

Differences of Opinion – A Wife's Approach

Proverbs 16:20 "He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he."

So far, in this series on "Differences of Opinion," we've looked at "Needless Strife," "A Wife's Timing," and "A Wife's Attitude." So now you're ready to approach the difference of opinion. The subject is worth dealing with, the time is right, and your heart attitude is in line with God's Word. Now the question is, **how** are you going to handle the discussion? What wording are you going to use to get your viewpoint across? We want to **handle the matter wisely** so that at the end of the discussion we'll find we've had a good and productive conversation.

Remember the Golden Rule? "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. 7:12) As **you would want to be spoken to, speak**. As you're discussing the issue, do so with:

- Respect - "and the wife see that she reverence her husband." (Eph. 5:33b) Speak (and think) words of honor and respect.
- Gentleness - "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;" (I Tim. 5:1) Whether your husband is "elder" or "younger," come with entreaties instead of rebukes.
- Sweetness and kindness - "The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning." (Prov. 16:21) Compare Proverbs 26:21 "As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife." to the previous verse. One person is egging the strife on, adding fuel to the fire. The other is sweetly explaining herself. The Bible says that the one who speaks gently and sweetly is the one who gets her point across. "Honey, you probably didn't realize..." goes a lot farther than "You just don't think, do you!?"
- Self-control - "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." (Prov. 25:28) "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32) **Don't allow yourself to become emotional or angry**. Also, never "give back as good as you got." "**Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me**: I will render to the man according to his work." (Prov 24:29) **Retaliation is strictly forbidden**. Don't permit yourself the fleshly relief of treating him the same incorrect way you feel he just treated you.
- Restraint - (Prov. 29:11) "A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards." **Not everything you think has to be said**. "Giving a piece of your mind" is unwise. Filter your words through God's Wisdom, the Bible, before you speak.
- A readiness to listen to the opposing viewpoint - "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:" (Jms. 1:19) **Come desiring to hear and understand your husband's side of the issue**.
- Careful and thoughtful wording choices - "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:" (Jms. 1:19) 'Think before you speak.' If you know certain words or phrases are hot-buttons, avoid them. Also, try to phrase things in **neutral language** rather than **accusatory language**. "The widget keeps being left on the whosit. Is it possible to make sure it gets back in its drawer?" instead of "You never pick up, and you know how that bugs me!"
- A 'we' mentality instead of 'me versus you' - "they shall be one flesh." (Gen. 2:24b) When you married, 'you' and 'me' became 'we.' So 'he' doesn't have a problem, 'we' have a problem. "**We** have a problem. How are **we** going to handle this?"
- Graciousness - "A **gracious** woman retaineth honour:" (Prov. 11:16a) Grace gives to another what the other **does not deserve**. Treat your husband with honor **whether or not he is deserving** of it at the moment, and God promises that you yourself will retain honor.

- Clarity - "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to **knowledge**," (I Pet. 3:7) Be very simple and clear about what you want. Spell it out so they **know**. Husbands are not mind-readers.

Of course, these points are good for any conflict. But there's one more thing to keep in mind especially as a wife speaking to your husband.

- Submission - "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."(Eph. 5:22) Decide before you come to him with a subject that you will be fine with whatever he decides. The only way to do this is to do so "as unto the Lord." As you submit, trust God to work everything together for good. Since He designed the home, and since He set your husband in charge, and since He told you to submit to him, even knowing full well all of the circumstances involved; then you obey God by obeying your husband and you trust God alone to work it all out. **This will preset your voice tone. It will also prevent pushiness.** Also, the humility to admit that you just might be wrong comes in handy here! :)

You want to have a good relationship, and you can! Follow the wise counsel of God's Word as you handle these issues, and you will "find good."