

“But What About My Needs?”

By Patrick & Dwaina Six

We have heard it too many times. Maybe you’ve heard it or even said it: “My spouse just isn’t meeting my needs...” Some have even interpreted a popular marriage book on “needs” to mean that it is your partner’s responsibility to meet all your needs. We all do have needs, but we’ve discovered that we are ill-equipped to meet ALL of each other’s needs.

Truth or Myth?

Here are some statements from *Marriage Myths* (adapted from the *Great Start Premarital Workshop*, Wib Newton, author). See which ones you think are true, and which ones you think are myths:

- I will always have the same romantic feelings I have for my partner.
- All of my companionship needs will be met by my partner.
- My spouse is the only person with whom I could have a happy marriage.
- The things I don’t like about my spouse now will go away after we are married.
- Most of the difficulties we’ve experienced before marriage will just fade away after we’re married.
- If my spouse really loves me, he/she will be able to know what I want without me telling him/her.

Okay, so which ones do you think are true statements, and which ones are just myths? The answer: **All of these statements are myths!** As you can easily see these statements are tailored more for couples who are newly or recently married, so if you have been married for longer than your honeymoon, you have already discovered they are all NOT true! Let’s analyze these statements.

Consider the first statement, *I will always have the same romantic feelings I have for my partner*. Feelings are somewhat like the weather in West Texas – if you don’t like the weather now, just stick around for about ten minutes, it will change! Feelings are very flexible, and sometimes volatile. No one has the same romantic feelings all the time.

How about this one, *All of my companionship needs will be met by my*

partner. While this one may sound right, it is not. Ladies, your husband can’t be your girlfriend. And husbands, your wife doesn’t want to be one of the guys!

Here’s another myth, *My spouse is the only person with whom I could have a happy marriage*. The Sunday School answer is supposed to be “YES,” but what about those who have been widowed and remarried? We are not suggesting that they will love their second husband/wife more than or as much as their first. Most likely their love will be very different, but a different kind of love does not mean that it is an unhappy marriage!

A huge part of a healthy marriage is choosing to unconditionally love your mate!

The things I don’t like about my spouse now will go away after we are married. In our conferences we have quipped that whenever a couple is getting married, the groom looks lovingly at his beautiful bride walking down the aisle thinking, “She’ll never change!” As she makes her way down the aisle her gaze is focused on her handsome groom, and she’s thinking, “That man’s got potential. I can change him!” The fact is, both of you are going to carry your baggage from your past into your marriage, both the good and the bad. Some of our traits and quirks are driven by our DNA, and they aren’t going to go away. A huge part of a healthy marriage is choosing to unconditionally love your marriage partner, and opting to live with some things about your spouse that you may not like.

What about this statement, *Most of the difficulties we’ve experienced before marriage will just fade away after we’re married*. The act of getting married does not automatically fix *anything*, pretty much for the same reason as stated before. You and your spouse will bring your past with you into this new relationship. Some have gotten married

in large part to get out of the unhealthy family situation they were in prior to marriage. Very soon they realize they tend to settle “issues” just like their parents did, because they never learned a more positive way of dealing with them. Their partner does what his parents did, which is probably not the same as what her parents did. You can see how this would compound the problem!

Finally, *If my spouse really loves me, he/she will be able to know what I want without me telling him/her*. Now this one really should be a no-brainer, but, sadly, this is what some people believe. Perhaps because they hear some who have been married so long she can complete my sentences.” Well, we have been married for almost thirty years, and we can do the same thing. The reason – because we have told the same stories for so long, or we have used the same expressions for so long that we each know what is supposed to come next! But something else we have learned about one another is that neither of us is a mind reader, and it is unfair for us to expect that of each other.

It is not good for the man to be alone...

Now you may say – “But remember God declaring, ‘It’s not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helpmate suitable for him.’ So, didn’t God create the woman for the man to meet his needs?” Not really! So then why did God create them male and female? Because it was not good for the man to be alone – that’s why! (Dwaina says it is because later, Adam would get lost and not stop and ask for directions when trying to get out of the garden!) When God said, “I will make a helpmate suitable for him,” it is a reminder that no other created being could do, or was even created to do, what God designed Adam’s opposite sex partner to do. She was designed to help him, and to be suitable for him, but she was not created to **complete** him! It sounds so romantic for one to say, “Oh, he/she just completes me.” The fact of the matter is that one is a whole number. When we got married we were one whole person

being united with another whole person to create one whole union! In this sense, I guess you could say that 1+1=1.

Given our current cultural trends, we need to understand that the woman was not created to **compete** against her husband either. Our American culture elevates education, advancement and equality. The majority of women today continue to pursue careers outside of the home. There is the distinct possibility that a wife could achieve a higher education and land a higher paying job than her husband. She could become the "breadwinner" for the family. (Do you remember the movie, *Mr. Mom*?) This can work well for some couples, but for other couples this could become a battle of egos and wills, turning holy matrimony into a holy war. The point here is not which spouse makes more money. The point is that when competition becomes part of a marriage, the relationship always suffers!

