

**CA 31 TFP3 COMMITMENT AND COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE (formally CA 32)****Theme music**

**FOSTER:** After a short pause, the Pastor asked the large group of men at the retreat, “What would you say the condition of your marriage is today?” “Is it great? Is it good? Is it ok? Or is it bad?” Stan thought to himself, “I think it’s good...between good and ok, I guess.” But then the Pastor asked the big question, “How would your wife answer? great, good, ok, or bad?”

Stan’s wife Sarah had been complaining about feeling unloved and unappreciated. How would Sarah answer this? Probably not well Stan thought. But some wives are never satisfied right? Right?

Welcome to Champions Arise. I’m Foster Braun and I’m with Kent Darcie. Is Stan correct? Are wives never satisfied with us? Or is there more to it? We’ll answer these questions when we return to Champions Arise.

**Music Theme** in

**FOSTER:** Kent, both Christian and non-Christian marriages are struggling around the world. While some people say their marriages are good or even great, others would say their marriages are “ok,” or “bad.” You may even get a different view of the same marriage depending on whether you talk to the husband or wife.

**KENT:** I’ve seen that. Men and women have different expectations. Largely because of how we’re created by God. In Genesis 1 verse 27 it says” *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*” God created men and women different. Not better or worse. Just different.

**FOSTER:** And when we bring those differences into a marriage, things can get difficult sometimes. But why is that? Why didn’t God make it simple for husbands and wives to understand each other and not have the problems?

**KENT:** I can’t say exactly. But in the Bible, we learn that God works to make us more like His Son Jesus. Philippians 1:6 says

*“being confident of this very thing, that He (God) who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;”*

God’s desire for us is to become more and more like Jesus and I’ve found that trials and problems help that process. The question is: ‘Is that **our** desire?’

**FOSTER:** What do you mean, “Is that our desire?” Don’t Christians want be more Christ-like?

**KENT:** We should. We say that Champions Arise is by men, for men. But really it’s for men who want to be godly men.

**FOSTER:** So are you saying that men don’t want to be godly men? And I’ve lost the connection to marriage—which is where we started this conversation. ‘

**KENT:** Here’s the connection between the two. Let’s use Ephesians 5:25 as an example. It says, *“Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”* Foster, can you be a godly man and not love your wife as Christ loves the church?

**FOSTER:** I know the answer is “no”, but I’ve not heard it presented that way before. That really creates some challenges for us doesn’t it?

**KENT:** Yes it does—for any man who claims Jesus Christ as his Lord. The reason we haven’t started talking about the marriage issues yet is because, as men, we must accept two things:

First, loving our wives as Christ loves the church is not an “option” for the Christian man. We can’t say, “I really don’t like that verse, or my wife doesn’t deserve it, so I’m not going to do it.”

**FOSTER:** Yet many men treat their marriages that way.

**KENT:** Unfortunately yes. I did—for years. But the second thing, for a lot of us, we must accept that **God** decides what “loving our wives” looks like, not us.

**FOSTER:** Ok, I’m seeing where the problem is now. You’re saying there are men who claim to be godly men—may even be serving in the church, but they’re not following God’s standard for what loving their wife is.

**KENT:** Exactly. We’re using other people’s standards for how to love our wives. Probably the most common person we use for an example is our father. We treat our wife the way our father treated our mom. Or maybe we treat our wife the way our friends do. Or our coworkers or whoever we respect or want to be like.

And they may treat their wife ok—by the world’s standards, but, as Christian men, we are challenged to live to the highest standard—God’s standard. And I pray that the men listening to us are willing to accept that challenge.

**FOSTER:** I believe they are Kent,

**KENT:** In fact, Foster, if I may, I'd like to pray for the men listening. I believe there are men who need to make a decision right now to be willing to love their wife God's way.

**FOSTER:** Please do.

**KENT:** Heavenly Father, I pray for the man listening who is afraid that if he loves his wife the way You want him to, he's going to be ridiculed by his friends, or coworkers, or his family—maybe his father. But Lord, Your word says that the fear of man is a snare—a trap—but those who trust in You will be safe. Lord, give us the strength as men—godly men—Christ-following men—give us the strength to honor you by loving our wife—Your way, not our way. And Lord, we accept the challenge to love our wives as Your Son Jesus loved the church and gave Himself up for her. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

**FOSTER:** Thank you Kent. My friend, I hope you accepted that challenge and we at Champions Arise are here to help you do it.

If you joined us late, you're listening to Champions Arise. This is Foster Braun and I'm with Kent Darcie. Today we are discussing how to love our wives God's way, but we just learned that it starts with **our commitment** to love our wives God's way. So Kent, with that commitment, "how can we love our wives as Christ loves the church?"

**KENT:** First we need to understand that our wives are not like men.

**FOSTER:** That part I've figure out. (laughter)

**KENT:** We think we all have, and you newly married men out there, listen up. We do know they aren't like us, **but we treat them and react to them like they are like us. They should feel the way **we** feel and act the way **we** act. But Foster, how well does that work?**

**FOSTER:** No comment

**KENT:** Well I'll comment for you. It doesn't work. **I know.** And **women** who are listening right now will tell you it doesn't work.

