

SS, Marriage, M&F, Husbands' Responsibilities 4/9/23

IT IS THE HUSBAND'S RESPONSIBILITY TO LOVE HIS WIFE AS CHRIST HAS LOVED HIS BRIDE, THE CHURCH

Eph. 5:1-2 Therefore **be imitators of God**, as beloved children. ² **And walk in love**, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Eph. 5:22-33 *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.* ²³ *For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.* ²⁴ *Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,* ²⁶ *that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,* ²⁷ *so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.* ²⁸ ***In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.*** ²⁹ *For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,* ³⁰ *because we are members of his body.* ³¹ *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”* ³² *This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.* ³³ ***However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.***

Col. 3:18-19 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ **Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.**

1Th 3:12-13 ...and may the Lord **make you increase and abound in love for one another** and for all, as we do for you, ¹³ so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

APPLICATION QUESTION: Over the last six months, is it evident, husbands that your love for your wife has increased and abounded? The one thing, above all, that Christ calls each husband to do, in relation to his wife, is to LOVE her. Have you done that one thing WELL? Are you growing in the practice of that ONE THING? Are you praying regularly for such growth? Are you deliberately pursuing such growth? As we anticipate coming to the Lord's Table later this morning, these are warranted questions to ask ourselves, men.

[Acknowledge Stuart Scott's book, The Exemplary Husband: A Biblical Perspective. It's over 300 pages long, with 21 chapters. One section, "A Husband's Responsibilities" takes up six chapters, one of which is, "LOVE".]

I. **WHAT BIBLICAL LOVE IS NOT**

1. **Biblical Love is not to be equated with Romantic Feelings and/or Sexual Desire**

Marital love involves such feelings at times (Song of Solomon). In our culture, such feelings usually predominate when choosing a spouse at a relatively young age. Such feelings should be cultivated and protected in marriage.

But romantic feelings and sexual desire are notoriously unreliable. Just as we may feel very flat in relation to Christ, we may feel likewise towards our spouse. Being tired or stressed or frustrated can easily influence such feelings.

Then again, we may become infatuated in feeling and desire in a direction that is clearly immoral. Romantic feelings and sexual desire may be an expression of

self-serving LUST. One of the great dangers of being influenced by this present age's entertainment is in being led to relate to romantic and sexual desire in a way that is self-serving. Hollywood does not help us here. The world's novels and the world's counsel does not help us here. The world's music and video does not help us here.

Living a godly life often involves *resisting our feelings* rather than giving in to them. We must discipline ourselves, seeking grace from above, to push through both the absence of feelings and the presence of feelings that are unhelpful, if not ungodly.

Biblical love is a continuous commitment to the welfare of another. Within marriage, that continuous commitment works within a framework of exclusive commitment. I have pledged to CHERISH my wife, forsaking all others. In a unique way, in a distinguishing way, I will pursue her welfare.

Such love is steadfast. It is constant. We persist in CHOOSING to love. Marital love is not a sprint but an endurance race

1Co 13:7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, **endures all things.**

Is this not the way that Jesus has loved us? Jesus Christ loves his bride CONSTANTLY, steadfastly.

Ps 117:1-2 Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! ² **For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.**

Praise the LORD!

John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, **he loved them to the end.**

2. Biblical Love is not to be Equated with a Large Sense of Needing Someone or Benefitting from Someone

It is in fact true that we need one another, as God has not designed us to live and thrive by ourselves. Even in the paradise of Eden, God said, *“It is not good for man to be alone”* (Gen. 2:18). Most people NEED a spouse, for various reasons. Most people DESIRE a spouse.

One’s sense of need, however, should not be the main reason that one seeks out or marries another person. One may feel intensely a sense of loneliness. One may feel a deep yearning to be regarded as special. One may feel a great need for affirmation and reassurance. One may think that he or she can never be happy and fulfilled without a soul mate. One may feel that an outlet for one’s sexual hunger is desperately needed.

These feelings of longing and need are not to be ignored. We must talk to our heavenly Father about these matters. But our sense of need, in itself is not LOVE. Love focuses on what another needs, not on what SELF needs. Love is much more concerned with GIVING than with GETTING. Love works at “needing” people LESS and serving people MORE.

One may feel a tremendous sense of benefitting from one’s spouse. They may have a large sense of, “I LIKE WHAT YOU DO FOR ME”. But what happens when there’s a lapse of service? What happens when one or more of those benefits is removed, perhaps by a health issue, or the pressures of parenting, or possibly a

change of attitude? Such things test whether our FOCUS is on what our spouse does for us, or is it truly about WHAT WE CAN FOR THEM.

1Co 13:4-5b Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. **It does not insist on its own way;**

NIV ...it is not self-seeking,

NKJV ...does not seek its own

II. WHAT BIBLICAL LOVE IS (AS SEEN IN CHRIST)

1. Above all, a husband's love is to be self-sacrificing.

Eph. 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church **and gave himself up for her**

Eph. 5:2 ...And walk in love, as Christ loved us **and gave himself up for us**, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd **lays down his life for the sheep.**

Gal. 2:20b And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, **who loved me and gave himself for me.**

1John 3:16 **By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us**, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION: What are some practical ways in which a husband can “give himself up for” or sacrifice himself on behalf of his wife?

