

# The Ideal Marriage - How Husbands & Wives Should Treat One Another

Intro:

1. This passage has done more for women's status in society than any other document.
2. This passage shows how a husband ought to treat his wife & what her response should be.
  - a. 9 verses deal with husbands - only 3 verses deal with wives.
  - b. So God has 3 times as much to say to husbands as He does to wives.
3. The context of ancient society.
  - a. **In Jewish culture:** Duet 24:1 - If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house . . . In Jesus' day "indecent" could mean anything!
  - b. Women could not initiate divorce, only men could.
  - c. **The Roman culture:** women kept track of dates by the names of their husbands; 20 in her lifetime was not unusual. Women were considered possessions.
  - d. **The Greek culture:** to men prostitutes were for pleasure, concubines for companionship & wives were for running the household & caring for the children. There was no divorce. Men just threw their wives out.
4. The context of our modern society is not much better morally.
  - a. We have no fault divorce, cohabitation, liberal media, a 49.7% divorce rate & gays with a legal marriage relationship.
  - b. Moslems are trying to make Sharia Law binding in some of our American communities which would make women virtual slaves to their husbands.
5. If the world ever needed direction about how to succeed in marriage it's today!

*Ephesians 5:22-33*

## I. v25-33 - How are Husbands Supposed to Treat Their Wives?

- A. The same way Lord Jesus treats His church. So how does the Lord treat the church?
  1. **v25** - He loved her.
    - a. His love was **assertive**. Lk 9:51 - As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.
    - b. **Gave** (παραδίδωμι) = hand yourself over. **ILL: In the garden He surrendered.**
  2. **v26** - He made her holy through the new birth.
    - a. **Washing with water through the word** is new birth language. Jn 3:5 - no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.
    - b. Because of the cross you can have abundant & eternal life with God.
  3. **v27** - He presented her **radiant** (ἔνδοξος) = glorified, held in honor (like a bride at her wedding).
  4. **v29b-30** - He feeds & cares for it by providing His Holy Spirit.

## B. So how is a husband to treat his wife? **Assertively!**

1. A woman's basic need from her husband is to be loved **biblically**.
  - a. A wife's self esteem is provided primarily by the way her husband treats her.
  - b. **Biblical love** (ἀγαπάω) is giving - because there's a need.
  - c. Love means: providing, showing affection, spending time with, talking to, etc.
  - d. Men don't naturally do this - so they have to be commanded!
2. **v25** - Love her **sacrificially**.
  - a. To the degree Lord Jesus gave Himself for the church.
  - b. Would you be willing to suffer & die for her?
3. **v26** - Love her **purely**. The washing of water (baptism) symbolizes complete forgiveness.
4. **v28-29** - Love her **caringly**.
  - a. **Ought** (ὀφείλω) = to owe, be in debt. She has a right to this kind of love.
  - b. Treat her like you treat your own body: you nourish, provide for it, protect it.
  - c. As you love your wife you love yourself. Psychology tells us an unloving person is that way because he has a poor self worth.
  - d. **Care** (θάλλω) = to cherish, lit. get warm by hugging. Men, we need more cherishing today - more romance!
5. **v31** - Love her **unconditionally**.
  - a. The love of a parent for a child is that way - so the love in marriage should be too.
  - b. A married couple is considered by God to be one unit - one flesh (body).
    - (1) **For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. (Gen 2:24)**
    - (2) You must leave your parents physically & emotionally.
    - (3) You must be **united** (προσκολλάω) = cleave, glue yourself. This sentence is quoted 5 times in the Bible. God must want to get your attention!
  - c. So divorce is like tearing apart a physical body limb from limb - some of you have experienced that pain!

## II. **v22-24** - How are Wives Supposed to Respond to Their Husbands?

- A. The same as the way the church responds to Jesus. So how does the church respond to Jesus?
  1. **v23** - To the church, Jesus is Lord as well as savior.
  2. As Lord, we as church members, govern our lives by what His Bible says.

**B. So how is the wife to treat her husband? Responsively!**

1. A husband's basic need from his wife is **respect**.
  - a. He needs to feel like her prince, knight in shining armor; one whom she can trust with her life.
  - b. He gains considerable self esteem by the way his wife relates to him.
  - c. Women do not naturally submit, so they have to be commanded.
2. Men have been given authority, but also responsibility.
  - a. **ILL: Delegated command authority in the army.**
  - b. In Genesis, Adam was told to take charge of the world & Eve was created to be "a fit helper" for him (**Gen 1:28; 2:18**).
3. **v22 - Submit** (ὑποτάσσω) = to rank yourself under, to obey. So to fit yourself in with your husband's plans.
4. This submission is, hopefully, a natural response to a biblically loving husband.
5. This submission may have to come as an act of faith.
  - a. **1 Pet 3:1-6 - Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master.**
  - b. But Sarah's submissive attitude was an act of faith. **ILL: Abraham telling her to say she's his sister. (Gen 20:2-13)**

**If modern day husbands & wives would just fit themselves into this pattern, they would have longer & happier marriages. Let's do this marriage thing God's way - let's do it right! Then you can expect His blessing!**