

# God's Plan for the Family

Introduction:

- A. The Peril of Marriage and Family
- B. The Preservation of Marriage and Family
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**Let's Begin:**

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      - b) Illustrated in the marriage relationship
    - 2. The principle of authority and submission – Gal. 3:28
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      - b) In marriage
      - c) In government
      - d) In the family
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## ***Today's Marriages and Their Effect on the Next Generation***

Marriages today are very different from 100 years ago. Each year we see millions of couples make vows of fidelity, pledging to love each other for better or worse. Many of these marriages will end in divorce. As a result of the divorces there is the lingering situation of unwanted children. There are as many abortions by married women as non-married. Couples often don't want children. One-third of all couples in their childbearing years have been sterilized. Why? Because children interfere with divorce. If you don't have any children, you can leave easier. Children get in the way. We have a generation of children growing up in families that are in chaos. Many children are saying to themselves, ***The last thing I want to do is get married.*** I don't want to repeat this mess. They've lived in chaotic and totally unfulfilled families, so they don't want anything to do with marriage. But they want to fulfill their sex drives, so they go from person to person with no commitment. The next generation may never get married.

Even marriages that do hang together are often characterized by adultery, unfaithfulness, lying, cheating, and loss of respect, loss of trust, pride, self-centeredness, materialism, laziness and loneliness. Our nation is a mess, but the sad thing is that those characteristics have crept into the church. Believers are having marital problems, too. The answer is not more counselors, more marriage seminars, or more books on marriage; the answer is in **Ephesians 5:18**: *"Be filled with the Spirit."* When it is accomplished, God Himself will produce the virtues that make for a meaningful marriage. People are good at patching up symptoms but not so good at dealing with reality. What we need to do is back up and look at God's principles.

## ***The Condition of Marriage in Paul's Day***

When Paul began to preach about the diving standards for marriage, the situation was much the same as it is today.

- 1) The Jews
- 2) The Greeks
- 3) The Romans

## ***The Song of Solomon: A look at God-Designed Marriage***

While authority and submission is to exist in the home, our relationships should be bathed in love so that they melt together with mutual love and respect. This illustrated in the Song of Solomon, where we will see a beautiful picture of a right marriage relationship. It is a beautiful example of how leadership is to work.

- 1) The perspective Song of Sol 2:13-15
- 2) The portrait
- 3) The problem

The Bible has two important things to say about having a meaningful relationship:

- 1) We are all to mutually submit to each other
- 2) Functionally, we must have authority and submission.

When we learn the meaning of those two dimensions of truth, our families will be what God intended them to be.

### **Consider the Principles**

- 1) To whom are believers called to submit in Eph 5:21, Heb 13:17, and 1 Peter 2:13? Are you submissive in each of these areas? In which area are you least submissive? Why? What steps do you need to take to help you become more submissive? Meditate on Philippians 2:3-8.
- 2) Some couples choose not to have children so they can remain independent and avoid the responsibility of raising children. They see children as a financial burden rather than a rewarding investment that yields present dividends of joy and personal growth. Read Psalm 127:3-5. If you have children, how are you treating your "gifts" from the lord (v. 3a)? Do you acknowledge them as rewards that must be treasured (v. 3b)? Do you benefit from their usefulness (v. 4)? How have your children blessed you? Have you told them how thankful you are that God has given them to you? Take every opportunity to allow the children of unsaved neighbors to interact with your household. Let them see the harmony that is nurtured in a family committed to biblical principles.

(Taken from "Grace to You" study series by John McArthur)

# God's Pattern for Wives

## I. The Duty of the Wife Eph 5:22-24

### A. The Matter of submission-

*"Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands."*

1. Colossians 3:18, *"Wives, submit unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord."*
2. I Peter 3:1-6, *"Likewise, you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands."*
3. I Corinthians 11:3-12,
4. Titus 2:3-5, *"The aged women that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness..."*
5. Proverbs 31:10-31, *"Her price is far above rubies..."*

### **B. The Manner of Submission (v22b)**

*"As unto the Lord."*

### **C. The Motive of Submission (v23)**

*"For the husband is the head of the wife."*

### **D. The Model of Submission (vv. 23b-24)**

*"Even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."*

# The Husband's Role

Intro:

Field Marshall Montgomery once said to his young troops, "Gentlemen, don't even think of marriage until you have mastered the warfare." Why is marriage potential warfare? Why is it so difficult to have a meaningful relationship with someone? The most meaningful relationship is that which occurs between a man and a woman in marriage, yet fulfillment is elusive. Having a meaningful, lasting relating relationship that gets better, richer, and more fulfilling is rare. In fact, whenever we see marriage portrayed, it's usually depicted as a discontented, bitter relationship ending in separation or divorce. There are reasons for that.

