

A Thorough Review & Examination of the Book

Love & Respect: The Love She Most Desires; The Respect He Desperately Needs

By Mark Baker

Love & Respect: Is it a biblical and helpful book, or just another “spirit of the age” fad deceiving and hurting many? How do we establish which one it is? Let’s exercise our biblical discernment to find out.

What we do know is that many people, pastors, and ministry leaders are recommending and praising it. Some are touting it as the best book they’ve read on marriage. *Love & Respect (L&R)* has won numerous awards, including “Book of the Year” in 2007. Hundreds of thousands of copies, if not more, have been sold. Case closed, right?

Yet, reasons of likeability and popularity alone do not support one’s claim to truth (in fact, it is usually the opposite).¹ As always, the determining question must be: how *biblical* is this book? While *L&R* does use some Bible verses, we must investigate just how well Scripture *truly* authenticates its teachings.² Every book rises or falls—at least in the eyes of God—based solely on how well it measures up to His Word of truth.

However, after a thorough review and inspection of *L&R*, it is apparent that something *other than the Bible* is being used as the criteria as to whether this book is biblical. In spite of the Scripture used, the central themes of the book stem not from God’s Word but from the latest feel-good ideas of the world (e.g., feelings focused, need based, and “love tanks”). *L&R*’s message is essentially indistinguishable from other pop-psychology tomes on marriage and conflict. To make matters worse, not only does it not mesh with truth and reality concerning love and relationships, but it perverts the clear and pure Word of God.

¹ Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 16:15

² Acts 17:11; Isaiah 8:20

Some of the key errors found during a thorough reading and examination of *Love & Respect* are listed below, with brief explanations for each outlined in the following pages.

- 1 Holds to a Low View of Scripture
- 2 Mishandles Scripture
- 3 Springs from a Polluted Source
- 4 Engages in Eisegesis
- 5 Adheres to Maslow's "Need" Based Life
- 6 Presents a Functionally Insufficient God
- 7 Presents a Functionally Insufficient Bible
- 8 Claims Special Revelation
- 9 Indirectly Attacks God's Character
- 10 Teaches a Man-Centered Focus
- 11 Affirms Humanism
- 12 Espouses a Humanistic View of People
- 13 Paints a Deceptive View of the Goal of Life & Marriage
- 14 Encourages a "Give-To-Get" Approach To Marriage
- 15 Emphasizes Behavior Change Over Heart Change
- 16 Over-Emphasizes Feelings
- 17 Teaches a Worldly & Anti-Biblical Understanding of Conflict
- 18 Emphasizes the Horizontal Dimension
- 19 Encourages Putting Hope in the Performance of People
- 20 Discourages Responsibility
- 21 Forces Relative Truths & Falsehoods Into Absolute Truths
- 22 Offers Misunderstanding & Misinformation About *Love & Respect*

There seems to be an alarming trend in the church (when it comes to this book and other popular teachings): few people truly use and depend on God's Word of life as the standard for measuring and discerning truth and error. Whenever I talk to pastors, ministry leaders, or lay people who favor *L&R*, I have yet to encounter a *single person* who will use a *single verse* to defend the myriad of errors that are pointed out regarding this particular book. Not only is this not a good indication for the "Bible-ocity" of *L&R*, but, and far worse, it is a frightful sign regarding the state of the church today.

In one instance, I spent several months going back and forth with staff at a particular church over the use of *L&R* in their congregation. In all of our exchanges, they could not or would not use *any* Scripture to defend their position; but eventually gave a backdoor admission that they were wrong about *L&R*. Finally, they even confessed to their flock that they were mistaken about "a book" and asked for forgiveness—but would not name the book or what was wrong with it.

What, we need to ask, is the measuring rod for truth for churches and ministries? What guides our decisions to use or not use a certain book, ministry, or teaching? I have found that many leaders have mind-sets along the lines of, "It works, so it can't be that bad," or, "Everyone else is using it, so it must be good," or "Yeah, it has a lot of bad stuff, but..."—rather than, "God's Word is *the* standard for truth regarding life and love." It seems that in the era of the mega-church and now the

emerging church, *numbers* and *pragmatism* do the leading, not God's Word of life. What is it exactly that is leading our favorite authors, ministries, or churches?

