

For the Love of the Family Ministries

Missionaries to America's Forgotten Mission Field, the Family

The Husband's Biblical Role In Marriage

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Ephesians 5:21-33, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see she reverence her husband."

After many years in the ministry I am convinced that the Christian home is in very serious trouble. The lack of understanding and applying true Biblical principle in the home has created a huge disaster in the church, for the cause of Christ, and especially for the children. Through the ministry of For the Love of the Family we hear from people around the world. Through our counseling ministry I am greatly concerned about the lack of understanding and applying Biblical truth in the lives of God's people which is breaking down the home. As a Pastor we will do more marriage counseling than anything else. Maybe you are reading this article and you have just about given up on your marriage. You do not understand why you cannot change your life or your spouse will not change theirs.

The pain and agony that goes on in many Christian's lives and homes is totally unnecessary. Let me share with you as a husband and a father God has the answer for you in His Word. Many times Christian husbands are told, "Be the leader God wants you to be!" A sincere man goes forward in a service and prays for God to make Him that leader, but nothing changes. The husband lives in defeat and discouragement and asks, "Where is God, why does He not help me?" Simple answer, God has already told you from His Word how to be the leader He wants

you to be. Most Christians think that if they ask God to forgive them for a sin then that sin should go away. The reality is it won't unless you use God's Word to renew your mind and change your thinking to God's thinking about the matter. True Biblical change comes when a person changes their thinking to God's thinking from God's Word. The Bible calls it "renewing your mind", Ephesians 4:22-24. When you change your thinking to God's thinking then your behavior changes. It does not change until then.

Most Christian men would like to be the leader God wants them to be, but they do not know how. They do not know how to Biblically change their life and therefore, their home suffers greatly because of it.

Let me give you three points that the Bible says is the "Husband's Role in Marriage."

The Husband's Biblical Role in Marriage is he is to be a: 1. Learner 2. Lover 3. Leader.

In my study of the Scripture it was a great help to me as a husband and father when I learned I was to be a learner of my wife and daughters. Many husbands do not bother to learn their wives and it shows in their marriage. Did you know that being a learner is a command for the husband in the Bible? I Peter 3:7, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them (wives) according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." Did you notice "according to knowledge?" It means to learn about her, knowledge about her. The world says we cannot understand our wives and children. The Bible tells us we are commanded to know them.

Getting to know someone takes time. Let me ask you husband, how much do you know about your wife? I mean really know. Most husbands think they know about her, but in counseling I find that when couples come for marriage counseling the husband knows very little about his wife. Yet we expect God to work in our marriage when we are disobedient to the command of God in the matter of learning our wife. (See below questions to ask your wife). Learning someone means I need to study them.

As our girls were growing up one of the things I wanted them to learn was they needed to learn about the man they were going to marry. Is he lead by his emotions? How does he react under pressure? You need to learn about where he is spiritually. You need to ask questions and get solid answers. You need to learn about his heart. Do not leave things up to I presume or I suppose. You do not know what is in the heart of a person, unless you ask questions that reveal the heart.

As my daughters were growing up I took the time to take a drive with each of them individually after church on Sunday afternoon. As a busy Pastor I could have justified taking a nap or finding something else to do. However, I wanted to learn what was in their heart. My responsibility as a father is to get and keep their heart. It was a learning and revealing time to me. I asked the question, "What is God speaking to you about?" When I got the answer I then asked "what does that mean to you?" I then listened to what was on their heart. It drew us close together and helped me to encourage their focus on their intimate, personal, and passionate relationship with God.

For our family, drive time is important! Kim and I have practiced for the last 34 years of married life taking a drive on Sunday evening after church. I ask her what she thought of the

message that day. How did God speak to her, whether I was preaching or someone else was preaching? I listened to her answers about what God was speaking to her about. You see I believe it is important that I understand where God is working in her life. I want to have her heart as well and be open to building my relationship with her. We also talked about our children and where we needed to be working in their lives. I shared with her where God was speaking to my heart and life. We learned each other and are still learning each other to this day. Sometimes we would pull over and have prayer together for what we were learning and seek God's face for our children and our home, for us to be all we could be with each other and with God. It was a precious time and we still practice this each Sunday. I have to admit as each girl grew up and left home, I miss the Sunday afternoons together with them. I find myself now as they are out of the home and in their own lives serving God, taking a drive by myself and thinking about our drives together and I find myself praying for them and the way God is working in their lives now. Guess what, every now and then when they are home, one of them will say, "Dad let's take a drive!" Generally, they want to talk about something God is speaking to their heart and life about and ask for my thoughts and prayer with them on the matter.

Several years ago, I was at a church with a young pastor. He had been at the church a couple of years and it was his first and last pastorate. His church was growing and he was on fire about it. However, I noticed he treated his wife and young children shabbily. He was short and disrespectful to his wife. He asked me to come into his office. He spent the next hour bragging about his church while his wife and children were told to wait outside. When I mentioned to go ahead and take care of his wife and children's needs his disposition changed to one of impatient and intolerance. He had an angry spirit. Needless to say all the pride and arrogance soon dissolved into some ugly problems for the marriage and the church.