## A. The Curse of God

1. Marriage before the curse (Gen. 2:18-25; cf. 1:27-28)
  - a. Authority and submission
  - b. Unity

## Four Reasons for Marriage

- To propagate children (Gen. 1:28)
- To eliminate loneliness (Gen 2:18)
- To prevent immorality (I Cor 7:2)
- To provide enjoyment (Heb. 12:4; Gen 26:8)

## 2. Marriage after the curse (Gen. 3:16)

- a. The elements of the curse
  - (1) Pain in childbearing (3:16a).
  - (2) Strife in marriage (3:16b)
  - (3) Work (3:17-19)
  - (4) Death (2:17)
- b. The effects of the curse

If you want to know why we have women's liberation movements, it's partly because the element of the curse that says women will seek to rule over men is still in effect. Male oppression and male chauvinism are evident because that part of the curse is also in effect. Women's liberation and male chauvinism are simply evidence of our depravity, the Fall of man, and the curse.

## ***How to Have a Marriage That Works***

Two things are needed if you're going to have a marriage that works.

1. A woman characterized by submission.
2. A man characterized by sacrificial love.

### **B. The Corruption of Satan**

1. Polygamy (Gen 4:19, 23)
2. Evil Sexual thoughts and words (Gen 9:22)
3. Adultery (Gen 16:1-3)
4. Homosexuality (Gen 19:4-11)
5. Fornication and rape (Gen 34:1-2)
6. Incest (Gen. 38:13-18)
7. Prostitution (Gen 38:24).
8. Seduction (Gen 39:7-12).

### **C. The Confusion of Society**

Our Society extols all of Satan's corruptions as virtuous. It is difficult to live a godly life in this evil and perverse generation. The only people who can do this are those who: (1) know the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 1-3) and (2) are filled with His Spirit (Eph 5:18). Apart from that, a person has no more hope of making a marriage work the way God designed it than of finding a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow.

## **Are You Buying the World's Fantasy or God's Reality?**

### **II. The Duty of the Husband (Eph 5:25-33)**

We are to love our wives.

#### **A. The Manner of love (v. 25-31)**

##### ***Three Practical Ways to Love Your Wife***

1. Consideration (I Peter 3:7)
2. Chivalry
3. Communion

# God's Pattern for Husbands

## Part 2

### I. Introduction

#### The Seven Ages of the Married Cold

Several years ago, the Saturday Evening Post published an article entitled "The Seven ages of the Married Cold." It revealed the reaction of a husband to his wife's colds during their first seven years of marriage. It went something like this:

*The first year.* "Sugar dumpling, I'm really worried about my baby girl. You've got a bad sniffle, and there's no telling about these things with all this strep throat going around. I'm putting you in the hospital this afternoon for a general checkup and a good rest. I know the food's lousy, but I'll be bringing your meals in from Rossini's. I've already got it all arranged with the floor superintendent."

*The second year.* "Listen, darling, I don't like the sound of that cough. I called Doc Miller and asked him to rush over here. Now you go to bed like a good girl, please? Just for papa."

*The third year.* "Maybe you'd better lie down, honey; nothing like a little rest when you feel lousy. I'll bring you something to eat. Have you got any canned soup?"

*The fourth year.* "Now look, dear, be sensible. After you've fed the kids, washed the dishes, and finished the floor, you'd better lie down."

*The fifth year.* "Why don't you take a couple of aspirin?"

*The sixth year.* "I wish you'd just gargle or something, instead of sitting around all evening barking like a seal."

*The seventh year.* "For Pete's sake, stop sneezing! Are you trying to give me pneumonia?"

The decline of marriage as seen through the common cold. A funny look at a not-so-funny reality.

## A. The Decadence of the Last Days

### 1. It's Certainty

II Tim. 3:1, "*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.*" Then verse 13, which is a summary of those perilous times, says, "*Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*" In other words, its going to get worse---not better.

### 2. It's Characteristics

- a. Self love-"men shall be lovers of their own selves."
- b. Rebellion in the family
- c. Lack of normal familial love
- d. Attacks directed against the home

## B. The Difficulty in Marriage

Marriage is difficult because of the curse of God, the corruption of Satan, and the confusion of society.

## Review Eph 5:21-34

### I. The Duty of the Wife (vv. 22-24)

To submit to her own husband as unto the Lord.

### II. The Duty of the Husband (vv 24-33\_

To provide, protect and care for his wife in a loving manner.

#### A. The Manner of Love

##### 1. Sacrificial Love (v. 25)

a) The example- "Christ died for the church"

b) Its essence

(1) Properly characterized

Has nothing to do with whether its deserved or not.

(2) Predominantly corrupted

The World loves with an object-oriented love. So if the object is desirable, the world says, "I love you."

God's love is different. God doesn't expect the object to be worthy; it's His nature to love. John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world*"

c) It's exhortation

Eph 5:25 is not saying, "love her if she deserves it;" its saying "love her even if she doesn't deserve it.

