

## Stop Complaining and Start Reigning in Your Marriage!

“We become windows constantly affecting each other with new views on the mystery of God’s presence in our lives.” Henry Nouwen *You Are the Beloved*



Just like with two magnets, often we are attracted to and marry someone who has many of the opposite qualities, personality, and character traits than we do. Since we try to put on our best side during courtship, some of these differences don’t fully manifest themselves until we have been married for a while. And then they can become major areas of irritation and we start complaining about the very things that first attracted us to each other!



That certainly was true with my wife, Sue, and I. I was a quiet, stable, calm guy who never seemed to get too emotional or overly excited about circumstances or situations. While Sue was initially attracted by that behavior, over time it became more apparent to her that I also wasn’t emotional or excited about relational issues in our marriage and with our children either. It was easy for me to hide and withdraw or focus myself on projects and work. This became an irritation and frustration to her and a major source for complaints. Another area for us was how we managed our money. I was the tight and frugal one and Sue usually wanted to spend a little more money! Even purchases of needed or important items became a source of complaints towards each other. I could make a long list of other examples, but I think that you get the point!



If left unresolved or compromises are not reached, these complaints can lead to major rifts in our marriage and push us further apart. One thing that can happen is we get on the “Crazy Cycle.” In **Eph. 5:22-29** women are told to submit or respect their husbands and men are told to love their wives as their own bodies. I think our heavenly Father has a sense of humor. Here, He is asking wives to submit and show honor and respect to their husband which is not as easy as for her to love him. And the husbands are told to love their wife, which is not as easy for them as showing respect! We get on the crazy cycle when either the wife says, “I will show respect for him when he starts showing love towards me.” Or when the husband says, “I will show love to her when she starts respecting me.” So, the wife doesn’t show respect and the husband stops showing love and around and around they go! The only way to get off the crazy cycle is for the wife to decide to show respect whether he shows her love and/or when the husband decides to love his wife whether she shows respect towards him or not!



Another place where we can start complaining is from unmet expectations with our marriage. Because none of us had perfect parents, we all come into our marriage with some wounds or pains in our heart. Most of us expect that our spouse will now be able to meet all their love needs and heal their past heart wounds. This puts unrealistic demands on our spouse and will eventually drain all the energy and love from the relationship. Complaining and pointing out what is missing or wrong with the relationship only puts a bigger wedge between us.



The only thing that will heal our broken heart and meet all our love needs is to begin receiving love from our heavenly Father. You can’t give away what you haven’t received first, and that love must come from Him! **1 John 4:19** When we become rooted and grounded in Father’s Love, we now have love to give away. Now we can come to our spouse

and ask, “What can I do to make you feel loved?” When you give, it is given back pressed down, shaken together, and running over! **Luke 6:38** When both spouses do the same thing, love begins to build and blossom in their marriage and home. Since Sue and I have had our hearts healed, we have experienced our love growing sweeter and sweeter in our marriage.



The experiential knowing of Father’s Love in us will replace all the fears and doubts, silences all the lies from the enemy, trumps natural reasoning, and sets us on a course of healing and growth in our love for our spouse. Marriage becomes the life-long love affair that Father intended it to be! However, this does require us to develop intimacy (into-me-see) with each other. We must take the roof off and the sides down in our personal life and allow our spouse to enter our space. We must build trust and create a safe place where we can be open and transparent with each other in every area and way of our life. With that level of intimacy, we can move from a life filled with pain, complaining, fighting, arguing, and demanding our own way to a life filled with love, peace, joy, happiness, and abundance! We can develop a heart-to-heart relationship and can even begin to think the same thoughts as our spouse.



All of this takes time and effort from both spouses and a willingness to change how we do life and interact with each other+. It was not easy for Sue and I to walk away from some of our old patterns and ways of living together that were hindering our becoming one with each other. But all the effort and time has made life beautiful and fulfilling for both of us. We are more in love now than during any other time in our 53+ years of marriage. We now rule and reign as one of God’s unbeatable teams and an example for others to pursue! You can do that in your marriage too!

Make this your prayer: “Help me Father to be the best husband or wife that my spouse could ever have. I don’t want them to ever have to look for someone else.”

Kenneth Copeland *Limitless Love*

## **Stop complaining and start Reigning!!**

### **Dialogue Questions**

1. What are some things or areas that you feel like I am complaining to you about? How does that make you feel?
2. What are some things that I could do or change to make you feel more loved? How would that make you feel?

### ***Fun Night Ideas***

1. When you park the car after doing something fun together, instead of going quickly inside, sit in the back seat and “make out” before going inside.
2. Pretend that you are going out on your first date again. As much as possible, recreate the details of that date and talk about your memories and feelings you had while you enjoy this date!