Failing to learn her affects your spiritual life! Did you notice in I Peter 3:7, "That your prayers be not hindered." Failing to learn your wife will affect your spiritual life. Psalm 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

So, a fundamental failure of the Christian home is the husband not learning his wife. It is a simple but deadly flaw.

2. Lover-Ephesians 5:25

Gentleman, you will never be a proper lover until you learn the needs of your wife. Love is not a feeling. In our culture we believe love is lust and sex. What is the Biblical view of love? John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

God's view of love is giving in order to meet the needs of another person. A couple of years ago we had Evangelist John Bishop at our church. John ten years earlier had contracted spinal meningitis. He woke up and did not know who he was, who his wife was and what marriage was. It touched my heart to hear the story of how his wife, Donna, gave of herself to help him. True Biblical love is giving in order to meet the needs of another person.

Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

The Christian home and marriage today is filled with pride, arrogance, anger, self will, demanding, and the all about me philosophy.

How am I to love my wife and to what degree am I to love her?

1. I John 4:19, I am to love her first.
2. Ephesians 5:25, I am to love her the most.
3. Ephesians 5:25, I am to love her sacrificially.
4. I John 3:18, I am to love her in ways that cannot be unmistakably interpreted. There should never be a time when she feels I care for anyone else.
5. Romans 5:8, I am to love her in spite of her faults.
6. Ephesians 5:28-29, I am to love her as my own body.
7. Colossians 3:19, I am to love her without bitterness.

Now husbands, I will never be the lover I should be unless I make an effort to learn her and nurture her. Learning to nurture her helps me with the command in Ephesians 6:4 concerning my children, where the Bible says, “but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

3. Leader-Matthew Chapter 20

The lack of Godly leadership and spirituality in the home is contributing greatly to the breakdown of the Christian home. One of the things I find in our counseling ministry is the men who think that leadership is being a dictator. Folks, in Matthew 20: 1-16 we have the parable of the laborers. Two things that are very importantly taught here is: 1. We do not serve for what we can get. 2. Whatever God does is fair.

An example of unselfish service is in Matthew 20: 17-19 and the example of selfish service is in Matthew 20:20-24.

Men let me share an extremely important thought with you. Seek to apply the theme of servant hood to your leadership of your home. Someone has said, “The test of your servant hood is how you respond when you are treated like one.”

You will either be a selfish leader or a servant leader. The servant leader does the following:

- He focuses on her needs. Ephesians 5:25, Philippians 2:20-21, Ephesians 6:4.
- He seeks to help others in the home be Christ like oriented. Ephesians 5:26-28, 6:4
- He sets the example of self control in the home. Philippians 4:9, Jeremiah 35:5-6
- He likes to solve problems and solves them Biblically. Ephesians 4:29-32
- He wants to be and works at being a teacher. I Timothy 2:11-12, I Timothy 3:4, 5, 12
- He lives with his wife joyfully. Proverbs 5:18
- He provides spiritual leadership. Ephesians 5:25-33

Men, have you ever given consideration as to how you could or should show love to your wife?

Let me give you some thoughts on this that I have learned that have been helpful to me:

Make her first place in your life and show it. She should be second only to your relationship to Jesus Christ. If she is not first place, she will doubt your love and become insecure.

How do you find out your wife's place in your life? Answer the following questions. What means more to you?

- 1. Your wife or your children?**
- 2. Talking with your wife or having sex with her?**
- 3. Your wants or her needs?**
- 4. Praying with your wife or praying with others?**
- 5. Helping other people or helping your wife?**
- 6. Your work or your family?**
- 7. Church activities or family needs?**

She knows when she is not cherished, nor uppermost in your affections. She also knows what you delight in more than her. The husband must understand God wants him to express his love for his wife by meeting her needs, I Peter 3:7.

Guys acknowledge and recognize her attempts to please you. Her attention to immediate details and her desire to express love to you may often motivate her to do little things for you. She needs your admiration and praise. Do not disregard, laugh at, or belittle what she does for you. Be very careful to watch for her attempts to please and then express appreciation.

One of the things I find is that men unfavorably compare their wife with other women. Don't unfavorably compare her with other women. Do not point out some ability she lacks or some appearance you prefer. In her eyes, that person pleases you more than she does.

Be the spiritual leader in your home. She longs for this. If you do not provide it or show disinterest in it, she is unable to place her full confidence in you. She may seek leadership from others. Make sure you have a personal time with the Lord. Make sure your wife and children are having a personal time with the Lord. Solve family problems Biblically. Find out from God's Word what he says about the problem you are experiencing. Then change your thinking to God's thinking on the matter. Work at sharing new spiritual insights with her that you learn from God's Word.

One of the things I have learned to do is value the opinion of my wife. She sees things in a different frame of reference or from a different perspective than I do. Let her know, "As far as possible, I will not make any decisions until we are one in spirit about that decision."

Men need to show self control and personal discipline in all areas of life. Did you marry her for satisfaction of sexual desires or to meet her needs? When you do nothing when she attempts to help you, this hurts her even more.

If you are going to change something, work at preparing her for change. She needs time for change. She needs to make the mental readjustment before that change occurs.