Sacrificial love is undeserved, yet it goes to the limits, as shown by Christ.

## Is Love an Emotion?

Love, as God defines it, is not an emotion. The world says, "When the feeling stops, the love is over." That kind of love is not the love of the Bible. The love of the Bible is not a feeling; it is an act of selfless sacrifice. Anyone with a need is worthy of it.

## Is he or Isn't He?

There are many men who want to be spiritual leaders. They want to be preachers, teachers, elders, or deacons—and they want to be pious. But if you want to know whether a man is genuine, check out his home. Find out the last time he made a sacrifice for his wife. Find out whether he would die for her. Find out whether he would give up everything he has to meet her needs. If you do that, you'll find out if he is genuine.

### 2. Purifying love (vv. 26-27)

*"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."*

#### a. The Lord's purification of His church

Christ loved the church. He wanted to cleanse it and purify it. This teaches us a basic truth: when you love someone, his purity is your goal. No one loves something and then wants to defile it.

#### Positional cleansing

When you are saved, the Lord Jesus cleanses every sin you committed and will commit.

#### Daily cleansing

In John 13:10 Jesus says to Peter, "He that is bathed doesn't need to take another bath; you just need your feet washed." The idea is that when you came to Christ, you were totally cleansed, positionally, before God. But every day you walk through the world and get your feet dusty; so Jesus keeps washing your feet.

#### b. The husband's purification of his wife.

Did you know that marrying someone purifies her by taking her out of the world and apart from the past? Marriage sets her apart and purifies her. If you love your wife you will do everything in your power to maintain her holiness, her virtue, her righteousness, and her purity every day you live.

### 3. Caring Love (vv. 28-30)

a. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." (v. 28)

b. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the lord the church." (v. 29)

## A. The Manner of Love (vv. 25-31)

*“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church..”* The standard is infinitely high. However, the text isn’t talking about the full capacity of divine love; it’s talking about the factors in the kind of love Christ manifested. Obviously we cannot match God’s love in quantity, or even in quality, but we can love in kind. We may not possess the ocean, but we can have a little of it in our bucket.

### 1. Sacrificial love (v. 25)

*“As Christ loved the church, and gave himself [lit. “gave up”] for it”*

#### a. It’s example

When Jesus came into the world, He loved the church. In fact, He loved the church before the foundation of the world in eternity past. And He loved us enough to leave heaven, come to earth, take on a human form, be spit on and mocked, crowned with a crown of thorns, nailed to a cross, abused, and have a spear thrust into His side. He loved the church enough to die. That’s sacrificial love. And it is sacrificial love that is to mark the love of a husband for his wife. When Christ gave up His prerogative to be equal with God and chose to come to earth in the form of a servant, He was acting in sacrificial love.

#### b. Its essence

##### 1) Properly Characterized

Sacrificial love has nothing to do with whether it’s deserved or not. There wasn’t a soul in the globe that deserved what Christ did for them. When our names were written in the Lamb’s Book of Life before the foundation of the world, when God by His sovereign love placed us in the Body of Christ, and when we were chosen to be His children, it was not because we were deserving. Sacrificial love is undeserved. God is not rescuing people who deserve rescue; He is saving those who don’t deserve it because it’s His nature to love. An inferior love gives only to those who earn the right to receive it. But God’s love is given to those who don’t have the right to earn it.

##### 2) Predominantly corrupted

The world loves with an object-oriented love. So if the object is desirable, the world says, “I love you.” When people pick a partner, they look around and say, “There’s a nice one. I’ll love that one,” or “Forget that one.” Or they go through a group of people and say, “I don’t care for those people; they aren’t worthy of my love. They don’t live up to my expectation. They don’t fit into my little group. But those people—oh, I love them.” Everything depends upon the form of an object or its personality. We have an object-oriented attraction.

God’s love is different. God doesn’t expect the object to be worthy; it’s His nature to love. That’s the difference. John 3:16 says, *“For God so **loved** the world”* (emphasis added). God was going to love anything, and it was a matter of being attractive, it wouldn’t have been the world. The world hated God, but God loved the world. It’s not the object that defines God love; it is His nature to love.

c. It's exhortation

When Paul says in Ephesians 5:25, "*Husbands, love your wives,*" he's not saying "love her because she deserves it"; he's saying love her even if she doesn't deserve it. Love her enough to die for her, whether she's worth dying for or not." We are commanded to love our wives. It isn't an issue of attraction; it's an issue of a binding commandment from God. However, I believe you will become greatly attracted to what you choose to love.

Sacrificial love is undeserved, yet it goes to the furthest extremity, as exemplified in Christ. It says, "You don't deserve anything, but I'll give you everything. You don't deserve anything, but I'll die for you. You don't deserve My best, but I'll give you My life." And Paul is saying that we are to say to our wives, "You may not deserve all those things, you may be a sinner, and you may not be all that you could be, but that is never the issue. I love you and commit myself to you, even if you are the least deserving. And I will give you everything I have—even to the point of dying for you."

