

Husbands, Love Your Wives

by John Isaac Edwards

This command appears twice in the New Testament (Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:19). A lot of home problems would be resolved overnight if husbands would but love their wives as the Bible teaches.

1) *Have A Preference For.*

The word “love” as used of husbands for their wives, in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3, means “to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of” (*Thayer’s Lexicon*). It needs to be emphasized that Paul said, “Husbands, love **your** wives...” (Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:19). Some husbands have a preference for women other than their wives. 1 Corinthians 7:2 says, “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife...” As husbands, do we have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of our wives?

2) *As Christ Loved The Church.* In Paul’s essay of the church it is written, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). This shows the extent to which husbands regard the welfare of their wives — giving themselves for them. This requires great selflessness! Would any question or doubt

the love of the Lord for His bride, the church? If I’m willing to give my life for my wife, then I will be totally committed to her.

3) *As Their Own Bodies.*

Ephesians 5 teaches, “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh...” (vv. 28-29). We regard our own welfare. We don’t inflict harm or hurt to ourselves. Why then would we misuse or mistreat “bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh” (Gen. 2:23)? Remember that we are “one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). What affects her, affects me. When she is injured, I feel pain. When she is benefited, I am comforted. The Golden Rule fits here: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them...” (Mt. 7:13). With application to husbands, we might say: “...do ye even so to your wives...” And the inverse is true as well: All things whatsoever ye would not that men should do to you, do ye not to them. “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself...” (Eph. 5:33).

4) *Nourish And Cherish.* In connection with husbands loving

their wives as their own bodies Paul declared, “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Eph. 5:39-30).

The word “nourisheth” is reminiscent of what Joseph did for his family. Even when he was ill-treated by his brethren, he placed them “...in *the best* of the land...” (Gen. 47:11), saying, “And there will I *nourish* thee... lest thou... come to *poverty*” (Gen. 45:11). And again, “Now therefore *fear ye not*: I will *nourish* you, and your little ones. And he *comforted* them, and *spoke kindly* unto them” (Gen. 50:21). When we nourish our wives, we will provide the very best we can for them. There are a lot of women who are impoverished in many ways because of failure of their husbands to nourish them. A nourished wife will not live in fear, but be comforted as her husband speaks and acts in kindness unto her.

“Cherisheth” is used but twice in the word of God. Here, in Ephesians 5, of husbands toward their wives. And, in 1 Thessalonians 2:7, “...as a nurse cherisheth her children.” Get the picture? The husband fosters his wife with tender care.

The imagery of Ezekiel 16:6-14 vividly depicts how the Lord nourished and cherished His bride. “Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and bordered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou was exceedingly beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom” (v. 13). Husbands, may we value our wives as the Lord treasured His bride.

5) *Be Not Bitter Against Them.* Colossians 3:19 reads, “Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.” When saying, “I do...” you married “for better” not “bitter.” A bitter husband does not make for a better wife. The word “bitter,” as used in the text, means “to embitter, exasperate, i. e. render angry, indignant; passive, to be embittered, irritated” (*Thayer’s Lexicon*). He may call her “sweet” because he is sweet toward her; he has affection or love for her. He does not anger, antagonize or aggravate, incense, infuriate or irritate her. He is pleasant, pleasing and pleasurable toward her. He is consistent in this manner: “Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?” (Jas. 3:11).

6) *Render Due Benevolence.* The Corinthians were charged, “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence...the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other...” (1 Cor. 7:3-5). The words “render” and “due” suggest a debt; an obligation. “Benevolence” suggests a gift. This is a privilege and special right that belongs exclusively to the marriage bed. “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). He is responsive to her bodily needs.

7) *A Ruling-Well Head.* It is the God-assigned place of the husband to be “...the head of the wife...” (Eph. 5:23). He occupies a position of authority in the home, “...even as Christ is the head of the church...” He is not a tyrant, exercising power or control in a cruel, unreasonable or arbitrary way. As Paul said of men qualified to be elders and deacons, “One that ruleth well his own house...” (1 Tim. 3:4) and “...ruling their children and their own houses well” (1 Tim. 3:12), he leads his wife and children with “...the meekness and gentleness of Christ...” (2 Cor. 10:1). Those too timid to assume

this role, force their wives to bear a responsibility and place for which they were not made.

8) *Dwell With Them, Giving Honour Unto Them.* Peter addressed husbands, “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Pet. 3:7). “Dwell with” is used “of the domestic association and intercourse of husband and wife” (*Thayer’s Lexicon*). “Knowledge” signifies “intelligence, understanding.” Live with her in such a way that manifests intimate knowledge and understanding of her. “Giving honour,” as one who is prized and precious, he values her. “As unto the weaker vessel” suggests, “the female sex, as being weaker than the male...in order to commend to husbands the obligations of kindness toward their wives (for the weaker the vessels, the greater must be the care lest they be broken)” (*Thayer’s Lexicon*).

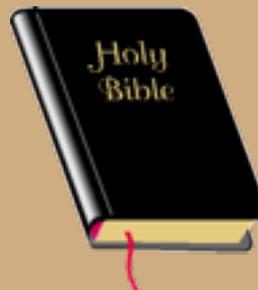
Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Can we put our name in place of the word “charity”? Do these qualities describe us, or are our prayers being hindered?

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