- He may sacrifice certain aspects of his career (relocating; being on the road a great deal; excessive hours)
- While he cannot rightly sacrifice his duty, he can sacrifice his liberties: 1) his leisure time; 2) his hobbies; 3) his rest.
- He can sacrifice his preferences: 1) as to what gets done around the house; 2) in matters related to home, activities with children; vacation, vehicles, etc.

2. A Husband's Love is to be Unconditional

Ps. 103:10 He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

Rom. 5:6-8 For while we were still weak, at the right time **Christ died for the ungodly.** ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but **God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

This quality is especially tested when a husband finds his wife difficult to love. There may be features of her personality that he finds unattractive. Her besetting sins, for example, complaining or being irritable or easily provoked, may spill onto him more than any other person. In some cases she may diminish in or even lose affection for him. She might even become embittered towards him, resenting him for real and/or perceived wrongs.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION: What are some practical ways in which a husband should strive to love his wife well, even if she is acting like his enemy?

Luke 6:27-38 *“But I say to you who hear, **Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,** ²⁸ **bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.** ²⁹ **To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes***

away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹ And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

³² “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. ³⁵ But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. ³⁶ Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

³⁷ “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

- He can do good to her, even if she acts hatefully towards him
- He can bless her, even if she curses him
- He can pray for her, even if she abuses him
- Rather than retaliate when injured, he can willingly bear more injury and give even more than expected
- Rather than treat her as she is treating him, he can treat her as he wishes she would treat him
- He can draw motivation and joy from the reality that God gives greater rewards to those who love people that don't love them back. Even unbelievers love those who love them back. What credit is there in that?

- He can give, in confident expectation, that the Lord will give back to him much more than we deserve. In giving, we receive. *It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).*
- Rather than be overcome by evil, he can overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).
- He can humbly face, confess, and repent of ways in which his own attitudes and actions have contributed to her erosion of affection and/or bitterness.
- He can seek graciously to shepherd her soul, praying and looking for ways to encourage her in truth and righteousness.

3. A Husband's Love, Like Christ's for Us, Should Express an Unconditional Treasuring of Her

Luke 15:11-32 *And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.*

¹⁷ *"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your*

hired servants.’’²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.²¹ And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’²² But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.’²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.²⁷ And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him,²⁹ but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends.³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’³¹ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

In this well-known parable, the prodigal son proves himself very unworthy of his father’s love. He is demanding, selfish, and irreverent. He is licentious. He only thinks of returning home when he becomes utterly destitute.

Despite his unworthiness, the father not only shows kindness to his prodigal son, but, more than that, treats him extravagantly. He shows him large affection

and unconditional generosity. The self-righteous older brother resents the father's largesse.

APPLICATION QUESTION: What are some practical ways in which a husband can demonstrate to his wife that he TREASURES her (even amidst her blemishes and spots)?

- By demonstrating that she is the single most important person on earth to him.
- By demonstrating that he values her person more than what she does for him.
- By demonstrating a concern to love her in a way that truly registers with her.
- By doing things for her that go beyond the obligatory.

IT IS THE HUSBAND'S RESPONSIBILITY TO UNDERSTAND HIS WIFE AND SHOW HER HONOR

1Pe 3:7 Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

APPLICATION QUESTION: Wives, what are some of the ways that you most want to be understood and honored?

IT IS THE HUSBAND'S RESPONSIBILITY TO BE PREPARED TO INSTRUCT HIS WIFE IN THE SCRIPTURES

1Co 14:34-35 ...*the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. ³⁵ If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.*

APPLICATION QUESTION: What is the most basic way that a husband should seek to be prepared to instruct his wife in the Scriptures?

A: He should daily read and meditate upon the Word of God.

Ps 1:1-3 *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.*

IT IS THE HUSBAND'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TO HIS WIFE AND HOME

1Ti 3:4, 12 ² Therefore an overseer must be above reproach... ⁴ **He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶ ... ¹² Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, **managing their children and their own households well.****

The multiple texts calling wives to submit to their husbands recognize that God has assigned husbands headship in the home. They have been delegated authority to lead their homes. They are the one ultimately responsible for what goes on in the home.

- Husbands should lead by example
- Husbands should embrace the overall responsibility for making assessments about what is needed and making decisions about how best to address what is needed
- Husbands should seek, consider, and value input from their wives. In many things, they can defer to their wives.
- While a husband should be a Servant-Leader, he is still responsible to the leader, not essentially the follower in the home.

CONCLUSION: Jesus Christ is the Perfect Husband. He is the perfect Leader. He has taken responsibility for his bride. And he really does love his bride immensely, always having in view her best interests.