### ***Is Love and Emotion?***

Love, as God defines it, is not an emotion. The world says, "when the feeling stops, the love is over." That kind of love creates serial monogamy; it's not the love of the Bible. The love of the Bible is not a feeling; it is an act of selfless sacrifice. Anyone with a need is worthy of it.

Jesus washed the disciples' feet (John 13). Why? Because they deserved it? No; they were arguing about who would be the greatest in the kingdom. They were on an ego trip; they were selfish, self-centered, self-indulgent, and absolutely insensitive to the fact that Jesus was going to the cross. And in their self-indulgence they refused to wash each other's feet. Finally, Jesus stepped down and washed their feet. And when He was done He said to them, "*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you*" (v. 34). How had He loved them? Certainly not feeling emotional. If anything, He probably felt pain because of their selfishness and sorrow because of their indifference. But in His sorrow and pain, He washed their feet. Love doesn't act out what it feels; it does what is right. Where there is need, love acts. And in a marriage, it isn't a matter of whether your partner deserves you love; it's a matter of sharing love because it is sharing.

John 3:16 doesn't say, "For God so loved the world that He felt emotional about it." God didn't look at this world and say, "I just can't resist them; I've got to get them in heaven. They're terrific." There wasn't one thing in us that was deserving. We were enemies; we hated God vile, but God loved us anyway. And He love us so much, he gave Himself. In Acts 20:20 Paul says, "*The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*" We were so rotten, He had to die to claim us. We were so far gone. He had to give His life to rescue us. And Paul basically says in Ephesians 5:25, "That's the way I want you to love your wives." It's not an emotion. Now, you commit yourself to love you may become emotional, but you must first realize that love is always a verb. Love always acts, meets needs, does whatever has to be done, and reaches out.

Husbands, you will never know how to love until you've sacrificed yourself, crucified yourself, and died to yourself. Paul says that love "*seeketh not its own*" (1 Cor. 13:5). As long as you're looking for what you can get out of marriage, you will never know what it is to love your wife as Christ loved the church.

Ask yourself: When is the last time I made a sacrifice for my wife? When is the last time I sacrificed myself for my wife? When is the last time I came close to actually being willing to die for my wife? When is the last time, when we both wanted to do different things, that I said, “Honey, I think what you wanted to do is what we ought to do?” When is the last time I set aside my own carefully laid out plans to do what my wife suddenly decided she wanted to do? The whole heart of the matter is dying to self.

### ***Is he or Isn't He?***

There are many men who want to be spiritual leaders. They want to be preachers, teachers, elders, or deacons—and they want to be pious. But if you want to know whether a man is genuine, check out his home. Find out the last time he made a sacrifice for his wife. Find out whether he would die for her. Find out whether he would give up everything he has to meet her needs. If you do that, you'll find out if he is genuine. If true spiritual life isn't a reality in the home, then it's a façade on the outside. You may be playing giant, but if you're sacrificially giving up yourself for the needs of your wife, you've missed the point. Love meets needs; worthiness isn't an issue.

Husbands, we need to die to self. Our world tells us “Be the macho man. Be the big shot. Don't let anyone step into your territory. Fight back; you deserve more. Build up your identity. Be somebody. Grab all the gusto. Live for the moment.” But the Bible says, “Crucify yourself”—the opposite of what the world says. Somewhere along the line, if you're going to love your wife as God says you should and if you're going to love her as Christ (who was willing to die) loved the church, then you're going to have to make a sacrifice for her.

#### 2. Purifying love (vv. 26-27)

*“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”*

##### a. The Lord's purification of His church

Christ loved the church. He wanted to cleanse it and purify it. This teaches us a basic truth: when you love someone, his purity is your goal. No one loves something and then wants to defile it. Christ love His church, so He wanted to purify His people.

##### 1) Positional cleansing

When you are saved, the Lord Jesus Christ cleanses every sin you committed and will commit. The Bible says that Christ has *“forgiven you all trespasses”* (Col. 2:13). The moment you opened your heart and invited Christ in, He cleansed you so absolutely that *“though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool”* (Psa. 103:12), and then cast them *“into the depths of the sea”* (Mic. 7:19). He says, *“I will remember their sin no more”* (Jer. 31:34). When you were saved, He made you absolutely pure so that you can enter into the presence of God covered in His absolute righteousness: *“For he hath made him to sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”* (2 Cor. 5:21). When you were saved, you were absolutely purified. Past, present, and future, every sin was done away with, and forever you'll be pure.

