

19. Love her how much???

February 10, 2013

Ladies, it is the time to let the male side rules be known. I am listing only a handful of our rules:

*Please note that these are all numbered "1" ON PURPOSE!

1. Shopping is NOT a sport. And no, we are never going to think of it that way .
1. Tell us what you want. Let us be clear on this one: Subtle hints do not work! Strong hints do not work! Obvious hints do not work! Just say it!
1. Anything we said 6 months ago is inadmissible in an argument. In fact, all comments become null and void after 7 days.
1. Whenever possible, please say whatever you have to say during TV commercials.
1. Christopher Columbus did not need no stinky directions and neither do we.
1. If we ask what is wrong and you say "nothing," we will act like nothing is wrong. We know you are lying, but it is just not worth the hassle.
1. When we have to go somewhere, absolutely anything you wear is fine... Really!
1. You have enough clothes and too many shoes and too many purses.
1. We are in shape. Round is a shape.
1. Thank you for listening to this: Yes, we know, we have to sleep on the couch tonight, but did you know men really don't mind that, it's like camping.

All the guys say, "Amen" and all the ladies say, "Boo."

In all seriousness, the verses that we are going to study in chapter 5 of the Book of Ephesians are far more demanding than what we learned about the things the wife is supposed to do last Sunday. In other words, the husband has more responsibilities and accountabilities to the Lord as I mentioned last time.

Actually, Paul went beyond presenting Christ as our example to follow . He intertwined human husband's role with Christ's role to His church.

We need to understand the intention of the Lord for marriage. Marriage is not merely a convenience to overcome loneliness or an arrangement to populate the race. First and foremost, marriage is a mirror of the divine -human relationship. Every marriage is meant to represent God: His perfect relationship with Himself – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as well as His relationship with His people. In other words, we can reveal God by the way we love our spouses.

Think of it, ladies and gentlemen, marriage, despite all the faults of its two very human partners, is a human object lesson of the divine relationship between Christ and believers.

A. AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Did you notice that the Lord didn't command wives to love their husbands in v22? Because women are already wired that way from the Lord. It is the husbands who need to love their wives.

The word 'love' here in Greek is "agapao" which is the highest level of love there is. It is unconditional love; it is unselfish love; it is self-sacrificing love for others. It is the love that is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Loving like Christ also means forgiving. A Christlike husband will embrace grace rather than hold grudges, extend compassion rather than belittle her with shame, and accept and value his wife for who she is rather than demand the unrealistic standard of perfection. You must know that your wife is not perfect, after all she chose to marry you, didn't she?

Christ our Lord wants all the husbands to love their wives with this love that seeks the highest good of the other, even at the price of one's own good as Jesus did for us.

I can hear some husbands say, "That is not possible. I cannot be like Christ, because I am a mere man." Yes, we all are. But I am gonna let you in a secret. You submit yourself to the Lord and His Word by being obedient to Him and being in love with Him by the power of the Holy Spirit first, guess what, your love for the Lord will overflow to your wife. You will love your wife like never before.

You see, God didn't make Eve out of Adam's head, so that she could rule over him; He didn't make her out of his feet, so that he could trample over her; God created the woman out of the man's rib from his side under his arm, so that he can protect her; close to his heart, so that she can be loved by him. Your wife is not your maid, rather the help mate and soul mate for your life.

B. SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER WITH THE WORD

Ephesians 5:26-27 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

The husband's love will also be a sanctifying love. The word 'sanctify' means "to set apart." From the wedding ceremony, the husband is set apart to belong to the wife, and the wife is set apart to belong to the husband. Any interference with this God-given arrangement is sin. Today, Christ is cleansing His church through the ministry of His Word. The love of the husband for his wife ought to be cleansing her so that both are becoming more like Christ.

Unfortunately, it is not unusual for Christian wives to be more spiritual than their husbands. I see many husbands show up at the church, not because they are hungry for the Word of God, or want to know more about their Savior Lord Jesus Christ, rather they come to appease their wives. That is NOT what the priest of your family is supposed to do.

Husbands, you cannot sanctify and cleanse your wife unless you yourself first sanctify and cleanse yourself with the Word.

C. LOVE YOUR WIFE AS YOURSELF

Ephesians 5:28-29 So husbands ought to love their own 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 the Lord does the church.

I believe one of the primary reasons why marriages are falling apart at such an alarming rate is because husbands are failing to fulfill their scriptural duties to their wives. If we concentrate on loving our wives just as Christ loved the church, God will transform our marriages.

As a result, He will then transform our families, our churches, and yes, even our country. The breakdown of the family is why our country is in this horrible state that it is in. Someone once said the family can survive without a nation, but a nation cannot survive without the family. We have children today who are being raised with no values and no consciences because their families are weak. We need the family to be strengthened again.

