

HUSBANDS,
LOVE YOUR WIVES

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*What the Bible Says
Concerning a Husband's Duty
Towards His Wife*

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Husbands, Love Your Wives

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*to Tisha Danae Janzen,
the wife I cherish*

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INTRODUCTION



Husbands, Love Your Wives

I'm a young man and here I am writing a book on how husbands ought to love their wives. A lot of people are questioning how a man as young as I could even begin to know what it means to love your wife. This is understandable, but let me explain my situation in a little more detail.

I have been married to my beautiful wife for almost 11 years. "Back in the day" people used to get married at the age I married much more frequently. No one would wait until they were 27 to get married in even the late 1800's and early 1900's. Not only have I been married for this

amount of time, I also have four children, with my wife pregnant with our fifth child (third son) due this fall in 2008 (We are praising Yahweh for this child!). My reason for stating all of this is that although I am still learning about what it means to be a husband to a wife (and a mother) I do have at least a little experience “under my belt.” I’m not some single guy who lives by himself trying to tell all the married people what they must do to have a wonderful marriage. I once heard of a book where the author spoke of how couples could have the best marriage on earth. I soon found out that the author was not married, and I just could not comprehend how an unmarried person could teach a married person about how to have a great marriage. Seemed odd then, seems odd now.

All husbands should be constantly learning about being a better husband. This goes for whether you’ve been married for 5 years or 50 years. I have talked to a few husbands who have been married to their wives for 50 years. This strand of man is becoming more and more difficult to find. Men nowadays “fall out of love” with their wives, and marriage vows are really not seen as vows in the sight of God and their spouse, but rather empty words which have the meaning of, “Well, I’m trying this out, and if it works for me, great, but if it doesn’t, no big deal,

I can just get a divorce and continue searching for 'Mrs. Right'."

These "50 year marriage veterans" have a lot to teach a young man like myself. I remember talking to a woman who had been married for several decades. At the time I think I had been married around 2 or 3 years. She told me, "Son, the grass is not greener on the other side. It's just better kept." These words have stayed with me since that day. I must make the effort to apply these words to my relationship with my wife. If I want her to honor me, I must love her as Scripture commands; just as Christ loves the Church.

You know what people who are married for this amount of time still say? They say that marriage is something you work at. They say that they are still learning what it means to love their spouse. I've never spoken to someone who's been married for this long who thinks they've got it all figured out. They all recognize that although they've been through a lot, they are still continuing to learn about what things like sacrifice, commitment, thick and thin, and 'till death do us part really mean. It's just like life; we never stop learning, and that means we should never stop growing.

I know some people who are set in their ways. I guess this can be a good thing to some extent,

but it can also be not so good. If I can be shown how to make my job easier then let someone show me. No sense in me continuing to do something the hard way just because that's how I've been accustomed to doing it. I've had men twice my age tell me, "Matthew, you can do it that way, but let me show you this; it will be much easier on you." It is at this point that I need to keep my mouth shut and then listen and learn. We have to recognize that we do not know everything there is to know. With age comes wisdom. With experience comes wisdom.

I have seen and do know just how much good marriages mean. Divorce is such a tragedy in people's lives. Not only does it affect the husband and wife, but it also affects the family of the two people, as well as the children, if there are any involved. I told someone just the other day that it can be illustrated by throwing a rock into a lake. The rock hits in one place, but the ripple effect extends outward. The ripple may begin at the rock, but that is not where it ends. This is how marriage problems that can lead to divorce work. A fight breaks out between spouses, and before you know it, the pride in one or both of them leads to talk about getting a divorce. This talk may not be completely understood by small children, but believe me it affects them. I have friends who as children went through seeing their

parents divorce and they tell me that it left a scar on their life. They tell me how difficult it was to watch Mom and Dad fuss and fight over things. They tell me how much it hurt to see the parents who took care of them become enemies with each other. I've been told about how hard it was to get shuffled around as a child, going from this house to that house, and trying to comprehend that Daddy loved someone other than Mommy, and that Mommy lived with someone other than Daddy.

These thoughts (among others) are why I made the decision to write this book. I'll be the first to say that I do not know everything there is to know about marriage. I don't always apply the Biblical principles of marriage in my own relationship with my wife. I'm a sinner just like all other husbands, but I want to strive to become a better husband to my wife. I want to love, take care of, and nurture my wife. I want her to know that she is the most loved woman on the planet. I have the capability of making her feel this way. I know the Biblical principles; I've tried them and they really do work! What I must do is make extra effort to apply them more than I have in the past. I need to wake up each morning and not only thank Yahweh for His blessings, and for giving me another day to praise Him and live in service to Him, I need to also approach each day

by asking myself, “What can I do today to please, love, and honor my wife?” “How can I make my marriage even better?” How often do we, as husbands, ask ourselves these questions?

Some mornings I wake up thinking along these lines, but I must confess that there are some mornings where this is the furthest thing from my mind. I have completely forgotten about caring for my wife at times, and in doing so have caused hurt feelings within her. In these times she did not feel like she did when we were in courtship or when we were married. She didn’t feel like she was the focal point of her husband. Instead, her husband was more concerned with work, sports, a book, or whatever. Something else was more pressing in my mind than the woman that I was supposed to be madly in love with. Instead of kissing her passionately before leaving for work, I just said an, “I’ll see ya’ later,” and walked out the door. “At least he could have called me honey!” she thinks.

What I would like to accomplish in this book, is give us husbands a renewed passion for loving our wives. We have to love our wife as Christ loved the Church. I know you’re probably thinking, “Yeah, I’ve heard *that* a gazillion times!” Get that attitude out of your head. The odds are if you are thinking like that, then you have only *heard* the phrase and never practiced it to see its

effects on your wife. Christ's love for the Church should be the ultimate goal in a man's relationship with his wife. I want us men to wake up each morning and make our wives fall in love with us all over again. "Give me a break," you think... but you need to at least give it a try. Do you want your wife to love you? Do you want your wife to submit to you as the spiritual leader in the family? Do you want your wife to serve you as the Church is called to serve Christ? If your answer to these questions is *no* then you need a good dose of the Holy Spirit. If your answer to these questions is *yes* then you need to learn to take the initiative in your marriage.

The husband is the head of the wife (First Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23). I hear a man roaring right now. What men do not often think of when they read passages such as these, is that if they are the head then they are the ones that need to take the first step. If you are the boss or the leader on your job, then you sometimes have to make decisions for everyone else. You are the one who has to decide where the company needs to spend this large amount of money. You are the one who has to set the example of how work should be accomplished at the work place. You want to let your employees see what it means to be a diligent worker. The best way to do this is to set the example. Work hard, do your best, go the

extra mile, do everything in a friendly manner. It's contagious; it will begin to rub off on your employees.

I'm not saying your wife is your employee; please don't get that in your mind. What I am saying is that just as a boss begins by setting the example, a husband must begin by setting the example. "Well if she would just do this!" I've heard this from many husbands; always wanting to blame the way they act on their wives. Why not quit worrying for a second about what your wife should be doing for you? Instead, concentrate on what the Bible teaches you should be doing for her. You're the head, right? Then take the first step. Be the example. I guarantee you that if you treat your wife like a Queen, she will not be able to help but treat you like a King. Sound good? What man doesn't want to be treated like a King! You can be, but it's going to take some extreme effort on your part as a husband. Here we go.



Paul's Letter To Ephesus

What in the world is Ephesus, and how in world is it going to make me love my wife! Slow down for a second, and take the time with me to go *back in time* and discover a portion of a letter written around 2,000 years ago to husbands. The author of the letter is Paul the Apostle; the recipients of the letter are the saints at Ephesus, known as the Ephesians.

I heard a story one time about an elderly man who had been married for 50 years. This man wanted to take out him and his wife's best friends for dinner. The two men decided that they would sit in the front of the car so they could talk about

the things that men liked to talk about. As he began to drive down the road he turned to his friend and remarked that there was this one particular restaurant that he was searching for, but he just couldn't think of the name of the place. After a few minutes of thinking, he turned again to his friend as asked him, "What's the name of that flower... you know the one with the green stem, thorns, and beautiful red, pink, or yellow petals? You know, the one us men like to get our wives a dozen of?" His friend responded, "Are you talking about a rose?" The man thanked his friend and turned to the back and said "Rose, honey... what's the name of that restaurant we like so much?"

Let's hope your relationship with your wife hasn't gotten that far off course. The duty of the husband is not to forget his wife's name, that's for sure. Remembering your wife's name *should* be a cinch, but I'm here to discuss much bigger things than that.

Let's start with the basics. We will get to Ephesians 5 soon, but first we must understand the meaning of the word husband. The English word husband is derived from the Old English term *husbonda*, meaning the male head of the household. This word is in turn most likely from the Old Norse word (the Norwegian language spoken from about 100 to 1500 AD) *husbondi*,

meaning “master of the house.” This is taken from two basic words: *bus*, meaning “house,” and *bondi*, meaning “householder.”

To be the master of the house doesn't mean we rule our houses with a rod of iron. A leader's best way to lead is by example. Peter wrote in his epistle (1 Peter 5:1-3) how that the elders of the Christian assemblies should not lord over the flock of God, but rather lead as examples. When Paul wanted to teach people that it was more blessed to give than to receive, he did so by giving himself. He didn't require something of someone else that he was not willing to do himself.

If we are to learn anything about what it means to be a Biblical ruler, and Biblical husband, we must go to the Bible. It is Scripture that will teach us what we need to know about this area of our lives. Scripture is given to make us complete, thoroughly furnishing us to all good works (Second Timothy 3:16-17).

You're not going to learn how to be a husband by reading non-Christian material for husbands. Such material may contain certain good points, but it will always lack because of its non-Christian (non-Biblical) worldview. The world's standards can be set by the world itself, and are thus subject to change. What was good for a husband 100 years ago may not be good for a husband in 2008, at least according to society.

This is not how it works with Yahweh. What was good 4,000 years ago for husbands is just as relevant today. What worked for Moses will work for you. Yahweh's standards are truly that good. They never fail. It is humanity that fails to apply them.

Many people may think that they can look to their earthly father for knowing how to treat their wife. I do believe that earthly fathers can set examples for their sons to follow in the area of marriage. I believe they ought to set the example, but earthly fathers do fall short – every one of them. Our earthly father is not who we should look at ultimately for our example. Our example should be the precepts written in the inspired word by our Creator. He designed us, He created Adam and then He made Eve. He knows what we as descendants of Adam should do to please our wives. He's going to give us instructions that are 100% fool-proof. While earthly fathers can lead by example, at the end of the day we must always be looking to the Bible for our guide.

Learning to be a good husband is going to take commitment and practice. Anything in life we desire to have success in takes commitment. Commitment to friends, family, jobs, a team, it doesn't matter, if we want to make progress in something, we have to commit.

I once read a short sentence in a book that stated something to the effect of, “Commitment stops indecision, but indecision stops commitment.” How true it is. Take fasting for instance – going without food for an allotted amount of time. There have been times in my life when I decided I would go on a fast but maybe halfway through the fast I would think to myself, “Well, maybe I really don’t need to fast for *quite* this long.” The problem here is that there was never a commitment made towards the fast. There have been other times in which I committed myself to a period of fasting. No matter how hungry, tired, or burdened I felt, I continued on because of my commitment.

A good husband commits himself to his wife. He doesn’t just “start the fast” he finishes it. A good husband understands that “through the fast” he is going to hit some times of discouragement and depression. He is going to feel burdened and drained, but because he is committed to his wife, he is going to press on.

Right along with commitment, comes putting things to practice. My favorite sermons of all are the ones that are practical. Don’t get me wrong, I love hearing a sermon on vitally important subjects such as Christology and Soteriology, but it always gives me a spiritual boost when I hear a message that challenges me as a Christian. I want

to hear someone say “Now Matthew, *this* is what you are going to *have* to do.”

People do not practice spiritual things for the most part. Take Bible reading for instance. All Christians should read their Bible everyday, but I would venture to say that most do not read their Bible once a month, maybe even less. Somebody is always there to say, “Well, I just can’t find the time.” Yet it seems that we find the time to work our job, do recreational things, watch television, go to the theatre, attend sporting events, get our hair cut, died, and styled, but there’s no time for Bible reading. We make no commitment to read, and therefore what follows is no practice of reading Scripture. The Bible just lays wherever it may in the home, and it may get dusted off and set on the coffee table when company comes over.

