

## Love and Respect

God's message to husbands is to \_\_\_\_\_ their wives, and His message to wives is to \_\_\_\_\_ husbands. The Lord always gives the \_\_\_\_\_ instructions that provide for the peace and happiness of His people. The Lord's instructions on marriage is no exception. God unites us in marriage and gives us the \_\_\_\_\_ that we most need to live happy and godly lives. Marriage, as God wills it, provides love, security, and stability to our lives. It's truly the foundation of the \_\_\_\_\_.

As a Christian husband and wife we should do what is right, even when doing what's right isn't \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus set the example. **Read 1 Peter 2:21-23.** Jesus loved us even when we were unlovely and sinful. He died for us, even when we were helpless and ungodly.

All marriages go through \_\_\_\_\_ spots and challenges. I know that Jackie and I had our \_\_\_\_\_ of parenting responsibilities, financial challenges, and health problems. I'm certainly not the \_\_\_\_\_ husband, and Jackie has had to put up with all my weaknesses. Through it all, we've never \_\_\_\_\_ the commitment that we made to each other in the presence of God and witnesses. Both of us \_\_\_\_\_ to love and respect each other. When we turn to Scripture, love and respect are the \_\_\_\_\_ to happiness in marriage.

### **Our reading today comes from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians 5:22-27.**

The Scriptures teach the husband is the \_\_\_\_\_ of his wife, and she is to be subject to him. In our day, when equality seems to be so important, some think it's \_\_\_\_\_ that God gave authority to husbands over their wives. This authority, however, never gives men the \_\_\_\_\_ to abuse or dominate their wives. Any man who treats the woman he married unkindly is breaking God's \_\_\_\_\_. He's not only disobeying God, he's also deceiving himself. Only a fool believes abusing his wife will benefit him. Wise husbands understand the better that they treat their wives, the more their wives will respond with love and respect.

When husbands \_\_\_\_\_ to love their wives, their wives \_\_\_\_\_ with disrespect. When husbands sense a lack of respect from their wives they often \_\_\_\_\_ in ways that are unloving. So these feelings of being disrespected or unloved \_\_\_\_\_ apart the marriage. When husbands show love and wives show respect, the marriage prospers and strengthens. You can make your marriage brighter and better, husbands, if you can \_\_\_\_\_ to demonstrate Christian love to your wife.

If a disrespected husband will love his wife anyway, and if a wife who feels unloved will respect her husband anyway, they can \_\_\_\_\_ putting their damaged marriage back together. A wise husband pays attention to his wife. He's able to see what she \_\_\_\_\_ to be happy. Every woman needs to \_\_\_\_\_ her husband is close to her and cares about her. Some husbands

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**Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.**

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keep their distance from their wives, and their wives feel \_\_\_\_\_ because of it. Wives need husbands who will open up enough to \_\_\_\_\_ their thoughts and feelings. She feels unwanted or unneeded when he closes up and \_\_\_\_\_ her out of his life. When he keeps his life secret from her, she feels he doesn't love her enough to \_\_\_\_\_ her. Wives need to know their husbands are \_\_\_\_\_ to the marriage, that he's not looking elsewhere. She also needs to know he sees her as the \_\_\_\_\_ important person in his life (except for God). She needs to know he cherishes and honors her.

The most important thing a husband can do is love his wife. **Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.** Love may start with a \_\_\_\_\_ feeling, but we must learn how to love our wives; and wives must learn how to love their husbands.

Some folks are \_\_\_\_\_ to love than others, that's true, and love will require lots of patience and kindness. Love demands that we set "self" aside. I can't love someone else if I'm focused \_\_\_\_\_ on myself and I'm self-centered. Love rules out envy, and arrogance and rudeness. It learns to let small things slide and not be irritated all the time. Love bears what marriage demands, it believes and hopes the best in our spouse, and it endures. Love determines to put the \_\_\_\_\_ interests of our spouses before our own, regardless of the cost. Jesus loved the church like that, and He asks husbands to love their wives that way as well.

Loving your wife involves taking the \_\_\_\_\_ to be close to her and to listen. The happiest \_\_\_\_\_ spend time with each other, talking and listening to each other. Husbands and wives should spend a good while each day in meaningful conversation. Turn the TV off, get away from the computer, and talk face to face. A wise husband will take the time to \_\_\_\_\_ his life with the woman that he loves. He wants her to know about him and he wants to invest his life in her by \_\_\_\_\_. To fail to pay attention to your wife is to say to her that you don't \_\_\_\_\_ what she has to say. Such behavior is abusive not loving.

James 1:19-20 says, "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not \_\_\_\_\_ the righteousness that God requires." Much of the \_\_\_\_\_ in our homes would go away if people would take the time to listen and understand the people they love. Listen to your spouse, let her finish her sentences, don't act rashly or hastily. Try to understand her life from her point of view.

Treat your \_\_\_\_\_ with kindness. "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your \_\_\_\_\_ may not be hindered" (1 Peter 3:7). Some men have the awful attitude that because husbands are the head of the wife that this position of authority gives them the right to dominate or abuse their wives with their \_\_\_\_\_. Any man who treats his wife like a doormat violates the will of God. Abusive power is a marriage \_\_\_\_\_. Husbands, treat your wife kindly, tell your wife how important and valuable she is to you. Watch for the loving \_\_\_\_\_ on her face when you do that! The writer of Proverbs said, "An excellent wife, who can find? For her \_\_\_\_\_ is far above jewels. The heart of her husband \_\_\_\_\_ in her, and he will have no lack of gain" (Proverbs 31:10-11). Notice how the wise husband trusts his wife's judgments and realizes how fortunate he is to have her. It's

utter foolishness for a man to expect his wife to love him and meet all his needs while he \_\_\_\_\_ her unkindly. Husbands, love your wives.