The transformation of the family and then our country depends on you, husbands. You can't solve all of America's problems, but you can start by doing what God has called you to do.

Even the physical relationship of husband and wife should be so controlled by God that it becomes a means of spiritual enrichment as well as personal enjoyment. The husband is not to "use" his wife for his own pleasure, but rather is to show the kind of love that is mutually rewarding and sanctifying. The marriage experience is one of constant growth when Christ is the Lord of the home. Love always fulfills and enriches, while selfishness does just the opposite.

D. LEAVE AND CLEAVE

Ephesians 5:30-32 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Adam and Eve had it made in the Garden of Eden. Eve didn't have to listen to Adam bragging about his mom's cooking and Adam didn't have to hear about Eve's ex-boy friend.

Adam had to give part of himself in order to get a bride, but Christ gave all of Himself to purchase His bride at the cross. God opened Adam's side, but sinful men pierced Christ's side. So united are a husband and wife that they are "one flesh." Their union is even closer than that of parents and children. The believer's union with Christ is even closer and, unlike human marriage, will last for all eternity.

E. MORE TO THINK ABOUT

Apostle Peter also echoes what apostle Paul speaks about marriage in his first epistle.

1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, likewise, (1) dwell with them (2) with understanding, (3) giving honor to the wife, (4) as to the weaker vessel, and (5) as being heirs together of the grace of life, that (6) your prayers may not be hindered.

There are five commands and one warning from God to us within v7:

1) Dwell with them

A godly husband abides with his wife. He doesn't merely share a house with her, he truly shares lives with her.

2) With understanding

A godly husband has undertaken the formidable task of understanding his wife. By knowing her well, he is able to demonstrate his love for her far more effectively.

3) Giving honor to your wife

A godly husband knows how to make his wife feel honored. Though she submits to him, he takes care that she does not feel like she is an employee or a slave under a task master.

4) As to the weaker vessel

Unless your wife is a biker chic or can bench press 200 lbs. or more, generally she is weaker than you. But the word 'weaker' has a meaning of 'fragile'. You don't toss around a fragile and a precious Ming Dynasty china like a basketball, you cherish it. Like that, a godly husband recognizes whatever limitations his wife has physically, and does not expect more from her than what is appropriate and cherish her.

5) As being heirs together of the grace of life

A godly husband realizes that his spouse is not only his wife, but his sister in Christ. Part of their inheritance in the Lord is only realized in their common bond. Heirs together "reminds husbands that even though they have been given great authority within marriage, their wives are still equal to them in spiritual privilege and eternal importance. They are 'Joint Heirs.'"

6) A warning from God – Your prayers may not be hindered

The failure to be a godly husband has spiritual consequences. It can and will hinder prayer. The word 'hindered' is "ekkopto" in Greek which means "to cut out, cut off." We also see this word used in Matthew.

Matt. 5:30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

That means literally God cuts off your prayer line to Him, so that He doesn't listen to you.

F. APPLICATIONS

1) Be the priest of your family.

Trash your lame excuses for not being the priest of your family. Whether you like it or not, as Christian husband of your wife and father of your children, you are the priest of your family by God's order. Now start to be one. Get into the Word of God daily and ask the Lord to show you and teach you and help you live by it.

2) Love your wife first and make all other earthly relationships – your children, your work, your favorite sports, your hobby, your newspaper, etc. secondary.

3) Your love for your wife should not be conditional, rather unconditional without any expectation from her.

When Christ gave Himself for His bride, the church, He didn't expect us to love Him back. He did it because He loved us so much that He gave Himself up for us. 50-50 marriage relationship is straight from satan to destroy marriage. You give 100 to her and expect nothing. Just do it.

4) Don't try to be a fixer for everything.

By nature, men are fixers, are we not? But in marriage, your wife may not want you to fix her problem that she is talking about, rather she may just want you to be there and listen to her thoughts as she expresses them to you. This leads to the next application.

5) Be a good listener with your full attention.

Can you turn away from your favorite football team's play off game on TV that is at the fourth quarter, 5 seconds left with four points behind, third down five yards away from the goal line to give full attention to your wife for her 'not -so-important' chat? That chat may not be important in your priority, but it is to her.

In many cases, your wife feels that you are with her physically, but you are NOT with her emotionally, because when she talks to you, your mind and attention is half way around the world, or even at the other side of the universe. Next time when she starts to talk to you, stop whatever you are doing and give her your full attention – looking at her eyes and really listening. Let her know that what she says is more important than anything in the world with the exception of God. That will make her feel very special. That's better than any gift you can give her.