

# FOUR THINGS WOMEN WANT FROM A MAN



A. R. BERNARD

"A. R. Bernard has been a major influence in our lives ...  
[helping us reach] a higher level in our relationship and spiritual growth."

—DENZEL AND PAULETTA WASHINGTON

## **Chapter 1**

*Four Things*

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## **Chapter 2**

*The Culture of Marriage,  
Then and Now*

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## **Chapter 3**

*Patterns and Principles*

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## **Chapter 4**

*Maturity*

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## **Chapter 5**

*Decisiveness*

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## **Chapter 6**

*Consistency*

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## **Chapter 7**

*Strength*

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## **Chapter 8**

*On Being a Real man*

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## **Chapter 9**

*A New Beginning ...  
Beginning Today*

## **Small Group Curriculum**

*Composed by Sirece Thomas*

## Four Things Women Want from a Man by A.R. Bernard

### Small Group Curriculum

#### Chapter 1: Four Things

<b>Focus</b>	There are four things God wants from a man, four things a woman wants from a man, and four things men struggle with: <b>Maturity, Decisiveness, Consistency, and Strength</b> . These four characteristics can bring peace to your heart and happiness to your home and when practiced regularly, have the power to transform boys (of any age) into men.
<b>Scripture</b>	1 Peter 3:7
<b>Hook</b>	Rev. Dr. A.R. Bernard was born in Panama and moved with his mother to Brooklyn, New York at the age of four. Without a father, he became socially conscious at an early age, searching for his own identity, male role models, and searching for God. He eventually landed in the Nation of Islam in his teens and after five years, God seized his heart on January 11, 1975. The first person to notice his newly attained salvation was his high school sweetheart, Karen. They were complete opposites, but they certainly did attract. Three months after he gave his life to Christ, Karen did the same and they began studying Gods word together. They dated for three years and then married and have now been married over 40 years with seven sons and twenty-one grandchildren. They began a tiny ministry in their kitchen that soon exploded to an eleven-and-a-half-acre campus in Brooklyn and a recently launched campus in Long Island totaling over 37,000 members. Through the years they have seen the 'perfect' marriages blow up overnight and the most rock relationships mend overnights. There is truly nothing new under the sun. This book will help both women and men recognize good patterns and avoid bad ones. Dr. Bernard has experience extremely low points in his marriage, particularly in 1984 when their marriage was on the verge of ending. Only then did he realize so much that he had done wrong beginning with having his priorities out of place. He sought forgiveness from his wife, although she brushed it off, he began to make huge changes in his marriage that saved them and placed them where they are now. He heard God say, "Deepen your relationship with your wife, and I'll broaden your ministry." He learned how to take these four main traits and apply them to his own life ultimately saving his marriage and ministry.
<b>Main Points</b>	<p><b>I. Four Traits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Maturity</li> <li>b. Decisiveness</li> <li>c. Consistency</li> <li>d. Strength</li> <li>e. They will bring peace to your heart and happiness to your home</li> </ul> <p><b>II. Man vs Woman</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Men can often miss obvious signs about their women which could have helped them avoid headaches and heartaches</li> <li>b. Women are very keen observers and know their husbands better than anyone, but often women don't understand themselves</li> </ul> <p><b>III. Man on a Mission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Since Adam had his work before he had his wife, he was a man on a mission.</li> <li>b. Today many men still tend to identify themselves with their work</li> <li>c. Women were created to help their men and so they still want to desperately help their men, but men being so mission minded to the point of stubbornness often misinterpret their wives' efforts.</li> <li>d. What a woman believes to be much-needed assistance, the man perceives to be much-dreaded nagging.</li> </ul>
<b>Reflections/Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you agree that these are four essential traits?</li> <li>2. Is there a trait you'd add or replace?</li> <li>3. What are your first thoughts to this experience?</li> <li>4. Men: What trait seems the hardest to develop? Easiest? Women: What trait do you appreciate most in a partner? The least?</li> </ul>
<b>Concluding Applications</b>	Discuss with your small group/counselor where you have seen some of these traits shine in your own marriage in yourself/your husband. Prayer on p 20. Action steps to be reviewed next meeting.

