

What about my Needs?

*What do I do when my needs seem to be ignored or lost in the busyness of life?*

by Elvira Delaplaine

“You’re always on the computer! I can’t compete with that machine for your time! I have no idea what I need to do to get a little bit of attention around here!” Those bitter words spewed from me out of the frustration and hurt that came from my feelings of being an afterthought to my husband.

Of course, those “loving” words did not solicit the response that I really wanted. “That’s great – why don’t *you* respond to the e-mail messages that constantly come in! Or why don’t you take over the accounting work for the ministry? You never show any appreciation for the things that I do around here!” We were both hurt and went to our corners to lick our wounds.

For so many years we looked to one another to fulfill our needs. Those expectations are doomed for failure – we are always going to fall short in some manner. Just as God has met our physical needs for food, air and water, He knows our emotional needs and wants us to go to Him for the fulfillment of those as well. Of course, God will use our husband and other loved ones to meet those needs, but He will also use other circumstances and people to meet our deepest needs.

When our needs are not met, we will almost always focus on the behavior of others – the things they are doing or not doing that result in our hurt. In the earlier example, my need for attention led to me to focus on my husband’s actions – being on the computer rather than spending time with me. My attack naturally led to defensiveness and a counter-attack by my husband. While expressing my “need” for attention, my words may have caused my husband to feel unappreciated, disrespected and “not good enough.” As I learned to go to God with my needs, He showed me ways to approach my husband with words that build up and edify while still expressing my heart’s desire. “*A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*” (Proverbs 15:1).

“I know you have been working really hard on the ministry. I appreciate all the things that you do and how responsive you are in writing back to those who contact us on the internet, but I have been missing you. When you come to a point where you can take a break, could we just go to Starbucks and get a cup of coffee?” Speaking the truth in love creates miraculous results.

Both of us have learned that our words can tear one another down or build one another up. We have absolute control which words we choose to speak into our loved ones – choose life and love. Nagging or “helping” others to understand our needs is never fulfilling. Trust God to meet your needs by going to Him and sharing your heart.