## 2) Daily cleansing

In John 13:10 Jesus essentially says to Peter, “He that is bathed doesn’t need to take another bath [Gk.; **louo**]; you just need your feet washed [Gk., **nipto**].” In the Orient, a man would get up in the morning and bathe himself. Then, as he went through the day and his feet got dirty, he would wash them as they needed it. The idea is that when you came to Christ, you were totally cleansed, positionally, before God. But every day you walk through the world and get your feet dusty; so Jesus keeps washing your feet. There is, then, the need for both a total positional cleansing and a continuous daily cleansing. When you were saved, all your sins were washed away; yet 1 John 1:9 says he keeps on cleansing us from all sin. You were bathed once, and you’re continuously kept pure.

### b. The husband’s purification of his wife

Did you know that marrying someone purifies her by taking her out of the world and apart from the past? Whatever relationships she may have had, or whatever indulgences she may have had, or whatever other things she may have done, marriage sets her apart and purifies her. And not only in the act of marriage do you purify that person, but every day you live. If you really love you wife, you will do everything in your power to maintain her holiness, her virtue, her righteousness, and her purity every day you live. You’ll never put her in a compromising situation where she would become angered, because that’s a sin. You would never induce an argument out of her, because that’s a sin. You would do nothing to defile her. You would never let her see anything, expose her to anything, or let her indulge in anything that would bring any impurity into her life. Love always seeks to purify.

Here’s some advice for women who aren’t married. If a man comes along and tells you he loves you and then tries to take away your virtue, that is not love. Don’t ever believe that definition of love. Love lifts up, purifies, exalts, honors, makes holy, sanctifies.

Husband, if you love your wife, seek to lift her up, draw her to God, pour virtue into her life, and maker her, in every possible way, like Christ. Husband, that’s your spiritual responsibility---you’re the purifier.

Look again at verse 26: Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church “*with washing of water by the word.*” It is the Word of God that keeps us pure (cf, John 15:3). It was God’s Word that redeemed us, and it is God’s Word that keeps us clean. Men, you have the responsibility in your home to apply to your wife every purifying influence that will make her holy. Do everything you can to ensure her purity.

Further, in verse 27, Paul says that the Lord wants to present Himself “*a glorious church [Gk., **endoxon**, “an intense splendiddness”], **not having spot** [Gk., **spilon**, “stain”], **or wrinkle** [Gk., **rjutida**, “flaw”], **or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.**” Men, that is how we are to deal with our wives. Don’t ever do anything in your life that will lead your wife into any illicit thought or relationship. Don’t ever do anything that would cause her to look to someone else for fulfillment. Fulfill your love to her so she is purified, sanctified, and lifted up to God---that’s your responsibility.*

### 3. Caring love (vv. 28-30)

- a. *“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.”* (v. 28)

Men, we spend a lot of time on our bodies by jogging, exercising, eating the right foods, and wearing nice clothes. After all, a Christian’s body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We certainly don’t want to mar it, so we take good care of it. What Paul is saying here is this: “Look, you ought to love your wife as you love your own body.”

Again notice that love is not an emotion. When your body has needs, you meet them. Your wife also has needs, and you’re to meet them too. And even though love is not an emotion, I believe that emotion can follow the meeting of a need. As you meet the needs of your wife, it’s going to change your emotional response.

- b. *“For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church”* (v. 29).

Does the Lord care for the church? Does He take care of everything we need? The Bible doesn’t say, “My God shall supply most of your needs...if you don’t get too picky or make too many demands.” Philippians 4:19 says, *“But my God shall supply **all** your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus”* (emphasis added). If you need love, or joy, or peace, or strength, or wisdom, or anything else, He will give it to you. You will never do without what you need to fulfill His will.

Men, God is saying that we are to give our wives every single thing they need. Now, maybe she needs to understand the difference between needs and wants. If so, help her to do that. But, what she needs, you must supply. Don’t forget that. The man is the provider, the protector, and the preserver. He is the one who grants the resources. We are to care for our wives as we care for our own bodies—as Christ cares for the church. Something is wrong if you look at your wife as a cook, baby-sitter, clothes washer, and sex partner—and nothing more. She is a God-given treasure to be cared for, cherished, and nourished.

#### 1) *“Nourisheth”*

This word in verse 29 is a fantastic word. It is the Greek word **ektrefo**, which means “to nourish” or “to feed.” Primarily, it’s used in reference to nurturing or raising children. It simply means “to mature”. Men, we’re called to nurture our wives, to bring them to maturity and provide for their wives needs. Also, because **ektrefo** literally means “to feed,” I believe this reiterates the principle that the man is to be the breadwinner, the provider.

What did you provide for your salvations? Nothing. What resources do you provide to live the Christian life? Nothing. As Christ provides for the church, so a husband should provide for his wife. We’re to nourish, feed, nurture, bring up, and mature our wives. We are to be their preservers, their saviors, and their protectors.