Keep in mind that falsehood packaged in biblical verbiage is the most effective way to deceive.³ The closer a lie is to the truth, the more believable—and dangerous—it is. While *L&R* has its share of subtle deceptions (i.e., a lie close to the truth; e.g., counterfeit money), it is also replete with brazenly fraudulent teachings, such as the following thesis *on which the entire book relies*:

A wife has one driving need – to feel loved. When that need is met, she is happy. A husband has one driving need – to feel respected. When that need is met, he is happy.⁴

This declaration may *sound* good at first. But, if you are to closely and biblically examine it,⁵ how many problems can you come up within *L&R*'s foundational statement of belief? For starters, this is like writing a book aimed at teenagers with the following thesis:

A teenager has one driving need—to feel popular. When that need is met, he or she is happy.

Such a statement would clearly resonate with teens (not to mention many adults). They would nod their heads emphatically up and down and say, "Yeah, that's right! That is exactly what I'm missing. If I can just get other kids, especially the cute and popular ones, to fill my 'popularity tank,' then, and only then, can I be truly happy. Finally, someone has uncovered my deepest need!" While such an idea may *feel* true, or, as Oprah might say, "it's an '*emotional truth*,'" it is really the direct opposite of truth and the antithesis of what we actually *need*.

So, right off the bat, what the author of *L&R* appeals to is not Scripture, not truth, not even a true need—but to our flesh through alluring *pseudo-needs* (more on that later). The power behind this appeal is not God's Word, not the Holy Spirit, but rather the universal struggle we all deal with—the *fear of man*.⁶ That is, putting too much hope in *the performance of sinful people* to determine our day-to-day experience. The fear of man is giving people power over our lives—that should belong to God alone—to make us happy, secure, sad, fearful, worried, etc. We place ourselves at the whim of other sinners, rather than in the security of God's unfailing love. This is our common battle between worshiping and serving the *creation* rather than the *Creator*.⁷

From this underpinning of sinking sand springs forth a whole host of errors, deception, and destruction which *L&R* feeds its readers. What follows is a sampling of 22 of the key problems of *L&R*, along with brief explanations for each one.

1 } L&R HOLDS TO A LOW VIEW OF SCRIPTURE

Our view of Scripture is foundational for all our beliefs. In fact, it determines far more of our lives than we probably realize. A high view of Scripture sees the Bible as containing "**everything** we need for life and godliness" (e.g., for love, relationships, conflict, how to change, what to change into, etc.)⁸ and believes that it is able to "**thoroughly equip**" us "for **every good work**."⁹ Sadly, this is the minority view in today's church and, I believe, the reason for much of the current problems in the body of Christ.¹⁰ Many say and even believe that they have a high view of Scripture and that the Bible is sufficient (their stated view), but their actions (their functional view) show otherwise. A lower view sees the Bible as being

³ Colossians 2:4; Genesis 3:1ff; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

⁴ *Love & Respect*, Emerson Eggerichs, Back Cover, *emphasis in the original*

⁵ 1 Timothy 4:15-16

⁶ Proverbs 29:25

⁷ Romans 1:25; Matthew 6:24; Jeremiah 2:13; Jonah 2:8

⁸ 2 Peter 1:3; see also 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2; 2 Peter 1:3ff; Psalm 119: 1:2-3; 19:7-11

⁹ 2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁰ Amos 8:11-12; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Mark 4:13-20

helpful for some things, but needing help from other sources when it comes to most situations. Ultimately, it is seen as *deficient*. According to such a view, where the rubber meets the road, God failed to give us “everything we need for life and godliness;” therefore it is up to us to study the latest ideas from the world on such vital topics as relationships and how to change¹¹ in order to make up for the Bible’s deficiency and God’s weakness or oversight.¹² As is the trend these days, many Christians hold more to the low view of Scripture (at least by their actions). In their minds, we have, apparently, exhausted the truth and treasures of God’s Word,¹³ so they invest their time, money, and resources believing in, studying, and teaching other ideologies in order to make up for what God’s Word is lacking.

