT FOR THE SAKE OF THE OTHER.”*** Men, that doesn’t mean that she has to run to Dairy Queen every time you have a craving. And women, it doesn’t mean that he has to rub your feet every time you ask him to.

Men, God says, ***“HUSBANDS, BE CONSIDERATE AS YOU LIVE WITH YOUR WIFE.”*** ***1 PETER 3:7*** - Consider her needs and personality. Study your wife.

Figure out what brings out the best in her, then do it. Husbands, submit to your wife. Wives, submit to your husband. That's principle #1 of a fireproof marriage.

**The second fireproofing principle** comes from verse 33, where Paul says, ***“EACH OF YOU ALSO MUST LOVE HIS WIFE AS HE LOVES HIMSELF, AND THE WIFE MUST RESPECT HER HUSBAND.” – EPHESIANS 5:33***

I suspect that you noticed that the husband and the wife are given different commands. Husbands love their wives. Wives respect their husbands. Out of love each respects the other. We can't love without respecting, and we can't respect without loving.

Since men and women are different, we have different ways of receiving what we need. Men want to be loved in ways that show them respect. Likewise, women want to be respected by feeling loved by the one who matters most to them.

Here's the **second principle**: ***ACCEPT GENDER DIFFERENCES AND ACT ACCORDINGLY.*** When men and women refer to "conversation," they might not be talking about the same thing at all.

Students in a college class on gender differences recorded casual conversations between women friends and men friends. Many found it easy to get recordings of women friends talking. Recording conversations with female friends and family members were easier than recording male conversations with their male

friends. One woman's mother agreed readily, but her father insisted that he didn't have conversations with his friends.

"Don't you ever call Fred on the phone?" she asked, naming the man she knew to be his good friend.

"Not often," he said. "But if I do, it's because I have something to ask, and when I get the answer, I hang up."

Another woman's husband delivered a tape to her with great satisfaction and pride. "This is a good conversation," he announced, "because it's not just him and me shooting the breeze, like, 'Hi, how are you? I saw a good movie the other day,' and stuff. It's a problem-solving task. Each line is meaningful."

When the woman listened to the tape, she heard her husband and his friend trying to solve a computer problem. Not only did she not consider it "a good conversation," she didn't really regard it as a conversation at all.

His idea of a good conversation was one with factual, task-focused content. Hers was one with personal content. Men and women are different.

Men are often more task oriented, women are more relationship driven. These differences are what make marriage challenging – but they're also what make life wonderful!

Women, remember that men can be tough and sometimes rude on the outside, on the inside, there's a soft side to us that needs the one who matters most to us to believe in us. If we're not the heroes of our homes, then we're not going to

be heroes anywhere else. If you've stopped respecting your man, make a list of things you need to do to show him respect. Tell him that you're proud of his accomplishments. Tell him you believe in him. Tell him that he does things well.

Men, would that make us feel good?

Guys, God says a woman needs love. It's our job to give it to her. God says, ***"HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES, JUST AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR HER."*** *EPHESIANS 5:25*

Men, your wife needs to know that you love her. She needs to hear it from you, see it from you, and feel it from you. The way she receives it best is to have you listen to her. – Listen to her dreams and her feelings and her fears and her thoughts. Sit and listen, with full eye contact, and as much emotional engagement as possible, for 5 to 10 minutes a day.

Now, simply listen to her. She's blessed by your empathy. Men tend to listen for the problem to be solved. Your woman doesn't want you to solve her problem; she wants you to care about her. So, while she's talking, as best you can, try to listen for and understand what she's feeling. Then say something like, "That must have felt terrible." or, "That must have felt great." If you got it wrong, learn from it, start over with your best shot.

Listen to her, pay attention to her. Then, say, "Honey, I love you. Of all the women in the world, I choose you, and I'm so glad I did." Guys, write this down: If you want to fill her love tank, pick up the phone and call. Say, "I just wanted you

to know I was thinking about you and I love you.” Then, don’t ask her for anything, to remind her of anything, don’t plan or solve anything. Just listen. Let’s look at our assignments again: ***WOMEN, RESPECT YOUR MAN. MEN LOVE YOUR WOMAN..***

Here’s the final principle. ***MARRIAGE IS A PREVIEW OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO JESUS IN HEAVEN.*** It comes out of v. 32. ***“THIS IS A PROFOUND MYSTERY, BUT I AM TALKING ABOUT CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.” – EPHESIANS 5:25***

Listen carefully: On a very deep level, marriage is a mystery. A mystery is something you cannot understand unless it is explained or revealed to you. Marriage is not a practical necessity or a legitimate cure for lust, but a picture of the relationship between Christ and those who believe in and follow Him. It is a holy union, a sacred covenant, a precious relationship demanding tender self-sacrificing care.

So if you are married, or plan to be married, treat your marriage carefully, sacredly. Give up your rights. Build it with love and respect. Recognize that you will never fully understand all that is involved in a life-long commitment to a single spouse. What we do with marriage matters, friends, because it is in some mysterious sense a rehearsal for what God’s Son will do one day with all who call on His name.

Yes, it takes love, love that is shown in very practical ways which can be learned. So I want to give you an assignment today. In the movie, Caleb is about to give up on his marriage, when his dad hands him a special little hand-written book. The book is called the **LOVE DARE**. In it is 40 days' worth of practical ways for Caleb to demonstrate his love to Catherine.

Caleb's dad challenges him to do one of these love dares every day for the next 40 days and see if it doesn't change his attitude and his marriage. Caleb takes the challenge, and the dares do their work. If we take this series and assignment seriously, God will do His work in us as well. Over these next six weeks we are going to have our own Love Dare Challenges. They'll be practical assignments designed to raise the level of your relationships, whether you're married or single. So, are you up for this, friends?

I know many of you thought you were just going to come to a nice safe church service, sit through it and go home. But church was never meant to be that way, but rather life-changing and God-honoring, and hope-filled.

**Here's the first *LOVE DARE CHALLENGE: WIVES: IDENTIFY WHAT MAKES YOUR HUSBAND FEEL RESPECTED BY YOU. SHOW THIS RESPECT IN A VERY PRACTICAL WAY. DO SOMETHING THIS WEEK TO MAKE HIM FEEL RESPECTED BY YOU.***

***HUSBANDS: IDENTIFY WHAT MAKES YOUR WIFE FEEL LOVED. DO SOMETHING THIS WEEK TO MAKE HER FEEL LOVED BY YOU.***

***SINGLES: IN YOUR WORK, SCHOOL, OR HOME ENVIRONMENT,  
DO SOMETHING THIS WEEK TO MAKE SOMEONE FEEL LOVE OR  
RESPECTED.*** Okay?

Knowing this was coming, I asked three people in our church to test-pilot these challenges to see how they might go and then report back to all of us. So would you welcome \_\_\_\_\_ (couple) and \_\_\_\_\_ (single) to tell us about their experience with these assignments.

After their reports: thanks guys. Let's pray. (2001) (Ask God to strength marriages and relationships and deepen our relational abilities during this Fireproof series.)

*[Author's suggestion: For a powerful application, at the end of the message, have a couple prepared to share the story of their marriage and how they are going to apply the Love/Dare Challenge this week, or, ask one couple and one single to take the challenge a week ahead of time and have them share their experiences at the end of the message.]*