## 2) “Cherisheth”

This word literally means “to soften or warm with body heat.” It is used to describe a bird sitting on her nest (cf. Deut. 22:6). Husbands are to literally provide a secure, warm, soft place as a provision for wives. Husbands are to provide the security. Don’t shove your wife out into the cold, hard, cruel world. We are to provide our wives with a nest, a security, a security, a place of warmth, and a place of nourishment. Again, this idea is relinquished in the case of the working mother. She should not be the one who nourishes and feeds; she should receive that provision.

In the curse in Genesis 3, the wife was cursed in two areas: (1) she would have pain in child bearing, and (2) she would have a hard time submitting to her husband—but both areas are centered in the home. Now notice where the curse on the man comes. He’s cursed in that he will have to till the ground and work in the sweat of his brow to provide bread for his family. From the beginning it was assumed that the woman would be home with her children, meeting the needs of her family, and the man would be out working to provide for those needs. That is God’s design. As Christ provides for the church, so the husband is to provide for his wife that which nourishes her and provides security.

### c. *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and his bones” (v. 30)*

You may ask, “Why does Christ care for us as he does? Why does He meet every need we have? Why is He so wonderfully caring? Why did He go through all the things he went through to provide everything for us as a sympathetic, loving, faithful, High Priest?” The answer is in v. 30: we are members of His body—His flesh and His bone. We’re one with Him. Not to provide for us would be not to provide for Himself. We are one with Christ.

1) *“He that is joineth unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17).*

2) *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal 2:20)*

3) *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13).*

Because we are one with Christ, He will meet our needs.

Husbands, your wife is one with you. Not to meet her needs is to commit spiritual suicide, because you are one. People who violate their marriage destroy themselves.

The grace of God is amazing. God incorporates us into a body and says, “As Christ cares for His body, the church, and as a man cares for his own physical body, so is a husband to care for his wife—meeting for her needs and providing all that is necessary.” Men, God has a high view of women. They are to be exalted, honored, and lifted up. We’re to submit to meeting their needs—even if we must die doing it—and cause them to be pure, honored holy, and sanctified.

#### 4. Unbreakable love (v. 31)

*“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife and they two shall be one flesh.”*

That is a direct quote from Genesis 2:24. It is nothing new. People say, “You’ve got to get the Bible up to date. Times have changed.” But that is a direct quote. The Bible was written over a period of 1500 years; nothing has changed. Thousands of years back, when God first created man, He said, *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”* Nothing has changed. It’s the same Ephesians 5:31. Nothing has changed. It’s the same standard; marriage is an unbreakable, indivisible union.

##### a. *“For this cause”*

Why is marriage unbreakable? Because marriage partners become one---and they cannot be separated. Some people think that a Christian can lose his salvation. But if that were true, Christ would have to cut off part of His own body. As members of His body, we cannot be separated from Him. The point is this: the body is indivisible and cannot be cut apart. It is one flesh. Because of that, when you marry you are to leave your father and mother, join your wife, and become one flesh. It becomes an indivisible union, because you can’t divide one.

##### b. *“Leave”*

The Greek word **leipo** means “to leave.” But the word used here is an intensified form, **kataleipo**, and means “to abandon completely.” Married couples run into a big problem if they don’t leave their mothers and fathers completely when they step into the marriage relationship. That doesn’t mean they shouldn’t talk to their parents anymore; it means they need to have a conscious understanding of the new relationship that has been formed.

##### c. *“Joined”*

The Greek word used here is **proskollao**, an intensification of the word **kollao**, which means “to connect us.” **Proskollao** means “to glue together.” The idea is that you are to leave, and then you are to glue the new relationship together. It is a new relationship, absolutely unbreakable. Two become one.

### ***What Does God Think of Divorce?***

Do you want to know what God thinks of divorce? Malachi 2:16 says, *“For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away [divorce].”* That’s how God feels about divorce. And by the way, God hasn’t changed His mind, because in Malachi 3:6 God says, *“I am the LORD, I change not.”* God has always hated divorce; He hates it now, and He’ll always hate it. There’s no divorce He doesn’t hate. You may say, “But my divorce was justified. My partner committed adultery.” God still hates it. He hates divorce on any terms or on any condition. He forgives it, but He still hates it. Now, He hates a lot of things He forgives, but that doesn’t change the fact that He hates divorce.

I’ve had women say to me, “I’m finally going to divorce my husband. We haven’t gotten a long for years, but he finally committed adultery: Now I can divorce him.” Usually I often say to them, “You know what? God hates divorce. And not only that, God hates your satisfaction in considering your divorce is justified.” Don’t be glad for evil. God hates divorce.