If we are to go on the actions and ideas of the author of *L&R* (as is *commanded* by Scripture: “By their fruit you will recognize them”)¹⁴, it seems apparent that he is closer to the low view of Scripture. In the “actions speak louder than words” department, his decision to immerse himself in an overtly *humanistic* and *evolution*-based study and understanding of people and relationships—***rather than the Word of God***—speaks volumes.¹⁵

See to it that no one takes you captive through *hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.*¹⁶

Sadly, the “godless myths” of humanism, as we will see, are painfully evident throughout *L&R*. The prevailing view in *L&R* is a *humanist* version of Ephesians 5:33 (feelings, *individual* pseudo-needs, we’re all basically good, “love tanks,” a focus on temporary goals), rather than the God-focused and marriage-focused understanding the Lord intends.

If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, *brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.*¹⁷

2 } L&R MISHANDLES SCRIPTURE

While there is some Scripture used in *L&R*, it is frequently interpreted through the lens of pop-psychology and the Maslowian/humanistic¹⁸ view of people, relationships, truth, conflict, love, etc. This is the general outcome whenever someone ventures out into the world’s “wisdom” (ostensibly to “add to” or “improve” upon God’s all-sufficient, “perfect” Word). No matter what predicated this book, the result is that the author absolutely brutalizes Ephesians 5:33, the passage of Scripture on which the whole book rests.¹⁹

3 } L&R SPRINGS FROM A POLLUTED SOURCE

The origin of the “unique” and intoxicating ideas of *L&R* come not from God’s perfect Word but from the author’s doctoral study of the “ecosystems” of the family at a liberal secular university which, in turn, comes from passionate proponents of evolution, humanism, and an anti-Christian world view.²⁰

¹¹ cp. 1 Corinthians 1:20-21

¹² cp. 1 Corinthians 1:25

¹³ cp. Romans 11:33; Psalm 119:96; Colossians 2:3

¹⁴ Matthew 7:16

¹⁵ Ph.D. in Child and Family Ecology from Michigan State University

¹⁶ Colossians 2:8

¹⁷ 1 Timothy 4:6-8

¹⁸ Abraham Maslow: one of the founders of humanistic psychology, noted for his “Hierarchy of Human Needs”

¹⁹ see *Eisegesis*; cp. 2 Timothy 2:15

²⁰ See Psalm 1:1-3; Isaiah 8:20; Jeremiah 2:13; 2 Corinthians 6:14ff; 1 Timothy 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; 2 Peter 1:3-4

4 } L&R ENGAGES IN EISEGESIS

The previous errors are the perfect storm to create the egregious *eisegesis* (that is, adding the author's and, in this case, *the world's* preconceived ideas *into* Scripture) of Ephesians 5:33. The commands to **give** love and respect for the purpose of the *marriage* and *God's* glory are perverted into the *individual's* fabricated absolute "one driving need" which is "to **receive feelings** of love and respect," all so that we can be...*"happy."* This eisegetical inversion and corruption of God's Word is *the basis of the whole book.*

5 } L&R ADHERES TO MASLOW'S "NEED" BASED LIFE

Needs, real or phony, carry incredible power. The more you believe you need something, the more that "need" will dominate your life (e.g., wealth, a job, alcohol, to get married, the approval of others/"feelings of respect," etc.). If, however, you buy into a pseudo-need, then your life (and relationships) will be governed by a lie. *L&R* happens to be dominated by at least two major lies (i.e., the *absolute* "need" for feelings of love and the *absolute* "need" for feelings of respect). Whether he realizes it or not, whether he will admit it or not, the author's writings reveal that he is a devotee of the anti-Christian "father of humanism" Abraham Maslow. Much on false "needs" has been written elsewhere. In my own studies, I have written extensively on the subject of discernment when it comes to determining true and false needs. The following is an excerpt from this material, dealing with the "Embellished Need Syndrome" upon which all false teaching depends.

The sufficiency of God and Scripture are the greatest realities, by far, for the believer. Consequently, they pose the greatest threat to the enemy, our flesh, and false teachers. Therefore, every deceiver will attempt to draw you away from the "one thing"—your sufficiency in Christ and the Word—by some supposed urgent, all-important, absolute "need" that must be met, or else. These pumped-up desires or trumped-up "needs," while always alluring, will bring chaos and tyranny into our lives as they distract us from our one true need.

