

Flesh of my Flesh, Lesson three

Let the Wife See that She Respects Her Husband

Ephesians 5:33 says this:

“...let the wife see that she respects her husband.” (ESV, NKJ) “The wife must respect her husband.” (NIV) “the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.” (NAS)

The Amplified Bible says this: “and let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband - that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him, venerates, and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him, and loves and admires him exceedingly.”

Let’s take the last part of the Amplified passage and break it down and examine what some of these words mean and how they apply to our marriages.

- A. Notices him – what other words could we use for notice?
- B. Regards and honors - earlier in Ephesians 5 we are told that the “husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church.” The husband is the spiritual leader in the home, and as such is responsible before God for the household. We should work to help him in this, and to help the children to respect their father.

Let’s examine some Biblical examples of disrespectful wives:

Genesis 27:1 – 19

Judges 14:15 – 17

Hosea 2:5 - 7

- C. Prefers him –
When we have more of a heart level relationship with someone else – whether a friend, sister, parent, child – or our jobs, ministries or hobbies really have our hearts and minds, we are not preferring him.
- D. Venerates and Esteems him – What is esteem? Proverbs 12:4 says that a wife who shames her husband is like “rottenness in his bones,” and an excellent wife is his crown.
- E. Defers to him
- F. Praises him – this is not artificial or exaggerated false praise, but genuine and honest

- G. Loves and admires him exceedingly. Love and respect strengthen a home, strengthen the husband as the leader, encourage him in what is right before God.

How can we build our own love and admiration for our husbands? Is this love and respect to be found by waiting for him to be perfectly obedient to Christ before he deserves our respect? Scripture does not say this – the passage we are examining says that the WIFE is to SEE, or SEE TO IT, or that the wife MUST respect her husband. No statements like – respect him if he deserves it, or wait until he deserves it. Many women are called to very difficult marriages – when one person does not behave as he should, that does not mean the wife is to disobey God's commands. Disobeying God's commands to respect him is sin. James tells us that sin begins in our thought lives –

James 1:15 – “when desire has conceived it gives birth to sin.” This was in the person's mind first. And 2 Corinthians 10:5 tells us to “take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

The world will tell you several things about your thought life – Your thoughts are out of your control, you can't help how you feel, you can think anything you want – it doesn't matter. It DOES matter.

Step one - Taking deliberate control of how you think about your husband's words, actions and character is essential. Your prayer life in this matters enormously. The Holy Spirit will always strengthen you in your efforts to obey God's revealed will.

Philippians 4:8 & 9 says this: “Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”

We are to practice these virtues ourselves and we are also to THINK about these things. Instead of seeking things to criticize or dislike, seek to see, think about and focus on what is true, honorable, and just – watch for good qualities and remind yourself of them. What about him is worthy of praise, what about him is excellent? Too often a wife becomes the critical quarrelsome wife, frequently correcting and complaining because she is so focused on where he falls short instead of taking her thoughts captive – praising God for her husband's excellent qualities.

Step two then moves to your speech: Praise him out loud. To him personally – “you did a great job with that, I appreciate how you did that, thank you for this, I know the kids loved your doing that with them.” Praise him to the children – behind his back and in front of him. Remind the kids of something great their dad did. Praise him to your friends and family. Have a positive influence on the opinions others have of him.

Don't join in with negative comments about men in general.

Step three involves your actions – showing your love and respect. Think about ways you can be helpful to him –cheerfully re-arrange your schedule to be helpful, run errands for him, be careful in recording messages for him, be careful with the budget and efficient in managing the household. Be gracious to his family and friends. Little expressions of affection, making his favorite meal, asking him for “date night” making these arrangements yourself, asking him to take a walk with you.

Pray for him daily. Show humility in apologizing for your own failures. Let him see Christ in your own actions and attitude.

Taking your thoughts captive, praying for the help of the Holy Spirit, and making deliberate efforts to think and behave with love and respect will affect your feelings, strengthen your marriage and strengthen and support your husband, and also gives your children security and encouragement. Your children live in a world where their parents’ staying married is not a guarantee.

The world tells you that your wedding day and honeymoon are wonderful and that with the passing years you grow increasingly bored with each other, increasingly disillusioned and argumentative.

The truth in a Christian marriage is very different from this. None of us is perfect; we need a Savior because of our own sins. With the Holy Spirit at work in each of us and in our marriages, with love for Christ, death to self and devotion to God and His purposes for your life, even a painful marriage can be redeemed. Christian marriage is designed to be a joy. You are designed to be a helper and nurturer.

“The Godly woman builds her home.” Build a home that is filled with the precious treasures of encouragement, love, respect and trust, a safe haven and a place where God is served and honored.