### ***Should You Divorce Your Partner in the Case of Adultery?***

When God designed marriage, He designed it to be like a body: indivisible, two becoming one. But many spouses aren't willing to forgive their partners when they sin. If Jesus divorced us every time we sinned, where would we be? Since we're to love our wives the way Christ loves the church, how many times are we to forgive? How many times has Christ forgiven you? Should you cast your wife off if she is unfaithful? Did Christ cast you off when you were unfaithful? Did God cast Israel off when Israel committed adultery? Israel committed and still commits many adulteries, but some day God will recover Israel and give her the kingdom. The church, too, has sinned again and again; but Jesus does not cast us off. He keeps on cleansing us. If the spouse sins, your spouse should be forgiveness.

That kind of forgiveness is illustrated in the life of Hosea. God told Hosea to marry a woman who was a prostitute. Then He told him to keep forgiving her for her continued prostitutions. And Hosea did---he kept on forgiving her again and again. Finally, God restored their marriage into a wonderful blessing. There was true love, and she was purified. Then God said to Hosea, "That was an illustration of My relationship with Israel. I love Israel. She is My wife, and she commits adultery after adultery; but I'll never put her away. I still love her." And in the end, ultimately, He's going to regather that wayward wife back into the fold.

Look at the Church, Jesus loves the church. And even though the church is unfaithful and sinful. He never puts us away. He keeps on forgiving us (1 John 1:9).

#### **B. The Motive of Love (vv. 32-33)**

Ephesians 5:32 says, "*This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*" You may ask, "Why is it important to love like that?" Why is it important that marriage be based on those principles?" Because it is a picture of the church. This magnificent picture was a mystery, never known in the past, but now revealed. The sacredness of marriage; so by your marriage, you are either a symbol or a denial of Christ and His church.

Because marriage is so sacred, Paul says in verse 33, "*Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*" If we would learn, in Christ, and the power of the Spirit, to base the marriage relationship on God's principles, there would be an end to much anxiety. Approach your marriage God's way. And watch God pour out so much blessing you won't even be able to receive it all!

## Focusing on the Facts

1. Describe the characteristics that will work against the family in the last days (2 Tim. 3:2-3, 6).
2. How is the husband supposed to express his submission to his wife?
3. Do we deserve God's sacrificial love? Explain your answer.
4. How does the world's love compare to God's love?
5. You will become greatly \_\_\_\_\_ to what \_\_\_\_\_ to love.
6. Define biblical love. Who is worthy to receive it? How did Jesus demonstrate it in John 13?
7. Love doesn't act out what it \_\_\_\_\_; it does what is \_\_\_\_\_.
8. What must a husband do before he can properly love his wife?
9. Because Christ loved the church, what did He seek to do? What should be your goal with regard to someone you love?
10. In what two ways are Christians cleansed from their sins? Explain.
11. Why is premarital sex not an expression of true love?
12. How do we show that our bodies are important to us? How does that relate to a husband's loving his wife, according to Ephesians 5:28-29? How does the Lord care for the church, according to Philippians 4:19?
13. Why is Christ so willing to provide for the needs of Christians?
14. How is the command about marriage in Genesis 2:24 evidence that the standards for marriage haven't changed?
15. What is one of the biggest problems newly married couples might experience with their parents? What does Ephesians 5:31 command them to do?
16. What does God think of divorce? Has He changed His mind on that issue? Support your answers with scripture.
17. If your spouse sins, what should be your response?
18. Explain how Hosea is an illustration of God's forgiving love toward Israel.
19. Why is it important for marriage to be based on biblical principles?

## Pondering the Principles

1. As long as you are looking for what you can get out of your marriage, you will never be able to fully give yourself to your spouse. Husbands, when was the last time you made a sacrifice for your wife by submitting to her needs and desires? Although your time may be valuable and your funds limited, what tangible expressions of love can you give your wife that will demonstrate how highly you value her as your life partner?
2. Men, if you love a woman, you should do everything in your power to preserve her purity. Do you ever encourage her to compromise her spiritual or moral standards? Or do you take advantage of the fact that she hasn't established any standards yet? What are you doing to draw her closer to God and to make her life more virtuous? Recognizing your mutual concern for your own body and the fact that it is the temple of the Holy Spirit, make sure that you care for your wife with at least the same amount of zeal.
3. A symptom of a deteriorating relationship is a fault-finding attitude. If you are hoping that your partner will sin so you can justify a divorce, your attitude is totally wrong. How many times have you sinned and been forgiven by God? Has God, in effect, divorced you? Paul tells us that nothing can "*separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. 8:39). If an infinitely holy God keeps His promises to His children, who are undeserving of His love, we should be faithful to the one we have promised to love and care for until death. If you sense a growing separation in your marital relationship, pray that God would help you determine its cause and would empower you to build your marriage into one that honors and pleases Him.

# God's Pattern for Children

Eph 6:1-4

## I. Children

We have looked at the wife and the husband in the family role, now we will look at what God has to say about children.

