

A Husband's Relationship to his Wife

Read Ephesians 5:22-33.

What is the key word describing a husband's responsibility to his wife?

What is the position from which this love is demonstrated (v. 23)?

When a man loves his wife from any other position than headship, it is not love but sentimentalism. But headship without love is tyranny. DISCUSS THESE TWO SENTENCES.

The husband loves his wife when he assumes responsibility for her before God. The headship of the husband is very clear in the Scriptures. This is not inequality any more than the Father and the Son are unequal (see I Cor. 11:3). Subordination is not the same as inequality. The Father and the Son are one in substance, but for the purpose of redemption there is an order — the Father *sent* the Son, the Son sent the Spirit. Husbands and wives are equal before God. Sometimes wives are superior in their abilities, but in Scripture God has established a Divine order.

In Gen. 2:18, what term did God use to describe a wife's relationship to her husband?

In view of this, what implications does this suggest concerning a man's relationship with his wife? DISCUSS.

In the passage we read earlier (Eph. 5:22-33), what greater relationship is reflected by that of a husband and his wife? (v. 23)

husband =..... wife =.....

When Jesus took the Church as His Bride He gave her an exalted status and treats her according to that status and not according to her blemishes and faults. WHAT DOES THAT SUGGEST TO YOU CONCERNING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A HUSBAND AND HIS WIFE? DISCUSS. This does not mean that Jesus overlooks the failings and shortcomings of the Church.

What does he do (vs. 26 & 27)?

What does Jesus mean by v. 28? DISCUSS. What did Jesus do for the Church to demonstrate His love to her? (v. 25)

Jesus made the supreme sacrifice for the Church when **He** went to the Cross for her. Husbands are to model their relationship to their wives upon this example. They must put themselves last and their wives first. They must be prepared to die for their wives. In the Greek New Testament there are three words that may be translated as "love" — (1) 'eros' = sexual love; (2) 'philo' = sentimental love, feeling, affection;

(3) 'agape' = sacrificial, self-denying love.

Which love is Paul referring to here?

Give some examples of how a man may demonstrate this love for his wife. DISCUSS. In dying for the Church and rising again Jesus incorporated His Bride into Himself as His Body. So too, when a man is married, his wife becomes one flesh with himself. **He** is to care for her as his own body. In v. 29 what is the meaning of the following two words (you may need a Bible commentary!)

"nourishes" =.....

"cherishes" =.....

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING:

- i) What is a Christian man's spiritual obligation to an unsaved wife?
- ii) Discuss the role of a Christian husband in the following areas:— spiritually, materially, emotionally, physically.

Summary: Jesus submitted Himself to the role of husband to an imperfect, even unfaithful wife. He does not deal with the Church after her sins, but loves her and washes her from all her blemishes. He sees what she is going to become, perfect, and treats her as such. This is the pattern for Christian husbands. As Jesus is totally committed to the Church, so a husband must never go back on his covenant with his wife, in spite of all her faults. He must provide for her material needs, meet her emotional needs, fulfil his conjugal responsibilities, and minister to her spiritually. He must be willing to lay down his life for her.

A Wife's Relationship to her Husband

What does Gal. 3:28 teach us concerning a women's position before God?

Read Eph. 5:22 & Col. 3:18. What does the Bible say concerning a women's relationship to her husband?

DISCUSS — HOW ARE THESE TWO STATEMENTS RECONCILED?

Being a Christian does not release us from our responsibilities in the crucial relationships of life. The child is still in subjection to it's parent; the citizen of a country to the civil authorities; the employee to his employer, and a wife to her husband.

How does 1 Pet. 3:7 describe the wife?

What does this mean? (DISCUSS)

In 1 Cor. 11:10, what does Paul mean by "because of the angels"?

According to Titus 2:5, what did Paul say could be the consequence of a woman not being in submission to her husband?

What is one possible result of a Christian woman submitting to her unsaved husband?

..... (1 Pet. 3:1)

What exception to obedience towards civil authorities did the Apostles give in Acts 5:29?

Give some examples where this might apply in a Christian wife's circumstances?.....

Read Gen. 21:10-12 Who took the lead in this passage?

Who did God side with?

How does this harmonize with 1 Pet. 3:6? DISCUSS. In Eph. 5:23, what motive did Paul give for a women's submission to her husband?

Not only is the Church the Bride of Christ, she is also His Body, of which He is the Head. What does Eph. 1:23 say of the Church?

In a similar sense a woman is the fulness of her husband. She does not have to compete with him. She has equal spiritual rights to him. But, in respect of function she is subject to him. What term does Gen. 2:18 use to describe the function of the wife?

What similar thing does Paul say concerning the role of a wife in 1 Cor. 11:9?

This is the dignity and glory of a woman. Although man was made perfect from the hand of God, yet he is still incomplete until he is married to his wife. The rib taken from his side to create woman represents a vacuum that will always manifest as a serious lack until he is married to a woman.

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:—

1. IS A CHRISTIAN WOMAN SUBJECT TO EVERY CHRISTIAN MAN, OR JUST TO HER HUSBAND?
2. WHAT SHOULD TAKE PLACE WHEN A WOMAN HAS SUPERIOR GIFTINGS OF ADMINISTRATION AND LEADERSHIP ETC. THAN HER HUSBAND?
3. DISCUSS SOME HELPFUL PRINCIPLES THAT WOULD ENABLES CHRISTIAN COUPLES TO HANDLE SITUATIONS WHERE THERE IS DISAGREEMENT CONCERNING CERTAIN DECISIONS.