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed" (Lk 10:41-42). Created or inflated needs are no small matter. Consider how need dominates your life, for good or bad:

- **We devote our time, resources, and lives to whatever we *believe* we need. If we get our needs wrong, then our lives will be deeply troubled, if not destroyed (Jas 3:16; Matt 6:33-34; Heb 12:16-17; 1 Tim 6:9-10; e.g., drugs; respect; sex; "feelings of love;" money).**
- **Given the deceptive, sinful, and foolish nature of our hearts, we tend to get our needs wrong more often than not (Jer 2:13; 6:16; Is 30:9-13; 2 Tim 4:3-4; Gen 25:29-34).**
- **The more we need something, the more it will control our thoughts, actions, relationships, and overall experience in life (e.g., people to think well of us; money; marriage; pleasure; alcohol).**
- **The more "needs" in our lives, the more stress, disappointment, and discouragement there will be.**
- **The more "needs" in our lives, the less contentment, peace, and joy there will be (Phil 4:6-13, 19; 1 Tim 6:6-11).**

- The more “needs” we have, the more distracted and deterred we will be from the real or more important needs—especially our one true need (Lk 10:38-42; Matt 6:19-34; Ps 27:4; 1 Kgs 11:2-3).
- The fewer and the more accurate our needs, the more blessed, powerful, and peaceful our lives and relationships will be (Ps 16:11; 23; 27:4; 62; 73:22-26; 2 Cor 9:8; Matt 6:9-13, 19-21, 33).

Key to Remember: “Need” kills. Sufficiency strengthens. We thrive in His sufficiency. False teachers will always, subtly or overtly, present a false need and, therefore, they are also attacking the sufficiency of God and His Word. We should always search for and clearly define the presented need. Need is so powerful that our lives and the lives of others may hang in the balance.²¹

6 } L&R PRESENTS A FUNCTIONALLY INSUFFICIENT GOD

Directly or indirectly, *L&R* attacks and undermines the greatest truth and certainty for the believer—our sufficiency in Christ. One can only conclude—due to *L&R*'s overemphasis and plethora of references to the belief that our “greatest,” “deepest,” “one driving need” can **only** be met by our *spouse*—that **God is not enough** for life, godliness, or “happiness.”²² What, then, becomes of the unmarried, or those in a less than perfect marriage? Can we not have happiness, let alone “love, joy, peace...” from God alone?²³

7 } L&R PRESENTS A FUNCTIONALLY INSUFFICIENT BIBLE

We all have a stated view (i.e., what we say we believe, or even what we *believe* we believe) and a functional view (i.e., what we *actually* believe) about God and Scripture (or anything else for that matter). There is a high likelihood, for any of us due to the deceitful nature of our hearts,²⁴ that our stated view and functional view do not match up. The author's belief in and devotion to the world-based, godless ideas of man, relationships, and marriage reveals his *functional* view of Scripture as woefully insufficient, despite whatever his *stated* view might be.²⁵

8 } L&R CLAIMS SPECIAL REVELATION

(See *Eisegesis*) Stunningly, the author claims to have “discovered” (or that God Himself revealed to him) our “one driving need” in Ephesians 5:33; which, obviously, *everyone else in all the annals of history has failed to see*. In the thousands of years spanning the existence and study of Scripture, not one person has discovered what the author has claimed to have uncovered (purportedly through special revelation from God but, in actuality, from Maslow's needology). Not that *L&R* is a cult, but this type of gross absurdity (a “new” and “undiscovered truth” that no one else has seen) is an inarguable and distinctive mark of a cult. If we would be concerned, and rightly so, about a cult's “new” and “fresh” revelation from God, why are so few of us deeply alarmed about this sort of teaching in our churches? And why is this author the one person in all of history to which God revealed our greatest need?

²¹ *Discerning Or Deceived*, Mark Baker, Hope For Life Biblical Counseling & Equipping

²² cp. 2 Peter 1:3-4; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Philippians 4:19

²³ Cp. Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 3:7-11; 4:11-13; Psalm 23; 62; 63:3; 73:23-26

²⁴ Jeremiah 17:9; Ephesians 4:22

²⁵ cp. Psalm 1:1-3; 119; 1 Timothy 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:15-18; 3:15-4:3

9 } L&R INDIRECTLY ATTACKS GOD'S CHARACTER

The logical conclusion of this "new" revelation would have to be that we follow a God who hid, or chose not to reveal and fulfill, *the greatest need* for literally billions of people (and waited thousands of years to reveal it to this author). What can we conclude about a God like that? Or, more to the point, what does this reveal about *L&R*?

