**How to Be a Fulfilled and Fulfilling Husband**

or

(*How to Change Your Wife!*)

 The world thinks that fulfillment is the result of having all your desires met (getting what you want no matter the cost). However, the Bible teaches us that genuine fulfillment comes, not from *getting what you want*, but from *being what God wants* you to be – and that is like Jesus Christ. The fulfilled and fulfilling husband is the husband who understands what God has called him to be.

 One writer, commenting on the role of the husband said, “If you are a husband/father, then you are in a war. War has been declared upon your family. Leading a family through the chaos of [our] culture is like leading a small patrol through enemy-occupied territory” (Stuart Scott, “*Exemplary Husband*”). If you are to avoid becoming a casualty of war, you must (Biblically) understand and fulfill your role as husband. You must put off worldly thinking and behaviour and put on godly attitudes and actions! Simply put, you must be a Christ-like husband.

**I. A Christ-like husband is a LEARNER!**

 *“You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”* 1 Peter 3:7

 **A.** The **Command** – Our culture says you can’t understand a woman. Yet God says not only that you can, but that you must.

 1. God stated the principle of being a learner in the form of a command. What phrase from this verse teaches us this is a command?

The command to ‘**live with your wife**’ implies more than sharing the same address. Peter reinforces Ephesians 5:31 and Genesis 2:24 which state “the two shall become one flesh.” Therefore, living with your wife in an understanding way fulfills, in part, the one flesh relationship of the husband to the wife.

 2. What would you say to a husband who viewed this as optional?

 **B.** This is a command to **understand**.

The word “understanding” actually comes from a Greek word which is also translated “knowledge.” This particular word means knowledge based on *personal experience*. That is, because of what you’ve done with that person, because of interaction with her, you understand or know her.

This is the same word that Paul used in Philippians 3:10 when he said, *“...that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death”*

Though our culture says, “You just can’t understand a woman,” God says to the husband, you must understand your wife and you must learn to “live with her in an understanding way.”

 1. What things should a husband seek to understand about his wife?

 - her heart! especially regarding her relationship with Jesus Christ.

 2. What are some attitudes or hindrances on the part of a husband that may keep him from being a learner?

 - pride, selfishness, unforgiving, anger, living in the past

 3. Principles to remember:

 a. Being a learner takes **time** – if God says to do it, you have the time; you must prioritize it.

 b. Being a learner takes **effort**

 i) Study godly women in the Bible (Ruth, Esther, Mary(s), Prov31)

 ii) Study your wife continuously

**II. A Christ-like husband is a LOVER!**

 **A.** Love Defined

 1. Popular views

 Romantic feelings; physical attraction; sex; needing; being “in love”

 2. Biblical View

 *“4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,6does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails”*  1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

 **B.** Love is a **command**!

 *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up*

 *for her …”* Ephesians 5:25

 **C.** Love Described

 1. “*As Christ loved the church* …”

 a. In principle:

 i. **Initiatory**

 *“We love because He first loved us.”* 1 John 4:19

 ii. **Sacrificial**

 *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and* ***gave Himself up for her****”* Eph. 5:25

 In what ways did Christ sacrifice Himself for us?

 - gave up own comfort willingly, humbly

 - willing to be mistreated

 - gave His life

 In what ways can a husband sacrifice himself for his wife?

 - “die” to my wants and desires

 - protect her physically, emotionally, spiritually

*“A husband is not commanded to love his wife because of what she is or is not. He is commanded to love her because it is God’s will for him to love her. It is certainly intended for a husband to admire and be attracted by his wife’s beauty, winsomeness, kindness, gentleness, or any other positive quality or virtue. But though such things bring great blessing and enjoyment, they are not the bond of marriage. If every appealing characteristic and every virtue of his wife disappears, a husband is still under just as great an obligation to love her. If anything, he is under greater obligation, because her need for the healing and restorative power of his selfless love is greater. That is the kind of love Christ has for His church and is therefore the kind of love every Christian husband is to have for his wife.”John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Ephesians (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), p. 297*

 iii. **Humble**

*“3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but* ***with humility of mind*** *regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”* Philippians 2:3-4

 iv. **Willing**

*“11 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep … 18 "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative.”* John 10:11, 18a

 v. **Contra-conditional**

*“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* Rom. 5:8

 vi. **Eternal and Committed**

 *“38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Rom. 8:38-39

 vii**. Forgiving**

 *“bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”* Col. 3:13

 viii. **Purifying** and **Constructive**

 *“26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.”* Ephesians 5:26-27

 What are some things you would need to protect your wife from so that her life honours Jesus Christ?

 What are some things a husband can do to help keep his wife “pure” in this world?