God never meant for marriage to be a completion or a competition

No, God never intended for marriage to be a completion or a competition. Then what *did* God intend for marriage? Let's look at what God's Word says (all verses taken from the Holman Christian Standard Bible unless otherwise stated):

Genesis 1:27-31 – So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female. 28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful,

multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth." 29 God also said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth, and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This food will be for you, 30 for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth—everything having the breath of life in it. [I have given] every green plant for food." And it was so.

31 God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.

- Husbands and wives are to reproduce.
- Husbands and wives are to manage the resources of the earth that God has entrusted to them.
- Husbands and wives are to enjoy God's provision together.
- Husbands and wives are to work together to give God a reason to say, "This is good!"

Genesis 2:24 – This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.

- Husbands and wives are supposed to bind their lives together.
- Husbands and wives are supposed to enjoy sexual union together.

Malachi 2:14-15 – ... Yet you ask, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have acted treacherously against her, though she was your marriage partner and your wife by covenant. 15 Didn't the one [God] make [us] with a remnant of His life-breath? And what does the One seek? A godly offspring. So watch yourselves carefully, and do not act treacherously against the wife of your youth.

- Husbands and wives are marriage partners.
- Husbands and wives are joined in a covenant relationship, not a contract.
- Husbands and wives are to produce godly offspring.
- Husbands and wives are NOT to act treacherously toward one another.

Matthew 19:3-6 – Some Pharisees approached Him (Jesus) to test Him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife on any grounds?"

4 "Haven't you read," He replied, "that He who created them in the beginning made them male and female, 5 and He also said: For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh? 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, man must not separate."

- Husbands and wives are joined together by God.
- Husbands and wives are to be one flesh.
- Husbands and wives are to stand together against those who would try to separate them!

None of these verses states that God created one for the other in order to "meet my needs." Yet these verses DO tell us that *we are to be joined together*. If we were not created for completion or competition, then what does this union accomplish? Companionship! Remember, God said in Genesis 2, *It is not good for the man to be alone...* The number one reason people give for wanting to get married is not for love, sex, or health.

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The number one reason people want to get married is for **companionship**. Simply put, they do not want to live the rest of their lives alone. They want to share life with someone, but not just anyone. Reason would tell us that **if we are going to invest ourselves, and risk ourselves in a lifelong relationship, we need to find someone we care a great deal about, someone with whom we are willing to take that risk.** And if we care a great deal about someone, then we naturally want to do what we can to meet their needs as best we can!

The covenant of marriage is a call for us to die to ourselves!

We believe **the covenant of marriage is a constant calling for us to die to ourselves in order to care for our mate.** It does involve seeking to meet their needs. But that does not include *unrealistic expectations or demands*. It will involve sacrifice. It will involve giving them preference. It will involve making this relationship a priority over every other earthly relationship.

Philippians 2:3-4 says, *Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others [your husband or wife] as more important than yourselves.*

⁴ *Everyone should look out not [only] for his own interests, but also for the interests of others*” (bolded insertion for application).

We are completed only by – and only in – Jesus Christ!

It is vitally important for us to realize that we CANNOT meet every need our marriage partner has. **There is only One** who can do that. Again, let’s examine the Scriptures to see what they teach us:

Genesis 17:1 – *When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, “I am God Almighty. Live in My presence and be devout.*

- The Lord is the only One who is Almighty. He is the only One who knows all, and can do all. Your marriage partner can’t, and you shouldn’t expect him/her to know or meet your every need!
- Married or single, we are called to live in His presence.
- Married or single, we are called to be devoted to Almighty God!

Philippians 4:19 – *And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

- God, not your spouse, has the power to supply all of your needs!
- He meets your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ALL things are done in Him, through him, and for Him!

Ephesians 3: 20 – *Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think.*

- He is able to do more than we could ever even think of. You spouse **cannot** tell what you are thinking of!

Colossians 2:8-10 (NASB) – *See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.* ⁹ *For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,* ¹⁰ *and in*

Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.

- It is an empty deception to expect your spouse to know and meet all your needs!
- Not only is God able to meet your needs through Jesus Christ, but it is He who makes you complete.
- Jesus Christ is the head over all rule and authority.

In conclusion, we need to make sure you understand this message is completely pro-marriage! We implore you to dig deeply into what God’s Holy Word teaches us about this beautiful, sacred union, and to apply it to **your** marriage, so that you will not be deceived by the disposable culture in which we live. The challenge for us is to desire for our marriages to be a reflection of the biblical relationship between Jesus Christ and the church, and then to be willing to work hard for that desire! This calls us to live outside ourselves in order to nurture and strengthen our marriage. But it also calls us to be realistic enough to quit expecting our mate to meet our every need. Rather, together we should *run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith* (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Note: Patrick and Dwaina have been marriage speakers for many years and presently pastor a church in El Paso, Texas.

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