10 } L&R TEACHES A MAN-CENTERED FOCUS

The book is essentially about *me* and how I can be *happy* in marriage. And this is precisely why this book is popular. While it has *some* truth (of course, the phrase "it has some truth" is a big red flag in and of itself), *L&R* ultimately appeals to our flesh, not the Spirit. Marriage is not about happiness (although happiness may come about). Instead, marriage is much more about God's glory, sacrificial love, selflessness, dying to self, "losing one's life," and growing in grace which, when put into practice, results in treasure far better and longer lasting than "happiness" (e.g., joy, peace, love, maturity, godliness, blessing God and others, just to name a few). This book, along with the wrong focus among popular Christian books, is a prime example of why Christian marriages (and the divorce rate among Christians) mirror those of non-believers.

11 } L&R AFFIRMS HUMANISM

Consider these statements taken directly from *Love & Respect*:

He knows he is full of goodwill.²⁶

But the main thing is to trust your wife's heart.²⁷

Now, compare these quotes to what God has to say on the subject:

The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.²⁸

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.²⁹

Everything in *L&R* is heavily influenced by humanism—if not unashamedly humanistic. For example, "Wives do not need a lot of coaching on being loving. It is something God built into them, and they do it naturally³⁰...all women naturally love unconditionally³¹...they never stop loving unconditionally."³² These errant notions alone have too many destructive implications to count. An example for men is, "A man's first and fundamental impulse is to serve."³³ What? Where can we back up these ideas with Scripture? (Or in logic or in real life?) Compare these ideas with what the book of Romans has to say regarding every single person on earth:

As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."³⁴

²⁶ *Love & Respect*, page 26

²⁷ *Ibid.*, page 144

²⁸ Genesis 6:5

²⁹ Jeremiah 17:5; see also Romans 7:18-25; 3:10-18

³⁰ *Love & Respect*, page 183

³¹ *Ibid.*, page 36

³² *Ibid.*, page 36

³³ *Ibid.*, page 186

³⁴ Romans 3:10-12

12 } L&R ESPOUSES A HUMANISTIC VIEW OF PEOPLE

Another prime example of the pervasiveness of humanistic thought throughout *L&R* can be seen in the following assertion:

But I want to remind all husbands that their wives are basically good-willed women. They are only acting critical, contentious, and disrespectful because they are crying out for love.³⁵

So now sinning against others is really only “crying out for love” or just trying to get our “respect tank” filled? Are we really “basically good-willed”? To make matters far worse, there is **absolutely no mention of the biblical view of the heart**³⁶ (or of the flesh vs. the Spirit dynamic)—which happens to be *the* problem in marriage and in life.³⁷ Therefore, the correct solutions are missed and avoided altogether. If we are to truly help people—individually and in relationships—then an accurate understanding of our hearts is absolutely necessary. Instead, *L&R* goes out of its way to replace the biblical teaching of our inner being with the latest worldly and faddish teaching.

13 } L&R PAINTS A DECEPTIVE VIEW OF THE GOAL OF LIFE & MARRIAGE

What are the goals of life and marriage, according to *L&R*? To get our “love tank” or “respect tank” filled. If this is thwarted, then we cannot be “happy.” This “unmet need,” asserts *L&R*, helps us understand, or even justifies, our fighting and “harsh words” because we are merely trying to get what we “desperately need”—those *feelings* of love or respect. Who can blame us for doing whatever it takes to get our deepest needs met, right? Of course, the biblical goal is not happiness, but holiness. Scripture is clear that we do not fight or commit adultery because of an empty love or respect tank. We sin because of our sinful nature,³⁸ because of the sinful and selfish desires of our hearts.³⁹

14 } L&R ENCOURAGES A “GIVE-TO-GET” APPROACH TO MARRIAGE

Despite the denials of many *L&R* supporters, the author makes repeated rationalizations that stress this “rule” of **giving-to-get**. While such an idea is common among “needologists,” psychologists, life-coaches, and the world, it is antithetical to God, His Word, and, ironically, to true love and respect. “Giving” in order to get something is manipulation. Compare the following *L&R* give-to-get teachings with Acts 20:35, Luke 14:12-14, and Matthew 6:1 (and following).

