

Biblical Marriage Study

Written by Dr. George Kuykendall for Officers' Christian Fellowship

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Study #8

What the Bible says about the husband's role in marriage.

Last time we discussed the Ephesians 5:23-24 passage concerning the admonition to wives to “submit to their husbands in everything.” Now we turn to the husband's role. Some say this Scripture is just too demanding for husbands and wives. A different interpretation is that this Scripture illustrates the high level of importance that God places on the marriage relationship.

You will note in this portion of Scripture that there is a comparison between the husband's role with his wife and Christ's role with the church. As we read this description, it is like comparing one 33mm color slide projected side by side with another. Then, as we read on, the two views seem to merge, and then become separate again. Obviously, our Lord considers the marriage relationship to be very important.

Will someone please read Ephesians 5:22-27 out loud for us? What are the facts in verse 23?

*The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church.
Christ is the savior of the body.*

How do you suppose Christ wants the believer to relate to the church body?

It is the Christian's identity—citizenship. It is how the Christian relates to the world—by supporting our marriage, then the body by membership, stewardship, and the practice of spiritual gifts and talents.

In what respect is Christ the head of the church?

He is its savior. He is Lord—the supreme ruler and authority over the church.

Now let's look at verse 24. In what respects are members of the body subject to Christ?

In all respects: morally, spiritually, professionally, and socially.

In what ways does Christ exercise His authority over the church?

By direction of His Word, the Bible. By the moment-by-moment continuing presence and leading of the Holy Spirit. (See John 16:13 and Romans 8:14.)

Regarding the analogy in the beginning of verse 23, in what sense should the husband be head of his wife?

He has this primary responsibility. As Christ reliably fulfills His role as savior, so the husband is responsible to fulfill his role as the head of the marriage.

Which roles of the husband compare with those of Christ?

1. *He is continually responsible to be the provider and protector.*
2. *His role is three-fold: past, present, and future—meeting physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs.*
3. *He provides reliable security in the sense of commitment of his love (agape), the provision of a home, and plans for future security (savings, insurance, personal reliability, assurance that he will always love and be there for his wife).*
4. *Before the Lord, he is the spiritual head of his home, the religious leader/guide/teacher providing for his wife's spiritual relationship with the Lord, spiritual growth, and development so she is presented spotless (righteous) before the Lord. Also their marriage is holy (set apart/protected for God), a witness to the world, and especially a model for their children of what a Christian marriage should be.*

Why do you think these responsibilities are not left to the natural selection of the fittest between husband and wife?

If the wife leads spiritually, the husband usually abandons or diminishes his responsibility for spiritual things. We model a wrong image for our children.

What is the connotation of verse 25?

The husband's practice of agape is complete to the point of being willing to give his life for her.

What is the implication of the husband's role in verses 26 and 27?

As the spiritual head of his home, he is responsible for the ministry of the Word in a day-by-day process so that they both are guided by the Word and the Holy Spirit, set apart for God, and blameless (righteous) in His eyes.

Someone read verses 28-31. What is the overall issue here?

The unity of man and his wife is so important that the man should consider his wife as an equal part of himself. Meeting her needs is equally as important as meeting his own needs. She is just as important as he is himself. Failure to consider one's wife as important is often the reason for bitterness and castle walls that exist between husband and wife.

What are some areas where unity is important?

Husbands don't completely dominate their wives, but need to assure equal consideration in recreation (leisure time), social needs, spiritual needs, and in consultation on personal and family decisions. Husbands often lose themselves in their professional commitment and fail in this primary area of responsibility before the Lord.

How does a husband determine what his wife's needs are?

Ask! Extensive communication. He needs to try putting his own defenses and ego aside and concentrating on understanding his wife's concerns, where she is coming from, and how her thoughts and ideas are formed—learning about the

historical experiences that have shaped the filters in her mind. Then, he should reverse the process and share with her just as deeply where he is coming from. He should share extensively with her about his daily life and actively listen to her share about hers.

Someone read verse 33. What is the command for the husband here?

To love (agape) his wife as himself.

What are some ways we can begin to enact these imperatives in our marriages?

1. *Talk about them.*
2. *Make commitments to the Lord and to each other.*
3. *Study the Word.*
4. *Obey the Word.*
5. *Pray separately and together about these things.*
6. *Seek third party spiritual help where needed.*

Of what importance are these things if we desire God's blessing upon our own lives and our marriage/home?

Scriptural imperatives are not options before the Lord. They are basic to life and our job description before the Lord. This relates not only to God's evaluation and blessing of our lives now, but it also relates to the future lives of those around us, and ultimately our judgment by God as righteous or unrighteous.

Is there anything else anyone would like to share about applying this from the husband's perspective?