The Bible is not the only thing that can get dusty in your homes men. Just as the Bible is not going to help you out if it only sits on the shelf and never gets read, your wife is not going to follow your lead if you are not doing what you are supposed to do as a husband. I guess I take that back in one sense. She *is* going to follow your lead, but what lead are you giving her? If you’re cranky, obnoxious, self-centered, evil-eyed, sluggish, and work all the time, that’s the lead she is getting from you to follow. The result will be a

wife who is all those things multiplied by two. If you do not give her the care, attention, and love that she needs, she is not going to fulfill her role as the woman of the house. You must commit yourself to her fully, and then put into practice that commitment. Let her know that you have deep seated romantic feelings for her, show her these feelings, communicate with her, laugh with her, talk to her, hold hands with her. These are the simple things that we husbands must get back to.

Society has come a very long way it just 50 years. One of my favorite Television shows of all time is *The Andy Griffith Show*. There are certain episodes of this program that I believe I could watch 1,000 times and still laugh just as hard as I did the first time. I'm not presenting the show as being morally flawless, but one thing I often notice is how the men always make a point to open doors for the women, or even pull out the chair at the dinner table so that the woman can get into the chair with no problem at all. I'm trying to teach my sons to start doing things like this at a young age. If Andy and Barney can do it, then so can my sons.

Here I am, writing a chapter on Paul's letter to the Ephesian husbands, and instead I'm talking about the Andy Griffith show. Let me tell you, you'll learn a lot more from Paul's letter. This

letter was inspired by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of Yahweh's ordained Apostle.

Paul begins his discourse to the husband in verse 25 of chapter 5, and he begins by telling the husbands to love their wives. However, this isn't where he stops his sentence. He attaches on it a certain type of love. He says to love them as Christ loved the Church. How did Christ love the Church? The text tells us by continuing to say that He gave Himself for the Church. This deals with both the life and death of Christ, along with the victorious resurrection.

See, we as human beings are sinners. There is a reason why every single person that has ever been born has been inclined to sin and fallen short of a perfect adherence to the holy law of our Creator. Only one man ever kept the entire law of Yahweh perfectly, and that man is none other than Yahweh's unique Son, Yeshua the Christ. Yahweh's demand for His people was that to be justified or declared righteous in His sight we must obey every word that comes forth from His mouth. I know I haven't obeyed every word; I've fallen short many times. This is where the life of Christ comes into play. Yeshua lived a perfect life, never sinning one time. When we accept Him as our Savior, His righteousness gets imputed to our account.

This goes hand in hand with the death of Christ. Yeshua's death without His perfect life would have been the death of a good man, but it could not have atoned for sin. He had to first obey the law perfectly and only then could His death atone for a sinner like you and me. We may say it this way. Yeshua has a bank account with just the right amount of money to pay the bill. We do not nor will we ever. He has transferred His money into our account, so that we, that owe a debt, that are unable, can pay. But how do we pay? Not with our money, but with His money. How are we declared righteous in the Father's sight? Not by our own righteousness, but by the righteousness of Christ along with his sacrificial and substitutionary death.

In all of this, please understand that Christ does this for sinners. People that are whole do not need a doctor, only those who are sick. Christ came to call the sinners to repentance. He lived perfectly and died for people who were imperfect. Paul said it right in First Timothy 1:15 when He stated that Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom he was the chief.

When we husbands comprehend the love that Christ had for us we ought to be able to see that we should have this same type of love for our wives. *We are to give our life to our wife.* That's a lot more than just a good rhyme. If we are going to

follow Yeshua's example, then we are going to have to sacrifice for the sake of our wife. This means that we love her at all times. Yes, even the times when we do not think she deserves to be loved.

I know this is a difficult saying, but it has to be true in light of Ephesians 5:25. Those people who make up the Church do not always deserve to be loved by Christ do they? What about you? Do you think that Christ owes you His love? Of course you shouldn't. Christ loves you because the Father gave you to the Son (John 6:37-44). Your love towards your wife has to exhibit the same characteristics of Christ's love for the Church.

There are times when I do not feel like loving my wife. I might be having a bad day, maybe somebody fussed me out on the job. Whatever the case may be, loving my wife is not continuously easy. Sometimes it is, but other times it is not. Am I only called to love her when it is easy? No way! I'm called to love her just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. This means that even when she may say something sharp towards me, I'm called to love her. Even when she may slam a door in my face, I'm called to love her. Maybe she says harsh words that cut deep to the heart. Through all of this, I'm called to love her.

I'm blessed to have a beautiful, lovely wife. She is very submissive to me as her husband, but I would be fooling you (and myself) to say that we always get along. Everyone's marriage is going to experience problems. When these problems arise you better believe I don't want to love my wife. However, I've recently started either thinking in my mind or whispering to myself these words – Love her as Christ loves the Church. Sometimes I've had to grit my teeth to say them the first time, but it does help the more that I say them. Either I'm going to obey Scripture or not. Either I believe Ephesians 5:25 or not. Romans 5:8 states that while we were yet *sinners* Christ died for us. Romans 5:6 states that Christ died for the *ungodly*. Do you think your wife is a sinner? How about ungodly? Guess what? You are called to love her as Christ loved the Church.

Ephesians 5:26 goes on to state that Christ gave Himself for the Church that He might present it as being sanctified, which basically means "holy." In other words what Christ did for the Church was for the purpose of making her (the Church) set apart, holy, consecrated. This speaks volumes when applied to the literal husband and wife relationship. We men should live in such a way that our wives become more holy or sanctified. We should set an example for

them so that they will have a desire to be more of the woman Yahweh would have them to be.

Verse 26 also speaks of the washing of the water by the word. At the least, this refers to the cleansing the word (law) of Yahweh brings to a person. Our wives should see us talking, walking, and living the laws of our Father here on earth. We will cleanse her in doing so. She will begin to see a change in your life when you put something of this caliber to practice. She will become holy for the service of Yahweh.

Ephesians 5:27 in the New Living Translations states exactly, “He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.” Husbands, you need to think about this long and hard. Do you desire for your wife to be glorious? What about without fault? No spots or wrinkles? I know, I know... the both of you are eventually going to get a few spots and wrinkles in the natural, but I’m talking about a splendorous woman of Yahweh; a spiritual warrior for a wife. Proverbs 31 puts in nicely by telling us that favor is deceitful and beauty is vain but a woman that fears Yahweh, she is to be praised. If you’re like me, then you do want these things, but here’s what you must do. You must make the first move, you must act first. Christ did something *first*, so that His bride

could become something. Christ did not wait on His bride to make herself holy. He took the initiative. He is the one that made the first move. This is exciting to me even as I write. We have the perfect example in Yeshua the Savior. We are who we are as Christians, as Saints, because of what Yeshua did first – not second. A good husband will follow Yeshua's lead and not wait until his wife takes the first step. You take it; you're the man of the house right?

The Apostle moves from here into verse 28 to talk about loving your wife just as you love yourself. He says in verse 29 that no man ever hates his own body but rather nourishes and cherishes it. Men lovingly care for their bodies. I'm not speaking in the sense of some in the worldly scene today which show forth much pride and ego, but I'm simply speaking of the fact that human beings watch out for themselves. If I'm out working on my chicken pen, I'm going to take extra time not to hit my finger with my hammer. If by some chance I do hit my finger (I've hit it before) I'm going to place all my attention upon that hurting place on my body. I'm probably going to look for some type of salve and a band aid as quickly as possible.

This goes right along with the second most important commandment in the entire law of Yahweh – love your neighbor as you love

yourself. “But I’m not supposed to be in love with myself!” some may say. According to this commandment that mentality is wrong. We should love and cherish and nourish our body, and most people do. People, in general, take care of their bodies and that is what Paul is speaking of in these last few verses. Christ cares for his body (the Church) and a man should care for his body which in turn means he should care for His wife.

The New Living Translation I mentioned earlier places an interesting perspective here in the latter portion of verse 28. It states, “For a man is actually loving himself when he loves his wife.” It seems to me that this hearkens back to the Genesis account where the first woman was literally taken out of the man. We have the scene in Genesis 2:18-24 where Yahweh causes a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and out of Adam Yahweh creates Eve, the woman. Adam’s response is that she is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. This woman was originally, and even literally, a part of her husband! Therefore when Adam loved Eve, he was actually loving himself; his own flesh and bone.

When a man comes of age and joins himself to his wife, he is to join to her in an inseparable way. The two people are to become united in one purpose, mind, will, etc. This is what the Bible

speaks of when it says that the two shall become one flesh. The togetherness that existed prior to the taking of woman out of man finds itself in the intimate Christian marriage between male and female. The man leaves his current family unit (Father and Mother) and cleaves to his wife to begin another family unit.

Ephesians 5 has always been a wonderful chapter in my eyes as it pertains to the duty of the husband. I believe the same can be said for its discussion on the duty of the wife, but that's not the purpose of this book, and neither should it be your purpose if you are the husband. As a husband, you need to concentrate on following the commands and precepts of Scripture that are given to *you*. You need to be in love with the wife of your youth – deep love. Do not let that love escape. Take time out for your wife. Give her the attention she needs as a woman. Touch her, hold her, hug her, kiss her, and let her know that you love her each and every day you spend on this planet. She'll become more holy. Those wrinkles will iron right out.



Genuine Family Planning

To the world, the sound seems to go in one ear and out the other. To most 21st century church goers a concern is not really there. To people who love to have children, home school them, and nurture them looking at them as the Psalmist said “arrows in the hand of a mighty man” the words are like fingernails on a chalkboard. What words do I speak of? Two words: family planning.

Of course I’m talking about the term as it is defined today. This term covers those in the world who do not want children or who want to have as *few* children as possible and then turn

them over to someone else's care almost the moment they are born. People do not love their children. That sentence seems harsh, but love can only be defined Biblically. If parents do not express a Biblical, Covenantal love for their children, then an authentic love is not there. Parents do not consider their children as blessings from above; some would probably even say that they were a curse from below. Such talk is paramount to blasphemy, but this is the mentality of modern America.

What gets me is that parents generally blame their small children for the way they act at home or in public. They seem to be awe struck at how their little Johnny could act the way he does when they go to department store. "Why" they wonder "does my child 'pitch these fits' all the time?" All the while what they need to understand, is that from the moment the child is born, they must recognize that it is their responsibility to train up the children Yahweh has entrusted to them. As I said, many parents today do not train their children. A daycare or government school does instead. At the same time, they learn constant filth from other children who are allowed to watch just about anything on the television network. We shouldn't even allow our children to be in fellowship with unbelievers.

If the parent is not wondering what's wrong with their child, then they are usually making excuses for why they act the way they do. The most famous is "Well, she's just going through a phase," or "You know what they say about the 'terrible twos'," as if there is nothing within the realm of possibility that could make their children behave in a godly manner.

I title this chapter *family planning* for a reason. I speak of child training and behavior briefly, but nevertheless for a reason. Family planning can be a good phrase if it is used in a proper sense. I specifically speak of planning for the well being of our family, and this includes the well being of our wives. Just as we must look at our children as a blessing from above, we must also look at our wives as a blessing from above. Proverbs 18:22 teaches us that a man who finds a wife finds a good thing, and has obtained favor with Yahweh. Definitions for favor include acceptance, good will, pleasure, and delight. Think about it, when you find a wife you've found good will or pleasure with the Almighty. This is not all though, for we should read Proverbs 19:14 in conjunction with Proverbs 18:22. This verse says that houses and riches are received by a man from his father. However, a prudent wife is from Yahweh. It is Yahweh, not the man's father,

which gives man a prudent wife. Your wife is a blessing whether you know it or not.

Many of you men who just read the above paragraph either thought or said to yourself, “But my wife is not prudent.” I knew you would say this, and I’m ready to combat that statement with Scripture lest you forget entirely what we learned in chapter one. Remember, you’re to love her as Christ loved the Church. The Church is not always prudent, and the Church was certainly not prudent when Christ died for its members. Whether or not you have a prudent wife is not the issue, the issue is the love that you should have for your wife. She may not be prudent this moment, but I guarantee you, if you do what Yahweh requires of you as her husband, she’ll eventually be more prudent than you possibly ever dreamed.

Let me side step for a few moments and deal with something here since we’re talking about *genuine* family planning. Husbands should not only love their own wives, but they should also love the wife of their future son-in-law and the husband of their future daughter-in-law. We could put it another way by saying that fathers should love their daughters and their sons. I bring up this point to further combat the objection “my wife is not prudent.” This objection could be brought to nothing if the head

of the home (Father, Husband) would take ample time to teach his children to be careful who they set their eyes upon for a spouse. A child's parents should always be choosy with whom their child marries, and likewise the grown man or woman who may have been through a divorce or become widowed needs to be choosy with whom they may become remarried to.

