

## A Test of Faith: Husbands Leading With Love

Franklin Church of Christ  
Edwin Crozier  
January 18, 2004  
AM Worship

### Introduction:

Every Christian husband knows **Ephesians 5:22-23**. Even if they do not know the reference, they know the Bible says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church." While we may like to look at the wives' side of that statement, we husbands need to consider our side. We need to be husbands worthy of submission.

When we discuss our roles in the home, (in this lesson, the husbands, and in the next, the wives) we are actually discussing a test of faith. God has given us direction for our homes. We have to ask ourselves, "Do we really believe God? Is His way really best? Or will we do things our own way." If we are not living according to the Lord's Word in our homes, no matter how difficult that is, we are failing faith's test.

God has given us great responsibility in our homes, husbands, and it is mutually exclusive of whether or not our wives are fulfilling their responsibilities. We are not to be children, forsaking our responsibilities and claiming our wives started it. We must be adults, filling our responsibilities no matter what. Our responsibility in the home is summed up in two words: *Leadership* and *Love*.

### Discussion:

- I. "The husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church" (**Ephesians 5:23**).
  - A. As Christ has authority in the church, so does the husband have authority in the home.
    1. According to **Ephesians 1:22-23**, all things in the church have been placed under Christ's feet. Christ's word is final. His decision stands and the church is to follow Christ, even when we do not understand or agree (**Proverbs 3:5**). So it is regarding the husband within the home. He is the head, his decisions stand as final and the family is to follow him.
    2. However, Christ's authority was qualified in **I Corinthians 15:27**. The Father, who placed all things in subjection to the Son, was still in authority over the Son. Jesus said that He neither spoke nor did anything from His own authority, but was submissive to His head, the Father (**John 5:19, 30; 12:49**). In like manner, **I Corinthians 11:3** demonstrates that just as the Son was submissive to the Father in His headship over man, the man must be submissive to the Son and the Father in his role of headship at home. Being the heads of our homes does not give us permission to do as we wish. Rather, like Jesus, we must speak and do what we have been commanded by our head, Jesus Christ.
  - B. As Christ was the savior of His church, the husband is to be the savior of the family.
    1. **Ephesians 5:23** highlights not only Christ's headship, but the fact that He is the savior of the body. According to **Luke 19:10**, Jesus came to seek and save the lost. His leadership authority is not exercised for His benefit, but for ours.
    2. In like manner, the husband should act as the savior of the family. Obviously, we do not provide the sacrifice for salvation. However, in general, we are to sacrifice ourselves and our personal desires for the good of our family. In specific, we should realize that leaders are supposed to be taking people somewhere and we are to be taking our families to heaven. We most often relate **Hebrews 13:17** to a church's eldership, but it has just as much application to husbands and fathers. We will give an account for the souls of our wives and children. For those who are saved, we will have to give account that it is because of us and not in spite of us. For those who are lost, we will have to give account that it is in spite of us and not because of us. Husbands, we do a lot to make sure our wives get to live in nice houses and ride in nice cars. We do much to make sure our kids get into good universities and awesome sports programs. What are we doing to make sure our families get into heaven?
  - C. As Christ was the example for His church, the husband is to be the example for his family.
    1. The whole tenor of these verses in **Ephesians 5:23-33** demonstrates that Christ is our example. Other passages demonstrate that as well. Consider **Ephesians 5:1** and **I Peter 2:21**. In **Hebrews 2:14-18**, we find that Christ was unwilling to simply tell us how to live this life, but also endured it that He might be a faithful and merciful priest for us. He was unwilling to simply sit on high and issue forth behavioral edicts. He certainly has never been willing to say, "Do as I say, not as I do."

2. In like manner, we husbands need to be examples to our families. We need to lead the way, going before them and demonstrating the proper life. We must not try to take our place on high, issuing decisive directions. Rather, we must live properly with and before our families demonstrating faithfulness to God in all things. We must lead exemplary lives in our families, just as Paul commanded Timothy to do within the church (**I Timothy 4:12**).
- D. As Christ served His church, the husband is to serve his family.
1. According to **Matthew 20:28**, Jesus expressly did not come to be served, but to serve us, giving his life as a ransom for us. He commanded His apostles that they must not use their authority for tyrannical purposes within His church, but must serve those over whom they had authority (**Luke 22:25-26**).
  2. We are to be servants as well. We are not the heads of our homes in order to tyrannize our wife and children. They are not our property to do with and treat however we choose. They are not our slaves to provide for our every whim and desire. We are their servants, to find out their needs and provide for them.

II. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church" (**Ephesians 5:25**).

