

# MARRIAGE THROUGH THE AGES

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## “Husbands, Love Your Wives”

Someone recently asked me why we have so many admonitions to wives to honor their husbands but so few admonitions to husbands to honor their wives. This is a good question that deserves our attention. In this brief article we will examine Bible teachings on the husband’s duty to his wife.

Let us start with the first marital model: Adam and Eve. In **Genesis 1:27** we read that both male and female are created in the image of God. In God’s sight, men and women are equals and equally valuable to Him. Adam was the first human, and God saw that it was not good for him to be alone (**Gen. 2:18**), so God made *“a helper suitable for him.”* None of the animals was suitable as a helper ... the man needed a partner. Men, remember that we need our women, and treat them as our equal partners as we each strive to fulfill the roles God has appointed for each gender.

God took a rib from Adam and formed it into the first woman (**Gen. 1:21-22**). When Adam awoke and met her, he said, *“This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”* (**Gen. 1:23**). With these words, Adam declared her to be his equal. She is not to be regarded as a piece of property, a concubine, or a slave, nor should her value be limited to the roles she fulfills in the home.

Of the marriage relationship, the Scripture states, *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh”* (**Gen. 2:24**). Jesus affirmed this marital model in **Matthew 19:4-6**. A man must cleave to his wife and regard her as his own flesh. Apart from a person’s relationship with God, there is no relationship more important than the one you have with your spouse. Your job is not more important. Neither is your education, your hobbies, or the pursuit of possessions, achievements, or entertainment. Let me say it again: with the exception of one’s relationship with God, there is no relationship more important in this life than one’s relationship with his or her spouse.

Now let’s examine something specific that troubles several marriages. Notice what the Scripture teaches in **1 Corinthians 7:3-5**:

*The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

No need to mince words here ... this is talking about the sexual relationship between husband and wife. Husband, if you are not taking care of your wife’s sexual needs, you are disobeying this Scripture. She has just as much right to sexual satisfaction as you do, and the only person she is authorized to receive it from is her husband. Sexless marriages frequently end in adultery and divorce. Stop depriving!

Too often we husbands are quick to turn to **Proverbs 31** and admonish our wives to be the virtuous wife described therein. We forget that there are thirty preceding chapters in that book that

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tell the man how to be a good husband and father. Perhaps if you want a better wife you should try being a better husband ... you might be surprised at how her attitude will change, and how much more she will respect you, if you are the godly man you ought to be! And be mindful of the example you set for your sons ... they learn husbandry from you. If you disrespect or neglect her, if you speak to her with sarcasm or bitterness, if you put your wants above hers, your sons may grow up to do the same to their wives.

Finally, the Scriptures liken marriage to the relationship between Jesus Christ and the church. Read **Ephesians 5:22-33**. The husband should value his wife in the way Jesus values the church. And if you are in doubt as to the manner or degree in which you are to love her, the Scripture says to love her as you love yourself. Do you protect yourself? Do you indulge yourself in comforts, entertainments, and recreational activities? Do you try to better yourself? She is entitled to everything you would give yourself.

A wife's needs are just as important as a husband's: the need for bonding, partnership, equality, sharing of burdens, emotional connection, intellectual stimulation, and of course the sex. She needs your presence, your attention, your arms around her ... and she needs these more than she needs the creature comforts you are trying to provide when you spend too much time away at work. Husbands, love your wives as your own flesh. God gave her to you as your partner in this life, so honor her as such. And remember: when you married her, you made a vow ... a solemn oath to her, in the presence of God and witnesses. Fulfill your vow every day!

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