It's a famous passage I heard a lot growing up and it says that Christians should not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers (Second Corinthians 6:14). In this passage, the Apostle borrows from a statute in the Pentateuch where Yahweh commands the Israelites not to plow with an ox and a donkey together. Agrarian Israel would plow with their animals as all people used to do even here in Georgia, my home state. Many times there would be a double yoke which could hold two animals, one on either side. Two oxen could be placed in this double yoke to give more "pulling power" to the hoe being dragged through the soil for loosening purposes. You could also place an ox in one side of the yoke and a donkey in the other side of the yoke, but it was unlawful according to Deuteronomy 22:10. A famous commentator (Albert Barnes) notes on this passage that, "The ox and the donkey being of such different size and strength, it would be cruel to the latter to yoke them together." In

other words, the donkey could not pull as hard as the ox and thus both animals would be off balance and unable to perform the job at hand. It just would not work properly, and to this Paul alludes in his second epistle to the Corinthians.

Why parents ever allow their children to get entangled with unbelievers is beyond my comprehension. I believe it is partly because of the “dating game” mentality that has become prevalent in all homes, Christian or not, in the world today. Such means that parents believe it to be okay for their daughter to be “dating” this boy and then “break up” with him and go on to the next. (What happens is that this mentality is often carried over into actual marriage. A spouse enters into marriage thinking to themselves, “Well, even if it doesn’t work out I can just get a divorce.”) This concept of dating may include holding hands with each boy or even involve much more intimate things in nature that should only occur within marriage. The Scriptural way to handle your daughter (the future wife of your son-in-law) in this situation is to allow them to be courted by a suitable young man who is seriously interested in pursuing marriage to your daughter, and who has your approval. Such a method is quite Scriptural.

This brings us to the patriarchal rule in the home. Godly men seek to honor Yahweh by

loving their wife and children, and by also seeking to genuinely plan for the well being of their family; not only their own family, but specifically the future families of their children. If we could get a long-range vision in our minds about having each of our children grow up and start God-fearing families themselves with God-fearing children, in a few generations we would have several hundred law abiding citizens in reference to the kingdom of Yahweh. Shall I say that it would be Yahweh's will being done in earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10).

Fathers need to be aware of passages as in Numbers 30:3-5. This passage teaches us that the daughter of a home does have a choice to make vows of her own, but ultimately it is her father that allows or disallows the vow to be made. Why? Because the father loves his daughter, knows what is best for his daughter, and seeks for his daughter to walk in the will of Yahweh, that's why.

Let me get really practical. Suppose a daughter is raised in a godly home, but around the age of 16 she decides that she has fallen in love with this man who has already been married a couple of times and is not living for Yahweh. This daughter is enamored by the "love" that this older young man has for her and is persuaded in her own mind that she wants to spend the rest of

her life with him. Meanwhile, the father knows this young man, knows his lifestyle, and also knows that he will be nothing but trouble for his daughter. Nevertheless, the daughter runs off and gets married without her father's permission. Is the daughter really married? Not if the father has disallowed her marriage to this man. It is the father that has the authority to take control and make the decision that she is not going to marry this hooligan. Numbers 30:5 says in part, "...if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand..." If the father annuls the "wedding vows" his daughter has taken with this man, then these vows are essentially no vows at all. Her continuing to live with this man does not constitute marriage, but rather fornication.

Other passages in Scripture teach us that the father has the authority to disallow marriage to a man that has taken his daughter's virginity. The Scriptures are Exodus 22:16-17 and Deuteronomy 22:28-29. These statutes in Yahweh's law teach us that if a man lies with a virgin woman who is not engaged to a husband he is to (1) pay the father the price (dowry) for the virgin, and (2) marry the young woman and never put her away for the rest of his life. Let me point out that point number two may not

necessarily take place. If this man is not fit for his daughter, that is, if the father knows that this man is going to give his daughter a difficult, unholy life, the father can utterly refuse his daughter's hand in marriage to the man. It is the father's choice, not the daughter's.

"Well, my daughter would never stand for that," some of you may be saying. Why is this though? Could it be that us husbands (male heads of the households) are not doing our job as husbands and fathers? Had we been diligently training our daughters from infancy that their Daddy wanted the best for them and that they were under his covering until he permitted them to marry a godly, Christian young man, the outcome of our daughter's teenage years would undoubtedly be different. Don't try to tell me they wouldn't for I've seen daughters on both ends of the spectrum. I have seen teenage girls who treat their father with the utmost respect, and much of this respect stems from the father taking the time to train his daughter up in the way that she should go. He took time for her, and now she is going to respect his decision.

What your daughter also needs to see is your honor and respect and love towards your wife. She needs to see you holding hands with her mother, and telling her mother, "I love you dearly." I know this next one is a difficult one at

times, but children need never to see their parents in a feud or argumentative conversation. Sometimes such conversations may have to exist to some degree because of problems that may arise, but it is not your place to bring the children into the picture in these issues. If your daughter instead sees the holy emotion you give to her mother, she will desire to marry a man that will give her that same holy emotion rather than an illusion of emotion.

Let me pull you back into reality here; I've probably lost some readers. I'm not saying that I'm for arranged marriages or that I would force my daughter to marry someone she did not love. My oldest daughter just turned ten years old the other day. I've already briefly talked with her about what my wife and I call her "true love." Sometimes I tease my youngest daughter who's only four, by telling her that she's my "love" but not my "true love." She replies, "Daaaaad... I know... Mommy is your true love." My oldest daughter already understands that when she "comes of age" to get married, she must have her daddy's approval. This means that if I do not believe the young man is fit to take care of my daughter then she will not be allowed to marry him. I'm not going to be unreasonable about the situation at all, but Yahweh has given me the authority to protect my little princess, and protect

I will for it is my duty as a Husband to my wife and a father to my children. My daughter knows that Daddy will be seeking what is best for her spiritually and even physically. I don't want my daughter to marry a drunkard or a wife-beater or an adulterer. I realize I cannot see into a man's soul and make perfect judgment on any of these matters, but I can do my best to, over a period of time, watch fruit in the young man's life. I can tell if he is a wolf in sheep's clothing or if he a sheep inside and out.

I say all of this in response to those married men who may say that their wife is not very prudent. For these men you must still continue to perform your duty as a husband. For those who are unmarried, take extra effort to look for a spouse who you will be able to spend the rest of your life serving Yahweh with. Women, a man may be able to "whisper sweet nothings in your ear," but that doesn't mean he is going to be the man of Yahweh he needs to be two years after you're married to him. Men, just because a woman may be beautiful to your eyes doesn't mean she is going to be fearful of Yahweh's ways as long as you both shall live. I say to parents, love your children enough to take time out to train them and teach them. Take them out of the government school system and bring them home to their father's house where they belong. Take

seriously Yahweh's command to teach the three principles of Deuteronomy 6 to your children. Teach them who Yahweh is, what Yahweh has done for them, and what Yahweh requires. Take time to talk to them, and as they get older don't be afraid to discuss the serious issues with them such as drugs, alcohol, sex, etc. When they grow older they will look to you for guidance in the area of choosing a husband or wife.

Let me just end by speaking to you married men. After all, this book is titled "Husbands, Love Your Wives" so it is fitting that I end the chapter with an admonition to husbands. Men, the answer to a wife who is not prudent is not divorce; it is not separation, it is not seeing what other kind of "fish" there are in the sea. The answer is for you to begin to love her as Christ loved the Church. Don't wait until tomorrow to do this, start today. When I generally talk to men who complain about the way their wife treats them, I ask them if they have *really* and *truly* loved her as Christ loves the Church. The first response I get is either a rolling of the eyes or a facial expression that is so disgusted they just can't stand it. But really, this *is* the answer. Try with all your might to do exactly what we discussed in Ephesians five. Plan for greatness for your wife, and plan for her to be holy and without blemish.



A Husband's Physical Duties

When I was a child growing up in the home of my parents, I had one sister and no brothers. As with all young girls my sister liked Cinderella and I must confess I didn't mind watching the movie or even reading the book. One of the lines I remember in the movie is where the stepmother of Cinderella (along with those dreadful stepsisters) would tell Cinderella, "Wash the dishes, scrub the floor, and see who's knocking at the door!" I wonder how many husbands have borrowed that line for their wives since that movie was produced. I'm sure for the wives of such husbands the phrase is not one accepted with graciousness.

We all have physical duties to perform in the life that we live. I know that when I was young, my mother would have me do things like take out the trash, vacuum, and sometimes even clean the bathroom. I'm certainly glad I had parents that gave me responsibility. It built character within me. Not only would my parents give me these chores to complete, but they would also teach me to do them to the best of my ability. I remember my dad once quoting to me a passage from the book of Colossians. It was Colossians 3:23 which states, "Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord and not for men." So, if I took out the trash, I was supposed to do it as unto the Lord and not just as unto my parents. Now, when I'm on my job as an adult, I recognize that when I'm acting in service to a customer, I'm not only working as unto the customer, but I'm also working as unto the Lord. This can get cumbersome at times, but it is nevertheless the Scriptural way of doing things. I don't always *want* to "give it my best" but Colossians 3:23 demands this of me as a Christian. I have to constantly tell myself, would I do it this way if I were doing it unto the Lord?

I recently was asked by my neighbor to do a little tractor work for him. His dog was continuously shredding and strewing his landscape paper in the front of his house where

his decorative bushes and shrubs were located. He had a load of gravel hauled to his house and asked me if I would be willing to take my small machine and dispense the gravel in the allotted area(s) for the ornamental garden. I told him I would, and when I got around to it - *man* was it ever hot outside. I could have just strewn that gravel any "which-a-way" for all I cared, but the thought hit me, "As unto the Lord, Matthew... as unto the Lord." I'll have to be honest with you, the moment that thought hit me my flesh did not want to receive it, but I had to receive it because it was Scripture! What did I do? Gladly, I did the best that I could to place the gravel in the places it should go, making sure it was spread evenly and that it looked nice when finished. In the end, my neighbor was pleased, but most importantly I know Yahweh was pleased.

Do you know that the same goes for our physical duties towards our wife? "You mean I have duties unto my wife?!" Yes you do, and you are supposed to be doing them with joy and not with grief, and like all physical duties performed by Christians you are to do them as unto the Lord. You are to do them with all of your might and strength, to the best of your human capability so that Yahweh (and the beautiful wife whom Yahweh has blessed you with) will be pleased.

Exodus 21:10 mentions three primary areas of the physical duty of the husband toward the wife, and it is to these three areas we will now turn.

When a man takes a wife, the law of Yahweh requires that he provide her with food, clothing, and marital rights – three physical areas of importance. And rest assured this doesn't mean you allow her to buy TV dinners, wear sackcloth, and to top it off you give her command over the DVD player and the remote control. If you're thinking this is the primary imperative of Exodus 21:10 then you are *way* off base. Let me explain.

Let's start with the first physical duty, the provision of food. This means that you are to provide your wife with sustenance or nourishment. If you do not provide anything for her to cook, then surely she will not be able to do any cooking for you. So if you like biscuits and tomato gravy (like me) you are the one who must provide the flour, tomatoes, and whatever else you like to go with the meal. I'm being humorous, but hopefully I'm making my point. The man is to be the one who *provides* for his wife materially, not the other way around. The wife is the keeper of the home; it is the male figure in the marriage that makes sure the needs of the home, such as sustenance and food are supplied.

In modern America, it is more complex, backwards, or different. Sometimes you have

what is called a “stay-at-home-dad” and this is just not the design of our heavenly Father. The woman goes off to work in a high-rise building in the city while the man stays at home and watches over the affairs of the house. Yahweh never intended the roles for marriage to work in this manner. This places the woman as the supplier of the food (etc.) and the man in the role of the one who *accepts* the supply rather than the one who *earns* the supply.

This book is not intended as an instruction manual for women, but I do need to address women who may receive a copy of this book. Please understand me, I do not write the above paragraph to degrade a woman's place and/or role in marriage. The woman's role is quite a prestigious one in the Biblical view. She has the responsibility of keeping the home and taking care of her children. Yahweh has instilled such a nature with the female gender. It is something that men are just not built to do. No matter how hard I try, I cannot keep a house like my wife. She is better than me by leaps and bounds in this area. This is because she was given this role as a gift.

Paul (the Apostle) speaks of this role in the book of Titus chapter two. He states here that the older women are to teach the younger women, “...to love their husbands and children,

to be sensible, pure, good homemakers, and submissive to their husbands, so that God's message will not be slandered." I only want to center in on the words "good homemakers" because as I said, I only mention women here to explain to them that I do not look upon them as being less of a person because they keep the home. Goodness gracious, I'm married to one and I love it!

The Greek word here for homemakers is the word *oikouros* and is defined by various Greek lexicons as a (1) stayer at home, (2) domestically inclined, (3) caring for the house, (4) working at home, and (5) taking care of household affairs. This is where the woman is required to be, according to Scripture. I'm sure glad they are because I would make a mess of it as a man.