- **This book is about how the wife can fulfill her need to be loved by giving her husband what he needs—respect.**⁴⁰
- **The key to creating fond feelings of love in a husband toward his wife is through showing him unconditional respect.**⁴¹
- **But when you authentically meet her emotional needs, she’ll be empathetic to your sexual needs.**⁴²
- **I am convinced that the key to motivating another person is meeting his or her deepest need.**⁴³

³⁵ *Love & Respect*, page 81

³⁶ Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10ff; Ecclesiastes 9:3

³⁷ Proverbs 4:23; Luke 6:45; Mark 7:21-23; 1 Peter 2:11; Galatians 5:16-17; Romans 8:5

³⁸ Mark 7:21-23

³⁹ see James 3:16-4:3

⁴⁰ *Love & Respect*, page 1

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, page 19

⁴² *Ibid.*, page 144

⁴³ *Ibid.*, page 187

- This is the key to empowerment: *You get what you want by giving him what he wants.*⁴⁴
- As she met his physical need, he reached out to meet her emotional need.⁴⁵
- The rule that never changes is: *you can't get what you need by depriving your partner of what your partner needs.*⁴⁶
- The beauty of it is, if you meet a need in your spouse, it will come back to you as your spouse meets one of your needs.⁴⁷

15 } L&R EMPHASIZES BEHAVIOR CHANGE OVER HEART CHANGE

L&R offers no teaching to change our hearts. Rather, it tells us only to change our behavior (really, *others'* behavior), our *feelings*, and what we are *getting*.

Our hearts are the equivalent to our relationships with God. The condition of our hearts is essentially the same as the state of our relationship with God. This is why *sanctification* is emphasized throughout Scripture. If our hearts are the problem, *and they are* (i.e., the flesh battling the Spirit), then we should zero in on understanding and transforming our hearts to make them more like His.⁴⁸ In spite of this clear teaching from Scripture, *L&R* merely attempts to modify our outer behavior (Pharisee-ism), so *that* we can get others to fill our love tank and, subsequently, provide us with more desirable *feelings*.

16 } L&R OVER-EMPHASIZES FEELINGS

L&R's grand and over-arching emphasis is that we *absolutely* “need *feelings* of love” (or respect).

We're here to discuss the way things are—the way men and women feel in their souls.⁴⁹

It is, in fact, according to *L&R*, our “one-driving need.” Although such an assertion fits in perfectly with postmodernism, daytime TV experts like Dr. Phil or Oprah, and our flesh—and while feelings do have an important place in relationships and life—they are dwarfed by many other more valuable realities. Also, “feeling” loved does not always equate with being loved.⁵⁰ But, in the unbiblical world of *L&R*, *feeling* love even supersedes *being* loved. If we live as if *feeling* love *is* love—or that the pain and undesirable feelings that often come from love *is not* love—then we will have an unnecessarily hard life and needlessly difficult relationships. Not to mention that we will miss out on genuine love. And, by the way, obtaining enough of these desired feelings is impossible; *it is never, ever enough*, as even the author of *L&R* himself admits. “Be aware,” he warns, “a woman’s need to feel you understand is insatiable.”⁵¹

Living for feelings is a living hell. So, in actuality, setting marriages up to fixate and depend on feelings will give them a short burst of “happiness” in the short term, but will produce the long term effect of destruction and despair that will be exceedingly difficult to break. This is yet another way *L&R* is subtly deceptive (i.e., “it works”—according to the temporary “feelings” standard, but fails by the biblical standard).

