

THE DISTINCTIVE ROLES OF MARRIAGE - RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WIFE

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS FROM EPHESIANS 5:15–21

“Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise— 16 making the most of the time, because the days are evil. 17 So don’t be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. 18 And don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit: 19 speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of Christ” (Eph. 5:15–21).

1. “Be filled with the Spirit” (5:18)
2. “In the fear of Christ” (5:21)
3. “Submitting to one another” (5:21)

THE ROLE OF A WIFE

“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, 22 because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives are to submit to their husbands in everything. . . 33 To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband” (Eph. 5:22–24, 33).

“In the same way, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, even if some disobey the word, they may be won over without a word by the way their wives live 2 when they observe your pure, reverent lives. 3 Don’t let your beauty consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and wearing gold jewelry or fine clothes, 4 but rather what is inside the heart—the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight. 5 For in the past, the holy women who put their hope in God also adorned themselves in this way, submitting to their own husbands, 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You have become her children when you do what is good and do not fear any intimidation” (1 Pet. 3:1–6).

Biblical Marriage

Lesson 5

“Submission is the divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband’s leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts” (John Piper, *This Momentary Marriage*, 80).

1. Submitting as to the Lord

a. What submission is not:

- i. Submission does not mean agreeing with everything your husband says.
- ii. Submission does not mean leaving your brain or your will at the wedding altar.
- iii. Submission does not mean avoid effort to change your husband.
- iv. Submission does not mean putting the will of the husband before the will of Christ.
- v. Submission does not mean that the wife gets her spiritual strength mainly from her husband.
- vi. Submission does not mean acting out of slavish fear toward the husband.
- vii. Submission does not mean blind or unqualified obedience to the husband.

b. What submission is:

- i. Submission exercises a singular reverence.
 1. To Jesus Christ, supremely.
 2. To your own husband, subordinately.
 3. In everything, scripturally.
- ii. Submission embraces a subordinate role.
- iii. Submission expects a renunciation of rights.
- iv. Submission entails an obedient response.
- v. Submission expresses a proper respect.

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Lesson 5

2. Showing Respect

- a. What is your *attitude* toward your husband?
- b. How do you *address* or speak to your husband?
- c. How do you *act* toward your husband?

3. Working at Home/Managing the Household

“Therefore, I want younger women to marry, have children, manage their households, and give the adversary no opportunity to accuse us” (1 Tim. 5:14).

“In the same way, older women are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to excessive drinking. They are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and in submission to their husbands, so that God’s word will not be slandered” (Tit. 2:3–5).

“Homemaking—being a full-time wife and mother—is not a destructive drought of usefulness but an overflowing oasis of opportunity; it is not a dreary cell to contain one’s talents and skills but a brilliant catalyst to channel creativity and energies into meaningful work; it is not a rope for binding one’s productivity in the marketplace, but reins for guiding one’s posterity in the home; it is not oppressive restraint of intellectual prowess for the community, but a release of wise instruction to your own household; it is not the bitter assignment of inferiority to your person, but the bright assurance of the ingenuity of God’s plan for complementarity of the sexes, especially as worked out in God’s plan for marriage; it is neither limitation of gifts available nor stinginess in distributing the benefits of those gifts, but rather the multiplication of a mother’s legacy to the generations to come and the generous bestowal of all God meant a mother to give to those He entrusted to her care” (Dorothy Patterson, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, p. 377).

Biblical Marriage

Lesson 5

APPLICATIONS

1. Applications for unmarried women

- a. What would it look like for you to prepare for this role?
- b. Questions to ask about the man you're dating:
 - i. Is this guy worth it?
 - ii. Is what he's doing with his life worthy of me orienting my life toward him?
 - iii. Can I trust his leadership?
 - iv. Does he give up his life for others? Or does his world revolve around him?

2. Applications for married women

- a. The challenge of following a flawed husband.
- b. Recognize it will take time for him to really know you.
- c. It will take several years for your marriage to fully take on this shape (headship/leadership; helping/nurturing)

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON

- Read "As Christ Loved the Church: Instructions for Husbands from Ephesians 5" by Daryl Wingerd at bulletininserts.org/as-christ-loved-the-church-instructions-for-husbands-from-ephesians-5
- Read "The Purpose and Limits of a Husband's Authority" by Jonathan Leeman at crossway.org/articles/the-purpose-and-limits-of-a-husbands-authority