This place of a woman is a precious place. I remember once talking to a friend of mine who has a wonderful wife and eight wonderful children. He was telling me, if I recall correctly, about these certain curtains his wife wanted to put up in their home. She came to him asking if he liked the curtains and he was telling me that without hesitation he said yes. He explained that he already knew she liked the curtains and continued by telling me that either we as men are going to let our wives be the keepers of the home or not. In other words, he left that decision up to

her. I try to do the same for my wife. If my wife likes really likes a particular set of dishes I want her to have them, but I'm getting a little ahead of myself.

Yahweh has instilled within man the ability and strength to be the provider. The man was given the job of tilling the ground and sweating in the face in Genesis 3. We are the ones who should be laboring for the physical provisions for our wife and children, we should never demand for our wife to do what Yahweh requires us to do. That's like "passing the buck" to someone it doesn't belong to. That's like your mother telling you to clean your room and you secretly ask your younger sister to clean your room for a quarter. You should not ask others to do something Yahweh has commanded you - personally - to do.

After food we come to clothing, and this brings me back to what I was saying about the curtains and the dishes. I know these items are not clothes that your wife is going to wear, but the point of the text mentioning clothing is that you need to make your wife comfortable in her appearance as well as the appearance of the home that she keeps. You need to make sure she has nice things as well as nice clothing. I do not mean that you have to spend an enormous amount of money on something, please don't put me in that category. All I'm saying is that you

should make sure that the home your wife keeps is suitable for her and that the clothes your wife wears are to her taste.

If there is one thing that I do not get the most thrills out of, it is shopping for women's clothing. I remember as a child going through a department store with my Mother and wondering how much longer it would be before we were finished. I could not then, nor can I now comprehend how women enjoy looking for hours at clothes that for the most part they will never buy. When I go shopping for a specific item, I know ahead of time what I want and one of my goals is that I get in and out of the store as quickly as possible. I'm sure you men can get in the "Amen Corner" on that one.

We men need to realize though, that it's not the same with women. There is nothing wrong with the way that women shop it's just a difference that exists between the sexes. When my wife asks me about going to shop for clothing, I tell her that I do not mind one bit if she takes some money and goes out to buy herself a new outfit or two. I might even go with her if she's nice (smile). She deserves, as the keeper of the home and the Mother of my children, to be able to dress beautifully, modestly and femininely. I also say that while she is shopping, why not buy a sweet-smelling fragrance? Song of Solomon

4:10-11 comes to mind, “How sweet is your love, my treasure, my bride! How much better it is than wine! Your perfume is more fragrant than the richest of spices. Your lips, my bride, are as sweet as honey. Yes, honey and cream are under your tongue. The scent of your clothing is like that of the mountains and the cedars of Lebanon. (NLT)”

What I am saying in all of this, is that a husband should make his wife feel like a beautiful woman. A woman should be able to have a nicely decorated home, nice clothes, shoes, jewelry, perfumes, etc. The virtuous woman was clothed in fine linen and purple (Proverbs 31:22), and I consider my wife to be virtuous so why can't the same be said of her? I believe it can and should be said of her for my job as the husband (according to Exodus 21:10) is to supply her with clothing. Just get out your Bible and read Ezekiel 16:1-14. Look at how Yahweh adorned His symbolic wife. Yahweh puts all husbands to shame.

Let me interject a little here and make the point again that I am not intending to come across in a way that makes women look incapable of doing anything for themselves. I do think that I'm making myself fairly clear, but I want to press the issue again. I know the Scriptures in Proverbs 31 that speak of a priceless woman evaluating a

field, buying it, and planting a vineyard. I also am aware of the Bible verse that says she makes and sells linen clothing and delivers belts to the merchants. I'm fully cognizant of these passages, but this does nothing to thwart the roles which Yahweh has given men and women. The woman can do all these things – as the keeper of the home. However, she is never to take the position of the husband as the provider and sustainer of the physical needs of the house. He is not to be in the kitchen cooking and cleaning while the wife is out working eight hours a day. Sure, she can help him in his business and even as we've noted, consider how good a field is for the crop production for the family. I was doubly concerned with making sure my wife was satisfied with the piece of property we live together on currently. If my wife did not think that the land was suitable for the needs of the home she keeps, then it was on to next property to keep looking.

I hope I have made myself clear that a woman is not a “second class citizen” in Yahweh's kingdom. It's just that the male head of the household is not supposed to hand over the obligations Yahweh has given him to his wife and expect her to do them. He is required to supply food and clothing for his wife and children, this is not the requirement for the wife. You husbands that have not been serving your wives in these

manners ought to begin today. Repent of your sluggard mentality and make the extended effort to physically supply for your family, working by the sweat of your face.

Next we come to what some Bibles call “marital rights,” and others “conjugal rights.” Looking at the Hebrew wording used here, we can come to the conclusion that these rights refer to something that is three-fold: housing, fellowship, and sexual intercourse.

We have basically covered housing to some extent, but let me briefly say that husbands are required to supply their wives with housing, housing that is suitable for her to live in and take care of the family in. This house (I believe) should be decorated the way that the wife desires it to be decorated. I do not say that this is a hard and fast rule of Scripture, nor do I mean to teach that a husband cannot interject his ideas in the area of how the outside and inside should look. All I am saying is that for me, I let my wife make these types of decisions. She is the homemaker, she is the one that spends most of her time at home, and I feel inclined to thus let her be the one who decides how her home is going to look. If she wants a pretty floral bedspread, I do not bellyache because I want stripes or solids. I smile and let her be the keeper of the home.

When I mention housing let me also say that this doesn't mean you have to buy a \$250,000 dollar home to keep up with the command of Exodus 21:10. As a matter of fact, I would shy you away from spending more money on a home than you are really able to afford. What I am saying is make sure that she has a comfortable place to live in. Make sure that she feels safe when she goes to bed at night. Make sure that she has a place that she can not only dwell, but that she can love, and that she enjoys keeping.

Next, I want to move into the realm of fellowship, and yes husbands this is included in the term "marital rights." You and your wife should be best friends, communicating with each other every day, talking about things natural and spiritual; spending time with one another and enjoying the time that you spend together.

I honestly feel that one of the greatest pitfalls in a marriage is lack of communication. So often the most communication in a marriage is either spouse asking the other, "So, how was your day honey?" The reply is usually "fine" and then off to our own hobbies. We think that we need alone time from our spouse, but get real. The two, saith Yahweh, will become one flesh. You should not "need space" as a husband from your wife. You should have an earnest desire to communicate with her in an enjoyable fashion.

Lack of communication does stem from several things. Perhaps the man is working way too much and doesn't find the time to spend with his wife. The wife begins to feel that her husband does not desire to be in her presence and a sense of loneliness comes over her. Men, while you should work to provide for your family you should never work to the neglect of your family. An extra hundred dollars is not worth missing family devotions, family dinner, or tucking your children in at night. Maybe you let the television get in the way of your communication. Instead of sitting on the couch or lying in bed and talking, laughing (communicating with one another) you just watch the latest sitcom on television and never speak a word to your wife. Whatever the case may be, husbands are commanded to spend fellowship time with our wives. If we do not, they may begin seeking fellowship elsewhere. This does not okay adulterous thoughts in the mind of a wife, I only point this out to show that we should not be the ones driving our wives to have such thoughts. They should get plenty of attention from the man they vowed their life to.

My wife and I have four children and one quickly on the way. We love these children with all that is within us. They are truly blessings from Yahweh. That being said, there are times when my wife and I need to have time together, not

because we seek to neglect our children and have someone else raise them but for us to recharge our marriage relationship. For example, there are times when she likes to go “out on a date.” A quiet dinner or a walk through the mall or park is what she is looking for. A husband should give this to his wife. With me it can be difficult at times, the more children you have, the less chance you have at finding someone who wants to take on the “task” of watching them. We are blessed though to each have a mother who is willing to take the children for a few hours and give us some together time. It is this together time that often brings us back into the bond that we need.

What every husband needs to do is surprise his wife by planning an evening all by yourself without her help. Make sure you’ve got everything planned to the tee. You have the children scheduled to be taken care of, the dinner reservations are set, and whatever else you plan is also set. There’s no need to even tell her about it, just surprise her. Tell her that it’s time for her to get dressed, and when she asks you for what just tell her it’s a surprise. Make sure this is how you go about it. The last thing your wife wants to hear is you say, “Honey, how about we go off by ourselves tonight?” As she is shocked by the sound of those words she asks you, “Great! Where to?” You reply by saying, “Oh it doesn’t

matter, wherever.” The short glimpse of love that was caught by your wife has come to a screeching halt. She doesn't want to hear the words “it doesn't matter” she wants to know that it does matter to you, and planning this out yourself is one of the best things you can do for her to let her know that it truly does matter.

Let me also say that you should take the time out to hold your wife's hand, open the car door for her, reach over and touch her on the arm while driving down the road. These are the kinds of things we all did when we were courting/dating our wives. Oh, I remember those times, the times when I felt like I couldn't be away from her for even a few minutes. Regain that feeling. It's there, you've just lost it and you've got to search for it so that you can find it and grab hold to it again. It's a shame that so many men today claim that such love can never be attained. I disagree; with Yahweh on our side we can have the greatest marriage imaginable.

Your wife needs you to hold her hand while you walk through the grocery store with her. For that matter why not put your arm around her every once in a while. Let her know that she is truly loved. I realize as a husband that this can be awkward at times. Maybe you haven't done these sorts of things in years, and maybe you feel like it's not in you to do this. That's tough, you need

to learn to love your wife in this way. Know that it's probably going to take a lot more than a day or two of doing your duty for your wife to begin to acknowledge that you are truly genuine in your feelings. Marriages do not get destroyed overnight and neither do they get rebuilt overnight. Generally, marriages are demolished because one or both parties secretly (but surely) fall further and further away at a slow fade. In this case the husband used to kiss his wife everyday, always looking out for her best interest, and communicating with her frequently. After a couple of years the "I love you" dwindled to 2 or 3 times week, and the fellowship was gone. Next thing you know the husband has his eye on some other woman and the wife of his children doesn't "appeal" to him any longer. The same can happen with a wife towards her husband. My point is to stop it before it ever happens! Realize though, that it is going to take some extra effort, time, and stamina on your part to restore the marriage to its proper stage. Husbands, the buck starts with you.

Last, but certainly not least I must deal with the area of sex. This is an often overlooked and under preached area and I do not want to be guilty of such over looking and under preaching. It can be a ticklish topic at times and a secretive topic but the Bible deals with it so preachers and

teachers should not be afraid, ashamed, or embarrassed to teach about it to their congregations.

Sex is a breathtaking, entertaining gift that Yahweh has given to the husband and wife. A marriage that lacks in sex is going to lack elsewhere. Sex is where the two parties (male and female) become one in a very close knit, intimate way. This is why the Bible speaks against men pursuing harlots. A man who lies with a harlot becomes one with her according to First Corinthians 6:15-16. This shows us the intimacy of sex, and how it is to be permitted only in the marriage bed. Let me push the issue though that not only is it to be permitted, but it is also to be a blissful, intoxicating time for both the husband and the wife. You think I'm plain, lets see what Yahweh says about it.

I guess I can start here with Proverbs 5:18-19. Scripture reads, "Let your fountain be blessed, and take pleasure in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful fawn – let her breasts always satisfy you; be lost in her love forever." You are to take pleasure in your wife, specifically in her love and as the text plainly states – her breasts. We are talking about sexual intimacy here; the intimacy that a man has with his beloved wife.

It is interesting to note that the word “lost” in the last phrase is the Hebrew word *shagah*. This word is usually used in Scripture in the sense of someone “going astray” from the proper way. For example, in the same book, Proverbs 19:27, the Bible reads, “If you stop listening to instruction, my son, you will *stray* from the words of knowledge.” The word “stray” here is the same Hebrew word – *shagah*. What the author of Proverbs 5 is telling us is that we are literally to be strayed away in, ravished, lost, and wandering in the love of our wife forever. This is how a husband should treat sexual activity with his wife. It shouldn’t be something that is timed or that he desires to get over with. He should take his time in order to be lost in the love of his wife.

