



How Does a Woman Respect a Man Who Does Not Love Her?

Ephesians 5:33 says, “Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband” (NIV). This perfect prescription for a happy marriage that fulfills both the man and woman’s needs isn’t a problem in a healthy marriage, but it is tricky in a difficult marriage.

Love means to care for someone in a way that nourishes them and takes their needs into consideration. When a man mistreats his wife by not treating her as an equal partner and in a way that shows he cares for her needs and wants as well as his own, he isn’t loving her. When he repeatedly does things that hurt her, he isn’t loving her. When he makes choices that hurt the family, his wife, and himself, he isn’t loving his wife.

Respect means to honor or value. When you honor and value someone, you treat him or her in a way that shows respect. Your words and actions build up rather than tear down and show how much the person means to you. The problem in difficult marriages is that it is incredibly difficult to respect a man who is acting in a way that leads a wife to disrespect him

Love and respect are reciprocal. It is difficult to love someone who doesn’t respect you; conversely, it is difficult to respect someone who doesn’t love you. However, there are six things you can do to show respect to a man that doesn’t act in ways that you respect, and who doesn’t love you as he should:

1. You can respect the position and treat him in a way that acknowledges he is your husband; however, it does not mean you cannot say no, set boundaries, or speak the truth—even if those things feel disrespectful to him.
2. A man feels respected when he is appreciated and acknowledged. Appreciate and acknowledge him for the things he is doing right. You do not have to pretend you respect his choices in other areas.
3. When needing to confront your husband, do it in the things that really matter and in a way that is as respectful as possible (i.e. not nagging, putting him down, yelling, or undermining him in front of others). Just state your own truth clearly and simply.
4. Men feel respected when they lead their families. If you can safely allow your husband to make decisions, let him lead and experience the natural consequences of

his leadership with your input as a partner. Always use wisdom, and be willing to protect your family when you need to by saying no.

5. Do your part in the marriage. Continue to be his wife and fulfill your responsibilities in a way that is not demeaning to you. This includes sex, if it is safe, comfortable, and doesn't devalue you. It also includes your responsibilities in the home and marriage, even if he doesn't do his part and doesn't deserve you to do yours. This doesn't mean you can't have boundaries or say no to protect yourself.
6. Do not treat him with disdain or contempt. No matter what he has or hasn't done, he is still a human being, loved by God. Treating him in a way that is demeaning only decreases his own self-worth. Treating him in a way that shows he deserves good things will build his self-worth.

It isn't easy for you to respect a man who doesn't love you as he should, but it is a goal you should have to fulfill as your part in the marriage before God. The difficulty is in figuring out how to do that in a way that still stands for truth and has boundaries that protect you. It can be done carefully by using wisdom and discernment.