### A. The Attack on the Family

Satan is attacking the family and he has from the very beginning. As a result we pay a terrible price when we succumb to his tricks and buy into his lies.

#### a. The Message from God

##### 1) The theology God gave through Israel

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deut. 6:4)*

##### 2) The Response

*"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all the soul, and with all thy might" (V.5).*

#### b. The way to pass it on

##### 1) Personal commitment

*"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart" (V.6).*

##### 2) Parental communication

*"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children" (V.7).*

##### a. In speech

*"And shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (V. 7).*

##### b. In symbols

*"Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes" (V.8).*

##### c. In surroundings

*"Thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (V.9)*

## II. Satan's Resistance

From the very beginning Satan has tried to disrupt God's plan. In order to do this he has to get the attention of husbands, wives and children. He uses whatever means possible to get us to think wrong thoughts and accept wrong ideas.

### B. Satan's Plan of Attack

#### 1. Fathers First

Satan has provided enticing, luring and fantasy ideas to get the attention of fathers. The idea is to convince fathers that their role is different from what God outlined. Harold Voth has written a very alarming book called *The Castrated Family*. He concluded that if the father is not the head of the family, there can be nothing but chaos. He says that the father is responsible for structure and form and for establishing the family standards, character, direction, and strength.

#### 2. Mother's Next

Mothers have been pushed out of the home and into the work place. Over 45% of the United States work force is women. Already over 6 million children under the age of six have working mothers. Nearly half of all children under the age of eighteen have working mothers. This is the result of the failure of fathers to give spiritual strength and character to their families.

### 3. Children Next

a. According to David Elkind in an article in *Psychology Today*, “One major change is the form of middle-class mothering. For a mother to work voluntarily while her children were young was once seen as a sign of bad parenting, a rejection of the maternal role. But today, going to work and placing a child with a caretaker or in a day-care center is accepted practice. For many children that means coming home to an empty house after school and tending for themselves.

#### b. Influenced by TV

##### 1) Violent role models

Dr. Walter Menniger, a psychiatrist connected with Topeka State Hospital, said we are raising a generation of violently aggressive women who are being formed through exposure to fantasy TV super-heroes.

##### 2) Godless morality

a) According to Ben Stein in *The View from Sunset Boulevard*, interviews with the forces behind television (executives, producers, writers) reveal that they are systematically attempting to change traditional American values. This is being done through the situation comedy: you can get people to buy a whole new philosophy if you can get them to laugh with it.

b) TV characters consume ten times more alcohol than coffee

c) According to the National Federation of Decency, over 88% of all sex is depicted outside of marriage.

##### 3) No Communication

In many cases parents do not talk to their children because they are too busy watching TV.

#### c. Raised by day-care centers

The Denver Post ran an article about a group of day-care workers who were trying to start a union to protect themselves from abusive children. The day-care workers had to teach potty training, table manners, respect, and just about everything else—all at about a 50 to 1 ratio.

#### d. Abused according to statistics

1) An estimated 1 million children live in foster homes, residential facilities, institutions, mental hospitals, or are in prisons.

2) Four out of ten children will live in a broken home.

3) Eighteen million children are currently living with step-parents.

4) Between seven and fourteen million children will become alcoholics, based on the statistics concerning children of alcoholics who become alcoholics themselves.

5) Sixty-five out of every one thousand children between the ages of seven and eleven have received psychiatric help.

6) American children are indulged with more than 4 billion dollars of toys each year—more than the gross national product of sixty-three nations.

7) The average age of beginning smokers has dropped from fourteen to ten.

8) One million young girls between the ages of twelve and seventeen get pregnant every year.

9) Ten million minors have venereal diseases, and five thousand new victims contract it every day.

10) One child in five uses drugs twice a week.

11) The only age group with increased births in America is girls between the age of eleven to fourteen.

Our children are being attacked by an anti-God philosophy. We can't stand around in indifference and expect them to turn out all right in the end.

### C. How the Attack Works

#### 1. The curse of sin

The curse of sin is built into the family. The curse causes men to be oppressive, despotic, and chauvinistic: it causes women to want to rule over men and usurp their position authority, and it causes children to rebel. It is only in a family where its members are Spirit-filled and obedient to the word of God that God's standards for the family can be kept.

### **Children Committing Suicide**

The suicide rate among children is staggering. Between 10 and 15 percent of children have tried or have contemplated suicide. Charlotte Ross, director of the San Mateo Suicide Prevention Center, said children as young as six or seven are trying to kill themselves. And she lade the blame on what she calls "*the way our society has of alienating kids.*"

#### 2. The failure of parents

Parents have failed—even Christian parents have problems. God can restore us, forgive us, and help us get our families back together. The emotional and spiritual needs of our children are not being met. We are allowing the world to raise our children by allowing them to sit in front of the TV without parental guidance or control. The philosophy of the world is reflected on the TV and it is not Christian.