I also want to mention the section here concerning the breasts. The only reason for my bluntness is because we are dealing with keeping marriages together. Sexual activity outside of the marriage bed is sin and leads to no inheritance in the kingdom of heaven (First Corinthians 6:9-10). Sexual activity *within* the marriage bed should not be looked upon in the same light, but people have a tendency to do so. Sex is a beautiful gift that can be discussed bluntly in a proper context; the only proper context though is within a Scriptural marriage. If the Bible teaches it, we shouldn’t be afraid to talk about it. Therefore, the text says that

we should always be satisfied with the breasts of our wife. Husbands, take time to love your wife fully during sex. No need to skip over the breasts or any other part of her body. Your wife needs to feel the touch of her husband. She needs to know that you are there because you *want* to be there. Many men approach sex in a hurry or without a willingness to be intimate with their wife in other areas. This ought not to be. Take time with your wife in allowing the sex you have with her to last for an evening. It will do wonders for your marriage.

On the heels of this, I want to mention Deuteronomy 24:5. You may have never even heard of this passage, but it is in the Bible, and I must say that I don't know of anyone that is fully observing this commandment. The text reads, "When a man takes a bride, he must not go out with the army or be liable for any duty. He is free to stay at home for one year so that he can bring joy to the wife he has married." I hope that I can train my sons up to be keepers of this commandment as I'm already well past the time spoken of here. One point that I want to bring out is the joy that the husband brings to the new wife. One way to bring this wife joy is in the area of sexual pleasures. Yes, I said it, no need to be afraid of it.

Let me mention in closing First Corinthians 7:3-5. This passage teaches that a husband should not deprive his wife for sex except in cases where they mutually agree on praying and fasting for a time. The same does go for the wife, she is not allowed to take control of her body and demand that her husband not approach her sexually. What happens in these cases is a lack of sexual activity leads to either spouse seeking sexual fulfillment elsewhere by means that are unlawful whether in fornication or adulterous relationships. Yes men, this means that even when we may not feel like having sex to our full capacity, if our wife desires our body, we must not deprive or defraud her. The text says that we do not have authority over our body; that authority belongs to the wife, and vice versa. Also, make sure that if you do consent to a time of prayer and fasting, come together again immediately after this time so that you will not be tempted into sexual immorality. There are to be no “permanent prayer meetings” for either partner. A marriage that is sexually active is a thriving marriage. A marriage that is not sexually active is asking for trouble.

Part of our love towards our wife needs to be one of supplying her physical needs. A wife is a delicate and precious gift from the heavenly Father. The Father has given us commandments concerning how we are to supply for our wife.

We've looked at these commands in this chapter; it is now our job to put them into practice. Remember, commitment stops indecision. Commit to providing for your wife if you've not been doing so until today. If you have been to some degree, we can all do better. She is waiting for you to be the husband that meets her physical needs.



A Husband's Spiritual Duties

Sacred Scripture teaches us that the carnal mind is at enmity with God and it cannot subject itself to the law of God (Romans 8:6-8). Scripture also teaches us that humanity is dead in trespasses and sin (Ephesians 2:1-3). What we need then is a spiritual resurrection that enables us to achieve salvation as well as the fruit of salvation. We need the supernatural working of the Spirit's effect upon the heart. Only then will we be able to obey the spiritual commands of the law of Yahweh.

People in Christianity today have their own idea of what is spiritual. Maybe they think that

clapping their hands really hard is spiritual, or it could be that the louder they say, "Praise the Lord!" the more spiritual they are. I believe that we should praise Yahweh with our lips and even clap our hands in joy for His wonderful works, but oftentimes we miss the fact that the Bible clearly and poignantly states that the law – the commandments of Yahweh – are spiritual. Paul states this in Romans 7:12 where he writes, "For we know that the law is spiritual." When Yahweh says "THOU SHALT NOT KILL," that is a spiritual command. Keeping that command is a spiritual action, breaking that command is a fleshly or carnal action.

Paul does continue in the same verse and goes on to explain that although the law is spiritual, he is fleshly or carnal, sold unto sin's power. This is why man cannot in and of himself even come unto God. Yeshua said it like this, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent Me draws him... (John 6:44)" To say that no man *can* come to him has the meaning of no man *has the ability* to come to Yeshua. We are not able, that is, in our own power, to come to the Son.

Think of it along these lines. Lazarus, a friend of Yeshua had died (John 11) and Yeshua came to the tomb of Lazarus after he had been dead for four days. Those of us who know the story know that Yeshua called out unto Lazarus

and told him to “come forth.” Here is Christ telling a dead man to come forth. What does this mean? Well, Lazarus did come forth, but what had to happen before he could walk out of that tomb? He had to be supernaturally or miraculously resurrected. Only after the resurrection could he obey the command to come forth. It is only after the Spirit’s work on the heart that we have the ability to obey the law of the holy God.

You may not think you are able to love your wife men, and you are entirely accurate. You cannot love your wife in and of yourself, but with Yahweh’s help you can do all things. I realize that being a spiritual provider for your wife and children seems almost out of grasp at times, but you have to come to grips with the realization that you can’t do it, you must place your trust in the Father of heaven and earth, allowing Him by His Spirit to work on you, molding you and shaping you according to His will.

I mention the work of the Spirit in this chapter specifically because we are dealing with the spiritual duties of the husband. Spiritual duties take a spiritual man. Spiritual men are made spiritual by the power of Yahweh. In order to be the spiritual leader in your home you first must acknowledge that it is only through Yahweh that you will be able to accomplish such a task.

You must also seek Yahweh in prayer every day requesting for yourself more love, power, kindness, and tenderness for spiritual leadership. Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find.

As we previously covered in Ephesians 5:25-27 Christ loved and gave Himself for the Church that she might be without spot, wrinkle, or blemish. We can look upon this specifically in Him giving us an example to follow. Christ gave us the example of perfect obedience to the Father, and First John 2:6 tells us that if any man claims to be in Christ he should walk even as Christ walked. That is a tough pair of shoes to fill, but strive we must.

Husbands, you are called to set the spiritual example for your wife. Just as we can look to Yeshua and find an example in His lifestyle, our wives must find a godly example in our lifestyle. If we are always slothful, odds are that she will be also. If we have a tendency to complain every time something doesn't go exactly as planned, she will probably get on the complaining "bandwagon" with you. The flip side is also true. If she sees you in prayer to Yahweh she will probably be prompted to pray herself or either with you during prayer. If she sees you handling the children in a calm yet disciplined fashion, she will follow suit. Your wife is looking for a godly

example to follow in her husband. She needs to get what she is looking for.

Do you know what makes a woman be more virtuous? To have a husband who himself is virtuous. Remember, the virtuous woman's husband is known at the city gates when he sits with the elders of the land (Proverbs 31:23). I feel that the meaning here is twofold. The husband is known for having a virtuous wife, but what also follows is that he is known as a virtuous man himself. He isn't a husband who denounces the authority of the commands of Yahweh. He follows them so that His wife will be able to look to him for spiritual guidance and strength.

We should make sure that our wife has a spiritual guide in the home. She should see us making all our decisions in accordance with the law of Yahweh. If she comes to you with a difficult question, do not be rash by giving an answer off the top of your head. Explain to her that you want to search Yahweh's law for the answer. You want to make sure that the answer you give to such a serious, important question is "in sync" with what the Scriptures teach. You never want to overstep the boundary of the Bible. Look to the Bible for answers to life's problems. Man's answers are like sticking a band-aid over the gas light in your car. Yahweh's answers are

like pulling into the station and filling up your tank with gas.

I know people who have had major problems in their life and it's as though they continuously wonder what to do about them. I've approached individuals before by simply asking them what they think about this verse of Scripture or that particular Biblical law. It is nothing short of astonishing to see people almost become abhorrent when you attempt to answer their earthly question with something from the Bible. And sometimes we get to a point where we think we know better than Yahweh, or are more moral than the King of kings. You should never think this way, and you should always – always – deal with your marriage and family in a Biblical manner. If you step outside of the arena of Scripture even one time, your wife may think that it is okay to do so the next time. If you try to explain why it is not okay she will be quick to point out your inconsistency. It will be difficult to achieve that consistent standard again. However, if you stand firmly on the Scriptures, even when your flesh steers you away and you can't possibly imagine how such an answer will work, your wife will become confident in your spiritual headship. You will be a husband to be proud of.

What are some of the ways we can live as examples to our wife? They are simple yet unknown by many husbands today because they seem *too simple* or maybe old fashioned and outdated. For starters, your wife needs to see you reading your Bible. Instead of her coming to the table to find you reading the newspaper or the Sports Illustrated magazine, she needs to find you opened to the book of Exodus, Romans, or Jude. You need to be a Bible reader.

I heard a story of an elderly woman who would make the remark that she didn't care if her grandchildren "snuck up on her" in her home. Her reason went like this: all they are going to find is their Grandmother either reading her Bible, praying, or singing praises. She wanted her children to find her. She didn't do these things for the purpose of being seen in self glorification, but she wanted them to have an example. She wanted them to know that their Grandmother not only read the Bible when they were watching, but it was a way of life for her. She didn't stop when the grandchildren were gone.

You need to set this example for your wife. No need to do things to be seen among men as the hypocrites, this is not what I speak of. I mean that you should live such a life so that even if your wife finds you alone or sneaks up on you she doesn't find you in something unlawful, but

rather lawful. She doesn't find you looking at internet pornography, but instead searching for a particular Bible verse. If you are constantly in service to the King, it will not matter what time your wife needs to call upon you. You will be spiritually ready for any warfare that comes your way.

Here's another thing, our wife should see us not desiring to commit adultery or fornication against her. She should not have to worry about you sneaking around on her or holding back secrets from her. There's no need for you to have a private computer where only you can gain access and not your wife. Don't put your wife through that kind of agony. Don't give her the opportunity to wonder if you are being faithful to her. Let her know that you're not interested in the world or in the women of the world. You're a man that is interested in living holy and in loving his wife fully.

I'm not one of those preachers that preach against the television set. If I did, I think I would have to preach against having a radio and a computer. Any of these items can be used to the glory of Yahweh or for the destruction of the soul. You can turn your radio to a station that glorifies the Maker of all things or you can listen to a song that would delight the demons of hell. The same can be said for the TV. There is not

much good that comes across the TV, but I do enjoy watching some shows with my wife. Andy Griffith is my favorite, and my wife enjoys good mystery shows. Let me tell you though that most shows on television today should find no place in the home of the Christian. I was riding down the road the other day and saw a sign advertising a show on TV, and the show's name was "Californication." That's the biggest hint a Christian man could ever get. What I read when I saw that title was "This is a show you should never set your eyes on."

Sometimes you could be watching a show and all of sudden a commercial comes on the TV and it may have a woman scantily clothed. Husbands, your immediate reaction should be to change the channel. Let your wife know that you are a spiritual man. The only woman you desire to see that much of is your wife.

Not too long ago my wife and I were watching a show and a commercial came on saying something to the effect of "Now, we've got women in bikinis!" My response was the pick up the remote and say, "Now, we are not going to watch what you've got!" There's no need for me to lay my eyes upon such filth.

This book is not about the specificities of the commandments, but I want to take the opportunity to give us husbands an example to

follow. Your wife should see that you are unwilling to violate the precepts of Scripture. She should know that you are unwavering in your stance, and are even a “stickler” when it comes to being obedient to the commandments of Yahweh. Sometimes us “sticklers” get scorned by even professing Christians, but Yeshua taught us to even give great respect to the keeping of the *least* of the commandments (Matthew 5:19). Doing so will cause us to be called *great* in the kingdom of heaven.

Take the Sabbath for instance. You can break a small portion of the Sabbath and you’ve still broken the Sabbath. No need to “jump the gun” towards the end of the Sabbath and make a purchase too soon or begin cooking too soon. What will your wife really think of you as a Spiritual leader if you give in and say, “Well, it’s almost over anyway, we can go ahead and buy, sell, cook, clean, etc.”

Recently, I’ve placed my children in a local softball league. We home school our children so they do not have a school sports system like I was accustomed to in both elementary and high school. I’ve got nothing against certain sporting activities as long as they are placed in their proper perspective. This means that if a sporting event is going to cause them to violate the law of Yahweh it has to be out of the question. It shouldn’t even

be an option. I never would place my son in recreational baseball or the like because I know that the atmosphere is not acceptable for a young Christian boy to be around.

When I considered this co-ed Christian softball league, I had to make it clear to my children that there were two important standards we have to consider prior to signing up for a season. Standard one was our clothing. We believe that both men and women should dress modestly and we would have to ask the league if this would be okay in light of the uniforms they handed out. This wasn't a problem, and I'm thankful – my children enjoy playing softball so much.

The other standard was the Sabbath day. I do not believe that my children should be out playing softball on Yahweh's Sabbath day; much less playing softball while a Sabbath meeting (church) is taking place. I explained to my children that if a practice or game ever took place on the Sabbath we would not be playing. They understood, and the league said that missing a few practices or games would not be a problem. They recognized that church came first. Even they did not have games scheduled on Sunday, their particular day of worship.