- A. As Christ loved the church unconditionally, the husband is to love his wife unconditionally.
1. The term used to describe Christ's love for the church is "agapao." This love is the unconditional love we hear so much about. This unconditional love is demonstrated in **Romans 5:6-11**. While we were His enemies, Christ loved us and provided for our salvation. His love was not the spontaneous reaction to our awesomeness and lovableness. Rather, it was the conscious choice to do what was best for the unlovable.
  2. In the same way, husbands, we are to love our wives unconditionally. Even if she has become our enemy. The love we are commanded is not the spontaneous reaction to our wives' beauty, personality, service or love. It is the conscious choice to do what is best for our wives, no matter what. **I Corinthians 13:4-7** describes the love we are to have for our wives unconditionally. Further, **Colossians 3:19** explains that this love means refraining from bitterness and exasperation. Even when our wives do things that upset us, our responsibility is to treat them patiently, lovingly and tenderly. Too many men believe if the love has gone out of their marriages that they are allowed to divorce their wives. Husbands, not only is abandoning our marriages not allowed in this situation, but neither is a lack of love. Loving our wives was not God's hope, His advice or His goal for our marriages. It was His command for us and to do anything other than love our wives is sin.
- B. As Christ loved the church sacrificially, the husband must also love his wife sacrificially.
1. According to **Ephesians 5:25**, Jesus demonstrated His love by giving Himself for the church. His giving for the church began with leaving the glories of heaven to come to earth, living as one of us (**Philippians 2:5-7**). Then it concluded with His sacrifice for our sins.
  2. Jesus said, "Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down his life for his friends" (**John 15:13**). Husbands, we cannot claim that we love our wives if we are not willing to sacrifice ourselves for them. This concept is not just about physically dying for our wives, but about giving up our desires and wants to provide and promote hers. We must live **Philippians 2:3-4** in our homes, viewing our wives as more important and seeking her interests above our own.
- C. As Christ loved the church, providing for her growth, the husband must provide for his wife.
1. According to **Ephesians 4:15-16**, Jesus, the church's head, provides for the body's growth. Certainly, He does so by helping each part of His body grow stronger and provide more work, but He is still the one who builds us up. Through the word and through prayer, He nourishes and strengthens us.
  2. In **Ephesians 5:28-29**, Paul provided another illustration of this love. Just as we love our own bodies, nourishing and cherishing them, we are to nourish and cherish our wives. We nourish them, that is, we must provide nutritional nourishment for our wives. This is not just about working to put food on the table. This is also about putting the spiritual nourishment on the table, giving our wives what they need to grow spiritually as well as physically. Secondly, we are to cherish them, that is, we provide the emotional support they need. We need to listen to their emotional needs, supporting them and providing for them. We will only fulfill this aspect of love if we follow Peter's command in **I Peter 3:7**. "Husbands, like-

wise, dwell with [your wives] with understanding ...” We are not allowed to toss out the clichéd “Women! You just can’t understand them.” God commanded us to live understandably. Our duty is to strive to learn what our wives think and feel. Then we must live with them accordingly, not according to the way we believe they ought to think and feel, but according to the way they think and feel. Only through this kind of understanding can we nourish and cherish our wives.

D. As Christ loved His church, honoring her, the husband must also honor his wife.

1. According to **Ephesians 5:26-27**, Jesus provided His sacrifice in order to cleanse and sanctify us, presenting us as a glorious church without spot or wrinkle. He wanted to glorify us and make us glorious. This encapsulates the idea of bestowing honor. Even when we were in our sins, Jesus wanted to honor us. He viewed us as so important that He was willing to die for us to help us be the glorious church He knew we could be by His grace.
2. Just as Christ honored His church, husbands, we are to honor our wives. We are to present her as glorious, without spot or wrinkle. Peter described the honor we are to bestow in **I Peter 3:7**. He declared that we are to honor her as a fellow heir of the grace of Christ. Our wives were so important to Jesus, He died for them. If they were that important to Jesus, how important ought they to be to us? Additionally, Peter said we should honor them as the “weaker vessel.” While it may be true that women, in general, have less physical strength than men, that is not Peter’s point. Additionally, Peter is not saying that women are weak and need us men to do everything for them. When he talks about the “weaker vessel,” he is drawing a word picture of a fine pottery that is easily broken. We are supposed to envision the special crystal pitcher and the fine china we reserve only for special occasions. Or we might picture the porcelain doll that has been handed down from our great-grandmother preserved in a curio cabinet to be protected from harm. We are to treat our wives the way we treat these precious fragile vessels. Our wives are not unbreakable rag dolls to be tossed about, bruised, and abused. They are not the regular dishware that if it gets chipped in the dishwasher, we do not care because it is “just the every day stuff.” They are precious gems, which we care for and protect, lest they be broken by us or others. That is why we strive to love them, caring for them, nourishing and cherishing them, understanding them and helping them to go to heaven. The Proverbialist said, “He who finds a wife, finds a good thing” (**Proverbs 18:22**). We need to treat her as that good gift that should be handled with care and protected at all costs.

### Conclusion:

Husbands, we must lead our homes. We must do so by loving, honoring, cherishing and understanding our wives. **I Peter 3:7** explained how important our duties are. If we do not fulfill our responsibilities at home, our prayers are hindered. That is, we will become separated from our God, because that is what sin does (**Isaiah 59:1-3**).

The numerous problems in families today are caused by disregard to God’s word. Regrettably, many preachers today have done a disservice to families by not proclaiming God’s whole counsel about the home. Even many of those who proclaim God’s order fully spend half of their time apologizing for it because it is not politically correct or “up to date.” Herein is the test to our faith. Do we truly believe God’s way is best? If so, we must boldly proclaim God’s plan for the home without apology. Only in this way will families be strengthened and led to heaven.