

If your spouse is doing something that is seriously affecting you, it's good and essential that you communicate that, so your spouse may know the serious harm they are causing you. In this lesson we are not talking against communication, which is essential for a good marriage; but we are speaking against a whining, nagging and a bitter attitude. When we are so negative, even the Holy Spirit that is within us is affected. That's why *Ephesians 4:30-32* says: **"And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."**

God wants us to resolve the conflicts we have at home; but many times, the one that has to change the most, is the one being a carper. If you are full of criticism against others, do the following:

Repent and ask God's forgiveness, since God has not given the role of a critic to any member of the family. The role of each one is summarized in *Colossians 3:18-20*, which says: **"Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."** Who has the role of carper? No one! We already have enough homework with our own role, isn't that true? *Ephesians 5:21* and forward, speaks more of the role between husbands and wives, and concludes by saying: **"So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."** (v.33)

It's important that you not only obey the role that God assigned to you, but also repent of your bitterness, because if not, the consequences are devastating. *Hebrews 12:14-15* says: **"Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many."**

Once you have repented of your bitterness and have gladly taken your role, kindly explain to your spouse the problem. If that doesn't work, approach a Christian counselor or a loving Christian couple, so that they can hear both sides of the conflict, and thus can solve it as biblically as possible.

It's very important that you avoid being a carper, since the more you criticize your spouse (even if you only do it in your mind), your resentment for your spouse will only grow. Just as you fell in love with your spouse by constantly thinking about their virtues, you will also hate them if you only think of their faults. We would be better off if we just obey *Colossians 3:12-14*, which says: **"Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony."**

**If you want to have a loving home:
Welcome to the church of Christ!**

Don't be a carper!

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Obviously this exhortation goes for both genders, since unfortunately both men and women, abandon the beneficial practice of giving good advice when asked, and develop the bad habit of becoming a critic of everything that their spouse does.

There are many reasons why some marriages don't last; but lately, and after many years of study, some say that the number one reason is criticism. And obviously they are not talking about what some people call "constructive criticism," which is similar to good advice; but they are referring to those criticisms that don't help and encourage anyone.

Imagine that the "Honeymoon" period of your marriage has passed, and you begin the day by listening to the following: "You didn't let me sleep all night because of your snoring." "You hit me in your sleep." "I had a nightmare with you." "You stole my sheets." "Your breath stinks." "Don't take too long in the bathroom." Later: "You didn't put the dishes away." "There is no coffee." "You didn't leave the keys where they belong." "Someone forgot to sweep the floors." Can you imagine hearing that every day?

Then, once you see each other again, it's like: "Where have you been?" "You are so annoying." "Why didn't you answer my calls?" "You are not my mother." "Well, someone needs to be." "The house is a mess." "You left it that way." "You're so lazy." "And you're a loser." "Quit being on Facebook all day." "Stop chewing so loud." "The food doesn't taste good." "Don't eat it."

Later that day: "You didn't take out the trash." "You didn't wash the dishes well." "You forgot to mow the grass." "You forgot to use softener." "You forgot to buy it." "You were going to buy it." "You didn't give me enough money." "You spent it at the mall." "The car is no good." "You are no good."

Imagine how many criticisms we can say each day. Sometimes, one starts to become a carper by making little complaints or observations against the other person, and little by little, without noticing, it becomes a habit. Your constant criticism becomes so overwhelming, it starts generating fights, insults, grudges, hate, and even family disintegration.

Speaking first of a woman's continual criticism, *Proverbs 27:15* says: "**A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.**" Who likes to hear a continuous leak in the middle of the night? Drip! Drip! Drip! Drip! Now imagine a leak dropping on your face from the ceiling. Anyone would lose their patience.

Did you know that there are some women who dare make their husbands so mad on purpose to get beaten, so that they can call the authorities and sue them for abuse? All abuse is bad, including verbal abuse. Christians should not participate in any of it. When you want to share your discontent, do not substitute good dialogue with discouraging criticism.

And just as the constant criticism of a woman can greatly discourage her husband's spirit, the constant criticism of a man can deeply hurt the heart of his wife.

1Peter 3:7 says: "**Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.**" Ask yourself this question: If you didn't treat your wife as your wife, but only as a sister in the church, would you treat her worse or better?

Would you say to your sister in Christ: "Woe you scared me! if you saw her without makeup? Or if she had too much makeup: "You look like a clown!?" Would you say to your sister in Christ: "The food tastes horrible," or "My mother cooks better"? What about: "I hope you know how to wash my clothes." or "You didn't iron my shirt well." "The dishes still look dirty to me."

No, instead, we would be saying to our sister in Christ: "Don't worry, you look better without makeup." And if she over did it? Silence, we would not say a word. Of her food we would say, "It's so delicious" and without her noticing we would add some salt, and we would say: "You cook like my mother." Of the clothes, we would say: "Don't bother, I'll wash them" and for the wrinkle shirt we would say: "Thank you! and wear it like that; and the dishes? we would offer to wash them too.

And it's just that sometimes the man believes that by simply fulfilling his economic duties, he is already a good husband; But as long as he doesn't treat his wife with love, affection, and tenderness; he hasn't fulfilled his roll. *Colossians 3:19* says: "**Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.**"

Now, unfortunately, some women also know how to mistreat a man verbally. They complain over and over against them as if they were their mothers, and discourage their souls to death. He comes all the way from a very hard job, all distressed and feeling very bad because they treated him like trash at work, and he arrives home only to receive more criticism from his boss... I mean, his wife. It's not fair! And it's not only unfair, but God does not like that terrible attitude of a woman against her husband. But when a wife, instead of being a "continuous leak", behaves as a suitable helper, even God appreciates her more. Speaking to women, *1Peter 3:3-5* says: "**Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They put their trust in God and accepted the authority of their husbands.**" Don't be one of those women who abandon what God has in high esteem, to focus only on the external.

Instead of telling your husband: "You're late!" say "Thank God you arrived well." Instead of saying: "Well, the kitchen is already closed," say: "I'll warm up your food, my love." Instead of receiving him with a long list of demands, greet him with a hug, with a kiss, with a massage, with a "I missed you!". You don't want your husband to be one of those men who hate to come home, who would do whatever it takes not to arrive, even an accident if necessary. But when the woman has a gentle spirit, and a tender and submissive soul, the husband flies home like a rocket, without even saying goodbye to his friends. He even brings her flowers or invites his wife out to dinner.