I could have just let these things slip. I could have explained to my wife, "Well, it's just a

ballgame. What's it going to hurt to play on the Sabbath?" Or I could have told her, "Honey, the children can wear *these* type clothes for ball, they just need to dress modestly at other times." Maybe my wife would have been the strong one spiritually if I expressed these feelings, but maybe she would not have. She may have gone along with such feelings, and I would be the reason for leading her into compromise. Don't compromise on Yahweh's standards men. Make sure your wife knows that you love Yahweh and you want to lead your home by placing Yahweh first in everything.

Husbands, your wives should also see you spending quality and quantity time with the children. It angers me so much to hear people say something like, "Well I may not spend quantity time with my children, but I do spend *quality* time with them." Quantity time *is* quality time. If you only have a few minutes a day for your children, it is a disgrace on you men. Your children need you to spend a lot of time with them. You are supposed to teach them when they lay down and rise up, when you walk with them outside or when you are sitting in the house. Use every opportunity possible to instruct your children in the ways of Yahweh. Your wife needs to be married to a man that believes in child training. The time you spend with your children

will be appreciated by your wife. It will let her know that you cherish your children. No woman wants to raise children by herself. No godly man will have children that are raised solely by their mother, much less by the government. Spiritual children come from a Spiritual Father. Wicked children stem from wicked Fathers.

Men, make time for home Bible studies. Do not wait until time to go to church to get your "spiritual cap" on. We should not live our religion inside the four walls of a church. Our religion should be a lifestyle. Our children should not only sing hymns and songs of praise at Sabbath meeting; they should be able to enjoy songs in their home during home Bible study or home worship.

Home worship is something that sounds strange to many today because it is just not done in most homes in America, and I'm talking about most Christian homes. When you begin to practice home worship, your life is going to change. You will feel rejuvenated spiritually, your children will become more acquainted with Biblical issues, and your wife will become more of a servant of Yahweh. She will see that you desire to put effort into knowing more about Yahweh not just one day a week, but every day in the week. A man that takes extra time out for Yahweh is a man that a woman will submit to.

Another spiritual act that we must show towards our wives is to refrain from being bitter towards them (Colossians 3:19). This word bitter in the Greek has the meaning of exactly what we think of when say the word in English. Sometimes our wife may say or do something not to our liking and we do have to address these times as the head of our household. We can choose to address the issue in bitterness or in love, with a soft answer or with harsh words. One good practice is to take a few seconds (or more) before speaking to your wife in these situations. It's so easy to quickly say something that is harsh or in the wrong tone towards my wife. I've made statements before that I wish I could take back; I would like it if my wife never would have heard me say such words. Once the words are out in the open they are there, and they can wound. People are fooling themselves by believing that words do not hurt people. The Scriptures teach that words can heal and wound, give life and death, turn away wrath or stir up anger. Let the law of kindness be on your tongue, treat your wife with words that are sweet, not bitter.

First Peter 3:7 says, "Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives with understanding of their weaker nature yet showing them honor as co-heirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers

will not be hindered.” When we deal with our wife we should not deal with her like we would our hunting or fishing buddy. Women are delicate and need to be treated differently than men. I’ve heard men say things to women that they could say to a man and it was no problem; say them to a woman and the tears begin to fall. I’m glad Yahweh made women like this. As a man, I wouldn’t want to be married to a “masculine woman.” Peter is trying to teach us that we have to deal with our wives in a way that understands their weaker nature; this shows them honor, and they should be honored. The husband of the virtuous wife gives her praise (Proverbs 31:28). When we read Scriptures like this we think about standing up in church and telling everyone that we are thankful for our wife, and that is a good thing, don’t get me wrong. What I am speaking about though is praising and blessing her in the way we speak to her and treat her. She is to be spoken to delicately, honoring her as the Queen of the home.

This brings me to touch upon the subject of abuse. A husband should never abuse his wife in a physical or verbal manner. A wife does not need to be married to a man that comes home to use her for a punching bag. My prayer is that Yahweh’s vengeance would be poured out upon such men. What does this prove? Do men think

it makes them more masculine by beating up on the weaker vessel? To me, I would think of such a man as being weak himself. The same goes for the verbal abuse. Women should be spoken to kindly and gently. A woman should not have to listen to a man tell her of all her shortcomings day in and day out.

I once heard a brother in the church I attend talk about deposits and withdrawals in a spiritual sense. Men need to realize that they should not make constant withdrawals on their wives without making deposits. We should deposit words of thanks, praise, blessing, and love towards our wife and then when a situation arises where we need to discuss a serious matter with her, a withdrawal will not hurt her heart. She will respect you because you treat her with honor and respect. You recognize, as Peter says, that she is a co-heir with you of the grace of life. She is just as much a child of Yahweh as you are. You are not more saved than she because you are a man. Galatians 3:28 says that there is neither male nor female in Christ. This means that salvation extends to the husband *and* the wife, not just one or the other.

Peter also teaches another good lesson for all husbands. If we do not follow the admonition he gives, our prayers will be hindered. Prayer is a powerful tool that Yahweh has blessed His people with. The Bible tells us that the effectual,

fervent prayer of the righteous man has much avail (James 5:16). The Bible says that the righteous cry and Yahweh hears and He delivers them from trouble (Psalm 34:15-17). The key is that when we as husbands are out of tune with our wives, we are not acting righteously. We cannot expect Yahweh to answer our prayers when we are not in unity with our beloved wife. What if a problem occurs and prayer must be made at a specific moment in time? Did you fuss with your wife that morning? Did you speak harshly to her and leave the house without asking her forgiveness? Were you bitter towards her when she asked a favor of you? How will our prayer avail? A dire relationship with your wife yields a hindered relationship with Yahweh.

Think back on what we've covered in this chapter and *read it again* if you must. Yahweh Father is looking for husbands that lead their homes geared with spiritual armor. He is looking for husbands who lead their wives into a relationship of holiness and sanctity. I'm sure you would love for your wife to have such attributes. You hold the key in your hand. I don't speak of some sort of power you have, but the key is the Scriptures. We've covered them, it is your job to believe them and obey them.



The Whole Counsel of God

Why is it that preachers want to glance over certain passages in the Bible? I've seen it happen too many times for this not to be factual. When a man stands up behind a pulpit every Sunday morning for twenty years and doesn't talk about certain issues it is generally because he is afraid of the ramifications it may have upon the church. I'm not saying this is always the case. I know that sometimes a preacher may just not feel he has studied enough about a topic. He may need to look deeper into the meaning of a text – no problem. But is this the case generally? I do not think so at all. I

think that it is the fear of man that causes preachers to shy away from teaching on “forbidden” topics. Paul said in Acts 20:27 to the elders of Ephesus that he had not shunned in declaring the entire or the whole counsel of God. That’s what I want to be able to say.

I was preaching recently and made the remark that if you find a church that honestly preaches the truth of the Bible without fear or favor of man; you aren’t going to find a big, mega church. The reason churches get so big is because there isn’t any preaching of conviction coming across the pulpit. There is no sense of being lost in people because they do not think they need to be found. They are not told that God will destroy them and that He hates their sin. They are not told that they are but mere clay in the hands of the Almighty Potter. They are not told of their sin and how dreadfully sinful it is. What they are told is that they need to believe in themselves, be a positive thinker, and expect financial blessings from the Lord. Religion is so man centered today that I believe it makes the Lord want to vomit. I don’t see how I’m off course in this statement. Our Lord said to those of Laodicea that because they were lukewarm He wished to vomit them out of His mouth (Revelation 3:16).

It’s difficult being a preacher or a pastor. I personally don’t like the title placed on my name,

but sometimes my position as a pastor comes out in conversation. I was recently asked about the church I attended. I explained and the next question was, "Who is the pastor?" Seeing that I am the one who Yahweh has seemed to call to do the preaching at the church I attend, I answered, "Well, I am." I usually see an immediate change in a person's demeanor when a conversation like this takes place. Either they are baffled because of my age, they are shocked because of the way I'm dressed (my regular job has me cleaning out septic tanks), or they begin to act pious and holy because of the title that has just been applied to me. I do my best to let them know that I do not consider myself a pastor in the ordinary sense of the word. I can pastor or shepherd people right there on the job or in the grocery store; it doesn't have to be in an air conditioned building behind a pulpit with a microphone.

What's difficult about being a pastor is how to bring a message across. Many times I feel a sermon in my inner man, but to get it from my inner man into my mind, from my mind into the minds of others, and then finally into their inner man can be somewhat easier said than done. The process becomes trickier when the message is one that I know is not going to sit well with the hearers. I know I have to preach the message, that's not the problem, but I do not want people

to shut their ears before the message is over. If they can at least catch a glimpse or have a few minutes of the sermon embedded within them to think about for the week I believe I've done what I'm required to do. Sometimes it's hard though. One message that's hard to get people to listen to is the role of the woman in marriage.

I know, I know, this book is titled *Husbands, Love Your Wives*, but I'm not planning on writing a sequel so I feel the need to include at least one chapter in this study on the life of a wife and on how a woman should live her life towards her husband. I've preached on this subject at church or at a conference or just to women in general at times, and the usual response is the same. "Who in the world does he think he is!?" That's the feeling I get from women when the truth of this subject is preached.

I am by no means against women, nor do I believe they are less saved or inferior in Yahweh's plan of salvation. I think I've mentioned this verse already, but I must do so again here. Galatians 3:28 teaches us that there is neither male nor female in Christ. Christ saves to the uttermost those that come to God through Him; whether man or woman. My wife is not any less a child of Yahweh than myself. The point Paul labors to make in this text, is that if a person has faith in Yeshua – His life, death, resurrection, etc.

they will be in the kingdom. One of the requirements of the kingdom is not that you be of the male gender. Females will be in the kingdom.

Now, here's the part that most preachers do not talk about. This text doesn't mean that all distinctions and roles of the man and woman (the husband and wife) suddenly cease. For example, women still have children and men don't. Believe me, I know. My wife is pregnant with our fifth child, I'm not.

The point is, that a woman is still given the role of a woman, just like a man is given the role of a man. The man shouldn't take on the position of the woman, nor the woman the position of the man. This means that a woman should seek to be in the role for which she was created. She was created to be the helper to the man.

In the beginning, Yahweh made Himself a man. His name was Adam. Prior to this making, all through Genesis 1 we find that Yahweh created many other things and each thing that Yahweh made was good. I remember reading as a child or being read to, and hearing the story of the creation. Yahweh would pronounce upon His creation – and it was good. I like this. We then come to the first thing that is *not good* in Scripture. This is stated in Genesis 2:18. The man that Yahweh made should not be alone. The

text has Yahweh saying that it is *not good* that man should be alone. Yahweh then says that He will make a helper suitable for the man.

The word help in Hebrew basically means to aid, assist, and lend strength to. It is amazing to see how this same word (*ezer*) is used of Yahweh many times in Scripture in saying that He was the help of Israel and other individual people within Israel. Yahweh came to their rescue, He came to their help, and He lent strength to them. Wives, this is what you were created to be for your husband; an aid or assistant; one who lends strength to your husband.

The wife was not made to nag at Adam or tell him of all his shortcomings. I'm sure Adam had some downfalls – I know he did for he fell into sin. Eve was called to encourage Adam though. Eve's calling was not to find a way to degrade her husband or tell him how he wasn't "meeting her needs." She was called to assist him in whatever he needed. She was created to be his helper. This is the role of the wife.

I am finding more and more that wives are seeking to "do their own thing" in the day we live in. They want their own job, their own money, their own schedule. They come first and not their husband or family. How is this being an aid to your husband? This may seem contrary to the teaching of the masses, but a woman's place is

not in the work field. A woman's place is not to leave her children with someone else to watch each day and go to work. That's not what godly women do. A godly woman is to be a keeper of the home. Titus 2:3-5 tells us that the elder women are required to teach the younger women to be keepers at home among other things. I'm often asked if I'm married or if I have children. I'm excited when I'm asked this question for I am proud of my wife and children. Another question that comes up is "What does your wife do?" My proud response is, "She is a homemaker." Sometimes there is a disgusted look on people's faces. It's as though they think I've got my wife tied down to a post at home and will not let her out of the house. Nothing could be further from the truth! My wife is happy to be the keeper of the home. She knows that Yahweh created her for this purpose, and the more practice she gets at fulfilling her role the more happy she will be.

Another thing the elder women should teach the young women, is how to be chaste. This is not a word we use too often in 2008 but it basically means pure, clean, and modest. Paul uses the word in Second Corinthians 11:2 to describe a virgin espoused to Christ. First John 3:3 translates the word as pure when speaking of how Christians need to purify themselves even as He (God the Father) is pure. I believe we learn

from this that a woman needs to be a woman. A woman's place is not to be boisterous, obscene, and flaunting. A woman needs to act feminine, delicate, and womanly.