Be consistent with her discipline of children. Don't take sides against her. Don't defend the

children. This causes her to doubt your loyalty to her. She may think you are trying to turn the children against her. Learn to settle differences away from your children. If you differ with what she is doing with the children discuss it with her privately.

Another area I have found for both husbands and wives is do not correct each other in public. Men do not use jokes about her or cutting remarks to her in front of other people in order to emphasize some change in her you would like to have. If she makes a mistake or misquotes someone, tell her about it privately.

Speak to her in a gentle spirit. Be a gentleman and do not use harsh words. Ephesians 4:29-32. Always look for ways to communicate to her in gentleness with tact not in anger. Ungodly anger is the destroying sin of the Christian home. Be controlled by the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 5:18. There is never a place for ungodly anger in the Christian home. Ephesians 4: 31, "Let all... .wrath, and anger....be put away from you." There is no place in the Christian marriage for cussing, yelling, hitting, and screaming. Put away from you an angry spirit as well. Many men and woman speak to each other in impatient tones. This is an angry spirit. Praise her for more than her cooking and physical involvement. Praise her for qualities of character she possesses. This is not done simply, it requires thought and planning. Learn to praise your wife and work at finding things to praise.

Work at removing her fears. Discover them by asking her what they are. Listen when she talks about them. Write them out. Then write out things you can do to eliminate them.

Show creative affection to your wife. This would be outside the realm of sex. Affection without sex includes good manners, be courteous. Build security with her. Knowing she has a permanent place in your heart and affection is important to her. Be careful never to show attention to another woman in such a way as to disillusion her. Delight in fulfilling her wishes. She has little things for you to do. Little means no imposition of your time. This gives you a chance to reassure her of your love by enjoying and doing things for her and meeting her needs. Don't give her the idea her suggestions and ideas are not good and yours are better. Do things in the idea that I am doing this for you. Or we are doing this together. Seek to be friends, work at it. Kim is my best friend. I value that friendship. Show respect and kindness to each other. Love is kind, I Corinthians 13:4.

Seek to provide time for intimate conversation. Work at spending time with the children. It makes your wife happy. Give them undivided attention. Do what they want to do. Make sure this is a frequent habit.

I want to encourage you as a husband to learn your wife. This will take a little work, but will be a tremendous benefit to your marriage and home. Remember you are commanded to learn her. Take the questions below and sit down and interview your wife. Some questions to ask your wife to learn her are:

- 1. What are your 3 favorite foods, with the most favorite first?**
- 2. What are your 3 favorite kinds of meals, with the most favorite first?**
- 3. What are your 3 most favorite deserts, with the most favorite first?**
- 4. What are your 3 favorite restaurants, with the most favorite first?**
- 5. What is your favorite color?**
- 6. What is your favorite hobby? Did you have more than one?**

7. What are your 3 most favorite recreations, with the most favorite first?
8. What are your 3 favorite sources of reading, with the most favorite first?
9. What gifts do you like?
10. What is your favorite book(s) of the Bible? Why?
11. What is your favorite verses(s) of the Bible? Why?
12. What is your favorite song?
13. What makes you most fulfilled or happiest as a woman?
14. What makes you the most fulfilled or happiest as a wife?
15. What makes you most fulfilled or happiest as a mother?
16. What makes you saddest as a woman?
17. What makes you saddest as a wife?
18. What do you fear the most?
19. What do you look forward to the most?
20. How much sleep do you need?
21. What are your skills?
22. What is your spiritual gift or gifts?
23. What are your weaknesses?
24. What things (personal, home, car, etc.) need repairing?
25. With what chores and responsibilities do you like my help?
26. What caresses do you enjoy the most?
27. What caresses do you enjoy the least?
28. At what times do you need assurance of my love the most?
29. How can that love be shown?
30. What can I do that will make it easier to discuss and work on areas or problems that are uncomfortable to you?
31. What concerns do you have that I do not seem interested in?
32. What things do I do that irritate you?
33. What desires do you have that we haven't discussed?
34. What do you enjoy doing with me, with the most enjoyable first?
35. What things can I do that show my appreciation for you?
36. What varying desires (spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, social, worth, appreciation, recreational, security etc.) would you like me to provide?
37. In what ways would you like me to protect you (physically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally)?
38. In what ways would you like me to sacrifice for you?
39. What things are first in my life? As you look at me, what do you see? What is your perception of me?
40. What implied or unspoken desires and wishes of yours would you like for me to fulfill?
41. What concerns and interests of yours would you like me to support?
42. How much time would be good for us to spend together each day?
43. In helping family members to use their skills and develop their abilities, what motivating factors would be helpful for me to use?
44. What can I do that provides the greatest comfort and encouragement for you when you are hurt, fearful, anxious, or worried?
45. What personal habits do I have that you would like changed?
46. What ways demonstrate to you that you are a very important person who is important or more important than I am?

Men, after reading these questions, did I leave anything out you need to ask to learn your wife? Write them down and ask the question. The important thing here is to learn and to communicate. Pray for God's wisdom and remember a good marriage just doesn't happen it is worked at.

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