

How Should a Woman Love Her Husband?

A few weeks ago I began a series in the Pastor's Word on husband and wife relationship. I addressed the husband's side of things, but due to the seasonal vignettes and other appropriate topics, I deviated. With your patient permission, allow me to address the wife's side of things in this issue of the Pastor's Word.

How, then, should a wife love her husband?

I. A wife should love her husband by submitting to him.

The Bible says, "*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord*" (Ephesians 5:22). "*Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing*" (Ephesians 5:24). "*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord*" (Colossians 3:18). "*To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed*" (Titus 2:5). "*Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives*" (I Peter 3:1). "*For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands*" (I Peter 3:5). In no less than six places in Holy Scripture we discover that God says women are to submit, subject or obey their husbands.

All three expressions, submit, subject and obey come from one Greek word *hupotasso*, which means: 1) to arrange under, to subordinate 2) to subject, put in subjection 3) to yield to one's admonition or advice. It is a Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader." In non-military use, it was "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility and carrying a burden."

I like the definition that alludes to the wife's responsibility to "arrange like troops under the command of a leader." This admonition to submit does not disassociate a wife from her husband, but enforces the importance of understanding that we are on the same team! This doctrine also emphasizes that we are in war and as we lead our children, the sweet wife is understood as one assigned the task to be "*keepers at home...*" (Titus 2:5). She is the queen of our home that "marshals the troops," under Dad's godly command.

In the true story, "The Sound of Music," there is the humorous incident of Captain Von Tropp blowing his whistle and lining up the kids in military fashion. As the captain stands there inspecting the "troops," as the lone stalwart against this world after the passing of his wife, you see the tender-hearted Maria looking with compassion over the children, knowing that they will need so much more than "hup-two-three-four" cadence of a demanding father, but would need the warm love that only a mother could provide. And of course in the "happily-ever-after ending" that is exactly what happened.

As is often the case, the junior officer on the field of combat does the heroic deeds while the senior officer is in the tranquility of headquarters. Above all, the wife should see herself on the same team, with the same goals and aspirations for the family as her husband.

II. A woman shows her love to her husband by allowing no one else to share in his authority over her life.

If you will notice every time a woman is commanded to submit, the word is always accompanied by the phrase "*own husband*." This is a very strong reminder that a woman is not permitted to allow any other masculine authority in her life to take precedence over her husband. This is said deliberately and emphatically by our Lord in His inspired Word. Our Lord would know the tendency women would have to assign someone else this privilege, but God establishes this command as an extremely important one. For Him to say it once is enough, but six times is going to make the matter much more clear.

To "*leave father and mother*" (Matthew 19:5), is again showing the place a father holds in the home.

In other words he leaves his dad and mom to become the head of his own home as God, Himself declares, *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church...."* (Ephesians 5:23).

I pray that what I am about to state does not "water down" the importance of what I have already said. But it is only natural that by now there might be some female crying out against the "headship" of the husband, by asking, "What if my husband is trying to get me to do some wicked thing?" Before I answer that, please consider this; oftentimes a young lady marries a man whom she has been strongly cautioned by people who love her, not to become involved with. A woman should never marry a man to reform him. She should always marry a man who is either her spiritual equal, if not mentor. You are asking for trouble when this is not resolved before marriage. On the other hand, sometimes the woman is either deceived or her husband back-slides. In this case, if a man asks his wife to do something that is unmistakably wrong, she is not under obligation to obey him. This comes under the category of what Peter said in Acts 5:29, *"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."* So, when asked to go against a clear command of our Lord to preach and teach the gospel, we side with God. By the same rule of interpretation, we are not to obey anyone and disobey God in the deed.

So, according to the Word the woman's chief responsibility is not to her boss, her dad, her pastor, her Sunday School teacher or any other man she looks up to; it is to be given in love and humility to her husband. The only one who takes precedence over him is, of course, her Lord.

III. A woman shows her love to her husband by silence and sweetness to her husband.

The Bible says, *"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church"* (I Corinthians 14: 34, 35).

When it comes to teaching in the public forum of the church, the woman is not to usurp authority over the man, *"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence"* (I Timothy 2:11, 12). Rather than put this into a male domineering interpretation that belittles the high and holy calling of being a woman, let us stay positive in our understanding of what God is saying. God is saying, "Be on the same team, let your husband speak for the family and let there be no time that your heart appears different from his! If there comes a rebuke for the words, let them be directed at him. If there is a reception to his words let the accolades be given to the name that you share, which is after all, his name, *"...and called their name Adam..."* (Genesis 5:2).

How much value does God place on a woman's quiet role? Observe these words, *"But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price"* (I Peter 3:4). The Bible says the quietness of a woman is of great price in the sight of God! The value? Priceless!

The argument is often given to stand up against your husband and demand what you need or want. As is so often the case, God's Word goes against the reasoning of man. For instance the Bible says, *"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear"* (I Peter 3:1, 2). The Lord says that a woman's conversation that is most heard is not the verbal argument she gives, but the sweet, submissive spirit in which she operates. To take another look at Scripture, *"they (the wayward husband) may without the word be won."* The winning is not in verbal response, but having the Christ-like attitude.

Next week, I would like to share with you seven day-to-day ways a woman may show her love to her husband.

- Pastor Pope -

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