I must speak here for just a bit on the dress of women. This book is not about modesty, but a brief word about it is needed. I've met some women in my life who I give great respect to. Each one of them knows how to dress like a woman should. I'm talking about women who seek to show forth Christ in their outward adornment. They are not concerned with showing their cleavage or making sure their pants are tight or what have you. They are not interested in how many men look at them for their heart belongs to their husband. These type women are not found regularly today. Most women look like they either belong to some motorcycle gang or the playboy mansion. How sickening this truly is, not just to me, but to the Lord.

How do I know that Yahweh doesn't approve of this? Well, He tells us plainly in Paul's first letter to Timothy. First Timothy 2:9 says that women should adorn themselves in modest apparel. Tight pants and halter tops are not modest. Bathing suits are not modest. Low cut shirts are not modest. Short skirts or dresses are not modest. Women should dress in long and

loose apparel, not seeking to accent their bodies but rather to modestly cover their bodies.

The passage in Timothy goes on to speak of how women should be shamefaced (KJV). This word carries with it the meaning of bashfulness or downcast eyes. In other words a woman is to be gentle, quiet and meek. She is not supposed to talk over her husband or even correct him in front of others. I'm not saying that a wife has nothing good to say. I learn from my wife all the time. She has many good insights into the Scriptures, but the place of a wife is not to make her husband look like he doesn't know what he is talking about in public. She is to consider him as the leader, the head of their marriage, and the leader of their family.

This brings me to Paul's admonition to wives in the letter to the Ephesians. Paul states that the wife is to submit herself to her husband. If there is one Scripture that I've seen twisted and distorted, it is this one. "Now you see, this doesn't really mean submit like what you are thinking," people say. Nothing frustrates me greater than to see someone take a clear Scriptural teaching and muddle it with eloquent speech and flattering words. The text *tells us* what it means. Ephesians 5:24 speaks of the wife submitting to the husband just as the church is submissive to Christ. Do you think that a preacher is going to

misunderstand what the Bible means when it says the church should submit to Christ? I highly doubt it, although some may. It should be painfully obvious that this means the church is under the headship and Lordship of Yeshua the Christ. He is the leader, and the church is to *follow* His lead. The church is not in an equal role with Christ. The church doesn't get to override an ultimate decision made by Christ. Christ is Lord over the church, and yes, the husband is to be the lord of his wife.

Just in case I've lost any women with that statement, let me explain that this doesn't mean that the husband should disregard the petitions, requests, or suggestions his wife may give him. Christ listens to the prayers of the saints and many times answers our prayers for our own good. He is compassionate towards His Church. He does not treat His Church with contempt. There are sometimes though when He does not answer those in His Church. He does not give them what *they think* they need. He gives them what *He knows* they need. I'm thankful for this.

"You mean my husband is the lord of me?" I know that's hard to swallow, but let's allow the Scriptures to be our guide here. Look at First Peter 3:3-6. The text speaks of women understanding that their beauty is not skin deep. Their beauty doesn't consist in mere jewels, hair

styles and clothing, but it is found in the inner woman, the heart of the woman. It is the meek and quiet spirit of the woman that is of great price in the sight of God. The text goes on to say that this is how the holy women of old adorned themselves. They did not just think about beautifying themselves on the outside, but they adorned themselves by being in subjection to their own husbands. This word subjection is used in Luke 2:51 where Yeshua was subject to Mary and Joseph as a child. In Luke 10:17 we read where the devils were subject unto the disciples through Christ's name, and in First Peter 2:18 in saying that servants should be subject to their masters. There is really no denying what the word means. A wife is to be in submission, obedient to her husband.

First Peter 3:6 then shows how Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. That's a tough one. Personally, my wife does not *literally* call me lord, but I don't think that's what matters most. The point of the verse is that the wife should treat her husband as her lord, and my wife is great at that. A man should come home from a hard day's work to find his wife ready to kiss him at the door, ask him how his day is gone, and lead him to the bath that she has prepared. A man should find that his wife has prepared dinner and desires to make the rest of his day comfortable. She

should ask her husband what she can get him and if there is anything she can do to please him. She should treat him like the King of the home.

Let's go back to Ephesians 5. I want to get into some technicalities here. Ephesians 5:23 tells us that the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church and the savior of the body. This places a strong responsibility on the man and that's why I wrote the better part of this book. Concentrating on the woman here, we should see that a wife has to recognize her husband as the head. He is the priest of the home. I often show women how this doesn't belittle them at all, but only places them in their proper role. The example I use is with the children. The children are under the authority of their parents. This doesn't mean the children are lesser humans in God's eyes. They are precious to the Father. What it does mean is that children must be subject to their mothers and to their fathers. Likewise a wife must be subject to her husband.

At the end of Ephesians 5:24 the text says that the wife is to be subject to her husband in everything. That's what the text says, and I believe the text. What we have to understand here is that the text is referring to a Christian husband when it speaks of everything. What I mean is, that a wife is bound first and foremost to

Yahweh. Her relationship with Yahweh always comes before her relationship with her husband. This doesn't mean that she neglects her husband to study the Bible – no, that's not what I'm saying. All I'm saying is that if a husband's wishes go contrary to the written word of Yahweh then she must disobey her husband in order to obey Yahweh. This goes for all earthly submissiveness.

Take for example our relationship to government. There is nothing wrong with submitting to wicked government. I stop when I see a stop sign, and I turn my blinker on when I about to go right or left. I've got no problem with these things, but when earthly government contradicts the law of Yahweh I have to disobey the earthly rule to carry out the commands of the heavenly rule. Babylon made a decree to pray to no one except Darius for thirty days. Did Daniel listen? You know the story.

Let's say that a husband wishes for his wife to help him in a bank heist. I know this is extreme, but my point will be made. Is she required to help? Ephesians 5:24 says everything doesn't it? Yes it does, but it is everything in a Christian, law abiding context. Yahweh's law commands against theft, therefore the wife must disobey her husband. She cannot rob the bank and explain to Yahweh, "But you said I had to submit to my husband."

Let's get a little more practical. Let's say a woman is married to an unbelieving husband and he demands that she discontinue going to assembly on the Sabbath. What does she do? The answer should be easy. God has told us in his word to attend public fellowship on Sabbath (Leviticus 23:3). He has told us we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:25). The wife should go to Sabbath service, because God comes first. However, what if the husband asks the wife to stay home instead of going to a weeknight Bible study? Is the weeknight Bible study commanded? No, it is not. God does not absolutely require her to go to the Bible study. She can study at other times. The wife should submit to even her nonbelieving husband in this.

Also, recognize that a wife is to obey her husband even when she differs with him on certain Scriptural subjects. He may see a Scriptural passage or command one way and she may see it in another way. So long as you are not in sin, you should obey your husband's understanding over your own. For example, a husband may see that Scripture requires a woman to wear a headcovering when she prays (First Corinthians 11). Maybe his wife doesn't see the passage this way and she has a different understanding. It's not that she rejects the

passage at all; she just believes it teaches something different than her husband believes. In this case, she should follow her husband's understanding. The wife is not going to be in sin if she wears the headcovering. She will be in sin if she disobeys her husband.

Wives, there is no need to blur the distinction here. Don't pretend that you're disobeying your husband for God's sake when you're not. You are to submit to your husband in everything. You are more than capable of recognizing if his requests are against Scripture or for Scripture. I will also say that even in cases where you must disobey your husband to obey God, you should do it gracefully.

This reminds me of First Peter 3:1-2. The Bible speaks here of wives with unbelieving husbands. The husbands are spoken as those that obey not the word. Even these husbands are to be submitted to. These husbands can even be won to Christ without a verbal word from the wife. He will behold her chaste conduct and godly behavior. He will see that her desire is to please her husband in all things, even though she follows Christ and he does not.

There are many good books on the place of women in the marriage and home, I've only touched the surface in this chapter. I would suggest that the women find a more thorough

treatise on the woman's role. Hopefully, though, I've given a place to begin. I in no way, mean to belittle women at all. I love my wife; she is quite an awesome woman. All I seek to do is ignite a fire in the hearts of women to be a true wife to their husband. Women who seek to please their own selves and not their husbands, are wasting their life.



Touching it with a Ten Foot Pole

I would rather keep my mouth shut than get involved in some arguments. Sometimes I'm around people that disagree with me about what I consider to be trivial matters. If the person is presenting themselves as a haughty instructor or as having unattainable knowledge to the average person, it can be difficult to bite the tongue, but I would rather remain quiet and calm or either reach far within myself and find some grain of holiness that causes me to give a soft answer. There are also times when I may get into a disagreement on doctrinal matters in Scripture. If the person I am at odds with is presenting

themselves as a teacher or preacher, I am inclined to make extra sure that they know I disagree with them and I'm more than willing to explain why. If they are just at a point of growing in grace and knowledge, I do my best to approach the issue by explaining my understanding to them and also listening to their understanding. Sometimes we can learn the way of God more perfectly. Priscilla and Aquila are said in Scripture to have shown Apollos a more perfect way (Acts 18). Apollos was not a rejecter of truth, he was just doing everything he knew to do at the time.

The kind of arguments that I do not like are the ones filled with strife. People argue over the craziest things these days. It has been said that marriages become depleted because of arguments over things like squeezing the toothpaste tube too high up from the end. What an argument, huh? I prefer to have my toothpaste tube squeezed from the bottom, but if my wife wants to squeeze it from the middle I do not think it's going to upset my apple cart.

There are other issues I do not even want to touch at times, because people have a tendency to have selective hearing. I've talked with many, many people about theological subjects and believe me, when they have something settled in their mind about what *you* believe they are not going to be able to listen to you explain your

actual position. They feel that they are more qualified to tell you about your position themselves even in light of the fact that they aren't the ones believing the doctrine, you are.

Sometimes it tickles me when I teach on a subject in a church, conference, or radio setting and someone comes up and asks a question afterwards that was answered during the lecture. Don't get me wrong, I love questions, and I believe any teacher should allow himself to be questioned, but the problem is that a teacher can say a certain "buzz" word in a lecture and from that point on, the listener cannot hear anything else because his mind is on how he is going to disprove the whole lesson afterwards. It's called selective hearing.

One such issue I do not really enjoy talking about is the issue of divorce. When you begin to talk on divorce you generally have two camps: those who have never been divorced and are vehemently against it, or those who have been divorced and are trying their best to find Scriptural support. It is rare to find someone who approaches the subject without bias. Either they feel like they are holier than everyone else because they have never been divorced, or they feel like they have to defend their position because of their involvement in a divorce. For anyone wondering, I've never been divorced. My

wife and I really do not believe in divorce. We believe that Yahweh joined us together and we as human beings should not separate what Yahweh has joined (Matthew 19:6).

Think about this for a moment. When Yeshua was asked about divorcing or separating (Matthew 19) from a wife for any reason, His *first* response was to quote from two passages in Genesis. The first passage was Genesis 1:27 where the Bible teaches that in the beginning God made them male and female. This was Yahweh's original intention, for a male to be with a female. Yeshua's implications here can definitely apply, as it pertains to heterosexual marriage, but it also implies that God desires for marriages to remain in harmony. He does not desire for marriages to end in divorce.

The second passage that Yeshua quotes is found in Genesis 2:24, a verse we discussed early on. The man leaves his current family unit and cleaves or joins himself to his wife. Yeshua then states that it is Yahweh who joined together the first marriage and thus, when a marriage likened unto this first marriage takes place, it is Yahweh that joins together this marriage as well. When Yahweh joins something together we should not be in the business of separating His doings.

In pointing this out, I do not mean that the Bible doesn't allow divorce under certain

circumstances. What I mean when I say I do not believe in divorce, is that I do not believe it is Yahweh's perfect plan or will for a couple to get lawfully married and then after a period of time, get a divorce. Yahweh is not in the business of promoting divorce. He desires for a husband to love his wife and for a wife to submit to her husband. Such a lifestyle can only lead to a closer relationship in marriage.

When I discuss divorce with people, I begin by asking them why they would want to divorce their spouse. Every time, without fail, the person I'm talking to will blame all or most of the fault on the person they are married to rather than on themselves. If I am talking to a woman, she complains of her husband not spending enough time with her or loving her as Christ loved the Church. If I talk to a man, he complains of the lack of submission his wife gives him and he reminds me that the Bible says a wife is supposed to submit herself to her husband and even call him lord or master as Sarah did Abraham (1 Peter 3:5-6).