⁴⁴ *Love & Respect*, page 221, *emphasis in the original*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, page 250

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, page 253, *emphasis in the original*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, page 261

⁴⁸ Romans 8:28-29; 12:1-3; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 1 Peter 3:15

⁴⁹ *Love & Respect*, page 190

⁵⁰ e.g., Psalm 119:75; Hebrews 12; Nehemiah 9

⁵¹ *Love & Respect*, page 153

17 } L&R TEACHES A WORLDLY & ANTI-BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF CONFLICT

For a book that attempts to deal with conflict so much, it not only falls far short, it misleads and misdirects the reader from the necessary biblical insight into this quintessential understanding for marriage and life. *L&R* teaches conflict as if it were merely horizontal—with *temporary* goals—while going to great lengths to avoid the more determinative *inner* and *vertical* dimensions⁵² to conflict. When it does teach on the “inner” part, *L&R* perverts and trivializes this utmost reality to whether or not we have sufficiently “filled our love tank with feelings of love” so that we can be “happy.” Let’s compare God’s view of conflict with *L&R*’s:

***L&R*: I believe he is laying out one of the great principles of the New Testament: because you have equal but different needs, you will experience conflict.**⁵³

***God*: For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice...What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.**⁵⁴

Notice the horizontally limited view of conflict from *L&R* (as opposed to God’s horizontal, vertical, and inner dimensions) and the Maslow-ian view of the source of conflict (the “why” of conflict; “different needs”) and, therefore, the wrong solutions that spring from such an anti-biblical understanding and teaching. Also, one of the primary and practical biblical teachings and responsibilities in conflict is “speaking the truth in love.”⁵⁵ Yet, anyone who has done this knows that speaking the truth, albeit in love, rarely, if ever, fills the other person’s “tank” with warm and fuzzy feelings of love or respect.

18 } L&R EMPHASIZES THE HORIZONTAL DIMENSION

Any book that does not emphasize the vertical dimension *first and foremost*—not to mention the inner dimension (i.e., the Spirit/flesh dynamic)—will inevitably contain profuse and egregious errors. *L&R* is no different. Of course, *L&R* does mention God, but this turns out to be misleading, at best, because the bulk of the book is aimed at “me” and how I can get my needs met by others, all for the fleeting feelings of happiness. By giving lip service to the vertical, and by tickling ears with a worldly feel-good inner dimension (i.e., love tanks), *L&R* successfully seduces many believers—to our shame.

19 } L&R ENCOURAGES PUTTING HOPE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF PEOPLE

The respect/love tank view of people leads to a fixation on others and, most importantly, how they are *performing* according to what we believe we need (“How are others treating me? How well are you filling my tank? You’re not giving me what I need...you need to change!”). It fulfills the goal of our flesh by effectively drawing our dependency away from God and increasing our dependency on the performance of sinful beings.⁵⁶ Putting too much hope in the “creation” rather than the “Creator” is nothing less than *idolatry*. How does Jeremiah 17:5-8 fit with the *L&R* view?

⁵² See James 4:1-3

⁵³ *Love & Respect*, page 158

⁵⁴ James 3:16; 4:1-2

⁵⁵ Ephesians 4:15

⁵⁶ Jeremiah 2:13

20 } L&R DISCOURAGES RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility equals hope. The unavoidable fruit of the “love tank” view of life is a *lack of individual responsibility*. It’s merely my love tank’s fault—“You were stepping on my air hose (which leads to my respect tank), that’s why I hurt you.” “If you had met my needs I wouldn’t have _____.” “You can’t blame me, I was just trying to meet my need for _____.” “I didn’t commit adultery...I prefer to say that I was merely seeking love outside of marriage because YOU weren’t meeting my needs!” The love tank teaching is beyond destructive to marriages, individual spiritual growth, and the kingdom of God as a whole.

Everything in *L&R* revolves around “meeting needs” (which are not true needs) and filling the all-important love or respect “tank.” Without responsibility, however, *there is no hope*. And, as a result, there is little “need” for our true needs like confession, repentance, and forgiveness. Author Os Guinness points out that pseudo-needs (like those put forth in *L&R*) rob us of the satisfaction of our true needs:

The other problem with the modern use of need is that, endlessly engineered and marketed, an obsession with need results in consumer indifference to *specific, genuine, real* needs. People skilled in learning to need the needs that the professional elites identify become deaf to their own true needs—their needs as God, not the world, defines them.⁵⁷

21 } L&R FORCES RELATIVE TRUTHS & FALSEHOODS INTO ABSOLUTE TRUTHS

Another perversion of truth and subtle undermining of responsibility is frequented throughout *L&R* along the lines of absolutizing a relative truth, such as, “All women/men are *wired* to...” (i.e., we can’t really help it. God made us this way.) Logically, then, our actions in these scenarios are *God’s responsibility*, not ours. Not only is this absurd, but, yet again, it cheats us out of fulfilling our true needs for confession, repentance, forgiveness, and even reconciliation.

