

# 11. The rules of engagement of godly living – Part 4

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Once upon a time, there was a woman married to a very annoying man. He would complain about everything. One day he went to the creek with his mule. He harassed the mule so much that it got annoyed and kicked him to death. At the funeral, when all the men walked by the wife she nodded her head yes and every time the women walked by she shook her head no.

Later the minister asked, "Why are you nodding your head yes for men and no for women?" Her response was, "The men would say how sorry they felt for me and I was saying, "Yes, I'll be alright." When the women walked by, they were asking if the mule was for sale..."

Last Sunday we studied what a godly wife is supposed to do in her marriage and how she should treat her husband. This morning we are going to learn what a godly husband should do and how to treat his wife according to the Lord's way.

## A. WHAT HUSBANDS SHOULD DO

*Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.*

Though wives are to submit to their husbands, it never excuses husbands acting as tyrants over their wives. The Greek word for 'bitter' is "pikrainō." The definition is quite clear: "to embitter, exasperate." We, husbands, shouldn't make ourselves be a bitter taste in our wives' mouth. In other words, don't annoy them, guys

Instead, a husband must love his wife, and the ancient Greek word translated 'love' is 'agape'. We all know that this word 'agape' means 'unconditional love'. The word has little to do with emotion or sex. It has everything to do with a complete commitment and self-sacrifice for the sake of another.

## B. GOING MORE IN-DEPTH

There are parallel verses for this. We can find it in Ephesians 5. 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 previously.

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.

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 the church, born-again believers.

## C. 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 is the same "agape" that 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 are mumbling, "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 on 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 helpmate and soul mate for your life.

#### **D. 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 God's Word.

## **E. 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 and practically non-existing. 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 between 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 cheapens and degrades the spouse.

## **F. 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-boyfriend.

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.

## **G. MORE TO THINK ABOUT**

The apostle Peter also echoes what the 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 5 commands and 1 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 of her that she does not feel like she is an employee or a slave under a taskmaster.

### **4) As to the weaker vessel**

Unless your wife is a rough and tough 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 his prayer. The word 'hindered' is "ekkoptō" in Greek which means "to cut out, cut off." We also see this word used in Matthew:

*Matthew 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.*

It means literally God cuts off your prayer line to Him so that He doesn't listen to you. Yikes!!!!

## **H. APPLICATIONS**

### **1) Be the priest of your family.**

Stop your lame excuses for not being the priest of your family. Whether you like it or not, as a 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. Your marriage will flourish.

**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 off your favorite football team's playoff 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 to you, 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 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.