What people usually fail to recognize in all of this, is that if a divorce happens it is because one, or both parties in the marriage failed to comply with the law of Yahweh. People do not look at their divorce as a failure to obey Yahweh; they seem to look at it as a failure between the two

human parties. They also have blinders on their eyes when it comes to seeing their own human failures. Has the husband truly been following Yahweh's standards for a husband? Has the wife honestly been obeying Yahweh's commandments for a wife?

It could be that the wife is just not willing to submit. She *could be* the sole reason for the divorce. Likewise, it could be that the husband is just not willing to love – this too *could be* the sole reason for the divorce. Maybe one party in the marriage has a problem with sexual promiscuity and the other does not. In this case, it *could be* that only one party is at fault. It could also be that *both parties* are not making the effort to do what Yahweh has commanded them in regards to serving their spouse. In the end, divorce happens every single time because somebody (or bodies) got out of the will of Yahweh. Somebody (or bodies) transgressed Yahweh's law.

Think about the issue of capital punishment. Capital punishment is commanded and thus sanctioned by Yahweh's law (Genesis 9:5-6; Exodus 22:18-20; Romans 1:26-32). However, any time the death penalty must be enacted it is because someone did not walk according to the law of Yahweh. The hardness of man's heart caused a person to have to be put to death. It would have been better had this person chose not

to transgress, but transgress they did in Scripture, and we do have instances where people had to be put to death (Numbers 15:32-36).

My main point is this men: if you have been through a divorce, it is because either you, your former wife, or the both of you were not serving Yahweh properly. Maybe it was not your fault, but either way someone transgressed; it led to the tragedy of divorce. The divorce was caused by the sinfulness of someone's heart.

Divorce places a deep scar upon people's lives. Sometimes the pain is almost unbearable. Why – someone thinks – why did things have to turn out this way? I think that we are silly to try to answer these questions at times. I've tried in the past and it makes a person look like an idiot to put it bluntly. There are times when a person that's been through a divorce just needs an ear to listen to them, or a shoulder to cry on. They don't need someone explaining "why" to them. They just need a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

Is divorce ever allowed in Scripture? Is it ever permitted? This is where I hesitate. Not because I believe the Scriptures do not give us direction in this area, but because I know the heart of man is desperately wicked. If I say in this book, that divorce is allowed, someone will selectively hear me tell them to go out and get a divorce if they

are having marriage problems. Believe it or not, there are people who could read something along these lines and completely forget what else the book has taught up to this point. Please do not be one of these people.

Before I deal with the Biblical allowances for divorce, let me reiterate something I have painfully tried to make plain in this book. Men - divorce is not the answer to your marriage problems. If you begin to apply the Scriptural principles to your marriage, Yahweh will perform what you believe could only be a miracle. The same goes for the woman. The Bible teaches that a Christian woman should be in submission even to her heathen husband, witnessing to him with her character, and hoping to win him to the Messiah (1 Peter 3:1-2).

My family and I have been going through First Samuel in our home Bible studies. One thing I find simply amazing is that although Saul had been rejected as King of Israel by Yahweh, David refused to lay a hand upon Saul, even when Saul had tried to kill David more than once. David said that it should be far from him to harm the one who had been anointed by Yahweh as King of Israel. My point here is that David performed his duty towards the plan of Yahweh in spite of someone else's unrighteousness. Saul

was not doing his part, but David remained faithful.

The answer to your marriage problem is to begin to apply the Scriptures to your life. You should quit thinking about yourself and start thinking about the person you married. Quit being such so selfish, stop thinking about all the things your spouse should be doing for you and meditate upon the things you should be doing for your spouse.

Even after all I have written, I would like to talk a little bit about divorce being permissible in certain situations. At first, I was not going to include such a topic in this book, but I knew that if people read a book like this and it did not cover the divorce issue I would have to answer a gazillion phone calls and emails. Not that I mind answering questions, it's just easier to go ahead and deal with it in book form one time rather than with each person many times.

Let me say up front that this chapter is the furthest thing from an exhaustive study on the issue. What I hope to do is briefly give some legitimate reasons for divorce. I do not wish to go into great detail on the issue, for my purpose is to keep marriages together, not give people an excuse to leave their spouse. I do not want to separate what Yahweh has joined.

The Bible does permit divorce in certain situations. This does not mean the Bible promotes divorce. There is a difference between promote and permit. Yahweh permits men to become national leaders without promoting them as national leaders. In the history of America, we have had some very ungodly, licentious men in the office of the Presidency. Yahweh surely did not stand behind them promoting their campaign for presidency in the month of November. He did *permit* them to become the President and this is in His providence. Maybe this is not the best example, but a simple looking up the definition of each word will yield the difference. Promote basically means to forward, advance, and contribute to the growth of something. Permit rather carries the meaning of allowing something to take place.

I have to take this stance on divorce because of the facts I laid out earlier. Divorce occurs because of sinfulness in one or more people. Thus, divorce takes place by Yahweh's permission in Scriptures, not by Yahweh's promotion. Nevertheless, it is permitted in certain cases.

Let's begin with something that will be easy to swallow. Yahweh allows for divorce when one of the parties involved in marriage commits sexual immorality. If a man and woman are married and either of them makes a sinful decision to commit

sexual immorality, Yahweh permits the innocent party to divorce the other that has committed the offense. We see this clearly spoken about in a passage like Matthew 5:32. The text speaks of putting away a spouse for the cause of fornication. The word fornication here is the Greek word *porneia* and carries with it a range of inappropriate, nay, unlawful sexual behavior. This could range from marital infidelity to incest to harlotry among many other things. You may also consider Matthew 19:1-9 on this particular allowance.

Another grant for divorce is the apostasy of one of the marriage participants. We receive this understanding by noticing two points in particular. One is that we must realize the Greek word mentioned above (*porneia*) doesn't only deal with physical sexual immorality, but also *spiritual* sexual immorality. This word is used in the New Testament to describe the actions of people who do not serve Yahweh, the true and living God, but rather false gods of their own imagination (Revelation 17:2; 18:3,9). Likewise, this word (its Hebrew counterpart) is used in the Old Testament Scriptures when Yahweh's Israel people would serve other gods. They would leave their husband (Yahweh) and cleave to other lovers (false gods).

The second point to consider on this allowance is the words of Paul in First Corinthians 7:12-16. In this section of Scripture, Paul deals with two people who are unequally yoked. The text is not completely clear if the couple were both heathens at the time of their marriage or if they went into the marriage neglecting Paul's admonition in Second Corinthians 6:14. Let's use the example of their both being heathen and in the future one of these two people decided to convert to the faith. They should not feel that they must depart from their unbelieving spouse. There might be a chance that they could have a part in the conversion of their unbelieving spouse. The right thing to do is to remain with this spouse in hopes of their conversion to Christ. Remember First Peter 3:1-2. A believing wife can convert her unbelieving husband by her behavior apart from her words.

What the text also states though, is that if an unbeliever departs *on their own*, the believer is not under bondage in such cases. I don't know what else this bond could be referring to except the marriage bond. Therefore, let's say that a believing man's wife is an unbeliever, and she decides she is leaving the house and refuses to follow Yahweh living a life of service to other gods. By the way, if a person is not serving Yahweh, they are automatically serving other

gods, there is no in between. In this case, the believer isn't under the bondage of having to remain married to the unbeliever in such a situation.

Placing these two points together causes us to realize a technicality here. If you are currently married to an unbeliever, I would admonish you to only seek a divorce if the unbeliever departs on his or her own. No need to think you have to divorce the unbeliever simply because of their unbelief. But, if they choose to leave you, you are not under bondage in such cases. Paul's use of "such cases" proves that normally you *are* bound to remain married to your wife and not seek for a divorce. To just up and choose to get a divorce because you "feel like it" or because you "fall out of love" is not righteous in Yahweh's sight.

The last reason for divorce I want to mention is one that has no specific Bible verse for it, but it is attainable by recognizing something that's called the principle factor. In other words, the Bible often deals with specific practices, laws, and customs of the culture in which it was written. We can take the specifics of a law or teaching and apply them to our culture appropriately.

For example, the Bible teaches that if a man steals an ox or a sheep, and butchers it or sells it, he is to repay five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. We read such a passage and may

think that it has no relevance for 21st century Christians but quite the contrary is the case. In ancient times, a man's tool was often a man's ox. Men plowed with an ox then, as men plow with a tractor today. It is probable that the reason the penalty was higher for the stealing of an ox is that the ox was a tool for the man, while the sheep (though valuable) was not a tool. The sheep could provide clothing and food (I often milk goats – so food would extend to drink) but a sheep was not an animal that you would hook to a yoke for plowing.

Making a practical application today would be something like this: If a thief stole a man's work truck as opposed to his family vehicle, he must repay five-fold for the work truck as opposed to four-fold for the family vehicle. A man's working tools would also yield a five-fold restitution. Let me say in passing, that the restitution would not be given to the government under Yahweh's system of things, but to the offended party. In short, Biblical law has just as much application in today's culture as it did in the culture of ancient Israel. Much more could be said on this issue, but this example will suffice for the current topic.

We have discovered that the Bible teaches a husband should love his wife as Christ loved the Church and that he should nourish and cherish her as he would his own body. What, then,

should we make of a husband who habitually abuses his wife either physically or mentally? I do not speak of the arguments that occur in all marriages. Marriage partners should always seek to restore unity when an argument or strong disagreement arises. What I'm talking about is serious abuse coming from one or the other spouse. What if a husband burns his wife with cigarettes or beats her black and blue? What if this is not a one time incident that ceases after true heart repentance on his part? I believe the Biblical principles in the law teach that a woman is not bound to remain with such a man. Divorce would be lawful.

The same can go for a spouse abusing the children. If there is any type of sexual molestation involved in a marriage towards a child, it is surely a violation of Yahweh's sexual principles. Should a woman have to stay with a man that she knows is going to molest her children? Should a man have to remain married to a woman who he knows is going to beat their children until they are black, blue, or bleeding? Extreme you say? These types of occurrences happen all the time. Some people are too naïve to think that such things do not happen and are unwilling to think about these situations. They cling desperately to the fact that they have never been divorced and that divorce is disallowed in all

circumstances or in only ones of sexual infidelity on the part of a spouse. I disagree, and I base my disagreement on the principles in Yahweh's laws that teach us to honor our spouse as we would our own bodies.

I conclude this chapter by reiterating my previous statements. Do not try to shape a mild situation in your marriage into one of extreme proportions. If you and your wife have a spat, do not try and say that she has given you grounds for divorce. If a wife's husband loses his temper and breaks a wall or flower pot, no need to sign any divorce papers. People are sinners, we have to work at our problems. Yahweh went to great lengths to keep His covenant with national Israel during the Old Covenant. He even told a prophet, (Hosea) to take a wife of harlotry and have children of whoredom (Hosea 3:1). My point is that even if your spouse commits a grave sin against you, you are not necessarily obligated to divorce them. You can show them some kind of unconditional love because you seek to imitate the grace of your Creator. I know it's difficult, but it can be done. It may not be commanded of you in certain situations, but a man or woman who does their best to hold a marriage together is truly not seeking their own, but the well being of another (First Corinthians 13:4-5).

Concluding Thoughts

So here we are. My hope at this point is that you've been pricked in your heart by the Spirit of Yahweh; that is and will always be my goal in this book. As a minister of Scripture, I feel a strong urge to make an even stronger effort at promoting the sanctity and continuance of Biblical marriage. I believe it is something Yahweh appreciates. He wants homes to stay intact, He does not want children torn between two parents and spouses as enemies. Yahweh desires for a man to leave his father and mother and *cleave* to his wife. He doesn't desire a man to cleave and then one day decide he doesn't love the woman he cleaved to.

I ask you husbands: are you cleaving to your wife? Is she feeling the love from you that she needs? Are you just telling her you love her but not showing her you love her? What are your goals? Do you spend more time fishing, hunting, or watching sports than you do with your wife? When is the last time you read the Bible together?

When is the last time you prayed with your wife? When is the last time you and her discussed Scripture? Do you want to ruin your marriage or keep it together? Do you want your wife to grow apart from you and closer to you? Do you want her to be apart from you all the time because you would rather be at work, with friends, or doing something else? Do you want to make her feel that the children she bore have no love coming from their father? How do you want to be remembered? Do you want other people to think of you as some kind of GQ model? Do you wish to be remembered as the man who always chased money? If your children walk in your footsteps, where are you going to lead them; to the kingdom or to destruction? Where are leading your wife right now as you read these words? Is she getting a holy example from you or a bad temper? Do you yell at her all the time or do you speak kindly to her? What are you going to do? You have a choice. You can completely disregard the Bible and destroy your marriage, your relationship with your children and everything that Yahweh has to bless you with, or you can tighten up, be a true man of Yahweh and love your wife, father your children, and be a partaker of the kingdom of heaven. Which will it be?