22 } L&R OFFERS MISUNDERSTANDING & MISINFORMATION ABOUT LOVE & RESPECT

In yet another stunning irony, the book entitled “*Love & Respect*” is vacuous, if not aggressively errant, concerning these central ideas for relationships. One would think that any book *based* on these two vital realities would go into great depth defining and explaining these specific concepts. Yet, not only does *L&R* fail to give us accurate biblical understanding, what it puts forth are the Rogerian⁵⁸ and trendy misconceptions of both love and respect.

“Yes,” some will say, “but it *works*.” Frankly, the, “It works, so it must be okay,” response is the fallback position of those who cannot defend the errors in any book or belief system. Does Mormonism, atheism, Eastern meditation, Islam, Christianity, psychology, or Catholicism work? It all depends on what your individual *standard* is. Can hundreds of millions of Buddhists be wrong? Would Satanists tell you that Satanism “works”? Yes, of course—based on *their* standard. But does Satanism “work” according to the Bible? Of course not. (Although it does, like every effective lie, contain some truths.) *L&R* does “work,” just like humanism, socialism, Hinduism, Scientology, and Pharisee-ism, etc., “work.” We may see an outward and temporary improvement (e.g., in the “feelings” realm or in “getting” more because you are giving more), but this is ultimately *deceptive* and *destructive*. The followers of this errant ideology are convinced that they have solved the problem, so *now they see no need to address the real problem*.

Having a serious problem is not the worst thing in life. Rather, the worst place to be is in a grave situation, while erroneously believing that the problem has been resolved. This is where many *L&R* readers end up—in the worst place to be. Remember that Satan’s preference is to have people *happy* and deceived, rather than hurting and deceived. There is then no motivation to change.

⁵⁷ *Dining with the Devil*, Os Guinness, page 67, *emphasis in the original*

⁵⁸ Carl Rogers: leading psychologist, father of concepts such as “unconditional regard” and the basic goodness of mankind

If Mr. and Mrs. Smith have a poor relationship and adopt, for example, the “give-to-get” principle then, yes, this “giving” will *seem* to improve their dire situation. Is that a success? Absolutely not. They are actually worse off. Now they have little or no motivation to go after what God is trying to change—their hearts.

The true condition of our hearts is usually revealed best in marriage and conflict. Yet, instead of dealing with the real problems of the heart, *L&R* perverts the sin, selfishness, and weaknesses of our hearts into “not getting the feelings you want” or “not getting your love tank filled.” What could be further from the truth? As a result, and just like unaddressed cancer, problems can only get worse.⁵⁹

Our standard, as Christians, should always be the Bible. If something violates or conflicts with God's clear and precise design (Scripture), then it is not just “wrong,” it does not truly “work,” no matter how good it makes someone feel (temporarily) or how it improves someone's behavior (temporarily). In reality, Mr. and Mrs. Smith will be increasingly blinded to the actual problems in their lives and relationships. They will most likely feel better for awhile but, over time, they will grow away from the truth and reality of their greatest problems and, therefore, the *solutions*. This is the basic fruit of *L&R* and other books like it. If we are resting on the it-works-so-it-must-be-true fallacy, then we have opened ourselves, and most likely others, up to deception and destruction.

The greatest tragedy in all of this, however, may not be the damage done to *L&R*'s readers, but that so few Christian leaders have noticed the gross falsehoods in this book, or cared enough to speak out against such a popular, yet destructive, book. This failure exposes the even greater weaknesses and dangers present in the church today: the dearth of discernment, the cavalier attitude toward truth and God's Word, and the fear of speaking out against falsehood and false teachers.

Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them...Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, *you will save both yourself and your hearers.*⁶⁰

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can *encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it...*They must be silenced, because *they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach...*Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that *they will be sound in the faith.*⁶¹

Have *nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.*⁶²

For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, *you put up with it easily enough.*⁶³

⁵⁹ e.g., Pharisees; Mark 7:1-13

⁶⁰ 1 Timothy 4:15-16

⁶¹ Titus 1:9, 11, 13

⁶² Ephesians 5:11

⁶³ 2 Corinthians 11:4