Jesus taught, "In everything, therefore, treat people the same \_\_\_\_\_ you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12). I'm amazed how kind and good people can be to those \_\_\_\_\_ the family, they'll be nice to them, but they'll treat their own families with disrespect. If we could see ourselves as we really are and how we treat our families, we might be quite \_\_\_\_\_. If we had a tape recording of our words or a video of our actions, we might see ourselves the way our families see us. Some folks never consider how \_\_\_\_\_ they make their family's lives. That's why, every now and then, it's good for all of us to step back and take a long look at how we've \_\_\_\_\_ our families. Empathy is the ability to \_\_\_\_\_ things through the eyes of another and to feel what he or she is feeling. Sometimes we look at ourselves through other's eyes. When we do that, we ask, what are we going see? Will we like what we see?

A wise husband will also be the \_\_\_\_\_ leader in his home. It's spiritually important for couples to spend \_\_\_\_\_ together singing, praying, and reading the Bible. There's great \_\_\_\_\_ in a husband and wife privately praying together every day. Prayer allows husbands and wives to take their \_\_\_\_\_ together to God the Father. It allows them to express to each other and with each other's presence and in the presence of God to talk about their \_\_\_\_\_ concerns and needs. When two people pray with each other, they develop a spiritual intimacy and unity that \_\_\_\_\_ their relationship. Christian marriages, where God is the center of the home, where love and where patience and forgiveness are present, and where God's laws are \_\_\_\_\_, almost never end in divorce. God's ways are not only right ways; they are the \_\_\_\_\_ ways. When people truly live out their \_\_\_\_\_, the way God intended, they find their marriages to be the happiest and most loving. Husbands, do your best to make your \_\_\_\_\_ what God would have it to be. Be the spiritual leader in your home. God's way is truly, truly, a way of blessing.

**Read what Peter said in 1 Peter 3:1-6.** Sarah is an ideal for Christian wives to \_\_\_\_\_. As an apostle, Peter was inspired of God and as an elder, Peter himself was married. He knew the great blessing of having a good wife.

God says, "But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband" (1 Corinthians 7:2). Making your home as God teaches is \_\_\_\_\_ to a happy life. Proverbs 12:4, says, "An excellent wife is the \_\_\_\_\_ of her husband, but she who shames him is as rottenness in his bones." In Proverbs 18:22 Solomon said, "He who finds a wife finds what is \_\_\_\_\_ and receives favor from the LORD"; but in 19:13 he said, "a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping." Just like a dripping faucet, a quarrelsome wife is a \_\_\_\_\_ irritation. Proverbs 19:14 says, "Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD." A man who has a godly and wise wife is doubly \_\_\_\_\_. Proverbs 31 gives us a marvelous insight into a virtuous woman who would be a \_\_\_\_\_ to any man. It begins in Proverbs 31:10 with the words, "A wife of noble \_\_\_\_\_ who can find? She is worth far more than rubies." He ends the chapter by saying,

“Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord is to be praised” (Proverbs 31:30).

What kind of wife does \_\_\_\_\_ wish women to be? Paul says wives should show respect for their husbands. Many women find it \_\_\_\_\_ to respect men. Some have stereotyped men as crude or juvenile, unworthy of respect. Masculinity, as a whole, has been under attack in our \_\_\_\_\_. Some actually think that we don’t need men at all, but humanity couldn’t function or reproduce itself without men. Many men work very hard and sacrifice a great deal to \_\_\_\_\_ for their wives and families. Many men spend hours \_\_\_\_\_ for their wives and children every day. Many men are sensitive and understanding when they need to be and \_\_\_\_\_ when they need to be. Men who love their wives and live the Christian life of honesty, and integrity and purity will be men \_\_\_\_\_ of love and respect. Some men, sadly, live without integrity or purity. They treat their wives \_\_\_\_\_. I think how tragic! Wives, however, should still respect their husbands.

How can a wife respect her husband when he doesn’t \_\_\_\_\_ it? She gives him respect because of who he is and because of who she is. She gives her husband respect because she \_\_\_\_\_ to God and it’s God’s will. Just as I’d tell a husband to love a wife that is hard to love, I’d tell a wife to respect her husband even when he is hard to respect. Paul said, “Nevertheless let each individual among you also \_\_\_\_\_ his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she \_\_\_\_\_ her husband” (Ephesians 5:33).

If you want a \_\_\_\_\_ marriage start looking at yourself. How are you treating your spouse? Instead of constantly criticizing, start evaluating \_\_\_\_\_. You can help your marriage by improving yourself, rather than putting down your mate. Let’s clean up our own lives before we focus on the \_\_\_\_\_ of our spouses. Women, do you show respect to your husband? Men, do you show love to your wife? Men are you meeting your wife’s needs for love and attention, and women are you honoring your husband by meeting his needs?

We can’t change our spouses by making unreasonable \_\_\_\_\_, but we can change ourselves. When we change for the \_\_\_\_\_ our spouses will appreciate those changes and will want to change as well. Improving our marriages begins with improving our hearts. Nothing makes a more loving heart than entering into a loving relationship with God. When the love of God is in your heart, you’ll become more loving and respectful to your family.

Does the love of God live in you? Are you committed to Christ? To become a Christian you must have love for and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Loving God means turning away from the sinful and hurtful ways of the world and embracing the loving and righteous ways of Christ. We call this repentance, a change of heart that leads to a change of life. Upon your repentance and the confession of your faith the Lord asks you to be baptized in His name, immersed in water, for the forgiveness of your sins. In baptism you’ll be united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection according to Romans 6:3-7. The Lord will wash away your sins (Acts 22:16) and add you to His church (Acts 2:47). You’ll be in God’s family. I hope you’ll come to Christ today.