*“Love wants only the best for the one it loves, and it cannot bear for a loved one to be corrupted or misled by anything evil or harmful. When a husband’s love for his wife is like Christ’s love for His church, he will continually seek to help purify her from any sort of defilement. He will seek to protect her from the world’s contamination and protect her holiness, virtue, and purity in every way. He will never induce her to do that which is wrong or unwise or expose her to that which is less than good.” John MacArthur,*

 b. In practice: Jesus Christ loves us in ways we can understand

 i. **Telling** her (verbal and non-verbal)

 ii. **Appreciating** her

 a) Praising her generously

 b) For her character qualities as well as what you receive from her

 iii. Making **time** for her

 iv. **Communicating**

 a) Listening to her TO HEAR what she says

 b) Not assuming she can read your mind

 v. **Sharing**

 a) Share every area of your life with her

 b) Treat her as a complete companion

 vi. **Providing** for her (1 Timothy 5:8)

 vii. Promoting her **spiritual** growth

 viii. Treating her as **priority** – Your love for her should supersede all other loves in your life (except love for God).

 ix. **Initiating love**

 “When there is not enough love in the marriage, one place for a husband to look – in the mirror.” Wayne Mack

 x. As you love **yourself**

*“28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church.”* Ephesians 5:28-29

**III. A Christ-like husband is a SERVANT LEADER!**

*“For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.”* Ephesians 5:23

*“But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.”* 1 Corinthians 11:3

The world has defined leadership as the number of people who are under your authority. Leadership is synonymous with dictatorship. But that is not God’s view of leadership. Christ does not lead that way!

 **A.** Godly leadership is not …

 1. A **Dictatorship**

*“25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. 26 "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”* Matthew 20:25-28

 a. He doesn’t demand submission

 b. His home is not his castle

 c. He doesn’t expect his wife to serve him

 d. He doesn’t force his wife to accept his opinion or preference

 2. Making all the **decisions**

 a. Not enough time to make them all

 b. Not his responsibility to make them alone – He is a team leader

 c. He needs her insight and the godly wisdom God has given her

 d. He will listen to his wife and compare what she says with the Word

 3. **Following** your wife

 a. Ephesians 5:23 – God did not intend for the husband to follow his wife’s lead but vice-versa.

 b. Genesis 3:6 Adam should have protected Eve; not followed her

 **B.** WhatGodly leadership is

*“Biblical leadership is a divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christ-like servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home.”* John Piper

 1. Following **Christ’s** Example

 a. “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”* Jo. 10:27

 Jesus Christ doesn’t drive His church (‘Cowboy’), but leads her (‘Shepherd’).

 b. Having His Attitude: Philippians 2:5-8

*“5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”*

 c. Having His Perspective: Luke 22:26-27

*“26 But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. 27 "For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.”*

 d. Having His Humility: John 13:5

*“5 Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.”*

 2. **Practical Living**: A godly leader …

 **Feeds his wife**: feed her the Word of God (Eph. 5:25-27)

*25 “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.”*

Character of a spiritual leader: one woman kind of man (no adultery & no pornography – even of the eyes and heart; be a faithful man) … not a flirt / not a womanizer / no wandering, glancing, “checking her out” eye / careful to keep boundaries – hugging / touching / texting – social media / etc. … it’s a slippery slope that some think they can handle, but it’s only a matter of time. [“slow fade”]

 **Provides for** **her well-being:** Ephesians 5:28-29

“28 *husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh,* ***but nourishes*** *and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church*.”

… Eph. 5:29 – husband is to nourish his wife – includes caring for her physical needs; Gen. 3:17-19, responsibility to work was given to the man God has given her a different domain = the home!!! Titus 2:3-5) (later we’ll do a session on finances and cover more principles of providing)

**Protects her – physically, emotionally and spiritually**: Ephesians 5:29

*“for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes* ***and cherishes*** *it, just as Christ also does the church*.”

Your wife is trusting you with the rest of your life! Cherish her and never give her reason to fear.

*She is likely physically weaker – don’t take advantage of this. (illustration: sports world / athletes being charged with “domestic violence” … physical abuse.)*

*Don’t physically intimidate (not even with looks). Don’t emotionally intimidate her.*

*Do show her love; do connect with her; do talk to her; do practice intimacy with her; and do love your children too – this will make a huge impact on your wife! Be a real man. Use your strength to protect.*

Every one of us has areas of repentance and growth that are required. I challenge you to begin by praying WITH and FOR your wife. It all starts there as you show that you truly are committed to honour Christ in your marriage. Let’s encourage one another in this area! Find some time to ask one another: “how it’s going, loving your wife.