And that is because, going back to the very beginning, God created Eve as Adam's helper. In Genesis 2 verse 18, God says, "I will make a helper suitable for him (Adam)." God made a helper, not a copy of Adam.

God designed inherent differences between men and women. Big differences! And when we understand these differences, and that they are God created, we can better love our wives as Christ loves the church.

**FOSTER:** So what are some of those differences?

**KENT:** One difference is the way men and women communicate. Generally speaking, women tend to focus on the specifics in a conversation while men tend to talk in generalities. Women want every single detail. Men want to get to the point.

**FOSTER:** and quickly!

**KENT:** Yes. And in the book “The Four Priorities, by Dr. John Tolsen and Larry Krieder, they list five levels of communication.

The first is the least intimate. “How are you?” “What do you do for a living?” are examples.

The second level of communication is reporting facts. “I drive a truck for my job.” “My football team lost last week.” Many men rarely get beyond this level

**FOSTER:** And that upsets our wives.

**KENT:** Yes, because they are created to go deeper. We are too, we just don’t do it without prodding.

The third level of communication is where we share ideas and judgements. Men can see this as risky, because we lack practice doing it, and we think our wife may not like what we share.

The fourth level is sharing our emotions. Proverbs 31 verse 11 says, “*The heart of her husband safely trusts her.*”

My friend, sharing your emotions with your wife may seem unnatural and risky, but for most wives, it will deepen your relationship in ways you never thought possible.

**FOSTER:** That’s very true. And the deepest level of communication?

**KENT:** This is where we share our fears and struggles with our wives. Again, while this can be very hard for us as men, it empowers most wives to deepen their love and support for us. It’s their natural response because of the way God created them. So they benefit by our deeper communication. And we benefit too.

But we have a choice. We can frustrate our wives by not letting them share their thoughts with us—cutting them off when we think they’re talked too long. And **we** can refuse to have deeper communication with them.

Or we can trust and honor God by adapting to the fact that the loving thing to do is listen to our wife **and** share with her.

Your wife’s primary way of measuring the quality of your relationship is if you’re having meaningful conversations with her. What you talk about may seem trivial or scary to you at

times, but if your relationship with your wife is as important **to you** as it is to God, then making the effort to communicate in healthy ways with your wife is *very* important.

**FOSTER:** What's another way we're different from our wife?

**KENT:** We use our feelings differently. Because of the way God created them, women tend to be in touch with their feelings and thoughts at the same time. Men think first and then add feelings if they think they're necessary—which is rarely.

As a result we will tell our wives “you shouldn't feel that way.” However, we can't change them and we shouldn't change them, because God designed them to help us. We don't have that strength. I can't tell you how many times, my wife has seen things from an emotional perspective that I totally missed. A wise husband will seek and value the insights of his wife.

**FOSTER:** So there are differences in communication and the use of feelings. How else are we different from our wives?

**KENT:** Men fix things. Women fix relationships. Let me say that again. Men fix things. Women fix relationships. And both are important. Unfortunately, as men we tend to only see our side as important, and our wives only see their side as important. But God put fixing things and fixing relationships together in a marriage to make it a reflection of how God works in the world.

**FOSTER:** That makes a lot of sense. This is really interesting. How else are we different?

**KENT:** A big difference is in the area of sex. For guys, it's physical. For wives, it needs to be a bonding experience on an emotional level. A survey confirmed this. 100,000 women were asked what was most important to them when they were physically intimate with their husbands. 70,000 said feeling close, nurtured, safe, warm, and connected were most important.

Remember earlier we asked, “Can you be a godly man and not love your wife as Christ loves the church and gave himself up for her?” This verse tells us, Christ put **our** needs before His own. And He challenges us to put our wife's needs before our own in the area of physical intimacy.

**FOSTER:** That is not always easy.

**KENT:** God doesn't say it is. What He does say is if we are obedient to Him first, there are blessings that come with that. If you are having a tough time in this area—lots of friction—try doing things God's way. You'll be surprised how things may change. Remember, God created sex. So doing it His way—putting our wife's needs before our own, honor's God.

**FOSTER:** And Kent, it seems like if we accept the different way God created our wives and respond positively to it instead of complaining about it, they will see that as a show of commitment to them, wouldn't it?

**KENT:** Absolutely, and that show of commitment is very important to our wife's wellbeing in the marriage. Again, it may seem unimportant to us, but it's very important to our wife, because of how God created her.

**FOSTER:** My friend, we pray that you have accepted the challenge to take what you've learned and apply it in your marriage today.

### ***Music Theme in***

### **Program Close**

**FOSTER:** Thank you for listening to Champions Arise where men are equipped and strengthened to meet their God-given potential. Today we discussed the importance of commitment and communication in marriage. This material was based on chapter 15 in the book "The Four Priorities," by Dr. John Tolson and Larry Kreider which is published by "The Gathering USA" in 2007 and used with permission. You can learn more about this book and listen to any of these programs at our website [championsarise.org](http://championsarise.org). I'm Foster Braun with Kent Darcie. Thank you for listening to Champions Arise. May God mold you into the man He knows you can be.

### **Closing Tag**

**CA 31 TFP3 COMMITMENT AND COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE (formally CA 32)**