## Four Things Women Want from a Man by A.R. Bernard

### Small Group Curriculum

### Chapter 2: The Culture of Marriage, Then and Now

<b>Focus</b>	The culture of marriage has changed vastly over time based on the constant changing culture of society. This ever-quickenning change of pace in society has caused both men and women to feel uprooted, confused, and disoriented. Relationships between husbands and wives are being refined by popular culture. Although culture undergoes constant change, the hearts and minds of men and women are not nearly so malleable. We have been hardwired to approach marriage the way God intended, which is the only way that has proven true for a truly successful marriage and has stood the tests of time, changes of culture, and pressure of society in the past, now, and forever.
<b>Scripture</b>	Ephesians 5:25, Hebrews 12:15, Matthew 19:6
<b>Hook</b>	Pastor Bernard shared in the last chapter his sin of transposition, having his priorities out of order. Although he began the process of change, his wife, Karen, offered her forgiveness on an installment basis. She watched for consistency and gradually began to forgive him. She was treating forgiveness as a reward instead of as a gift that flows from the value you place on the relationship. This resistance grew from a root of bitterness that formed in her heart after all they had gone through. One day after getting into a huge argument over something so minor, he prayed to God to find out what he was missing in his marriage that has made it so unpleasant and made them so easily angered with one another. God revealed the passage of Hebrews 12:15 to him which focused on how you can become defiled by the root of <i>bitterness</i> . This is exactly what he was missing. Karen had grown bitter and God revealed the same thing to her. Bitterness takes root before it springs up. It stems from disappointments that accumulate over time but are not acknowledges or addressed. Bitterness then begins to color the lens through which we see and interpret the words, attitudes, and actions of the one we believe hurt us. Once they realized the true state of their marriage, they took it to God. Karen asked for forgiveness and began her own journey of change and renewal. Forgiveness released them both that day!
<b>Main Points</b>	<p><b>I. Culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Integrated system of beliefs, traditions, customs, values, products, technologies, and ideas that constitute the life of a people.</li> <li>b. Formed by mankind's response to basic needs; the more creative the response, the more advanced the culture</li> <li>c. It undergoes constant change which has vastly affected the original purpose of marriage and the formula to a successful, marriage of longevity given to us by God</li> </ul> <p><b>II. Institutional Marriage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Lasted from the founding of America until the middle of the nineteenth century</li> <li>b. There were no large institutions or mass media, so values were taught in the home</li> <li>c. Marriage was considered essential and divorce was almost never heard of</li> <li>d. Falling in love with your spouse was not the primary thing, just an added benefit</li> </ul> <p><b>III. Compassionate Marriage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Marriage became a search for affection and companionship, a way to find love and sexual fulfillment (1850-1955)</li> <li>b. Couples married for reasons of the heart, often tossing practicalities aside.</li> <li>c. This was also expressed in various romantic movies post World War II: boy meets girl, fell in love, and go married happily ever after.</li> </ul> <p><b>IV. Self-Expressive Marriage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Society's view of marriage evolved from the "compassionate" to the "self-expressive," which is where we are now as a society.</li> <li>b. Spouses seek to discover who they "really" are. They are focused on themselves as individuals, not on themselves as part of an indivisible union.</li> <li>c. The view of marriage is self-centered and "me-based." It is the recipe for midlife crisis where spouses seek <i>self</i>-satisfaction, <i>not</i> mutual satisfaction.</li> </ul> <p><b>V. Adapt and Adjust</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. These are two words that express the secret to longevity in a relationship.</li> <li>b. Adaptability is having the knowledge and willingness to accommodate new conditions. This has to do with major changes.</li> <li>c. Adjustment has to do with slight alterations, the small changes that are necessary for the good of the relationship</li> <li>d. Sacrificial love is, by definition, long-term love. It's not about the pleasure of the moment; it's about consistent respect, day after day, year after year.</li> <li>e. Marriage is not designed for instant gratification.</li> </ul>
<b>Reflections/Questions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When you think about the changes the institution of marriage has gone through, how do you feel?</li> <li>2. How have you or your partner let self-expression get in the way of commitment?</li> <li>3. How have you had to adapt and adjust in your own relationship?</li> <li>4. Have you seen bitterness take root in your own life? How have you dealt with it?</li> </ol>
<b>Concluding Applications</b>	Discuss with your small group/counselor the type of marriage you believe you are currently in and how it has progressed or digressed over time. Prayer on p 48. Action steps to be reviewed next meeting.